

The background features a complex network of white nodes connected by thin purple lines, set against a gradient background that transitions from dark purple at the top to a bright pink at the bottom. The nodes are scattered across the frame, with some forming distinct geometric shapes like triangles and polygons. The overall aesthetic is modern and digital.

Red Rose, White Rose

Written by Joanna Hickson

Published by sanmarco-sf

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Red Rose, White Rose

Red Rose, White Rose

By Joanna Hickson

Red Rose White Rose

The powerful story of Cecily Neville, torn between both sides in the War of the Roses. Perfect for fans of Philippa Gregory.

Red Rose White Background

Richard, the thirteen-year-old Duke of York, England's richest heir.

Told through the eyes of Cicely and her half-brother Cuthbert, *Red Rose, White Rose* is the story of one of the most powerful women in England during one of its most turbulent periods. Born of Lancaster and married to York, the willowy and wayward Cicely treads a hazardous path through love, loss and imprisonment and between the violent factions of Lancaster and York, as the Wars of the Roses tear England's ruling families apart.

Red Rose White Ceiling

So nearly queen herself, Cicely Neville was the mother, grandmother and great-grandmother of kings
â€” and her descendants still wear the crown.

I hesitate to acknowledge this as biographical fiction, which it is meant to be, as it is largely fantasy and far-fetched fantasy at that. However, the period of Edward VI reign isn't so much covered in HF (until a recent crop of novels as yet to be read by moi) so it was worth a look. Ms Hickson is a good writer and tells a very readable story but it is not recognizable as the history except as to dates and sequence of action. I would not recommend this to anyone who reads HF as a history buff I hesitate to acknowledge this as biographical fiction, which it is meant to be, as it is largely fantasy and far-fetched fantasy at that. However, the period of Edward VI reign isn't so much covered in HF (until a recent crop of novels as yet to be read by moi) so it was worth a look. Ms Hickson is a good writer and tells a very readable story but it is not recognizable as the history except as to dates and sequence of action. I would not recommend this to anyone who reads HF as a history buff but it will be great if you like a HF romance. ...more

Red Rose White Rose Song

Rating: 3 Stars

Red Rose, White Rose is a historical fiction story based on Cecily Neville, the wife of Richard Plantagenet of York and mother of Edward IV and Richard III. Plantagenet history is a topic that I'm hugely passionate about, and any books, movies or TV shows about this period I'm sure to love.

Some of my favourite books about the Plantagenets are written by Philippa Gregory - namely The Cousins War series. Where Gregory excels is in bringing the Plantagenet era to life - her writing is Rating: 3 Stars

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Some of my favourite books about the Plantagenets are written by Philippa Gregory - namely The Cousins War series. Where Gregory excels is in bringing the Plantagenet era to life - her writing is stunning, her characters believable and the history weaved into the fiction so naturally.

My problem with Red Rose, White Rose was in the fiction element. First, let me say that the historical details were brilliant - I felt like I learnt a lot from reading this, which is always a good feeling!

The narrative is split between two first person perspectives - Cecily and her half-brother, Cuthbert. I was, unfortunately, in two minds over whether this worked or not. A lot of the action (and historical events) happened in Cecily's chapters and there were times where I felt like Cuthbert's chapters weren't really necessary.

However, his chapters introduced us to some of the lesser-known figures during that time. I knew about Cecily Neville and Richard Neville (The Earl of Warwick, who features in Gregory's The Cousins War series a lot) but the rest of the Neville family were unknown to me. The copious amounts of detail surrounding the Neville family and the family split were often quite hard to process at times, and I often had to do a quick Google search into the Neville family tree - but once I 'got it', I felt like I enjoyed the novel a lot more.

What I couldn't quite get to grips with, unfortunately, was the characterisation and the writing. There were times where I often felt as if I wasn't immersed in the plot and this effected my motivation to finish it. However, I did love the fact that it introduced me to events and historical figures that I wasn't already aware of. An enjoyable historical read, but perhaps not one for those who aren't familiar already with the Plantagenet's history.

Red Rose, White Rose

Thanks to HarperCollins for providing this eARC via NetGalley. ...more

I was disappointed to find out this is a standalone novel, which I think says a lot how much the book engaged me, as I wanted to see Hickson continue on with her take on the life of Cecily Neville.

There's a lot of info dump in the opening chapters as we get three centuries worth of family trees, which is a bit much, but I suddenly Got It as to why people cared so about family lines. As the man said, "It's the economy, stupid."

It wasn't about bragging rights or having the prettiest prancing pony

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It wasn't about bragging rights or having the prettiest prancing pony shield or any question of honor " it was about jobs. This was the system that allowed people to be employed. For most people, inheritance today is about which relative is stuck with Great Aunt Temperance's bad tempered Pomeranian. But for people then, bloodlines, marriages, deaths and wills were all vital parts of a successful career.

