



The Tudor Crown

Joanna Hickson

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‘A wonderful story... engrossing, lively and engaging’ For Winter Nights book blog

‘An intriguing tale, told with confidence’ The Times

She’ll betray her king to crown her son

When Edward of York takes back the English crown, the Wars of the Roses scatter the Lancastrian nobility and young Henry Tudor, with a strong claim to the throne, is forced into exile.

Recently widowed and vulnerable, his mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort, forges an uncomfortable alliance with Edward’s queen, Elizabeth Woodville. Swearing an oath of allegiance to York, Margaret agrees to marry the king’s shrewdest courtier, Lord Stanley. But can she tread the precarious line between duty to her husband, loyalty to her son, and her obligation to God and the king?

When tragedy befalls Edward’s reign, Richard of York’s ruthless actions fire the ambition of mother and son. As their destinies converge each of them will be exposed to betrayal and treachery and in their gruelling bid for the Tudor crown, both must be prepared to pay the ultimate price...

The Tudor Crown Details

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Author : Joanna Hickson

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From Reader Review The Tudor Crown for online ebook

Kathleen says

An enjoyable read about the start of Henry Tudor's reign which I gave something close to 4 stars. (rounded up) I liked the " Margaret "chapters much the best, although Joanna Hickson explained how little is known about Henry's exile. I found it difficult to go back and forth between the two accounts and am sure it was a difficult task for an author.

Henry VII is not my favorite king, but hopefully the last chapter where he explains himself very gracefully sheds a more hopeful light for a sequel about his marriage to Elizabeth. Those years are sort of sparse on authentic historical narrative also. I am anxiously awaiting another book being in the works.

Olga Miret says

Thanks to NetGalley and to Harper Collins UK for providing me an ARC copy of this novel that I freely chose to review.

I must start by saying that although I've been reading more historical fiction recently, I am not an expert on the subject, and I know a bit more about other historical periods than about the rise to power of Henry VII of England. I was familiar with the bare facts and, like many people, knew of Richard III through Shakespeare's play. So, please take my comments about historical accuracy with a pinch of salt (I might be totally wrong!).

I thoroughly enjoyed this novel. I had not read any of Joanna Hickson's previous books but thought this would be an opportunity to familiarise myself with the period and to discover her writing. The book follows the adventures of Henry Tudor, whom we meet as a youth, as he escapes England with his uncle Jasper Owen, and also his mother's, Lady Margaret Beaufort, who is left in the unenviable position of being widowed and a known supporter of the losing side (the House of Lancaster) in the new court of Edward IV (of the House of York). The chapters, written in first person from the points of view of the two protagonists, alternate as required by the action (at times we might have several chapters from Margaret's point of view, and towards the end, when Henry returns to England, while his mother is confined to her husband's household, we have several from his point of view), and we also have access to their epistolary interaction (as many years passed before they set eyes on each other).

To begin with I was overwhelmed by the large cast of characters, some with pretty complex titles and similar names, but the book offers a Family Tree and a Map at the beginning, that allow us to follow some of the intricacies of the relationships and to better understand the movements of the characters, and a glossary at the end, that includes definitions of some of the historical terms in use and others relevant to the story (some French and Welsh words that are introduced in the action). (Those who access the story in e-book format should be able to find most of the terms in the dictionary included with the e-reader). Do not be put off by talk of historical terms, as the language used in the story, although not jarringly modern or inadequate to the times, is easy to follow, flows well and feels completely natural to the setting and the situation.

As for the characters... I liked Margaret from the very beginning. Even though her circumstances are miles and centuries apart from most of us, it is easy to empathise with a woman who has lost her husband, is separated from her son, and has to make difficult decisions in order to survive and to further the cause of her son. She is intelligent, astute, determined, but also caring, generous, and kind-hearted. She takes on the children of noblemen and women who have lost their lives in the war or fallen on hard times (perhaps as a way of compensating for the loss of her son), and she is presented as a woman particularly attuned to the

difficulties and tragedies other women are faced with. She is a staunch supporter of her son, schemes and puts herself at great risk, at times, to try and further his cause.

