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Posted on 06 August 2019 By Joanna Hickson

## #FREE DOWNLOAD È The Agincourt Bride (Catherine de Valois, #1) à eBook

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This book was good but, too wordy It caught my eye enough to read the sequel which I enjoyed better The descriptions of the lifestyle during the time period were excellent, which was the best part of the book. I loved this Indeed, I found myself completely enthralled and caught up in the politics, intrigue and magic of the French Court and Henry V of England Joanna Hickson is one of those rare story tellers that weaves a kind of magic with the English Language so that you feel as if you have been transported to another time and place. The story is told in first person by Catherine s nurse At first I thought this literary device would become annoying However, I soon found myself completely caught up in personalities and events. The detail of life in 15th century England was remarkable and so well done Clearly a lot of research has gone into this book However, the research didn t get in the way of telling a good story and instead enhanced and delineated the time and place. Fans of Elizabeth Chadwick and Sharon Kay Penman will enjoy this book, as will all readers of historical fiction I am so looking forward to the sequel, The Tudor Bride, coming out later this year. #FREE DOWNLOAD , The Agincourt Bride (Catherine de Valois, #1) ? The Epic Story Of The Queen Who Founded The Tudor Dynasty, Told Through The Eyes Of Her Loyal Nursemaid Perfect For Fans Of Philipa Gregory When Her Own First Child Is Tragically Still Born, The Young Mette Is Pressed Into Service As A Wet Nurse At The Court Of The Mad King, Charles VI Of France Her Young Charge Is The Princess, Catherine De Valois, Caught Up In The Turbulence And Chaos Of Life At Court Mette And The Child Forge A Bond, One That Transcends Mette S Lowly Position But As Catherine Approaches Womanhood, Her Unique Position Seals Her Fate As A Pawn Between Two Powerful Dynasties Her Brother, The Dauphin And The Dark And Sinister, Duke Of Burgundy Will Both Use Catherine To Further The Cause Of France Catherine Is Powerless To Stop Them, But With The French Defeat At The Battle Of Agincourt, The Tables Turn And Suddenly Her Currency Has Never Been Higher But Can Mette Protect Catherine From Forces At Court Who Seek To Harm Her Or Will Her Loyalty To Catherine Place Her In Even Greater Danger Although the Tudor dynasty is oft accredited to Henry VII s success at the Battle of Bosworth the Tudor line matriarch is arguable Catherine of Valois However, before her marriages to Owen Tudor and King Henry V of England Catherine already led a life of intense intrigue Joanna Hickson narrates Catherine s youth in, The Agincourt Bride. Without a doubt, The Agincourt Bride suffers from stylistic issues and a slow beginning Being narrated by Mette , Catherine s nurse maid The Agincourt Bride is told in a reflective voice which results in a story being passive rather than lived This means that the pages lack true action and instead include too much talking in an, As you know Bob style To say the least, this makes for a rather boring novel which does nothing to sweep the reader away Also indicative of the weaknesses of The Agincourt Bride is its blatant shallow