I think if my next promotion depended on who my great-great grandfather was, I'd take them time to memorize my family tree too. (Side note: No idea other than the vaguest of parameters who those men were. One or two were Russian? Or maybe Latvian? Maybe?)

And she also shows how those same bloodlines made the top tiers very small and very awkwardly close. This became a war where a brother and sister ended up on opposite sides, your aunt could be your "hostess" while being held hostage in a castle, a nephew could be on the other side of the battlefield; this was much more a "brother against brother" war than what people go on about with the American Civil War.

Hickson takes Lady Cecily Neville, Proud Cis, Rose of Raby, Duchess of York, and strips back all the pride and airs to get at the human side of Cecily, to show what's beneath the ice she's usually portrayed to be carved out of. Here she breaks out of her colored glass portrait and becomes fully three dimensional, flawed, loving, hating, and real.

Bonus " the mitochondrial DNA used to identify the "body in the car park" gets a shout out as Cicely has a brief wish / vision of her daughter having a daughter having a daughter, etc.

...more

Red Rose White Rose Eileen Chang

3.5 stars. Another very good historic read from Joanna Hickson. She has a very engaging and present writing style without making the subject matter anachronistic. This book felt a little long though, and I didn't enjoy it as much as I did *The Agincourt Bride*, but maybe that's because "Proud Cis" character was, by nature, a bit cold. I did however really enjoy the other POV character, Cecily's illegitimate half-brother Cuthbert, and was surprised to read at the end that he was a complete fabrication. 3.5 stars. Another very good historic read from Joanna Hickson. She has a very engaging and present writing style without making the subject matter anachronistic. This book felt a little long though, and I didn't enjoy it as much as I did *The Agincourt Bride*, but maybe that's because "Proud Cis" character was, by nature, a bit cold. I did however really enjoy the other POV character, Cecily's illegitimate half-brother Cuthbert, and was surprised to read at the end that he was a complete fabrication.

Joanna Hickson is fast becoming an autobuy author for historical fiction (where I am notoriously hard to please); can't wait for her next. ...more

A beautifully written historical novel about the War of the Roses. Joanna Hickson presents this novel crammed packed full of historical facts, from events, people and places. I always think that reading historical novels, written accurately is the most enjoyable way of learning. Maybe high schools should encourage pupils to read this way and then discuss what they have learnt in class?

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The book is both interesting and entertaining, showing the strength and politic mannerisms of historical figures during that time. I often think about what it must have been like to live in the 15th Century with the tentative relationships between families stretching loyalties, and risking displeasure of others. Especially when loyalty to the King who was weak could be seen as disloyal to your own family and the risk of that could mean being killed as a traitor.

I loved the women characters, especially Cicely who matures from a child into an influential woman of her time. There is a great feel to the way each of the characters are portrayed in a way to give an authentic feel to what I was reading.

The bits that did not work for me:

I must admit I was unable to finish this book because for me personally, there was such a lot of information that I couldn't manage to hold it all in my head. Not only does Hickson give copious

Red Rose, White Rose

amounts of accurate details she also includes minor information such as pet names for each person which totally confused me. Because I was struggling to remember it all I lost the excitement of story. Having said that I am sure that most people wouldn't have the same problem.

Would I recommend this book: Yes definitely, it is well worth the read.

Many thanks to the publisher for a copy of this book via NetGalley in return for an honest review
...more

Red Rose White Rose Movie

Did not like this book. Too much whining, too boring to be even remotely interesting, prattling main character, just the last two pages had a whiff of emotional flair. "Oooh, I'm so faithful and so loyal and beautiful, but in secret I always think of the man who kidnapped me, and took my virginity as well, and I think my husband is a bore most of the time, while my kids die off as infants most of the time". *Yawn* This book became more a duty to read through, than a joy.

A very good read , with some interesting characters. I liked seeing how the young Margaret wanted to be queen & was the queen mother later in life to Henry VII and grandmother to Henry VIII. Such wonderful ambition.

Red Rose White Rose England

I must admit, I enjoyed this read. I've always been interested in Cecily Neville and though this is fiction, it's nice to read a story where she's the main character. I also loved her half brother, Cuddy! What a man. This is a great book for those of us who can't get enough of Wars of the Roses material.

