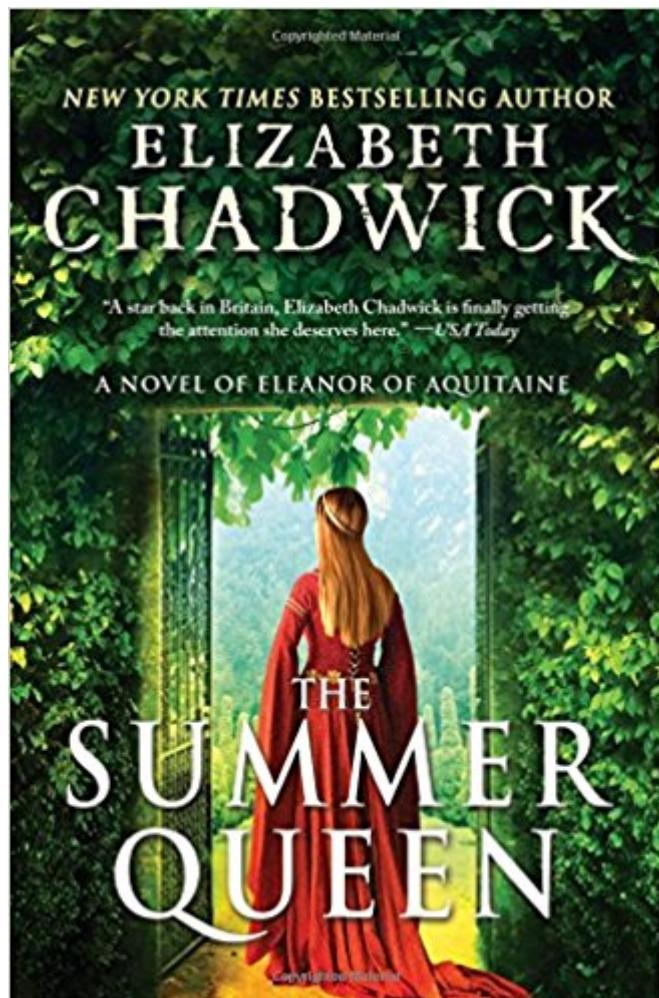


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The Summer Queen: A Novel Of Eleanor Of Aquitaine



Synopsis

New York Times bestselling author Elizabeth Chadwick brings Eleanor of Aquitaine to life with breathtaking historical detail in the first volume of this stunning new trilogy. Eleanor of Aquitaine, the legendary 12th century queen of France and later of England, is one of the most powerful and irrepressible women in medieval history, and her story of romance, scandal and political intrigue has fascinated readers for centuries. Young Eleanor (or Alienor as she was known) has everything to look forward to as the heiress to the wealthy Aquitaine. But when her beloved father William X suddenly dies, childhood is over. Sent to Paris and forced to marry Prince Louis VII of France, she barely adjusts before another death catapults them to King and Queen. At the age of just 13, Eleanor must leave everything behind and learn to navigate the complex and vivacious French court. Faced with great scandals, trials, fraught relationships, and forbidden love at every turn, Eleanor finally sees what her future could hold if she could just seize the moment. The first in this highly anticipated trilogy, *The Summer Queen* follows Eleanor through the Second Crusade to the end of her marriage to Louis VII. The author's meticulous research (including delving into the Akashic records) portrays the Middle Ages and Eleanor with depth and vivid imagery unparalleled in historical fiction that will keep readers riveted and wanting more.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Once upon a time there lived an amazing woman who was destined to be ruler of Aquitaine. Her heart and soul was with Aquitaine and the heritage that she was born with. In a time where women

were considered frail or used as chattel, Eleanor of Aquitaine rises up and becomes Queen of France, then dumps her husband and that title only to soon become Queen of England. After many reads based on Eleanor's life, one would think I've had enough. But then here comes Elizabeth Chadwick writing a novel that she has wanted to write for a very long time. Her previous historicals on William Marshal were based during Eleanor's time, and Eleanor would beckon to the author to write Eleanor's story. And that she did. With typical Chadwick flair, we have a start to what will prove to be an amazing trilogy on Eleanor, except our main protagonist is now called Alienor. My first inclination was to shy from this twist on the anglicized name of Eleanor, but Chadwick's skillful writing set me at ease with this proper spelling of Eleanor right away. Among other things, I loved how she portrayed Louis; my feelings about him changed as his character changed.. and she made him more interesting than he probably was! What a sack of uselessness he seemed to be. Alienor's story is familiar to most of us medieval fiction lovers, but as always Chadwick tells it beautifully and with deft writing skill. She does not inundate us with endless facts and names, she simply draws us into Alienor's world from the time she was a child to the time she finally meets Henry, her second husband. It is a poignant tale as we ache for Alienor during her loveless marriage to the weak and overly pious King of France even though we know eventually she will break free.

The Summer Queen is the first in a planned trilogy based on the life of Eleanor of Aquitaine (or Alienor as she is called here). After the glut of Eleanor novels a couple of years ago, this review is written with the assumption that most readers are familiar with Eleanor's history. This review will discuss those known events freely and might be a bit spoilerish for those new to the period, so consider yourself warned. Arranged marriages can't have been easy under the best of circumstances, but Louis and Alienor had so many things against them from the get-go: raised to the church until his older brother dies, having to take the throne earlier than expected upon his father's death, political treachery and double dealing, and worst of all everyone waiting and watching for the heir that never arrives (it's all the woman's fault you know). And then something happens that completely changes Louis and he's forever changed and more devoted to the church than before (and not in a good way). "What she saw now was a querulous man, old before his time, full of righteous anger, his guilt and self-loathing twisting within him, so that all the ills of the world became the sins of the nearest scapegoat." That return home was compelling stuff. And then we get to the crusade - quite an adventure just getting there, let alone what happened when Alienor wanted to cut ties there and take shelter with Uncle Raymond (no, not that - get your mind out of the gutter!). That Thierry is one nasty eunuch is all I'm saying... The latter part of the novel revolves

around the failed marriage, obtaining the annulment, and of course this: "The Count of Anjou and his son are come to Paris to discuss the situation..." Can I say how much I loved the portrayal of Henry?

A RICHLY DRAWN, FINELY WRITTEN, METICULOUSLY RESEARCHED, FICTIONALIZED ACCOUNT OF ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE -- Elizabeth Chadwick's fleshed-out characterization of this controversial and often misunderstood historical figure is loaded with vivid descriptions and a sumptuous scenography that brings the medieval setting to full life at every turn of the page. Glorious in every compartment (character development, scene setting, world building, dialogues), The Summer Queen spans over a period of time of about fifteen years. The protagonist's life was such an eventful and dramatic ride that, in that window of time alone, she was twice married, twice a queen, and mother of a future king: an incredible pool of inspiration for a fictional treatment of real historical events. One of the most powerful women in Western Europe during the Middle Ages, Eleanor was famed for her beauty and strong personality. Daughter of William X, Duke of Aquitaine, she became Duchess of the richest territory of Southern France at a very young age. She was only 13, in fact, when her sick father died in Spain during a pilgrimage of penance: Eleanor ('Alienor' in the novel) instantly became one of the most eligible heiresses in the continent. In order to protect her from unscrupulous vassals and the duchy from political turmoil, before his death William arranged Alienor's marriage to Louis, son of Louis VI and heir to the throne of France. The young duchess' life radically changed during the summer of 1137: raised as a free-thinker and uncommonly beautiful, she won the heart of her 17 year old bridegroom, but her unconventional conduct made her an unpopular queen among Church elders and some powerful people at court.

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