



## The Conquest

*Elizabeth Chadwick*

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## **The Conquest** Elizabeth Chadwick

The year is 1066 and the world is about to change. Suddenly life in England is going to be completely different, especially for Ailith, a young Saxon wife. It is the year in which she loses both her husband and young son, and the year in which the Normans come, not as friends, but in search of conquest. Ailith's grief and despair run so deep that she would have done away with herself and joined her husband and son if a handsome, womanizing Norman, Rolf de Brize, had not happened by in the nick of time. Feeling strangely responsible for the woman whose life he has saved, the normally unreliable Rolf installs Ailith as chatelaine of Ulverton, his English estate. Despite his wife and daughter in France, he and Ailith eventually fall in love and have a daughter, Julitta. But can love truly conquer all - even Rolf's wife's decision to take her rightful place as mistress of Ulverton, and Ailith's discovery of a betrayal at the Battle of Hastings that she can never forgive?

## **The Conquest Details**

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Author : Elizabeth Chadwick

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## From Reader Review The Conquest for online ebook

### Rebecca says

Elizabeth Chadwick never fails to impress. All the period details were great as usual, and this one was quite interesting as it told a multi-generational tale. I think it is probably one of my favourite of hers that I have read to date.

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### Graceann says

I have one bit of advice regarding reading Elizabeth Chadwick novels, especially in paperback. Do NOT read the back cover. Although I didn't realize it, most of the major plot points are given away in that tiny bit of description. It is a testament to Miss Chadwick's skill as a writer that I was still interested in how the story would unfold.

Ailith is happily married to an armourer in the days leading up to the Battle of Hastings. She is expecting a child, her brothers are huscarls to King Harold, and her life is largely peaceful. The Battle changes that, and has repercussions for generations to come.

Notwithstanding my warning regarding reading the back, there were numerous surprises in the book's 566 pages, and those were exciting to discover. I gave up a night's sleep in order to find out what would happen to Ailith, Julitta, and their various friends and family members. Chadwick writes in a way that seems plausible, but yet approachable, and I appreciated that. Reading about the change from Saxon to Norman leadership through the eyes of the women of the home is an excellent way to get an overview of the period.

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### MAP says

The Conquest follows 2 generations of families in England and Normandy during the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066.

Unfortunately, this book suffers from predictability. Early on, you figure out who the main couple is, then it's easy to figure out basically what everyone else is going to have to do. Which means you spend the last 300 pages or so just waiting for it to happen.

I will give Chadwick credit though, she does a good job of creating interesting, compelling, relatable female characters that still work within their time period. Too often in historical fiction, characters end up being anachronistic ("time travelers" who clearly have the values of the 20th/21st century but plopped into the past) in an attempt to make them relatable and likeable. Chadwick consistently avoids this pitfall and gives a good sense of historical background and context.

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### Misfit says

Unputdownable! Is that a word? If not it should be, at least when describing this author's books. The Conquest is really two books in one, telling the story of two generations as it opens shortly before the Norman invasion of 1066. Saxon housewife Ailith loses her husband, brothers and new born child and attempts to take her own life, but is stopped by womanizing Norman knight Rolf de Brize. To avoid the romantic attentions of a London Goldsmith, Ailith accepts Rolf's offer to serve as chatelaine at his castle and (of course) love follows and they have a daughter Julitta. Eventually the relationship deteriorates, not helped by the fact that Rolf has a wife and daughter in Normandy.

The second half of the book tells the story of their daughter Julitta, reunited with her father after years of separation and she has to see her beloved Benedict marry her half sister who loves the church more than she loves her husband. Caught up in the revelries of a May Day celebration the actions of Julitta and Benedict have far reaching consequences on everyone's lives and.....

I'm not telling anymore, you have to read for yourself. Needless to say that once I picked the book up (and this is the second time around) I just could not put it down, and as with all of this author's books the way she brings the medieval period to life in such a graceful and effortless way, be it the sights, sounds, smells, food, clothes and battles is just awesome. Although her books are becoming rare and hard to find in the US they are readily available through UK and Canada and well worth the cost and effort to do so. Five stars.

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### **Dominique says**

Ugh.

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### **PeterK B says**

OK, I am going to disagree this time, although I usually agree when a book gets a four or five star rating.

This historical fiction book starts out as a good read with a family in England and another in Normandy. Then, we have the battle (conquest of England). Loved it so far. But that's only the first 1/4 of the book. The rest is a soap opera of relationships starting, breaking up, etc. etc. etc. My wife might like that but to me it was just boring.

This author writes some books that are more exciting and suspenseful, but this is not one of them. Of course, I prefer historical fiction such as murder mysteries, so I may be biased. My preferred authors are Paul C. Doherty, Arianna Franklin, Ashley Gardner, Anne Perry, etc. etc.