I found the early chapters from Henry's point of view, less interesting. Although he finds himself in dire situations, he is too young to fully understand what is happening, and he gets side-tracked at times and behaves like a boy his age, no matter what fate might have in store for him. This is as it should be and shows the skill of the writer, who presents Henry as somebody aware of his position but also a young boy with much to learn, not only about becoming a king but also about life in general. The book is, in part, his coming-of-age story (including a romance, which the author explains in her note at the end, she made up), but as he grows, he comes into his own and ends up being the one to drive the action. Whatever our opinion of the historical events of the time, his life in exile, always at risk of assassination due to his bloodline, the early loss of his father and the forced separation from his mother make him another character easy to side with. The fact that we see the story from his point of view, and have no insight into Richard III or his actions (other than third-hand through comments and gossip from others) adds to our enjoyment of the story as it is told, although I found that, like Margaret, we come to appreciate some of the members of the York House (Edward IV, his wife, and his daughter, Elizabeth of York) and, like the country, we see that politics and alliances can be difficult to fathom and understand without full knowledge of the circumstances.

There are enigmatic characters (Margaret's husband, Lord Stanley, is fascinating and plays his cards very well, although he is not heroic in the standard sense), and the novel offers us a good sense of the complexity of the historical period, of what passed for diplomacy at the time (that might include marrying somebody to further one's claims to land, power, and titles), and of how easily somebody's luck can turn. Survival was complicated in such a period, no matter who you were (in fact, it might be more difficult if you were of royal blood), and knowing how to present yourself and who to choose as your ally could be (and often was) a matter of life or death.

The author includes recent discoveries (like Richard III's body being unearthed from a Leicester's car park) and research to bring to life Bosworth Battle (or Redemore Battle, if we were trying to be more precise). The scene is set in detail and she manages to convey the brutality of it and the tactical elements. Richard III's determination also comes through, and no matter what we might think of him as a person, it seems he was a brave and determined fighter.

The ending, which is satisfying (of course, not surprising), leaves us with Henry waiting to be crowned and talking about his marriage, after having finally been reunited with his mother. In her note, the author tells us she plans more books with Margaret as a character, and she explains her first-hand research (including visiting some of the Bretton and French castles where Henry spent his youth, and the Battle of Bosworth Heritage site, which sounds like a must for anybody interested in the topic), and the books and sources she has accessed. She also explains which liberties she took with the story and how much she made up (very little is known of Henry's life in France), and it did not sound excessive, considering this is not intended as a history book but as a novel.

In sum, I enjoyed learning more about this historical period; I felt the first-person narration made it easier to get invested in the fates of the characters and enjoyed the mixture of politics and action. I recommend it to people interested in this historical period, lovers of historical fiction and all things Tudor, and to fans of the author. I will keep my eye on future releases and will check her other books.

Julie says

I find Henry VII's story fascinating; in part because he was the father of the Tudor dynasty and also because of his formidable mother, Mary Beaufort. I think that without her relentless determination to see her son on the throne, despite the fact that others had just as much of a legitimate claim to it, the course of British

history might have been completely different. Although other authors also deal with the same period, Joanna Hickson allows us to see into the mind of young Henry Tudor. It is not easy to bring history alive yet somehow the author does so in a seemingly effortless way. I learnt more about Henry Tudor from this book than I ever did at school.

Mary Higginson says

The Tudor Crown - Joanna Hickson

Told from a dual perspective those of Henry VII and his mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort, this is a gripping re-telling of a fascinating period in history.

Dramatic, detailed and rooted in a period we know little about this novel has the ring of authenticity. We are shown the long wait and struggle for Henry's accession to the crown of England against the backdrop of the Wars of the Roses.

Margaret Beaufort is ruthless in her determination to help Henry. She schemes and plots in her efforts to get the throne she believes is rightfully his and is ruthless in her determination to this end. Nevertheless, unlike in a lot of modern re-tellings we sympathise with her rather than Richard.

There is a good sense of period and the atmosphere of danger is tangible. The characters are well drawn and convincing.

If you enjoy strong, well written historical fiction this is for you. If you don't normally read this period you are in for a treat.

Olga Miret says

Great female narrator and a must-read for lovers of all things Tudor. Thanks to NetGalley and to Harper Collins UK for providing me an ARC copy of this novel that I freely chose to review.

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Dana says

A compelling read about Henry VII's very long wait to claim the throne of England. As the author admits there is very little fact available about this period of history but Joanna Hickson has combined what little there is with a fictional tale to make a very readable novel about this period.

Very many thanks to Netgalley/Joanna Hickson/Harper Collins for a digital copy of this novel. All opinions are my own.

