



The Queen's Bastard

Robin Maxwell

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Historians have long whispered that “the Virgin Queen” Elizabeth’s passionate, lifelong affair with Robin Dudley, Earl of Leicester, may have led to the birth of a son, Arthur Dudley. In this exquisite sequel to *The Secret Diary of Anne Boleyn*, Robin Maxwell fashions a stunning fictional account of the child switched at birth by a lady-in-waiting who foresaw the deleterious political consequences of a royal bastard. Set against the sweeping, meticulously rendered backdrop of court intrigues, international scandals, and England’s battle against the Spanish Armada in 1588, Maxwell deftly juxtaposes Elizabeth and Leicester’s tumultuous relationship with the memoirs of the adventurous son lost to them—yet ultimately discovered.

The Queen’s Bastard artfully weaves two tales, the first told by Arthur Dudley himself, who, exchanged at birth by Elizabeth’s intimates for a stillborn infant, grows up as a country gentleman, never knowing his true identity. A dreamer, a romantic, and a magnificent horseman, Arthur sets off to fight Philip II of Spain. Meanwhile, the lifelong love affair of Elizabeth and Leicester has only been strengthened by the presumed loss of their child. The two narratives collide when Arthur learns who his true parents are. Religion, sex, and the sixteenth century’s most fascinating personalities are woven into a rich tapestry of betrayal, the quest for power, and love.

The Queen's Bastard Details

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From Reader Review The Queen's Bastard for online ebook

Peggy says

I received a Kindle for Christmas which came with 1 month of free Amazon Prime. This allowed me to pick out 1 book to be "lent" to my Kindle; it will disappear from my books at the end of the month. Since I love historical fiction I picked out this book.

I'm giving it a 3 star rating. Would have given it a 4 star rating but it seemed to drag a little in the middle of the story. I would still recommend this to those who enjoy historical fiction, especially British history set during the time of Elizabeth I's reign during the late 1500's and early 1600's.

The plot is based on the premise of what if Elizabeth I and her long time close friend and possible lover, Lord Robert Dudley (who would become the Earl of Leicester), had conceived a child together. Evidently the author found in his research of King Philip of Spain that a Arthur Dudley had been arrested in Spain and sent to prison after he had approached a "spy". Arthur had claimed that he was the bastard son of Queen Elizabeth and Robert Dudley.

This novel's strong points are that it is very rich in historical details and as I stated above, it only lagged somewhat in the middle of the story.

Elizabeth Sulzby says

In this book in which Robin Maxwell draws upon some historic clues to posit that Queen Elizabeth and Robin Dudley had a baby early in their relationship. The pregnancy was hidden through cleverness of dressing and also the Queen's summer "Progress" in which she travels throughout the realm to show her support for the people and gain theirs for herself. I am reading this historical fiction just after reading a history of Catherine de Medici, Queen and Queen Regent of France during the Valois reigns. Catherine and Elizabeth both were dealing with religious factions and wars within their own kingdoms and had some direct dealings with each other. In Robin Maxwell's historical fiction, she makes the idea of this young man, Arthur (Dudley) "Southern," appear as a possible heir to the throne of England but she does not make that a goal for Arthur himself. He, like his birth father, is a lover and trainer of horses and his "assigned father" supports his love of horses and makes sure that he has an appropriate horse for his age.

Maxwell allows the preteenage Arthur to have some time with Robin Dudley in which Dudley encourages him in his studies as well as his horsemanship. She also allowed him to have a shorter amount of time with Elizabeth. This occurred when Dudley (later, the Earl of Leicester) and Elizabeth visited the small estate on which Arthur and his assigned family live. His time with Dudley is intimate and personal but his time with Elizabeth is during a hunt in which she finds him a fine fellow hunter.

As he grows up and then begins to serve as an cavalryman and then a spy within the English army, we as readers are allowed to follow his motivations and the events of his life. His adult life fits with the real history of the age and Maxwell outlines how she chose to treat Arthur Dudley as the real son of Robin and Elizabeth. I was quite satisfied with this as a piece of historical fiction with a good embedding in actual history.

I will stop now rather than give spoilers but the ending of the book was quite satisfactory to me.

