



Princess Ben

By Catherine Gilbert Murdock

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Benevolence is not your typical princess and Princess Ben is certainly not your typical fairy tale. With her parents lost to unknown assassins, Princess Ben ends up under the thumb of the conniving Queen Sophia, who is intent on marrying her off to the first available “specimen of imbecilic manhood.” Starved and miserable, locked in the castle’s highest tower, Ben stumbles upon a mysterious enchanted room. So begins her secret education in the magical arts: mastering an obstinate flying broomstick, furtively emptying the castle pantries, setting her hair on fire . . . But Ben’s private adventures are soon overwhelmed by a mortal threat facing the castle and indeed the entire country. Can Princess Ben save her kingdom from annihilation and herself from permanent enslavement?

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Starred Review. Grade 6–10— After 15-year-old Princess Benevolence's parents and her uncle, the king, are presumed killed by agents of neighboring, much-larger Drachensbett, she moves to the palace to live with her widowed aunt, Sophia, now the queen regent, to be groomed as heir to the throne. When Ben discovers magic within the walls of her castle home, she finds a means for asserting her independence and escaping her aunt's control. After a series of adventures and hardships away from the castle, including time spent as a prisoner and drudge in a Drachensbett army camp, Ben ultimately returns to the castle to accept her royal duties. Since her previous behavior has led to questions about her suitability for the throne, she must prove herself to her friends and enemies, using her magic and her wits to find her own adult role. At first, Ben is somewhat spoiled and childish, but the loss of her parents forces her to grow and mature. The first-person narrative is presented as the writing of a much-older Ben, looking back at her life, which allows for both immediacy and frequent humorous comments. The formal tone contrasts with Ben's droll remarks about her many misfortunes. The magic is a significant tool, but her intellect and decisions for how to use her powers are more important than her limited repertoire of spells. Murdock's first venture into fantasy offers a fairy tale with several twists and surprises, and readers will be drawn into the world and moods that she creates.—*Beth L. Meister, Pleasant View Elementary School, Franklin, WI*

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review In this new offering, the author of *Dairy Queen* (2006) and *The Off-Season* (2007) shifts from a contemporary Wisconsin setting to a magical, snowbound kingdom. Once again, though, Murdock's protagonist is a winning, iconoclastic teen female. Princess Benevolence's life is upended during a single afternoon's tragedy: while visiting an ancestor's grave, her uncle and her mother are killed, and her father disappears. Ben, now the kingdom's heir, begins grueling lessons with her aunt Sophia, learning "myriad responsibilities and arts of royalty." Just as her tutelage becomes unbearable, she discovers a hidden wizard's room in the castle and begins teaching herself, using the enchanted spell books she finds there. Then tense negotiations to marry Ben to the sullen heir of a neighboring kingdom commence. Gathering her newfound magical knowledge, the princess flees the castle only to find grave dangers outside its walls. In delicious language that is both elevated and earthy, Murdock spins a rip-roaring yarn that borrows fairy-tale conventions (particularly from "Sleeping Beauty") and reverses them to suit her strong, resourceful heroine. The wild adventure, intricately imagined setting, memorable characters, and romance will charm readers, especially fans of Gail Carson Levine's *Fairest* (2006). Grades 8-11. --Gillian Engberg

Review

Wichita Eagle, Great Gift Recommendations 2008

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Maria Gomez:

This book untitled Princess Ben to be one of several books that will best seller in this year, honestly, that is

because when you read this publication you can get a lot of benefit upon it. You will easily to buy this specific book in the book retail outlet or you can order it by way of online. The publisher of the book sells the e-book too. It makes you quickly to read this book, since you can read this book in your Touch screen phone. So there is no reason to you personally to past this book from your list.

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