



What inspired you to create your main character Lady Margaret?

After reading about the conflicts between the Saxons and the Normans, I wanted a character who lives in both worlds and must make difficult choices. Also, in the 12th century, women were property (like a cow or horse), and I wanted to explore what that meant in a woman's life.

Why did you name your main character Margaret?

I named her after Princess Margaret of England (1930-2002). While the rest of the world followed Queen Elizabeth II of England, I liked Margaret's feistiness and her struggle to live her own life within the confines of the royal family.

You start your story in 1199 C.E. How was 1099 to 1103 such a dangerous time?

Before King William II died, he caused much of the trouble his brother Henry faced. When Henry became King of England in 1100, three factions wanted him dead. Henry fought his entire reign to create a new country and a new people, but the first years of his reign were the most dangerous.

Why did you write a prequel?

I often give away the prequel to introduce the trilogy. The prequel introduces the main characters, both good and bad, and sets up Henry's problems of trying to outsmart and outlive his enemies.

Why did you weave Lady Margaret, your main character, into Henry's first years as King of England?

Lady Margaret represents both sides of the society of the time. A transitional figure with one foot in the Norman world and the other foot in the Saxon world, Margaret starts as a woman of rank, but her father reduces her to servitude. She must bargain to fight her way back into Norman society.

- *Lady Margaret's Disgrace* – She is reduced to servitude
- *Lady Margaret's Escape* – She bargains with the royals and endangers her life
- *Lady Margaret's Challenge* – She is awarded land and coin, but few Norman men want to marry her
- *Lady Margaret's Future* – Queen Matilda helps her find a new life

Do you really think King Henry would have replaced his queen just because she could not provide an heir?

Why not? The subtitle of the trilogy is Henry's Spare Queen because Henry had to have an heir. If Queen Matilda did not provide one, he might replace her with Margaret. King Henry was both a realist and a pragmatist. To Henry, having an heir to hold England and start a dynasty was more important than the woman who bore his son.