depths The story is thin and flat reading like a bare skeleton which Hickson has not properly fleshed out The attempt at is evident as The Agincourt Bride is not fluffy per se but perhaps Hickson held back or did not know how to follow through This also pertains to the characterizations as none experience any growth arcs, none stand out, and all are too reserved making them quite bland The biggest disappointment is that readers do not get to truly know Catherine or her actions as, again, the story is of a reflection. Hickson s prose is light making The Agincourt Bride easy to read and quick despite its long page count However, this is not necessarily a positive trait Plus, the language is much too modern and lacks historical accuracy making the novel ideal for YA readers or those new to HF and not wanting to be overwhelmed by context and facts At approximately the 200 page mark, The Agincourt Bride becomes strikingly stronger with complexity and raw situations which increases the pace and results in page turning Sadly, even here there is a consistency issue as the pages bounce between this new found strength and the errors of the former pages Unfortunately, this arousal is fleeting as The Agincourt Bride takes a tumble and returns to a thinner consistency The story becomes repetitive while the events that are supposed to evoke emotions fall flat Literally, devices such as the inclusion of letters fictional without historical merit fail to add to the novel and instead make Hickson s effort feel elementary, forced, and dragged out The concluding chapters of The Agincourt Bride are painfully slow and somewhat meaningless The introduction of Owen Tudor is too fairy tale esque foreshadowing at its height while the ending is somewhat weak and abrupt On the other hand, it is a good enough set up for the follow up novel Sadly, Hickson does not fortify the novel with a note describing her historical liberties which would be helpful to those new to the subject because much of the plot is contrived The text also includes some punctuation and grammar errors at least the edition I read Overall, The Agincourt Bride is certainly not the strongest HF novel and has many flaws and weaknesses Yet, Hickson does attempt to focus on politics than romance which adds some merit Also notable is the fact that at least Catherine of Valois is depicted from a French view point of a strong and beautiful female versus the HF novels from an English view of a flippant, spoiled girl It is interesting to see a different characterization Although The Agincourt Bride isn t amazing, will even bore at times, and doesn t truly teach anything it is recommended if looking for light entertainment and for a focus on Catherine which is not readily available which is exactly why I plan to read the second novel Otherwise, it can be skipped. Her beauty fuelled a war. Her courage captured a king. Her passion would launch the Tudor dynasty Tagline from the novel cover The Agincourt Bride is part one in the story of Catherine of Valois, French princess and the eventual English Queen The story is narrated by Guiliamette Lanier, who becomes the wet nurse of the infant princess and eventually the princess most able and willing confidant in her teenage and adulthood years The book ends perfectly with Catherine, now the wife of King Henry V and her faithful, Mette heading for England The Agincourt Bride is rich in historical detail and a captivating narrative that had me turning

