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Treason

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

In a beautifully paced and measured story Berlie Doherty takes the reader into the world of Henry VIII's England, a land trying to come to terms with the disestablishment of the Catholic Church and ruled by an irascible man with three wives behind him. Will Montague has enough on his plate really, having he thinks, been responsible for his brother Matthew's drowning and his father's subsequent overwhelming sorrow. Will and his sister, Marjorie, live on the family estate, tutored by Brother John, a priest adhering to the old ways of worship in the family chapel. Life changes completely for Will when his father leaves to work for his kinsman at the court, sending for Will, who is put forward as a page to the baby Prince Edward. Will catches the eye of Henry VIII but in so doing makes an enemy of Percy Howard. Will finds he belongs to the King like a slave, unable to leave court and go back to the home and sister he loves so much. On a brief visit home, the family's way of worship is discovered by Percy Howard and Will's father is taken to Newgate Gaol, charged with treason. He tells Will to find Lord de Crecy but Will loses his way and is rescued by Nick and his family and nursed back to health. Will's sister Marjorie in the meantime has been married to Lord Richard of Calais and it is to him in France that Will and Nick turn for help. All ends well, although not for Henry VIII as Anne of Cleves arrives to marry him.

Berlie Doherty manages to involve the reader completely in Will's world contrasting his loving family home with the febrile life of Henry's court, with its positioning of favourites amid the intrigue and fear which surround it. The background of deeply held religious belief and the way in which it should be practised is clearly laid out in the prose, but it is Will, desperate to be shown that his father loves him, and finding that family matters more than position, who will stay with the reader long after this book has been read. The cover is very good indeed with the T of Treason being a jewelled sword in front of the portrait of the young Edward VI.

Running Order:

55

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