



Gentle Warrior (Tapestry Romance)

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From *New York Times* bestselling author and queen of romance Julie Garwood comes this classic novel of a medieval lady who risks everything to win a champion's heart.

In feudal England, Elizabeth Montwright barely escaped the massacre that destroyed her family and exiled her from her ancestral castle. Bent on revenge, she rode again through the fortress gates, disguised as a peasant...to seek aid from Geoffrey Berkley, the powerful baron who had routed the murderers.

He heard her pleas, resisted her demands, and vowed to seduce his beautiful subject. Yet as Elizabeth fought the warrior's caresses, love flamed for this gallant man who must soon champion her cause...and capture her spirited heart.

Gentle Warrior (Tapestry Romance) Details

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Author : Julie Garwood

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Julianna says

Reviewed for THC Reviews

Gentle Warrior was Julie Garwood's first published romance from way back in 1985, and although I mostly enjoyed it, I would have to say that it showed some of her greenness as a writer. There are many of the trademark Garwood elements here such as a temperamental alpha hero who has a gentler side; a feisty, independent heroine; lots of spirited, humorous banter between the pair; and love scenes that were pretty steamy for the time period in which they were penned. However, the book is written in a style in which the points-of-view (POV) sometimes slip back and forth between various characters every few paragraphs within the same scene rather than there being longer passages in one person's POV and then having a scene break before switching to another character. I'm not sure if this is just an older style of writing that was more common in the 1980's or one of the signs of the author's inexperience, but for me, it was a little confusing and made it more difficult to get inside each character's head. In my opinion, it also gave the narrative a more passive tone that had a telling rather than showing feel to it. Additionally, there wasn't quite enough details in any area of the book to fully satisfy me.

As I mentioned, Geoffrey and Elizabeth are the typical Julie Garwood character stereotypes. Geoffrey is an intense, stubborn alpha warrior with a hot temper, but in the bedroom is usually quite gentle. Elizabeth is a brave and fiercely independent young woman who was taught more masculine pursuits such as hunting and riding by a father who longed for a son and didn't get one until later in life. Even though she isn't very good at more feminine things such as sewing and household maintenance, Elizabeth still had a tender side which made her more relatable to me. She witnessed her entire family, with the exception of her little brother, be massacred by greedy men who wanted her father's land, and is now hell-bent on seeking vengeance against them. Needless to say, Geoffrey and Elizabeth have a clash of both personalities and wills as they try to create a lasting, affectionate marriage. The moments where they are butting heads while trying to "teach" each other how to be a proper spouse, when each of them has a completely different idea of what that means, were quite funny. In fact, I would have to say that the largest part of this book was about them learning to compromise and come to terms with the other's inherent personality traits. Geoffrey could be rather arrogant at times which occasionally grated, but sometimes could lead to something endearing. I loved the scene in which he tells Elizabeth, "You are mine," and she says it right back to him. I didn't feel that the hero and heroine had as much depth as they could have, but overall, they were both pretty likable.

The one thing about the book that wasn't quite my cup of tea is that it is written more in the bodice-ripper style of the 1970's and 80's. While Geoffrey isn't exactly abusive like some heroes of that era in romance, he can get very intense and a couple of times he shook Elizabeth or pulled her hair in a way that was more than just a playful tug when he was angry. I'll allow though that on one of those occasions she had just confessed to doing something disobedient (although she had thought better of the idea and didn't fully go through with it), and then had followed that up with an act that scared the living daylights out of him even though it had a good outcome. The story simply had a healthy dose of a woman's subservient position to her husband which would seriously raise feminist hackles, but at the same time, it wasn't nearly as bad as some other bodice-ripper romances or the reality for women in the Middle Ages. So, overall, I guess I would say that it had a pretty good balance even if that part bugged me just a little bit.

