



## Roselynde

*Roberta Gellis*

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## **Roselynde** Roberta Gellis

The end of her world . . . and the beginning of her greatest adventure

In a time of lords and ladies, Lady Alinor Devaux was an anomaly. The mistress of Roselynde was young, uncannily intelligent, wealthy and had a reputation for being as fierce and protective as any feudal lord before her. Alinor was unmarried and a rich prize for greedy men seeking power and wealth.

When the Queen makes Alinor a royal ward and assigns a warden to oversee the running of Roselynde, Alinor must deal with not only fighting off unwanted suitors, but with the warden as well! Not willing to be any man or woman's pawn, she is determined to make Sir Simon Lemagne's life miserable. But the seasoned knight isn't quite what Alinor expects.

What belongs to Alinor remains with Alinor, and God help any woman, man or holy crusade that gets in her way . . .

## **Roselynde Details**

Date : Published December 13th 2005 by Harlequin Books (first published February 1st 1978)

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Author : Roberta Gellis

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Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Romance, Historical Romance, Medieval, Fiction, Medieval Romance

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## From Reader Review Roselynde for online ebook

### Kit★ says

**3.5 Stars** This was my July Pick-It-For-Me book over in Western and Medieval Romance Lovers, and I was already feeling in the mood for a medieval set story, so it worked out good. When I first added this book to my TBR, I was thinking it was more of a bodice ripper than it ended up being, to be honest. I was expecting a lot more, well, romance of the steamy sort. This didn't have much of that at all. In fact, it kinda made me just a little disappointed there. It was a bit more of the courtly, proper romance sort. A few dangerous stolen kisses was about as hot as it got until close to the end when at long, long last Simon and Alinor were permitted to marry and finally consummate their love. The whole time I was rooting for them, agonizing over the things they had to go through, the whims of the royals they had to obey... In fact, the historical feel of the book was very good, the author made me able to understand precisely the things that were going on, and why. The only thing I think was missing was some description. I felt entrenched in the time period politically and socially, but I didn't *see* it as well as I have with other books. There wasn't much physical description of the scenery or clothing, I didn't think. Other than that, though, the historical feel was excellent. The writing was very well done, and I found myself wanting to just keep reading and reading, loath to put it down because I had to see what was going to happen. I loved the epic feel of it, the traveling the characters did over land and over sea, the long time span of it and the exotic places. I was also quite fond of both Simon and Alinor, and their relationship, how they both handled the attraction, the pain they felt at their misunderstandings and occasional lack of communication. Simon was a warrior through and through, all of the battle scenes were superb and exciting. I *thoroughly* enjoyed how the author didn't hold back when it came to the grisly details of war, the spouting blood and heads cleaved in, limbs chopped off, that madness of battle! Rawr! Got me going. Simon was amazing in that department, lol. Alinor was no slouch either, though her battles weren't on the same playing field. I liked her cunning, and her strength in the face of everything. I was so, so happy when they could be together at last, and I think I'm going to leave my ending there, with them together, happy, though not necessarily safe forever. I don't think I'll read the other books in the series, because (view spoiler) So there it will end for me I believe. I am happy that I finally read this though, I enjoyed it. It's been awhile since I read a good, meaty historical that made me think, and made me feel like I learned quite a few new things. I have another medieval by this author on my TBR pile, so this book makes me feel more inclined toward getting around to it as well. **3.5 Stars!**

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### Karen says

This adventure took us to Wales then off on the crusades via dangerous sea crossings, peralid snow capped mountain traversing, plagued by wrekers & bloody skirmishes. It certainly was action packed.

I was drawn to the main characters. Their focus on protecting as well as managing the Lady's lands & the skill in which they are able to navigate to the tempest of court politics as well as self-serving royals.

This type of descriptive writing appeals to me. I could feel the bite of the icy winds or sweltering oppressive heat even the glide of different fabrics.

A great series to curl up with and get lost in on a cold day.

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### **Emmy says**

This book is not a straight historical romance (despite the ridiculous cover). There is probably equal parts history as there is romance. And unfortunately a lot of the history is wrapped up in the characters trying to navigate a very complicated political situation, that is often described in depth, as well as the description of a number of battles - neither of these things which are much interest to me. The author also includes some details about life in the middle ages, that while they may be accurate, certainly un-romanticize the book.

