



The Favored Queen

Carolly Erickson

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From The New York Times bestselling author of *The Last Wife of Henry VIII* comes a powerful and moving novel about Jane Seymour, third wife of Henry VIII, who married him only days after the execution of Anne Boleyn and ultimately lost her own life in giving him the son he badly needed to guarantee the Tudor succession

Born into an ambitious noble family, young Jane Seymour is sent to Court as a Maid of Honor to Catherine of Aragon, Henry VIII's aging queen. She is devoted to her mistress and watches with empathy as the calculating Anne Boleyn contrives to supplant her as queen. Anne's single-minded intriguing threatens all who stand in her way; she does not hesitate to arrange the murder of a woman who knows a secret so dark that, if revealed, would make it impossible for the king to marry Anne.

Once Anne becomes queen, no one at court is safe, and Jane herself becomes the object of Anne's venomous rage when she suspects Jane has become the object of the king's lust. Henry, fearing that Anne's inability to give him a son is a sign of divine wrath, asks Jane to become his next queen. Deeply reluctant to embark on such a dangerous course, Jane must choose between her heart and her loyalty to the king.

Acclaimed biographer and bestselling novelist Carolly Erickson weaves another of her irresistible historical entertainments about the queen who finally gave Henry VIII his longed for heir, set against the excitement and danger of the Tudor Court.

The Favored Queen Details

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From Reader Review The Favored Queen for online ebook

The Book Maven says

Do yourself a favor and don't read this book. A nice alternative would be Plain Jane: a novel of Jane Seymour (Jun 2006), by Laurien Gardner. Although I have not read it, it got a good review from *Library Journal* and it would have to be better than this book.

The other alternative would be for one of you fair readers to write your own novel. I'd read it. I promise.

Now, on to the review.

Really? Really?

Like many other folks on this here site, I was really looking forward to this book. (Especially as, I have to admit, *The Tudors* depicted Jane Seymour as an extraordinarily compassionate, humane, and generous woman.) I think the story of Jane Seymour would be a great one to tell.

Ms. Erickson, you dropped the ball.

Completely apart from the incredible stretching of the truth (this book bordered on the fantastical), it just wasn't really well-written. It read like mediocre fanfic (of which I have read plenty, kthxbye.)

Historical FICTION is one things. But this was practically fantasy fiction. Jane becomes the rescuer of her sister-in-law and two nephews? She's practically BFF with Queen Catherine and envied by the Spanish ladies in waiting? She randomly falls in lust with a glazier? Anne Boleyn kills off said glazier and makes Jane vengeful? Queen Catherine nurses Anne Boleyn back to health, and many years later, gives Jane her deathbed blessing to marry Henry? And King Henry calls Anne HIS LITTLE PUFFBALL???????

Tracey says

I liked the idea of using Jane Seymour's voice to narrate her time in Henry viii's court until her marriage and sadly her death after birth of Prince Edward
a quiet careful lady who I have a fondness for as she tried to live a quiet life whilst being a member of the royal Tudor court.

Marci says

I'm sorry, this was bad! I did not enjoy this at all. I was looking forward to reading this for a while also. Too many inconsistencies, and VERY far fetched. I know this is fiction, but could the author at least try to stick to the well known history behind this??? After getting 3/4 through this I had to stop. I kept trying to finish, but it was like pulling teeth! I even skipped ahead to see if it was worth carrying on....it wasn't. I don't know, maybe it's just me, but too far away from the story we all know! Very disappointing! That's just my opinion

of course!

Jennifer says

I was pretty impressed with Erickson's why-let-the-facts-get-in-the-way-of-a-good-story approach to Jane Seymour--Henry VIII's third wife-who is usually portrayed in these kind of books as a boring goody-two-shoes. Erickson calls her work "historical entertainment" and cautions that she's played fast and loose with the documentation. Thus, her Jane is promiscuous, devious, quick-witted, and very entertaining. O.K., so I might not use this book to teach English history. But then again, I don't teach English history.

Orsolya says

For some reason, I feel a loyalty bond with Carolly Erickson. Although, we all complain about her "historical entertainments" and her use of speculation and inaccuracies; something draws me to read her books (I still haven't read her non-fiction works but plan to). Sadly, as much as I tried to push myself, I couldn't finish *The Favored Queen*. Yes, it WAS THAT bad.

I truly gave *The Favored Queen* a hearty attempt (I was around page 100) but after much debate, I closed the book. *The Favored Queen* simply lacks any depth and character development. Never did I feel like I "knew" Jane Seymour. It was more like words on a page with no emotional back-up. The image which was presented of her didn't fit inline with any other texts I have previously read. Erickson portrays Jane as Catherine of Aragon's most trusted companion and further, as a high-born lady who doesn't want to be at court but merely wants to marry. Basically, she was given a saintly image. I have encountered such views of Jane Seymour (including ones which give her doses of ambition); but my problem wasn't necessarily with the personality she was given but the fact that Erickson didn't support the view or back it up. Jane is basically one-dimensional and, well, boring.

