



The Queen of Four Kingdoms

Princess Michael of Kent

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At the age of nineteen, Yolande of Aragon is sent away from her family, her friends, and everything she knows, to marry the young Duke of Anjou, King Charles VI's first cousin. Their marriage has been arranged to form an alliance between the previously warring kingdoms of Aragon and Anjou, and is politically fraught in a time of great danger and unrest. Yet the union between Yolande and Louis becomes not only a great love story, but also sets in motion events which will change the course of history.

As Louis spends more and more time and money fighting in Italy for his claim to the Kingdom of Naples, Yolande is left alone with their six children to govern their lands. But through her charm, fierce intelligence and the clever use of her spies, she becomes the saviour of not just her kingdoms but also of France.

Her Royal Highness Princess Michael of Kent unveils this seldom told story, enriched by her own insider's perspective of royal life. *The Queen of Four Kingdoms* is the epic true story of a rich and riveting period of French and English history, all witnessed by the captivating and complex heroine Yolande.

'It was a time of high stakes and high risk, where the right choice might bring a throne in its wake, but the wrong one could lead to the scaffold, of lives wrapped in gilded velvet, but drenched in ambition and blood. Princess Michael takes the reader to the heart of this glamorous, dangerous world, and holds them spellbound. I loved it.' Julian Fellowes

'Meticulously researched and powerfully evoked, Princess Michael uncovers the extraordinary life of Yolande of Aragon, the power behind the throne of fifteenth-century France, and the mentor of Joan or Arc.' Philippa Gregory

The Queen of Four Kingdoms Details

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Kaya Dimitrova says

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Marita says

Revised review

Having read three of her novels, I find that characterization is not this author's forte. Basically,
very beautiful = very good (possibly many wonderful attributes)
very ugly = very bad (Jean sans Peur looks like a toad and behaves like one)
very plain = very pious and also good (e.g. Joan of Arc and Yolande's daughter, Marie).

However, the author certainly knows her history and it shines through in the story telling which lifts this novel to a four star rating.

The star of the novel is Yolande of Aragon who played a prominent role in France during the latter part of the Hundred Years' War. At an early age the future King Charles VII of France was betrothed to Yolande's daughter Marie, and came to live in Yolande's household. Yolande also had a hand in presenting Joan of Arc to Charles. Joan of course not only lifted the siege of Orléans, but also led Charles to Reims to be crowned as king.

I really love this period of history, and I enjoyed reading this novel.

Laura says

Okay this book is so poorly written that I only read less than 50 pages before I decided I simply couldn't read this badly written story. I don't know why, I love historical fiction but in my opinion no one writes it like Philippa Gregory does.

I say don't buy it or even rent it, it's not written well.

Emmalee says

This is a well researched novel, but there is a lot of time compression, and I just can't get over the "everything is okay, we're happy as a couple, we love each other so much!" super romance that the HRH puts on everything.

I just could not connect with the characters after 70 some pages and there are other books out there that I'd rather read.

Jackie G says

While I thought the writing was a bit stilted and the flow of the story repetitive, I did enjoy the plot and the history behind the fiction. My mom got this for me for Christmas and I can see why she thought I would enjoy it.

Jteez says

The premise of the book sounded interesting especially since there does not seem to be that many books on medieval France. But damn was this book a struggle to get through all I can say is that the author is lucky to have been born a princess because her writing is not engaging in the least. Its only two stars because as I said it was about a period of history that i never really heard about and semi interesting although I found it hard to truly fall in love with any of the characters. One problem is that she constantly explains how amazing and whatnot Yolanda is without explaining why AND SHE REPEATS THE SAME PHRASE OVER AND OVER AND OVER AGAIN. Like jeez i get she is 'an imperious beauty' or everyone admired her intelligence (the particulars behind the basis of this I vaguely only understood). And the speech between the lovers was omg not exactly lighting any fires but you know I could be wrong because the author constantly wrote of there passion and love blah blah. Now considering my rating of two stars I somehow think I'm just rewarding myself for finishing the damn book than for any actual enjoyment. And this was supposed to be the beginning of a trilogy...umm no thank you.

Emily-Jane Orford says

I enjoyed this book. It was a good lesson in history. I wasn't sure if the author was trying to write historical fiction or creative nonfiction or memoir. It seemed to fluctuate between the styles. I found the present tense difficult at times, especially when the author suddenly switched to past tense. The map at the back was marginally helpful in placing different settings in the book, but not all of the places were positioned on the map, sadly. Same with the family tree which seemed incomplete in many parts and didn't effectively connect all of the main characters. As I said, it was a good history lesson and an interesting read. Reviewed by

Alice says

An interesting historical story marred by awful writing. Some historical inaccuracies (no marriage ceremony at the level of the Duke of Anjou's would have ended without one of those embarrassing bedding episodes), but mostly just horrible, sugary dialogue. Yolande deserves better.

