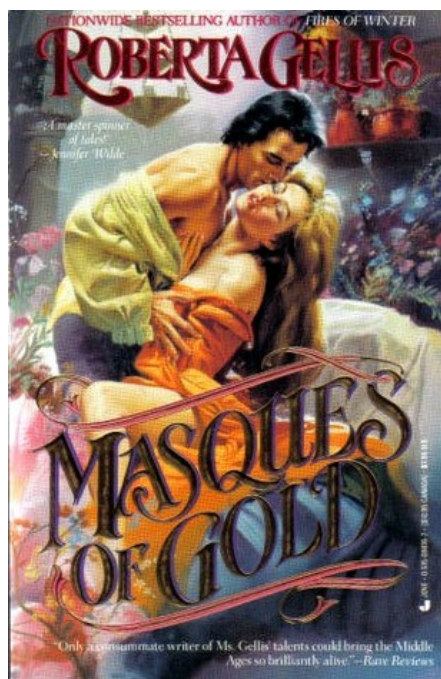




Masques of Gold

Roberta Gellis

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London's colorful marketplaces proclaimed the city's splendor and wealth--a golden prize disputed between King John's devouring greed...and the warrior barons who challenged his throne. From the flames of the bitter struggle came the men and women who dared to forge their own unique destinies...

Lissa de Flael

Willful, bold and beautiful, she as a burgher's daughter, married and widowed in a nobleman's cynical conspiracy of power. Yet her independent heart remained untouched--until one man fired her senses in a single glorious night of desire...

Sir Justin FitzAilwin

Wellborn and feared, the warden of London's peace in a ruthless age of war, he waged a desperate private struggle for Lissa's love--his life, his hope, his destiny.

Their joining was a shining, embattled alliance, menaced by an unseen enemy, yet fated by the passion that stirred deep within their souls.

Masques of Gold Details

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Author : Roberta Gellis

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From Reader Review Masques of Gold for online ebook

Tash says

3.5 stars

Reviewed for Booked Up . Stay tuned for the review to be posted on Booked Up's goodreads account and the Blog

Deb says

The year is 1214, and London has begun to relax There is a new Archbishop of Canterbury named Langton, King John is about to embark for war in France, and most of the barons have either gone home or are going with him, leaving the streets of London blissfully free of men at arms. The murder of an elderly goldsmith brings Sir Justin, head of the mayor's watch, to investigate the crime. Why was the man's body mutilated after death and then dumped in the doorway of his shop? Was this some sort of warning? At first, Justin suspects the young bride of six weeks, but then discovers that the man's sons have fled with all his gold and jewels and that the girl is the daughter of a shady apothecary whose marriage to the goldsmith seems to have been coerced out of her father somehow. As Lissa, the wife, and Sir Justin get to know each other, they find themselves strongly attracted. But Lissa will not marry Justin because she fears that her father has committed crimes that would reflect badly on Justin and when the man flees the city, claiming to be going north to do work for a powerful baron, with all of his stocks of rare spices, tally sticks and ready money, she is convinced that he had something to do with her husband's murder.

The story is intriguing, Lissa and Justin are delightful, and details about the medieval guild system, the reign of King John and the Hanseatic traders make this mystery almost like reading a history of early thirteenth century London.

NB: Despite the racy cover, this book is definitely NOT a bodice ripper!

Gail says

This one is about the head of the London watch and a female apothecary and spice merchant in the time leading up to Runnymede and the signing of the Magna Carta. From the point of view of the merchants of London rather than the angry barons. I have always liked the way Gellis blends history with romance.

Lorena says

This felt a little over-long, but the historical detail and feel were very good, as usual.

Misfit says

Lissa de Flael is in for the shock of her life when her husband Peter, an older London goldsmith, is found dead on her doorstep. His sons run away and Lissa is left dealing with the investigation into the murder by warden of the peace Sir Justin FizAilwin. Of course you know Justin is handsome and mightily attracted to the much younger widow - although he keeps his feelings at bay at first until he's satisfied Lissa had nothing to do with the murder. Or was it a murder? Why did Lissa's father who runs an apothecary's shop wed her off to a goldsmith where her great talents mixing herbs and potions would be of little use? What is the mysterious object everyone is breaking heads and houses apart to find? What does her father know about this object and to what ends will he go to obtain it?

Despite a pretty decent start and a nice relationship between the two (the misunderstandings were a lot less severe than you find in most of Gellis' books), the big mystery fell a bit flat at the end, as well as Lissa and Justin being worked into the events leading up to the Baron's rebellion and the signing of the Magna Carta and I found myself skimming quite a bit towards the end just to get it over with. I did enjoy reading about the merchants guilds and the inner workings of their businesses and society, it's rare these days to find something that's not wholly centered on the court and it's courtiers - and for that reason only would I recommend it. Otherwise, it's best left for die-hard Gellis fans only.

Oh, and don't let that cover fool you. Outside of a few sex scenes at tad bit on the purple prose side, it's pretty tame by today's comparison. Have to share my favorite quote though,

"The touch drove all but one desire, that one he had tried to resist, out of him. He lurched forward, but Lissa had already twisted under him, sliding her legs up around his hips, and guiding the blind but lively Cockrobin into the empty nest. His delight in being home again created a period of violent activity....."

