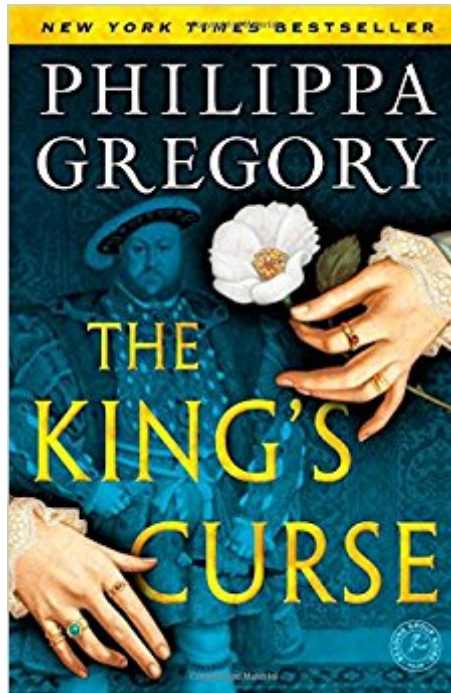




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The King's Curse (The Plantagenet And Tudor Novels)



Synopsis

From the #1 > bestselling author behind the acclaimed Starz series > comes the story of lady-in-waiting Margaret Pole and her unique view of King Henry VIII's stratospheric rise to power in Tudor England. As an heir to the Plantagenets, Margaret is seen by the King's mother, the Red Queen, as a rival to the Tudor claim to the throne. She is buried in marriage to a Tudor supporter Sir Richard Pole, governor of Wales and becomes guardian to Arthur, the young Prince of Wales, and his beautiful bride, Katherine of Aragon. But Margaret's destiny, as cousin to the White Princess, is not for a life in the shadows. Tragedy throws her into poverty, yet a royal death restores her to her place at young Henry VIII's court where she becomes chief lady-in-waiting to Queen Katherine. There she watches the dominance of the Spanish queen over her husband and her tragic decline. Amid the rapid deterioration of the Tudor court, Margaret must choose whether her allegiance is to the increasingly tyrannical Henry VIII or to her beloved queen. Caught between the old and the new, Margaret must find her own way, concealing her knowledge that an old curse cast upon all the Tudors is slowly coming true...

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

While other protagonists in the Cousins War series are obsessed with gaining or retaining the throne, the King's Curse is narrated by Margaret Pole, the daughter of George Duke of Clarence and the niece of Edward IV and Richard III. If you have read The Kingmaker's Daughter, you know about her tragic childhood - her mother died young, her father disappeared into the tower for

treason, and her maternal aunt, wife of Richard III died broken-hearted before the Battle of Bosworth. Margaret and her younger brother survived all this, and at the beginning of The King's Curse, she is married and banished to the country out of the new king's sight. Her brother is not so lucky, banished to the tower as a punishment for being born too close to the throne. Margaret doesn't seem to have any ambitions to regain the throne for herself or her family. She is happy with minor royal responsibilities, such as looking after the new Spanish princess Katherine who comes to England to marry Arthur Prince of Wales. While she suffers indignities and injustices under Henry VII, she chooses to pursue a rewarding country life, looking after her lands and her people. Henry even stifles this ambition when he drives her into poverty after her husband dies. Then Henry VIII becomes king and he does not seem to have his father's craven mistrust of Margaret's heritage. She is welcomed back to the palace where she attends the beautiful young queen Katherine. When Katherine gives birth to her first son, Henry asks his beloved cousin Margaret to raise this new prince. But the baby prince dies and the new king becomes obsessed with his own failure to sire an heir to his throne.

I've been following the Cousin's War saga since the first book, and waiting eagerly for the next one - and now it's finally finished. This book works perfectly well - naturally so - as both the last book of this saga and as a story set during her Tudor stories (it starts almost 1/3 into "The Constant Princess" and ends up to almost half of "The Boleyn Inheritance"). It talks mostly about Henry VIII's reign and his fall from the most promising prince in Christendom to a tyrant married to a child -- all while managing to make one feel for his losses. Margaret Pole, the protagonist of the novel, lived - or rather, survived - through some of the most turbulent period of the English History, from the second half of the war of roses to the beginnings of Anglicanism. Her story is remarkable; as is everything we can safely learn about her. As someone who generally sides deeply with York, I was looking forward to it. That said, she makes a rather unsympathetic protagonist - specially if you've learned to love and care for Gregory's protagonists through (both) the series. Extremely proud, overtly conscious of her own royal blood, Margaret looks down on EVERYONE around - except, perhaps, Catherine of Aragon. Not even her beloved cousin Elizabeth (Henry's mother) is excused from her sense of self-importance and she loses no opportunity to vilify everyone she sees as an "upstart" - from Woodville's to the Boleyns, passing through the Tudors themselves and her own loyal husband. I still cared and felt for her children and grandchildren, I admired the written ending here, but most of the time I just wanted to smack the old lady in her head - both for being arrogant and for the incredible amount of hypocrisy she shows.

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