

Frances Parkinson Keyes

The King

A NEW NOVEL



I, The King

BY

*Frances
Parkinson
Keyes*

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I, The King

BOOKS BY FRANCES PARKINSON KEYES

I, The King	Also the Hills
The Explorer	The River Road
The Old Gray Homestead	Once on Esplanade
The Career of David Noble	Came a Cavalier
Letters from a Senator's Wife	Dinner at Antoine's
Queen Anne's Lace	All This Is Louisiana
Silver Seas and Golden Cities	The Cost of a Best Seller
The Safe Bridge	Joy Street
Senator Marlowe's Daughter	Steamboat Gothic
The Happy Wanderer	The Royal Box
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Written in Heaven	St. Anne: <i>Grandmother of Our Saviour</i>
(Revised and reissued as	Blue Camellia
Therese: <i>Saint of a Little</i>	The Land of Stones and Saints
Way)	Victorine
Capital Kaleidoscope	Station Wagon in Spain
Parts Unknown	Mother Cabrini: <i>Missionary to the World</i>
The Great Tradition	Frances Parkinson Keyes' Christmas Gift
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The Sublime Shepherdess	Roses in December
(Revised and reissued as	The Chess Players
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Fielding's Folly	Madame Castel's Lodger
The Grace of Guadalupe	A Treasury of Favorite Poems
All That Glitters	The Restless Lady and Other Stories
Crescent Carnival	

TO DON JOSÉ MARÍA DE AREILZA,

Count of Motrico,

who suggested that I write a novel

based on the friendship between

Philip IV and Maria de Ágreda

and

to those who helped me expand the scope of the story

to include the other women

who most influenced his life

Illustrations

FOLLOWING PAGE 114

Philip, Prince of Asturias, afterward Philip IV, at the time of his marriage to Isabel de Bourbon. Portrait by Villandrando. Courtesy of the Prado Museum, Madrid.

Isabel de Bourbon at the time of her marriage to the Prince of Asturias, later Philip IV. Portrait by Pourbus. Courtesy of the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

Conde-Duque de Olivares. Portrait by Velázquez, 1625. Courtesy of the Hispanic Society of America, New York.

Velázquez—self-portrait. Courtesy of the Prado Museum, Madrid.

Philip IV as a young king of Spain. Portrait by Velázquez. Courtesy of the Prado Museum, Madrid.

Isabel de Bourbon as a young queen of Spain. Portrait by Pantoja de la Cruz. Courtesy of the Prado Museum, Madrid.

FOLLOWING PAGE 242

Baltasar Carlos, heir to the throne of Philip IV. Portrait by Velázquez. Courtesy of the Prado Museum, Madrid.

Sor María de Ágreda. From an etching reproducing a contemporary portrait in the Franciscan Convent of Santo Domingo de la Calzada.

Don Juan at the time of his victory in Naples. From a French contemporary etching as represented in *Manual de Historia de España* by Pedro Aguado Bleye. Vol. II, Reyes Católicos. Courtesy of Gilberto Molina Correa, Ecuador.

Philip IV as an older king. Attributed to the school of Velázquez. Courtesy of the Prado Museum, Madrid.

Mariana of Austria, second wife of Philip IV. Attributed to the school of Velázquez. Courtesy of the Prado Museum, Madrid.

The Infanta Margarita. Portrait by Velázquez. Courtesy of the Prado Museum, Madrid.

MAPS

Contemporary map of seventeenth-century Spain and Portugal. Courtesy of the author.

FOLLOWING PAGE 114

Spanish Empire in Europe during the reign of Philip IV. Drawn by Barbara Long.

FOLLOWING PAGE 242

View of Saragossa. Painting by Velázquez. Courtesy of the Prado Museum, Madrid.

ENDPAPERS.

Cast of Characters

PHILIP III, King of Spain

His children:

THE INFANTA ANA, later Queen of France

THE PRINCE OF ASTURIAS, later King Philip IV

THE INFANTE DON CARLOS

THE CARDINAL-INFANTE FERNANDO

THE INFANTA MARÍA, later Queen of Hungary and Empress of Austria

GASPAR DE GUZMÁN, Count of Olivares, later Duke of Sanlúcar, generally known as the Conde-Duque. (Chief Minister, known as *Privado*, to Philip IV)

INÉS DE ZÚÑIGA, Countess of Olivares, his wife

ANA DE GUEVARA, Nursery Governess of Philip IV

ISABEL DE BOURBON, first wife of Philip IV

CHARLES, Prince of Wales

GEORGE VILLIERS, DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM

ARMAND JEAN DU PLESSIS, better known as CARDINAL RICHELIEU, Chief Minister of France

