

Valentine Princess: A Princess Diaries Book Study Guide

Valentine Princess: A Princess Diaries Book by Meg Cabot

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Plot Summary

Valentine Princess by Meg Cabot is the story of how Princess Amelia, dealt with Valentine's Day on the first February 14th on which she had a serious boyfriend. Princess Amelia is also known as Mia Thermopolis. As the story unfolds, Mia is on her way in a private jet to her family's kingdom in Genovia. She is writing a screenplay based on true life events - her own. She is reminded of her first Valentine's Day with her boyfriend, Michael Moscovitz. The story flashes back to that time, some eighteen months before.

The date is February 11th and Valentine's Day will soon be occurring. Mia has no idea what she should do for Valentine's Day. Should she get Michael a card or a gift? Will he get her something? It doesn't help that he hasn't said a word about the day. Mia decides to try to do some not-so-subtle probing to see if she can find out where Michael stands on the day for lovers. In the limo on the way to school, Mia asks Lilly, who is Michael's sister, what plans she has with Boris, her boyfriend, for Valentine's Day. Mia finds that asking Lilly was a huge mistake. Lilly hates the day. It's commercialized and pressures people to buy cards and gifts.

Michael is not much better. He agrees with his sister that the date is over-hyped and over-commercialized. He also mentions that the day was originally a Roman celebration of Juno. Tradition called for boys and girls to draw names. The resultant pairs were linked to each other for the next year. The ceremony actually took place on February 15th and was known as Lupercalia Day.

Since Mia gets nowhere with Michael and Lilly, she asks her friend Tina for her opinion. Tina has just been dumped by her boyfriend and warns Mia to make the most of Valentine's Day with Michael so that he knows she really cares. Another friend has plans to go to a romantic restaurant to celebrate the day. Her mother, Helen, is pregnant by her live-in boyfriend who is also Mia's algebra teacher, Mr. Gianini. Helen's feet are swollen so they will order in but will celebrate the day together. Mia is upset - even her mother has a Valentine!

All the while Mia is struggling with what to do about Valentine's Day, she is dealing with her grandmother. She has to go to her grandmother's suite at the Plaza each night after school for princess lessons. One night an astrologer, Dr. Steve, is there and predicts that Mia will wind up with a Leo. That is bad news for Mia because Michael is a Capricorn. Dr. Steve predicts that Grandmère is at risk of bodily injury and will soon have a marriage proposal.

Mia asks Mr. Gianini how she could persuade Michael to be more amenable to celebrating Valentine's Day. He tells her the day is not important. How she and Michael feel about each other is what counts. Helen tells her daughter something similar. She tells her that she should give Michael a card if she wants to and should not worry about whether he gives her something or not. That is what true love is all about—unconditional.



Grandmère breaks her toe while trying to escape from Dr. Steve who professes his love for her and proposes to her. This frightens Mia because his predictions about Grandmère have come true. Would his prediction that she would wind up with a Leo boy also come true?!

In the end, Mia makes a homemade Valentine for Michael which he loves. He doesn't give her a card but he writes a song and appears on her balcony that evening and sings the song while he accompanies himself on the guitar. Since Michael hadn't made plans with Mia, she had accepted an invitation to attend a movie marathon at Tina's house. Mia and Michael plan to have their romantic dinner the next night on Lupercalia Day.

Flash forward to June 9, when Mia learns that every person has his or her own way of expressing love. Looking back, she would have never imagined that Michael would write her a song but she couldn't have been more pleased. One can't say too much for the nice surprises in life!



June 5, 7 pm, private jet to Genovia

June 5, 7 pm, private jet to Genovia Summary

Mia, or Princess Amelia as she is officially known, is writing a screenplay entitled, "ME, A PRINCESS???? YEAH, RIGHT." Scene 44 opens on Mia Thermopolis' messy room that looks out over the inner courtyard where Mia and her cat are when her mother, Helen Thermopolis, enters to tell Mia that the limo is waiting for them. But Mia can't find her journal, she tells her mother. She can not go to Genovia for the summer without it. Helen finds a composition book but it isn't the one Mia is looking for. The one she finds is from her freshman year, a full year and a half before. But it reminds her of her first Valentine's Day with Michael.

June 5, 7 pm, private jet to Genovia Analysis

The story begins with a flashback to Mia's first Valentine's Day with her boyfriend. Mia is on her way to Genovia and is writing a screenplay indicating that she is a budding writer. An old composition book that her mother uncovers reminds Mia about her first Valentine's Day with Michael which sparks the flashback episode.



February 11

February 11 Summary

Tuesday, February 11, 6 pm

After school, Mia has "princess" lessons with Grandmère . When she walks into her grandmother's quarters, a man is sitting there whom she does not know. When her grandmother enters the room she introduces the man as Dr. Steve, her astrologer. Her grandmother is impressed that Steve knows that Mia is Princess Amelia without her telling him. But since Amelia's picture is all over every teen magazine each month, Mia does not consider it to be a great feat.

