



The Brass Queen

Elizabeth Chatsworth

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Elizabeth Chatsworth's steampunk romance *The Brass Queen* is as vibrant as an electrified carousel.

Constance Haltwhistle can handle knife-wielding assassins, airship turret guns, mechanical warhorses, and gentleman scientists, but when it comes to landing a husband, she's a puddle of steampunk jelly. She's gregarious, impetuous, and stubborn, and her blunt attitude drives this hearty, romantic fantasy forward at a breakneck pace. When Constance is drawn into an international conspiracy that centers on a stolen invisibility serum, she embarks on a madcap mission to save civilization as she knows it.

Laden with futuristic and bombastic details—including a makeshift chain mail chemise and “twelve-foot high bronze-and-brass exo-suits with polka-dot party hats”—Constance's world is irresistible. It's populated by memorable characters, including J. F. Trusdale, a handsome but inept cowboy spy from Kansas, and Maya Chauhan, a doctor who appears in “a voluminous gold sari that could double as a sail in the event of high winds.” Attention is devoted to detailing captivating landscapes and settings, while frequent visual gags, as of an overblown, Herculean portrait of a spoiled prince, result in humor. The multilayered plot transitions between characters' perspectives with ease, their distinct voices helping to reveal their deepest desires, motives, and thoughts.

With a satisfying bite, this steampunk venture includes an insightful twist on the British Empire, making frequent nods to Queen Victoria's bloodthirstiness and the era's inequitable treatment of women. Best of all, Constance stays center stage: a feisty, lovable heroine who is capable of rescuing herself, thank you very much.

With zingy dialogue and acts of derring-do, *The Brass Queen* is an ebullient romance that's complete with unicorn polo, telepathic communication, and extradimensional artifacts.

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