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The Thistle and the Rose: (Tudor Saga)



Par Jean Plaidy
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Description : Description du produitFrom the pen of the legendary historical novelist Jean Plaidy comes the story of Princess Margaret Tudor, whose life of tragedy, bloodshed, and scandal would rival even that of her younger brother, Henry VIII.Princess Margaret Tudor is the greatest prize when her father, Henry VII, negotiates the Treaty of Perpetual Peace with neighboring Scotland. The betrothal is meant to end decades of bloody border wars, but it becomes a love match: To Margarets surprise, she finds joy in her marriage to the dashing James IV of Scotland, a man sixteen years her senior. But the marriage, and the peace it brings to both nations, does not last. When King James is struck down by the armies of Henry VIII, MargaretPrincess of England, but Queen of Scotlandfinds herself torn between loyalty to the land and family of her birth and to that of her baby son, now King of the Scots. She decides to remain in Scotland and carve out her own destiny, surviving a scandalous second marriage and battling with both her son and her brother to the very

end. Like all the Tudors, Margaret's life would be one of turmoil and controversy, but through her descendants, England and Scotland would unite as one nation, under one rule, and find peace.

Presentation de l'auteur Jean Plaidy's Tudor series continues with the scandalous and heartbreaking story of Margaret Tudor, a princess who leaves England for Scotland and whose future was used to end war and unite kings. When King Henry VII negotiates peace with Scotland, his daughter's hand in marriage to James IV is the ultimate prize. A true princess, Margaret Tudor leaves her beloved England and accepts her fate unquestioningly. But to her surprise she falls madly in love with the fearsome Scottish King and, as Queen of Scotland, for a while she is happy. But neither the marriage nor the peace are to last. When James IV is defeated in battle by Margaret's own brother, the widowed Queen is torn between fleeing to her home and staying to protect her son's future as the new King of Scots. It seems that once again Margaret's destiny is not to be her own... Extrait

The Betrothal IN AN APARTMENT OF THAT ROYAL PALACE WHICH recently, by the command of the King, had had its name changed from Shene to Richmond, three children were ranged about a blazing fire. Outside the January wind buffeted the octagonal and circular towers, threatening to sweep away the little chimneys which looked like inverted pears. The eldest of the three—a girl just past her twelfth birthday—had taken off the net which held her beautiful reddish golden hair, so that she could have the joy of letting it fall over her shoulders and down to her waist. The boy, who had the same rosy complexion and bright gold hair, watched her sullenly. She was delighted with herself; he was displeased. As for the other child, a little girl not quite six, she was intent on watching the pair of them, very conscious of the fact that on account of her age she was of small account in the eyes of her twelve-year-old sister, Margaret, and ten-year-old brother, Henry. "The fact is," Margaret was saying, "that you are angry because I am to have a marriage and because I shall be a queen before you are a king." "Queen of Scotland!" sneered Henry. "That barbarous land! Nay, my sister, I tell you this: I am displeased because it seems to me unfitting that my sister should so demean herself by such a marriage." Margaret burst out laughing. "What airs you give yourself, Henry. I declare that since you became Prince of Wales you believe you are a king already. And think of this, brother: Had our dear Arthur lived you would never have been a king at all." Henry scowled. It was like Margaret to take an unfair advantage. She was telling him that he showed too much pleasure in his new state and not enough sorrow for the death of their brother. "It matters not how or why a man wears a crown," he muttered. "It only matters that he does." "So you are glad Arthur is dead!" "I did not say that." "You imply it." "You lie." "I do not lie." Mary began to whimper. She hated quarrels between her brother and sister; they were always threatening to arise, partly because Margaret and Henry were so much alike. If Margaret's hair were cut off—which she would never allow because it was her greatest beauty and she was very proud of it—and she were dressed like a boy, there would be Henry all over again. And it was not only in appearance that they resembled each other. They were both headstrong, willful, loving to indulge themselves, furious with any who opposed them. Mary secretly took Henry's side because he made much of her. He often told her how pretty she was and that she was his favorite sister. "Now you see what you have done," complained Henry. "You have frightened Mary. Come here, Mary. I will sing to you if you like. I will play my lute." "Oh yes, please." Margaret regarded them scornfully. "And you must say none sings like he does, none plays the lute to compare with him, and you are the luckiest girl in the world to have such a brother. That is the payment which will be asked of you for his attentions, little sister." "Heed her not," Henry reassured the little girl. "She is angry with us because she has to leave our beautiful Court for that of a barbarian." Margaret lost a little of her bravado. She had her qualms. It could be an ordeal at twelve, when you had not a great experience of the world, to be called upon to leave your home for that of a husband you had never seen. Henry saw the change in her demeanour and made the most of his advantage. "I never cared for Scottish alliances." He imitated the tone of one of his father's ministers and stood ponderously, long legs apart, hands clasped behind his back, an expression of wisdom on his round, rosy face. "I wonder you do not discuss this matter with the King," Margaret put in sarcastically. "I might do so." Henry was playing for Mary; it was possible that she would not find it difficult to imagine her wonderful brother already advising the King. "Go and seek an audience at once," Margaret suggested. "I am sure our father will be eager to listen to your counsel." Henry ignored his sister; he began to pace up and down before the fire. "In the first place," he said, "I like not these Stuarts. I like not their lax morals. You will be going to a man who has had a host of mistresses and, some say, married one of them. A pleasant state of affairs, madam, for a Tudor!" Margaret folded her arms across her breasts and laughed gaily. She was aware of mingling apprehension and excitement; she had become conscious of her body at an early age; her governess

