



## Winter's Heat

*Denise Domning*

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Her years in a nunnery taught Rowena of Benfield many things, but not how to be a wife to the powerful lord who claimed her as his bride. She vows never to submit to this aloof and ruthless man who claims her.

Rannulf of Graistan has been a woman's fool once before and has sworn to never be again, but he cannot refuse the rich estate that this marriage brings him.

But a tide of treachery is rising around them and their only hope lays in daring to trust and to love unconditionally.

## **Winter's Heat Details**

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Author : Denise Domning

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## From Reader Review Winter's Heat for online ebook

### Melanie says

I guess in a way it was good. The first part was really engaging. Unfortunately I started reading the book at 11:00 pm night. I couldn't stay past 3:00 am and during my sleep my entire thoughts was on waking up early and finishing the book. Then came morning and there were times I just wanted to skip pages to get it with.

#### Good things

- 1)Historical details accurate or atleast I think it is
- 2)Nice story build up
- 3)Great heroine though unbelievable at times
- 4)Great vamp

#### Bad things

- 1)A frustrating hero
- 2)Overly long descriptions of stuff
- 3)Lot of misunderstanding
- 4>An incomplete end (OOH!!!!How I hate those things. If this was some kind of a tyrannical world and I was the tyrant in charge I would have made it a rule that all books ends with an epilogue series or no series))

I am a fan of married couple romance and if you go through my shelf you will see that those are exactly the kind of books I read. I make exceptions when the book is a second book in the series and I want to know more about the married couple. So there you have it this book is no different. There is this guy and a girl forced into marriage with girl wanting to be a nun and the guy burned too many times by women. Then the usual the girl can't hold her tongue the guy tries to distance himself because he feels the girl will hurt him (It is at times like this I think that I had enough of this genre)The girl hates that the guy uses her and casts her aside. All the people in the guy's keep and his brothers adore the girl. The rest lot of misunderstanding and a villainous sister by marriage of the guy trying to drive a wedge between them yadda ..yadda... Basically this is the story.

Now for the characters: The Guy was absolutely frustrating...and I mean really, even Clayton in Judith Mc Naught's Whitney My Love did not frustrate me this much. Atleast Clayton had something to go on but this guy just cooks up stuff in his head. Would it hurt him too much if he was atleast civil? Now the girl on the other hand is quite resourceful and strong. She gives as good she gets which is why I was surprised when she fell in love with the hero after all the insults and mistrusts he had heaped on her. Even he seemed surprised by it. The guy was married two times before because of which he is scared of another relationship. But there is not much said about the pain he suffered in either of the relationship because truth is the guy never loved either of his wives. All he feels is guilt which makes it difficult to understand his reaction to the heroine. The only thing said about his first marriage is that it was dull and boring. Nothing about how she died or how she made him suffer. The end was incomplete and that made me reduce another star for this book. But it is enjoyable for most part and wouldn't be a waste of time if you decide to give it a go.

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## **Regan Walker says**

### Classic Medieval Romance

Doming said she got the idea for this novel in a dream and then spent 12 years researching the medieval time period in which to set it and the novels that followed. It is the first in the Graistan Chronicles (see list below). I really enjoyed it and think she captured the time, though there is a bit less history than in some romance novels of the period.

It takes place in 1194, during the latter part of the reign of King Richard I. It tells the story of Rowena of Benfield, who at 21, was taken by her father from the abbey where she'd planned to spend her life to be wed to Rannulf FitzHenry, the powerful Lord of Graistan. Rannulf is a man with emotional baggage from a past betrayal and Rowena wants but does not expect his love. She is a masterful chatelaine and does his estate proud. While all come to love her, Rannulf treats her with disdain, holding himself back, presumably for fear of being betrayed once again.

I loved Rowena's strength and feisty attitude; but Rannulf was at times too mean. Yes, it was an arranged marriage and Rowena was determined to make it work, but how many times can you be publically cut by your husband and not want to leave him? When he finally came around, it was a dramatic change and I was still harboring bitter thoughts about him from his earlier actions toward his wife. (How we do get into these stories!) But this is romance so it all comes right in the end.

