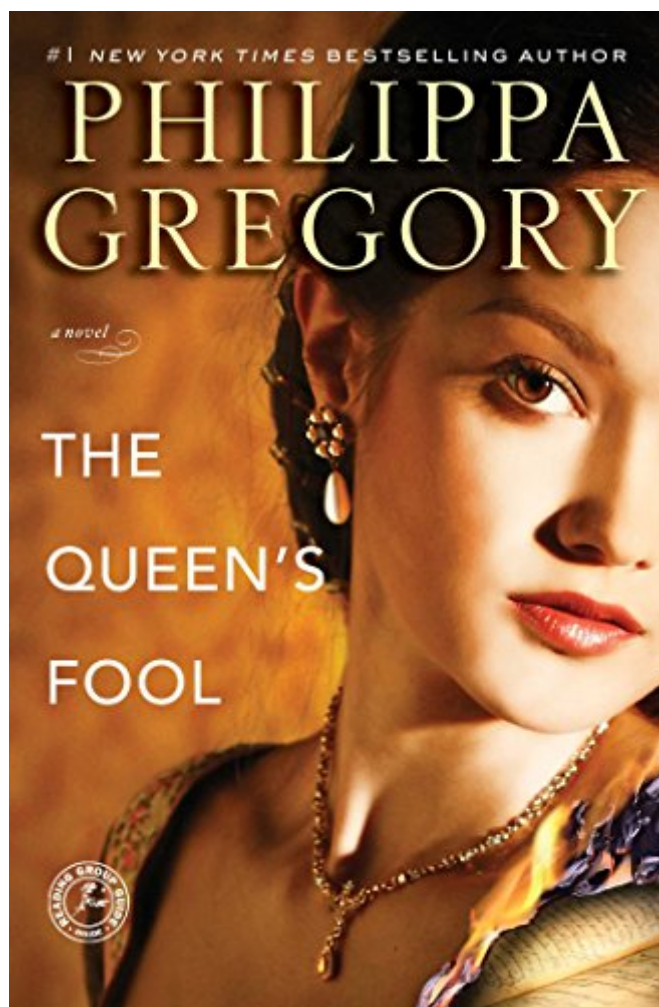


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The Queen's Fool: A Novel (The Plantagenet And Tudor Novels)



Synopsis

#1 > bestselling author and "queen of royal fiction" (>) Philippa Gregory weaves a spellbinding tale of a young woman with the ability to see the future in an era when destiny was anything but clear. Winter, 1553. Pursued by the Inquisition, Hannah Green, a fourteen-year-old Jewish girl, is forced to flee with her father from their home in Spain. But Hannah is no ordinary refugee; she has the gift of "Sight," the ability to foresee the future, priceless in the troubled times of the Tudor court. Hannah is adopted by the glamorous Robert Dudley, the charismatic son of King Edward VI's protector, who brings her to court as a "holy fool" for Queen Mary and, ultimately, Queen Elizabeth. Hired as a fool but working as a spy; promised in wedlock but in love with her master; endangered by the laws against heresy, treason, and witchcraft, Hannah must choose between the safe life of a commoner and the dangerous intrigues of the royal family that are inextricably bound up with her own yearnings and desires. Teeming with vibrant period detail and peopled by characters seamlessly woven into the sweeping tapestry of history, > is a rich and emotionally resonant gem from a masterful storyteller.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This best selling English author of historical fiction has written yet another interesting work. This

novel takes place during the reign of Mary Tudor, daughter of King Henry VIII and Katherine of Aragon. She would leave a legacy that would cause her to be known as "Bloody Mary" for her burning of heretics. The narrator is a girl named Hannah Green, a young teenager who has fled Spain and its Inquisition with her father, following the death of her mother. She had been burned alive at the stake as a heretic, when it was discovered that she was a "Marrano", a false Christian, that is, a Jew who has converted to Christianity but who follows the Jewish faith in secret. Landing in London, where her father opens a book store, Hannah makes the acquaintance of a handsome rake, Sir Robert Dudley, who discovers that Hannah has the gift of sight. She develops a personal relationship with him that eventually sees her enter into Queen Mary's service as her fool. Hannah serves Queen Mary, but at the same time, is sent by the Queen to serve her half-sister the Princess Elizabeth and spy upon her. Meanwhile, Sir Robert Dudley also uses Hannah in his treasonous plot to see the Princess Elizabeth on the throne of England. So, Hannah finds herself walking a dangerous tightrope and is fearful of discovery of her role in the political intrigues that are welling around her, as well as discovery of her own background, which would be grounds for death. Her worst fears are nearly realized when the Queen marries Prince Phillip of Spain. In the midst of all this political intriguing that appears to be going on all around her, Hannah has her own immediate future to think about, as she becomes betrothed to another Marrano such as herself.

Phillipa Gregory does a wonderful job of recreating a historical period, and I did enjoy her other Tudor work, *The Other Boleyn Girl*. I expected to enjoy this one as much, but couldn't. I found the indiscriminately sympathetic portrayal of Mary (known to history as Bloody Mary) troubling. The author seemed to think that because Mary was a wronged wife, her excesses were excusable. Even more disturbing, and harder to swallow, is that the main character, Hannah, a secret Jew who lives in fear of being burned as heretic, remains loyal and uncritical of Mary until the end. Either Hannah is an insensitive hypocrite, indifferent to the suffering of others because of her own safety as a royal favorite, or she is a poorly drawn character. It is hard to believe someone whose own mother was burned at the stake could remain loyal to a woman who sent so many to be burned alive. Gregory blames Mary's ministers, pretending Mary was largely unaware of what was being done. A ruler with Mary's absolute power "unaware"? That makes her either a disconnected, incompetent ruler (not Gregory's view), or one so weak she was completely dominated by her ministers, which there is no reason to believe. Gregory did succeed in showing how sad Mary's life was in many ways: Early separation from her mother due to her father's selfish whims, loss of her position, a youth spent in a kind of exile, an unfaithful husband. However, I also saw her parents' flaws in her: obsessive

attachment to a indifferent man, fanaticism and sense of absolute truth which both parents possessed, and worse, a ruthlessness and cruelty in enforcing her will inherited from her father."Bloody Mary" traumatized her country and was, ironically, probably one of the reasons England turned staunchly Protestant.

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