



## Lovers and Beloveds

*MeiLin Miranda*

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*A trapped immortal planning escape...*

*A prince who is the key...*

*And a secret, seductive history, captured in a magic book...*

Just turned 18, Prince Temmin Antremont has finally joined his father's court, only to walk straight into a power struggle between the secular and the sacred. The twin gods of love and sex call Temmin to serve in the Lovers' Temple for two years, a call made even more tempting by the seductive twins who embody the gods.

Prophecy suggests that Temmin's entrance into the Temple spells the kingdom's end, and the King will stop at nothing to prevent it. But the king's own advisor, a strange immortal called Teacher, comes to Temmin's aid. Why? And does the kingdom's fate really hinge on one young man's decision?

*Lovers and Beloveds* is the first book in the acclaimed Victorian-esque fantasy series *An Intimate History of the Greater Kingdom*, which continues with *Son in Sorrow*.

## **Lovers and Beloveds Details**

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Author : MeiLin Miranda

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## From Reader Review Lovers and Beloveds for online ebook

### Jan says

Lovers and Beloveds is the coming of age story of Temmin, next in line for the throne of Tremont, intertwined with tales from a Magic Book called An Intimate History of The Greater Kingdom (which gave the series its name).

This book was first serialized online, and when I started reading that version, I could never get past the first chapters because Temmin annoyed the heck out of me. Not that he's a very annoying character, but because he's a very typical spoiled male teenager, and I just don't have patience for that.

However, friends who read it raved about it and the premise of the story always seemed like my cup of tea, so when I was given a digital copy of the rewritten book, I decided to give it another try.

**I loved it.** I didn't love it until somewhere halfway when I suddenly realized it was 6 o'clock in the morning and I couldn't put it down, so instead I just read on. It's the kind of story for which the appreciation sort of sneaks upon you.

I thought Temmin was incredibly spoiled and blind and stupid and ignorant and insensitive at first. And I didn't feel like he redeemed himself for a long time, because he *kept* on being ignorant and walking after his dick. If not for the magical awesomeness that was Warin and Emmae's tale (the story that's told inside the story) I would have quit reading again I think. I just couldn't sympathise.

But then the good in Temmin slowly started to shine through, and suddenly I found myself crying with him when the twins revealed their past. Disliking his father also really helped in siding with Temmin.

And it dawned on me that the unlikeable Temmin actually shows off the biggest strength of Meilin Miranda; she writes very believable young adults, with all their doubts and rashness.

Even in this magical setting, with a very different (but boy is it interesting!) belief system, and the Royal upbringing of the characters, Temmin, Sedra and Ellika seem like people you can meet around the corner. And while I didn't always like what they did, or agreed with their way of thinking, I found myself rooting for them all.

I especially loved Sedra, and I really hope she and her mental prowess get a spot in the spotlight at some point in future books.

I did expect there to be more Intimate Tales, and was admittedly a little disappointed that this book focused on only one historical couple. I'm assuming the next 2 books will tell more (which is awesome!!!), but that probably won't fill my hunger. I was expecting to end up with the full history of the Kingdom, but alas, I don't think that will be the case.

Emmae's and Warin's tale was beautiful though, and I loved how Temmin was shown both point of views. There aren't black and whites when it comes to history, only grays, and I think that was portrayed very well.

What can I say? I'm hungry for more. More Temmin, more Sedra, more Twins and definitely more Intimate

History.

I really, really, *really* wish book 2 was out already.

Highly recommended.

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### **Frida Fantastic (book blogger) says**

“If the women were so important, why aren’t they in the histories?” -Prince Temmin

If George R. R. Martin’s Song of Ice and Fire series captures the gritty realism of medieval history, Lovers and Beloveds reveals the intimate and personal dynamics of power in aristocracies. It weaves together a rich multi-layered story that explores how sex and power shape history and individual destiny—sharing a perspective that’s beyond the “men, swords, and thrones” (capital H) history that’s often seen in fantasy.

It follows Temmin coming of age as he gains a fuller understanding of the responsibilities that he holds with his privilege. He learns about intimacy and dominance from court servants, religious figures, and an ancestor’s curse. What is coercion, trust, and consent? How would he rule differently from previous rulers?

