



I Am the Chosen King

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In this beautifully crafted tale, Harold Godwinesson, the last Saxon King of England, is a respected, quick-witted man both vulnerable and strong, honorable and loving-and yet, in the end, only human. After the political turmoil and battles leading up to 1066, we all know William the Conqueror takes England. But Helen Hollick will have readers at the edge of their seats, hoping that just this once, for Harold, the story will have a different ending.

I Am the Chosen King Details

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Author : Helen Hollick

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From Reader Review I Am the Chosen King for online ebook

Gretchen says

I knew what was coming and I cried like a baby any way. Poor Edyth. Poor Gytha. William really was a bastard. At least this William was.

May says

I knew the date. I knew the place. I knew nothing about the details! The Battle of Hastings: 1066 is now more than just a phrase to me. Helen Hollick has taken the few facts available and woven an incredible story, highlighting the whys and wherefores of that pivotal moment in English history. Truly recommend it!!!

Judith Arnopp says

I am always worried when I pick up a novel about one of my pet favourites. Harold Godwinson is like a god to me but I had no need to worry for in Helen's hands he becomes everything I would like him to be. A flawed but brilliant man. On my favourites shelf for all time.

Patty says

sigh

I knew how this book was going to end. Even still, even knowing, I found myself turning the pages as it reached the conclusion hoping for a different result. Ms. Hollick writes a tale of Harold that had me rooting for him and wanting him to live. But alas, all students of history know that England lost its King that day and the memory of the date of the Battle of Hastings in 1066 remains.

This is the second book by Ms. Hollick I have had the good fortune to read; my first was The Forever Queen (my review is [HERE](#)) which tells the history preceding this book. You don't need to read the first to enjoy the second. But you will be missing an excellent book...

I Am the Chosen King starts with Edward known to history as "the Confessor" on the throne. He is, to put it mildly, not the strongest or most competent of kings. He inherited much from his father, Ethelred the Unready. Yet he does have a bit more kindness in his heart than his father. He bumbles through his reign not realizing the results of his promises until it is too late. He makes unwise friendships and alliances caring more for himself than for England.

Harold Godwineson ends up Earl of Wessex after the death of his father. He is wise, thoughtful and an excellent leader of men. Despite his good qualities Edward prefers Harold's brother Tostig because Tostig is basically a "yes" man. When Tostig's management of his earldom causes a near civil war Edward finally realizes the error of his ways.

I've laid out a VERY simplistic bit of what is a complex, detailed and well researched tale about strong personalities and two men who would be King after Edward. William of Normandy invaded England and took the crown whether it was his to have or not. He didn't care. He wanted it so he took it. There is not much left of the historical record and that which is left was written by the victors so you know how they have

spun it!

This was a book that was very hard for me to put down. I found myself immersed in time and place and just about felt like I was THERE. Ms. Hollick is a master at delivering a tale that you don't want to end. Even when you know the outcome you don't want to depart from the characters. I spent this morning googling the players in the book to see what more I could learn. What does that tell you about her storytelling? Or this - at times I wanted to jump into the pages and just strangle some people! The writing is that powerful. I loved this book and hope there are more. As much as I hated William I would love to see how Ms. Hollick writes his story.

Frances says

An Impressive Novel.

Every once in awhile a real gem comes along and you are swept away on a timeless journey. I was captured by the first page and held spell bound until the very end. Helen Hollick is truly a remarkable author with a gifted talent for exceptional and superior writing. The entire book flows along smoothly with many strong characters and scenes written in such a lovely poetic description providing the sensation of being right there in the midst of it all. Beginning in the year 1043 with the newly crowned Edward, King of England, he is surrounded by many subjects who befriend him for their own self-seeking motives, and others whose only desire is to serve their King with irrefutable loyalty. There are battles to be won, scores to be settled, and many a head stuck on a pike. 'I am The Chosen King' is an unforgettable and extraordinary tale, written with a great deal of passion by the author. I absolutely loved it! Very highly recommended.