Gentle Warrior had a few significant secondary characters that helped liven things up, mainly Geoffrey's gruff vassal and second in command, Roger, and Elizabeth's precocious little brother, Thomas, and grandfather, Elslow. I really enjoyed the easy relationship that Elizabeth had with Elslow and how he is the voice of reason for both her and her husband when they are being too stubborn. The romance in the book was

good, but not quite as strong as I've read in other novels. I think I simply have a preference for the relationship to solidify between the hero and heroine before they marry, or if for some reason a quick marriage is necessary, that they perhaps wait to consummate it. This way there is a slower build of sexual tension. In this story, everything happens right up front, leaving only their journey to figuring out that they have fallen in love somewhere along the way. All in all, *Gentle Warrior* was a pretty simple, uncomplicated romance (even the bad guys were dispatched with little fanfare which was somewhat disappointing), but in spite of its weaknesses managed to elicit enjoyment from me. I think it just simply falls into the category of a sweet, feel-good story that makes a nice comfort read.

Saly says

3.5 stars

Tracey says

I found it! I can't believe I found it. I've thought about this book now and then, wondering what it was. I was pretty sure it was Garwood, but I couldn't pin down the title till just now, with a pretty simple search on Google Books. (I do love Google Books.)

You see, a good while back (pre-Goodreads) I went to work and forgot to take a book with me. It was horrible. My break loomed, and I was anticipating a long, boring half hour staring at the vending machines, when a very kind, well-meaning lady from the other side of the room caught wind of my dilemma (honestly, I don't think I was audibly whimpering) (not yet) and offered me a romance novel she had with her. This one. I thought "well, hey, it's a medieval-y sort of a setting. It's 'an exquisite tender tale of love, adventure and passion'. How bad can it be?"

Oh, my silly, unsuspecting younger self. I found out how bad. If it had been my book it probably would have ended up embedded in that vending machine, but I couldn't hurl a book that didn't belong to me, even if that stellar first chapter did feature a woman allowing a "massive" hawk to land on her bare arm. I saw it coming, based on the buildup, but I thought "surely not". I mean - well, look:

A bird is going to grip whatever it lands on. With its talons. It kind of has to, so as not to, you know, fall off. I don't care if this idiot does have some kind of psychic link to her hawk (I think she did), it's *a bird*. Transitioning from motion to stillness. It will grab on. With its razor-sharp talons. Let's put it this way: after my break I faked a smile as I returned the book to its owner, and that night wrote a letter of protest to the author. I read about thirty pages, and it was a two-page letter.

That must be why this book has lingered in the outskirts of my memory after many mediocre (i.e., less horrendous) books have been completely forgotten. I was reminded of it by revisiting another romance novel review (note to self: really, don't try any more historical romances unless they've been thoroughly vetted first), and on a whim tried that Google search: "hawk landed on her bare arm", was what I typed. Lo and behold.

"...raised her right arm until it was stretched taut [stretched taut??] just slightly above her slender waist. ... The hawk had landed on her bare arm, but she did not flinch from either his weight or his touch. [How about those talons, though?] His jagged claws [They're talons, not claws, and "jagged" is not synonymous with

"sharp"] [Merriam Webster: "having a sharp, uneven edge or surface"] were blade sharp, yet she wore no glove..."

Even without the sheer idiocy of this and whatever else I wrote about in that letter (and it wasn't just this; I recall I had a lot of issues with those first chapters) ... Just looking at what's available on Google Books ... Good *lord* is the writing shocking. I begin to wonder if the book originated in another language and was incompetently translated; that would explain it. I'm surprised I made it the whole half hour of my lunch break. And that the letter was only two pages.

UniquelyMoi ~ BlithelyBookish says

Yet another winner by Julie Garwood!

Summary

As with all of her historical romances, we have strong, arrogant, hunky heroes who know all there is to know about... well, about everything. Or so Baron Geoffrey Berkley thinks.

Enter Elizabeth Montwright, a woman as equally sure of herself and set in her ways. Having survived the massacre of her family and being exiled from her family's castle, Elizabeth makes it her mission to gain revenge on the man who destroyed her family and regain possession of her ancestral home.

When Geoffrey sees Elizabeth, he vows to make her his. It doesn't take long and the two are wed, and now the real battle begins.

My thoughts on the characters

While I really enjoyed this books, Geoffrey is one of the more frustrating characters I have found in Julie Garwood's novels. He is loud - constantly yelling at Elizabeth, and insensitive - repeatedly saying demeaning things to her, intentionally to hurt her and to force her to see things his way. That got very old by the time he saw the light, a mere 40 pages before the book ended.

