



## Conquered Hearts: The Collection

*Emily Murdoch*

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Emily Murdoch's thrilling historical romances set just after the Norman invasion are now available in one collection. 'Conquered Hearts' includes: CONQUESTS England, 1069. The nation is still recovering from the Norman invasion three years earlier - and adjusting to life under its sometimes brutal new rulers. A young girl trembles in the shadows of what was once her home. Avis is homeless and penniless, and with no family left alive she is forced to become a ward of Richard, the Norman lord who has taken her home. But when King William decrees that Norman lords must marry Anglo-Saxon women Avis must make a terrible choice: either marry the repulsive Richard or take a else chance on another Norman, Melville, a man she has never met. Soon she realises that survival in a time of turmoil and war depends of putting aside the prejudices of the past. And if she can do so, kingdoms and hearts can still be among her 'Conquests'... LOVE LETTERS Having built a rich empire and keen to win the favour of the royal court, Hilda and AElfgard have little time for their daughter, Catheryn. But one man, Selwyn, is intrigued by the intelligent and high-spirited girl. Selwyn sends Catheryn a love letter as a joke, disguising it as though it is from one of her father's thanes. Catheryn is fascinated by the letter, and cannot imagine who would be capable of sending a poem of such imagination and beauty. When Selwyn offers to help Catheryn identify the mysterious suitor, she accepts, and they start to realise that they have more in common than they thought. Soon, Catheryn finds herself falling in love with Selwyn instead... But the strict hierarchy of Anglo-Saxon England stands in their way. Selwyn, a steward, could never be considered Catheryn's equal, let alone an eligible suitor. Will they manage to stay together despite the odds? Or will duty tear Selwyn and Catheryn apart? CAPTIVES Normandy. 1067. Lady Catheryn, an Anglo-Saxon noblewoman, is taken against her will to Normandy after the invasion. She arrives, a prisoner, at the castle of Lord Geffrei, a ruthless invader who hopes to gain a ransom for her. When Queen Matilda, William the Conqueror's wife, sees her plight, she takes pity on her. Catheryn is sent to the castle of the noble FitzOsberns - but will her new captivity be any better than the cruelty she faced at Geffrei's hands? She finds her hostess cold and embittered, but when her husband William FitzOsberns returns from the Conquest, Catheryn's heart is torn by unwanted emotions. She becomes entangled in the quarrels and heartbreaks of her jailers even as she tries to remember her place among them. Is she falling in love with the man who helped to destroy her homeland? Praise for Emily Murdoch 'An enthralling saga.' - Robert Foster, best-selling author of 'The Lunar Code'. Emily Murdoch is a medieval historian and novelist. She lives in York. Endeavour Press is the UK's leading independent publisher of digital books."

## Conquered Hearts: The Collection Details

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# From Reader Review Conquered Hearts: The Collection for online ebook

## Bria Perozzo says

### Unexpectedly enjoyable

I got the series in a free book deal, so I went in with low expectations. I found deep, relatable, intriguing characters in a well-researched setting. Set in a time period I knew next to nothing about, it was even educational. I couldn't believe the way the 3 stories were woven together, a very pleasant surprise. Well done.

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## Maria-Anne says

I have the unabridged audio version of this set of books. This time I listened instead of reading but I have read other book by Emily Murdoch and always fully enjoyed them

Book one:

This is a clean romance developing between two people of different background and education and the fact she is Anglo-Saxon and he is a conquering Norman.

Marriage is forced by the King so neither person had much to say about it.

It's more a matter of surviving in a time of war and how people adapt eventually to almost any circumstance.

Book two:

This story gives back the emotions of a young couple trying to establish their feelings for each other now that they are no longer children but young adults at a time in history when it was practically unheard of to break through class boundaries and decisions made by the parents.

Book three:

The first book gave back the experience of the daughter the third book concentrates on what happened to the mother after she was captured.

Emily Murdoch is a very talented author been able to portray conflicting emotions in people. She also brings the time period to life. The conditions people where living in. The acceptance of certain traditions as arranged marriages. In lots of cases been a political pawn both for men and woman.

If you like to get a feeling for the time period and some of the political intrigues that were going on I highly recommend these books. If you are looking for a hot steamy sex affairs these are not it.

I loved all three books but have to say the third one was my favorite. I'm hoping that we see another book in the series maybe from the fathers point of view as what happened to him during the battle and afterwards. A slight hint at book the end of book one might be that somehow he survived.