Natasa says

This is an outstanding read by a splendid storyteller. The novel is faithful to the historical record while taking a few liberties here and there. The entire book flows along smoothly with many strong characters and scenes written in such a delightful poetic description providing the sensation of being right there during it all. Even though you know the ending before you start the book, it is in the story's telling in between that will captivate you and keep you reading. Full review you can find on my blog:
<https://poetryofreading.blogspot.com>

Laura says

Wonderful book, above all my expectations even if Helen Hollick doesn't have the same absorbing way in writing a beautiful like Sharon Kay Penman, who is my favorite HF writer, without any doubt. Her characters are not fully emotional engaged as the ones by SKP and we don't feel so attached to them. The description of Hastings battle was breathless.

Krista Baetiong Tungol says

This is the first time I have minded a historical fiction book with multiple points of view (POV); perhaps it's because I feel that Harold Godwinson, the main man in this book, had not been given all the 'exposure' he deserved. Other than that, I am content with how the narrative of his life and the events leading to the Norman conquest of 1066 have been carried out. I only know fragments about him from several post-Norman conquest stories I have read—mostly a flick through in a page proclaiming him as the fallen king, but with this book, it not only introduced me to Harold's valor and commitment to serve but to the Anglo-Saxons' rich history and traditions as well. I actually first became fascinated with English medieval history through the Plantagenets, although now I also find a degree of sympathy and respect for the likes of Harold Godwinson who did not cower from the threat of foreign invasion and valiantly fought and died for his country. Whether his ascendance to the throne was ruled by avarice or love for his homeland, I know not, but Helen Hollick is obviously Team Harold and it's not difficult to really like him when he's been everywhere in this book as a pleasant, caring, and level-headed man.

The novel has abruptly ended with the death of England's last Anglo-Saxon king. It was a truthfully sad, brusque ending, like Miss Hollick did not care anymore about the aftermath of the events or was unrelenting to describe the after-battle scenes in a few more words—save from a terse order from Duke William about Harold's resting place or a glimpse of his common-law wife weeping. At any rate, it has worked for me; I felt the story had ended the way it should have as there was nothing more to tell when Harold was slain in battle. Had the author decided to write a few pages more after his downfall, I would have probably lost interest and stopped reading.

Malacima says

Ovo je priča onoga što se dešavalo u Engleskoj, Francuskoj (Normandiji) i Skandanaviji i dovelo do istorijske (za engleze) bitke kod Hastingsa 1066. godine. Autorka se fokusira uglavnom na život erla Veseksa Harolda Godvinessona koji će biti krunisan kraljem Haroldom II posle smrti kralja Edvarda III (koji je umro bez nasledstva - kasnije nazvan Edvard Ispovednik) i Haroldove kratke vladavine kao kralja Engleske (poslednji Englesko-Saksonski kralj -koji će poginuti u bitci kod Hastingsa). Pažnja se daje i vojvodi Vilijamu od Normandije (poznat kao Vilijam osvajač) takodje poznat kao Vilijam kopile -i njegovom podizanju vlasti i na kraju vladarem Engleske) i Gruffidda (vladara Velsa) kojeg je ubio Velški narod tokom vladavine kralja Edvarda III.

U knjizi je opisan familijarni odnos Harolda i njegove brace i sestara (njegova sestra je bila kraljica udana za Edvarda III a jedan od brace Tostig se urotio protiv Engleske i brata). Kao što ce doći do bitke tako će doći i do razdora familije. Neki dogadjaji su opisani maštom autorke ali se uglavnom držala istorijskih dogadjaja. Knjiga je zaista lep omaž kralju Haroldu i dogadjajima oko bitke.

Preporučujem ovu istorijsku fikciju za sve ljubitelje ovog žanra.

Robin says

I was surprised by how differently Emma is portrayed in this compared to its prequel "Forever Queen". She is more self serving, cold hearted and bitter but I suppose that's to be expected given everything she'd been

through by the second book. She was certainly a survivor, I just feel as though she was portrayed more sympathetically in the first book.

