



The Secrets of Casanova

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Winner of Nancy Pearl Award

Paris of 1755 is bloated with opportunity. That's the way Jacques Casanova, an unredeemed adventurer with an ever-surging appetite for pleasure, needs it. But times, men, and gods are changing—and Jacques' luck is fading. When he is thrust to the center of a profound mystery, he doesn't care if vice or virtue leads him onward. "After all," he declares, "a man who asks himself too many questions is an unhappy man." But as Jacques' challenges mount, what questions will he ask? What price must he pay to uncover a treasure of inestimable value? Loosely based on Casanova's life of intrigue, peril, and passion, Michaels' *The Secrets of Casanova* will keep you burning the midnight oil.

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The Secrets of Casanova Details

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Author : Greg Michaels

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From Reader Review The Secrets of Casanova for online ebook

Jane says

This review first appeared on the Historical Novel Society website.

In 1755 Jacques Casanova, exiled from Venice, visits his brother in Paris and comes into possession of a mysterious scroll. Hoping it will provide him with the wealth he needs to fulfill his dream of returning to Venice, Casanova sets off across Europe in search of treasure.

The cover of this novel proclaims it a mystery, but *The Secrets of Casanova* is more of a Dan Brown-style suspense novel crossed with a swashbuckling adventure tale than a novel written for mystery readers. The scroll doesn't come into view until nearly halfway through the book, and the plotting is too loose and episodic to support the puzzle at the heart of the tale.

I felt that the author had done a great deal of research into Casanova and his times, and perhaps that's why I found it hard to like Casanova himself. The portrait Michaels paints has realistic feet of clay – Casanova is presented as a man with many faults and weaknesses, a profligate adventurer prone to episodes of instability. The lover, philosopher, and scholar is hinted at but never truly realized on the page. The novel is also hampered by a florid style of writing that I found unappealing.

Debbie says

This book was easy to consume and get caught up in. All the adventures and the settings that were described in this novel, made you believe in this fictional account of Casanova, the romantic hero. As Casanova, we already know that he spent his life capturing the eye of multiple women. His conquests were legendary. But life isn't always what it seems for this historical man.

The words of this book are similar to poetry and the author takes you on a fictional adventure through the times of Casanova. This book has class but also passion as well. It has adventure as well as love. It has complications as well as solutions. The language alone makes me rate this book at five stars but the story, the characters and the development of this adventure makes this book a MUST READ for me.

It is 1755. Jacques Casanova escaped from prison in Venice and finds himself in Paris with his valet, Petrine. As much as he loves Venice, filled with his favorite childhood memories, he knows he can't return, so he seeks refuge from his brother, Francesco. His escape is not his only cause for concern, but he is also in debt and can barely afford to pay his valet, yet Petrine stays by his master. Is Petrine loyal or is there another reason why he stays put? This is just one of the many questions, the reader starts to ask.

Jacques meets several people through his brother who led him on an adventure throughout Europe for "a treasure of inestimable value". This is where the adventure and mystery aspect of the novel comes in. As they set out to discover the treasure, by means of a finding clues and a treasure map, they meet with many misfortunes.

The cliché of the Casanova is that of a man that romances women and has passionate encounters at every turn. However, this book made Casanova so much more than that. Sometimes through out the book you find yourself wanting to despise Jacques Casanova but you just can't bring yourself to. He is too charming and his character is written in such a way, that you feel for him.

This was a beautiful telling of Casanova. The story was well told and I know that I will want to read this book again and again. That says so much because I hardly have time to read everything I want to read, let alone read a book a second time.

Paula Coomer says

With the Secrets of Casanova, Greg Michaels should easily rise to the ranks of our most beloved historical fiction writers. His finely crafted writing and storytelling is intelligent, quick-witted, and betrays an author of sensitivity and present-mindedness, meaning, he knows how to show us our human lessons by taking us down history's less-traveled roads. The image of Casanova has long embodied desire in our collective imagination, but what we come to understand through Michael's vision of him harks of existentialism: "Your compulsion to have your song heard is your cross, a burden you will not or cannot lay down."

Immediately I thought of John Jakes, Patrick O'Brian, and Larry McMurtrey.

I am a feminist, so I scoured the book initially looking for male bravado and feminine stereotypes, but the writing and tremendous but sparsely-delivered detail quickly pulled me in, and I soon saw that Michael's representation of women was as stunning and individualized as that of his male characters.

