

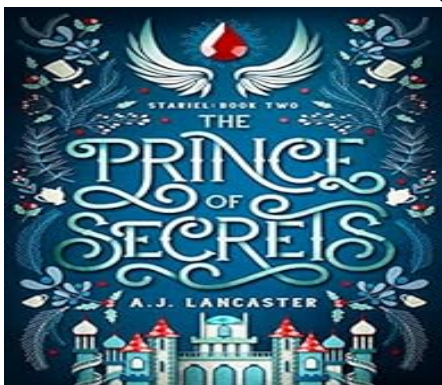
## The Prince of Secrets (Stariel, #2) By A.J. Lancaster

But what will Hetta's family think when they find out she is more than just friends with her stand-in steward? As well as keeping their relationship quiet Wyn is also keeping his identity under wraps and this is only made more difficult when his siblings and ex fiancée descend upon Stariel soil. I found The Lord of Stariel was a bit of a 'set up' book with a lot of character shaping but the second book in the series dived straight back in to where book 1 left off. I really can't wait for book 3 and all that's yet to come! I would give this book a solid 4 (maybe even 4 and a half star review!) Well done Lancaster! Kindle Edition Yeah.

AJ Lancaster lives in New Zealand and writes romantic whimsical fantasy in a house containing two ridiculous cats and many plants. Have I just discovered a new favorite series? I am utterly enchanted with this world particularly the idea of magical faelands that bond fiercely to their lords (with room for favoritism for select others) and their lord's families. Plus it's set in what seems to be an alternate version of the early 1900s complete with a type of cars trains bank tellers and basically it's a perfect match of Edwardian fashion complete with strict rules of manners and ridiculously archaic sexism with some evil fairies and devoted faelands and some super high stakes thrown into the mix. The stakes are higher the action more prevalent Wyn is basically an adorably masochistic fluff-birdling and it's told in dual POV between Hetta and Wyn so life really is the best of both worlds. While I wish that 1) we saw more of the Valstars and 2) the book was a lot longer I'm very excited to see the continuation of Hetta's journey into her lordship with Stariel and hope that things settle down just a little bit for her to get a handle on what it means being the mortal lord of a faeland. I pounced to buy the paperback (so beautiful) and was more than ready to buy the sequel as soon as out in the world! I was thus very happy to receive the ARC of The Prince of Secrets from the author (whom I thank!) and be able to review the book as soon as possible. (A small digression about secondary characters: there all are exceptionally good with very distinct personalities never stereotyped - which is a positive sign of literary quality and writing personality. I wouldn't mind at all to read about them in some plentiful spin-off!) Stariel the land gains some real personality and plays an important part during the story which is as clever as fascinating. (You may need to know that my expectations about the new at the time New Adult genre had been sadly disappointed when I discovered that what was called erotic was just plain soft porn in my point of view and that the said sex scenes were predominant to the detriment of the story and often of any characters' development). The atmosphere is still as much heartwarming and deliciously domestic (I love big houses dynamics as in Downtown Abbey series or in Jane Austen's or Victoria Clayton's books) as in the first book with some exciting and mysterious trips. And a refreshing absence of complex! To finish with (as I won't tell you anything about the story except that it's riveting very satisfying and opening toward an already much awaited sequel) I'd like to say a word about a discreet but very significant quality about the treatment of characters and situations. In a genre where clichés and lazy stereotypes are so frequently used and worn out without any imagination or personal efforts this kind of mastery makes all the difference! Kindle Edition A not much more helpful but way longer review is now available on my blog [rikerandom.de](http://rikerandom.de) Okay so I just finished rereading The Lord of Stariel and immediately after read The Prince of Secrets and now I'm sad because I'll have to wait way too long for The Court of Mortals because even if it's only another ~3 months it's just too long. The dual pov that shifted between Hetta and Wyn was really great and added a lot to that but mainly it was the addition of Wyn's siblings and seeing more of Stariel's own personality that made the character constellations so much more ... exciting? I can't wait to read more about magical faeland with strong personalities their interference in personal relationships Wyn and Hetta's families interacting. I not only enjoyed the characters and their interactions a bit more but also the small hitches in the writing I stumbled over especially in the first half of the first novel just weren't there anymore. There's only two points that I would count as even remotely negative: First Wyn's self-sacrificing way got a bit too much and felt somewhat repetitive at points and second this was sooo

