

Marguerite de Bourgogne and the Château-Gaillard

by

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Excerpt



Okay, put your Medieval thinking caps back on and throw a jaunty, haunted feather on top for good measure.

Remember two chapters back when I blabbed on and on about [The House of Capet](#)? I left off with the demise of the Capet line: "Things fell apart after the death of Philip IV "The Fair"...he had locked his daughter-in-laws up for adultery ..." Who can resist an opening line like that?

Marguerite de Bourgogne (1290 - 1315?) was the granddaughter of Saint Louis IX (who wasn't such a saint!). She married her cousin, Louis X "The Quarreler" of France, eldest son of Philip IV "The Fair".

They had a daughter.

(Have I mentioned how much I love these nicknames?)

Enter Isabella of France, only daughter of Philip IV "The Fair". Known as the She-

Wolf of France, she was drop dead gorgeous and dangerous to boot. Married to King Edward II of England, she had to contend with his bi-sexuality at a time when it could be punishable by death. Isabella was therefore often manipulating the enemies/lovers of her husband as well as having people assassinated for political gain.

On a trip to Paris with her husband, Isabella gave embroidered purses to her three sisters-in-law. These purses were later seen in the hands of two knights, prompting Isabella to assume adultery had been committed. It was called the Tour de Nesle Affair as the three women were said to have had the amorous relations with the knight in the Nesle Tower. The knights in question were *"broken on the wheel, skinned alive, castrated, hanged on the public gallows of Pontoise, and finally beheaded."*

The three sisters-in-law were *"shaven, shorn, stripped of their royal robes, and imprisoned."*

Imprisoned in the Château-Gaillard, a castle built by King Richard the Lionhearted in the 12th century. Located in the Eure department of Normandy, this castle was built for war, not residence. The living conditions within were fairly atrocious.





Either Marguerite was held captive in the Northeast tower, in the donjon inside the castle itself, or in an "underground crypt" dug at the foot of the North wall. Either way, creepy, drafty, cold, and austere.

When Philip IV "The Fair" died, Louis X "The Quarreler" became king and that made the imprisoned Marguerite, Queen of France. Her husband wasn't okay with that program. He wanted to get rid of her and remarry to produce a male offspring. Unfortunately, adultery wasn't cause for divorce. Also unfortunately, the Pope died and the Bishops in Avignon took months and months to choose a new pope.

Louis X "The Quarreler" being headstrong and quarrelsome decided the best course of action was to strangle his wife and be done with her.

And that's exactly what he did.

Today, you can visit the ruins of Château-Gaillard in Normandy and hear her cries of

agony. She is frequently seen wandering about the fortress.

The ghost of Richard the Lionhearted is reported to have been seen often as well.

I'll bet those two have a lot to talk about!

As for the other two women: Joan was placed under house arrest and, thanks to her husband's efforts, eventually acquitted, Blanche was imprisoned in the Château-Gaillard for 8 years, when her husband assumed the throne, he had their marriage annulled and put her in a nunnery where she died shortly after from poor health.

Now there is one other rumor ... that Marguerite de Bourgogne's family snuck her out of the Château-Gaillard and brought her back to the family Château de Couches, today called Château de Marguerite de Bourgogne located in Couches, Bourgogne, France. There she lived out her life in hiding until she died at the age of 43 in 1333.



Spirits are known to haunt places that have had an impact on their lives. Example: Empress Matilda who haunts the [Mortemer Abby \(see my blog\)](#).

Therefore, no matter if Marguerite died on the spot or not, she definitely has reason to haunt the Château-Gaillard as does Richard the Lionhearted.