

The Majesties

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Gwendolyn and Estella are tycoon sisters from a huge wealthy Chinese-Indonesian family. But one night, Gwendolyn finds herself in the hospital, conscious but stuck in a coma, after the nasty effects of a fatal poisoning of her entire family by the hands of none other than Estella herself. As the sole survivor of the 300 party guests poisoned at her grandfather's lavish birthday celebration, Gwendolyn looks back and relives her old memories leading up to the tragic murder, in order to figure out how everything went terribly wrong.

I would recommend this novel for readers age 15-20s. The novel contains some mature suggestive content, as well as domestic abuse and murder. Additionally, I feel like the content, writing style and plot of the novel might not be very interesting for younger readers, because of the mostly formal, business-y language.

I was initially very intrigued by the plotline and I was dying to know why Estella wanted to murder her whole family. But in the early chapters (with an exception of the first chapter), I felt like the plot lost its initial momentum. I wasn't very hooked on to the flashbacks and memories that Gwendolyn had during her coma. To be honest, they didn't really support the buildup very well because I wasn't sure how some of her initial memories or events were relevant at all to the plotline. Much of the events and issues seemed to just be superficial and boring "first world problems". As characterization goes, Gwendolyn and Estella didn't seem to be very interesting or intriguing characters. A lot of their interactions consisted about business, expensive shopping items, and family drama or gossip. Overall, there wasn't anything extremely fascinating or charming about their personalities.

As the story delved deeper into the family secrets, you could definitely see more blatant flaws in much of the family members, which was good plot and character development. It gave me an idea of how Estella could have had the motive to turn against her family, but I still wasn't completely convinced that the evil subplots were a strong enough reason to pull off such a big murder. I felt like the build-up was a little disappointing because some of these events could have been further developed to create greater suspense. When I started reading this, I was looking for a deeper look into deep-rooted, complicated family relationships, but I felt like the execution of the story didn't fully give me this kind of effect.

However, I felt like the writing style was nuanced and interesting throughout the novel. The author's word choice was a bit more formal and advanced, but I feel like that was supposed to add to Gwendolyn's high-status flair. Also, despite the fact that I found some points of the novel a little lacking and disappointing, I felt like the ending was pretty satisfying, and the author did a good job of wrapping up the story.

Recommended Titles:

- Crazy Rich Asians by Kevin Kwan
- Black Sunday by Tola Rotimi Abraham
- These Ghosts Are Family by Maisy Card
- Little Gods by Meng Jia
- China Rich Girlfriend by Kevin Kwan