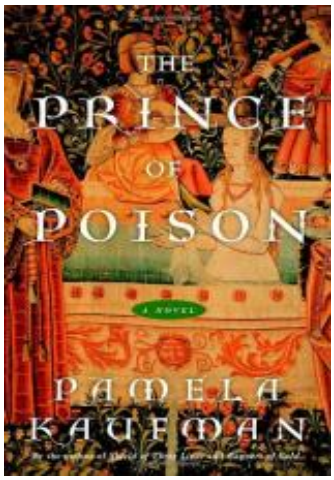
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The Prince of Poison

by Pamela Kaufman



About the Book

For decades, Pamela Kaufman has entertained a loyal readership with the mesmerizing and often hilarious adventures of Alix of Wanthwaite, madcap medieval beauty. In *Shield of Three Lions*, the unflappable Alix braved the crusades dressed as a man to spar with the king of England over her birthright. *Banners of Gold* saw her taken hostage, drawn into a web of international politics, and entangled in the heartstrings of three different men. Now, **The Prince of Poison** finds Alix homeward bound at last, with a half-royal child in tow and an angry monarch on her trail.

Discussion Guide

1. Much of the action in the novel occurs at the intersection of humor and violence. The attempted rape in the novel?s opening pages is dotted with puns, for example, and the horror of the shipwreck on page 85 is mitigated by the comedy of Alix resuscitating ducks. How does this affect your reading of the many tragedies in the novel, from Bok?s decapitation to the murder of the pregnant woman at the gates of La Rochelle to the rape of various barons? wives and daughters? What point is the author making with this juxtaposition?

2. Of her infant son, Alix states, ?I was deliriously happy to be loved without ulterior motive? (page 42). What ulterior motives drive Enoch, Bonel, and John in loving (or thinking they love) her?

3. Who leaks the news of Alix?s presence in Rouen? Why does Queen Eleanor have a vested interest in helping Alix and Theo escape? Given their complex history, why does Alix trust Eleanor this time?

4. What is the symbolic significance of the poison frog that Alix nearly strokes on her way home to Wanthwaite? Why does the image recur when Alix arrives in King?s Lynn? Why does Alix initially pretend to lose the little girl?s frog rather than tell her the truth about its dangers? What does this tragic scene on the beach signify?

5. How does Lord Robert convince the Pope that the assassination attempt on John was not only innocent and thus pardonable, but in fact laudable?

6. What does Cardinal Langton stand to gain by assisting the barons? What argument does he present against the writing of a charter? How does he sabotage the Magna Carta they so painstakingly compile?

7. Why has Bonel?s ardor cooled by his second night at Wanthwaite? Why does he refuse Alix?s offer of private acreage on Wanthwaite as a safe haven?

8. What bargaining chip does Alix gain over Queen Isabella? What weakness does it expose in John?

9. What does Bonel mean when he tells the assembly of barons: ?I mean no disparagement when I say that we are all Jews together? (page 250). How does his comment affect Enoch?

Author Bio

Pamela Kaufman, Ph.D., created the Communications Department at Santa Monica College. She is the author of *The Book of Eleanor*, as well as *Shield of Three Lions* and *Banners of Gold*, books one and two of the bestselling Alix of Wanthwaite trilogy. She lives in Los Angeles.

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