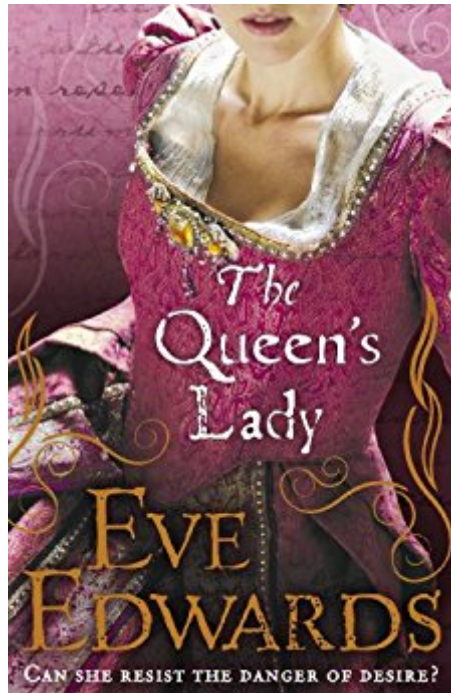




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The Queen's Lady (The Other Countess)



Synopsis

1584 - Surrey, England When Lady Jane Rievaulx begins service to the Queen at Richmond Palace, she is thrilled at the court's newest arrival . . . Master James Lacey. Despite her previous courtship with his older brother, James is the man she truly loves. And for his part, he cannot deny his fascination with her. However, James is setting sail on a treacherous journey to the Americas, seeking absolution for what he sees as past sins. But when Lady Jane is forced into a terrible situation by her own family, there is only one man to save her. Will Master James return to his lady - before it's too late?

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Customer Reviews

This is the 2nd book in the Lacey Chronicles series and revolves around James Lacey and Jane Perceval from the first book. In this one Jane is newly widowed after marrying an elderly man in the hopes she could escape her father's schemes. She ends up going to court to be one of the Queen's ladies. And of course her father tries to coerce her into marrying a wealthy man again. She doesn't want to marry again, partly because she absolutely does not want to marry anyone her gold digging

father chooses for her and partly because she is still in love with James Lacey, the Earl of Dorset's younger brother whom she hasn't seen since she broke off the engagement with the Earl. James Lacey is newly returned from being a scout the Low Countries, haunted with all that he has seen of the war. On his brother's suggestion as a way to get out of his slump, he goes to court to join Walter Raleigh's ambitions to take a voyage to the Americas. They meet again and James demands to know why Jane refused his brother, not knowing she did it because she could see how much Ellie and Will love each other. After that fateful meeting they once again become entwined in each others lives by various means and realize they may just suit after all. This book was really really good too. I love Eve Edwards books! I just loved that we got to catch up with the main characters from the first book, even though they weren't the main characters in this one. This book also set up the main character for the third book as well as having a side story revolving around Diego, James' servant and Milly, Jane's friend from school, which I enjoyed as well. This series is quite good and I have high hopes for the third book, titled 'Rogue's Princess'. I can't wait to read it :)

It has been months since Lady Jane Perceval (nee Rievaulx) last saw James Lacey, and much has changed in that time. Lady Jane refused to marry James's brother, Will (now the Earl of Dorset), knowing that his heart belonged to young Ellie Hutton. The couple have since welcomed an heir to Lacey House. James and his faithful blackamoor servant, Diego, have campaigned for Elizabeth's army overseas and the young Master has returned home world-weary and haunted by all he has seen. And Lady Jane has been widowed, with the passing of her dear friend and husband (in faith if not consummation) to stroke. Jane now finds herself at the mercy of her late husband's money-hungry sons, and so seeks refuge in Elizabeth's court as one of her ladies in waiting. But one thing has remained steadfast all this time - Jane is still in love with James. And now an overseas campaign with the Queen's favourite, Walter Raleigh, sees James Lacey attend court at the Richmond Palace. It is here that he will once again come face-to-face with the only woman he has ever wanted, but could never have. First because she was betrothed to his brother and now because he is not fit company for her gentle self. 'The Queen's Lady' is the second book in Eve Edwards' majestic young adult series, 'Tudor Historical Romance'. I adored Edwards' first book in this series, 'The Other Countess', and I eagerly anticipated the second book in her compelling new series . . . It must be said that the historic setting is spectacular. When the YA scene is currently crowded with novels of dystopia, vampires and angels, Eve Edwards has stepped outside the trends and written an historic series that is invigoratingly original. England during the reign of The Virgin Queen is an inspired timeline. There are still tensions between Catholics and Protestants;

