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TITLE INFORMATION

PAPER PRINCESS

Erin Watt

EverAfter Platinum (370 pp.)

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BOOK REVIEW

An orphan enters a world of privilege and decadence after she's taken in by a wealthy family in this debut YA romance.

Seventeen-year-old Ella Harper is determined to overcome a difficult childhood. Raised by a single mother, she's never met her father; however, she has a few clues as to his identity: his name is Steve and her mother met him while he was in the U.S. Navy. After her mother's death, Ella moves to a small town in Tennessee, enrolls in school, and takes a job as a stripper. One day, a man named Callum Royal comes to her school and tells her that Steve died and he's her new guardian. They served together in the Navy, he says, before they built a successful aviation company. He's helping to settle Steve's estate and support the daughter whom Steve never located. Wary of his motives but hoping to learn more about her father, Ella accompanies Callum to his estate, where she meets his five sons, Gideon, Reed, Easton, and twins Sawyer and Sebastian. Their mother died under questionable circumstances and they have a strained relationship with Callum. They're also openly hostile toward Ella, particularly Reed. Ella soon discovers dark undercurrents in the family while also discovering her attraction to the sullen Reed. They fall in love but secrets from the past soon threaten their relationship. Watt's novel moves along at a brisk, enjoyable pace, and it's built on an intriguing premise with well-developed characters. She doesn't overplay her hand by revealing too much too soon; instead, small details, such as a mysterious bruise on Reed's face, lead to shocking revelations later in the story. Ella is a dynamic, sympathetic protagonist who appreciates Callum's generosity while trying to remain grounded. Although her relationship with Reed begins on an antagonistic note, it gradually evolves into one that crackles with passion. However, some of their scenes together are more erotic than many written for adult novels, so they might be more appropriate for an older YA or adult audience.

A compulsively readable YA novel that seems like an adult romance, which may appeal to older teenagers looking for something in the vein of *Gossip Girl*.

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