DIEGO DE VELÁZQUEZ, Court Painter of Philip IV

MARÍA INÉS CALDERÓN, better known as LA CALDERONA, a young actress, later Abbess of Valfermoso de las Monjas, King Philip's "true love"

DON JUAN OF AUSTRIA, her son

BALTASAR CARLOS, son of Philip IV and Isabel de Bourbon

MARÍA TERESA, his sister, later bride of Louis XIV of France

MARGARITA, Duchess of Mantua, Vicereine of Portugal

JERÓNIMO DE VILLANUEVA, Marqués de Villalba, Secretary of State,

Protonotary and confidential agent to His Majesty, Philip IV

DOÑA TERESA VALLE DE LA CERDA, his erstwhile fiancée, Abbess of
San Plácido Convent

Sor MARGARITA, a beautiful novice at San Plácido Convent

DON LUIS DE HARO, nephew of the Conde-Duque and his successor
as Minister

MARQUÉS DE AYTONA, briefly Provincial Governor of Flanders and,
like Don Luis de Haro, a kinsman of Olivares, who remained
close to the King after the Minister's fall.

Sor MARÍA, Abbess of the Conceptionist Convent at Ágreda, "guide,
philosopher and friend" of Philip IV

MARIANA OF AUSTRIA, second wife of Philip IV

CARLOS, her only surviving son

THE INFANTA MARGARITA MARÍA, her only surviving daughter

LOUIS XIV, King of France

Contents

PART ONE *The Queen Consort* 1615-1627
page i

PART TWO *The Actress* 1627-1629
page 87

PART THREE *The Queen Regent* 1629-1642
page 125

PART FOUR *The Novice* 1642
page 171

PART FIVE *The Queen, the Duchess and the Nurse* 1642-1643
page 199

PART SIX *The Lady in Blue* 1643-1649
page 219

PART SEVEN *The Niece* 1649-1665
page 297

GENEALOGICAL CHART page 342

AUTHOR'S NOTE page 345

BIBLIOGRAPHY page 363

P A R T O N E

The
Queen
Consort
1615-1627

Spain was at war and a league of all liberal Europe under Henry IV of France was pledged to humble finally the inflated pretensions of the house of Austria; but just as . . . the prompt ruin of Spain seemed imminent, a circumstance happened that gave a new lease of life to the proud dreams of the Philips, and made the subsequent downfall during the reign we have to record the more complete.

In May, 1610, the dagger of a crazy fanatic ended the glorious life of "Henry of Navarre"; and the coalition against Spain broke down, and gave way to a struggle between his widow Marie de Medici and James I of England to secure the friendship of the decadent power which still loomed so large and asserted its claims so haughtily. The Queen Regent of France, papal and clerical as she was, succeeded where crafty, servile James Stuart failed; and in 1612 the eldest daughter of Spain, the Infanta Ana, was betrothed in Madrid by proxy to the boy King of France, Louis XIII, and young Philip, Prince of Asturias, became the affianced husband of Isabel of Bourbon, the elder daughter of Henry IV, the great Béarnais. . . . In 1615, King Philip III and his pompous Court travelled north in an interminable cavalcade to exchange the brides on the frontier.

Prince Philip remained at the ancient Castilian capital of Burgos, while the dark-eyed young beauty who was destined to be his wife rode, surrounded by Spanish nobles, from the little frontier stream through San Sebastián and Vitoria to meet her bridegroom. The boy and his father rode a league or two out of Burgos to greet the girl, who it was fondly hoped would cement France and Spain together for the fulfilment of the impossible old dream of Christian unity dictated from Madrid.

—MARTIN HUME. *The Court of Philip IV.*

Chapter I

SHE was seated in a silver saddle, with housings of velvet and pearls, on a white palfrey, when she came riding into his life and into his heart.

She more than fulfilled every fond expectation, for she was not only pretty as a picture; she had paid her bridegroom's people the compliment of changing from her gorgeous French attire to the stiffer Spanish dress; and, though it was evident she was still not used to it, the complaisance which had caused her to wear it, made a most favorable impression. Besides, if her dress were stiff, everything else about her was delightfully easy: her smile, her glance, her bearing, all marked her as the true daughter of the great Béarnais; like him, she was engaging, like him, she was gallant, like him, she was debonair.

