



Godiva

By Nicole Galland
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Introduction

In this richly imagined retelling of the story of Lady Godiva, Nicole Galland weaves a brilliantly-crafted adventure filled with courtly intrigue, deceit, back-stabbing, and romance. After all, well-behaved women rarely make history—or legend.

Questions for Discussion

1. Discuss Godiva's use of flirtation as a political tactic. Do you find this to be a positive or a negative trait? Why?
2. If you've addressed Question #1 from a 21st century vantage point, address it from the 11th century perspective, or vice versa. Is there a difference?
3. Discuss Godiva's friendship with Edgiva. They are quite critical of each other regarding their (significant) differences, but they retain a deep bond. What does each of them get out of it?
4. Have you ever been in a friendship with a similar dynamic? Which character did you more resemble?
5. Whom do you find the most and least sympathetic characters in the story? Why?
6. Consider the Land Ceremony ritual, which clearly blended paganism and Catholicism in the 11th century. Why do you think the Church rejected pagan elements over the following centuries? What aspects of paganism has Christianity retained? Why those elements and not others?
7. Do you agree with Godiva's decision to make the ride? Why or why not? 8. Have you ever found yourself similarly pushed into making a choice in a "no-win" situation? How did you decide what choice to make?
9. What decision about her future do you think Edgiva would have made if Godiva had not shown up at Leominster?
10. What do you think of Leofric's relationship with Godiva? Would he have shunned her if she had been excommunicated? Why or why not?
11. Godiva and Edgiva are fairly vocal about what changes they'd like to see in each other, but if each could change one thing about *herself*, what do you think it might be?

About the Author

Nicole Galland is the author of four previous novels: *The Fool's Tale*, *Revenge of the Rose*, *Crossed: A Tale of the Fourth Crusade* and *I, Iago*. After growing up on Martha's Vineyard and graduating with honors from Harvard, she divided most of the next 16 years between California and New York City before returning to the Vineyard to stay. During those 16 years she variously made her living in theatre, screenwriting, magazine publishing, grad-schooling, teaching, temping, and random other enterprises. She is the co-founder of Shakespeare for the Masses, a project that irreverently makes the Bard accessible to the Bardophobes of the world. She is married to actor Billy Meleady.