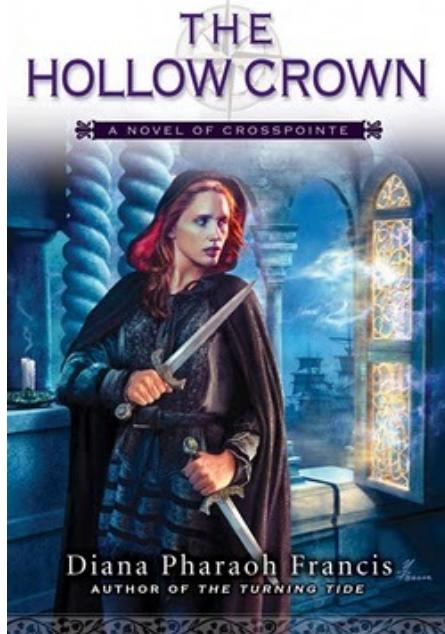


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The Hollow Crown

Diana Pharaoh Francis

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The Hollow Crown

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The Hollow Crown Diana Pharaoh Francis

The fourth exciting installment in the tumultuous world of Crosspointe

After the murders of the king and queen, the island empire of Crosspointe is on the verge of chaos. The ruthless Lord Chancellor has taken the throne and made slaves of most of the royal family. Now, in order to save the country they love, the king's heirs are determined to rally whatever allies they have left and overthrow the Lord Chancellor- before the Jutras invade.

The Hollow Crown Details

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Author : Diana Pharaoh Francis

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Genre : Fantasy, High Fantasy, Fiction

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From Reader Review The Hollow Crown for online ebook

JJ DeBenedictis says

This was a pretty fun book that jumps you into the swashbuckling action right away and features some appealing characters, such the female protagonist, who is both bad-ass and confidently self-reliant.

On the other hand, there were some things in the book that struck me as superficial and a bit hokey. The romance in particular seemed to exist for no other reason than because it would be maximally-inconvenient for the two people involved to get the hots for each other, and not because they had any genuine chemistry.

Of course, I don't read romance novels for the simple reason that this sort of thing doesn't thrill me much, so another reader might like that plot just fine.

There were other somewhat-hokey moments too, including the protagonist and her love interest having an argument about her next planned mission, with her saying she should kill herself rather than be mis-used by the baddie, and him insisting she should wait because he will come rescue her. Which, y'know, pretty much broadcasts the fact the author plans to get her captured on the next planned mission to get these sparring, testy love interests a little closer to hubba-hubba by the end of the book.

But again, maybe that's just my stone-hearted lack of interest when it comes to romance plots talking. :)

This novel is book 4 in a series, and it holds together just fine as a stand-alone, although it felt a bit unfinished at the end because the author withheld vanquishing the bigger baddies (as opposed to the book's local baddie) for the next novel.

I'm not sure if I'll read more in the series, because although it honestly was a fun read, it wasn't particularly great writing. I would recommend this novel to others, however, as a solid, middle-of-the-road fantasy novel that should entertain you.

Nicole says

Again, I want more. I really like each of the characters that are highlighted in each of the Crosspointe Chronicles, but I'm hungry for more at the end of each one. Is there a #5 on the way? Please, yes.

Chrissy Wissler says

The books of Crosspointe are different than most series in that each book tells a separate story with a different cast of characters in the lead. Some characters cross from book to book, like Keros the unregistered majicar and Margaret the once thought of pampered princess turned spy and assassin. With that said, some books have more appeal than others and it simply depends on how the characters resonate with you. Some speak to you more than others, and I have to say out of all the Crosspointe books, I've enjoyed The Hollow Crown the most. I'm a fan of conflict and reading about characters, who by their very nature and beliefs, are complete opposites.

Nicolas has spent his entire life trying to bring down the Ramplings, the large royal family, while Princess Margaret has given her life, dreams and future to protecting Crosspointe. Her father created her to be a weapon, who knew that someone who was driven by emotions and actions could never rule. And when Crosspointe is thrown into civil war and her two brothers refuse to act, she takes matter into her own hands, even if it's a simply action of saving her enemy's child from the regent.

A great story, great characters I enjoyed reading every page.

Craig says

Good 4th title in the series. The depth of world-building is beginning to suffer a bit, as the author relies too much on previous books, with little new expansion. Also the only one in the series that really doesn't have even a partial conclusion, which was one thing I liked about the others.

Amy Weiner says

I have a love/hate thing with this author. She starts novels by dropping me in with unfamiliar people whom I am not even certain I care about. But the flawed characters inevitably grow and grow on me and later in the story she links in elements from the earlier books in the series. I have to remember to bring patience to her novels because they are worth it. The stories stay with me for quite a while after I close the covers.

Nicole Luiken says

Princess Margaret made for a fascinating main character... a spy adept at hiding behind masks, a sometime assassin, ruthless enough to do almost anything to save Crosspointe from the evil Jutras and their blood magic. Well-plotted with strong pacing and high stakes.

