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Patience, Princess Catherine



Synopsis

Will Catherine ever become queen? England anxiously awaits Prince Arthur's betrothed—the Spanish princess who will be its future queen. But when Arthur dies not long after the wedding, Catherine of Aragon's fate becomes uncertain. Will the king and Catherine's parents arrange a marriage with Arthur's brother, Henry, or will she return to Spain a widow? Through all this turmoil, the young princess's resolve remains unshaken: She will one day be England's queen . . . no matter how long it takes.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 6 Up Meyer gives voice to Catherine of Aragon as she recounts the story of her betrothals and marriages. The political and economic gains and machinations upon which these unions were based are clearly chronicled in this carefully researched offering. Catherine's dramatic narrative begins as she embarks, at the age of 15, on the arduous journey from Spain to England to become the wife of Prince Arthur, a match made for her when she was only three. She tells of her life in England, moving from the enviable position of a future queen to that of a young girl far from home who is beholden to the generosity of the king of England. After six months of an unconsummated marriage, Catherine is widowed. Diplomatic negotiations rule her life as she is betrothed to his younger brother, the future King Henry VIII, but the path to that marriage is strewn

with international agreements that are made and revoked. Once Prince Henry becomes king, he marries Catherine and this union lasts some 24 years until he turns to Ann Boleyn. Through it all, Catherine is a pawn. Meyer seamlessly provides details about customs and beliefs in bringing history to life. Her Catherine develops from a callow young girl into a woman who fights for her rights as much as the times permitted. As in *Mary, Bloody Mary* (Harcourt, 1999), the author's rich prose style draws readers in as her skill at characterization creates a protagonist who evokes compassion.

—Renee Steinberg, formerly at Fieldstone Middle School, Montvale, NJ

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Gr. 6-9. This rewarding historical novel opens in 1533, as Catherine of Aragon once again refuses to release King Henry VIII from their marriage, renounce her title, or recognize Anne Boleyn as queen. Imprisoned in a "moldering castle" and allowed no visitors and no contact with her daughter, Mary, Catherine reflects on her experiences, beginning with her voyage to England at age 15 to marry young Prince Arthur. Their unconsummated marriage lasts six months until his death in 1502. Over the next seven years, Catherine lives with increasing poverty and decreasing prospects of marrying England's new crown prince, Henry. Though younger readers may be puzzled or disturbed by Catherine's reference to sprinkling sheep's blood onto the sheets of her first marriage bed, this is a small part of the larger story. The novel creates a vivid portrayal of Catherine, her difficult life, and her brief periods of happiness with Arthur and Henry. Catherine's sympathetic narrative mentions two figures, her daughter, Mary, and rival, Anne Boleyn, who told their stories in *Mary, Bloody Mary* (1999) and *Doomed Queen Anne* (2002). Catherine's account enlarges the intricate tapestry of Meyers' *Young Royals* series.

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Patience, Princess Catherine is Carolyn Meyer's YA retelling of Catalina of Spain's early years in the Tudor Court, her marriage, teenage widowhood, and subsequent years-long struggle to see her promised betrothal to her one-time brother-in-law, Prince Henry, realized. Framed by chapters where an older Catherine, victim of King Henry's attempts to see their marriage dissolved, Patience, Princess Catherine is a diary-like reminiscence of Catherine's arrival in England, interspersed with brief passages from Henry's point-of-view. Having just finished Philippa Gregory's *The Constant Princess*, I sadly found this fictional retelling of Catherine's life sorely lacking. While Meyers does an adequate job sticking to the historical record in that Arthur is viewed as weak and sickly, his

marriage to Catherine left unconsummated, facts alone do not a compelling story make. Meyers' incarnation of Catherine is curiously lifeless -- there is no suggestion of the vibrant queen who reigned at Henry's side for over twenty years, who fought for her marriage and position. Catherine here is immature, easily swayed, and -- thanks to the diary-like format of most of the novel -- frankly boring as there is no well-formed narrative, only a dry recitation of events punctuated by fictional insight into Henry's psyche. Given the inevitable tragic conclusion of Henry and Catherine's marriage, the insight Meyer's attempts to provide into Henry's youthful view of Catherine suggest -- in this context -- that Henry harbored a passion for his first bride. Whether or not this is in fact the case, Meyer's writes Henry with the voice of a man much older than ten years of age when the book opens. Not only does the tone feel off, but these passages in particular are riddled with distracting spelling and grammatical errors, with words misspelled, misused, or omitted altogether. *Patience, Princess Catherine* is a textbook introduction to Catherine and Henry -- the research is there, but these larger-than-life characters are stripped of their life and vibrancy, left colorless, pale shadows on the page. Between the characterizations, awkwardly-executed narrative, and abundance of distracting editorial mistakes, I was left rather underwhelmed by this offering in Meyer's *Young Royals* series. Hopefully, subsequent volumes in the *Young Royals* series will succeed in bringing history to life on the page in a more vibrant, engaging manner.

From the moment I read the first page, I was captivated. I had already read "*Doomed Queen Anne: A Young Royals Book*", the book about Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII's second wife, and I wanted to see things from the perspective of Catherine of Aragon, Henry VIII's first wife. I've always wondered what the real Catherine (or, in this case, Catalina) was like. I wanted to know why she did what she did, and why she made the decisions and choices that she did. This book gave me insight into that very thing. I was spellbound by this book, told in the words of one of the most intriguing women in all of history. This is truly a beautiful story, starting from the moment Catherine set out from Spain to be Prince Arthur's wife, all the way to her marriage to the newly made King Henry VIII, and ending with her divorce and exile.

I read the first book in 5th grade, now leaving 6th grade entering the world of 7th, this is a great series. I didn't know it was a series in till now, today to be exact. I've fell in love with the olden times and this shows that, no matter how much you think princess and princes have a good life, they come with great responsibilities and sacrifices. I recommend this series to middle school students and early on high school students (endless you are like me and you are progressing faster than an

average student. I'm a 7th grader and I read at a 11th grade level)!!!

The Young Royals series is terrific. I've purchased them all for my daughter, and I'm reading them too so that I can discuss them with her. They are a fast read (for an adult), and they portray the historical periods well. Meyers's rendering of the protagonists is insightful, and she makes her reader care about each of them, even when their choices are unsavory. Each of the books -- Catherine, Anne, Mary, Elizabeth -- presents a different perspective on similar events, so I recommend reading them all. These books are a great way to get your daughter interested in history.

I absolutely love Carolyn Meyer and her writing style. I love how all of her books give you a personal first-hand look at these historical women and the challenges they faced.

It was okay. An easy read for when you are bored

This fantastic story by Caroline Meyer tells the story of Catherine of Aragon. I enjoyed this book because Meyer describes thoroughly the hardships and emotions of Catherine. A must read for historical fiction fans.

this book is fairly researched and will ill provide your child with a romantic, but harmless view of Tudor life.

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