Grandmère has given Dr. Steve Mia's birth date and time the day before. She is anxious to hear what he has learned about her granddaughter's future. But Mia isn't interested in such a prediction. Grandmère explains that Dr. Steve doesn't tell fortunes, he merely examines the position of the planets and stars at the time of one's birth. He then interprets the meaning associated with that positioning which results in an "educated prediction" about one's future life. To prove her point, Grandmère tells Mia that Steve has warned her that she herself is in great danger of bodily injury. He has also predicted that she will be pursued by a love interest.

Grandmère fears that this future love interest could be Lord Crenshaw who has been persistent about escorting her to the contessa's charity ball for the American Heart Association on Valentine's Day. The only prediction about her future that Mia wants to hear is that she will wind up with her boyfriend, Michael Moscovitz.

Mia is upset when Dr. Steve tells her she'll wind up with a Leo. That can't be because Michael is a Capricorn. Grandmère tells Mia that she isn't destined to wind up with Michael. Dr. Steve's horrible prediction convinces Mia that he is a charlatan, a Rasputin! Mia doesn't trust the situation because Grandmère detests Michael because he isn't a royal. Grandmère is probably paying this guy off to tell her that Michael is not in her future.

Tuesday, February 11, 10 pm

Mia shares her annoyance at her grandmother and the astrologist with her friend Tina Hakim Baba by IM messaging. She thinks Tina will think the story is funny and Tina needs cheering up because she has no one for Valentine's Day. But Tina disappoints her by pointing out that Dr. Steve is the premier astrologist in America. But Mia pushes back and points out that how could she trust Dr. Steve who says that a love interest is in Grandmère's future.

Tina warns Mia not to give Michael any reason to dump her like she had with Dave. She should have given him a reason to want to be with her. Mia is astonished. is Tina telling her to sleep with Michael?! Tina responds that there are other ways to get a boy to



commit short of that. Tina is surprised to learn that Mia and Michael had no plans for their first Valentine's Day together. Tina tells Mia she should get Michael a gift to celebrate the day. She warns her that she could lose Michael and wind up with a Leo boy like Dr. Steve has predicted.

Just when Mia thinks everything is going so well, Grandmère has to bring in a psychic to ruin her life!

February 11 Analysis

Tuesday, February 11, 6 pm

The story flashes back a year and a half to just a few days prior to Valentine's Day. The author infers that there is a long-standing and on-going conflict between Mia and her grandmother. Her grandmother apparently wants to control Amelia's future and does not want "Princess Amelia" to think of a future with Michael because he's not a royal. The grandmother goes to great lengths to prove this point by involving an astrologist to confirm that her future is one without Michael. Mia shows a fighting spirit by defying her grandmother and sticking to her guns about Michael and rejecting the astrologist's prediction.

Tuesday, February 11th, 10 pm

Instead of getting comfort from her friend, Tina, Mia is more concerned than ever about losing Michael. Tina has just lost a boyfriend so, of course, she's an expert on how to keep one. The pressure is building on Mia over her relationship with Michael. Her grandmother is trying to break them up and Tina is warning her that she's going to lose him.



February 12

February 12 Summary

Wednesday, February 12, Algebra

When Mia gets in the limo with Michael and his sister, Lilly, the next morning she asks Lilly what she and her boyfriend, Boris, are doing for Valentine's Day. Lilly doesn't react well to the questioning and asks Mia if she is on crack. Lilly doesn't like the idea of celebrating a manufactured holiday that results in those without anyone feeling worse than they already do. The girls have a debate about who St. Valentine was. Mia views him as a romantic who risked his life for his love. Lilly focuses on the fact that he was clubbed to death on Valentine's Day.

Michael sees the legend another way. Ancient Romans celebrated the goddess Juno in a rite known as Lupercalia Day which required boys and girls to draw names linking them for the next year. Lupercalia Day took place on February 15th. Later, the celebration was called St. Valentine's Day so that children would emulate the lives of saints. Mia can't believe how the conversation has sidetracked her simple question about what Lilly and her boyfriend are doing for Valentine's Day. Lilly reiterates that she will not be celebrating the pagan event. And she won't do as much as buy Boris a card that would add to the profits of Hallmark.

Once the limo drops the kids off at school, Mia asks Michael if he feels as strongly about St. Valentine's Day as his sister does. He isn't as strong in his protestations although he doesn't like how commercialized the holiday has become. He kisses her goodbye and tells her to have fun in algebra.

Wednesday, February 12, Gifted and Talented

At lunch, Tina urges Mia to turn Michael's negative feeling about Valentine's Day around. She needs to work to make their first Valentine's Day memorable. But Mia doesn't have any money. Tina tells her to make a homemade gift for him - it will mean more. Mia is afraid that she can't make a decent present for him because she isn't very crafty. And, Michael may be disappointed that she is succumbing to the pressure to celebrate the day.

Mia overhears Lana Weinberger talking on the phone about going to a romantic restaurant with her boyfriend on Valentine's Day. That makes Mia feel bad but later when Boris shows her the heart pendant necklace he has gotten for Lilly, she really feels bad. Mia admires Boris for being so romantic but feels sorry for him because Lilly doesn't have a present for him.