Gary says

A richly atmospheric historical novel hypothesizing the claim of one Arthur Dudley, and the premise that his claim to be a son of Elizabeth I and her paramour Robert Dudley was true.

We are certain that Elizabeth II, a vital woman with a strong appetite for things physical like dancing, riding and hunting was no virgin!

And we can be sure that her great love relationship with Robert Dudley had a physical side.

Could her relationship have led to the birth of a child, whose pregnancy she hid on one of her summer progresses. then spirited away by the

Queen's trusty servant Kat Ashley and her Prime Minister William Cecil, while Elizabeth was told the child had died?

Far fetched? Could have happened.

There was a man who did claim to be the child of such a liaison, who knows?

Large parts of Arthur's journal detail the life he is given by Maxwell, included his love for horses inherited by his father, his cruel treatment at the hands of his insane adoptive mother Maud, his first sexual liaison, his military adventures in the Netherlands where he becomes a trusted confidante of William Prince of Orange and takes part in the struggle of Dutch Protestants for independence (I particularly like the Dutch section of the novel—it was rich and lively). And his adventures as a spy in Catholic Spain of the Inquisition and his love for a young Marrano Jewish widow

Lots on the romance between Elizabeth and Dudley and a great chapter on the defeat of the Spanish Armada which was prophesied.

Interesting perspectives and coverage of the great philosopher and seer Doctor John Dee.

A tight packed historical novel...brilliant visual details. Also a good story, swift, various and at all times exciting

James says

If you ever found yourself sitting around after watching the yearly Queen Elizabeth movie and thinking, "Man, will the whole Elizabeth story ever get old?" then this book shouts, "YES! IT'S OLD!" Had to force myself to finish it. Several times, after a few chapters, I felt I'd watched some Wal-Mart produced, Hallmark channel morality play that a crazed producer decided to set in Elizabethan England instead of the Cracker Barrel-esque Smokey Mountains. The most redeeming part of the book is that it's nearly ten years old so, hopefully, the movie window for it has closed.

Rebecca says

Historically the book was good. Learned quite a bit about William of Orange and Phillip of Spain that I did not know though I have read many Elizabeth books. The character of Arthur however, while apparently historical, was not believable. His interactions with Elizabeth and Robin were too contrived, and his survival in battles, etc., unbelievable. Would have been nice, but just read too much like a simple fairy tale and not a book to have any merit. Disappointing.

Gary says

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Tamara says

Dear authors everywhere,

Entire chapters in italics are annoying and unnecessary. Italics are to emphasize important points. If you believe your readers are too stupid to realize when a different character's voice is being used, you 1) are a poor character writer, 2) don't respect your readers and 3) could simply use the device of using the character's name as the chapter title.

For the record, I do not read chapters printed entirely in italicized type. Therefore, I read only about half of this book. The parts I did read were not too bad.

Elisa Mesiani says

"Mio affezionato popolo," cominciò Elisabetta con voce vigorosa e ferma "i miei consiglieri, temendo per la mia vita, non volevano che io venissi qui fra di voi. Ma come potete vedere non ho prestato loro ascolto, perché io credo nella lealtà dei miei sudditi che sono la mia forza e non la mia debolezza. E così sono venuta

qui, al culmine della battaglia, per vivere o morire con voi! Posso avere il corpo debole e fragile di una donna," proseguì Elisabetta, la voce elevata fin quasi a un grido "ma ho il cuore e le viscere di un re, e di un re d'Inghilterra per giunta!"

Terri says

Only Robin Maxwell could write an entire book based on someone who may never even have existed and make you believe that he quite possibly did. This is a fascinating story about Arthur Dudley, purported to be the illegitimate son of Queen Elizabeth and her Horsemaster, Robin Dudley. There is no doubt that the two carried on a long and tempestuous love affair; however, historical accounts are relatively silent about the existence of any offspring from this relationship. Nevertheless, Maxwell found enough during her research to raise the intriguing possibility of a child being born to these two, and his existence kept secret to protect Elizabeth's reputation as the "Virgin Queen."

A good story, as always, with enough historical fact to lend credibility to the idea of this bastard son of a Queen.