The story is interesting, the plot held my interest, and I can recommend it. I intend to read the others in the series. But for those of you history lovers, you may want to consider others I've recommended on my Best Medieval Romances list if you like deep history with your love stories.

The Graistan Chronicles:

WINTER'S HEAT (Rannulf and Rowena)  
SUMMER'S STORM (Temric and Philippa)  
SPRING'S FURY (Gilliam and Nicola)  
AUTUMN'S FLAME (Geoffrey and Elyssa)  
A LOVE FOR ALL SEASONS (Robert and Johanna)

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## **Melody says**

While I love historical fiction and appreciate that the author spent 12 years researching the period, her writing leaves something to be desired. The plot was simple and predictable. The number of grammatical and spelling errors was unacceptable.

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### **Melissa says**

Don't be fooled by the cover this is a bodice riper. I got to chapter 3 and had to put it down. Not a clean read like I thought. Just writing this for those that care.

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### **Maree Repa says**

Five Amazing Stars

Rowena 's Fate

I was absolutely thrilled to now read book one, The Graistan Chronicles By amazing new author, Denise Domning. I completely adored this next wonderful historical romance. I was excited to read this such beautiful tale indeed!

When Rowena of Benfield who has lived in the convent safe away from the rush of the outside world. She is again grabbed by the mean and angry man to take her go and meet the man he has chosen for her to struggle so marry. She is shocked to even think why he is making her. Rowena has no money. She doesn't think she is worth enough for a wealthy man to even want her.

Rowena is pushed into this awful situation and she fears and struggles as her father, John of Benfield becomes hostile to keep her quiet. She doesn't want anything do with this wedding to Rannulf, The Lord of Graistan. That is until her father then locks her up.

Rowena is now hurt. Her own family now doesn't even have a care in the world for her now.

I completely adored this magnificent. Most wonderful book. I completely adored its most amazing writing and I just loved all the marvellous characters throughout, This was one amazing book.

Congratulations Denise Domning!

\* I recommend this book to everyone!

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### **Shabby Girl ~ aka Lady Victoria says**

This book was recommended by Mary from the group I spend most of my time in with Goodreads, the Romance Refugees forum. I'm so glad she did. I enjoyed it a lot. This book was first published in 1994, so it's far from new, and I'm thinking 1994 was a pretty good year as so many books I've loved just happened to have been published in that year.

It's so hard to find a good medieval romance, so many of them set in that period don't follow life as it was then which takes away a lot of the enjoyment. This book, as far as I could tell, was pretty true to the times.

This book also has one of my favourite tropes, a marriage of convenience turning into true and deep love. It took most of the book for the H to realise he loved his wife, and there were many misunderstandings along

he way since the H was a bit of a dolt, but then it wouldn't be as enjoyable if everything went smoothly.

The h is a very strong woman, and this also contributed to my enjoyment of the story. There's no fluff involved with this h. I like that she took everything in her stride and moved on and did her best, even when things didn't go in her favour, but she didn't hold grudges and acknowledged her love in spite of the bad treatment given her by the H.

Okay, so I am looking forward to the next book, which is next on my list. I really want to read both Gilliam's and Temric's stories - both strong secondary characters in this story, and brothers of the H.

I recommend this book to anyone who loves medieval and historical romance as a well-written and enjoyable start to a series. And, joy, because it's written a while ago, all the books are available so no waiting involved. That's always a good thing, as I spend so much time waiting, waiting, waiting for books to come out.

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### **Misfit says**

**3/3/12. Kindle freebie today.** A redo of a 1997 romance.

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### **Candace says**

#### **Rowena and Rannulf**

John of Benfield strikes a contract with Lord Rannulf FitzHenry of Graiston for the hand of his daughter, Rowena of Benfield, in marriage. First Rannulf doesn't want to marry. Then he sees Rowena and changes his mind.