Sonya Lano says

"But as much as she loved her country, it was a damned cold lover." - I love this line and almost cheered out loud at Margaret for realizing it. Pretty awesome, I thought... And on this note I approached the ending, grinning and excited, and BOOM! The last line of the book had a typo (Her smiled widened.), which, instead of leaving me with the impression "What a good book!", unfortunately left me with the overall impression that it needed a decent copy-edit? (considering I'd been noting typos all the way through).

However, typos don't affect my rating (I don't 'take off points' for bad editing because I don't believe that's what the book should be rated on). I rate it four stars because I really liked the whole package (it didn't get five stars because I think everyone will agree that a 5 star book just somehow seizes you and won't let go and leaves you with a feeling simply unmatched by most other books).

PLOT:

I'm horrible at this but I'm going to give it a try. Princess Margaret was raised to be a lethal weapon (whoops,

didn't mean to evoke guns and Mel Gibson there; think more spy, assassin, thief, and whore - for Margaret, not for Mel) although the only public face the world has known for her was the empty-headed, shallow, simpering princess. While uncovering the secrets of the current regent Geoffrey (can't recall his last name at the moment), Margaret discovers that he has kidnapped the son of Nicholas Weverton, an enemy of her family who may have been responsible for her father's death. She makes a bargain with Weverton - help put the Ramplings back on the throne and she will help him save his son (not in that order). At the same time, magicars are going mad, the pale is failing, and sylveth is vanishing from the sea...

I can't really say anymore without giving away spoilers, but what follows is definitely a tale full of magic and fraught with danger and it's a good ride.

CHARACTERS:

I really, really liked the tension of the relationship between Margaret and Nicholas. Keros might be my favorite character, though it's hard to choose. I liked them all.

Ellyn's and Margaret's personalities seemed too similar to me. To be fair, to a certain extent they would have to be similar considering their pasts and their present occupations forcing them to be emotionally repressed. But I can't think of anything that either of them did that the other wouldn't have done, as well, put in the same situation. Their similarity didn't take away from my enjoyment, but it would have been nice to see just a bit more differentiation between their personalities. It's possible a more subtle reader would discern more of a difference than I did.

At the end, one of the characters was forgotten (can't say which one or I'll spoil one of the plots) - that forgotten character having been left with a farmer. This also didn't bother me much because the book ends in the middle of preparations for war so it's possible this character will be remembered later, but considering he was one of the key points of the story, it surprised me that there wasn't even a mention of "Oh, s/he'll be better off there" or "I'd better bring him/her here."

SETTING:

Regarding the worldbuilding and orientation in it. I didn't have a problem understanding it or orienting myself in it. There might have been a few things that had me stumped, but they were minor (as in I can't even recall what they were). I've only read one other Crosspointe book and that was the first one (*The Cipher*) from which I only recalled The Pale and sylveth; other than those two things; pretty much everything else about the world was new for me.

VARIOUS OTHER:

I didn't start off too impressed with this book because of two things:

- 1) the writing: there were lots of sentences starting with 'She' and it was enough to be jarring. This was particularly prominent in the beginning, not so much later. It flowed better farther into it.
- 2) in the first scene, Margaret would rather dither about bickering with someone wanting to help her rather than extricate herself from danger. She argued much too long for someone who needs to get out and fast, which slowed the pace and made me feel that the danger must not be that acute if she's taking the time to establish her rescuer's credentials.

After the beginning though, it gets better (imo).

My favorite lines of the book were:

"What happened? What was that scream?"

Keros smiled, a cold, vicious smile. "Turns out Weverton is afraid of snakes. He'll be along soon. Let's leave him to recover his dignity in peace."

My favorite scenes:

- the one where Keros shows Nicholas what he (Keros) is capable of (where my above-mentioned favorite lines were from). This scene is one of the ones that made me want to keep the book; for some reason I liked it a lot.
- the one where the four main protags play at being couples (although Margaret bordered on overplaying it, in my opinion); it was nice comic relief to an otherwise dark story.
- most of the scenes between Nicholas and Margaret, esp. in the second half of the book - another reason I'm keeping the book

GRAMMAR ERRORS that I noted (I only wrote down a few of them, just in case someone in a position to fix them stumbles across this review and is interested in fixing them):

- you were a meant to be a journeyman
- into the Ellyn's net
- I'm hear to help
- He was a much better swordsmen than they were
- He yanked back as the footmen thudded to the floor (should be footman)
- The groups set off again. (should be group)
- (and of course, in the last line of the book:) Her smiled widened.

Aliyyah says

Diana Francis just keeps getting better and the hits just keep on coming for the characters of Crosspointe. I think this is the novel that finally reveals many of the secrets of Crosspointe as we get to know Margaret Rampling and her arch-nemesis/would-be lover Nicholas Weverton. Each novel of Crosspointe has explored the secrets of Crosspointe, but never has one smashed them all in one novel. Here we come to see the family relationships of the Ramplings, some of the history of the Jutra, and a better understanding of the magic that has endangered everyone and kept them safe. Action-packed from beginning to end, the battle for Crosspointe has now just begun!
