



The Secret of the Rose

Sarah L. Thomson

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Do you have a secret about yourself? Rosalind Archer does. Plenty of them. In this spy thriller, based in London in 1592, fourteen-year-old Rosalind disguises herself as a boy, hides her Catholic religion, then finds a job as Christopher Marlowe's scribe.

But it's not that easy. Rosalind - now Richard - knows that her enigmatic new master also has things to hide. She is unnerved by his manner and the mysterious goings-on in his life. Marlowe is not only a poet and a playwright, he's also a spy, and he's coming very close to learning Rosalind's own closely guarded secrets. To add to her troubles, Rosalind thinks she's falling in love with the costumer's apprentice at the Rose, but how can she explain that to a boy who knows her only as Richard? And when Christopher Marlowe is murdered, Rosalind must reinvent herself once more.

Filled with vivid descriptions of Elizabethan England, Sarah L. Thomson's The Secret of the Rose is part espionage thriller, part historical novel, and a wholly engaging page-turner.

The Secret of the Rose Details

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Author : Sarah L. Thomson

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From Reader Review The Secret of the Rose for online ebook

Michelle says

I don't like books where the characters speak in dialect.

I also find that since getting an ereader I read more but I also have less patience for books that don't turn out to be really intriguing or in my taste in the first couple of chapters. I think this is because I didn't go all the way to the library to pick up a book and so less effort in obtaining book = less likely to feel obligated to read it.

Linda says

Rosalind and her younger brother are forced to leave their comfortable home when their father is arrested and jailed for practicing his Catholic religion. Rosalind dresses as a boy to avoid being taken advantage of on the streets of London. The story takes place in Elizabethan England where her brother is hired at a theatre, and Rosalind is hired a popular playwright Christopher Marlowe. Marlowe has secrets, too, and he discovers that Rosalind is a Catholic. Their secrets put both of their lives in danger.

It was interesting reading a good story that takes place during the time of Shakespeare.

Mara says

A splendid mystery, engaging from beginning to end. The Author keeps Readers in absolute suspense over what Marlowe's secret is, revealing nothing too soon nor concealing important facts for too long. And unless you know about Christopher Marlowe's life, the end will come as a surprise. The characters are wonderfully realistic - in sense and in personality - and Rosalind an especially good and enjoyable heroine. While there is a slight romance between her and another boy at the playhouse, it doesn't cause her to become annoying like so many heroines. She remains consistent and level-headed.

The writing itself is close to brilliant. Sarah L. Thomson's use of Elizabethan English in her dialogue brings authenticity to the 1592 London setting in a way no amount of descriptions could have. But have no fear, Readers - the dialogue is not at all hard to understand, and I found it really fun to read and pronounce.

I have no complaints for this book. Rosalind's male disguise brings about no awkward occurrences like in the Jacky Faber series, and yet the Author handles it quite realistically. The one scene where Rosalind, still dressed as a girl, is attacked by a man is written with great delicacy - no details, nothing comes of it - indeed, the Author never even outright says that the man is trying to have his way with her (even though it's obvious what he wants). This is one of those little-known books that is an absolute joy, and I hope that other Readers enjoy it as much as I did.

Cynthia Egbert says

Historically accurate, this is a fun read.

A great quote to give you a taste of this novel:

"Do you think the devil walks among us like looking like a monster, horns and tail and all? Do you think the devil knows nothing of subtlety? Do you think he's never heard of craft? I tell you, if the devil were among us right now, none of you would know it. He walks like a man, looks like a man; he gets souls by whispering, not by shouting."

Tiffany says

The first line in this was something about the heads of traitors being displayed on the London bridge. Gross. I read about 30 pages and decided this was not a book I wanted to read.

DilanAc says

Some of it was interesting but it was not a very satisfactory conclusion, and I really didn't like the main character who was portrayed as a rigid, stuck-up "merchant's daughter." The historical aspect of Christopher Marlowe and the ongoing contention between Protestants and Catholics was interesting but probably completely lost on a younger reader. That said, it wasn't horribly written as many of these types of books are and kept my interest.