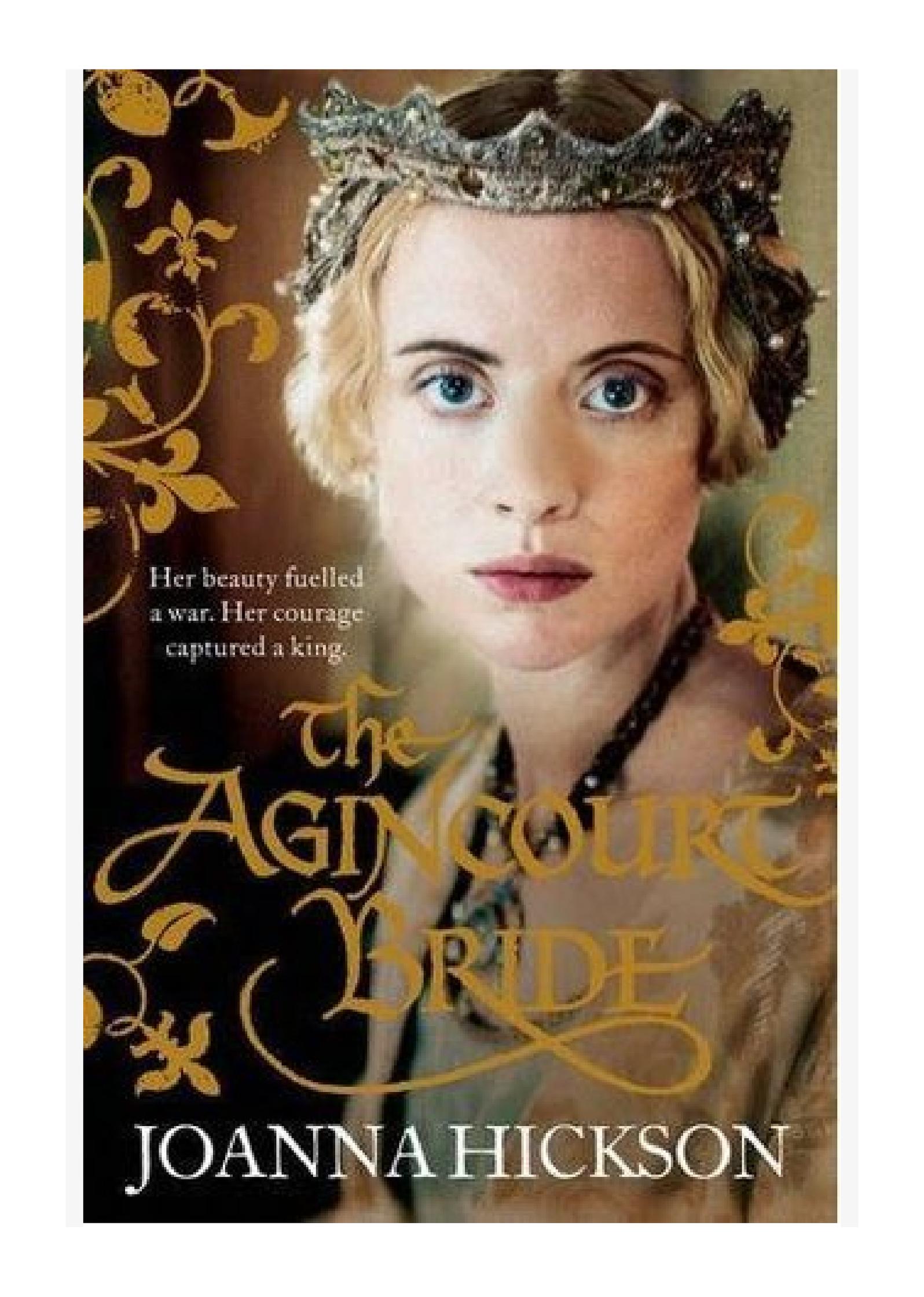
the pages I had recently read another book about Catherine Crown in Candlelight BUT I felt that AB was far superior because I felt that I actually had a better impression of the woman that was Catherine of Valois Definitely an extraordinary piece of historical fiction Looking forward to the sequel Before I truly destroy errr review this novel, does anyone else see the rather blatant similarity between the cover of the Agincourt Bride and the Forbidden Queen by Anne O'Brien I mean it looks like they used the exact same model, in the exact same dress, the exact same hair style and then just took two different shots Oy vey, there must have been some serious cutbacks in the book cover department Yeah I was not greatly impressed by the Agincourt Bride or by its author Joanna Hickson Feel free to consider the guitar as symbol for the Agincourt Bride and its subsequent treatment my overall reaction to the novel This review isn't going to be pretty Onwards Firstly, the good things about the Agincourt Bride The historical setting was reasonably accurate though vague in places Its portrait of medieval France was overall decent if somewhat skewed in certain aspects i.e relationships between masters and servants are heavily idealised It was politics, not romance that held superior sway throughout the novel and this I greatly appreciated one of the novels finer features The writing was smooth, flowed well and made for a fast pace I speed read through this quite quickly and with few difficulties Nothing was made over complicated and a couple of scenes were mildly interesting There was a plot and although slow moving at times the various dates and place names kept everything in perspective Now ATTENTION ACTUNG THERE WILL BE SPOILERS DONT READ AHEAD IF YOU DONT WANT TO KNOW view spoiler Let us start at the beginning The Agincourt Bride is the story of Catherine of Valois, daughter to the original mad king Charles VI of France and his beautiful but neglectful wife Isabeau of Bavaria, and covers her life from birth in 1401 to her marriage to the King of England and victor of Agincourt, Henry V, in 1420 All of this is told through the eyes Gulliamette Lanier, Catherine's surrogate mother and wet nurse who stays by Catherine's side throughout the years and in many difficult trials and hardships Written in the first person and past tense, spliced sporadically with letters by Catherine to her beloved brother, the future Charles VII, the Agincourt Bride often forgets the key advice of Show, don't Tell and the novel suffers dramatically for it Frankly I didn't like this novel To me it was melodramatic, sensationalised and trivialised the incredibly delicate topic of rape, passing it off as a way to gain sympathy points for the heroines while completely neglecting its emotional and mental aftereffects It was utilised purely as a shock tactic Characterisation leaned heavily towards black white morality and good evil tropes with very little room for ambiguity Clichés, modern speech Mette, at one point, says did my homework, I can't even to say how wrong this is and idealised master servant relationships abounded throughout this novel, giving it a very insipid and juvenile approach, almost YA as a matter of fact This detracted from the novels overall credibility and made it difficult to enjoy Now to the use of rape as a shock tactic Why should I even have to say this Rape is one of the most serious and despicable crimes that anyone can commit Its based on power, control and violence