Elizabeth was a patient soul. I think I would have packed up and left somewhere around page 82. But then there wouldn't have been a story!

I liked her gumption and her devotion to her family.

The writing

Something interesting about this book that I had never really noticed before, and something that made it a little more difficult to read than most of Garwood's novels, was the way she wrote the characters' silent thoughts.

Most authors will make it clear that a character is thinking something, perhaps putting their thoughts in italics, so you know what is going on in their head. In this book, however, Garwood didn't do that and it made for some confusing reading. Many, many times I had to go back and re-read to see what was thought and what was actual dialogue. While it shouldn't be a big deal, it came across as "unpolished writing" to me.

Bottom line:

I really love all of Garwood's historicals and while this is not a favorite read, it was still good!

Pamela(AllHoney) says

Gentle Warrior was Julie Garwood's first published book and set in Medieval England. Elizabeth Montwright witnesses the massacre of her family. Only she and her brother survives. Baron Geoffrey Berkley has come to find the murderers and bring them to justice.

One of those books I've read numerous times and I haven't gotten tired of it yet. It's not my most favorite Garwood book but I still love it.

ShoSho says

The audiobook was fun! I was laughing for most of the book ,narrator's voice for Geoffrey was the funniest thing!

Steven Walle says

The is a romance novel set in England in the year of 1086. It is a story of a strong, fierce warrior who rules over his knights and family with an iron hand, but he is a very gentle and tender lover towards his Wife. His Wife is a very strong willed lady who carries a dagger in her hand and one concealed beneath her skirts.

It has some very tender moments between the lovers and some very harsh scenes in war.

I recommend this book to all.

Enjoy and Be Blessed.

Diamond

Becky says

This is my second Garwood romance read in less than a week. This is unheard of for me... I very, very rarely read romance, but as I'm participating in a blog activity with a friend, I'm going for it and reading 5 of them this month.

I read this one in place of a different one that my friend had sent me, because that one was about rippling abs in kilts and the Garwood I just read featured the same theme... sort of. So I went for something a little different and went for Feudal England over Scotland.

Other than those differences though, there was a LOT that was similar in this book. Having read the newer of the two, *The Bride*, first (although I didn't know it at the time), this book felt a bit shallow. Neither one was really plumbing the depths of humanity, although they certainly went for SOME sort of depth-plumbing, ha

ha ha. The characters here didn't really have the same spark that they had in *The Bride*, and after finishing the book and thinking back on them both, I can really see the difference and improvement in the writing and characterizations in just the four years that separated these.

Elizabeth is very, very much like Jamie from *The Bride*. Both are spirited, skilled in ways that women usually weren't way back then, such as hunting and use of weaponry and defense. They both have problems with authority, both have knowledge of healing, both caretakers of their family, both beloved youngest daughters, etc. I could go on. But in truth, Jamie just had something MORE. I didn't really understand a lot of Elizabeth's reasoning and logic or her actions. She just seemed contradictory to me. But they were very similar in exterior facets... probably their most striking similarity is the fact that they are both innate sex-goddesses. Their first time brings out the cougar in them both, which is just unrealistic. Maybe Garwood is a few years past her first time at the rodeo, or maybe she's just really enthusiastically romantic, but let me clarify: It hurts. Virginal women don't go from "OMG WHAT THE HELL DID YOU STICK IN THERE?! A BASEBALL BAT? GET IT OUT! GET IT OUT!" to "I know! Let's see if we can get a table leg in too, dear. That'll be fun!" in the span of 5 minutes. Yet both of these girls did. Like I said, unrealistic.

More similarities abound in the male side of the relationship. Big, hulking menfolk, who are just gentle giants and don't realize that they love their little wifey until they almost lose her 567,118 times because she's such a little uncontrollable firecracker. These men have no subtlety when it comes to the horizontal mambo. True, they aren't **just** "Wham, Bam, Thank You, Ma'am" guys, they each make sure that she gets hers too, but the actual deed consists of much whamming and much bamming. Which is fine, but again... virgins and the recently deflowered don't like this tactic in real life.