England is under conquering threat from the Spanish Armada and expanding her territories to the New World in retaliation. This time period is so fascinating, even more so for it being relatively untouched by the YA genre. Eve Edwards leaves no stone unturned in this series. She explores every historic crevice - from the grand, to the mundane. James Lacey sets off to the New World to engage with the natives and help Walter Raleigh scout for new colonies. Lacey's manservant, the African blackamoor Diego, journeys with him to the New World and it's fascinating to read the juxtaposing thoughts of the slave and his master as they set their eyes on the rich lands of America. Back in England, Lady Jane is in Elizabeth's court and must manoeuvre herself through various royal politics and practicalities. But many challenges are thrown before Jane; like her late husband's sons threatening her in the corridors, and unwanted amorous attentions from the Queen's favourite, Walter Raleigh. The 'Tudor Historical Romance' series is firmly imbedded in history, but it is never a history lesson. Eve Edwards never writes a dry fact, and she imbues this old world with spicy love stories and powerful characters. Clearly Edwards is a history-buff, but her characters are never lost amidst the grandiose timeline. Instead, Edwards places her characters at the forefront and interprets great expanses of history and conflict through their eyes. I love the historic setting of 'The Queen's Lady'. But I found myself more invested in the characters of first book 'The Other Countess'. I don't think we got enough of Jane's voice in this book. In 'Countess' Ellie was a prominent and forceful narrator. She was a woman apart in her times - an alchemist's daughter with a sharp mind and sweet soul, at odds with her role as dutiful daughter and searching bride. In 'Lady', Jane is overshadowed and often hushed by more compelling secondary characters who share the narrating spotlight, and in particular a secondary romance that plays alongside Jane and James's. Milly Porter is Jane's childhood friend and independent businesswoman who runs her own seamstress business. James's manservant, Diego, used to serve the Porter household before Milly's father came into traitorous disgrace. When Diego and Milly reunite, there is instant chemistry and protestations of childhood love. I adored this storyline - not only for the forbidden romance between a young British seamstress and a foreigner blackamoor, but because Milly and Diego were such warm characters with a complicated past between them. Then there is Christopher Turner, local playwright and actor who is friends with Milly, and also happens to be the illegitimate half-brother to the Lacey boys. Christopher 'Kit' Turner is dramatic and passionate - a character close to Shakespeare who I am delighted has his own book in this series, coming out July this year. All of these wonderful, second-fiddle characters enriched the story, but blunted Jane's character. I don't think Jane got enough fleshing out or inner monologues. I think that her life was rife with story - a widowed woman (only eighteen!) navigating her way through the Queen's court

and trying to avoid her father's new wedding prospects for her. There is a lot of story here, but other characters got more page-time and often more interesting plots to play out. Furthermore, I didn't feel the same spark between James and Jane that I did between Will and Ellie. I don't think it is helped by the fact that James and Jane first met (and fell in love) in 'The Other Countess', and Edwards relies a lot of their current attraction on past encounters from that book. Further hindering the spark of this romance is James's travels to the New World. . .However, I loved this book. I'd love any YA book that allows a young man to say "En garde!" and mean it with deadly intent... Eve Edwards has captured a period in time and brought it to exuberant life. She has spiced the Elizabethan era with love triangles and unrequited lust as she writes about young people living in extraordinary times. Codpieces, swordfights and Armada's - oh my!

The Queen's Lady is the second book in the Lacy Chronicles and tells the story of James Lacy and Lady Jane, two characters to which we are introduced in The Other Countess, the first novel in the series. Having read the first novel, I was pleasantly surprised by The Queen's Lady as I was glad to see the further development of Jane's character as she was by far one of my favourite characters in The Other Countess. I actually thought she displayed the most possibility for being a unique and enjoyable character, and her antics in the first novel are what made it so interesting. While she was far tamer in the second book, having undergone a transformation while in exile and during her marriage, it seemed like her vitality was just simmering below the surface and the fire she displayed in the first novel was just waiting to come out. One of the things I really enjoyed about this novel is the conflict that women often faced during this time period, regardless of how strong a character you have or how much money you may have. Despite finally winning freedom from her awful and controlling family, Jane quickly finds herself under their wing as their machinations and betrayals force her hand into a foreign marriage that she does not want. I read Jane's struggles with interest as it really showed how desperate women were, especially those who waited on the Queen, despite the money, power, and position they may have held, and how they could be easily tricked into following their family's wishes. I really felt for Jane in her predicament, but with the Queen backing her family, and the threat of insanity hovering over her head, there was little she could do. I couldn't imagine feeling that powerless and although I felt for Jane in her predicament, being a woman of the modern world, it really is hard to imagine what that would be like as we have so much freedom. The fact that she has to rely so heavily on other people to get her out of her predicaments must really weigh heavily on her, and she was lucky to have had that help as to many others did not. I enjoyed the further development of Jane's character in this novel, but she had changed so

much from the first novel that it was difficult, at times, to reconcile her as being the same person. I liked especially when she was rebellious or did something that went against decorum as she seemed so much more likeable and personable that way, and she often got herself into a lot of trouble too. Her temper tantrums made her seem more normal, and although she alienated her maids on occasion, they were fun to read about. James was a much more serious character in this novel than in the first, but he had spent time in the Low Countries and had seen some atrocious things while serving there. He was suffering from a form of PTSD and needed some help to overcome his anxiety and nightmares, something of which Jane could not understand. I thought the voyage to America was too pat in healing his anxiety and stress disorder, but swallowed it for the sake of the novel. Milly and Diego were favourites of mine, and I wish the author had spent more time delving into their relationship and the difficulties they would have faced during this time period. This is another area I thought was dealt with a little too succinctly, but perhaps there will be more in the third novel. The Queen's Lady is an enjoyable and quick read, with characters that are interesting and fun. If you are looking for something that is really deep and involved, you will not find that in these novels, as they tend to be more on the lighter side of historical fiction. The great attention to detail, and the polish that many of the great historical novels have is missing, but The Queen's Lady has a charm of its own that makes it whimsical. I am looking forward to reading The Rogue's Princess, the next novel in this series, about James and Will Lacey's half-brother Christopher Turner.

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