This is a book that will not disappoint even the stodgiest and persnickety of readers--those of us who love our fiction detailed and real and full of humanity, alongside those of us who love to get our adrenalin bumps from a good, circuitous mystery. Might as well order 2, because you are going to want to give one away.

Diana says

When I started to read "The Secrets of Casanova" by Greg Michaels I thought I knew where the story was going and what it was about. I definitely did not expect all the twist and turns. This was a very interesting and fascinating novel and I was completely engrossed with Jacques Casanova. The writing flowed as did the storyline. I was surprised to learn this was a debut novel. I really enjoyed this story and recommend it to anyone. This story has a little bit of everything! Fun read!

Melinda says

Originally posted on The Book Musings

It is 1755. Jacques Casanova escaped from prison in Venice and finds himself in Paris with his valet, Petrine.

As much as he loves Venice, filled with his favourite childhood memories, he knows he can't return, so he seeks refuge from his brother, Francesco. His escape is not his only cause for concern, but he is also in debt and can barely afford to pay his valet, yet Petrine stays by his master. Is Petrine loyal or is there another reason why he stays put?

Casanova, at least the cliché that we are aware of, is a word we bestow on a man who loves his ladies, has various affairs with different women and by all means that is the same Casanova we find in this book. However, Jacques Casanova in this book, has been portrayed as much more than that. In the beginning of the novel you do get to read about that part of him. Jacques starts an affair with his brother's wife, Dominique and the love scenes I find was tastefully done. You won't get any 50 Shades of Grey from this (I haven't read it, but based on what I heard it's rather kinky), but you will get to read about the sensuality of their sexual encounters.

Jacques met several people through his brother who led him on an adventure throughout Europe for "a treasure of inestimable value". This is where the adventure and mystery aspect of the novel comes in. As they set out to discover the treasure, by means of a finding clues and a treasure map, they meet with many misfortunes. In the end, Jacques is the only one that's left to discover the treasure that was spoken of. It was not what he expected, but what he found served as his spiritual awakening.

Jacques I find to be an interesting character in this book. I myself had the clichéd view of who he was, but I saw growth in him throughout the novel, which I loved. Especially the part where Jacques falls hopelessly in love, maybe for the first time in his life? He is an adventurer, a lover and a philosopher. For most parts I enjoyed the book and "most parts" include the beginning of the novel and towards the ending of the novel. Somewhere around the middle I lost interest, but that picked up when we got closer to finding the treasure. I wanted to know what it was! The ending might not be what the reader would want, but it was what I expected. Overall, I'd say if you like historical fiction and adventure novels, this one gives you both and you'd probably enjoy it.

Clarissa says

I must begin by saying that it is very clear that Greg Michaels has a background in theater/acting. You can tell in the way he writes and for that, I am 100% appreciative because when you take such an iconic name like 'Casanova' and you're weaving a new adventure for him, you shouldn't insult the character (real person) by making them a one dimensional bore. You need not worry about that, my friends, Mr. Michaels did a fantastic job with making Jacques a well-rounded, likable man. He is not only 'Casanova', the infamous lover, he is an intelligent, charming man who you'll root for the entire way. I found myself wishing that I could help him pay those debts he was accruing along the way. You'll be graced with many other characters who are equally as fascinating, his loyal servant, Petrine and his brother's wife, Dominique. (He *is* Casanova, come now.)

From Europe to the Mid-East, we travel along with them on the adventure that an enigmatic Vicomte entreats Jacques to do. It's not some safe, "go get me this" adventure either; it brings us to explore the Knights Templar and there's treasure to be found...if it CAN be found. Nothing is ever easy in that respect and you should not expect it to be easy. This is a quick paced story and if you're worried about historical accuracy, don't. The attention to detail is on point. You'll absolutely be delighted, I promise you.

With witty remarks, insightful thoughts and true Casanova spirit, I can't tell you how much I enjoyed this

read (okay, that's a lie, I reaaally LOVED it!) and I think know that you will too! I read quite fast but I tried to take my time with this as I really wanted to let myself take everything in. I'm really glad that I did. Mr. Michaels has a gift for description and my hat is off to him. I'm a bit of a stickler for accuracy to detail but I have no complaints at all. I loved how I felt like I was really there or I was seeing the frock coats and seeing the powdered wigs, et cetera.

Don't let the name "Casanova" deter you else you are going to miss out on a fantastic read!

Dawn says

I received a free copy of this book for an honest review.

The Secrets of Casanova is one of those books that you want to take your time reading so that you can savor it. I read this book over a couple of weeks in between reading several other books. It's an intense read and is historical fiction at its best.