(Cockrobin being the nickname for the hero's standing man)

My Book Addiction and More MBA says

MARQUES OF GOLD by Roberta Gellis is an interesting Medieval historical romance. A re-print of a 1998 release. It has treason, murder, romance, love, deception, betrayal, rebellion, and conspiracy. "Marques of Gold" is the story of a goldsmith who is found murdered, who made King John's "privy" seal, and made a fake one also, he and his co-conspirators plan to use against the King. Unknown to his bride, Lissa, of only six weeks, her "bride prize" could be the death of her. When Lissa's husband is left dead, probably tortured on her doorstep, enter Sir Justin, the alderman, who will soon be her protector. A fast paced story of intrigue, treason, passion, desire and betrayal that could change the history of England. A great read for anyone who enjoys suspense, intrigue, romance, Medieval England, historical events and love. Received for an honest review from Net Galley and the publisher. Details can be found at Sourcebooks Casablanca, an imprint of Sourcebooks, Inc, the author's website and My Book Addiction and More.

RATING: 4

HEAT RATING: MILD

REVIEWED BY: AprilR, My Book Addiction and More

Mimi says

I joke that there is a category of books called “Good Books with Bad Covers” – they are basic Historic Fiction that were given a bodice ripper cover for picking up Historical Romance readers. This book has a bodice ripper cover but does not fall into this category, as the cover leads you to exactly what you will get.

We meet our young heroine on the day that her recent and much-older groom, a goldsmith, is found murdered. In rushes our hero, a London city functionary who is sent to discover who committed the murder. Several steamy sex scenes, an enforced separation, and convenient removal of those who stand in the way allow our couple to ultimately unite and turn to deal with the background thread, the events that lead to King John’s signing of the Magna Carta, as it comes to the forefront.

For what the novel is, it is a pleasant read. It isn’t going to enhance your understanding of the Magna Carta or the Hanseatic League, but it will give you ample opportunity to roll your eyes at purple prose.

Marya says

Medieval, and lots of political and historical references, which may slow it down too much for some readers.

Blodeuedd Finland says

Useless facts to show that the author knows her stuff, just, they were unnecessary at that time. And I was so bored.

Katie says

Lowdown: don't look here for bodice-ripping.

4.5/5 stars (I decided to round down instead of up simply because I felt it didn't quite have the wow factor I like from my highest rating.)

Being a fan of Roberta Gellis's work, I was surprised that this book had a cover and description that would lead one to expect a bodice-ripper tale. After perusing the reviews, it seemed like maybe the lower ratings were due to whoever making that decision not doing her work a favor, considering the book's content is similar to her usual - romance plays a part in the story, but it's certainly not the focus.

Unlike her other historical romance series that I've read, this story focused more on the politics of the merchant and burgher classes in the events leading up to the Magna Carta rather than the nobility. I particularly found all of the details about guilds and women's rights in regards to property and money to be fascinating. I would say it's not my favorite of her work but still high in quality!

Laura says

Just arrived from USA through BM. This is not my type of book, sorry guys.

Marielle says

This book has a cover and a description that makes you think it is a historical romance of the bodice-ripping type, instead it's a historical fiction (obviously there's a love story in it too). In fact, it feels a bit like *World Without End* which also has a romance throughout the book, but I suppose since it was written by a guy it gets called historical fiction, while this one was written by a woman and thus must be a romance. Unlike *World Without End*, however, this book gets a bit bogged down by the politics and I find it a bit confusing. Also, every other character is named FitzSomething which further confuses things. I'm sure the plethora of Fitz names must be historically accurate but it's just adding to the problem of keeping track of secondary characters and their subplots.

At this point (halfway) I don't really understand why Lissa is so afraid of the consequences of marriage so I'm losing sympathy for her. She seems to think her beloved is incapable of deciding for himself whether he wishes to risk the political/career repercussions of a marriage. Also, she's afraid said repercussions will lead her lover to start resenting her and then hating her, but surely making him miserable by having him sneak around in the dark and watch her being courted by others would lead to the same place. Thus, I'm starting to think maybe her lover should move along. (view spoiler)

In the end, I think it was a pretty good book and I recommend it to historical fiction fans

Melanie says

I can't believe I never read this author! Where was I for the past twenty-so years? Well, I'm really glad that Roberta Gellis has decided to publish her back list in ebook format as I'm sure to stock up on some exceptional reads. If I am to 'abandon' my regency world, the book better be good, and this one was excellent!

This is a historical romance and mystery all wrapped up in one fascinating tale of pageantry in the 13th Century England during King John's reign. Lissa de Flael's goldsmith husband, Peter de Flael has been murdered and Sir Justin is assigned to investigate the crime.

The author clearly knows her craft and her research into this era has paid off as she paints us a picture of this long gone era filled with equal measure of merchants, barons and royalty of Medieval England.

From the first page to the last, the author never fails in holding my attention while I slowly become embroiled into the intrigue and mystery of the very interesting and engaging plot, but what fascinates the most is this authors prose and historical detail which brings the Medieval Age to life. Ms. Gellis leaves nothing to chance and revels in her telling of this era and its inhabitants; its daily routine; its politics and the overall workings of the society our hero and heroine come from and belong to.

If you're in a mood for character driven, suspense filled love story with medieval setting, I highly recommend this story. It truly will take your breath away!

ARC provided by NetGalley.

Strangeattractor says

A historical romance that has a subplot about the writing and signing of the Magna Carta, and the various political maneuverings that went on before it.

There were a few things that annoyed me about it, but overall I liked it. I don't usually like romance books written before 2000, because there is too much sexism, but this one was only mildly cringy. And the Magna Carta stuff makes up for it.

Dana Darr says

I wish that more authors would take their cue from Gellis. She creates a believable, compelling atmosphere and populates it with complex characters of unexpected depth. Her attention to research and detail places her work above any other genre author. Her fiction is as much an education as a recreational pleasure.
