



The Royal Diaries: Victoria, May Blossom of Britannia, England 1829

By Anna Kirwan

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Being a princess is not all glittery parties and lavish holidays by the sea. Well, actually, it is, but it's not all fun. Young Princess Victoria is constantly surrounded by family and advisors, allowing her no privacy and very few opportunities to express herself until she purloins an old ledger book from one of Kensington Palace's stables. She promptly begins recording her secrets, daily trials, and naughty witticisms (her uncle, King George IV, has big, plump hands, "the size of a plucked quail.") in this very incongruous journal. The biggest secret of all, however, is one that is kept from our heroine. It is not until well into her two-year-long diary that Victoria pieces together her family tree to discover that she is next in line to the throne. This intriguing installment of the Royal Diaries series will inspire many readers to delve deeper into Queen Victoria's life as the longest reigning queen of England. Author Anna Kirwan's fictionalized account is entertaining and enlightening, packed with facts about royal customs in the early 19th century. Historical notes, a family tree, and photos provide more factual information for the curious reader. (Ages 9 to 12) -- *Emilie Coulter*

From School Library Journal

Gr 4-7-A charming portrayal of three years in the childhood of Queen Victoria. The nine-year-old begins by confessing that she stole a livestock ledger from the stable in order to have a journal in which to write her private thoughts. She fills the pages with details of life in Kensington Palace, from the menu at breakfast, her daily lessons and tutoring sessions to a ball given by her uncle the King, a vacation by the sea, and the negative influence of Captain Conroy, one of her mother's advisers. Throughout, the princess exhibits a shrewd awareness of palace life and a growing sense of the larger role she is being prepared for and must shortly assume. An epilogue reveals that Victoria became Queen just after her 18th birthday. While at first the young princess's voice appears a bit mature, as readers learn more about her demanding education and extraordinary upbringing, she becomes more plausible. A historical note, photographs, a family tree, and a glossary of characters round out the novel. Fans of the series will be delighted.

Kristen Oravec, Cuyahoga County Public Library, Strongsville, OH

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Review

Nine-year-old Princess Victoria steals a discarded Herd Record from the family stable and uses it to record her secret thoughts. Her act is a rebellion against her undemonstrative mother and the abusive Captain Conroy, who police her communications. Victoria's description of pivotal events reflects her love of family, her realization that she will rule England, and a growing acceptance that royal families, especially hers, must put aside private preferences as they serve the world as well as the nation. She tells of her disgust with nine-year-old Prince George and her powerlessness over the disturbing relationship between her mother and Captain Conroy. Victoria realizes the important place she holds with the king and the necessity of not appearing at the coronation when her controversial Uncle Billy rather than she succeeds him. She delights in playing with dolls and dressing up, dancing, and painting. Victoria also enjoys Shakespeare and excels on demanding examinations that include scripture, language, literature, and history. The epilogue and historical note explain how this fictional record anticipates the real events of Victoria's life and time, including the

personal journal she began at thirteen with the stipulation to her family that the most private information be deleted after her death. The pictures, captions, and cover portrait depict a more mature Victoria. Readers who have enjoyed other books in the Royal Diaries series, however, might be disappointed when they discover that this book concerns mostly her tenth year. Looking past the writer's age, they can glimpse demanding and tumultuous events that helped shape Victoria's rule.

--Voice of Youth Advocates, Feb. 2002

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Alan Coleman:

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Robert Knight:

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