Wednesday, February 12, 4 pm, limo on the way home from the Plaza



Mia goes to see Grandmère after school but she tells Mia that she doesn't have time for princess lessons. Dr. Steve is scheduled to be on Larry King that night and she had promised to go to the studio with him for moral support. Mia cautions her grandmother that she might be taking up with Dr. Steve a little too fast. She doesn't really know him. Grandmère responds that Dr. Steve is a genius and shouldn't be questioned and when a genius asks for your help, he can not be turned down.

But Mia is not convinced. She begins to think that maybe he is really a Rasputin and will bring her grandmother down. What if Dr. Steve is a Svengali who hypnotizes her grandmother and makes her his slave?! One good thing - she would never have to have princess lessons again! But she does not want her grandmother to be hurt by this flimflam artist. She decides she needs to call her father and ask him what to do about Dr. Steve. But she will put off calling him until after she has Valentine's Day resolved.

Wednesday, February 12, 10 pm, the loft

Mia asks her mother what she and Mr. Gianini are doing for Valentine's Day. Nothing, Helen tells her. But Mr. Gianini who is in the room sorting out laundry responds that they will be going out to a nice restaurant. Not with her swollen feet Helen tells him. Pregnancy is taking a toll on her mother who coos when Gianini promises that they will order in and celebrate the day together. Mia has to leave the room. Even her mother has a Valentine!

What is wrong with Michael?! Even Mr. Gianini wants to celebrate the day. Mia messages Lilly and asks her why Michael hates Valentine's Day so much. Lilly reiterates what she and Michael said earlier. They don't like the commercialization of the day. Lilly messages that Michael isn't a simple-minded schmo who would buy her a heart-shaped pendant from Kay's. Mia can't believe what she just heard. She wonders what Lilly will say when Boris gives her the heart-shaped necklace. Bottom line, Lilly tells Mia, Michael is not the Valentine's Day type. Maybe Dr. Steve had been right - maybe she is not destined to end up with Michael.

If Michael doesn't participate in St. Valentine's Day, something she believes in, it could threaten their future happiness.

February 12 Analysis

Wednesday, February 12, Algebra

Mia's attempt to drop a hint to Michael about Valentine's Day by asking his sister what she and her boyfriend are doing for the day backfires. Lilly is quite an idealist and considers the day a holiday manufactured by the greeting card industry and one that makes people who are alone feel worse than ever. Mia would have done better by being more direct with Michael, asking him what he wanted to do to celebrate. In the end, Mia's fears are all temporarily abated when Michael kisses her goodbye. However, she has failed in her mission to find out if he has anything planned for the lover's holiday.



Wednesday, February 12, Gifted and Talented

Mia has to sort out how she feels about Valentine's Day. She's getting a lot of conflicting opinions and is uncertain about what she should do to celebrate it with Michael. He's vague about how he feels. Lily hates the day and think it's almost sinful to participate in the commercialized day. Mia feels a bit envious when she hears the plans other friends have for the day. Mia hasn't learned yet to trust her own instincts but perhaps she will eventually learn to do so.

Wednesday, February 12, 4 pm, limo on the way home from the Plaza

If worry about her relationship with Michael and what to do about Valentine's Day isn't enough, Mia has to worry about her grandmother who seems to be falling under Dr. Steve's spell. Even though Mia is almost completely obsessed with Michael, she shows that she truly cares about what happens to her grandmother whom she thinks may be vulnerable to a person who may try to take advantage of her.

Wednesday, February 12, 10 pm, the loft

The final slap in the face - even Mia's pregnant mother has a Valentine. Mia is allowing her concern over one day to overwhelm her to the point that she sees it as pivotal to her continuing a relationship with Michael. She has bought into the hype that the greeting card companies have created. She sees Michael's disinterest in Valentine's Day as perhaps a fatal flaw in his make-up. She is putting way too much emphasis on what is really a superficial and unimportant element of her relationship.



February 13

February 13 Summary

Thursday, February 13, Algebra

Before class, Mia asks Mr. Gianini if she could talk to him. He thinks it is about her algebra homework but she assures him she has finished it. It is really an awkward situation to live with your algebra teacher, she thought to herself. She asks him if he has always believed in Valentine's Day or if it had just started when he met her mother. He confesses that he has never been a proponent of the holiday but now that he is with her mother, the day is just another opportunity to express his love for her. Mia asks him how she can convince Michael of that. He tells her that the holiday isn't important. What is important is how they feel about each other. Still, Mia feels concerned about her future with Michael and the prediction of Dr. Steve.

Thursday, February 13, G&T

Lilly grosses everyone out at lunch by discussing her school project on plastic surgery. Judith Gershner, a friend of Michael's, comes up to the table and tells Michael that the deadline to sign up for the science fair is fifth period. Michael leaves the lunch table to sign up because he doesn't want to miss out on the science fair. Mia had suspected that Judith has a crush on Michael at one time but she has a new boyfriend so perhaps they are just friends. Mia asks Judith what she thinks about Valentine's Day. She thinks it is passe and that everyone should opt out of it. It is a day that makes you feel bad if you don't get a Valentine from your love and if you don't have a love, it makes you feel like a loser. Mia wonders what is wrong with everyone! No one likes Valentine's Day except her.