The prose is lush and beautiful, which perfectly reflects the aristocratic steampunk world that Temmin lives in. The setting is fascinating and could be described as a fusion of Victorian England with Classical Greece. The narrative draws you in quickly and immerses you in life in the royal court. The characters of various classes are fleshed out with interactions that are full of wit and colour. Since sex is an important theme in the work, it’s heavy on the erotica, but it’s woven well into the plot and setting that none of it feels excessive. Also, it doesn’t hurt to have plenty of fetish fuel to go around.

Since most of the conflict revolves around Temmin’s personal development, it does follow a spoiled royal heir for over 400 pages, which understandably may not be for everyone. But I found him to be so well characterized and endearing that none of that mattered to me. I find it refreshing to see characters that are such a clear product of their upbringing and personal history. Regarding the world-building, there are some words mentioned that’s only explained in a glossary, but it’s a minor nitpick that wouldn’t affect your enjoyment of this book.

This is an intelligent, insightful, and beautiful fantasy novel. I highly recommend Lovers and Beloveds. The term “fantasy erotica” can’t describe the depth of this work. Even if you don’t think this subgenre is for you, I urge you to read the sample anyway and see if it draws you in. I’m sure you’ll be pleasantly surprised.

Note: a free review copy was provided by the author

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### **Liviu says**

I will add some fast scattered comments for now and have more later and a full FBC review in a week or so which I will c/p here.

The J. Carey comparisons are apt - I would say the aptest of several books claiming such; Lovers and Beloveds is somewhat more explicit but in the same tasteful vein as there and it posits a world where Gods' embodiments - including the erotic one in dual male/female manifestation - play an important role in society.

The novel starts slow and a bit on the raw side but it picks up considerably after a while; it ultimately depends on the character of Temmin and while he becomes quite interesting by the end of the novel, readers have to put up with a lot of silliness and even dullness before; not a bad prince as they go, but still spoiled and naive which makes for the worst combination sometimes.

Also the emotional distance of 3rd person narration works against the book to some extent - one huge reason the Kushiel books are so good (still my #1 fantasy of all time) is the immediacy of first person narration and i do not get why authors are afraid to use it in books like this where the extra pov's are superfluous and could be worked around; i saw recent books using 1srt person combined with 3rd person snippetting and that also would be better imho

The secondary story that Temmin sees in the magic book of the subtitle (Intimate...) is cliched and predictable, so a bit overlong as a subthread but it works as a morality tale/history lesson and I guess it may play a role in later world building expansion.

The writing is excellent and helps smooth some of the issues mentioned above, while the world building is pretty good, a little bit sketchy but not with great flaws, just incomplete and I expect continuing volumes to expand it. The characters develop and show a lot of nuance after a while, so I urge everyone to give this book a little time to develop from its somewhat raw beginning

All in all the series has extremely great promise so I am very interested in the sequel, while Lovers and Beloveds (A+) is one of the best indies (more or less debut as the book has been expanded a lot from its first edition) I've read this year. If you are a fan of Jacqueline Carey I would definitely urge you to try this one and as mentioned give it a bit to settle down and of course I would highly recommend it to anyone interested in beautifully written fantasy of intrigue and eroticism and who is not afraid of some explicitness.

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### **Keryl Raist says**

A while back an email popped up in my inbox requesting I read Lovers and Beloveds for review. I did my usual routine of checking the book out, looking at it's reviews, reading the back page copy, and bits and pieces of text. It looked good. My initial impression was steampunk erotic fantasy. It sounded right up my alley.

Then another interesting factoid hit my radar; it was groupfunded, a major plus. If that term means nothing to you, prepare to learn. Groupfunding is a technique where you get a bunch of people to give you money to pay for you to do your project. Call it modern day patronage. On a practical level that means this book was good enough, in the bits and pieces released by the author, to get total strangers to give her money to hire an editor, artist, etc. While total money generated is not a definitive ruler for a book's quality, I've waded through a lot of self-published fiction that no one in their right mind would buy, let alone decide to patronize. I was thrilled to get into this book.

It turns out my initial impressions of Lovers and Beloveds was off, but not in a bad way. It is a coming of age tale wrapped around a story of sexual domination (a story within the story writing technique is used to

good effect in this book) exploring how the one story furthers the other. It's a tale of a young man preparing for his eventual kinghood and the paths he may take to get there.