and is primarily focused on achieving dominance over the victim and subjecting them to intense trauma and humiliation. It should in no way be used lightly or as a cheap trick to gain sympathy points for the heroine or just to show how violent and misogynistic the Middle Ages were in general. Both Mette and Catherine are raped brutally, Mette by two nameless, faceless thugs and Catherine by the Duke of Burgundy and suffer great physical pain. I'm in no way saying that rape didn't occur throughout in the Middle Ages; this was a violent, misogynistic and patriarchal society that turned women into second-class citizens and of course sexual violence was rampant. No, what I object to hear is how easily forgotten and minimized their rapes are for both characters. Mette's rape is particularly savage and yet despite the physical anguish she endures and has to overcome, her emotional and mental trauma is completely overlooked and disregarded. After not becoming pregnant, she continues on as before with no recognizable changes to Mette before the rape and after. There are utterly no differences. In fact, if you were to have read the book and have skipped the pages detailing the rape and the very odd time it is mentioned for plot purposes, YOU WOULDNT HAVE NOTICED ANYTHING DIFFERENT ABOUT METTE. She was raped. I highly doubt that would have been in any way clear. There is nothing to highlight the emotional or mental trauma that rape victims have to endure and the shattering impact that it can have on their lives. There is something profoundly ignorant about such a portrayal of rape. It happens and that's it. The heroine has no conscious or subconscious reactions to such a horrifying ordeal. There isn't any indication of their suffering or how they might feel about themselves or men afterwards. Passing over the aftermath of rape and having your heroine suffer it as a shock tactic is deeply offensive. If you can't handle rape with sensitivity and in a truthful manner, then please don't do it. Catherine suffers rape at the hands of Jean the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy. I won't go into detail about how, as an unmarried French Princess and incredibly valuable marriage pawn, Catherine's virginity would have been vigorously guarded from birth as a guarantee for her future husband and to ensure the paternity of her offspring. Unmarried Princesses were always chaperoned and not allowed to enter into such dangerous situations. To me, Catherine's rape boiled down to three things: 1 To greatly increase our sympathy for Catherine and to highlight her powerlessness. Common feature for Mary Sues. 2 To show how evil and depraved the devil Duke of Burgundy is. 3 Shock value. Prior to her rape, Catherine is sexually molested by the Duke without anybody knowing besides Mette and her lady-in-waiting Agnes. Her mother does nothing to defend and the Duke takes malicious pleasure in such cruelty. Let me be frank, there is no evidence whatsoever that such an episode in Catherine's life ever occurred or that the Duke of Burgundy was a rapist. This is very much fictionalized and used to highlight poor suffering Catherine. To claim that a titled Duke walked repeatedly into Catherine's chamber without anyone knowing and that she was for long stretches of time left without female chaperones is ludicrous. Again, virginity was essential for a bride's purity and marriageability for her to be considered as a possible wife to the King if she wasn't a widow. For the Duke of Burgundy

to actually do such a thing would be politically disastrous and he would quite likely to have been arrested and hanged for such an offence against the royal family Since we don't see Catherine's perspective, we only have Mette's word on how she has suffered It handled somewhat than Mette's but not by much her reactions are still for the most part non reactions Lets say you break both your legs in an accident There's no way you can get up five minutes later and walk around normally as if nothing happened There are going to be consequences and certain things will change even you don't want them to When awful, cruel and sadistic acts are inflicted on people, their emotional reactions and interactions with fellow people will alter and transform into something different Rape is no exception Go to any rape crisis network to see how people are impacted and how they change as a result Character wise this book was very weak and had a certain YA feel Characters are classed as either good or bad with no grey morality to be found Everyone's a saint or a demon And it gets old fast Catherine from her very birth is shown to be the most perfect, adorable and perky blue eyed and golden haired baby ever to have existed and OMG she is so sweet and precious that I half expected her to turn whatever she touched into refined sugar and for angels to burst out into song whenever she happened to grace the world with her glorious presence I can sort of understand Mette's idealism of her but frankly it becomes too much at times especially when, as a four year, she attacks the Duke of Burgundy with no hesitation and with tiny closed fists of fury I had half a mind to recommend that she apply for the Avengers Initiative I did a double take upon reading that scene I occasionally mind a three year old and I can with all certainty that the chances of such a ridiculous scene ever happening in real life are zero Toddlers cry, run away and go to people they trust and know they don't suddenly turn into Jack Jack from the Incredibles And still Catherine's sanctification continues, like a runaway train on cocaine For instance, even when she and Mette are separated by ten years they pick up their old relationship with no trouble and are the bestest of best friends like that I don't need to explain how after a ten year gap no relationship can be the same and to suggest otherwise is not keeping with real life Catherine has no visible flaws Mette harps about her beauty, goodness and piousness Her molestation and rape by the Duke of Burgundy are used to gain sympathy for poor Catherine and little Since we only see Catherine through Mette's besotted eyes she remains a distant and ill defined character Even her letters to Mette and her brother fall somewhat flat Also for the life of me, I can't see why Catherine has such a strong attachment to her brother they were together till they were three and four and didn't reunite for ten years and then only for very rare occasions Huh Mette's primary purpose is a surrogate mother to Catherine and this makes her a very biased narrator It becomes clear that Catherine is the center of her life and nothing will ever interfere with that Mette has a husband and children They always take second place to Catherine and her woes Her children only enter the plot when its convenient and related to Catherine Her husband dies Mette thinks so little of Jean Michel and even his grisly death leaves her and the reader