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## Barb says

I found this book, which consisted of 3 novels, a really great. Loved that it gave me a well written history of the time line. It went into great detail of the Normandy history and King William. All 3 books are intertwined with each other and the story line was well written.

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### **Leslie Miner says**

This collection contains three stories. Each story could be considered a stand alone, although they do intertwine with each other. I enjoyed all three stories, but my favorite was probably *Captives*. I really like this author's writing style. What I really liked about this collection is scenes that happened in the first story also happened in the third story, although it's from a different character's point of view and the main characters are completely different. *Captives* was also unpredictable. I actually gasped out loud a few times. I look forward to reading more by this author.

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### **Cyndi says**

#### **Good stuff, this!**

War , uncertainty, survival, beginning anew....love , pain, joy sorrow..honor , duty, loyalty...man to man, sibling to sibling, husband to wife, monarch to his people..its all in here, you'll laugh with them, cry with them , feel their anguish and embrace their myriad emotional journey in both these stories...Well done Emily!

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### **CJ Browne says**

I have just finished reading the first part of this delightful and gripping historical omnibus and loved it. The story starts in 1069 three years after the Norman Conquest of Britain. It follows the relationship between Avis, a young Anglo-Saxon noble woman and Melville, a brave Norman warrior rewarded by King William with a lordship and a wife. Both have suffered family losses and hardship, although it is Avis's circumstances that the reader gets to know about first. The story is told from the two perspectives of Anglo-Saxon Avis and Norman Melville as they both try to survive and make sense of their marriage that neither wanted. The historical detail is realistic and the reader soon learns of the different cultures of these two nations forced to live together amid a background of insecurity and war. Both lead characters are interesting and convincing and as the reader gets to know more of their inner thoughts and previous experiences it is hard not to think what they would do in similar circumstances. The story is told at a lively pace compelling you to turn the page to find out what happens next. A very satisfying read.

I received a copy of the eBook from the author in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Lillian Huffman says**

#### **Very Intriguing**

Wow what a wonderful series this is. I have never read about the Normandy conquering of England. I have never known much about King William . This story revolves around these things. I completely enjoyed it. I did not enjoy King Williams ruthless destruction of North England however it is history. I highly recommend

this book.

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### **Heather says**

This series made me think. When I say think, I felt that this is probably close to how the Anglo-Saxon truly felt. It was intense, sometimes I didn't like Avis and then other times I felt empathy. Concerning Cathryn's story I will say I skipped through a large amount of it. I felt her pain and wondered how true this could all be. This series has made me remember my history and look things up.

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### **Maria says**

#### **Well written historical novel**

Enjoyed learning about this time in history and historical figures. Two feisty heroines and a hero that is their salvation. A different ending than what is typical in historical romance novels, but still a satisfying end.

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### **Margaret Watkins says**

Conquests is a heart-rending romance that takes place just after the Norman invasion in 1066. The Anglo Saxons have been slaughtered and their homes destroyed. Is it any wonder that when Avis finds herself with an ultimatum to either marry her despicable guardian Richard, or the dark, threatening Melville, that she resents having to make the choice. Both of them are the enemy of her people. The lesser of the two evils is Melville, however the road is paved with every conceivable hindrance to a happy marriage. As Avis and Melville struggle to come to terms with the marriage they find themselves in, unrest continues on all sides. The story is sad in that the aftermath of war always leaves devastation. Nevertheless, Avis is strong and she finds ways to cope, even as Melville flounders as he tries to understand the woman who is now under his protection. The story didn't always flow easily and I was confused at times as the narrative jumped around a bit, and I had reread a couple of paragraphs to understand the context. Nevertheless, all the makings of a good romance were there and the characters are very lovable.

Love Letters: In this prologue to the series, Childhood friends meet again after a number of years of being separated and in their own way, both of them have changed. Selwyn has watched Catheryn from afar, and at first glance he does not like the woman she has become and decides to remind her of the friendship they once shared. However, things don't go as planned and feelings get hurt. Selwyn is a servant in her father's household he knows the risks that showing his hand will incur. However, over the days and months that ensue, the childhood friends realise that the core of their relationship remains and Selwyn makes his stand, knowing that his future is on the line. This is a truly delightful medieval romance written in the style of the period where maidens remained innocent and their suitors wrote love poems expressing their feelings.

