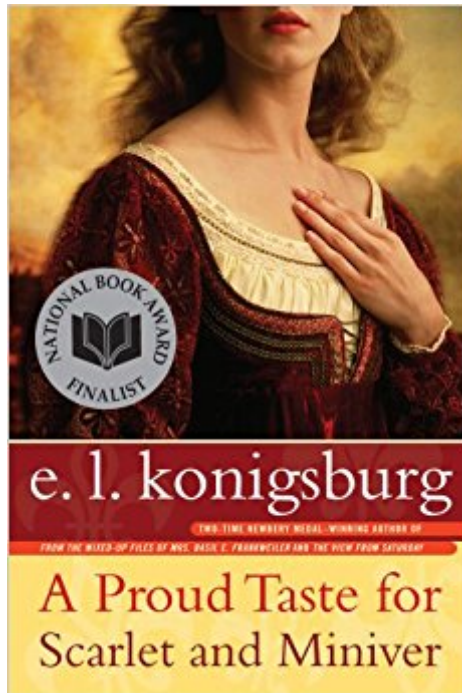




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A Proud Taste For Scarlet And Miniver



Synopsis

Eleanor of Aquitaine, wife to two kings, mother to two others, has been waiting in Heaven a long time -- eight centuries, more or less -- to be reunited with her second husband, Henry II of England. Finally, the day has come when Henry will be judged for admission. While Eleanor, never a patient woman in life or afterlife, waits, three people, each of whom was close to Eleanor during a time of her life, join her. Their reminiscences do far more than help distract Eleanor -- they also paint a rich portrait of an extraordinary woman who was front and center in a remarkable period in history and whose accomplishments have had an important influence on society through the ages.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Eleanor of Aquitaine has every reason to be upset. For centuries she's been patiently waiting for her husband, King Henry II, to meet her in Heaven. Luckily, she's sharing a cloud with some old friends who knew her when she and Henry ruled supreme. As long as they're together, they might as well gossip about old times--and soon all of Eleanor's adventures in the Middle Ages spring to life again. Finally, just when they're about to give up on Henry, Eleanor spots three men floating toward them. After all this time, could one of them be Henry? --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

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A charming and rewarding little book. Well-researched and historically-grounded, it captures the characters and the events well, truly, and succinctly, helping make a time that might otherwise seem dead or be ignored instead come vibrantly alive for her target audience (the young adult reader). Konigsburg here is at her best in respecting the intelligence of her targeted young readers, with prose, constructions, and wry/light humor that make the characters and events accessible to modern audiences without talking down or dumbing down complicated situations. This book has particular value as a gateway that encourages deeper explorations of history and biography -- showing that history, far from necessarily being boring or dry, was the story of how and why lives were lived. (History is also the "mine" from which so much of today's TV, movie, and other fiction, draws its material.) The book's distinctiveness and quality will help it serve as a lamp that shines in the memory of a young reader for years after having read it. And of course the subject of the book is one of the most remarkable women of history -- who was also encouraged and supported in reading and learning from a young age.

This is an outstanding book. The life of Eleanor of Aquitaine is interesting enough in itself, but this book gives it an even deeper richness. The book is funny and witty through and through, but never shallow. I even cried several times. The picture it paints of human nature, in all its forms, is breathtaking. As a Catholic and lover of medieval history and culture, I was enthralled by the well-rendered, bittersweet relationships between so many major figures of history and saints...Eleanor, King Louis, King Henry, St. Bernard, St. Thomas Becket, Richard the Lion Hearted, etc. I loved hearing the story from 4 points of view. It was amazing to feel that I had traveled through hearts, decades and across the world in a book of only 200 pages, from the early morning of Eleanor's bright life in France to the exotic Christianity of Constantinople and Antioch, to grey England with its farmers and shopkeepers, to the joys of romance and family life, the sorrows of loving and losing, the reality of jealousy and revenge, and ultimately to forgiveness, loyalty to God and man, and long-awaited reunions in heaven. Read this! I have never seen such love for history and all things human and divine in the pages of any piece of historical fiction, young adult or other.

Eleanor of Aquitaine was a vivid, fascinating woman who lived and made a great deal of history. A Proud Taste for Scarlet and Miniver imagines her in Heaven, waiting impatiently for her second husband, Henry II, to arrive for his judgement and (hopefully) admittance into Heaven. While she waits, she visits with three other associates from her life on earth: her mother-in-law Matilda, Archbishop Suger, and William Marshall. They take turns telling the parts of her life's story that each of them is most familiar with. It's a wonderful introduction to Eleanor and all the famous people from history that her life intersected with, and does a particularly nice job of showing her accomplishments: an introduction to the ideals of chivalry at her Court of Love, her commissioning of poets and authors to "improve" the stories of King Arthur, and her and Henry II's efforts to bring about the Rule of Law in England. I found it valuable for these things even as a mature reader. A young reader would find it a great story well told, without even having to be aware of how much they were learning.

I didn't know if my boys (age 10) would enjoy this or not, but having the story told by characters in heaven, watching earth from the clouds, tickled their imaginations, so that they were ready to hear more. Overall, they enjoyed the story of Eleanor of Aquitaine. We read it, along with *The Door in the Wall* and *The Canterbury Tales* (Geraldine McCaughrean), in conjunction with a homeschool unit on the Middle Ages.

Excellent middle-level reading book (but thoroughly enjoyed by adult readers as well) to spark interest in Historical Fiction. Written from a clever viewpoint with great character development through witty conversation. This book sparked a frenzy into further readings of French and British historical fiction as well as non-fiction in a quest for knowledge of what was "once upon a time" a reality. Very enjoyable, indeed!

Interesting and historically fun read, especially for a girl studying basic world history.

I first read this book ten years ago, when I managed to leave my homeroom ten minutes late after being completely engrossed in the story of Eleanor of Aquitaine. Last year I finally managed to purchase a copy and found Konigsberg's work as fascinating as I always did. Her narrative is fascinating and her heroine is exciting, selfish, conniving, vain, funny, and in all aspects a very cool character. Be sure to read this book, *The View from Saturday*, and my Konigsberg favorite: *From*

the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler.

Great story from an interesting perspective. LOVE the way history is told in this one. Entertaining.
Read it twice!

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