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Three's a Crowd

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Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

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McKenzie's much-praised award winner **Girl, Missing** was concerned with a kidnapped child. Here, however, we are in the lighter vein of her **Six Steps to a Girl** in which Luke first met the 'totally amazing' Eve. **Three's a Crowd** speeds us through the further adventures of Luke and Eve with a familiar mix and maze of teenage trauma. Summer's here, and Luke and Eve are off to romantic Mallorca, where her Dad runs a hotel. Fantastic. Except it turns out Mallorca is a tad tacky, her Dad calls Eve 'My Princess' and 'Babycakes' and has no intention of letting Luke get within arm's length of his daughter. As if that wasn't enough, what's to be done about 'compact and curvy' Catalina, just about wearing the mini-est of mini-skirts, who thinks Luke is distinctly hot? And where does that leave Luke with Cat's boyfriend, Marco? And then there's Alejandro, glamorous drummer in the hotel band, rich, handsome and driving an Alpha Romeo Spider? Luke just knows he's bound to fancy Eve. (Mercifully? you guessed? he's gay.)

McKenzie is very good at excruciatingly cringing set pieces such as late nights at the El Garito night club, open mike sessions for the tourists and long afternoons at the hotel crèche (you'd have to read it for yourself). There's lots of snogging (no more than that, though), and misunderstandings leading to revenge snogging with someone else just to wind up the original snogger. Things go wrong, then right, then wrong, then right and then end up mostly sort-of right again (more adventures of Luke and Eve to come?). Luke comes out the other end of the labyrinth having learned a fair bit about possessiveness and jealousy. The summer's story races along at a page-gulping rate, and is all the better for being told from a boy's puzzled, wry perspective.

Commenting on books like this feels a bit like poking your nose into a private huddle on the corridors of the local comp., but I'm pretty sure that McKenzie has got the plotting and the pace just right for her readership. Though the publisher's blurb might like to claim otherwise, the novel does not pretend to be a penetrating insight into real-life teenage love, any more than **Holby City** is a Despatches documentary about the travails of the NHS.

Running Order:

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