



2009

The King's Rose

Tessa McMillan

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Libby, Alisa M.. *The King's Rose*. Dutton Books, 2009. ISBN 9780525479703. \$17.99. 293 p.

Reviewer: Tessa McMillan

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Historical fiction; Fiction;

Subject: Catharine Howard, Queen, consort of Henry VIII, King of England, d. 1542--Juvenile fiction.; Henry VIII, King of England, 1491-1547--Juvenile fiction.; Great Britain --History --Henry VIII, 1509-1547 --Juvenile fiction.; Books--Reviews;

Young Catherine Howard is placed as a lady-in-waiting to the new queen, Anne of Cleves. Soon after, rumors circulate that King Henry VIII is dissatisfied by Anne and is looking for another. The Howards hope Catherine will catch the king's roving eye. Henry does notice and lusts after her. To amend the situation, Henry divorces Anne of Cleves and proposes to Catherine. He is fifty and she is fifteen. But history is repeating itself for the Howards, because several years before Catherine's cousin, Anne Boleyn, also enchanted the and became his wife. But unlike Anne, Henry wants Catherine to be a virgin queen, like his past wife Jane Seymour. The Howards swear to Catherine's intact virtue, even though they all know it is a lie. Catherine never wanted this life, but she cannot refuse the king's will. Once married, Catherine tries to be a good wife by becoming pregnant with his heir. But she sees signs that Henry is becoming impotent. To save her life and keep her standing, Catherine tries to become pregnant through a relationship with her cousin, Thomas Culpepper, whom she loves. But her efforts fail when her seedy past and her secret affair are revealed to the king. Even though she confesses to some of the charges, she is condemned to death by the Privy Council and is executed as a traitor at the age of sixteen: the same fate as her cousin, Anne Boleyn.

Libby creates a vivid and realistic world around the character of Catherine Howard. Readers can tell Libby must have done extensive research into Catherine's life to make this story so believable and to make Catherine's character so well-rounded and strong. But a major topic of this book is centered on sexual behavior. The adult themes in *The King's Rose* may be too mature for many middle school and even some high school readers.

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