Jeanette says

If Hillary Mantel is the gold standard, P. Gregory somewhere between the silver and the bronze- than this is the brass level of royal biography. It reads like a history book and is quite interesting, but you never get the guts of the individuals. Yolande seems carved in ivory; she's impervious and stolid in all adversity as an iconic, but often heroic statue. The reality of the trusts encompassed, or the loyalty of the courts' followings- all the subtle connections to the deep economic "whys" of competitions- they are all nearly entirely unexpressed. Missing but to the facts of occurrence.

It doesn't read like fiction, more like a lengthy progression of non-fictional dueling dukedoms and kingdoms for that particular century. Yolande has core input supports but you really never know her, her husband, or her children in any real personal sense. You do get the feel of that particular time quite well. The time before solidification to a much greater extent for the chief European nations from prior "city" states monarchies. It did, for me, put down a conceptual stage in which a Joan of Arc could appear to solidify French nationwide identity.

Sue Chaplin says

Although I found the history I was reading of interest I did not like the style of the writing, it felt jarring to read. At times I found the actions of the characters unbelievable, for example, a spy for Yolande gets behind the English lines to send her an account of the battle of Agincourt but goes to all the trouble of giving details of how the English long bow men are trained and how the arrows are made. I felt this detail was put in either because the author felt the need to give her readers a direct history lesson or to show off her research. At other times events seem to come from nowhere that should have had a build up or at least a mention. I will not be reading any more of the series.

Melinda says

I received an ARC through Library Things.

I absolutely adore historical romantic fictions. However, this book turned out to be a slight letdown as it wasn't what I had expected.

While Yolande lead an extremely fascinating life, as did numerous leading female rulers around that time period, she barely stood out until the whole Joan of Arc period, which is much later in the book. It was rather

fascinating to read about Joan of Arc, told through a different perspective.

To be honest, nearly all the characters in the book were so one dimensional and they completely fell flat. They were forgettable and boring, which they completely aren't because they are fascinating, living people from history who played a significant role in history and in the royal courts. Like the Battle of Agincourt, the rise of Henry V, the fall of Louis D'Orleans, the horrendous end of the Duke of Burgundy, and so much more. This is an extremely fascinating period, pity this version of that period fell a little flat.

I didn't like how inconsistent some of the writing was. There were a few sections where there was nearly duplicate writing within a few paragraphs of each other, but with a few more details added or changed. And it kept switching between calling Yolande "Dowager Queen" and the "Old Queen of Sicily". Also I don't like how some random English word was thrown in, words that aren't commonly used, it was like the words were there to make the book seem smarter than it really is.

While some parts of the book were extremely descriptive (like the design of the royal banners, etc), some of it was extremely repetitive! I grew tired of hearing the description of the crown of Sicily and what Yolande did with it over and over again. Enough! We know she had a crown, why didn't we hear about the crown of France or crown of England?

Meg - A Bookish Affair says

"The Queen of Four Kingdoms" is a historical fiction look at Yolande of Aragon, who, like many aristocratic women of her age is sent off to become the consort to Louis, the Duke of Anjou. Luckily for Yolande, her match actually becomes a great love. Unlike many other women of the time, Yolande actually rules her lands as the Duke keeps going to Italy in order to fight tooth and nail for the Kingdom of Naples. This book is all about how Yolande copes with balancing family (she and the Duke have a lot of children) and duty. The Kingdoms of Anjou and Aragon seem to be only mildly assuaged by Yolande and the Duke's match.

In this book, you have a fabulous main character to read about. Yolande definitely kept me reading. I really enjoyed this story. Yolande is a really interesting figure and I did not know much about her. I am not certain as to whether or not that I've read much about her in historical fiction before. I really liked reading about everything she was able to do while her husband was away. It was so interesting to me how much power she was able to have and how she was able to walk the line between caring for her children and ruling a kingdom. I also really liked the appearance of Jeanne d'Arc in this book. She is one of my favorite historical figures to read about. What a life! It was really interesting to see Yolande's take on what Jeanne did and was able to accomplish and also how her life was ended.

Overall, the writing of this book is really good. I found it enjoyable. The writing style is interesting. The book was written in third person present tense. I think I probably say this every time I read a book in that tense (it is just so different to me) but, it did take me awhile to get used to and drew my attention away at first. Slowly I warmed up to it and it really helped me to get into the story eventually. It was an interesting choice but in the end, I think that the author succeeded.

I would be remiss if I didn't draw attention to the author. The author is Princess Michael of Kent, the wife of Queen Elizabeth II's cousin. She also came from an aristocratic family. This gives her a very unique resume. Prior to this, she had written a couple books and the foreword in this book makes it sound like she will write more (Yay!).