unmoved Honestly Mette's devotion to Catherine reminds at times of Harley Quinn and the Joker Their world revolves their obsession and nothing else I wonder what Mette did for that ten year gap where she and Catherine were not joined to the hip maybe there was a shrine to Catherine in her old house somewhere Her relationship with Catherine is heavily idealised and she regularly takes Catherine out to the streets of France disguised as a maid A Princess of France Walking around As a Maid Oh and Catherine often waltzes to the family to eat breakfast or to become godmother to Mette's peasant granddaughter. Do I even need to explain how stupid this is Without a doubt the Duke of Burgundy is portrayed as the devil incarnate, a vicious, ambitious and vindictive rapist and the bane of saint Catherine of Valois His character was over the top evil and a bloody caricature There's no historical evidence for what happened in this book between him and Catherine Honestly this book felt like the Duke of Burgundy's job application for the position of Satan in hell Would a titled and politically savvy Duke really have committed such an act which would have utterly ruined his career and reputation Queen Isabeau also received a bum rap Hickson turns her into a promiscuous, power hungry and neglectful woman who fails to protect Catherine This isn't the first time Isabeau been portrayed in such a way but it certainly is disheartening She serves purely as a foil to wonderful, always kind and caring Mette. Oh and the introduction of Owen Tudor is a foreshadowing 101 overkill Ugh Just ugh Personally I wouldn't recommend this Overall melodramatic, chocked full of clichés and tropes and suffering from a weird mix of idealised and demonic relationships, the Agincourt Bride is a very disappointing read Adios hide spoiler I had high hopes for this book when I first saw it and was looking forward to reading it Unfortunately it was a big let down The book was very shallow and relied totally on the serving maid narrator Sometimes, a narrator can be a really helpful device in a book, but it always takes away from the immediacy and action in the book In some stories that does not matter, in this book it did The effect of the Narrator in this book was jarring and false and and the book lost all excitement, immediacy and tension The book was slow and to be honest boring, because if the way it was written I had no sense of Catherine de Valois as a person, she came across as a cipher I have to say, I was very disappointed by the book and how it was written Sometimes the use of a Narrator like this is a lazy device to use in a book and it was here The book would have been so much better, tense, interesting and immediate, if it had been written from the point of view of the main and not just the serving maid You only have to read at the really good history fiction by someone like Sharon Kay Penman to see what I mean about immediacy, excitement and tension and see how this is developed using all the main characters point of view When you read one of Sharon's Kay Penman's books you are there in the moment, the taste the smell, the immediacy, the excitement, the tension, you feel it all, in this book you do not To write a book from all the main characters point of view is much work for the author but often, it is much enjoyable reading experience for the reader This book was written the lazy and easy way and it shows I cannot believe this is going to be a series, I won't be reading any

