



The Marriage of Meggotta

Edith Pargeter

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Originally published in 1979, this is the last novel Edith Pargeter wrote under her own name. Set in England in the 13th century, among the nobles and aristocrats surrounding King Henry III, it tells the true story of the secret marriage of the Earl of Kent's ten-year-old daughter, and the tragic consequences that follow in its wake.

The Marriage of Meggotta Details

Date : Published November 1st 2001 by Akadine Pr (first published 1979)

ISBN : 9781585790296

Author : Edith Pargeter

Format : Paperback 304 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, Medieval

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Cel Jel says

In a nation with a king who has sway over who marries whom I the aristocracy, you marry without his permission at risk. This tale involves intrigue at court, the way power shifts because different people gain the King's ear, and the king is inconsistent. The consequences of falling from a position of honour are great. The great love between a boy and girl, and the consequence of a choice made which many years later comes to light is written about in this book very well. If you have read The Heaven Tree trilogy you have already met the family of one of the children in passing. Do read this book if you want an idea of medieval life as an aristocrat.

Donie Nelson says

Poetic voice as author tells the story of the doomed lovers against the backdrop of weak, wily, cruel Henry III, son of King John.

Karen says

This novel tells the tragic story of the turbulent political fortunes of Hubert de Burgh, Earl of Kent and Justiciar of England, and the impact this has on two children, his daughter Meggotta and his ward Richard de Clare. Married in secret, they were inseparable, but fortune did not favour them.

I love this book. It is very well written, the politics do not overwhelm the emotions and personalities of the story. I love the way the final scene of the book links directly back to the beginning. This type of circular parallel is also reflected in the sub-plot of the irregular marriage of Simon de Montfort and his royal wife Eleanor. Hubert is the only noble to stand up and defend their actions. But he warns Simon to be wary of their king...and of course history proved this to be correct. The Marriage of Meggotta is a genuinely heartbreaking story and I would defy anybody to finish it without tears in their eyes.

Carol says

Most people know Edith Pargeter as Ellis Peters, author of the Brother Cadfael mysteries, but she was also a great writer of historical fiction. This book tells the heartbreaking story of the de Burgh family's persecution at the hands of the capricious Henry III. Henry becomes suspicious of Hubert de Burgh and his power, but ultimately it is Hubert's daughter Megotta and his former ward Richard who suffer. They are truly in love but their marriage is tragically thwarted. This could be the makings for a very melodramatic, sentimental, and overblown romance novel, but Pargeter is a far better writer than that. She takes on the full political situation as well as the emotional one, showing in a stark light the way in which the personal and political were often too tightly intertwined in the medieval world. Pargeter also does a nice job of bringing in the story of Henry's sister Eleanor and Simon de Montfort as a parallel to Richard and Megotta.

Leslie says

This fictional account of the sad fate of two 13th century children of English nobility is well researched and movingly written. Society versus the individual is a constant tension throughout human history but the English system of arranged marriage seems to be straight-out child abuse to the modern eye, prioritizing lands, titles and fortunes over the feelings of the human beings involved. Well done, and a very interesting insight into that era.

Noël says

79 hc ex library

Tania says

Read a long time ago, but I remember I cried when I read it ...

jrendocrine says

A little stilted and distant, this workmanly rendering of a children's marriage, broken by political necessity. The crime here is not King Henry's, but the mother who so directed her children to marry. Not a happy telling.

The politics of King Henry's court are very confusing, but can't be ignored -- as such the simple (sad) main story is, in the end, just a symptom of the ways of a difficult reign.

Not particularly enjoyable, but serves as another puzzle piece in the England and Wales of the 13th century that so enthralls many of us.

Carolyn Thomas says

A tragic tale, beautifully told by Edith Pargeter, and all the more poignant for being based on a true story. Richard de Clare is given into the guardianship of Hubert de Burgh in 13th century England, becoming the inseparable companion of his daughter Meggotta. The children marry but are torn apart when King Henry turns against Hubert and sets out to destroy his former friend and adviser.
