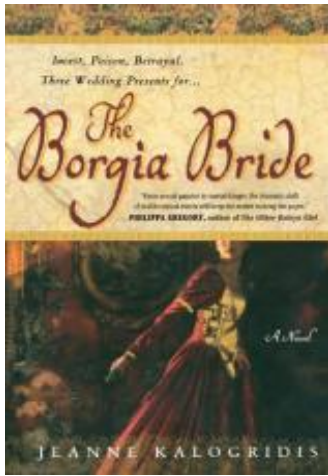


# Borgia Bride

by Jeanne Kalogridis

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## About the Book

A story of romance and courage, of danger and desire, set against the rich terrain of Renaissance Italy, for the readers of **The Birth of Venus** and **The Other Boleyn Girl**.

Vivacious Sancha of Aragon arrives in Rome newly wed to a member of the notorious Borgia dynasty. Surrounded by opulence and corruption, she befriends her glamorous and seductive sister-in-law, Lucrezia Borgia, whose jealousy is as legendary as her beauty. Some say she has poisoned her rivals, particularly those to whom her handsome brother Cesare has given his heart. So when Sancha falls under Cesare's irresistible spell, she must hide her secret or lose her life. Caught in their sinister web, she must summon her courage and use her cunning to outwit them at their own game. **The Borgia Bride** is based on a true figure and weaves real history and fiction to create a tale seething with conspiracy, sexual intrigue, and drama.

## Discussion Guide

1. How do you feel about Sancha's childhood experiences shaping her personality as an adult? What parts of her temperament do you think were inherited, and which shaped by experience?
2. What common traits does Sancha share with her brother Alfonso? What do you believe accounts for the difference in their personalities? Do you believe the fact that Sancha was older made a difference? Do you see Alfonso's goodness as a weakness? Which character do you admire more?
3. How do you feel about Jofre as a character when he first appears in the novel? Does your opinion of him change over the course of the novel? Do you feel he is a sympathetic character?

4. How does your opinion of Lucrezia change over the course of the novel? Are her actions justifiable?
5. Why do you believe Sancha was so drawn to Cesare Borgia?
6. Do you believe Cesare possessed any positive character traits? If so, which? Do you believe he was capable of genuine love for Sancha?
7. Sancha and Lucrezia's personalities differ enormously, yet they formed a strong bond. Outside of their shared affection for Alfonso, what was the basis for this bond?
8. Who was more in control of the House of Borgia's politics: Pope Alexander or Cesare? Do you believe that Alexander feared Cesare, or that the two schemed together, with Alexander often playing the innocent?
9. When faced with the choice between her husband and her son, could Lucrezia have acted differently? Discuss the consequences of her actions.
10. Do you think Cesare's slaughter of the condottiere of the noble houses of Italy was a wise or unwise political move?
11. Do you believe the Pope and Cesare could have succeeded in their quest to unite all of Italy under their rule? Why or why not? Do you feel Pope Alexander was a shrewd politician, or did he often alienate useful factions?
12. If Sancha had married Cesare, could she have influenced him for good? Could she have been a successful "power behind the throne?"

## Author Bio

Jeanne Kalogridis lives with her partner in North Carolina, where they share a house with two dogs. She is the author of the critically acclaimed novels *THE BORGIA BRIDE* and *I, MONA LISA* and other numerous dark fantasy and historical novels.

## Critical Praise

"From sexual passion to mortal danger, the dramatic shift of real historical events will keep the reader turning the pages."

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### **Borgia Bride**

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