Thursday, February 13, French

Tina continues to encourage Mia to make the best of Valentine's Day. But Mia is at the point of giving up since Michael and her other friends think it is lame. Tina invites Mia over to her house where she will be holding a movie marathon on Valentine's Day. The movies will include the best Valentine's movies ever which all happen to star Audrey Hepburn: Breakfast at Tiffany's, Funny Face, Sabrina, Charade. and My Fair Lady. Mia told Tina that she might join her movie marathon.

Thursday, February 13, limo on the way home from the Plaza

No one can find Grandmère. Mia thinks for a moment that maybe she has been kidnapped. But she thinks again and realizes that even kidnappers couldn't bear to be around her very long. The secondhand smoke would get them and they would collapse under her criticism of their poor kidnapping techniques. Mia later learns from her maid that Dr. Steve had picked her grandmother up and she had been gone all day. Actually, they have had a busy day. Grandmère and Dr. Steve had appeared on the Today Show



and other talk shows throughout the day. Mia still doesn't trust Dr. Steve. She puts a lot of thought into what to do. She doesn't want her grandmother to be the victim of a swindler but maybe she should just let her crash and burn and learn a lesson the hard way.

Thursday, February 13, the loft

Mia's mother senses that she is upset about Valentine's Day. Helen tells her she should give Michael a card if she wants to but not to expect anything in return. That is what true love is, her mother tells her. Mia begins to think that it is the best advice she has gotten thus far.

February 13 Analysis

Thursday, February 13, Algebra

Mr. Gianini gives Mia some solid advice. The holiday isn't important - what is important is how deeply people feel about each other. Mia is on a tear and can't seem to come down to earth about the day. She probably doesn't want to have to tell her friends that she got nothing for Valentine's Day from Michael. She is showing her immaturity and a bit of self-centeredness in her obsession about February 14th.

Thursday, February 13, G&T

Mia is determined to find someone who likes Valentine's Day but she strikes out again with the brainy Judith Gershner who thinks it's a lame holiday. Mia is not facing the fact that most of the people her age are not in favor of the holiday. She is a romantic and is trying to hold on to the specialness of the day but finds it's hard to do alone. But Mia has a second agenda. It's not just the romance of the day, she doesn't feel confident of Michael's feelings about her and wants to use the day to prove that he does care for her.

Thursday, February 13, French

Tina invites Mia over to her movie marathon on Valentine's Day. Tina, who just broke up with her boyfriend, may be in a kind of misery loves company state of mind. Mia gets advice from too many people. No wonder she's confused.

Thursday, February 13, limo on the way home from the Plaza

Mia continues to struggle with her grandmother's relationship with Dr. Steve. Even though she hates princess lessons with her grandmother, it seems she's kind of missing them. She thinks that maybe her grandmother needs to be taught a lesson so that she's more careful about becoming involved with a phony like Dr. Steve.

Thursday, February 13, the loft



Mother knows best - at least on the question of Valentine's Day. True love, she tells Mia, is giving to someone you love without expecting anything back. Will Mia be mature enough to act on this advice?



February 14

February 14 Summary

Friday, February 14, Algebra

Mia makes a Valentine for Michael but is dragging her heels about giving it to him. Lilly is talking non-stop in the limo and it just isn't the right time to give Michael his card. Her mother makes her heart-shaped pancakes that morning—at least she gets one Valentine. She gives Lars, her bodyguard, a Valentine with an automatic rifle on the front and the message, "I'm gunning for you," inside. Michael tells her he can't come to lunch. Mia doesn't know when she'll be able to give him his Valentine.

Friday, February 14, Health and Safety

Although Mia hates it, Ken Showalter gives her a Valentine - a box of chocolates. And, he gives it to her right in front of Michael. Lilly tells Mia that the competition is good. Her brother needs to know that other boys are interested in her; but Mia isn't interested in anyone but Michael and Ken is just a friend. Lilly points out that apparently Ken thinks of her as more than a friend. At lunch, Tina reminds Mia that Ken is a Leo which really gives her the creeps!

Friday, February 14, G&T

At lunch, Mia overhears Lana on her cell phone. She is upset because her boyfriend, Josh, is in the emergency room and their romantic dinner has been canceled. He has pulled a groin muscle. Mia is sure it's karma. Lana had stolen Josh from her friend Trish. Michael rearranges his schedule so that he can have lunch with Mia after all. It seems he has had a reaction to Ken's Valentine gift to Mia. She gets up the nerve to give her Valentine to Michael. Her mother had been right. Michael loves it! Her Valentine isn't an ordinary one. It is a coupon book. He can "cash in" coupons for neck rubs, for walking his dog, kissing him. He cashes in one of the "kiss" coupons immediately.

Boris is inspired and gifts Lilly with the heart-shaped pendant. She is less than gracious in her reaction which angers and upsets everyone including Michael. She puts poor Boris down by calling the gift a dorky necklace from Kay's. Mia praises the necklace and kicks Lilly under the table. Lilly is worried that the gemstone originates from an African mine where the workers are abused and brutalized by greedy mine owners. Tina explains that the gem is simulated but by that time Boris has slunk off, totally demoralized.

Michael is upset with his sister but Lilly points out that he didn't get Mia a Valentine. But he tells Mia that he loves her everyday. Lilly leaves the table and apparently makes up with Boris. Tina is happy when Mia tells her that she will be joining the movie marathon that night.