For the first half of the book I found the heroine rather manipulative and didn't particularly like her. And the hero's extreme sense of morals and chivalry didn't really jive with his admission that he had raped women (view spoiler)

I found the author's writing itself rather confusing at times - unclear sentence structure, paragraphs that lost the focus of the scene and jumped around too much, etc - and when trying to describe 12th century political strategy, it made some parts difficult to follow.

I also don't like when authors finish one book in a way that only serves to set up the plot of a sequel, which this author certainly did.

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### **Rosemary Cantrell says**

This is an historical novel set in the late 1100's when King Richard goes on his crusade. Other historical figures are included in the story, particularly his mother the queen and his brother John who intends to become king.

This is the background for the love story between Alinor, young heiress, and Simon, a much older courtier. Alinor was brought up to rule her lands with love and an iron fist and is capable of doing so. However, being a woman, she is a prize for which ever man the king may choose as her husband. Simon has spent his life serving the queen, her husband, and now their son King Richard. He is honest to a fault. When he is named as ward for Alinor - to protect the king and make sure he makes as much money as possible from her lands - he falls in love with her. Though there is 30 years difference in their ages, his love is returned.

The story is about how their love story is played out until they are actually wed. The background of life in the middle ages is the more interesting part of this book.

I enjoyed the book, but felt like at times things dragged a bit too much, especially in the war scenes.

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### **Valerie says**

I liked and didn't like this book. I liked the storytelling, it kept me turning the pages, especially the first half of the book; I didn't like the author's philosophy that sex and love are two different things. She had both the hero and the heroine tell me about it. This philosophy is a godless one that fits very well our modern age, but is out of place in her book. How many of you girls would be just fine with your love sleeping around because

you weren't around to satisfy his urges? A seventeen year old virgin in love with someone would not be happy! No matter how politically astute she may be. I contend the man would feel very guilty, as if he betrayed her, but our hero thinks of sex as no different than peeing. I sincerely hope that in the next book, Alinor, the hero thinks much differently! I just don't know if I'll ever find out, because I felt like throttling our heroes in this one.

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### **Misfit says**

This was great fun. There was so much humour between Alinor and Simon at the beginning, along with their wonderful chemistry. A nice twist to have the heroine being not only intelligent and strong minded, but to have her fall in love with an "older man" instead of some young hunk. LOL, so many funny scenes but especially the one where Simon wanted to see her books and had a horrible misunderstanding with the confused monk.

No matter what the appearances of the book cover and the name of the publisher I would not classify this as a true "bodice ripper". Just a wonderful love story. Alinor and Simon didn't even "do it" until after they were married about 50 pages before the end of the book! I found the battle scenes to be a bit tiresome (the crusade battles didn't interest me as much), but otherwise very entertaining and well written. I am looking forward to reading the sequel, Alinor.

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### **Ilze says**

Well-researched and highly detailed depiction of the era of the Crusades at the end of the 12th century. But tough slogging for someone who is more accustomed to (and prefers) a pure romance. This story is a historical novel with a love story as its main plot driver, not a historical romance per se. The violence, lawlessness and politics of the time pretty much preclude a "happily ever after" ending for this story, not to mention the fact that the hero Simon is 30 years older than the heroine Alinor. I didn't really like that aspect of their relationship and found it hard to believe that Alinor would fall in love with a man old enough to be her grandfather (in medieval times this was completely possible). Simon's falling in love with a girl young enough to be his granddaughter is also a little hard to believe, although he does constantly berate himself for being in that situation and takes a very long time to accept that Alinor does actually love him.

Some interesting real-life historical personages appear as secondary characters in the book: William Marshal and his wife Isobel of Clare, Eleanor of Aquitaine, dowager queen of England at the time, and king Richard I (known as the Lionheart) of England. Also his younger brother John, who eventually became the "evil King John" of the legend of Robin Hood, and Berengaria, the wife of Richard I, although it is not known if their marriage was ever actually consummated, Richard apparently having homosexual tendencies and Berengaria being completely disgusted at the reality of marriage and sexual intercourse (she eventually became a nun).

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### **Barb says**

I liked this book and very much liked the story between the main characters Alinor and Simon but sometimes it was a little too much history for me.