Rowena's first weeks at Graiston Keep are not easy. The Keep needs cleaning up and renovation. Rannulf doesn't acknowledge Rowena as the Lady Graiston. He treats her no better than a servant. She is constantly hurt, shamed and embarrassed. Rowena feels her marriage is doomed, yet she keeps reaching out to him and doing things for him. Is Rowena's marriage destined to be a loveless union? Can Rannulf let his guard down to reach for the love being offered?

I felt like the hurt, shame, embarrassment and grief at times dragged out in the middle of the story. Jealousies wreck troubles between the hero and heroine. Sir Gilliam (half brother), Temric (bastard brother) and Ilsa (servant) were secondary characters, who are relief characters that break up the tension. Sir Gilliam and Temric must have their own books. They are so well formed. I enjoyed this novel and would like to read more books by this author.

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### **Wendy, Lady Evelyn Quince says**

#### **Mini Review:**

A medieval romance that takes medieval life seriously is usually one I enjoy, but Winter's Heat fell a bit flat for me. Rowena is forced into marriage with Lord Rannulf of Graistan. After a quick consummation, Rannulf

leaves Rowena at his castle to deal with his surly servants, evil sister-in-law, Maeve, and young son.

After more than 30% into the book, I realized that the hero was nowhere to be found, and I was ok with that. I enjoyed reading about Rowena's attempts to turn Rannulf's pigsty into a liveable home. Unfortunately once Rannulf re-enters the picture, the book doesn't get better. Rannulf mistrusts his capable wife and only believes Maeve's ridiculous lies. This book reminded me of the worst of Johanna Lindsey's romances, with the hero and heroine bickering for no real reason, refusing to engage in basic communication and making lots of love even though they hate each other.

As this was Domning's first book, I'm willing to forgive the unsatisfying romance and read on to the next book in the Graistan series, as I did appreciate the historical authenticity. Hopefully the characterization and romance is better handled in her later works.

2 1/2 stars

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### **Sbuchler says**

Genre: Medieval Romance

I tend to avoid Medieval romances - the main characters (especially the heroine) usually have modern attitudes that make me gag in a medieval setting. This one was a very pleasant surprise. Rowena is a 12th century noblewoman... she may not want her marriage, and while she could refuse it, her father would only find someone else. Once married she undertakes the tasks of the lady of the manner with a will. The one sword-wielding girl in the book is regarded as the social pariah she is.

I don't know a lot about 12th century England - there were many instances of food or other details that made me wonder if they were correct, but nothing that I KNEW to be incorrect for the period. Such details have a tendency to jar me so much I can't get back into the story.

The story itself is a nice rendition of the love-after-marriage trope, and the issues that beset the pair are (imo) believably entrenched in the time. As the couple is married in the first chapter, there are sex scenes. These don't just "fade to black" but neither are they blow-by-blow accounts.

I think the real charm of this book is the supporting cast of characters. Both hero and heroine have pasts (although the reader is introduced to his far more, as the majority of the novel takes place on his estates) that are peopled. It's Rannulf's family - his half brothers and bastard son as well as his staff and hanger's on that give the story a rich texture (as well as providing the plot twists and turns).

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### **Anna Bowling says**

This book has been high on my "I really need to read that" list, since it first came out in the 90s. Too long to get to it, for sure, because so much of what I love about historical romance, in general, and medieval romance, in particular, came flooding back over me, very early in this book.

Do I believe Denise Domning spent a decade and change researching the era, after she first dreamed the

story? Yes, I do, and what a story it is, grounded in time and place, with two people who must earn their happy ending, and blaze a path for those whose stories follow. Highly recommended.

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### **Pamela(AllHoney) says**

This is the first in the Graistan Chronicles (or Seasons) series by Denise Domning. Rowena of Benfield is taken from the convent where she spent the last fourteen years of her life by her father. Circumstances have changed her fate and she is almost immediately married to Rannulf, Lord of Graistan. He then sends her on to Graistan and leaves to serve the king.