Captives is a well written and well researched historical novel with elements of romance. I grew up reading medieval romance and poetry, and the period is usually bathed in a glow of romanticism and the true love of a knight for his lady. In reality, it was one of the harshest and most brutal of periods, when the life expectancy of a soldier was short and the real sufferers were the women and children left behind, even more so if you had the misfortune of being on the side of the conquered. Lady Catheryn is taken captive and

despite having value as a political prisoner, she is treated with the utmost disdain and cruelty. It is only when King William and his prospective Queen visit the fortress where she is being kept, and they discover her condition, that she finds some relief as she is transferred to a more humane stronghold. Life gets easier for Catheryn, but her sorrow and anguish over the whereabouts of her daughter do not diminish one bit. With time she becomes valuable to her hosts but their distrust and disrespect do not change. When Lord FitzOsbern returns from war, there is an instant connection and affinity between Catheryn and Fitz, but it could never be acted upon. Times becomes more troubled for the family and Catheryn is caught in the middle. It is only when the greatest loss comes that Catheryn is eventually released to embark on a quest to find her daughter. *Captives* is a realistic reflection of the times, and leaves one with a feeling of melancholy. However, it is a tribute to the indomitable spirit of a woman and a mother who will do anything to find her child. I received a copy of this book as a gift and this is my honest and voluntary review.

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### **Pat Raab says**

A typical case of choosing the lesser evil, followed by hate at first sight ... Then a different generation rediscovers friendship, and it grows into something much bigger, and the story finally comes full circle. A tale of great suffering and sorrow, as the Normans conquer England, but also of hope, steadfastness, and love.

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### **Zena says**

Really worth reading!

I originally listened to the three stories in audiobook format and thoroughly enjoyed each and every one of them. This is what I said in my reviews:

#### 1. Conquests: Hearts Rule Kingdoms

I looked at the title of this book and its cover picture and couldn't work out what story it would tell. That had me hooked and I knew I had to find out.

Well, it's a love story about two very different people who are forced to get married by a decree from King William even though they do not know one another.

The game as played out by Avis and Melville in their quest to survive is amazing, neither realizing that they have fallen in love.

Emily Murdoch has written a truly outstanding historical romance that is clean, well thought out, factual and totally gripping. What an amazing adventure life for these two people turns out to be.

#### 2. Conquests: Love Letters

Oh my word. This is such a sweet and romantic love story and I simply loved every second of it. What a pleasure!

This is the second in the series and is considerably shorter than the first one and it is a stand-alone.

The main characters held their own and each showed different yet very endearing strengths.

I must say that I had a bit of difficulty to begin with with the names of that period but that is only because they are unfamiliar to my modern day ear and I quickly got used to them so that wasn't a real problem.

#### 3. Captives: Kingdoms Rule Hearts

This part of the story is from the mother, Lady Catheryn's perspective and it tells of her capture, imprisonment and hunt for her daughter, Avis.

This story, as with the others in this series, is a well written adventure telling of the hardships of that era and how people managed to survive it. It also tells of love and caring and the attempts of some of the people to

better their lots in life as well as that of others around them.

These reviews are my voluntary and unbiased thoughts on these stories and I am happy to recommend this set.

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### **Kim Paulus says**

Three stories intertwined. Each story can be listened to or read alone, but I couldn't stop at just one! Loved the rich history and the descriptions of the time. The struggle and the survival of the people was amazing. These stories will amuse all audiences.

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### **anna says**

Thank you Emily Murdoch for this opportunity for this wonderful listen! Once again over a series of stories you have given the reader a travel through difficult changes within broken families. Each part bridges the way to the next as the characters archive goals and fulfill their dreams. Period tales are enjoyable when they bring you in and this did!

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### **Carol Dixon-Smith says**

#### **3 books, 3 different reactions**

Interesting trilogy of linked stories that are told out of chronological order but to great effect. This would have been a 4, verging on 5, star except for the 3rd story. Certain events and character reactions jarred quite considerably in that book. They did not ring true to the characters as we had come to know them, and certainly not to certain events that occurred. Such a shame to be so disappointed.

Equally, only one can be defined as a 'sweet romance'. Two are set during a brutal period and the relationships reflect that, in addition the end of one is anything but sweet.

All in all, I enjoyed them well enough and will be reading any other of the author's historical fiction books.

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