Julio Vm says

Todos los años, sin proponérmelo, termino leyendo algún libro ambientado en la época isabelina. El año pasado fueron Isabel y Essex (Lytton Strachey) y María Estuardo (Stefan Zweig). Sabiendo a grandes rasgos su historia, nunca me aburre.

Con esta novela, me han dado ganas de montar a caballo. Uno de mis animales preferidos. Tienen gran protagonismo.

Encontraréis varias desviaciones históricas (el hecho del que parte ya es bastante cuestionable) pero no deja de ser entretenida, y un poco telenovela venezolana (pero eso no me ha importado). Los guiños a personajes de esa época y episodios que narra (la vida de Arthur y su participación en algunos sucesos históricos) lo compensan todo. Muy bien cerrada.

Rodolfo says

Un excelente libro para los amantes de la historia el cual narra la vida del hijo bastardo de la reina Isabel I, el cual esta excelentemente bien documentado gracias a la ardua investigación de la autora y que une todos esos puntos de una manera magistral relatándonos la vida de este personaje llamado Arthur, he de confesar que me tarde leyéndolo mas de lo que esperaba pero es que hay ciertas partes en las cuales la narrativa se hace un poco pesada y un tanto aburrida pero fuera de eso nos llena de puntos interesante que tal vez desconocíamos de la vida de la reina y que en parte son verdad mezclado con ficción pero que nos deja con la duda y probablemente la certeza de que pudo ser verdad, al conocer el trabajo de esta autora me han dado ganas de leer mas de ella por lo bien documentado que esta su trabajo...

Tita says

Este livro conta-nos a história de Arthur Dudley, filho de Isabel I e de Robin Dudley.

No entanto, aquando do seu nascimento, a parteira, em conluio com Kat (fiel criada e amiga de Isabel) e Cecil, trocam o bebé por um nado-morto.

Kat entrega Arthur a um seu amigo, para que ele o eduque como sendo seu filho. Arthur só descobre a verdade sobre os seus pais, quando o seu pai adoptivo está a morrer.

Ao longo do livro, a história é narrada por diversos intervenientes. Arthur relata as suas memórias, desde a sua infância, até à sua vida adulta. Paralelamente, temos a relação amorosa entre Isabel e Robin, o contexto político em que Inglaterra se encontra, as relações entre Espanha, Inglaterra e os Países Baixos.

O livro, com as guerras e os jogos de poder entre estes países, torna-se interessante, no entanto, achei alguns capítulos sobre Arthur, com bocadinho maçadores, nomeadamente sobre a guerra da Holanda; ao invés dos de Isabel, que gostei mais. Daí ter gostado mais dos outros dois livros da autora do que este.

Em relação aos livros da autora sobre os Tudor, não os li nem pela ordem que foram publicados nem por ordem cronológica. Se voltasse a ler os livros, iria-os ler pela seguinte ordem:

1. A Princesa Virgem
2. O Diário Secreto de Ana Bolena
3. O Bastardo da Rainha

Fazendo o balanço sobre os três livros, a opinião final é positiva.

Juliew. says

What would have happened if Queen Elizabeth I had an illegitimate son and he lived to tell the tale? This book gives an answer of sorts. The book follows the queen's son's adventures and it also follows the story of Elizabeth and Robert Dudley's relationship. I liked the vivid descriptions about horses, english towns, country life and battles. Although, I found the relationship between Robert and the Queen plausible I felt I couldn't say the same for the story of Arthur Dudley.

His exploits seemed far fetched at points but this aspect didn't ruin the book for me as I just kept in mind I was reading fiction and went with the story. If you like loosing yourself in the Tudor era you may want to read this.

Milly says

This was my first book by Robin Maxwell and it won't be my last. I really enjoyed how she put these characters into real history. Here she writes of a young man named Arthur Dudley, the illegitimate son of Queen Elizabeth I and her lover, Robin Dudley the Earl of Leicester. It includes a first person narration by Arthur which adds life to the story and makes it almost believeable.

Monica says

I wish the book focused more on Arthur Dudley and less on the Queen and Robert Dudley. I understand the need for historical context, however the switching in perspective was distracting and in my opinion unnecessary.
