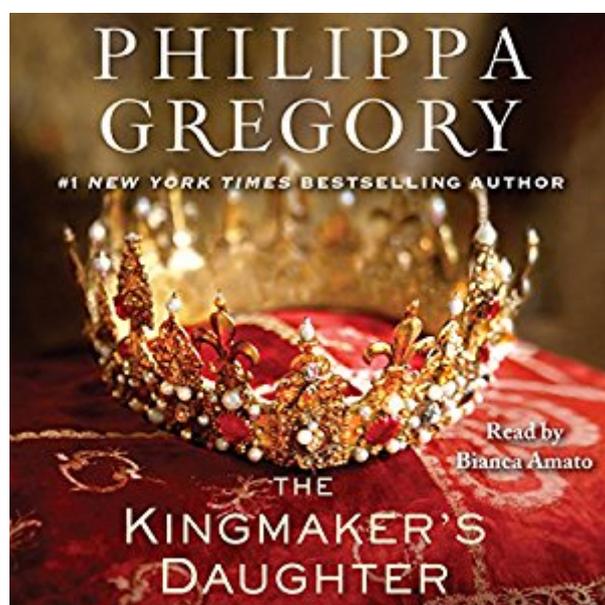


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The Kingmaker's Daughter



Synopsis

In *The Kingmaker's Daughter*, number-one New York Times best-selling author Philippa Gregory presents the riveting story of Anne Neville, her sister Isabel, and their ever-changing fortunes. *The Kingmaker's Daughter* is the gripping and ultimately tragic story of the daughters of the man known as the "Kingmaker", the most powerful magnate in England through the Cousins' Wars. In the absence of a son and heir, he uses the two girls as pawns in his political games, but they grow up to be influential players in their own right. In this novel, her first sister story since *The Other Boleyn Girl*, Gregory explores the lives of two fascinating young women. At the court of Edward IV and his beautiful queen, Elizabeth Woodville, Anne grows from a delightful child brought up in intimacy and friendship with the family of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, to become ever more fearful and desperate when her father makes war on his former friends. Her will is tested when she is left widowed and fatherless, with her mother in sanctuary and her sister married to the enemy. Fortune's wheel turns again when Richard rescues Anne from her sister's house, with danger still following Anne, even as she eventually ascends to the throne as queen. Having lost those closest to her, she must protect herself and her precious only child, Prince Edward, from a court full of royal rivals.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 15 hours and 7 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Audio

Audible.com Release Date: August 14, 2012

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B008XDYDFE

Best Sellers Rank: #55 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Romance > Historical #130 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Biographical #148 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Historical > Biographical

Customer Reviews

Philippa Gregory has long been associated with the highest quality in historical fiction. After reinventing the genre with her highly popular *The Other Boleyn Girl*, Gregory has consistently turned

out quality period novels, taking on Henry VIII's other and somewhat lesser known wives, Queen Elizabeth I and the many ladies of the War of the Roses. In her latest entry into her Cousins' War series, Gregory tells the story of Anne Neville, the daughter of the famous kingmaker, Richard Neville, who put Edward of York on the throne. It may seem simple on the surface, but there is much more to Anne's story. After Edward's highly unpopular marriage to Elizabeth Woodville, the subject of *The White Queen*, Anne's father felt betrayed and in order to secure his own connections to the throne, he marries Anne's older sister Isabel to Edward's brother George. When a series of failed revolts forces the Nevilles out of England, Anne is married to the exiled Edward of Lancaster in one last desperate attempt to put a Neville on the throne. But when the last Lancaster push for the throne fails, Anne is left adrift with an uncertain future. Dare I say that *Kingmaker's Daughter* is one of the best books in the Cousins' War so far? While I enjoyed the others, especially *The White Queen*, *Kingmaker's Daughter* followed an incredibly fascinating young woman and her struggle as a political pawn during one of the most turbulent periods in British history. Through Anne starts off as a somewhat meek and weak young woman, she draws strength from her life experiences and grows into a stronger, more intelligent and motivated woman.

Philippa Gregory has handled a muddled history with unexpected originality. When *The Kingmaker's Daughter* came out, I was excited but equally hesitant to read it. From reading Philippa's other books, I felt she would handle the story of Anne and Isabel in one of two ways. The first was to make Anne and Isabel anachronistically independent, and the second was to make them absolute pushovers. While Philippa did make use of that worn-out analogy of medieval women acting like pawns in a chessgame, she also made Anne and Isabel seem realistic, with a few exceptions. I was also impressed by the way Philippa treated such characters as George of Clarence and Richard III because her characterization of them was, if not totally new, at least different from the majority of Wars of the Roses novels on the market these days. Overall, my chief complaint in regards to this novel was, in my opinion, the poor writing and a certain lack of consistency which hindered an otherwise enjoyable story. In *Kingmaker's Daughter*, Gregory's writing seems almost like a parody of itself. The simple, slightly ominous and foreboding style that served her so well before became heavy-handed. In one sentence, she describes Edward IV as "glorious" twice, and this is only one example of her constant repetition of overblown adjectives and phrases. Despite all these adjectives, I felt the writing did not serve to set an atmosphere or setting for the novel. It was clunky and amateurish, and since I know Philippa can do better from her other novels, I can't help but feel that the writing in *Kingmaker's Daughter* is simply the product of

laziness, either on Philippa's part or her editor's. In general, the caliber of writing seems to decrease with each of her releases, specifically the books in the Cousins' War series.

When you buy a book by Philippa Gregory, you know a few things: the narrative will be a version of history; that version will focus on one or two key female figures, telling the tale from this unique perspective (which may be counter to what you've learned elsewhere -- even in other books by Philippa Gregory, as she does a great job of balancing differing viewpoints); and finally, the tale will be rich with detail, and will help you feel as if you are witnessing or experiencing the events first-hand -- for better or worse, in some cases. I was entirely prepared to enjoy *The Kingmaker's Daughter*; I've read all of the books in the Cousins' War series thus far, and have found them to provide a very interesting perspective on a fascinating historical period. Of course, I am prepared to accept a certain amount of speculation when I read historical fiction -- that's part of the agreement between writer and reader. That's not my problem with this book. One of my objections is that some of the scenes and one of the primary plot premises (that Anne, as a late adolescent, is somehow "too young" for this or that) are just *too* anachronistic for me to accept. Reading the exchanges between the sisters in which they endlessly addressed each other as "Annie" and "Iz" or "Izzy" became so grating; I felt as if I were reading a script for "Grey's Anatomy," not a novel set in the 15th century. I highly, highly doubt that Isabella and Anne Neville referred to each other as Annie and Izzy. It's a small detail, I know, but sometimes small things really wear on a reader. For me, that was one such thing. The Woodvilles are descendants of Melusina, a river spirit? Great! I love it. Late medieval sisters call each other Annie and Izzy? Like, gag me.

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