

Born Andromeda

K. M. Watts

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An action-packed space opera that's not afraid of guts, glory, or going against the grain, K. M. Watts's *Born Andromeda* showcases a new type of princess whose success hinges on being true to herself.

Andromeda of Celestine isn't your typical princess. Disabled, neurodivergent, and obsessed with mechanics, Andy hides engines in her bedroom and prefers plain clothes to pageantry. Despite this, she's accepted that her life will always be defined by her duties, no matter how much her spirit may suffer. At seventeen, she learns those duties include marrying in just a few days. On her journey to Earth, fate interrupts in the form of a pirate looting gone wrong, but the kidnapping that ensues offers her the first chance to figure out what she wants for herself.

Stuck aboard the pirates' ship, Andy faces the dissonance between herself and other people's plans. Her lurches toward self-actualization are punctuated in equal measure by teenage bravado and denial as Andy learns not only how naïve she's been, but how much fight is in her to be something bigger and more complex than what her role as princess offers.

Relationships comprise a major theme of the novel. The intricacies of family—biological, chosen, and found—help Andy to understand her own wants and needs. She sparks romances with people of multiple genders and forms relationships on her own terms. Whether it's the crew or the pirate captain himself, the pirates offer her comfort, challenges, and companionship, allowing Andy to contend with her assumptions for the first time.

The novel's cliffhanger ending tees up Andromeda's next adventure; it's a satisfying resolution to the book's core action. Brash and action-packed, *Born Andromeda* marks a bold beginning for this young adult science fiction series.

LETITIA MONTGOMERY-RODGERS (November / December 2022)

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