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Von Jennifer Blake

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Von Jennifer Blake : By His Majesty's Grace (The Three Graces, Book 1) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised By His Majesty's Grace (The Three Graces, Book 1):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Very goodVon Susan C. Saberi-FaschingbauerI enjoyed reading this very much. In fact, it was hard to put down.That

should say something to you when it is hard to put down.

KurzbeschreibungThe Three Graces of Graydon are well#150;born sisters bearing an ominous curse: any man betrothed to them without love is doomed to die.Much to her chagrin, Lady Isabel Milton has been given to Earl Rand Braesforda reward from the Tudor king for his loyalty to the throne. The lusty nobleman quickly claims his husbandly rights, an experience Isabel scarcely hoped to enjoy so much. But youth and strength may not save Braesford from his bride's infamous curseAccused of a heinous crime with implications that reach all the way to King Henry himself, Braesford is imprisoned in the Tower, and Isabel is offered her salvationbut for a price. She has the power to seal his fate, have him sent to the executioner and be freed from her marriage bonds. Yet the more Isabel learns of Rand, the less convinced she is of his guilt, and she commits to discover the truth about the enigmatic husband she never expected to love.KurzbeschreibungThe Three Graces of Graydon are well#150;born sisters bearing an ominous curse: any man betrothed to them without love is doomed to die.Much to her chagrin, Lady Isabel Milton has been given to Earl Rand Braesforda reward from the Tudor king for his loyalty to the throne. The lusty nobleman quickly claims his husbandly rights, an experience Isabel scarcely hoped to enjoy so much. But youth and strength may not save Braesford from his bride's infamous curseAccused of a heinous crime with implications that reach all the way to King Henry himself, Braesford is imprisoned in the Tower, and Isabel is offered her salvationbut for a price. She has the power to seal his fate, have him sent to the executioner and be freed from her marriage bonds. Yet the more Isabel learns of Rand, the less convinced she is of his guilt, and she commits to discover the truth about the enigmatic husband she never expected to love.Leseprobe. Abdruck erfolgt mit freundlicher Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber. Alle Rechte vorbehalten.August 1486 EnglandBraesford was finally sighted in late afternoon. It stood before them on its hill, a walled keep centered by a pele tower of massive proportions that loomed against the gray north sky. Rooks wheeled and called above the turret, soaring about its corbelled and battlemented walkway. A pennon topped it to show the master was in residence. That sturdy fabric of blue and white fluttered and snapped in the brisk wind as if trying to take flight.Isabel Milton would have taken flight herself were it not so cowardly.A trumpet sounded, indicating their permission to enter. Isabel shivered despite the latesummer warmth. Drawing a deep breath, she kicked her palfrey to a slow walk behind her stepbrother, the Earl of Graydon, and his friend Viscount Henley. Their mounted party approached Braesford's thick stone walls with their ragged skirt of huts and small shops, clipclipping over the dry moat, beneath the portcullis and through the gateway that gave onto a barmkin where the people of the countryside could be protected in time of trouble. Chickens flapped out of their way and a sow and her five piglets ran squealing in high dudgeon. Hounds flowed in a blackandtan river down the stone steps of the open turret stairway just ahead. They surrounded the arriving party, barking, growling and sniffing around the horses' fetlocks. Lining the way to the turret entrance was an honor guard of menatarms, though no host stood ready to receive them.Isabel, waiting for aid to dismount, stared up at the great central manse attached to the pele tower. This portion was newly built of brick, three stories in height with corner medallions and inset niches holding terracotta figures of militant archangels. The ground floor was apparently a service area from which servants emerged to receive the baggage of the arriving party. The great hall, the heart of the structure, was undoubtedly on the second floor with the ladies' solar directly above it, there where mullioned windows reflected the turbulent sky.What manner of man commanded this fortress, which rose in such rugged yet prosperous splendor? What combination of arrogance and audacity led him to think she, daughter of a nobleman and an heiress in her own right, should wed a mere farmer, no matter how wide his lands or impregnable his home? What rare influence had he with the king that Henry Tudor had commanded it?A shadow loomed inside the Roman arch of the turret doorway. The broad shape of a man appeared. He stepped out onto the cobblestones. Every eye in the bailey turned to fasten upon him.Isabel came erect in her saddle as alarm banished her weariness from the long journey. She had been misled, she saw with tight dread in her chest, perhaps through ignorance but more likely from malice. Graydon was fond of such jests.The master of Braesford was no mere farmer.He was, instead, a warrior.Randall Braesford was imposing in his height, with broad shoulders made wider by the cut of his doublet. The strong musculature of his flanks and legs was closely defined by dark gray hose and high boots of the same color. His hair was black, glinting in the pale sunlight with the iridescence of a raven's feathered helmet, and worn evenly cropped just above his shoulders. His eyes were the dark silvergray of tempered steel; his features, though well cast, were made somber by the firm set of his mouth under a straight Roman nose. Garbed in the refined colors of black, white and gray, he had not the faintest hint of court dandy about him, no trace of damask or embroidery, no widebrimmed headgear set with plumes. His hat was simple, of gray wool with an upturned brim cut in crenellations like a castle wall. From the belt at his lean waist hung his knife for use at table, a fine damascene blade marked by a hilt and scabbard with tracings of silver over its black enamel.It was no wonder he was a close companion to the king, she thought in fuming ire. They were two of a kind, Henry VII and Sir Rand Braesford. Though one was fair and the other dark, both were grave of feature and mien, forbidding in their strength and obvious determination to bend fortune to their will and their pleasure.At her side, Viscount Henley, a veritable giant of a man on the downside of forty, with