"It's all such fun!" she kept exclaiming. "Isn't it, Philip?"

"It must be, if you say so," he answered, all too inadequately, as he knew, and brought his horse a little closer to hers.

"Oh, but it isn't just because I say so! It's because it really is! And how kind and cordial everyone is. I'm sure I'm going to love Spain. In fact, I love it already!"

She burst into happy laughter and, impulsively, began to throw kisses right and left. No wonder that she charmed everyone in sight, from the beggars and burghers lining the dark narrow streets and the richly robed clergy awaiting her on the steps of the gorgeous cathedral to the pale, sandy-haired boy with the heavy underlip, who was almost speechless with the marvel of having so bright and beautiful a being become an essential part of his existence.

He was ten years old—two years younger than his bride—and

until she came riding toward him, that day near Burgos, very little which was bright and beautiful had entered his life. His mother, Margarita of Austria—delicate, devout, withdrawn—had died when he was only six years old. She had loved Valladolid and had grieved when the capital was moved, for the second time, from there to Madrid; she had never been well afterward. The boy's father, Philip III, who was also delicate, devout and withdrawn, had become a prey to moods of dark despair over his inadequacy as a monarch; and these alternated with mystic visions which gave him brief illusions of relief from his misery. More and more, except when his gay and charming favorite, the Duke of Lerma, was able to break through their barricade, he was surrounded by friars who dictated both the most trifling and the most important acts of his life; and it was these same friars or their counterparts to whom the little boy's supervision and education were entrusted. Prayers and lessons, lessons and prayers, relieved only by an occasional masque, were his portion; he had no companions of his own age, except for the young courtiers who acted with him in these rare entertainments, and he formed no close associations among them. This woeful lack made it all the easier for him to accept, as a friend, an Andalusian aristocrat, Gaspar de Guzmán, Count of Olivares, who was brought to him by the Duke of Uceda, the Duke of Lerma's son, to be his Gentleman of the Bedchamber, when he reached the age to begin dispensing with the services of his nursery governess, Ana de Guevara.

At first, he resented the intrusion of this huge, dark man, with his bold glance, loud voice and insolent manner; he was very fond of Ana and wanted to cling to her. But he was flattered at the suggestion that he was outgrowing apron strings and intrigued by the tall tales Gaspar de Guzmán, a superb raconteur, told about his childhood in Rome, where his father was the Spanish Ambassador, and his student days in Salamanca, where he had eventually become a lector. Little by little, Philip adapted himself to the change; when Ana was not at hand, he needed someone in whom he could confide and he found this increasingly easy to do when he and Guzmán were riding together—or when he was lying in bed and the Count of Olivares, as was fitting, stopped to make sure there was nothing more Philip required, before leaving for the night, just as Ana had

always done and she was now doing less and less frequently. She had obviously resented Guzmán's presence from the beginning and finally the Count explained to the boy that her attitude was unbecoming in an attendant and, with reluctance, Philip consented to part from his old nurse.

"You'll still come to see me sometimes, won't you, Ana?" he asked tearfully, hiding his head in her comfortable bosom.

"Just as often as I can. I don't know how I'll manage, but never you fear. I'll do it somehow."

"Please do, because I love you better than anyone in the world now that my mother's dead."

"And I love you better than anyone in the world. What's more, I'll serve you better in the end than this—this interloper. He needn't have ordered me away—he could have given me different things to do for you. I know as well as he does that you're not a baby any more, but that doesn't mean I couldn't be of use. I'll never forgive him for what he's done to separate us and some day he's going to be sorry."

She could not say any more just then because Olivares came striding into the room and harshly told her to be gone. Philip was bewildered, as well as unhappy, too unhappy to say anything more then, when he was trying hard not to cry. But there were many other things that puzzled him and though, to do Olivares justice, he took some pains to explain these to the lonely boy, Philip's bewilderment and unhappiness persisted. For instance, he had also been very fond of the Duke of Lerma, his own father's *Privado*—the Chief Minister who was further officially recognized as the Prime Favorite. Lerma had dandled Philip when he was a baby and still romped with him as a youngster; he wept again when he heard that his "gossip" had been banished from Court. Guzmán, who was vehement and voluble, undertook to clarify this situation as he had the other.

"*Privados* sometimes become an evil influence on the monarchs who single them out for special privileges along with their ministerial responsibilities," he said. "They abuse their power, plunder the people to enrich themselves and end by ruling the country over which the King only reigns. That is what Lerma has done, what Uceda will do if he is not watched."