It is set in a fantasy land with an 1890's-1910ish technology level. But the technology is just in the background. To call it steampunk would be similar to calling Sherlock Holmes steampunk, sure it's the right era, but to do so misses the point of steampunk.

It is erotica: coming of age, realpolitik, intelligently crafted with layers and story lines beyond the sex, and wrapped up in the sexual politics of what it means to be a man or a woman erotica. As such, if you don't happen to enjoy reading explicit sex or sexual violence, just put the book down and head for the next one on your list. Assuming such reading does not bother you, go get a copy, you'll be well rewarded.

Lovers and Beloveds uses erotic sex as a vehicle to explore the paths of power and the relationships of dominance and privilege. All things a boy needs to learn to become a man who will be a king. The sex is well written, very hot, and it's easy to see why the main character, Temmin, finds himself aroused and dismayed by that arousal when seeing the main character of the inner story raped.

I think calling this book fantasy might be a bit misleading. There is magic in this world, but it's use is minimal. My guess is that in later books in the series it will become important, (perhaps there will be a magical coming of age in the next book?) but for the opening book it's just sort of there. Really, this reads more like historical fiction than fantasy. Take out the few brief magic bits, and this could very easily be set in a fictionalized 1890's Colonial India or Hong Kong.

Temmin reads as a genuine young man. He's spoiled but trying to be a good person. He can be self-absorbed and whiny, but he's an eighteen-year-old who just had his world turned upside down. He's earned his whininess, and there's something wrong with a person who isn't self absorbed when his entire reality shifts. Basically, the fact that he is annoying on occasion is entirely in character and should the annoying bits be removed, he wouldn't read true.

The writing is tight. Scenes flow from one to the next with no major issues. If there were grammar errors, I didn't notice them. Dialog and voice may not be exceptional, but they were more than competent and worked with the characters. I never found myself thinking, "There's no way Temmin (or any other character) would say that!" There are bits where as a reader I found myself wondering why we were meeting certain characters and plot lines, but the quality of the rest of the story and knowing this is book one of a series makes me think they are the seeds of future plot points. The story within the story may have been a bit longer than strictly necessary, but that's my own personal taste (I tend to skim epic battle scenes), and for all I know in the next book the bits I thought were long may be vitally important.

I look forward to seeing how Temmin will mature into his future.

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### **A.M. says**

Prophecies, magic, curses and Gods — Lovers and Beloveds has all the trappings of a strong coming-of-age fantasy novel. It offers an impressive depth and breadth in terms of world-building, mixing hints of Victorian aristocracy with Ancient Greek religion to create a compelling, evocative setting. But most of all it offers an intimate view into the daily lives of those who have shaped and will shape the Kingdom of Tremont, intertwining the history of Temmin's ancestors with his current experiences at court.

This dual narrative — jumping between present times and Temmin's ancestors — is part of what makes the story so addictive. *Lovers and Beloveds* is in part a character study of Temmin and his formal training as Heir, but there is a larger story at play, too, which only becomes evident through the parallels between Temmin's behaviour and his ancestor's mistakes. Much of this revolves around religious, moral and sexual themes, in which Temmin is largely innocent and ignorant — and while the sex is often explicit and occasionally non-consensual, it is handled gracefully and is crucial to the plot.

But what is perhaps most striking is that both setting and cast have received equal care and attention; the Prince and his companions are as vivid in my mind as the city itself. Temmin is a believable teenager, awkward, petulant, trying hard to do what is right but often distracted by what is tempting. The strong bench of supporting characters are also well-developed, with histories of their own. My personal favourite is Teacher, a dark mysterious figure bound by magic to obey the King's commands.

Perhaps my only nitpick is that the beginning is a little slow, but certainly history buffs would enjoy the scene-setting, and as soon as Prince Temmin arrives in the royal capital, the novel becomes highly engrossing.

In sum, the story is highly polished and delightfully told — if you love history and strong characters, and aren't afraid of sex, then this is a book for you.

