

The King's Daughter

by Barbara Kyle



About the Book

Upon the death of her father, Henry VIII, Queen Mary assumes the throne after a long exile. Her first order of business is to wed the devout Prince Philip of Spain, creating a powerful alliance that will transform Mary's fanatical dream of ridding England of Protestantism into terrifying reality. And so begins the reign of Bloody Mary...

Even as she plans for her own nuptials, Isabel Thornleigh is helping to lay the groundwork to overthrow Mary and bring Elizabeth to power. But none of the secrets Isabel has discovered compares to the truths hidden in her own family. With her beloved father imprisoned by Queen Mary, only Carlos Valverde --- a Spanish soldier of fortune --- can help Isabel. Now with England's future at stake, Isabel risks all to change the course of history...

Filled with lavish period detail and fascinating characters, **The King's Daughter** mesmerizes readers as it takes them into a riveting world of riches, pageantry, passion, and danger...

Discussion Guide

1. With her mother grievously wounded and her father thrown into prison, Isabel faces a terrible choice. She is pledged to help Wyatt's rebels, her fiancé, Martin, among them, but her father has ordered her to take her injured mother to safety in Europe. Isabel decides to send her mother away but stay herself to help the rebels and try to free her father, though the latter seems impossible. What are your views about Isabel's decision? Was she wrong to abandon her mother, or was she right to stay?

2. Queen Mary's decision to marry Philip of Spain is the flashpoint for the country's unrest. The people are against her subordinating herself to a powerful foreign prince, and the Queen's own councilors beg her to call off the marriage, but Mary, desperate for a husband and an heir, will not betray her betrothal vows, and the result is the Wyatt Rebellion. What is your opinion of Mary's stand? Was she dedicated or deluded?

3. Isabel is determined to get her father out of prison where he will surely face execution. When the jailer, Mosse, offers her a trade --- her father's release in exchange for carnal enjoyment of her body --- Isabel allows Mosse to rape her. How did you feel about her bargain? Was she horribly naïve, or was the chance of saving her father worth enduring Mosse?

4. Martin is boyishly eager to join Wyatt's rebels and win a glorious victory against the Queen until, after the first battle, he watches his wounded brother die in his arms. Stunned by the brutal reality of war and fearing he'll hang if the rebels lose, Martin decides to flee England, and when Isabel says she will not join him, he leaves without her. What is your view of Martin's decision to desert both Wyatt and Isabel?

5. Loyalty and betrayal are key themes in **The King's Daughter** and the steadfastness of many is tested: Isabel's pledge to Wyatt, Mary's loyalty to her Catholic faith, Carlos's promise to kill Thornleigh, Isabel's fidelity to Martin. How do you feel about the choices these characters make to either preserve or destroy the bonds they hold dear?

6. Isabel's parents, Honor and Richard, treat her like a child, insisting she doesn't know what she's talking about in wanting to help the rebels, and Isabel is, in fact, naïve about the "glorious uprising." But what she experiences between her initial eagerness to help Wyatt and her final decision to betray him changes her almost overnight from a child into a woman. What do you think were the turning points that made Isabel grow up?

7. E. M. Forster said, "If I had to betray my country or my friend, I hope I would have the courage to betray my country." As Wyatt's army reaches Ludgate in London Wall, Isabel faces this heart-wrenching choice. If she keeps the gate open, the rebels will win, but Sydenham's archer will surely kill her father; if she closes the gate, she'll save her father, but the rebels will be captured and hanged. She must betray one or the other. What are your views about her choice?

8. Land means everything to Carlos. Having lost his land in the law courts, which drove him to kill a man, he jumps at the chance to get out of prison by accepting Sydenham's commission to assassinate Thornleigh. But he falls in love with Isabel, so he abandons that mission, joins the Queen's army, and captures Wyatt, assuring himself of the Queen's reward of land. Yet Carlos gives it all up to save Isabel and her father, dooming himself to poverty. How do you view his action? Is a man who makes such a sacrifice foolish or strong?

9. Frances Grenville's love for Edward Sydenham verges on adoration until she sees him with Isabel, and then her actions prove the adage "hell hath no fury like a woman scorned." After Carlos captures Edward with the rebels, Queen Mary tells Frances that she will pardon Edward if Frances wishes, but Frances declines the offer. How did you feel about Frances's decision to let Edward hang?

10. At the climax Isabel and Carlos risk everything to save her father from hanging, yet once they've carried him to safety, Isabel's father warns her not to marry Carlos, calling him a 'rootless mercenary.' But she stands firm, choosing Carlos. What is your view of the future Isabel and Carlos might have together? Are their worlds too radically different, or can love overcome such differences?

Author Bio

Barbara Kyle, a classically trained actor, enjoyed a successful career in Canadian television and theater before turning her hand to writing fiction. She and her husband live in Ontario, where she teaches popular writing seminars and workshops.

Critical Praise

"Excellent, exciting, compellingly readable."

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