Alinor Devaux is one of the wealthiest women in England. Unmarried at sixteen years old she has been well provided for and protected. She is capable of running her many estates with a strong but compassionate hand. Queen Alinor of Aquitaine, according to the wishes of her son, soon to be King Richard I, has placed young Alinor under the wardship of the King. Sir Simon Lemange, the king's judiciar, has been assigned as her warden. Sir Simon is surprised and not pleased by his new duties, Alinor is willful, quick tempered and manipulative. Surprisingly each stirs something in the other, they fall in love and wish to marry. However an arrangement of marriage between the two will not benefit the monarchy. They will travel a difficult journey before marriage is even a possibility.

The history woven through their story is somewhat complicated. This was the first time I can recall reading about this period in history. I found it very interesting but a little overwhelming at times. Someone who has knowledge about this period in time would probably find the detailed history more enjoyable than I did. I would have done better if I'd had some basic understanding of the Welsh conflict and the Crusades.

I thought Gellis did an excellent job of describing Medieval times with details on clothing, buildings, battle, customs, and traditions including how women were sometimes taken as wives against their will.

There were a few leaps of emotion that I would have preferred to have had drawn out. The relationship between Alinor and Simon is full of attraction and repulsion, misunderstanding and confusion with each not knowing how the other truly feels. Some of which felt just a little too contrived for my tastes. But I did grow to care for these characters and enjoyed the way their relationship resolved itself.

I really enjoyed the author's note which puts this period in history in perspective and offers insights to some of King Richard's behavior. I thought the writing was very good the characters were well drawn and I enjoyed the story.

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### **Penny says**

Roberta Gellis is by far the reigning talent of stories well told. With a mix of fiction and history, you will find yourself unable to put the books down! She is Superlative!

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### **TheMadHatter says**

Actual Rating: 3.5 Stars.

This is the favourite book of a work friend and she has been asking me to read it for years. I held off as it is a lot of pressure to read a book that someone loves so dearly in case it is not for you and you don't want to disappoint them. I don't think I will ever recommend a book I love to anyone ever again now that I see the other side of the stress involved :-P

This book was first published in the 1970s and is a historical romance fiction and rather well researched and portrayed to from the sounds of it and with a more strong focus on history than romance. Similiar in style to Outlander I suppose in detail.

It is set in the 1100s in England with King Richard on the throne, Prince John wanting the throne and the

crusades in full swing. The two main characters of the book though are fictitious (although the monarchy/Crusades play a large part of the story). Alinor is the lady of Roselynde and Simon is appointed to assist with the running of the property after the death of her grandfather.

I did really enjoy this book - but I wouldn't say I loved it. I really loved the setting and it is a time in history that I am really rusty on so I spent a lot of the time going back and forth between book and internet to research. However, I didn't particularly like Alinor and even though it was probably historical accurate, Simon's (being a knight) openly admits to rape and pillage and taking whom ever is available. Hard to get behind that as a lead man (plus he is also 30+ years Alinor's senior). Historically accurate maybe - romantic? Not so much. ?.

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### **Jayne dArcy says**

This was a very difficult story to get into. The reason being that the majority of the book concentrated on King Richard, his mother Queen Alinor, and the political clime of the time. There was a great deal of intrigue, discussions that said one thing but meant another, and it was years, it seemed, before Simon and the young Alinor could simply kiss with permission from the Queen.

The history was written very well but I cannot call it the kind of historical romance that I've been reading in which the romance takes precedence and it takes place during a time of history.

For those that enjoy reading about history, and this time when King Richard was preparing for Crusade, you will find a rich world that comes to life on the pages as you read. I found the realism harsh but authentic.

The romance of Simon and Alinor takes place near the end of the story and moves smoothly from there.

This book and author was recommended by a friend.

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### **Stacey says**

There were some violent scenes I didn't really enjoy, and one really silly scene. My rating is probably 3.5, not 4.

Overall, this is an atmospheric, not quite nostalgic, novel of the Middle Ages when Alinor of Aquitaine was Dowager Queen of England (Queen Mother?)

The love story is mostly solid, except for some parts (see above). Lots of adventure and danger, what with John Lackland, the Crusades, and an eligible, wealthy heroine.

Fans of Elizabeth Chadwick will most likely enjoy this.