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### **Emma (M) says**

I guess I would describe this book as Fantasy Erotica. I didn't really know what to expect from this book and the first chapter did have me worried that I wouldn't enjoy it. As it turns out, this was a very complex story full of politics, intrigue, religion and lust and I was pleasantly surprised to find that I was really enjoying the story. Be prepared for quite a bit of erotica in a number of different forms, as nothing is taboo in this book.

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### **Night Goddess says**

*Lovers and Beloveds* is amazing. It reminds me of Jacqueline Carey's Kushiel Series but at the same time, it is unique in its own right. I instantly fell in love with the world the author created. There actually were two stories being told, one from the present and one from the past and they came together perfectly. I bought this book a while ago and it caught my attention because of the reviews. In so many words, they all practically said the same thing "buy this book".....Now I will say the same "BUY THIS BOOK"..... Fantasy, magic books, curses, Gods, court intrigue, etc..... I could go on forever but I hope you get the point.....

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### **Kayla says**

There is really no proper way to describe this short of "Fantastic". Sincerely. This is easily my most favorite erotic novel now. And believe me, I've read quite a few of them. I'll admit that I was really wary of the story when I read the description - the description just honestly sounded a little dry. I promise, though, it really isn't.

It's available in tons of formats in different places. Here, you can pick it up for Kindle as well as a paperback book. The price difference is huge between the two, and really, the e-book format is easy enough to read. I read it in Kindle format, and it was extremely easy to read - nothing wrong with the formatting. However, since I finished the book, I actually want to purchase the print edition just to collect - it was honestly that amazing. I'm dying for book two.

The story is a bit soft on the sex but huge on the plot. It's basically like reading a "normal" book - except the entire point of the book happens to focus on sex and a sexual universe. A lot of the sexual action would be considered "bisexual" since the main character likes both men and women, and most characters in the novel seem to be sexually open as well.

The plot is pretty easy to describe without the seeming use of politics that the description gives: Basically, we follow a young boy (an Heir to the King) who just turned 18 and is now doing his official studies to be King. His mother has sheltered him, and he's also, surprisingly, a virgin - which is unheard of in the land. The boy meets some of the "sex gods" of the land and wants to be with them instantly - it turns out, the only way for them to be his first time is for him to pledge into the religion. The King is against the religion. This leads to some "thwarts" of getting the Prince devirginized. Also, the book's studies take him back in time to learn about his ancestors which is where most of the sexual action takes place.

While the plot doesn't sound amazing, I promise, it is. It's the universe that makes it so great. The friends the Prince makes/has, the betrayals, the slight politics behind it all, and following the Prince from an immature little boy to where he matures throughout the book to act more like a man. The sex is hot and usually includes two (or more) characters which is always a treat. One of my favorite scenes? The "ceremony" of their sex holiday is a holiday where the Gods personify two people and the two people have sex in public while others stand in a circle and watch - and it's considered a blessing to be in the circle. From there, everyone goes off in their own ways to "bliss" others. It's just an amazing ideal. Along with that, there's magic curses that cause uncontrollable sexual desires - it's just all-around an amazing story.

Would I recommend it? Yes, Yes, YES! The ebook costs less than a cup of coffee - this book (which took me over 7 hours to read, so it's easily worth the time) is well-written, captivating, light on the sex, but amazingly heavy on a gorgeous, sexual atmosphere, and just downright perfect. I'm dying for the next book. Dying. If you pick any book to introduce you to the Kindle (or erotic literature), make it this one. Just download the Sample and see if you get hooked. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

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## **Purr More says**

Temmin is Prince of Tremont and Heir to the throne. He has grown up with his mother, the Queen, far from the King's residence in a sheltered environment. Now that he is turning eighteen, he must return to court and start his training to one day become the next King.

Once there, he meets Issak and Allis Obby, the Embodiments of the God Nerr and Goddess Neya of the Lover's Temple. He is infatuated with them and wants to become a Supplicant to the Lover's Temple. Not so much out of piety but because he wants Issak and Allis. This plan is not popular with the King due to the prophecy that says if this were to happen, prosperity would come to the people. Sounds good, eh? Well, not when the King believes that prosperity for commoners means downfall for the royal line. Should Temmin follow his desire or his duty?