4.5

Oh did I struggle with this one. I finished it because there are few novels about Cecily/Cicely Neville, and I was eager to read one. But there were too many circumstances in this novel that I found improbable or irritating. Since it was an arranged match, I can see Cicely not being completely in love with Richard. But to have her pining away over a period of 20 years over her nephew (even if he is older) who kidnapped her and then wanted to use her for ransom does not seem like a likely reaction. Oh did I struggle with this one. I finished it because there are few novels about Cecily/Cicely Neville, and I was eager to read one. But there were too many circumstances in this novel that I found improbable or irritating. Since it was an arranged match, I can see Cicely not being completely in love with Richard. But to have her pining away over a period of 20 years over her nephew (even if he is older) who kidnapped her and then wanted to use her for ransom does not seem like a likely reaction from "Proud Cis." I almost gave up the novel altogether when they committed adultery, but at least the whole "Edward IV was really a bastard" plotline isn't used here; it seems to be a new trend for historical fiction of this time period, and it's already becoming tired.

As for Cuthbert, I can see the reasoning to include a male character that would be present at battles. But Cuthbert of Middleham is just a little too good to be true- rather like William Marshall in Elizabeth Chadwick's novels. I was irritated by him because no one is really that perfect all the time. Cicely at times is cold and not likable, but it did fit with her personality so it was acceptable. And why did the spelling of "Edmund" switch back and forth so many times during the novel? In one paragraph it went from "Edmund" to "Edmond" four times, talking of the same person! I think a little more editing may have been in order.

I enjoyed the novels on Catherine de Valois, but I'd advise skipping this one. Maybe First of the Tudors will be better. ...more

Red Rose White Rose Gem

This was actually quite an interesting read. Due to the fact that I really find great enjoyment in history I enjoy it even more when it is mixed with a little fiction. What Ms. Hickson has done here is to bring to life a very powerful (and to me little known character) from the War of the Roses – Cecily Neville. Cecily was a young nine year old girl betrothed to her fathers ward, thirteen year old Richard. And even before the marriage took place, her waywardness got her into quite a fix, which a This was actually quite an interesting read. Due to the fact that I really find great enjoyment in history I enjoy it even more when it is mixed with a little fiction. What Ms. Hickson has done here is to bring to life a very powerful (and to me little known character) from the War of the Roses – Cecily Neville. Cecily was a young nine year old girl betrothed to her fathers ward, thirteen year old Richard. And even before the marriage took place, her waywardness got her into quite a fix, which as it turned out remained a secret between she and her champion Cuddy.

The story is told through the eyes of Cicely and her half-brother and loyal champion Cuthbert aka Cuddy. RED ROSE, WHITE ROSE tells the story of one of the more powerful women in England during a very turbulent time. Betrayals were rampant and for Cicely, born of a Lancaster and married to a York, her path was hazardous at best. Through births, miscarriages, loves, loss and even imprisonment it was Cicely led a very perilous life.

What struck me most was that Cicely seemed so strong. Before her marriage, she had been abducted by a different faction of the Neville family that despised Cicely's mother who was portrayed as a greedy selfish termagant. The way it was told was that her mother had been granted property that by rights should have been kept in the Neville family, because of her mother's manipulation of Cicely's father. As a result, this rift caused a huge chasm between the family and undue unrest within the Neville heirs splitting loyalties from the houses of red and white roses.

Told from both Cecily and Cuddy's POV, I found it interesting that they remained so close considering that he was illegitimate; however Cuddy's devotion to Cecily was unrivaled, even when it went against his nature to side with the York faction over one thing or another. What must be noted though is that even at 550 plus pages, the action and the story was hard to put down, due to extraordinary writing and research on the part of author Joanna Hickson. And for lovers of historical moments, with a tad of poetic license thrown in - this just might be your cup of tea! Totally enjoyable read.

Marilyn Rondeau

...more

During the troublesome fifteenth century, the Neville's were one of the most prestigious families in England, and when Cecily Neville, the youngest daughter of Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmorland, makes an advantageous marriage with Richard, Duke of York, it combines two of the most powerful families in

Red Rose, White Rose

the land. However, being married to one of the richest men in the country is not without danger, and Cecily Neville discovers that life so close to English royalty is fraught with both treachery and peril. During the troublesome fifteenth century, the Nevilles were one of the most prestigious families in England, and when Cecily Neville, the youngest daughter of Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmorland, makes an advantageous marriage with Richard, Duke of York, it combines two of the most powerful families in the land. However, being married to one of the richest men in the country is not without danger, and Cecily Neville discovers that life so close to English royalty is fraught with both treachery and peril.

