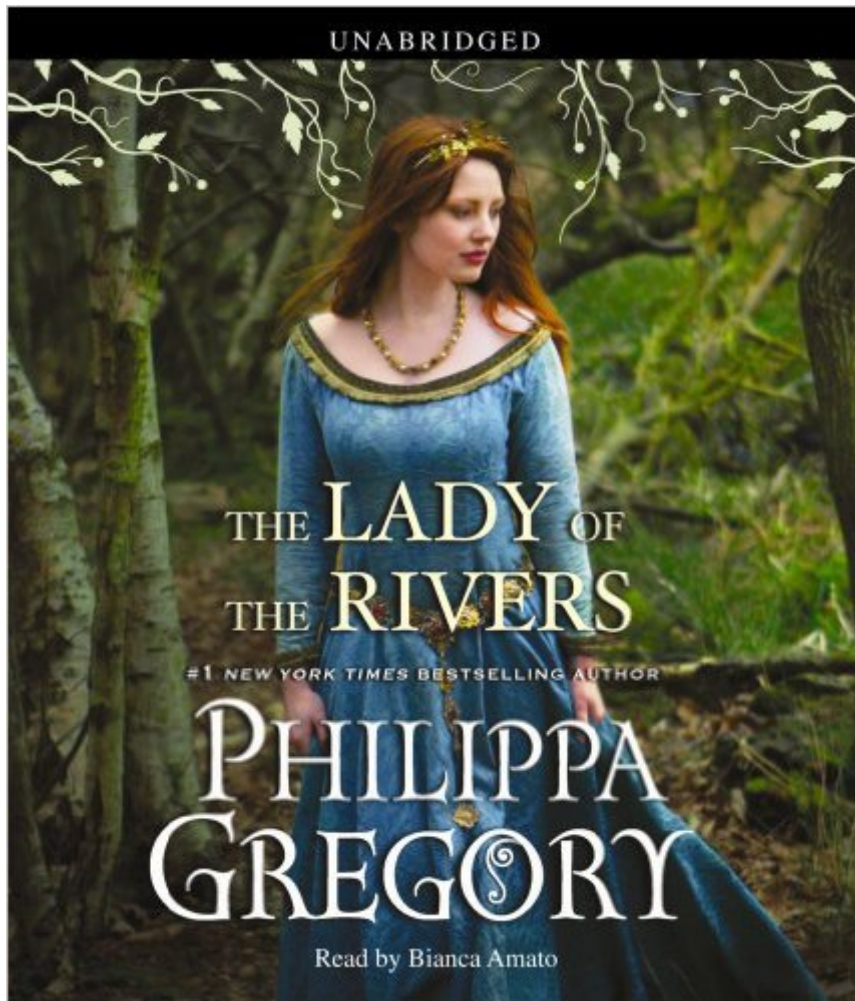


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The Lady Of The Rivers: A Novel (The Plantagenet And Tudor Novels)



Synopsis

#1 New York Times bestselling author Philippa Gregory weaves witchcraft, passion, and adventure into the story of Jacquetta, Duchess of Bedford, a woman who navigated a treacherous path through the battle lines in the War of the Roses. Descended from Melusina, the river goddess, Jacquetta has always had the gift of second sight. As a child visiting her uncle, she meets his prisoner, Joan of Arc, and recognizes her own power in the young woman accused of witchcraft. They share the mystery of the tarot card of the *œwheel of fortune* before Joan is taken to a horrific death at the hands of the English rulers of France. Jacquetta understands the danger for a woman who dares to dream. Married to the Duke of Bedford, English Regent of France, Jacquetta is introduced by him to a mysterious world of learning and alchemy. Her only friend in the great household is the Duke's squire Richard Woodville, who is at her side when the Duke's death leaves her a wealthy young widow. The two become lovers and marry in secret, returning to England to serve at the court of the young King Henry VI, where Jacquetta becomes a close and loyal friend to his new queen. A sweeping, powerful story based on history and rich in passion and legend, *The Lady of the Rivers* tells the story of the real-life mother to the White Queen. Philippa Gregory is writing at the height of her talent.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Summary: *The Lady of the Rivers* is the third book in the *Cousin's War* series spanning the time period near the War of the Roses. Even though it's the third book in the series, chronologically it's

