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About the Author

Rachel Bard had written eight nonfiction books before she took up historical fiction. To research the lives of her three queens, the author traveled to Spain, France, England, Cyprus, Sicily--the whole panorama of medieval Europe. So will you, as you follow their adventures. For a preview of possible candidates for future novels, see the biographies of a dozen medieval queens at her medieval queens website and place your vote. Rachel Bard currently lives on Vashon Island near Seattle.

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"A Reed in the Wind " follows the eventful life of Joanna, daughter of Henry II of England and his queen, Eleanor of Aquitaine. Her first adventure took her to Sicily, where through an arranged marriage she became the queen of King William the Good. She fell in love not only with her husband but also with the sunny island over which they reigned. Despite evil plots of her vengeful mother-in-law, threats from scheming courtiers, and personal tragedy, through pluck and good sense Joanna withstood it all. More challenges were to come. After William's untimely death, Joanna was cast adrift in the turbulence of twelfth-century Europe. Her brother Richard the Lionheart, now king of England, rescued her and took her with him on Crusade to the Holy Land. Here she narrowly escaped marriage to an infidel, the brother of the Crusaders' dread enemy, Saladin. Back in France, still mourning William, she unexpectedly found contentment, if not passionate love, in a second marriage, to Count Raymond of Toulouse. Still ahead: the joy of motherhood, the comforts of friendship--and the agonies of intrigue and betrayal. Where would she find the strength to withstand the buffetings of fate and come at last to a safe haven?

"A Reed in the Wind" is the third in Rachel Bard's trilogy about Plantagenet queens. The heroine of the first, "Queen Without a Country," was Berengaria, wed to Richard the Lionheart. The second, "Isabella: Queen Without a Conscience," examines the beauteous, controversial Isabella of Angouleme, queen of King John, Joanna's younger brother. To research these three queens, the author traveled to Spain, France, England, Cyprus, Sicily--and so will you, as you follow their adventures on Kindle.

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Most helpful customer reviews

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Not written with authenticity

By Historical Fiction Fan

There are many stories about Henry II and/or Eleanor of Aquitaine, as well as their sons Richard and John, but not about their daughters. I wanted to read this book because of the lesser known subject matter, but it was disappointing because of the writing. It just felt very artificial, and the characters were not written in a believable way most of the time. Words and speech patterns for the characters' dialogue is way too modern, and lacking any authenticity for the period. For example, none of the royals are addressed as anything but

"Queen [First Name]" or "King [First Name]" by everyone who speaks to them, including servants - they don't use "Your Grace" etc. when someone speaks to a Queen or King in this story. Joanna's monk tutor/companion even addresses her by her first name only - I don't believe that would ever happen, regardless of whether he knew her from her youngest days or not. There are also some common grammatical errors that ought to have been corrected in editing. Use of "insure" when it ought to have been "ensure" and other really common errors are really not excusable in published works. There is a lot of historical info, but it often just seems to be recited, rather than woven into the story. Overall, the book was just so-so, in my opinion, because of the lower quality writing.

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

A fascinating read!

By Barbara J. Roush

Though I have read several books on the Plantagenet kings, this was my first book about Joanna. What an interesting woman! Eleanor certainly had some interesting children. An excellent read!

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

Really good historical fiction!

By Second Child

This is a genuinely dramatic historical novel. The author is skillful in narrating the ups and downs of Joanna's life, making it difficult to Put the Book Down. Just as one problem is resolved, another comes along. Poor Joanna hardly had a minute to catch her breath between so many life-And-death situations. There is romance, warfare, royal banquets, births and deaths. This was not a dull period in history.

The characters are fully developed, well drawn. The narratives flow well and attention is given to landscape, clothing, interior decor, and the customs of the time. The author's dialogue, which is her own creation and not historical fact, is believable. I fully enjoyed this book and will look for more by Rachel Bard.

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