Friday, February 14, French

Michael stops Mia in the hall and hands her a "dinner with Mia" coupon, asking her to go to dinner that night. But Mia has to turn him down because she already has plans with Tina. Michael is disappointed but he blames himself for not making plans earlier. They make plans to go to dinner the next night which will be February 15, Lupercalia Day. He kisses her right in the hall for everyone to see. She no longer fears Dr. Steve's prediction.

Friday, February 14, the Plaza

Grandmère is laid up with an injured foot. She won't say exactly what had happened to her but tells Mia to pull up a chair. She wants to instruct her on what to do as a royal trapped in a conversation with an autograph seeker. It occurs to Mia that Dr. Steve's prediction about Grandmère suffering bodily injury has come true. She fears that his other predictions will come true as well.

Grandmère orders Mia to never mention Dr. Steve's name again in her presence. She had sustained her injuries when she was fleeing from his odious advances. He had professed his love for her and predicted that they would be married one day. Grandmère had been appalled. She is a royal and Dr. Steve is but a commoner. She had rejected him but he thought she was trying to play hard to get and then kissed her. During the entire time her grandmother is telling her the story, Mia has to stifle her laughter.

Grandmère had slapped Dr. Steve for his insolence but he had responded with even more passion. She had lit a fire in him! She had called for her bodyguard, Raoul, who ran in to rescue her. But as she escaped from Dr. Steve's arms, she tripped and broke her toe. Mia's Valentine to her grandmother is to get her more Tylenol and her favorite alcoholic drink, a Sidecar.

Friday, February 14, 8 pm, limo on the way to Tina's

When Mia is in her room getting ready to go to Tina's, she hears a rapping on her window. To her utter surprise, it is Michael standing there on the fire escape. Michael had written a song for her. The song is entitled, "Tall Drink of Water." He sings it and accompanies himself on the guitar. It is the best Valentine she has ever gotten!

February 14 Analysis

Friday, February 14, Algebra

Mia seems to be dragging her feet about giving Michael his Valentine. Perhaps she feels embarrassed because he obviously doesn't have a card for her. But the day's not over. Maybe Michael does have something planned. But Mia is in a quandary about when she can give him his card.



Friday, February 14, Health and Safety

Mia gets an unexpected Valentine from a boy she thinks of as just a friend. Perhaps it will make Michael think twice about not giving Mia anything. Is Dr. Steve's prediction starting to come true? Ken is a Leo!

Friday, February 14, G&T

Things turn out better than Mia could have guessed. She does learn that her mother is wiser than she ever imagined. She had been right-on with her prediction that Michael would love to get a Valentine from her and that she shouldn't give it to him expecting anything back. Mia matures through this process and feels the joy of making someone that she cares about happy. She is thrilled when Michael tells his sister that he tells Mia he loves her everyday. What more could Mia ask for on Valentine's Day.

Friday, February 14, French

Mia shows her strength of character and loyalty to a friend by turning down Michael's invitation to dinner. By doing the right thing, her relationship with Michael is strengthened.

Friday, February 14, the Plaza

Mia is panicked when she realizes that two of Dr. Steve's predictions have come true. Grandmere has broken her toe and has received a proposal. The proposal had been from Dr. Steve which had insulted Grandmere and which she had rejected. But Mia is glad to have her eccentric grandmother back and they are both glad to have Dr. Steve out of their lives. It seems that Mia has come to terms with her grandmother and despite her conflicts with her, loves and cares for her.

Friday, February 14, 8 pm, limo on the way to Tina's

Perhaps Mia has learned to be patient and have more confidence in her relationship with Michael. She has also learned that she can't force others into conforming to her ideas on how to express love. Michael expresses his love for Mia in his own special and unique way.



June 5, 9 pm, private jet to Genovia

June 5, 9 pm, private jet to Genovia Summary

Mia continues writing her screenplay. She writes that the characters Mia and Michael have agreed to always celebrate Valentine's Day. But that isn't true. Michael still doesn't like the commercialization associated with it. He prefers to celebrate Happy Lupercalia Day on February 15th.

June 5, 9 pm, private jet to Genovia Analysis

Mia has matured enough to know that if you love someone, you have to let him be himself.



Characters

Princess Amelia

Princess Amelia, also known as Mia Thermopolis, lives and goes to school in America but spends summer in her family's kingdom in Genovia. She is sixteen-years-old and her boyfriend, Michael Moscovitz, is a senior at Albert Einstein High School, the same school that she attends. In this story, Mia is struggling with several things. She has to deal with her difficult grandmother, whom she calls Grandmere, who requires Mia to come to her suite at the Plaza each evening after school for princess lessons. And Mia is very conflicted about how to celebrate Valentine's Day.

Mia is upset when Dr. Steve, an astrologer recruited by Grandmere, tells Mia that she will wind up with a husband who is a Leo. She is upset because Michael is a Capricorn. Mia suspects that Grandmere paid the astrologer off to tell her that because she doesn't want Mia to wind up with Michael who is a commoner.