One thing that the guys do have going for them in the sexy-time realm is their willingness and enthusiasm to please. This book had quite a few trips downtown, and while that sounds fun, it was actually quite a bit like a paint by number... 1-brown: play with boobies, 2-beige: tongue action on boobies, 3-off white: kisses down the belly, 4-green: circle navel with tongue, 5-blue: VICTORY!
(That picture makes a puppy frolicking in the grass under a blue sky.)

These complaints don't mean that I didn't enjoy the story... I did for the most part, and there was one part that really tugged at my heart, so despite the predictability of the story and the characters and the sex, I still liked it. I can't say that I would really recommend it, because I'm sure that there is better out there in this type, but it's not terrible.

Well, except for when Garwood refers to Elizabeth's mare as "him". I cringed a bit at that, I admit.

Juliana Philippa says

Another great Garwood romance with a fantastic cast of characters, though hero was a little too much at times

Setting: 1086, England

Gentle Warrior is another great Julie Garwood medieval romance. I had to give it four stars instead of 4.5 or 5 because at times the hero, Geoffrey, was a little *too* caveman-like for me. Actually, it wasn't even really caveman-like - he was just too forceful, angry, badly tempered. Overall, he was generally a good hero though, and the other cast of characters was absolutely terrific. The subplot (was kind of a mystery, but not really) was interesting and as it was central to the plot and how the story develops, it didn't feel like an add-on and detractor from the romance. The resolving it was *completely* anti-climactic - twice you feel like you'll

get some big to-do ... and then don't. Still a good read, though, that any Garwood and/or medieval historical romance fan should at least check-out from the library.

THE HERO, Geoffrey (27)

What bothered me about Geoffrey were his actions and thoughts that seemed to be relics of the 80s historical romance heroes, though to be clear there are *traces* of this - not the full-fledged real thing: there are no rape scenes that are supposed to pass as love scenes and Geoffrey never hits Elizabeth nor is he ever physically threatening/cruel, so don't worry about that; if any of those things had happened, regardless of what else was in the book it would have earned an automatic one star from me (or 0 if that was possible). The book was originally published in 1990, though, and I think that's why this hero is so much more borderline than Garwood's other heroes that were written later.

Basically, Geoffrey was a little too ... warrior-like. I know he's this big, bad knight, but normally Garwood's trademark heroes are big, bad warriors - who fall under the spell of some gentle courageous woman and become big teddy bears who can still be warriors in battle. Geoffrey took a little too long (IMHO) to show his teddy-bear side and in the beginning, I wasn't even sure I was going to be able to warm up to him at all - he is so dictatorial, so authoritative, and practically a tyrant ... yeah, basically nothing very romantic, dreamy, or sigh-inspiring.

There are many humorous moments, however, when Geoffrey and Elizabeth clash and as readers we are able to enjoy them all the more since we're privy to both of their thoughts. It's sweet - and at times quite funny - to watch their relationship develop: the confusion they feel over their feelings for one another, the teasing that quickly develops between them, and the battle of wills that takes place between these two strong and stubborn people.

THE HEROINE, Elizabeth

Elizabeth is a standard Garwood heroine - she's strong, courageous/brave, intelligent, gentle, compassionate, affectionate, friendly. One minute she'll be saving her husband's vassal with her bow and arrow and then by jumping into a lake even though she can't swim, and the next she'll be hiding her tears from her husband because he's being gruff or shouting at her or acts somewhat meanly in an attempt to avoid the fact that he's in love with her. Basically: standard Garwood.

Elizabeth isn't too weepy though, and considering that when we first meet her she has recently witnessed the massacre of her entire family (save her baby brother), one can't help but feel admiration for how she acts and the inner strength she displays. Instead of being completely despondent, as would be wholly understandable, she's intent on avenging her family and taking revenge on the man responsible for their deaths, while also doing her best to protect her younger brother, who is in danger since he's the heir to their father's holding and was one of the intended targets of the massacre.

OTHER CHARACTERS

Garwood rounds out her cast of characters with her usual wonderful additions - the hero's soldiers, whom we like almost immediately and treasure for their kindness to the heroine. There is also Geoffrey's vassal, Roger, who adds humor and gentleness to many scenes. Elizabeth's grandfather, Elslow, was absolutely wonderful and I'd be surprised to meet a reader who wouldn't want a grandfather like him - he's funny, witty, so sweet and gruffly affectionate with Elizabeth and her younger brother, and just all around fantastic.