and nurse said of her: "She should marry young." It was different for Henry, who was as eager for manhood as she was for womanhood; they were lusty people, these young Tudors. They must have inherited that quality from their maternal grandfather; they had often discussed gossip they had heard about him. Great Edward IV-handsome, tall, golden and very like them in appearance-whose greatest pleasure had been the pursuit of women. His daughter, their mother, was mild and docile; their father lusted after gold and possessions so exclusively that he had no lust left for anything else. So, thought Margaret, Henry has undoubtedly inherited his tastes from his grandfather. Have I? She believed so; and that was fortunate, for it meant that in spite of certain natural fears she could look forward with excitement to marriage with a man noted for his sensuality. It was amusing to see Henry in this mood. His little mouth was prim; because he liked to be the center of attention, and since, as this was her marriage which was about to take place, she must necessarily be, he was going to show his displeasure by disapproving of the morals of her bridegroom.

"He will have to give up his mistresses when I arrive," said Margaret. "If he would not do so while negotiating with our father for the marriage, depend upon it he will not when he has achieved his purpose: alliance with the Tudors." Henry said the last sentence as though he were making an announcement like a herald at a tournament. He had become very insistent on the homage due to the Tudors since he had become the heir to the throne. Of course, Margaret thought, that had changed everything. He was surrounded by sycophants, all eager to be friends with the boy who would one day be King; and Henry did not appear to see what their flattery meant-but perhaps he did though, and loved it so much that he would accept it eagerly no matter what lay behind it. Little Mary was watching him with adoring eyes. It was easy enough to be a hero in the eyes of a five-year-old little girl. "Our grandfather had many mistresses, and he was a great King," Margaret reminded Henry. "But these Stuarts! Even their castles are drafty." Margaret shivered. "So are ours." "And the winters are hard, north of the Border." "I shall know how to keep myself warm." "And"-Henry narrowed his eyes and his mouth grew tight-"I remember-though others do not-that your bridegroom has been overfriendly with a certain traitor." "A traitor!" squealed Mary. "Oh, Henry, what traitor?" "You are too young to remember, but two years ago Perkin Warbeck was a prisoner in our Tower of London, and there he was tried and found guilty; after which he was taken to Tyburn and hanged by the neck until he died. Do you know what this traitor planned to do? To pass himself off as the Duke of York, our mother's brother, thereby claiming that he had more right to the throne than our father. Vile traitor that he was. And this James, whom your sister is so proud to marry, received him in Scotland, gave him honors and allowed him to marry his own cousin. There! Do you understand now why I see no matter for rejoicing in this marriage of our sister?" Mary turned solemn eyes to Margaret. "Oh, Margaret, is it indeed so?" "Do you doubt me then?" roared Henry. "Oh no, Henry. You are always right!" "He is not," snapped Margaret. "And that is all ancient history. Perkin Warbeck deceived James Stuart as he did others. It is over and nothing to do with my marriage." "I beg leave to say that it has a great deal to do with your marriage." "Then I am surprised you do not forbid our father to consent to it," Margaret mocked. Henry's face flushed scarlet. "When I am King..." he muttered. It was unfortunate for Henry that at this moment the door was flung open and his words were overheard by the last person he wanted to hear them. The King had entered the room with his wife and a few attendants. King Henry VII was no lover of ceremony; his clothes were a good deal plainer than those of many of his courtiers; his face was pale and shrewd, and no one would have suspected he was the father of those pink and gold children who were clearly disconcerted to be so interrupted. Henry thought scornfully that a king should make his entrance to a fanfare of trumpets; his garments should dazzle with their magnificence; he should tower above his followers. When I am King..., his thoughts went on, for that was their persistent theme since the news of Arthur's death had been brought to him. He bowed to his parents, and the girls curtsied. "That time is not yet, my son," said the King coldly, "though it would seem you are unbecomingly eager for it." "Sire," began Henry, embarrassed, "I was but explaining to my sisters..." The King lifted a hand. "I rejoice in your healthy looks," he said, "and would that your mind kept pace with your body. You should pray that the time will not be yet for, my son, you are an infant in princedom and have much to learn of kingship." "I know this, Sire," murmured Henry, "and I will endeavor to learn quickly-so to please you." "My daughter," said the King; and Margaret came forward. Her father did not smile-he had rarely been seen to do so-but his glance was approving. The vitality of these children of his never failed to delight while it surprised him. He had lost Arthur and Edmund, it was true, but the ruddy looks of these three reassured him. If the child the Queen now carried had this same blooming health, and it were a boy, he would cease to mourn for the death of Arthur. There was, of course, no reason why there should not be more and more. Both he and the Queen were young enough to add to their brood. He went on: "The Scottish

