

Title: Cinderella is Dead

Author: Kalynn Bayron

Reviewed by: Ria Chhabra, 13

Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity

www.bethestaryouare.org

Cinderella is Dead was an interesting, captivating, fantasy novel by Kalynn Bayron! Cinderella is long gone, but her legacy continues even 200 years after she met her beloved Prince Charming. Sophia lives in Mersailles, within a kingdom where Cinderella's story of love and challenges shape the law. In this patriarch society, women are ruled by their husbands and fathers, with no freedom or expression. Now in memory of the moment Cinderella found her prince, all girls at the age of 16 must attend a ball where the men of the kingdom will select a bride. But Sophia has never wanted a husband so she defies the law and flees the palace with no plan for her future. And then she meets someone special...Constance, a hidden descendant of one of Cinderella's step sisters. Together the two plan to destroy their king and bring safety and freedom to all the women of their nation. But as they embark on their dangerous journey, they soon discover that the famous, revered tale of Cinderella is far from the truth.

My favourite aspect of this novel was its empowering, unique main character. As a black, lesbian woman, Sophia broke through heavy barriers of discrimination in her hometown to fight for women's freedom. Throughout the book, she demonstrated her courage, determination and selflessness in countless dangerous situations. Whether it was wielding a dagger against a deadly creature or running through a seemingly endless forest, Sophia displayed her perseverance and willingness to risk her life for her purpose and fight. Unfortunately, there were minimal explanations or memories of her younger years in Mersailles that could have really enhanced her character. In addition, throughout her journey she had very few flaws and made minimal mistakes, creating an unrealistic character that was a bit challenging to relate to.

I loved how Cinderella is Dead had a very refreshing, interesting twist on the traditional Cinderella story. It took place in a captivating, dystopian setting where Cinderella's life influences the current discriminative events and oppressive laws in the kingdom. From fairy godmother potion stores to the Annual Ball, Cinderella's tale built the culture of Mersailles. Although there was some adventure and engaging experiences weaved through the storyline, I would have loved to see a bit more action in the middle section of the book. Additionally, there were numerous side characters that were not well developed and barely seen during the story apart from the very beginning and end. I might recommend Cinderella is Dead for those 11+ who are looking for a simple, fairy-tale inspired read.

Recommended Titles:

Girl, Serpent, Thorn, Melissa Bashardoust

A Song Below Water, Bethany C. Morrow

House of Salt and Sorrows, Erin A. Craig

A Curse So Dark and Lonely, Brigid Kemmerer