BOTTOM LINE

Overall, *Gentle Warrior* was a very enjoyable - and often laugh-out-loud humorous - read that I would definitely recommend. Despite my annoyances with Geoffrey, the hero, it will be added to my reread shelf and should not be missed by medieval historical romance fans.

OTHER JULIE GARWOOD BOOKS

Other great medieval historical romances of hers include Honor's Splendour (one of my favorite historical romances of all-time) and The Prize. Garwood also has a wonderful Regency series, "Crown's Spies": (1) The Lion's Lady; (2) Guardian Angel; (3) The Gift (another one of my all-time favorites); and (4) Castles.

(Blogspot, "Historical Romance Heaven")

Libby Harrison says

I love the strength of the heroines in Garwood's romances and I loved the heroes cluelessness of her strength!

Meret Punk says

2.5 stars (:

Well, this was a massive disappointment..

I enjoyed my previous reads for Julie Garwood so much, that I had huge expectations for this one..

I didnt really like this book, I dont even know why..

It wasnt interesting at all):

Sorry..

Chitra *CJ* says

After reading all of JGs historicals, and being in love with every single one of them.. this left me a bit disappointed.

Maybe if I hadn't read her other books, I'd have found Geoffrey's yelling and shaking acceptable.

Maybe if I hadn't read the strong heroines she wrote, I'd have found Elizabeth's crying and surrendering sweet.

But I have, and so my expectations were a little high, and easily crushed.

Personal rant

He was my least fav of all Garwood heroes. He was highly non understanding, always threatening to beat her and nothing like the tender warriors I'm used to. The heroine lacked the spunk.

Anyways, it was an overall average read. I am only disappointed because the same author gave me Alec and Broderick! And they are top 3 on my book husbands!

Safe read

3/5

Jessica says

1.5 stars

So I decided to go on a Julie Garwood glom, starting with books I haven't read or have only read once. This falls into the read once and never re-read category and I now remember why.

It's her debut novel, and you can kind of tell that Garwood hasn't yet hit her stride as a writer in that she doesn't have her characteristic fluffy tone in this one. It does have an overuse of the description "contradiction" that she still tends to bestow on her heroes and heroines. It also makes use of the spunky ingenue of a heroine and more experienced hero-with-issues standard.

Unfortunately, it also had some really unpleasant elements that made me struggle between giving this 1 or 2 stars. The first big problem I had were the jokes about domestic violence. Given that those jokes, whether made by the heroine's grandfather, husband, or herself, are interspersed with the heroine's fear that they're actually threats, makes them really not funny. (view spoiler) They also made the romance kind of squicky.

There's also the homophobia. Even taking into account the medieval setting and the time the book was written (c1985, hello Reagan years), it doesn't add anything to the book. I mean, the villain conspired to kill the heroine's parents. Making him gay, fat, and slovenly and treating those all as moral failings equivalent to murder is uncool, unnecessary and, frankly, lazy character building/plotting. There's another villain who actually is way more villainous in my opinion, but it seems like, since he's straight, he gets less screen time.

Eh, I don't know. I still have really fond memories of some of her later historicals so I'll keep with this glom. I just hope my lack of memory about some of those yuckier elements means she dropped them from her list of standard tropes.

Feminista says

I have been wanting to read this for a long time, but I was a bit underwhelmed.

KatieV says

Really more like a 2.5, but I'll round up. I think part of the dissatisfaction comes from my not being thrilled with the narrator.

This was Garwood's first book from 1985. You can tell she hasn't quite hit her stride. She dabbles a bit in the style of the time. The hero shakes the heroine and pulls her hair a few times. There's no forced seduction or rape, but if I hadn't gone in knowing this was a Garwood book and what to expect, I may have expected it to happen. I personally enjoy some of the old bodice rippers, but not every writer's style is compatible.

You can see the beginnings of her trademark humorous battle of the sexes, but as I stated before, you can tell she hasn't quite hit her stride.

The content/resolution with the villains isn't quite satisfying. Garwood glosses over those moments more than usual.

Enjoyable for a rainy day, but not on the level with her later historicals such as her Highlander novels.