sandy hair and the battered countenance of those who made a pastime of war and jousting, swung down from his courser. He turned toward Isabel as if to assist her dismount. "Stay," Rand Braesford called in the firm command of those accustomed to being obeyed. He advanced upon her, his stride unhurried, his gaze keen. "The privilege is mine, I believe." An odd paralysis gripped Isabel while a hollow sensation invaded her midsection. She could not look away from Braesford's dark eyes, not even when he paused beside her. They were so very black, with shimmering depths that beckoned yet defended against penetration. Anything could be hidden there, anything at all. "My lady?" The low rumble of his voice had a vibrant undertone that seemed to echo inside her. It was as intimate and as possessive as his mode of address. My lady. Not milady, but my lady. His lady. And why not? Soon she would be his indeed. Aware, abruptly, that she was staring, she veiled her gaze with her lashes, unhooked her knee from her pommel and turned more fully toward him. He reached for her waist with hard hands, lifting her from the saddle as she leaned to rest her gloved hands on his broad shoulders. He braced with his feet set, drawing her against him so she slid slowly down his long length until the skirt of her riding gown was drawn up and crushed between them and her booted toes barely touched the ground. Her breath caught in her chest. Her future husband had no softness about him anywhere. His body was so unyielding from his chest to his knees that it was more like steel armor than living flesh. The sensation was particularly evident in the area below his waist. She jerked a little in his grasp, her eyes wide and fingers clenched on his shoulders, as she recognized that heated firmness against the softness of her lower belly. He cared not at all that she knew, or so it seemed. His appraisal was intent behind the thick screen of his lashes, which seemed to permit her the same right of inspection. His eyes, she saw, carried a gleam in their depths like honed and polished silver, and thick brows made dark slashes above them. Lines radiated from the corners, perhaps from laughter but more likely from staring out over far distances. His jaw was square and his chin centered by a shallow cleft. The firm yet wellmolded contours of his mouth hinted at a sensual nature held steadfastly in check. "Well, Braesford," her stepbrother said with the rasp of annoyance in his voice. "Graydon," the master of the manse said over his shoulder in acknowledgment. "I bid you welcome to Braesford Hall. And would do so with more ceremony if not so impatient to greet my bride." The words were pleasant enough, but carried an unmistakable note of irony. Did Braesford refer, most daringly, to his appreciation for her as a woman? Did he mean he was otherwise barely pleased to make her acquaintance, or was it something more between the two men? This knight and her stepbrother had known each other during the Lancastrian invasion of the previous summer that had ended at Bosworth Field. Braesford had earned his spurs there, becoming Sir Randall Braesford. It was he who had found the golden circlet lost by the usurper, Richard III, and handed it to Lord Stanley so Henry Tudor might be crowned on the battlefield. Graydon, by contrast, had come away from Bosworth with nothing except the new king's displeasure ringing in his ears for his delay in bringing up his men. Braesford no doubt knew that her...