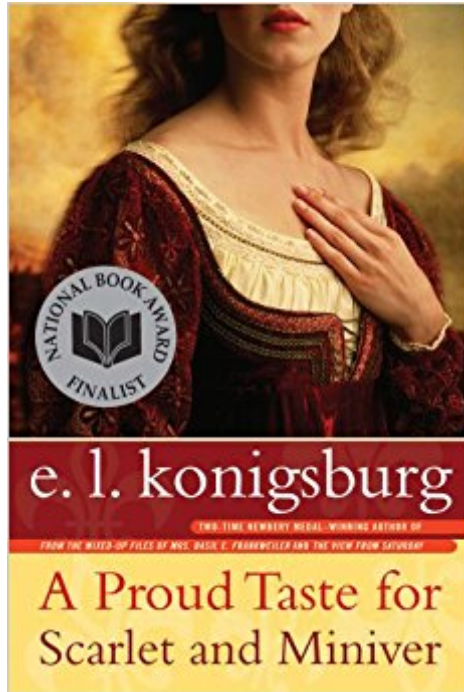


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A Proud Taste For Scarlet And Miniver



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

If this is historical, it is hysterical: give me more! What a delightful presentation of what is usually dry, historical fact. This book is the perfect vehicle to introduce middle school students to the Middle Ages, where human nature is revealed at its worst (just like nowadays). Let's hear it for the start of the Women's Movement --centuries before Elizabeth I. Between the covers of this literary gem is related the life of a determined, capable and ambitious woman--Eleanor of Aquitaine. The four sections are narrated Canterbury Tales style by different characters: Abbot Suger, Empress Matilda, William the Marshall, and Eleanor (the Incurable) who lived to be 80, herself. These first-person tales are interspersed with witty conversations on a cloud in Heaven, as the speakers reminisce while awaiting the iffy arrival of King Henry II. It seems that his earthly career requires the skill of many lawyers to argue his case--a breed which is not plentiful in Heaven....But for Eleanor Waiting itself is Purgatory, since she is a woman of decisive action. Still as we eavesdrop on their frank

discussions, we enjoy many chuckles and glean much information about the life and tumultuous times of this extraordinary woman. After so many centuries, will Henry finally make it Up? This is the monarch who loved then mourned Thomas a BECKET; the king who sired Richard the Lion Heart, as well as that much-despised creep, evil Prince John (who got his royal come-uppance at Runnymede). We learn about Eleanor's considerable improvements, courtly embellishments and Crusader importations in order to "civilize" both England and France. Of course there is nothing like royal family squabbles (The Lion in Winter) to keep us glued to the pages!

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