Rachel says

Good historical fiction choice. Slow at times, but there is a really good story there. People who are interested in Christopher Marlowe/William Shakespeare intrigue will be fans.

Brittany says

I thought it was really, really good. But I am so confused about what the heck happened. I mean, this guy was killed for being a spy, and turning over Catholics to the government. So why was he killed for obeying the law? It is weird... But I highly recommend it!

Snail in Danger (Sid) Nicolaides says

Faithful to the era, but ... it just didn't feel like it was going anywhere.

Susan says

My appreciation for freedom of religion jumped up three-fold as I read this story of Rosalind Archer and her brother Robin. Because their father has been arrested for treason, the two are forced to fend for themselves in a harsh London 1592. Rosalind becomes Richard (out of necessity) and scribe to playwright Christopher Marlowe, and Robin apprentice to the actors of the Rose. I know nothing of Marlowe, but thought it interesting that he knew Shakespeare. Both Marlowe and Rosalind become intertwined in their treasonous secrets.

Tressa (Wishful Endings) says

This is during the time in England when Catholics were executed as traitors. A brother and sister make their way to London where their father is imprisoned and find themselves at the mercy of the streets and their father dead from a disease. A play writer takes them under his wing and finds an acting job for the boy and hires the girl, who is disguised as a boy, as his servant, including to write for him. Trouble, however, seems to follow them. They narrowly escape, but all are not so lucky. Well written book with a somewhat sad ending.

Rachel says

During the end of reign of Queen Elizabeth, Catholics were taken to the Tower for treason. Rosalind Archer's father is taken. She and her brother, Robin, flee from their country home to London. But the people their father said would help them cannot. And so they live in the allies of London, until by accident the popular playwright Christopher Marlowe runs into them and helps them. Rosalind who has disguised herself as a boy in breeches goes by Richard Archer. Rosalind/Richard is taken in as Marlowe's servant and Robin works at the Rose, the playhouse. Where Rosalind and Robin's secret is hidden securely, Marlowe has his own secrets. Which could come out at anytime and threaten to destroy him and hurt Rosalind/Richard as well.

I was pleased with this book and deem it worthy of being read. This has sparked a further interest of mine toward this playwright I have not previously heard about.

Anne Margaret says

Rosalind Archer, the main character, is a very brave girl.

The description of everything makes me feel like being transported to another place of another era. Everything plays on my mind. The town, the alleys, the houses, and the theater itself. Because everything was elaborated.

This is not positive at all. All about misfortune. Rosalind, who once lived in a well family, is now a pauper wandering in the streets. She, who has secrets that can cause her death and he, Christopher Marlowe, also

had his. And apparently, it all ended realistically. The story was not a fairy tale. It's most likely to happen. And it did.

Rachel says

Girl, who must dress as a boy to find work, becomes an apprentice to playwright Christopher Marlow. Good historical details if a little over the top with the thou's and you's. Good connections to other books with Shakespeare apprentices.

Raissa says

A gripping read. The author leaves out some details which I think would have been helpful to readers, but you can work out. Like the age of the protagonist. I'd guess she's 14-15, in Elizabethan times old enough to be marriageable but young enough not to have her period yet (that would have added an interesting complication, by the way). This would also make her brother about 10, the right age to be a prentice. I was also looking for more details about the Tom Watson case which may have given more foreshadowing on what would happen later to Marlowe, since the two situations appear to be linked. A hint that a certain person was with both of them, for instance.

Marlowe remains a mysterious character here, and there many unanswered questions about him. Was he really an atheist? Was he against Catholics or secretly sympathetic to them? But then I appreciate the author for not presuming too much about this elusive real-life personage, presenting him as an interesting character but not interpreting his personality quirks too much.

The dressing-up as a boy plot has been done before, but there are different twists to the way it was used. I appreciate that this particular character wasn't doing it out of rebellion as is usual in fiction but for her protection. And that she didn't fool the man she was in closest proximity to into falling in love with her. This made it fresh and more realistic for me.

All in all an excellent buy for a little under a dollar--a hardcover book like new at that!
