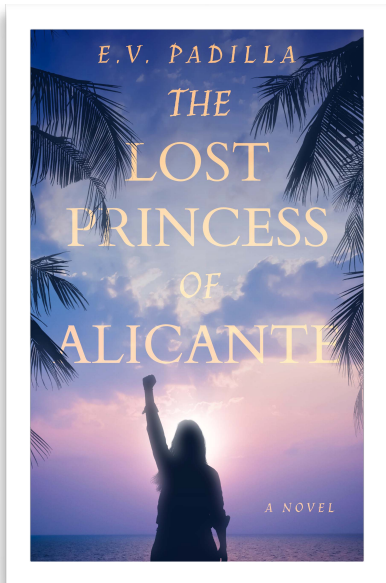




INDEPENDENT BOOK REVIEW

A CELEBRATION OF SMALL PRESS AND SELF-PUBLISHED BOOKS



The Lost Princess of Alicante

By E.V. Padilla

Genre: General Fiction / Royalty

Reviewed by Jadidsa Perez

A story of lost orphan royalty in the beautiful Caribbean islands

Inés is pursuing her graduate degree in history while dreaming of a paradisiacal world, despite knowing for sure that her life is just going to continue in monotonicity. But then her aunt's growing illness invites back figures from Inés's history.

Her cousin Don Román swoops in to inform her of her true self: a princess to the San Lázaro throne.

Her name is also revealed to be Magdalena. It turns out her true identity had been hidden for her safety.

Inés is taken to a neighboring country, Betania, due to the political tensions that have been steaming in San Lázaro, fogging the citizens and leadership alike. She meets the Betania leader, Alejandro, and is soon torn between the siren song of her native country and Alejandro's affection.

There are so many things that make this book enjoyable. The setting, which is two fictional Caribbean islands, is described so well. There is no confusion as to which country is which, despite sharing cultural similarities. As a Caribbean island native myself, I appreciated the details: the colorful houses, the honorifics. One particular image in the book, *"the cool emerald world"* of the trees *"mottled with pale green patches of sunlight,"* vividly paints a picture in my mind.

I loved Magdalena's character arc as well. She has moments of complete triumph in unexpected situations, and her dedication to preservation—from tangible history to her newfound connections—is admirable and likable as a trait. Even in relatively low moments, she keeps an air of decorum and finds purpose in assisting her country in

any way she can. This book is great for readers who enjoy a complex female protagonist.

The romance aspect of this novel does dim Magdalena a bit though. The romance feels more like an afterthought surprise than a planned move. At no point do I really feel Magdalena's romantic love toward anyone; rather, her biggest love seems to be her people. In the initial parts of the book, Magdalena has a thesis ready and has a vicarious interest in books. Then it feels a bit like she's thrown into romantic situations.

For all else, *The Lost Princess of Alicante* is a fantastic read. I was pulled in quickly and regularly blanketed with feelings of nostalgia and familial love. It has a lot of action but is cooled off by heartwarming dialogue between people who are learning to heal from the past. Any reader looking for an adventurous read would be glad to fall into the story of Princess Magdalena.