With Valentine's Day looming, Mia is in a quandary about what to do about the day for lovers. Should she get Michael a card or a gift? What if he doesn't get her something? Mia asks her friends what they think about Valentine's Day. Michael's sister Lilly hates the day. She hates the commercialization and pressure that it puts on people. Michael is not a big proponent himself. He prefers February 15th, Lupercalia Day, a day that was celebrated by ancient Romans. Her friends all have varied opinions and instead of figuring out what she should do she gets more confused.

Finally, her mother tells her to follow her heart and give Michael a card if that's what she wants to do. She follows her mother's advice and Michael is thrilled with the homemade card she makes. She realizes that her life would have been much easier had she just listened to her heart from the very beginning.

Grandmère

Grandmère is Mia's grandmother and is a royal subject of the kingdom of Genovia. She lives in a luxurious suite at the Plaza Hotel. She requires her granddaughter, Mia who is also known as Princess Amelia, to come to her suite every evening after school for princess lessons. Mia cooperates with her grandmother but Grandmère is a demanding and rather annoying person. She smokes like a chimney and her drinks of choice are sidecars. She is critical of everyone and everything and is never reluctant to voice her opinion.

Grandmère does not like the fact that Mia's boyfriend, Michael, is a commoner. Grandmère tries to discourage Mia by bringing in an astrologer, Dr. Steve, who predicts one's future by the stars. He tells Mia that she is destined to wind up with a Leo boy. That is terrible news since Michael is a Capricorn. Mia suspects that Grandmère paid the astrologer to tell her that. But it does worry Mia.



Grandmère runs into problems of her own with Dr. Steve. She accompanies him to the studios for his appearances on the Today Show, Maury and the Larry King Show. He has predicted that Grandmère is at risk for bodily injury and that she would soon be receiving a proposal of marriage. Little does she know that Dr. Steve would be involved in both. He professes his love for her and proposes to her. While she is trying to get away from him, she trips and breaks her toe.

Michael Moscovitz

Michael Moscovitz is Mia's boyfriend. He is a senior at the same high school that Mia attends.

Lilly Moscovitz

Lilly Moscovitz is Michael's younger sister and a friend of Mia's. Lilly is very outspoken and thinks that Valentine's Day is lame and a waste of time.

Tina Hakim Baba

Tina Hakim Baba is Mia's best friend. She has just been dumped by her boyfriend and advises Mia to make Valentine's Day special so that Michael knows she really loves him.

Dr. Steve

Dr. Steve is the premier astrologist in America. Mia's grandmother becomes acquainted with him but he steps over the line when he professes his love for her and proposes to her.

Helen Thermopolis

Helen Thermopolis is Mia's mother. She and her live-in boyfriend, Mr. Gianini, live in a loft apartment with Mia.

Mr. Gianini

Mr. Gianini is Helen Thermopolis' live-in lover. He is also Mia's algebra teacher.

Boris

Boris is Lilly's boyfriend. He gets Lilly a red heart-shaped pendant necklace for Valentine's Day which Lilly ridicules.

Ken Showalter

Ken Showalter is a friend of Mia's. But he wants to be more than a friend. He gives her a box of chocolates for Valentine's Day which makes Michael jealous.



Objects/Places

Genovia

Mia is officially known as Princess Amelia whose family rules the kingdom of Genovia.

The Loft

Mia, officially known as Princess Amelia, lives in a loft with her mother Helen and Helen's live-in boyfriend, Mr. Gianini, who is also her Algebra teacher.

Albert Einstein High School

Mia attends Albert Einstein High School. Her boyfriend, Michael Moscovitz, is a senior at the same school.

Valentine's Day

Mia endures an emotional ordeal in the days preceding Valentine's Day. She is uncertain if she should give her boyfriend, Michael, a card or a present or both. She is fretful because he hasn't made plans with her for that day.

The Limo

Mia is driven to school in a limo. She has the driver pick up her boyfriend, Michael, and his sister, Lilly, every day because they attend the same school.

Algebra Class

Mia attends a daily algebra class. The teacher is Mr. Gianini, her mother's live-in boyfriend. She mentions that the arrangement is somewhat awkward.

Gifted & Talented Class

Mia is in the gifted and talented class which indicates her above-average intelligence.

The Private Jet

The story opens when Mia is traveling on a private jet to the kingdom of Genovia where she will spend the summer months.



Lupercalia Day

Michael is not a proponent of Valentine's Day. He thinks it's too commercialized. He feels it would be better to celebrate Lupercalia Day which was celebrated by the ancient Romans and falls on February 15th.

The Movie Marathon

Mia's best friend, Tina, invites Mia to a movie marathon of Audrey Hepburn movies on Valentine's Day night.

The Plaza

Grandmère lives in a suite at the Plaza Hotel. Mia comes to see Grandmère after school every evening for princess lessons.



Themes

Control

Mia is a nice, well-mannered and thoughtful girl but she also has a tendency to want to control people and situations. The focus of this story is on her struggle on how to deal with her boyfriend and Valentine's Day. She is passive-aggressive in that she wants to steer her boyfriend toward celebrating Valentine's Day with her. She does not directly address the subject with him; instead, she drops hints and tries to push him toward what she wants. Although her attempt to control and manipulate the situation is not mean-spirited, she has learned from an expert.