Anne Boleyn plays a large role in the novel. Expect a haughty, sex-obsessed, prissy girl. Perhaps this stereotype is not far from the truth in some eyes, but also very one-dimensional.

The text is easy to understand and a very quick read so perhaps I could have trudged along to the end but it truly reads like a bad episode of *The Tudors*. In fact, I think even *The Tudors* gave Jane more "to work with" than *The Favored Queen*.

I generally write long, detailed reviews but I don't know what much to say except that sadly, this novel is terrible. I would suggest it for an entry-level reader into the world of Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn, and Jane Seymour but if you have read other novels or historical works, this isn't for you.

Kristen says

I knew within the first ten pages that this book would be a challenge. The way Jane is written, she seems to suffer from "special snowflake syndrome". You know, the "I'm not like other girls, I'm completely different, I'm the favorite of Queen Catherine", etc.

Why on Earth would a writer, who claims that they've done all this research and have written both fiction and nonfiction books on Tudor-esque subjects, perpetuate a rumour that was disproved back in 1876? Clearly, if Anne Boleyn had "a finger that was cleft at the tip, so that it appeared to be two fingers and not one" would not have been brought to court, let alone have caught the eye of the King.

(In regards to the exhumation: "Since physical deformities were generally interpreted as a sign of evil, it is unlikely that Anne Boleyn would have gained Henry's romantic attention had she had any. Upon exhumation in 1876, no abnormalities were discovered. Her frame was described as delicate, approximately 5'3", with finely formed, tapering fingers.")

I would be a bit more understanding if this was written, oh, in the early 1900s. But it's been 135 years. Why are people still perpetuating rumours that were brought about by Nicholas Sander, "a Roman Catholic recusant born c. 1530, was committed to deposing Elizabeth I and re-establishing Roman Catholicism in England"?

You are NOT a "distinguished historian", and I shudder to think about what other falsehoods are written in the non-fiction books. I will not be reading another book by this author.

Cheryl says

[3.5]

At first, I would've given this book a five star rating. The writing and details are great; easy-to-read and interesting. Halfway through the book though, I began to realize that it wasn't about Jane Seymour, it was about Anne Boleyn and the Nun of Kent (Elizabeth Barton) told from Jane Seymour's point of view. So far, I haven't come across any books that mention the Nun of Kent at all, so I did learn something. . . and that is always a bonus. But because I felt the book wasn't really about Jane Seymour it brought my rating down to a 4. I also felt that the book was stretched out a little, bringing it down to a 3.5.

I don't think I'd really recommend this book to anyone, especially if they wanted to read a book about Jane Seymour.

Maria says

Cada vez gosto mais de romances históricos. Bem sei que nem tudo o que é contado foi real mas por isso mesmo acho engraçado, não sou fanática do rigor histórico e acho piada que se tentem encontrar várias versões para a mesma história. Por isso gostei bastante deste livro, tendo simpatizado bastante com a personagem principal Jane. Apenas achei que algumas partes da história era um pouco precipitadas e podiam ter sido contadas com mais calma, ou seja, o livro podia ter sido um pouco mais longo. De resto gostei bastante e recomendo vivamente

A Miuda Geek says

Um livro fluido e fácil de ler sobre Jane Seymour, 3a mulher de Henrique VIII de Inglaterra.

Embora fácil, o livro não se aprofundou muito quanto à política do reino e as movimentações da corte. Aliás, Jane apenas aparece por si própria nas últimas páginas do livro. Talvez o facto de o livro estar escrito como se fosse um diário dela prejudique o poder ser mais aprofundado, pois Jane não era um animal político como Ana Bolena ou Catarina de Aragão.

Aconselho a quem se queira iniciar no mundo dos Tudors. É fluido e nada maçador. Para mim, que já li inúmeros livros sobre eles, soube a muito pouco.

Cris says

I picked up this book because I'm interested in the Tudor family, particularly in Henry VIII's decision to break from Rome in pursuit of a male heir. But I was disappointed with the way Erickson handled Henry's 'Great Matter'. The story started out interesting and fairly fast-paced, but once Henry set Catherine aside and married Anne Erickson started skimming through time/events very quickly. It was like Erickson decided everyone already knew the history so she just wrote the bare minimum to get to the end of Jane's life. Unfortunately, the 'Great Matter' of Henry's marriage and especially his decision to wed Jane &/or the birth of Edward *should* have been the climax of Jane's story. Instead the story seemed to lack a climax, moving from building tension to marking time until the story was over. (Frankly by the time I reached the end I was really happy to see it, even if it was extremely unsatisfying.)