the first. The story is the life of Jacquetta of Luxembourg from near the time of her first marriage to the Duke of Bedford and ends near where *The White Queen* (the novel about her daughter, Elizabeth Woodville) begins. I like historical fiction. I also generally like Gregory's novels (though she's also had more than her fair share of absolute bombs as well). She's kind of a guilty pleasure for me. I know that her novels are not groundbreaking works of fiction that will be discussed in literary circles for generations to come. It's "candy fiction". It tastes good, but you know there is no nutritional value. This is especially true with *The Cousin's War* series, where she takes many more liberties with actual historical events than she does in the Tudor novels. Granted, the Tudor family, and Anne Boleyn (obviously from *The Other Boleyn Girl*, her best work to date) especially, are much better documented in historical documents. So, some of this can be explained away by simply a lack of records from these times and characters. However, the fact still remains that these books are entertainment only, and not a "history reference". There are things I enjoyed about this novel. It held my interest well enough. I liked the inclusion of alchemy and mysticism which added an interesting angle, even if it did make the already factually flawed novel even more unbelievable. I liked Margaret of Anjou! She was really the only character that I thought was truly dynamic.

With a nod given to Philippa Gregory for her contribution (*The Other Boleyn Girl*) in bringing the genre of historical fiction back from the dead, I'm afraid I simply can't recommend her latest book, *The Lady of the Rivers*. I'm not going to nit-pick historical details because it is indeed a work of fiction and Gregory has the right to make up whatever she thinks will make a rollicking good story. Unfortunately, accuracy aside, *The Lady of the Rivers* is not a rollicking good story. As you likely know by now, the story focuses on Jacquetta Rivers, the famously beautiful Duchess and mother of Elizabeth Woodville, the "commoner" who would eventually become the wife of England's Edward IV. Long neglected by historical novelists, Jacquetta was a good choice for a heroine. Unfortunately, Gregory falls far short in the execution of the novel. It's hard to summon interest in Jacquetta in this book. She's surrounded by all the mythological/witchy/fish legend stuff of Gregory's earlier books in this series (you know, the Melusina, from which Jacquetta's line was allegedly descended), but that's about the sum total of anything interesting about her. She makes forays into alchemy and foreseeing the future, but neither is very convincing. Perhaps the biggest problem I had with this novel was the dialog. I understand that this particular time period during the Wars of the Roses in England, was extremely convoluted. It's difficult to keep track of all the different families and people who played a part. Gregory chose to solve this problem via dialog. Therefore, every time a character refers to another character, they do so using their full name, title, and relationship. Now before you

start thinking that this might be helpful, allow me to share how it reads.

The novel LADY OF THE RIVERS really should have been the first book in the series to THE COUSIN'S WAR. It is the third book and tells about Elizabeth Woodville's mother French born Jacquetta of Luxembourg, Countess Rivers.(1415/1416-30May1472. She married Richard Woodville 1'st Earl of Rivers.The novel was excellent and was well researched. It was full of history and at times I had to back track. The book was filled with facts about The Hundreds Year War known to everyone as The War Of The Roses. The main characters in the book are:Jacquetta Woodville Countess Rivers- Married to Richard Woodville and Lady in waiting to Queen Margaret of AnjouRichard Woodville-Jacquetta's husband and 1st Earl RiversHenry VI - King of EnglandMargaret of Anjou- Queen of EnglandEdmund of Tudor- 1's Earl of RichmondJohn Beaufort-Duke of SomersetRichard Duke of York- The King's Cousin and Edward of York's fatherJacquetta was French and loyal to the side of Lancaster the red rose. She was the eldest daughter of Peter 1 of Luxembourg, Count of Saint-Pol. She was briefly married to the Duke of Bedford brother to King Henry V. Her daughter Elizabeth Woodville married Edward IV of The House of York. Jacquetta had 14 children. She stood trial on charges of witchcraft for which she was exonerated. She claimed her ancestry from the river goddess Melusina. Melusina is mentioned in this novel as well as in The White Queen. The Woodville's claim their ancestry from this goddess. The novel starts in 1430 at the Castle of Beaufort, near Arras France at the trial of Joan of Arc. Jacquetta is a young girl with her great-aunt Lady Jehanne. Jacquetta even visits Joan in prison. Joan is accused of witchcraft and Jacquetta watches her burn!

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