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### **Gary says**

Beginning in 1065 and ending in 1088 , this book covers the Norman Conquest and its devastating effect on a young Saxon wife Ailith who befriends a Norman wine merchant's wife, Felice at a time when hostility is growing towards Normans in England

Ailith's two brothers are killed in the Battle of Hastings, her infant son dies and her husband is killed at William the Conqueror's coronation.

She tries to commit suicide but is stopped by Rold de Brize, a Norman merchant, and is taken to be paramour

of his holdings at Ulverton. Though he has a wife and child in Normandy His daughter by Ailith Julitte and Felice's son Bendict who up together but when Rolf's amorous adventures drive Ailith away, tragedy ensues and the trial and tribulations of the next generation begin, A well written book, quite compelling m which takes us from England of the Norman Conquest to Normandy and the Spain of El Cid If you like historical fiction , with a lot of romance and are not averse to some remarkable coincidences in the story line, tis will be right up your alley

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### **Susana says**

An incredible book, highly addictive, very recommendable. Historical fiction intriguing and enchanting. I was looking forward to reading more about William The Conqueror, never expected to find this jewel; related to the history of the conquest indirectly it affects its characters and the events in the plot. The story of Rolf and Ailith, leaves central stage to Julitta and Benedict, hoping against hope, seeing everything evolve in a thrilling, schilling manner, death lurks on the characters and one never knows how things are evolving or to what purpose. With geniality E.Chadwick leaves out facts we think we ought to know, but it turns out intentionally we are left in the dark, forced to keep reading to find out how everything disentangles and stretch out. I will re read this soon I believe. The narration is finely full of details that scape at first and everything is taken in through second reading, a third wouldn't go amiss. Well done! and in the end Julitta gets a happy ending! sorry for that, had to vent it. Fantastic book.

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### **Sharon Penman says**

This is very well-written story of the conquest of England by the Normans in 1066, and the impact it has upon two families, one Saxon, one Norman. Like all of Elizabeth's novels, it is meticulously researched. It has two passionate love stories, a solid grounding in the politics of the era, and a vivid depiction of the Battle of Hastings. I would definitely recommend it.

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### **Julie says**

Recently, I've been enjoying reading about the Norman Conquest of England in the late 11th century. I've read other Elizabeth Chadwick historical novels and was excited to see she had written one about The Conquest. Unfortunately, it isn't about the Conquest. It takes place during Conquest times, but it is strictly a romance book. I almost gave it 2-stars because I find romance books trite and boring, but settled on 3 stars due to Chadwick's excellent writing. It's not her fault that I expected history and got a bodice-ripper. I enjoyed the first half a lot, but had to force myself to finish the 2nd half, which was about the next generation.

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### **Parvathy says**

Historical fiction has always been my cup of tea and THE CONQUEST by Elizabeth Chadwick is no different. It has all the elements that are sure to make a good historical novel and such vivid and accurate

descriptions you can be sure that the author has done her homework before writing this book. I find it very difficult to imagine a era as old as 1066, let alone write about it and to write about such an era with such disarming accuracy is unnerving. Kudos!! to the author for delivering a nice dose of history to its readers without boring them out of there minds as some authors do. For a person who never before had any experience with horses I found myself very much interested in the horse trades going on at that time. The book got me interested in that part of English history which I did not have much experience but that to with a wonderful story backing it. The story takes us through two generations of women. It begins with Allith a young Saxon wife who has lost everything in the tides of change and finding comfort in the support of a married Norman horse trader Rolf. Eventually she falls in love with him and their story takes over the first part. The next part of the story is the story of their daughter Juillita, her love for her childhood friend Benedict, who is betrothed to her half sister Giselle. Her standing aside as she watches her true love get married to her half sister Giselle who loves God more than her husband. Her own marriage to her father's overseer's son. All these going on in the backdrop of a fight for power makes for an interesting story.

The only issue I had with the book was towards the end. For a person who considers predictability a sin in fiction I couldn't accept the authors intention to bring about a happy ending at the expense of characters whom I thought had much more potential. Instead of following the frequent path the author could have given the characters space to grow and mature to follow a different path other than what is expected of them. For most part the book is engaging, lacking its initial enthusiasm towards the end. But this flaw does not seem to do much damage in the overall scenario. Those interested in historical fiction should not let this one go

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## **Regan Walker says**

### Poignant Tale of Two Loves Set Against the William's Conquest of England

The story begins in 1065 (and continues through 1088), as Ailith, wife to Goldwin the Armorer, watches her younger teenage brothers serve the new English King Harold Godwinson as his bodyguards. Her husband makes them the Danish war axes, which they wield. But a storm is gathering as the Harald Hardrada, King of Norway and William, Duke of Normandy both seek to rule England. Rolf de Brize, a Norman horse breeder prepares his duke for war.