sadly. One of the most interesting things about historical fiction revolving around royalty is the paradox they present. On the one hand, you read about such wealth and power that clearly marks them on a completely different social sphere. And yet, behind the all the opulence you get a wide spectrum of people who are either driven at all costs to achieve maintain their status or are essentially pawns for said people to use and barter for their own gain. I think this idea was really illustrated well in *The Agincourt Bride* by Joanna Hickson. Within the story of Catherine of Valois and her rise to status of queen, you get the story of a young woman who survived a lonely childhood, unstable family and a dangerous court. I thought Hickson did a good job of bringing 15th century France to life. I appreciated the details, both large and small, that were in the story. You really got a sense of what life was like during that time both for the lower class and for royalty. It clearly illustrated the huge chasm between these two groups. You couldn't help but sympathize and perhaps even relate to the peasants with their struggles and how they were affected with the battles occurring. While on the royal side, you are in awe of their lifestyle but it also makes you a little disgusted at the oftentimes unnecessary extravagance. Further, this chasm also exists between the genders. Throughout the story, you are often presented with all the different ways that women are confined to a certain role which is prevalent in all social classes. It is this restriction that just underscores what Catherine, and her closest confidante Mette, had to go through and makes them sympathetic figures. At the heart of it, this book is about a young woman growing up in a world where she essentially isn't in charge of her life and is at the mercy of the whims of others. Catherine may be a princess, but it's not hard to see the vulnerable girl behind the title. It's most prominently illustrated in her relationship with Mette. With them you have that mother daughter relationship which enable us to see Catherine as a strong young royal who isn't easily intimidated but also an unsure 18 year old questioning her abilities to perform the role she was born to. Through Mette, you get to see all her hopes, fears, and frustrations. It lends a human quality to this historical figure. Overall, I thought this book was a well written historical fiction give or take a few questionable overdramatic moments. This is a read where you had to be patient with the beginning, after which, your patience will be rewarded. The rest of the book was filled with not only the usual political machinations, but there was also a good deal of drama and suspense. The story had my attention and made me interested to see how the story would unfold. This story is certainly epic and long. I enjoyed the first half of the book but the second half I got a little tired of it. I like how it's told from the point of view of Catherine's wet nurse, I felt that there was a good connection and easy way to follow the events though there were times between Mette's life and Catherine's which did not connect and probably there just for filling out the story. Overall if you love history, you will love this. It is told very well.



Her beauty fuelled  
a war. Her courage  
captured a king.

The  
AGINCOURT  
BRIDE

JOANNA HICKSON

I enjoyed this novel based upon the earlier years of the life of Catherine of Valois Through the eyes of her wet nurse and later confidante, Mette, we are with Catherine from birth and through the turbulent years of her adolescence Only towards the end of this novel does she become the Queen of Henry V and therefore this is truly a novel where Catherine herself is the focus, and not just her position as wife of Henry V and mother to Henry VI The reader is able to formulate an idea of who Catherine is as a person and not just as a Queen I thought the author did a wonderful job of bringing her to life and making her a living, breathing human being and not just a two dimensional Queen from long ago.I believe the reason this was accomplished so well was because of Mette and how she narrates the story Choosing to have a narrator is very risky as so many novels fall flat on their face from the lifeless way the story is subsequently told I did not find that to be the case in this novel Not only is Mette central to the events surrounding Catherine, she also has her own story to tell Her marriage, her children, and the things that happen to them along the way are all seen and felt by the reader alongside Mette Therefore this allows her character to be than just a narrator She is not just recording events in a book, she is painting a picture for us as the reader and breathing life back into all that has transpired It was very well written.

## New Post

Slaughterhouse-Five

Shadow Kiss

Tempted

The Silence of the Lambs

Pride and Prejudice

Home Repair

Animal Farm

Their Eyes Were Watching God

Marked

Hush, Hush

The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ

The Emperor's Children

Cold Mountain

The Pursuit of Love & Love in a Cold Climate

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

## Recent Post

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The Book Thief

Water for Elephants

To Kill a Mockingbird

The Glass Castle

Wuthering Heights

The Road

The Time Traveler's Wife

The Help

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban

My Sister's Keeper

The Da Vinci Code

Gone with the Wind

Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil

The Kite Runner

A Thousand Splendid Suns

Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close

The Memory Keeper's Daughter

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo

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The Story of Edgar Sawtelle

The Host

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn

The Hunger Games

The Alchemist

Blood Promise

Slaughterhouse-Five