Mia's grandmother, Grandmère, is a very controlling person. She is a royal and requires her granddaughter to come to her suite at the Plaza Hotel every evening after school for "princess lessons." Grandmère is very unhappy that Mia's boyfriend, Michael, is a commoner. She hires an astrologer who foretells Mia's future. He tells her that her future will be with a man who is a Leo. Mia is upset because Michael is a Capricorn. Mia suspects that her grandmother hired the astrologist and paid him off to tell her a future with Michael was not in her destiny.

At one point, Mia fears that Grandmère has been kidnapped but she quickly dismisses the idea. She is certain that the kidnappers could never withstand the criticism they would get from Grandmère about their lacking in kidnapping skills.

Communication

As is often the case in relationships, there is a serious lack of communication in Mia's relationship with her boyfriend, Michael. It is not a one-sided problem. Both Mia and Michael are guilty of communication deficits. Mia is agonizing over what to do about Valentine's Day. It is her first Valentine's Day with Michael. She wants to express her love for him but she's unsure what he wants to do because he hasn't said anything about it and has made no plans with her.

Instead of asking him directly, she takes a circuitous route and asks just about everyone else what she should do about the day. She gets the full spectrum of advice - everything from opt out because it's a lame holiday that's passe, to getting him a gift to show him how much she loves him.

For Michael's part, he does not pick up on the hints that his girlfriend drops about the day. He cares for her and probably is not ignoring her hints but he just doesn't realize that she's trying to find out what his plans are for Valentine's Day. He should have been more in tune with Mia and realized that his young girlfriend probably wanted to be remembered on Valentine's Day.



When another boy gives Mia a box of chocolates for Valentine's Day, Michael wakes up a bit. He then asks her to go to dinner on Valentine's night. But she already accepted an invitation from her girlfriend since he hadn't spoken up.

If Mia would have gotten Michael alone and just asked him point blank if they were going to do something for Valentine's Day, it would have eliminated a lot of doubt and uncertainty.

Self-Reliance

One lesson that Mia has to learn is to not confuse an issue by asking too many people what their opinions are and what they think she should do. By the end of her struggle to figure out what to do about Michael, her boyfriend, relative to St. Valentine's Day, surely Mia learns to rely on herself a bit more than on others who may have their own agendas and personal reasons for what they think she should do or how she should behave.

Mia is in a quandary about whether to get her boyfriend, Michael, a Valentine's card or gift or both. She asks her friends what they think and for every friend she asks she gets a different response. She is one confused girl by the time Valentine's Day is almost upon her.

Mia's first instinct is to get Michael a card but then doubt creeps into her mind when some of her friends - including Michael - put down the holiday as over-hyped and over-commercialized. She fears that Michael will think she is "dorky" if she gets him a card. Yet emotionally she can't let go of the idea of expressing her love for him on that special day.

Helen, her mother, senses that Mia is struggling. She advises her to do what her heart tells her to do. Basically, she should rely on herself to make her own decision. She wants to get Michael a card, she tells her mother, but he may not get one for her. Her mother tells her that she should give him a card because she cares for him - not because she expects something in return.

Mia makes a special card for Michael and he loves it. Her initial tendency is to get him that card. Had she followed her instincts, she could have avoided quite a few days of agony and indecision.

Style

Point of View

The Valentine Princess by Meg Cabot is written in the first person narrative. The point of view of the story is that of a sixteen-year-old girl who also happens to be a princess. This book is one in a long series of books known as The Princess Diaries a popular series among young teen girls. Writing from the perspective of a young girl, the story showcases a young girl's vulnerability, naivete and immaturity factors to which the young readers no doubt relate.

The book is an epistolary written in a diary format. Using this structure, the reader is able to understand the agony that Mia is going through as she struggles with how best to deal with Valentine's Day. Although some of Mia's friends think that the day is passe, Mia's romantic nature shows through since she is determined to express her feelings for her boyfriend on that special day for lovers.

Several of The Princess Diaries books have been made into very popular Disney movies. Cabot has also written books that appeal to teens including the Mediator series, All-American Girl, Ready or Not, Teen Idol, and How to Be Popular.

Setting

Valentine Princess by Meg Cabot is set in a big city in America which is probably New York City. Mia Thermopolis, whose official identity is Princess Amelia, is the protagonist. Mia's royal family's kingdom is Genovia. Mia attends school in America and spends the summer in Genovia. Mia lives in a loft apartment with her mother, Helen, and her mother's live-in boyfriend, Mr. Gianini who also happens to be Mia's algebra teacher.

When the story opens, Mia is on a private jet on her way to Genovia, where she will spend the summer. She is writing a screenplay while she travels which is inspired by her own life and relationships. As she writes, she recalls a year and a half before when she spent her first Valentine's Day with her boyfriend, Michael Moscovitz.

Mia takes a limo to school and picks up her boyfriend, Michael, and his sister, Lilly, on her way. Since Mia is a royal, she has a bodyguard whose name is Lars. Mia spends time in various classes including Algebra, Gifted & Talented, French and Safety & Health. Mia also has lunch with her friends at school in the cafeteria.