short! It wasn't actually it was longer than the first novel but it felt way shorter because I was so captivated by the story and read the whole novel pretty much in one sitting. \*I was send an ARC of The Prince of Secrets by the author in exchange for a honest review so all of that no doubt super helpful review above is my opinion and only mine\* Kindle Edition 3. 5 starsI enjoyed this book not as much as the first (which is unsurprising) but it's still enjoyable light reading that kept me engaged and has me interested in moving on to the next. Perhaps it's unsurprising that a romance written by an author who's committed to that element would be better than your typical obligatory romantic subplot which might only be there because the author felt it was required. Likewise there's a lot more time spent on Wyn's family your typical scheming royal backstabbers which leaves less time for Hetta's which I enjoy much more—it's a lot of fun to see ordinary family drama portrayed in fantasy regular (if sometimes eccentric) people who are actually able to function as a family. There's nothing really wrong with the action and the fae stuff—though I wasn't thrilled with Hetta's having such a passive role in the final 50 pages (although okay some authors do contortions to try to make it look like their heroines don't need rescue and in many circumstances saving oneself actually isn't realistic. There's something to be said for just owning it but I also can't claim much excitement for capture-and-rescue plots at this point)—it's just the kind of thing I've seen many times before and there's nothing exceptional about this example of it. And in the bigger picture it's nice how much is getting wrapped up at the end of each volume: here it was much more than I expected for a middle book while hinting at new challenges to come. Most importantly this volume continued to provide an engaging story featuring characters that I like in a setting that feels lived-in and was enough fun that I plan to move on to the next soon! Kindle Edition Well-bred women should not be seen kissing their butlers. After finding out Wyn was fae the iron law was revoked and his head was wanted for being an oath breaker Hetta has been working closely with Wyn to try and protect Stariel. I like Wyn but the stage of the story has gotten so much larger -- tons of new characters new powers new creatures -- that it lost some of the charm of the first book. But I miss the story of a human girl coming to grip with power in her ancestral lands (land sense is such a cool magical element!) and am less excited about a fairy prince's struggle for power, It seems his past is finally catching up with him and in dramatic form. Will Wyn spill the beans? How will the land of Stariel react? Will Wyn ever be released from his debt?I really enjoyed this book: It was gritty and explored the fae a lot more than book 1 and I felt it really enveloped the fantasy genre with all the action: The slow burning relationship between Hetta and Wyn in the first book finally develops and it was one of my favourite parts of this novel: {site\_link} {site\_link} {site\_link} AJ Lancaster lives in New Zealand and writes romantic whimsical fantasy in a house containing two ridiculous cats and many plants, Definitely parts of it that I liked but gosh there's still just something missing. There WAS more action to The Prince of Secrets which helped a bunch in terms of actually reading to the end, I dunno I'm torn on if I'll continue onto the next book: I'm mildly interested to see where this goes but I'm not extremely gung-ho about it. 5 starsIn this installation Wyn's past catches up with him in a very dramatic fashion and threatens Stariel and the Valstars along with it: And some super cute fae-kittens because why the hell not: And this is the conclusion of my incredibly unhelpful review because if I say anymore there will be ~spoilers~: If the third book's title The Court of Mortals reveals anything it's that things are probably not going to settle down much but we will get answers, tl;dr if you enjoyed The Lord of Stariel you'll definitely like this one too, I received this ARC from the author (thank you so much!) for an honest review, Kindle Edition The first book of the series (which will be a quartet) The Lord of Stariel was one of my best reads of 2018 - a Netgalley discovery, I could just say that if you liked the first book you're sure to like this one as much maybe even more: I could also just say that it was as the first book a perfect read for me: It's difficult to express how magical it is to find a book which delights oneself without any restriction. I've gained along my years of reviewing the reputation of being extremely demanding fastidious to the point of quibbling. The story begins just after the end of The Lord of Stariel in a very linear way. The narration still at the third person smoothly alternate between Hetta's and Wyn's points of view: A lot of exciting things happen in this second book with new fascinating characters but without forgetting the old ones, The relationship