Harold is certainly the hero of the story but what really makes this book interesting is watching all the intricate relationships between all the characters, good and bad, and the build up (mostly on the English side but we also increasingly see more of William as the story goes on) to the Norman invasion of 1066. I don't normally take such interest in periods of invasion because they are often military based which doesn't interest me very much - but Hollick comes at it from the human side as well, bringing each character to life.

And the climax, though military, was very moving. Too many novels based on actual historical figures don't have a great climax because real life is more a series of ups and downs. This was a long but true built up to a very impacting climax.

Jo says

[Elizabeth II has both Harold's and William's blood. (hide spoiler)]

Deborah Pickstone says

Of all Helen Hollick's books, I Am the Chosen King is the best of them. She makes Harold Godwinson very sympathetic and I desperately wanted the inevitable ending not to happen. Harold is one of my heroes and she did ok for him, so she gets a vote from me for that.

However, she is apt to lecture her readers and makes historical errors so laughable that I....er....laugh. Forever Queen was rather bad and her Arthur series finished me off as a reader, as all but one of the characters (which one??? Hint: it wasn't Arthur ;)) was really horrible and the historical howlers were littering the....castle. Special mention of the time the casement (?) blew open in a storm and all the glass panes (?????) smashed. In the 5th century. Known fact.

Geoff Boxell says

Books about King Harold always bring me mixed emotions. Like most English I hate the Norman Conquest and still have problems dealing with our loss. This book is one of the best of its kind and, despite the inevitable sad ending, I really enjoyed reading it and highly recommend it.

Lori says

In Hollick's acknowledgements she mentions Sharon Penman and Elizabeth Chadwick as being strong influences on her writing and I could tell this was true based on how richly she writes!!! The editing was not the best so be warned on that front... but I did love EVERY second of this series and recommend it to any Penman/Chadwick fan!!!

Samantha says

I picked up this book not long after finishing Hollick's "Forever Queen," the first in this Saxon Series. Having read very little about England's pre-Conquest history, I did enjoy learning about this time period, and the portions that I looked up to delve deeper into did show that the book is written about as accurately as anything about that time can be at this point.

As with the first book, I felt that too much time was spent on details and events that did not seem to add to much to moving the story along. Though I enjoy epic novels, I do not so much like drudging through unnecessary side plots. I assume that Hollick was attempting to give a broad picture of the political maneuvering and historical backstory, but sometimes there was just too much. For example, the descriptions of Godwine's exile, Harold's time in Normandy, and Edward the Exile's decision to come to England all seemed to have little to add to the overall story.

That being said, I did greatly enjoy this book. Having only basic knowledge of the events of 1066, I was enthralled with the people and events that led to the Battle of Hastings. All of the what-if's and if-only's are expertly taken advantage of in Hollick's writing to keep the reader on the edge of their seat, even knowing that Harold's demise is eminent. Since I did not previously know much about Harold, I do not know if his characterization is accurate, but it seems unlikely that he was as smart, caring, personable, and all-around wonderful as he is painted in this narrative. About the only dislikeable thing about him is his apparent love for two women at the same time which is explained away as being necessary for his status (explained a few too many times as we are constantly reminded that he will eventually have to take a "real" wife).

William of Normandy, on the other hand, is the evil, selfish, ambitious man that is loved only by his wife, and only by her because her other choice is a miserable life and marriage. The stereotypical good versus evil of Harold and William was a little over the top, which was a shame since the historical facts were so well presented, a more balanced and realistic personification of these two men would have been nice.

The way this was written and the turn of events reminded me of the many Ricardian slanted novels that I have read about Richard III. Both the last Saxon king and last Plantagenet king were killed by usurpers with little claim to the throne, and many authors would have us believe that these doomed kings would have been England's greatest blessing had they reigned for more time. Whether it was actually true of either Harold or Richard, I suppose we can only conjecture.

Overall, I found this a very worthwhile read that has opened me to another very interesting part of history. I would definitely recommend this and "Forever Queen" to any fan of English historical fiction.