While Temmin struggles with his choices, he has to adjust to his new, more formal life at The Keep, dodge assassins, avoid the annoying prat, Lord Fennows, who has come to live at The Keep, deal with the servants' love lives, and escape the machinations of the King to keep him out of the Lovers Temple. He gets an unexpected ally in Teacher, the immortal advisor and tutor to all the Kings of Tremont. Teacher shows him the Intimate History of the Greater Kingdom. This is a story within the story that has parallels to Temmin's experiences.

Temmin starts out a bit whiny and spoiled, but you see him grow through his experiences and the choices he has to make. Though he could act a little naive at times, he also showed a tendency toward compassion, protectiveness, and loyalty. He loves his sisters and is protective of them even though they do annoy him at times. He also shows kindness to the servants. These qualities made Temmin a very likable character to me. He seemed to be good at heart and wanted to do the right thing. There are a number of interesting secondary characters too.

There is magic in this world, but it has been diminished. The magic that was once wielded by the King and his line is now mostly in the hands of Teacher. The reason for this was explained briefly, but I would like to have learned a little more about how this occurred. When Teacher shows Temmin the Intimate History of the Greater Kingdom (and I do mean show...falling into a book takes on a more literal meaning with Teacher) we see the magic of the past. This story unfolds slowly throughout the book.

The ending seemed a bit abrupt to me. I turned the page and was surprised that it had ended. There are definitely open story lines to be continued, so don't expect everything to be neatly tied up at the end. I don't know how many books are planned for this series but I get the sense that it will be a fairly long saga. There was at least one story thread that seemed to disappear -- the assassins and their attempts to kill Temmin -- that I suspect will come back into play in upcoming books.

Miranda has created an interesting world that is not bogged down in excessive world-building details. There are enough similarities to our own world to make a connection, but also enough differences to give you that "we're not in Kansas anymore" feeling. I've noticed this book is tagged as steampunk, but other than it taking place in a pre-industrial age and a steam engine being one of the primary modes of travel, I don't really see anything steampunk about this story. This world is also polytheistic; there are several gods and goddesses that people can choose to worship. Each one has its own Temple, with the Lover's Temple being the one of choice for Temmin. You can probably guess what goes on in this Temple.

This book is often compared to Jacqueline Carey's Kushiel series. I haven't read that series so I can't say for sure, but I understand the gist of it and I think it may be a good comparison. Like Carey's books, there is a significant erotic element to this story. Lovers and Beloveds is not a romance and you won't get an HEA. I would consider it more an alternate world fantasy with strong erotic elements. I don't feel the sex is gratuitous. It supports the story rather than the other way around. However, some of the erotic elements may be uncomfortable for some readers. Be prepared for dubious consent/rape, menage, anal, m/m, light bdsm and elements of incest.

The beginning of the book was a wee bit slow for me but it didn't take long to pick up. I thought the narrative and dialogue flowed well. It was also edited well, which made it a delightfully smooth read. This book was crowd funded, which means enough people enjoyed the initial drafts and believed in the author's ability to deliver a good story that they were willing to donate money so the author could get it professionally polished with editing and cover art. If you are inclined to read a fantasy saga with a strong erotic theme, I would recommend giving this book a try. I look forward to Temmin's continuing saga.

### **M.K. Hobson says**

LOVERS AND BELOVEDS is one of my favorite recent reads. Vivid characters, lyrical prose, crisp narrative, a beautifully detailed and richly ornamented world ... I can't wait for the next one!

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### **Grace Krispy says**

Temmin has grown up sheltered from the world, living a blissful life in the idyllic countryside at Whithorse Estates with his mother and his faithful servant. But all good things must come to an end; Tremmin is heir to the Tremontine throne, and must move to the Keep to learn his father's ways and prepare himself for his inevitable future. It is at the Keep where Temmin begins to question who he is and who he will become. Is he a ruthless ruler, like his father, who will stop at nothing to get what -and who- he wants? Or is he a caring man who will make thoughtful choices and begin to harness some of the long-forgotten magic of the kingdom? Helping him on his journey of self- discovery is Teacher, a mentor to the royal family who has hundreds of years of experience under his belt, and has long since given up on any heir displaying magical ability. Slowly, Temmin finds himself pulled in two directions. He must decide whether to follow his father's footsteps and become the man his father expects, or if he should let himself be drawn into the seductive ways of the temple of enlightenment. He's discovering that his future truly isn't preordained, and that he alone is responsible for his choices.

