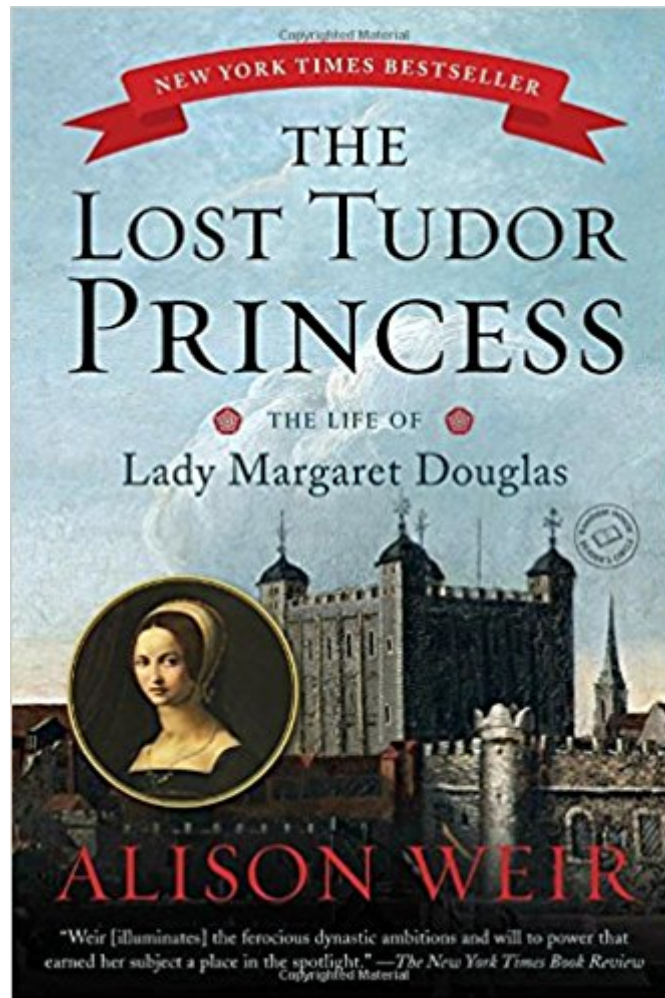




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The Lost Tudor Princess: The Life Of Lady Margaret Douglas



Synopsis

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER — NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY THE INDEPENDENT — From a bestselling author and acclaimed historian Alison Weir comes the first biography of Margaret Douglas, the beautiful, cunning niece of Henry VIII of England who used her sharp intelligence and covert power to influence the succession after the death of Elizabeth I. Royal Tudor blood ran in her veins. Her mother was a queen, her father an earl, and she herself was the granddaughter, niece, cousin, and grandmother of monarchs. Lady Margaret Douglas, Countess of Lennox, was an important figure in Tudor England, yet today, while her contemporaries — Anne Boleyn, Mary, Queen of Scots, Elizabeth I — have achieved celebrity status, she is largely forgotten. Margaret's life was steeped in intrigue, drama, and tragedy — from her auspicious birth in 1530 to her parents' bitter divorce, from her ill-fated love affairs to her appointment as lady-in-waiting for four of Henry's six wives. In an age when women were expected to stay out of the political arena, alluring and tempestuous Margaret helped orchestrate one of the most notorious marriages of the sixteenth century: that of her son Lord Darnley to Mary, Queen of Scots. Margaret defiantly warred with two queens — Mary, and Elizabeth of England — and was instrumental in securing the Stuart ascension to the throne of England for her grandson, James VI. The life of Margaret Douglas spans five reigns and provides many missing links between the Tudor and Stuart dynasties. Drawing on decades of research and myriad original sources — including many of Margaret's surviving letters — Alison Weir brings this captivating character out of the shadows and presents a strong, capable woman who operated effectively and fearlessly at the very highest levels of power. Praise for *The Lost Tudor Princess* — "This is a substantial, detailed biography of a fascinating woman who lived her extraordinary life to the full, taking desperate chances for love and for ambition. It will appeal to anyone with an interest in the powerful women of the Tudor period." — Philippa Gregory, *The Washington Post* — "Tackling the family from an unexpected angle, Weir offers a blow-by-blow account of six decades of palace intrigue. . . . Weir balances historical data with emotional speculation to illuminate the ferocious dynastic ambitions and will to power that earned her subject a place in the spotlight." — *The New York Times Book Review* From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

“This is a substantial, detailed biography of a fascinating woman who lived her extraordinary life to the full, taking desperate chances for love and for ambition. It will appeal to anyone with an interest in the powerful women of the Tudor period.”
—Philippa Gregory, *The Washington Post*
“Tackling the family from an unexpected angle, [Alison] Weir offers a blow-by-blow account of six decades of palace intrigue. . . . Weir balances historical data with emotional speculation to illuminate the ferocious dynastic ambitions and will to power that earned her subject a place in the spotlight.”
—The New York Times Book Review
From the Hardcover edition.