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### **Lindsey says**

I had mixed feelings about this book. Some parts of it I loved, for some reason the descriptions of Simon's campaign in Wales and the section about the Crusades. I thought the historical personalities were really well drawn and to me Queen Alinor (why not Eleanor?) of Aquitaine and Richard I seemed very realistic and well drawn. I had more of an issue with Prince John though - he seemed to be a bit of a pantomime villain.

I was less keen on the fictional characters. Alinor herself I found very irritating and the arguments she had with her warden just seemed a bit silly a lot of the time. I also found Simon less than appealing mainly because at one point he hit Alinor and the author also mentions that he has raped women in the past, yet he is presented as a romantic hero. I know this is probably more realistic for the time, but I couldn't warm to him because of that. I was actually more interested in his squire, Ian, and so I shall be reading the next in the series as I know it focuses on him.

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Overall I found this a good read but not amazing. I would recommend Elizabeth Chadwick's novels instead.

### **Agnes says**

I admit I was a bit embarrassed reading this one during my morning commutes. When I scored the cheap used copy, I was lucky to get the Alinor falling-out-of-dress-getting-all-hot-with-Simon cover. Oh boy - and I thought my Angelique covers were bad! Thankfully, the Goodreads reviews weren't lying - this is definitely a "meatier" novel than the cover would suggest – much better classified as historical fiction.

The story revolves around spunky Alinor's and stuffy Simon's spring-winter relationship, which I felt to be a bit contrived at times. She loves him and he loves her but he thinks she really doesn't because he's old and so he's going to be a jerk and she's going to get all upset and then they are to going argue and then... arghh!!

Despite much eye rolling and giggling, or perhaps because of it, I did eventually start to enjoy their story. The predictable happy ending came, though it appears that the bliss won't be long lasting with bad, bad Prince John lurking on the horizon! (Guess I have to pick up the sequel soon!)

But going back to the "meatier" aspects - I really enjoyed the strong, meticulously researched historical elements. I loved reading about the Third Crusade and the problems back home in king-abandoned England. The Plantagenets are always great fun, especially with conniving Queen Eleanor (err... *Alinor*) and angry Angevin-descended men!

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### **Oriana says**

Roselynde is the first book of the famous series The Roselynde Chronicles by Roberta Gellis. I've been reading excellent reviews about it for ages and one of my friends, Ana T. is always recommending me this series (she is such a patient and persistent friend!;-)). I finally followed her advice.

One Saturday afternoon, I picked up the book and just couldn't stop until the very last page. No need to say that I immediately read the second one, Alinor, even if I dreaded some aspects of the story, especially the fate of our heroine's 1st husband.

Normally, I'm not very fond of very young heroines, they are often immature and very childish. At first sight, Alinor seems to fit in this category, but just for some seconds. She might be young, but she is far from being the usual spoiled aristocratic young miss. She knows her value and her strengths. Since her birth she was taught by her grandfather how to manage her lands and business without relying in a man. This is quite unusual for these times but not unheard of. Strong women like Nicola Lahaye or even the ruthless queen Alinor were perfect examples of amazing women who wanted much more than men (and the Church!) allowed them to have.

Her relationship with Simon is quite unusual. Some might think that the age difference is a bit too much, but these two are good for each other. There's a good symbiosis going on since the beginning, and despite Simon's objections concerning their age (he really is disturbed by his attraction to a much younger woman), I could hardly imagine anyone else at Alinor's side.

What pleased me the most in Roselynde? The politically incorrect view of the Middle Ages. Roberta Gellis isn't afraid of talking about subjects that normally would hurt our modern sensibilities but who were considered perfectly normal in those times, like the common use of camp whores or some physical abuse from husband to wife. Not that I would ever approve of such behaviour, of course, but it makes me admire even more these women who stood up for what they wanted in times when their rights were close to nothing.

The historical background is also very rich and entrancing. Following the Lionheart in his quest along the Mediterranean and also some aspects of his life immediately remind me how little I like this English king. The author also mentions several times his possible homosexuality but even today historians are not convinced and mostly believe he was simply an asexual man who was more interested in his quests than actually have sex with everything that moved (like so many sovereigns before and after him). Prince John is, like always, the creepy and vindictive character who we all hate passionately. I often wonder if he really deserves it...

To be honest, I don't know if I would have picked this book only looking at the cover. Roselynde is not a historical romance, it's pure historical fiction with some strong romantic elements. It's also one of my best reads of 2010!

Grade: 5/5

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