Beautifully written and edited, MeiLin Miranda has created a rich fantasy world where magic still exists for the rare few, and sex is a cherished and godly endeavor. Although I do enjoy many types of fantasy, I have to admit I'm not a huge fan of fantasy with heavy erotic content, as a rule. That being said, the details and the flow of this story were superb. With fluid writing and nicely-developed characters, the story shines through. Sex becomes an integral part of the conflict of the story; the struggle of power- longing and restraint, duty and desire.

The author cleverly uses a legend from the Tremont family history to mirror Temmin's own sexual awakening. Teacher uses this story in pieces as part of the teaching process, and the author uses this story to mirror Tremmin's own emotions, and help move his journey along. Vividly drawn details show this fantasy world to be a land on the verge of exciting, and unalterable, change. The relationships between the characters are complex and intricately woven, and they pull you right along with Temmin.

If you are a fan of well-written fantasy stories with a strong sexual element, then this book comes strongly recommended. Some may find the erotic details a little too much, but the fluid and intriguing story makes it worth the read.

4.5 /5 stars @ MotherLode blog

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### **Crazyredhead17 says**

This is an awesome story set in a fascinatingly different but very real feeling world. I can't wait for the next

book to come out!

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## **Myth says**

At the moment I don't really know how to respond to this book, since I sampled it. The sample on Nook was 200 pages and through all those pages I didn't feel pulled into the world. The writing was inconsistent and often times not that great, which bothered me far more than I thought it would. I've learned if I'm going to try to read indie books I'm going to have to lower my standards a bit.

The premise of this book is still interesting to me, but I felt like it dragged on and continually picked up other directions to throw into the plot. After the 200 page sample I pretty much knew where it was going and it was kind of boring. I was hoping it would be more erotic after so many pages.

The characters weren't terrible. I liked the Obbys, but Temmin seemed kind of underdeveloped. He's naive and innocent, which apparently shocks everyone, but it doesn't seem like there's much more to him. The other characters seem kind of "meh" as well. There's some interesting, creative parts, but not enough to keep me interested.

Everything about the book seemed like it needed more time to be developed, edited and shortened. I like Shakespeare's quote, "Brevity is the soul of wit." I think that's a standard to live up to. A story told in six words can have more impact than a story in 400 pages; it depends on what the story *needs*.

My interest in this book came from people saying how it was so great the fans pushed for it to be finished and supported it. All I read about it made it sound like something I'd like to read. I don't know if it gets incredibly better in the second half of the book, but for the time being I'm putting on the back shelf. I'm pretty sure I could at least finish it if I bought it. It's not that I have no interest or dislike it, it's just that I want to read something else for the time being.

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## **Kara-karina says**

Let me rave and rave and rave about this book... It's 4am and I just finished reading. It's an amazing and rich and wonderful story, so vivid that I practically could see it in front of my eyes. It's a story of coming of age and personal development, of love and duty and fairy-tales and understanding what you truly want. It touched me, and I can not wait to read what's next. I hope Meilin Miranda will be noticed and contracted for many more books to come.

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## **Larry says**

As a disclaimer, I read Lovers and Beloveds because I know the author through a different context. I've also recently read the first two "Fifty Shades" novels. I won't repeat what other reviewers have said about the story line. Instead, I will focus on what this is: A coming of age story set in a mildly fantasy mythos that would be targeted to teens, except that most teens probably won't be allowed to read it due to the explicit (and excellent) sex scenes. I say mildly fantasy because it deviates from our own reality in only small ways. People are people, and act like people. They have desires and emotions that we will recognize, and act in

ways that we can understand. The fact that there's a little magic in the story doesn't detract from it.

The sex is far from gratuitous; it is central to the story as Prince Temmin is 18, and his mind is an 18 year-olds. While the same story could be told without the explicitness, it would be weaker overall.

The contrast with Fifty Shades of Grey and its sequels is striking. Lovers and Beloveds is a gripping story with well developed and understandable characters. The Fifty Shades books are excellent pornography, but the characters are not as believable as the fantasy characters in MeiLin Miranda's works. Appreciate the irony.

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