I originally read this and the following three in the series back in the 1990s when they were first published and I loved them. A few years ago I read them again and loved them still. The story took me to medieval England and I felt I was truly there. The story and characters were wonderfully developed. I have not yet read the fifth book in the series but I hope to someday. I would definitely recommend this to Historical Romance lovers who especially love the medieval setting.

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### **Mary B. says**

Yay! I love Medieval romances, and now that I've gotten through most of Patricia Ryan's back list, I'm happy to have found another author whose writing talents and historical knowledge I can appreciate. I love this book and all of its characters, and it was a good introduction to the world of this series.

I especially liked this heroine, because she was strong-willed and intelligent, and yet still behaved in a manner that was realistic for her time period.

I knew I was going to like her early on in the story when she said this:

*"I know nothing of being a wife, but have learned much about the running and maintenance of an estate. It may be that you will find my manner too straightforward for your tastes, but, my Lord, it is just that - my manner. Would that I die before I give up that part of me."*

This is a story about an arranged marriage between a very reluctant hero and heroine, that eventually becomes true love - one of my favorite themes in the romance genre. Right from the start these two characters had some hot chemistry, but it took time and patience for that to become anything more. In fact, their interactions at first are quite painful, and they clash in many ways. It's only until they begin to open up to one another that past hurts are revealed and subsequently begin to heal. At one point, my heart nearly broke as the hero wants to be close to his wife, he says *"What do we have servants for if you do all their work? Did you not just say you carried Graistan's good in your heart? Am I not Graistan? I have nothing to do and would greatly enjoy your company."*

Watching as the hero waffled between hard and soft, anger and pain, warrior and lover - it was very sweet, and totally endeared me to him.

Also, he says this at one point, *"By God's cock!"* which made me laugh out loud.

The historical detail is very well done, but it's so beautifully interwoven into the story that it never feels like you're reading anything but a novel. Highly recommend!

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### **Rabbit {Paint me like one of your 19th century gothic heroines!} says**

This isn't realistic at all, but I enjoyed it for what it is.

Feminism is a dirty word in this book. There was one kick-ass character named Nicola, who needs to call me. \*throws panties\*

Okay, I don't know what came over me there. \*clears throat\*

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### **Gerrie says**

This was a hard book to rate. There's so much about it that's really first rate. The author is a very good writer and story teller. And she has done her research. The book is set in England at the end of the 12th Century, and feels very authentic. I really love to see the history get equal time with romance in my historical romances, and I feel that here it certainly does.

This is an arranged marriage between Rowena and Rannulf. They're both nobility, and as is so typical of the period the marriage is for land and wealth. Rowena is a wonderful character. She's spent most of her life in a convent, where she was basically trained to someday run a convent herself. Her training has also instilled in her the confidence and belief that she can manage anything. Unusual for a woman of her time, she's also literate. That's why she's able to tackle Rannulf's dilapidated estate, turn it around, uncover fraud in the accounts, and have the servants obey and respect her. And it's believable. Also, while she's a competent, strong-willed person, she acts believably within the context of her times. She's no modern-day woman in medieval costume. While she may be a little too perfect, she's immensely likable and sympathetic.

The problem for me was the hero. He has decided he will never love again (which gets very old very fast), and his treatment of Rowena is just out-and-out cruel. The author tries to show us that Rannulf is really a kind and caring person and leader, but his behavior to Rowena just made him a jerk. And, he didn't listen to anyone. Not only Rowena, but his brothers and others close to him try to warn him of several situations time and again, and he won't even listen. He just shuts them out. Which of course leads to disaster. As one reviewer so accurately said, Rannulf is TSTL. I will always lower a rating when I dislike either the hero or heroine. Especially here where the hero is a first class jerk to the heroine, and won't take advice or information from anyone else. Although he ultimately recognizes that his behavior has been the catalyst for the catastrophes that occur, it only marginally improves him in my opinion.

I would give the book 4 stars for the good writing, the use of history, and a wonderful heroine. I would give it a 2 for the hero, so my rating is actually about a 3.5 stars. There was most certainly enough good things about this book that I intend to read the other books in the series.

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