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The King's Rose



Synopsis

Life in the court of King Henry VIII is a complex game. When fifteen-year-old Catherine Howard catches the king's eye, she quickly transforms from pawn to queen. But even luxury beyond imagination loses its luster as young Catherine finds her life—and her heart—threatened by the needs of an aging king and a family hungry for power. Will their agendas deliver Catherine to the same fate as her infamous cousin, Anne Boleyn—sacrificed at the altar of family ambition? Engaging historical fiction with a throbbing YA heartbeat, this thrilling novel will draw readers into the intrigues and dangers of the Tudor court.

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Customer Reviews

If you are familiar with Tudor History, you know who Katherine Howard is. Not many books seem to cover her life before she met Henry, but this one does, and for that I am thankful. Let's just assume, though, that you, the reader, have no idea who this woman is. Katherine Howard, a silly, flighty girl of 15, is a ward in the household of her aunt, the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk. Anne of Cleves is

recently out of the picture, so Henry VIII is in need of a new woman at his side. Despite Katherine's wanton and childish behavior, the Duke of Norfolk (the same duke who helped place Anne Boleyn on the throne) sees an opportunity to put the Howard-Boleyn family back into power, and decides that Katherine shall be groomed to be England's next queen. She does indeed become the King's new favorite courtier, and soon after his newest wife. But like many women before her, Katherine soon struggles to both please her king and her family, provide the king with a second son, and keep her head. This book is interesting in that Katherine has two sides; the flighty young girl who loves to be played with and dressed up in beautiful gowns, dripping with jewels, and the Katherine who actually genuinely cares for Henry despite his mood swings and aging appearance. The way it is written, there is an air of mystery for people who have no idea who Katherine is or anything about the time period (a key player in Katherine's fate is at first only identifiable by a ring; from the dialogue, people familiar with Tudor history can easily figure out who it is.) It is also unique in that we get Katherine at Lambeth, at Court, in the King's bed, and in the Tower all in one book. It's definitely a great addition to anybody's Tudor literary collection!

3.5 Stars. I didn't love everything about this book and I thought the first half was a lot stronger than the second. However, this was one of the better depictions that I have read of Catherine Howard.

Good introduction to the history of the period for young readers, and a very good explanation of the isolation and manipulation of people in power by various factions.

Very good book, I liked reading a book from the POV of Catherine Howard since she was sort of frowned upon in history. I would definitely recommend this book to buyers! It's rather short too, so it's easy to read.

I couldn't put this book down!!! So sad..She was basically thrust into the king's arms so that her family could be looked on with favor. She was so young and him very old. A must read!!!

Catherine never asked to be Queen, but greatness was thrust upon her by the Howard family. At first Catherine thought it might not be so bad and it wouldn't have been if she could produce an heir. That's all King Henry wants, an heir. Catherine's family decides that desperate times call for desperate measures and they have to do anything they can to get her pregnant before it's too late. So last month I read and reviewed *Gilt* by Katherine Longshore which is also about the 5th wife

of King Henry VII. These books were completely different. Unfortunately this one I found a tad dry and boring. In this story, Catherine is a good girl and a puppet for her family. She does whatever she is told and pushes down her feelings whenever she can. She doesn't really have any close friends but her family controls her every movement. It's not very entertaining reading about someone who puts up no resistance and doesn't seem to care enough to challenge herself. In this story it's the family's idea that she go to Culpepper to try and get pregnant. She already harbors feelings for Culpepper so she has no objections to this coupling. Catherine's attitude in this novel made me feel a tad bit more sympathetic to her in the end. Her married life was devoted to trying to hide her past and please her King. She bent over backwards trying to be exactly what he wanted, but all he wanted was a healthy son. This was an interesting read. It was nice seeing Catherine's life from her perspective and seeing her much more subdued than in *Gilt*. First Line: "The Thames is a messenger of fortune, rippling smoothly beneath the prow of this barge." Favorite Lines: "She releases my arm and sinks back into the shadows, muttering to herself. I stand here numbly, dumbly. I think that my whole world has changed: the witch wasn't a witch, after all."

Born into the ambitious Howard family, Catherine has never had much control over her life and fate. Her cousin, the infamous Anne Boleyn, lured King Henry VIII into marriage then met a grisly end. Hoping for a marriage that will benefit the family, Catherine's relatives send her to court in 1540, when she is fifteen. There, Catherine catches the eye of the king, who decides to divorce his current wife, Anne of Cleves, and marry her. Though Catherine would prefer to marry for love, one does not refuse the king, and even if she could, her family is determined to gain power through her marriage. From the start, Catherine feels like she is living a lie, and playing a part to be the wife Henry desires. He wanted a pure, innocent maiden, and Catherine had a foolish and youthful love affair before coming to court, an event the king must never learn about. Woefully unprepared for the life she must live, Catherine struggles with her own immaturity and the conflicting desires of the king and her family, and is forced to make terrible choices that will lead to her doom. *The King's Rose* is a wonderful historical novel for young adults - and adults as well - about the life of King Henry VIII's fifth and youngest wife, Catherine Howard. The author did a good job of bringing Catherine to life and making it understandable why she made the choices she did. Catherine is a tragic figure - a young girl, unprepared for the life of a queen, forced into a terrible situation by her family in a time when a young woman had few choices and little right to control her own destiny. I highly recommend this book to readers who are fascinated by the Tudors as well as those who enjoy historical fiction in general.

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