Alison Weir is the New York Times bestselling author of several historical biographies, including *Elizabeth of York*, *Mary Boleyn*, *The Lady in the Tower*, *Mistress of the Monarchy*, *Henry VIII*, *Eleanor of Aquitaine*, *The Life of Elizabeth I*, and *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, and the novels *The Marriage Game*, *A Dangerous Inheritance*, *Captive Queen*, *The Lady Elizabeth*, and *Innocent Traitor*. She lives in Surrey, England, with her husband.

I have always said there is one author who got me interested in English history, and namely, the Tudor history and that is Alison Weir. I have read her books for the last 15 years or so. She has always written a tome of historical facts that shows her investigative skills. I blame her for her preciseness whenever I read historical fiction and I find myself saying, "No, this didn't happen THIS way. ..." I love her books. I love her writing style. This book focuses on Margaret Douglas, niece to King Henry the Eighth and a woman who has managed to survive the tumultuous Tudor reigns of

Henry, Mary, Elizabeth One and Mary, Queen of Scots. There is so much information in this book that I have had to refer to the index of who is who in the beginning of the book. I thought I was familiar with events that occurred in King Henry's court as well as Elizabeth's, but it turns out, there is a lot more that I didn't know about, and Margaret was in the midst of it all. Born to King Henry's oldest sister, and her second husband, Margaret is not really a Scottish princess, but is treated like one. She was then sent to live with her uncle when she was 13 and became a lady-in-waiting to several of Henry's wives, starting with Queen Katherine. In Margaret's life, she played on the national court as well as any of the Tudors did. She may not be as famous as the Tudors were, but she played an important part in history. This is a meaty book full of information, but it's so good to read. Once you pick it up, it is hard to put it down. I am intrigued by all the drama and events that went on. Weir has a talent for making historical people seem more human, more life-like than just names on a piece of paper stuck in a museum. She is the reason why I am in love with English history. She has brought so many characters to life for me as well as making history of people who have lived hundreds of years ago seem real. That is talent.

As the niece of Henry VIII and grandmother of James 1 of England, Lady Margaret Douglas, Countess of Lennox, is not exactly "lost." However, she is less well known to the non-historian than Henry VIII's wives or Mary Queen of Scots. Alison Weir's biography is full of the names of Margaret's illustrious connections. She was the goddaughter of Cardinal Wolsey, the cousin and close friend of Queen Mary I, a lady-in-waiting to Anne Boleyn and Catherine Parr, the mother of Lord Darnley, and the mother-in-law of Mary Queen of Scots. Her turbulent life included angering Henry VIII by her courtships with Thomas Howard and his nephew Charles Howard (relatives of the disgraced Anne Boleyn) and angering Elizabeth I by marrying her son Charles to the stepdaughter of the Earl of Shrewsbury. She was imprisoned in the Tower on several occasions, and was one of the authors of an anthology of love poetry called the Devonshire Manuscript. Alison Weir's entertaining prose, combined with thorough research, makes this an excellent biography. Five stars.

This is an outstanding biography of Margaret Douglas. It is probably Alison Weir's best nonfiction book (and, by extension, at least for me, her best book, as I prefer her nonfiction over her fiction). So many so-called biographies of medieval or Renaissance women are more about the people around them rather than the woman herself as we so seldom have their opinions, hopes

and dreams expressed in their own words. Not so with Margaret Douglas. We have numerous letters written by and to her, as well as a series of heartbreaking love poetry from a doomed romance. And she certainly was a romantic figure (spoiler alert: a non-doomed romance). People adored the young Margaret when she came to the English court. She was a favorite of her uncle, Henry VIII (although he went ahead and threw her in the tower anyways) and his daughter (Margaret's cousin), the future Queen Mary. Henry VIII's other daughter, Elizabeth I. As well, their relationship was very up and down (and yes, she also threw Margaret in prison). Margaret Douglas was very much a contender for the throne, and Elizabeth was not very tolerant of anyone who stood too close to her throne. She and her husband were claimants to the thrones of not one country but two, England and Scotland. Margaret plotted tirelessly to advance herself and her family, and later to marry her son, Lord Darnley, to Mary, Queen of Scots. And yes, Elizabeth was not happy. So, if you are not familiar with Margaret Douglas, let me tell you a very little about her background. Her mother (also named Margaret) was the daughter of Henry VII, and so a sister to Henry VIII, and she was married to the king of Scotland. After that king died, she married a Scottish lord, and their daughter was Margaret Douglas, the subject of this book. Let's just say the relationship between her parents was not all hugs and kisses. Various people turn sides again and again, no one can trust anyone, everyone is spying on everyone, and it goes on and on. Margaret Douglas is an active, not a passive, person in this very dangerous high-stakes game. Alison Weir is to be congratulated for rescuing Margaret from obscurity. The book is intense, not a quick read, but clear and concise and utterly fascinating. I highly recommend it for anyone interested in women's history in general and the Tudors and Renaissance England in particular.

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