Megan Jones says

When Edward of York takes back the English crowns, the Wars of the Roses scatter the Lancastrian nobility and young Henry Tudor is forced into exile. His mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort forges an uncomfortable alliance with Edward's queen, Elizabeth Woodville. Swearing an oath of allegiance to York, Margaret marries the king's shrewdest courtier, Lord Stanley. Can Margaret tread the precarious line between duty to her husband, loyalty to her son and her obligation to God and the king? When tragedy hits Edward's reign, Richard of York's ruthless actions fire the ambition of mother and son.

This is fantastic, rich, historical novel charting a well-known period of history. Hickson tells this from the perspective of Margaret Beaufort and Henry and I have to be honest, I preferred the chapters from Margaret's perspective. These chapters are evocative of the time, rich in detail with good historical licence taken and the reader really gets a sense of the emotions behind Margaret and her actions. I struggled a bit with Henry's chapters, I did not always get the sense of who he was and a lot of detail is added in, potentially accurate but I did not get the realistic feel that I got from Margaret's chapters. I thought Margaret's chapters were more dramatic as well, she is in the centre of the danger and you can feel the desperation to get knowledge to Henry and to protect him. Towards the end, as Henry's story races forward in time, I did enjoy Henry's chapters a lot more as he becomes centre of the action and I got more of a feel for him as a person. It is just a pity that this is not carried through for the rest of the novel.

This aside, I thoroughly enjoyed 'The Tudor Crown', Hickson captures the excitement, the danger and most importantly the unknown. Despite knowing what would happen from history, I still found myself on the edge of my seat wondering how certain actions were going to play out. This was both a surprising and welcome addition to the novel. Hickson does do an excellent job in bringing the characters to life, at one point or another I felt sympathy for the characters and gained a good sense of who they were. This is a very sympathetic portrayal of Margaret Beaufort, different to others that I have read and again this was a welcome addition.

'The Tudor Crown' is a terrific, sumptuous retelling of a tumultuous period of history, I was taken in by this novel and was only too pleased to go along for the ride.

Jo says

Hickson's novel tells the story of how Henry VII came to power, starting with his exile in Brittany at the age of 14 to the aftermath of the Battle of Bosworth where he defeated Richard III. Inbetween, we see the story of Margaret Beaufort and her efforts on behalf of her beloved son. This was a very good piece of historical fiction written in an engaging style that brought the era to life.

Patricia Moren says

One of my favourite periods of history. I enjoy how an author selects characters and spins stories around them, linking it to recorded history. Thoroughly enjoyable read.

Kate says

Absolutely sensational! I love the way that the narrative is divided between young Henry Tudor, a young king in waiting, coping with exile, and his mother back in England, the remarkable Margaret Beaufort. It's an extraordinary story and I love the way that Joanna Hickson tells it. I gobbled this up. Review to follow shortly on For Winter Nights.

Margaret says

Little is known about Henry Tudor's early life and this novel covers the time he spent in exile when he was fourteen years old up to the Battle of Bosworth in 1485 when he was twenty eight. The son of Edmund Tudor and Margaret Beaufort, Henry was born in Pembroke Castle in Wales. As a Lancastrian claimant to the throne, Henry's life was in danger and so, together with his uncle, Jasper Tudor, he fled the country after Henry VI was killed in 1471 and Edward IV took the throne. They were aiming to seek refuge in France, but storms drove them to land in Brittany (I hadn't known that Brittany was not part of France at that time). Where they spent the next fourteen years.

If I knew little about Henry VII, I knew even less about his mother Margaret Beaufort. She was only thirteen when Henry was born and saw little of him during his early life in Wales and subsequent exile in Brittany. The Tudor Crown is told from both her perspective and that of Henry's, including letters between them telling of their plans for Henry's return to England.

The funny thing about historical fiction, to my mind, is that although I know the outcome of events as I read I found that I was willing Henry on and wondering how he would be successful. Joanna Hickson has brought the period to life, capturing the danger and frustration and hopes for the future that both Henry and Margaret experienced. I could visualise the scenes, particularly the storm at sea and the perilous landing on the shores of Brittany, Henry's fictional love affair with Catherine de Belleville and the account of the Battle of Bosworth. She has filled the story with characters that have their own personalities. In particular I grew to like and admire Margaret Beaufort. She comes across as an intelligent and compassionate woman, loyal to her son, always ready to help him financially and ambitious for his future.

I think this is a good mix of fact and fiction - in her Author's Note Joanna Hickson explains that 'with the odd exception' the people Henry met and the places he went to existed but their characters and descriptions are from her imagination. She says she 'has never doubted that Richard was responsible for the deaths of the Princes in the Tower' in contrast to other accounts that I've read, particularly Sharon Penman's *The Sunne in Splendour* in which she portrays a very likeable Richard and a different solution to what happened to the Princes.