Beautifully researched, the story combines the best of both fact and fiction. Throughout the novel, we have Cecily's perspective about her life; we see her maturing from a young and idealistic teenager, to a mature woman with her own children and responsibilities for vast estates. She is a feisty protagonist, opinionated, controlling but ultimately loyal to those she loves and respects. The co-narrator is Cuthbert, who is described as Cecily's illegitimate half brother; he's a fictitious figure who gives a much needed male perspective on what it was like to serve the Neville family. And as he gets tangled up in the politics and manoeuvrings of the scheming Plantagenets, we gain insight into the intrigue and deceptions that were so much a part of this deadly game of thrones.

There is always much to absorb about the feuding Plantagenets; they were all complex and highly volatile characters and I think the author does a really credible job of bringing them all alive in your imagination. The indecision, the instability and the sheer unpredictability of living through a time of great uncertainty is captured well and although the book comes in at a hefty 530 pages and covers well over 30 years of feuding, it isn't burdensome to read.

I enjoyed getting to know Cecily Neville and found that the author made the journey into the life and times of the Plantagenets a really enjoyable adventure, full of thrills and spills, but never avoiding the real purpose of the story, which was to bring a tumultuous time in history alive in the readers imagination.

...more

Red Rose White Rose Poem

“The sound of the key turning evoked vivid memories of my detention in Brancepeth Castle and the grim realization that I had been imprisoned three times in my life and each time it had been at the hands of a member of my own family.”

And you thought your family was crazy.

Fortunately for us, Joanna Hickson’s novel is a reminder that things could be so much worse, especially if you are Duchess Cecily. “Red Rose, White Rose” focusses on what seems like the endless war between the Red Roses of Lancas “The sound of the key turning evoked vivid memories of my detention in Brancepeth Castle and the grim realization that I had been imprisoned three times in my life and each time it had been at the hands of a member of my own family.”

And you thought your family was crazy.

Fortunately for us, Joanna Hickson’s novel is a reminder that things could be so much worse, especially if you are Duchess Cecily. “Red Rose, White Rose” focusses on what seems like the endless war between the Red Roses of Lancaster and the White Roses of York, aka the Wars of the Roses, through the eyes of Cecily, mother of whom would eventually become Edward IV.

The Neville family was both a big and complicated family “Cecily was the youngest of up to twenty-two children (and they were just the legitimate ones). The story is also narrated by her half-brother and focusses on her youth and the complicated friction in the Neville family. She even has a fling with one of her cousins (the author points out, however, that this never happened in real life). One thing that becomes clear as the story goes on is that this war was a family feud that had got a bit out of hand and had eventually involved a whole country. In this great family, there were rivalries over properties and relations broke down between Cecily’s husband, the Duke of York and King Henry VI. Subsequently, a terrible cycle of revenge and violence persisted and sadly resulted in four deaths in Cecily’s direct family.

“Anne had turned against us at St. Albans and there was no telling how much she might hate us now; I was horribly conscious of the fact that the worst enemies were often relatives.”

This is definitely the message of the novel. War, particularly in a family, was not a glorious thing at all. It was bloody and senseless. The story is a reminder of the futility of war. Along with other events, it is yet another warning from history and this book was very good at conveying that serious message.

...more

While nice to see a different take on Cicely Neville than is normally seen, I didn't feel as if it did much beyond detail HOW the Yorks came to feeling they deserved the crown over all others.

There were several oddities in the timeline and references to children that could be explained by the spotty documentation of the time period and the unfortunate tradition that girl children were not as "mentionable" in record as boy children. I would have liked it to continue enough to see the "fictionaliz
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Red Rose, White Rose

There were several oddities in the timeline and references to children that could be explained by the spotty documentation of the time period and the unfortunate tradition that girl children were not as "mentionable" in record as boy children. I would have liked it to continue enough to see the "fictionalized" view of Cicely to what she is most known for... Her reaction to Elizabeth Woodville.

The book ends as Edward begins his official bid as king against Henry. Even a moment of epilogue on that would have made the book a 4 star for me.

Along with the previous mentioned wish, I would have liked to see her take the news of Clarence's death... Cecily outlived all of her children except Elizabeth (de la Pole) and Margaret (Burgundy). So she was alive to hear that her eldest drowned her next eldest and why. A good outing... But for me, lacking a few things that should have been pivotal points in understanding Cecily Neville. ...more

Red Rose White Tea

I had to DNF at 70%, I just couldn't bring myself to finish this. I found the Cuthbert chapters hard work and Cicely a bit cold. While it was interesting to read from Cicely of York's pov at first, a figure normally ignored in historical fiction, it started to lose my attention for pages at a time. There's a lot of info dumping and I lost track of who was who only a few pages in.

Entertaining retelling of the Wars of the Roses from the perspective of Cecily Neville, Duchess of York (mother of Edward IV), and her illegitimate brother, Sir Cuthbert. War, romance and politics (domestic and national) vie for dominance.