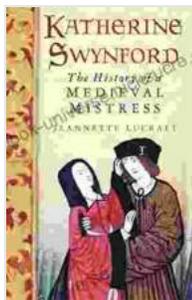


# Katherine Swynford: The History of Medieval Mistress



Katherine Swynford, born between 1350–1360, was a prominent figure in the history of the English monarchy. Her life was marked by both scandal and triumph, as she rose from being the mistress of John of Gaunt, Duke of

Lancaster, to becoming the mother of the Beaufort family and the ancestress of the Tudor dynasty.



## Katherine Swynford: The History of a Medieval Mistress

by Jeannette Lucraft

★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 980 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 260 pages
Lending	: Enabled



### Early Life and Family

Katherine was the daughter of Sir Payn Roet, a wealthy knight from Hainault. She married her first husband, Hugh Swynford, a Lincolnshire knight, in 1368. The couple had two children, Thomas and Blanche. After Hugh's death in 1371, Katherine became a lady-in-waiting to John of Gaunt, one of the most powerful men in England and the uncle of King Richard II.

### Relationship with John of Gaunt

The nature of Katherine's relationship with John of Gaunt remains debated. Some historians believe they married in a secret ceremony around 1372, while others argue they lived together in an openly acknowledged mistress relationship. Regardless of their marital status, their relationship was passionate and long-lasting. Katherine gave birth to four children by John:

Joan Beaufort, Countess of Westmorland; Henry Beaufort, Cardinal and Bishop of Winchester; Thomas Beaufort, Duke of Exeter; and Joan Beaufort, Countess of Somerset.

## **Illegitimacy and Legitimization**

Katherine and John of Gaunt's children were initially considered illegitimate due to the uncertainty surrounding their parents' marriage. However, in 1397, King Richard II issued letters patent legitimizing them. This act was likely motivated by political expediency, as John of Gaunt was a leading figure in the kingdom and the legitimization of his children strengthened his position.

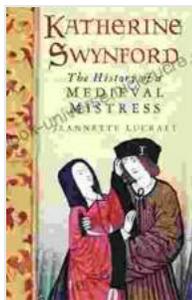
## **Power and Influence**

As the mistress and later wife of John of Gaunt, Katherine gained significant power and influence at court. She played a role in the education and upbringing of her husband's children, including Henry IV, who would later become king of England. Katherine also managed her own estates and maintained close relationships with other powerful figures, such as her sister, Philippa Chaucer, who was married to the poet Geoffrey Chaucer.

## **Later Life and Legacy**

John of Gaunt died in 1399, leaving Katherine as a wealthy widow. She outlived him by six years, dying in 1403 at Lincoln Cathedral. Katherine Swynford is remembered as a controversial yet influential figure. Her relationship with John of Gaunt caused a scandal, but her children played significant roles in English history, including serving as advisors to the king and contributing to the establishment of the Tudor dynasty. Katherine's legacy as a medieval mistress who rose to prominence and respectability

despite her illicit beginnings continues to fascinate historians and readers alike.

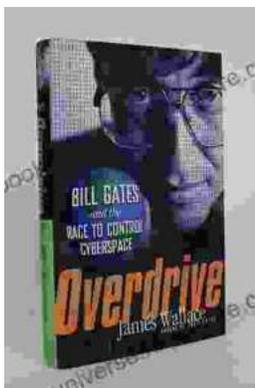


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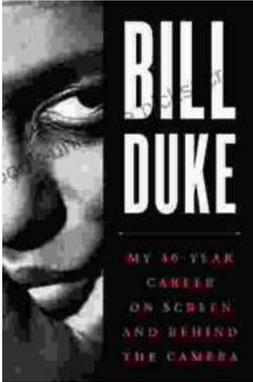
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