nobles are now arriving at the Palace. You should be ready to receive them. This is no time for nursery games." "No, Sire," murmured Margaret. The Queen stepped forward and took her daughter's hand. Elizabeth of York tried to hide the apprehension she was feeling. It was only a little more than twelve years ago that this bright girl had been born to her in the Palace of Westminster; she remembered the November mists which hung over the river and seeped into the room; she remembered holding the tiny child in her arms and rejoicing in her, forgetting the disappointment in her sex which it seemed must overshadow all female royal births. A sister for Arthur—a healthier baby than her little brother. And now soon there would be another. The present pregnancy worried the Queen. She was filled with foreboding perhaps because she, more than any, knew the weakness of her own body. Childbearing had taken its toll and, although she could remain fruitful for several years to come, she thought with dread of future pregnancies. There was none to whom she could confide this fear. Her daughter was too young to understand; moreover could she complain to her of a fate to which, by very nature of her own position, Margaret could herself be condemned? It was a great responsibility to be a royal princess, one whose duty it was to provide sons—a task which seemed extremely difficult for royal princesses and amazingly simple for humble subjects. Could she explain to her husband? Henry would never understand that anything could be of importance except the piling up of wealth, the strengthening of the country, so that the Tudor, who sat somewhat uneasily on his throne, should maintain his place. There was reason for disquiet. The recent affairs of Lambert Simnel and Perkin Warbeck had shown that; but with his usual sound good sense Henry had dealt with those impostors in a manner befitting his kingship. But such matters were disturbing to him. And now...a match with Scotland. An excellent proposition. Perhaps that would mean an end to the senseless border warfare which harried their peoples. Perhaps the Alliance would so strengthen the friendship of the two countries that they would live amicably together during the years ahead. And my daughter Margaret would be responsible, pondered the Queen. Pray God that she may be a wise counselor to her husband. She would speak with Margaret, try to impress upon her the importance of her duty. "Come and prepare yourself to meet the envoys from the Scottish Court," she said. "The Prince of Wales should also grace the assembly with his presence," said the King with a slight lifting of one corner of his mouth to imply mockery. Margaret glanced at her brother. Now was the time for him to declare his dislike of the match, to state boldly before his father what he had told his sisters. Henry's lower lip jutted out slightly. He opened his mouth as though to speak; but when he looked up into his father's stern face, he changed his mind. He was not yet King of England.

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