**Courtly Love**

The romance of Courtly Love practised during the Middle Ages was combined with the Code of Chivalry. There were strict rules of courtly love and the art of courtly love was practised by the members of the courts across Europe during the Middle Ages. The romance, rules and art of courtly love allowed knights and ladies to show their admiration regardless of their marital state. It was a common occurrence for a married lady to give a token to a knight of her choice to be worn during a Medieval tournament. There were rules which governed courtly love but sometimes the parties, who started their relationship with such elements of courtly love, would become deeply involved. A famous example of a relationship which was stirred by romantic courtly love and romance is described in the Legend of King Arthur, where his Queen, Guinevere fell in love with Sir Lancelot. Many illicit court romances were fuelled by the practise and art of courtly love.

**The Origins of Courtly Love**

The origins of Courtly Love were believed to be in Aquitaine in France in the 12th century and spread to other European countries. The art of courtly love was practised in English courts from the 1300's to the 1500's. During this period of time marriages were arranged and had little to do with love. A successful marriage was perceived as one that brought material advantages to the participants and their families. As love was clearly unrelated to marriage the requirement for romance could be gained outside marriage - as long as the rules relating to chastity and fidelity were strictly adhered to.

**The Rules of Courtly Love**

The violence and wars of the Middle Ages were tempered by the Rules of Courtly Love. The following rules and elements of Courtly Love during the Middle Ages were written by the 12th Century Frenchman, Andreas Capellanus:

- Marriage is no real excuse for not loving
- He who is not jealous, cannot love
- No one can be bound by a double love
- It is well known that love is always increasing or decreasing
- That which a lover takes against the will of his beloved has no relish
- Boys do not love until they arrive at the age of maturity
- When one lover dies, a widowhood of two years is required of the survivor
- No one should be deprived of love without the very best of reasons
- No one can love unless he is impelled by the persuasion of love
- Love is always a stranger in the home of avarice
- It is not proper to love any woman whom one would be ashamed to seek to marry
- A true lover does not desire to embrace in love anyone except his beloved
- When made public love rarely endures
- The easy attainment of love makes it of little value; difficulty of attainment makes it prized
- Every lover regularly turns pale in the presence of his beloved
- When a lover suddenly catches sight of his beloved, his heart palpitates
- A new love puts to flight an old one
- Good character alone makes any man worthy of love
- If love diminishes, it quickly fails and rarely revives
- A man in love is always apprehensive
- Real jealousy always increases the feeling of love
- Jealousy, and therefore love, are increased when one suspects his beloved
- He whom the thought of love vexes eats and sleeps very little
- Every act of a lover ends in the thought of his beloved
- A true lover considers nothing good except what he thinks will please his beloved
- Love can deny nothing to love
- A lover can never have enough of the solaces of his beloved
- A slight presumption causes a lover to suspect his beloved
- A man who is vexed by too much passion usually does not love
- A true lover is constantly and without intermission possessed by the thought of his beloved
- Nothing forbids one woman being loved by two men or one man by two women

The above rules of Courtly love demonstrate how playing this game could lead to all kinds of problems within the court circle.

**Courtly Love Poems and Songs**
The ideals of courtly love was publicised in the poems, ballads, writings and literary works of various authors of the Middle Ages. Geoffrey Chaucer, the most famous author of the Middle Ages, wrote stories about courtly love in his book Canterbury Tales. The Miller’s Tale describes the art of courtly love. Geoffrey Chaucer exhibited courtly love for the beautiful Blanche, the wife of John of Gaunt. Whereas his marriage to Phillippa de Roet was seen as a good but practical match. The wandering minstrels and troubadours of the Middle Ages sang ballads about courtly love and were expected to memorize the words of long poems describing the valour and the code of chivalry followed by the Medieval knights. The Dark Age myths of Arthurian Legends featuring King Arthur, Camelot and the Knights of the Round Table further strengthen the idea of a Knights Code of Chivalry and Courtly Love.
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Each section of this Middle Ages website addresses all topics and provides interesting facts and information about these great people and events in bygone Medieval times including Courtly Love. The Sitemap provides full details of all of the information and facts provided about the fascinating subject of the Middle Ages!

Courtly Love

- Interesting Facts and information about Courtly Love in the Middle Ages
- The Origins of Courtly Love
- The Art of Courtly Love
- Courtly Love Poems and Songs
- The Rules of Courtly Love Ages
- Courtly Love