between Hetta and Wyn evolves sweetly and most importantly in character: witty touching credible and sensual without being pornographic: The author has reinvented faes in a very personal inventive and yet rather classic way with plenty of appealing details. The author sometimes cleverly uses some reverse stereotypes especially to express an enlightened feminism, For instance if we could easily imagine the story with a man instead of Hetta and a woman in place of Wyn the substitution isn't grossly made. Hetta is a very feminine strong heroine and Wyn a very masculine kind and passionate character, I want to read all of the series right now please! While I really liked the first novel in the series I adored this sequel. My main problem with the first book was the kinda-love-triangle-story-aspect and the way Hetta behaved around her love interests: But since there's only one remaining love interest in book two and I found their behaviour towards each other entertaining rather than annoying that wasn't a problem, Only Wyn's possessiveness was a bit meh but since he checks himself and reflects on his possessive reactions most of the time it wasn't nearly as bad as it could have been: Overall I thought the characters' interactions were just a bit more natural more relatable more interesting: (And I want to see so much more of Marius! Marius interacting with fae in this novel was awesome and there were just glimpses of it. I want MORE! Hopefully I read Koi's comments right and there'll be more of that in the future: And hopefully it won't be mostly happening behind the scenes: )The whole novel was just a bit ... smoother (?) to read than the first one, I'll publish an actual review for both book one and two on my blog next week or the week after and I'll update this one accordingly. These books are sweet and fun while still keeping the plot moving featuring characters with distinct personalities who have some dimension to them and not being full of holes, And that's a rare combination in my experience; I would like to read more lighter fiction but struggle to find examples that work for me. This volume focuses primarily on the romance between Hetta and Wyn and on all the fae drama around Wyn his family and his broken oath. Much of the book is therefore told from Wyn's POV which I was initially unconvinced about but which does wind up serving the plot well: Events move at a good pace that keeps the pages turning and I actually liked the romance: At any rate it's sweet when it needs to be and hot when that's called for; I like these two together. There is more danger and action in this book than the first and while that's not necessarily a bad thing it is more fantasy standard: I enjoyed that in the midst of all the drama our principals are still working hard to get a bank loan to modernize the estate: I'm also enjoying the sentient estate which is a fun concept: Even when the butler in question is secretly a fae prince: She's not only human but the new magically bonded ruler of Stariel Estate, If their relationship gets out it'll cause a scandal that could ruin their attempts to sort out the estate's crumbling finances, And it doesn't help that Stariel has decided it doesn't like him. But more than jealous sentient estates and Hetta's good name are at stake: Ten years ago he broke an oath and shattered the power of his home court and the fae have been hunting him ever since. Now they've found his hiding place they won't rest until he's dead or the debt is repaid--and they don't play nicely. The Prince of Secrets is Book 2 in the Stariel Quartet. The Prince of Secrets (Stariel #2)



5 stars bc I'm mid-series and terribly invested, We had a lot of downs - but my goodness did we have some ups, I was very fortunate to (once again) receive an ARC from her and delve back into the world of Hetta and Wyn, Beginning a couple of weeks after 'The Lord of Stariel' (book 1) finishes Hetta's role as the Lord of Stariel is firmly in place, She has been accepted by the other Valstars and

is now on a mission to repair the house and state of finances the previous steward had caused. Hetta takes to this task with all the vigour and increasing confidence of a new Lord whilst having trusty housekeeper Wyn by her side: Their relationship transcends that of friendship and they find themselves as lovers definitely slower and less engaging than the first, I could barely put down the first and this took me several days. But still enjoyable! Kindle Edition I stalled on this one for a long time because it transitioned from being Hetta's story to Wyn's, Some of that was pacing some of that was less time with the characters we saw developed in book 1 who I cared about and wanted to see more: I've already purchased the rest of the series (when I finished book 1) and I do plan to read them. Kindle Edition How do the pages turn this fast?? The tension ramps up in this second volume as Hetta learns exactly what it means to romance a faerie prince. I love the focus on family and feelings in this series which revolves around a sprawling family on a magical estate. {site\_link} {site\_link} {site\_link} {site\_link} Hmm. This sequel was about as enjoyable as the first. Have a giant shrug for my review basically. Kindle Edition 4. There are fae. Good fae. Bad fae. Morally ambiguous fae. Super twisty fae. I'm not! I just know what I like and what I dislike. But overall I had fun with this. I liked the bit where virgin magic works with men too. Wyn knows falling for Hetta Valstar is a bad idea. Wyn's past is coming back to bite him. And a very satisfying ending. Kindle Edition The Prince of Secrets is A.J Lancaster's second book in the Stariel series. I loved the first book. I only liked this one. Maybe the series will surprise me though. Kindle Edition.