When the Conquest comes (Chadwick vividly describes the Battle of Hastings), Ailith's life is deeply affected. As she says to the married Rolf, who has more than a passing interest in her, "My brothers, my baby, my husband. What more is there to take?" Well there is more as she experiences betrayal that shakes her very world. I was deeply affected by it and reaching for the Kleenex box with nearly every scene.

Chadwick has created a compelling story that portrays the difference between a marriage of convenience and a marriage of the heart, personal stories set against the tumultuous events during and after the Conquest. Ailith is a wonderful heroine any woman can identify with and love. She is strong yet vulnerable to the man she loves though she never really possesses all of him. Rolf is a man who, while mature in many ways, takes his pleasure wherever he wants without regard to the consequences. He has two women—his insipid Norman wife and Ailith, his English mistress—and dozens more besides. He sees too late what his betrayal has cost Ailith and their child. And hence I must warn historical romance lovers that the story of Ailith's love for Rolf, which takes up most of the book, does not end well. Yet there is another story that follows, that of Ailith's daughter Julitta, which will give you the happy ending you are looking for.

Julitta, is a wonderful wild young woman with a spirit only a man of strong character could appreciate. And she finds him when she is only five—Benedict. Like her mother before her, Julitta is forced by circumstances and the whims of others to accept less than her heart's desire, which I have to say, pained me greatly.

The saga begins the year before the Conquest and continues for two decades as Chadwick weaves an intricate tale of the consequences of loyalties, the harsh revenge of William the Conqueror when the English do not bend to his will, lives disrupted and lost and a new legacy forged from the clash of two cultures. The characters are wonderfully drawn and the emotions powerful. The well written story reflects Chadwick's considerable research into the period.

The book kept me reading till the wee hours of the morning and has haunted my dreams since. Chadwick is a master of historical storytelling and she pulled my heartstrings on this one. It's a worthy story though at times a sad one.

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### **Denise says**

For me, a really good book is one that you can't wait to continue reading once you've started. Not so with this book. The plot meandered here and there, the characters were weak and the ending was predictable. I'm currently reading about the Anglo-Saxon period before and after the Battle of Hastings (1066) so I was very interested in reading this book but I felt disappointed afterwards. Every author will occasionally toss out a "not so great" book from time to time so I'll read another of this author's titles to give her a chance to redeem my interest.

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### **Krista Baetiong Tungol says**

The Conquest by Elizabeth Chadwick isn't as riveting as her other novels, and didn't get me into a serious dose of book hangover and 'fangirling' as was the case with her William Marshal series (I consider it a good thing because it only means I truly enjoyed reading it), primarily because I had expected her chief characters to be actual historical figures. Perhaps, Chadwick thought Duke William of Normandy wasn't charming a personality to portray, the same way that King John wasn't probably the kind of historical icon she'd be wanting to grace the center stage to when she created fictional Alexander and Monday as lead characters in The Champion. At any rate, I've become really accustomed to the author's writing style and laboriously-researched stories to ever pass up this read now.

This book is about love and second chances—and the premise that love can persevere even in the most tumultuous of times—with the Norman Conquest serving as the backdrop. While this is no bodice ripper novel, this is the first time I've read a Chadwick novel that devotes quite a number of pages on detailed intimacy. I've almost forgotten this was actually a Chadwick work if not for the book's meticulous portrayals of medieval life and customs, the battle in Hastings that ended the Saxon rule in England, and even the important attributes of a prized warhorse (which is central to the story since the protagonist Rolf de Brize is a horse breeder). She's indeed sent me off again to another magical tour of a bygone era with her plausible and creative description of life and love from that period (the 11th century), and I am truly impressed with the easy manner she could convey her characters' emotions to the readers.

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## Allie says

England & Normandy 1065-1088. I would consider The Conquest a historical romance but written just as well as her historical fiction. There are a few cameos of real historical figures (William the Conqueror, his sons and even someone I had to Wikipedia, Rodrigo Diaz de Bivar or "El Cid").

I loved the journey you are taken on in this book through England and Normandy. The book starts off with some real page turning events such as The Battle of Hastings and King Williams coronation. The MC Ailith, an Anglo-Saxon merchant's wife, loses her siblings, her husband and her child and doesn't see a purpose for her own life when at moment of extreme desparation she is saved by a good looking Norman horse trader. So a romance eventually blooms but complications are present from the beginning.

The book is split in two parts though and Ailith's unruly daughter, Julitta, takes center stage in the second half of the book with romance drama all her own. She is rebellious and seems as if no one will be able to "tame" her.

I loved all the details about the horses of the time and the trading between the European countries. It was refreshing for me to read a historical book that wasn't directly about the nobility and I enjoyed the romance and constant page turning drama. Elizabeth Chadwick always seems to write amazing characters and this book has multiple strong women who all have their desirable traits and flaws. The men are interesting too of course! I think the first part of the story was a little bit stronger than the second half, but still a great book!

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