

## The Art and Rules of Courtly Love

*The Art of Courtly Love* was written by Andreas Capellanus (Andre the Chaplain) at the request of Countess Marie of Troyes, daughter of Eleanor of Aquitaine. It is believed to describe Queen Eleanor's court at Poitiers (1170–1174), but was probably written several years after that. *The Art of Courtly Love* was originally written in Latin. Although once thought to be a serious instructional book, many now think it was created in a satirical vein. However, it still demonstrates the popularity of these ideals in courtly society.

Eleanor's real life was much like these types of romances. As Duchess of Aquitaine, she married Louis, the king of France, when she was young, and later Henry II, before he became king of England. When her marriage to Henry became strained, she and her daughter Marie created a court where liberal and literary ideas were discussed, and where troubadours and artists made music and other kinds of entertainment.

Eleanor and Marie created a set of manners that became the standard of chivalrous behavior for knights of the time. They held "courts of love" where they would test the behavior of lovers to see if they held up to the standards set in Capellanus' writings. Strong-minded Marie and Eleanor believed that wo men should have love in their lives, and not merely settle for the marriages of convenience that were typical at the time. These ideas have certainly influenced the concept of romance throughout the ages.

Read the excerpt below from Capellanus' book, *The Art of Courtly Love*. Do you agree with the rules he claims are true? Discuss as a class.

### ***De Arte Honeste Amandi [The Art of Courtly Love], Book Two: On the Rules of Love***

1. Marriage is no real excuse for not loving.
2. He who is not jealous cannot love.
3. No one can be bound by a double love.
4. It is well known that love is always increasing or decreasing.
5. That which a lover takes against his will of his beloved has no relish.
6. Boys do not love until they arrive at the age of maturity.
7. When one lover dies, a widowhood of two years is required of the survivor.
8. No one should be deprived of love without the very best of reasons.
9. No one can love unless he is impelled by the persuasion of love.
10. Love is always a stranger in the home of avarice.
11. It is not proper to love any woman whom one should be ashamed to seek to marry.
12. A true lover does not desire to embrace in love anyone except his beloved.
13. When made public love rarely endures.
14. The easy attainment of love makes it of little value; difficulty of attainment makes it prized.
15. Every lover regularly turns pale in the presence of his beloved.
16. When a lover suddenly catches sight of his beloved his heart palpitates.
17. A new love puts to flight an old one.
18. Good character alone makes any man worthy of love.
19. If love diminishes, it quickly fails and rarely revives.
20. A man in love is always apprehensive.
21. Real jealousy always increases the feeling of love.
22. Jealousy, and therefore love, are increased when one suspects his beloved.
23. He whom the thought of love vexes, eats and sleeps very little.
24. Every act of a lover ends with in the thought of his beloved.
25. A true lover considers nothing good except what he thinks will please his beloved.
26. Love can deny nothing to love.
27. A lover can never have enough of the solaces of his beloved.

28. A slight presumption causes a lover to suspect his beloved.
29. A man who is vexed by too much passion usually does not love.
30. A true lover is constantly and without intermission possessed by the thought of his beloved.
31. Nothing forbids one woman being loved by two men or one man by two women.

**Online Source:** <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/capellanus.html>

**Print Source:** Capellanus, Andreas. *The Art of Courtly Love*. translated and edited by John Jay Parry, New York: Columbia University Press, 1989, p. 81.

**Additional Sources:**

Web sites Describing Courtly Love

- Backgrounds to Romance: "Courtly Love"  
<Http://www.cla.calpoly.edu/~dschwart/engl513/courtly/courtly.htm>
- Images of Courtly Love in Art  
<http://www.cla.calpoly.edu/~dschwart/engl513/courtly/images.htm>
- Tristan and Isolde  
<http://www.legends.dm.net/kingarthur/tristan.html>