I really enjoyed reading this book, and as in all good historical fiction Joanna Hickson has included details of the sources she has used in her research for *The Tudor Crown*. Now, I'm hoping she will write more books about Henry's life after he became King.

Many thanks to Harper Collins and NetGalley for a review copy.

Kimberly Thompson says

As a reader who absolutely loves books about the Tudor court/war of the roses, I thoroughly enjoyed Joanna Hickson's latest novel, *The Tudor Queen*!

This book tells the story of Henry VII's struggle to claim the throne of England. It begins with Henry's 'escape' to the north of France with his Uncle Jasper after Edward of York has claimed the throne of England. The characterisation of such well known people in History is excellent. Joanna Hickson's writing brings all of the characters to life vividly. The chapters alternate between Margaret Beaufort's 'battle/conspiracy' to bring her son back to England safely to claim the throne of England for Lancaster and Henry's exile in France and his life/thoughts as a fourteen year old boy.

I really enjoyed the way Joanna portrays the character of Margaret Beaufort, her many sides and allegiances to others whilst always 'fighting' for her one true cause to save her son and make him King of England.

As well as bringing to life the major players in this story leading to the war of the roses, Joanna introduces lots of less well known characters such as Margaret Beaufort's wards or 'nestlings' as Margaret calls them.

Also the crew of the ship taking Jasper and Henry to France and Jasper's 'wife' Jane. Again Joanna makes every character seem so real and important in the part they have to play in this major historical story.

Equally, descriptions such as the treacherous journey to France are just as vivid and effective.

I would recommend this book to anyone who loves reading about this era in History.

A big thank you to NetGalley and the book's publishers for granting my wish to read this wonderful book!

Annarella says

A very enjoyable and interesting historical novel about a less known historical period.

The book is well researched and I like the way the historical settings were described and how the characters were developed.

Recommended!

Many thanks HarperCollins UK and NetGalley for this ARC

Jossie Marie Solheim says

Well researched and written but I just couldn't get into this one. It was very slow going and just not my style.

Vanessa says

This hurts me deeply. I was looking forward to this and wanted to love this book so much, cause there are really not many books that have Henry VII and Margaret Beaufort as heroes or even as a main protagonists. I've basically spent the last week or so in so much denial about disliking this book that I didn't even mark it as finished.

But I did dislike it.

The premise was actually great! Mother and son, separated because their side lost a war, trying to work their way back to one another and then towards the crown. Sprinkled in are other historical characters and some made up people to give the story more depths and the reader more characters to care about. Good stuff right there!

Sadly, the execution was terribly boring. I even started skipping pages near the end - and that's where the technically most exciting stuff was happening.

I usually don't mind changing up or adding to history a bit in my historical fiction. That's what the "fiction" part is for. I simply want to be entertained. (Now, if you claim that your version of history is 100% what happened, then we have a problem. Hello Philippa Gregory, how are you?)

Sadly neither the historical accurate, nor the made up stuff was in any way interesting most of the time. All the characters were pretty bland, with only the occasional sparks of life.

I do question the decision to have Jasper Tudor's made up illegitimate family join him and Henry in exile. I could have understood maybe a son/brother figure, but this way they didn't really add anything, except some weird family drama that also amounted to basically nothing. It rather took away from the famous uncle/nephew relationship in my opinion.

For those who are interested in if the usual suspects were evil or not:

Elizabeth Woodville wasn't portrayed as a villain. At first she seemed to be one, but with time in which her friendship with Margaret deepened (something that I did like), she was shown to be a practical, intelligent woman not without warmth - especially for her family.

Edward IV was portrayed pretty neutral in the sense that I didn't feel like I was supposed to hate him, but also get the feeling that he wasn't right for the throne. His eating and whoring habits weren't portrayed favorably, but they also weren't made up.

Sadly, Richard III had the usual main villain role without redeeming qualities. I prefer it when both sides of the conflict have at least some personality worth rooting for. Otherwise it's just boring - especially when you already know how it's going to end, like in this case. I'm totally able to root for Henry, even without hating Richard.

So yes. This one was a disappointment... but if the author decides to write a follow up about Henry's reign and his relationship with Elizabeth of York, I will be SO there. I'm starved for stories portraying them in a positive light (Hello again, Philippa Gregory... >_>)!