Very unsatisfactory as historical fiction. The sense of time and place was almost nil.

Most of the characters were sketches rather than being well-developed. Jane, on the other hand, was a little too perfect, especially when compared to Anne who Erickson demonized from the start. And there was one plot point that seemed a bit strange. (view spoiler)

Andreea Dr?gan says

[Henric a purtat doliu aproximativ trei luni, dupa ce Jane Seymour a murit. Nu a fost chiar atat de nepasator la moartea ei. Gosh. (hide spoiler)]

chucklesthescot says

I initially thought I was going to like this book as it follows Jane Seymour at Court when Henry VIII is trying to put aside Queen Catherine to marry Anne Boleyn. However the book after a while goes from Tudor novel based on fact into utter ridiculous bodice ripping fiction which is when I got fed up with it and stopped reading it.

In this version Jane has always wanted to marry Will, the son of friends of the Seymours but their union is threatened when her own father has relations with Will's young sister. Will's furious family refuse to allow the betrothal to take place but the couple are anxious to find a way to escape Court together as Anne's star rises. I liked Will as he was a genuine man who loved Jane and would have made her happy. Every plan he has for them to marry seems doomed and it was hard not to feel sorry for the couple.

As you expect in Tudor fiction, the story changes slightly to allow for a dramatic addition. In this, when the sweating sickness comes, Anne Boleyn does not return to Hever to be treated, but instead comes to Court looking for Henry and thinking he is with Catherine. When he is not there, Anne is forced to stay with Catherine, Jane and a few others who stayed with the Queen. When Anne gets sick, a few of the people try to throw her out the window and into the moat, solving several problems at once, but Catherine steps in to save her rival. I know this is pure fantasy but I liked that something different had been put into the plot to make things more interesting.

However as the book went on, the plot took several turns that I could not forgive. As everyone who reads Tudor non fiction knows, despite her brothers turning to the new religion, Jane remained a pious catholic right up to her death. So in this book when she starts with her 'Luther has a point' thoughts, I found that very unsatisfying. Jane captured Henry's attention by protecting her virtue and remaining innocent, compared with Anne's flirting and alleged adultery. So in this version, Jane turns away from her (fictional) betrothed love who she would not sleep with until she was married, to jump into bed with a married lowborn glazer on their second meeting? WTF is THAT all about? Sorry but NO. Jane was not a Tudor slut and this was beyond annoying for me!

According to reviews I read, Anne Boleyn has this glazer and soulmate murdered for some reason (I never read this far) so she plots to seduce the King away from Anne as revenge for her lover's death. Oh man, this was beyond crazy stuff and I'm glad I had already given up with it! The book also hints that Anne had lovers before the King. So Henry, who put aside Katherine Howard for not being a virgin, would accept Anne and Jane as wives despite them sleeping around? Yeah right.

There's fiction, and there is stupidity.

Andrea Jensen says

If you have any sense of Tudor era history this book will be nearly impossible to read. I agree with another reviewer that it would have made more sense to have the fiction warning at the front of the book instead of the back. History has been rewritten so much as to be laughable.

Matt says

As an amateur Tudor expert (gleaned mainly from the show by that title), I feel that Erickson has, yet again, put herself on par with the likes of Alison Weir and Philippa Gregory in capturing an excellent fact and fiction mix in this, her latest book. She gives some excellent background and deals with some of the poignant issues and developments, while leading the reader down a historically accurate path of the rise and fall of the first two wives of Henry VIII before his selection of Jane Seymour, his favored one.

Erickson spends a great deal of time laying the foundation for Jane's place in the Tudor court and stitches together some great background to 'fill out' her character. Using her usual first person narrative, it brings the story to life as we see history unfold in Jane's eyes. While the author does give the explanation that there are some inaccuracies in the story, they are seamless and one would really have to know what happened to know where literary freedoms were taken.

One small issue, though not of the author's fault, is the time spent on the lead up to Jane's becoming queen, as her time in that position is so brief. I suppose one cannot understand her time as Queen without knowing how she got there. It just seems to be that we spend so much time with Queens Catherine and Anne and so little time with Jane as Henry's wife.

Great work, though. Well worth the time if you are a Tudor lover!

Kara says

Words fail me to describe how bad this book is.

It's the equivalent a few high schoolers scrolling through the Wikipedia entry on Henry VIII, picking out a few key words, and performing Jane Seymour's life as a sexy interpretive dance

Look at me, I did research, I've got all the names of the historical people of the time period! The book screams as it tap dances around the facts. Um, yeah, ok, you got the names – but your presentation of the facts, while not always *wrong* per say, are always *warped*.

Also, the book commits the worst sin possible in historical fiction – its flat out *boring*.