Most evenings after school, Mia is required to visit her grandmother who lives in a suite at the Plaza Hotel for princess lessons. For Valentine's Day, Mia accepts an invitation from her friend, Tina, who is holding a movie marathon of Audrey Hepburn movies. She turns down an invitation to go to a romantic restaurant with Michael because he asks at the last minute and she already has plans with Tina. They make plans to go to a



restaurant the next night. Michael appears on her fire escape on Valentine's Day night and sings a song he wrote for her while accompanying himself on the guitar.

Language and Meaning

Valentine Princess by Meg Cabot is written from the perspective of a sixteen-year-old girl. The book is an epistolary written in a diary format. Since the book is told in the voice of a young person, there are expressions and words that are naturally indicative of her age. Although Mia is also a royal, Princess Amelia, she expresses herself in a manner that is typical of her contemporaries.

There are many examples of these youthful expressions. The book opens when Mia is writing a screenplay inspired by her own life. The title of the screenplay is, "ME, A PRINCESS???? YEAH. RIGHT." Mia refers to Dr. Steve, her grandmother's astrologist as a "totally creepy-looking guy." Mia exchanges cryptic instant messages with her friend Tina. On the way to school when Mia asks Lilly what she thinks of Valentine's Day, Lilly responds, "Valentine's Day? Are you on crack?" Lilly thinks that people who fall for the Valentine's Day hype are "simple-minded schmoes." In response, Mia wonders if Lilly really thinks people who celebrate Valentine's Day are "dorky."

Mia shows she's a drama queen on several occasions. She writes that Michael's refusing to participate in Valentine's Day could be a threat to their future happiness. When Mia laments about her agony over Valentine's Day, she feels even worse when she realizes that "Even my MOM has a Valentine."

Structure

Valentine Princess is an epistolary written in the form of a diary. The book is separated by locations, dates and times just as the structure of a diary. The book begins on June 9th but then flashes back eighteen months to the previous year's Valentine's Day. The flashback portion of the book covers February 11th through February 14th. The book then flashes back to the next year on June 9th, where it concludes.

The June 9th entry is made by Mia in a private jet on the way to Genovia. Each of the days in February is segmented into different times and locations. For example, February 11th is broken up into two separate time entries: 6 pm and 10 pm. Mia indicates that she wrote her 6 pm entry in the limo on the way home from princess lessons and the 10 pm entry in the loft where she lives.

February 12th is broken up into two classes: Algebra and Gifted & Talented which indicates she made the entries during class time. The other two entries are at 4 pm from the limo and 10 pm from the loft. February 13th follows a similar pattern as that of February 12th. Mia makes entries during Algebra, Gifted & Talented and French. She makes her last two entries in the limo and in the loft.

On February 14th Mia makes entries during Algebra, Health & Safety, Gifted and French. She makes her last two entries at the Plaza where her grandmother lives and in the limo.



Quotes

"This dude had on one of those monochromatic tie-and-shirt thingies, like a TV talk show host or mafioso might wear."

February 11, page 4

"The Czar's subjects did kind of lose respect for him because he and his wife were listening to the advice of a dude who collected hair from virgins as a hobby."

February 11, page 5

"I wish Lilly wouldn't ask me if I'm on crack in front of her brother. I mean, I know Michael knows I don't use drugs. But it's like, totally rude."

February 12, page 19

"I mean have I ever given you a Valentine? Except when some dumb teacher MADE us sit there and make Valentines, because it meant she could sneak off for half an hour to smoke while we were going busywork, another example of how inferior our educational system is to the rest of the world's."

February 12, page 22

"'God, I can't WAIT until I've graduated and don't have to spend all my time with so many CHILDREN,' Lana said, which good luck to her, isn't going to be for another three and a half years."

February 12, page 27

"Dr. Steve is a genius. When a genius asks you for your help, of course you oblige him."

February 12, page 31

"What is wrong with Michael?? Did he have some horrible Valentine's Day experience that scarred him for life? Did he once sustain some hideous paper cut opening a Valentine that wouldn't stop bleeding?"

February 12, page 35

"It's a holiday designed to make you feel bad about yourself. If you do have someone, and they don't get you a Valentine, you feel like crap. And then if you don't have anybody, it's like you're an even bigger loser."

February 13, page 46

"I think that's what Valentine's Day is all about—giving without expecting anything in return. That's true love, if you ask me."

February 13, page 56



"I tell Mia I love her every day. I don't need some greeting card company reminding me to say it once a year."

February 14, page 71

"What are you talking about, groin injury? Haven't I ever told you princesses don't talk about groins?"

February 14, page 76

"Well, of course I slapped him for his insolence. And what do you think he did? Seized me by the arms and told me I light a fire in him unlike any other woman he has ever known."

February 14, page 79



Topics for Discussion

What made Mia think that perhaps Dr. Steve's predictions might be coming true?

How did Mia show her immaturity and her lack of confidence about her relationship with Michael?

Describe how Mia's relationship with her grandmother was a complicated one?

Why did Mia keep seeking confirmation for her feelings about Valentine's Day? Why did she wind up more confused?

Who were the two people who gave Mia the best advice about Valentine's Day? What was the advice she received from each of them?

How did Lilly feel about St. Valentine's Day? What substance and credibility did her views have?

What vulnerability did Mia's grandmother show in her relationship with Dr. Steve? Was Mia right or wrong to let her grandmother "crash and burn?" Why?