



Revenge of the Rose

By Nicole Galland
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Introduction

In the spring of 1199, Willem, a naive, poor young knight, is summoned to the magnificent royal court of Konrad, the Holy Roman Emperor, whose realm spans much of Europe. An audacious fighter, Willem wins great honors for his knightly prowess. His champion, friend, and guide to courtly life is the irrepressible, mysterious minstrel Jouglet, a longtime admirer of Willem's sister Lienor. Willem soon learns, to his dismay, that gossip, schemes, secrets, and lies are what really fuel courtly life—and that not even a knight is immune—or safe.

Transporting the reader to the magnificent, conniving heart of the largest empire of medieval Europe, *Revenge of the Rose* brings to vivid life a long-ago time full of drama, intrigue, and sparkling wit in which colorful characters cunningly vie for power, wealth, and favor.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why do you think the author has chosen to tell a medieval story using a deliberately modern tone?
2. Jouglet and Konrad both poke fun at stereotypes of idealized romance. To what degree do those stereotypes still function in today's world? Are they hurtful or useful to women? To men?
3. Jouglet refuses to fall into the "idealized romance" stereotype with Willem, yet seems to enjoy playing into that stereotype with Lienor. What context justifies the two different kinds of behavior?
4. There are three male-female couples at the end of the story. Which one stands the greatest chance of having a successful marriage by the standards of medieval society? By the standards of modern society? Why?
5. Does Marcus, and the ministerial class in general (a group that earns upward mobility by loyal service, rather than by family ties, money, or physical might), have a modern equivalent?
6. Who is worse, Alphonse or Paul? Why? Compare their moral codes, or lack thereof. How does Marcus compare to either of them?
7. Marcus causes harm to Lienor and Willem, but he does it only reluctantly, and only to protect Isabel. Do his ends justify his means? What other course of action might he have taken? How sympathetic is he as a character?
8. Without Jouglet's influence, does Willem fulfill the traditional role of hero/protagonist? If so, how? If not, what about his behavior would have to change?
9. Imagine Willem in today's world. In what ways would he have to change to be as heroic to us today as the original Willem would have been 800 years ago? What does this say about the ways western society in general has changed?
10. Is Lienor's persona an inevitable result of her circumstances, or is she deliberately playing a role? Do modern women have an equivalent form of role-playing?
11. Would you rather be Lienor or Jeannette? Jeannette or Jouglet? Why?
12. At what point in the story do you think Konrad realizes the truth about Jouglet? Why does he not say anything until he is forced to?
13. How would you characterize the relationship between Jouglet and Lienor? Does Jouglet have a closer relationship to Willem or to Lienor?
14. Which character do you most and least admire, and why? (If you answered that you most admire Jouglet, then: *other* than Jouglet, whom do you most admire?)

Author Bio

Award-winning screenwriter Nicole Galland, more itinerant than some of her own characters, divides her time between the East and West Coasts. She is currently working on her third novel, set during the Fourth Crusade.