The main character, Jacques Casanova, is portrayed as a rogue and one of those men that you should despise but just can't. I imagine Greg Michaels' portrayal hit close to what the real Casanova was like. I enjoyed watching his personal growth throughout the novel. I also liked the author's note at the end of the book explaining the historical facts the novel is based on although, as he points out, this story is pure fiction.

I definitely recommend The Secrets of Casanova especially if you are a fan of historical fiction.

Carole Rae says

Like earlier stated, I was given this book for my honest and unbiased opinion.

Ooooooooooooooooooh Casanova! WHAT A ROGUE! However, one can resist his charms even in a book. Greg Michaels truly did his homework on Mr. Casanova. I feel this is the closet representation of the man (from what I know and believe) that I know of. The movie did an okay job, but this book really painted the man wonderfully. Yes, he was a gambler and a lover, but he was also smart. He was a philosopher and technically had a degree in being a lawyer. He was also and foremost and adventurer.

The adventure that we are taken on was exciting and I was addicted! I needed to know what the next clue was and even though I had a deep foreboding (which would be come true twice over) about what was going to happen, I still plummeted forward, because I needed to know just as badly as Casanova did. The ending did make me mad, BUUUUT I seen it coming. I also understand the symbolism and WHY the author ended it the way he did. Still though...I was not a happy camper and it was a small let down (at least for me...one might see it differently).

The beginning was a little slow, but it was indeed the calm before the storm. Enjoy the slowness, because after a couple of chapters things EXPLODE and the adventure begins. I'm glad the author didn't just jump into the adventure.

Poor Dominique...can't say much, but I truly connected with her and I felt bad....sighs.

In the end, this was a fun and exciting book. Even though the ending was a small let down for me (personally), I see the wiseness and the symbolism behind it. The beginning was a little slow, but it was necessary and I liked it. I recommend this to those who like their historical fiction mixed with some mystery and adventure. I shall stamp this with 4 stars.

Favorite Character(s): Casanova and Dominique

Not-so Favorite Character(s): Petrine and Quentin

Tracey Allen at Carpe Librum says

* Copy courtesy of Historical Fiction Virtual Book Tours *

I didn't know anything about the real life of Casanova going into this novel, apart from knowing he was a ladies' man in Europe a couple of hundred years ago.

Out of money and unable to return home to his beloved Venice, Casanova and his valet Petrine (great character) seek refuge with Casanova's brother. Always on the lookout for a patron, out of money and a social climber, Casanova takes off on an adventure in an effort to solve a riddle and seek a treasure worth more than money; which is where the novel really takes off.

The Secrets of Casanova is a fictional account of Casanova's life, and while it takes some liberties with the facts, many of the events and people Casanova met and interacted with (including Voltaire and Pope Clement XIII), actually took place.

Not surprisingly, there are several sex scenes throughout the novel, however Michaels has painted Casanova as a giving and generous lover; perhaps that's what made him attractive to the ladies...

Michaels includes many words and events that piqued my interest along the way, and I was frequently leaving the tale to learn more, the events just too interesting to ignore. One such event was the Lisbon earthquake, which I learned was a real event that took place in 1755 and killed anywhere between 10,000-100,000 people.

Here's my favourite quote from the novel, which gives you an indication of the author's writing style:

"But then Frenchmen are relatively polite. They, for instance, step around a starving peasant. The Russians? They slay the peasant, slice open his belly and shove their feet inside to warm their toes." Page 131

Unforgettable and bursting with imagery! I recommend *The Secrets of Casanova* for lovers of historical fiction, and those wishing to embark on a refreshing and exciting adventure story.

Click here to read my interview with author Greg Michaels:

<http://www.carpealbum.net/2014/10/review-of-secrets-of-casanova-interview.html>

Mary Rowen says

I was captivated by this book. It was not at all what I expected. Everyone thinks of Casanova as being a ladies man, but in Greg Michaels' story, he's so much more. He's brave, loyal, smart, and, well, a ladies man too. Very, very well-written, and a real page turner. I know the story is fictional, but Michaels did some great research, and based parts of the story on fact. The characters are incredibly real.

Sm says

Delightful sex scenes, intriguing story, compelling characters. Historical fiction at its best

Meg - A Bookish Affair says

3.5 stars. "The Secrets of Casanova" is the story of Jacques Casanova, the model for a million pick up artists and lovers. Before reading this book, I didn't realize that Casanova was even a real historical figure so I was interested in reading this book. This book is not only a book about Casanova's exploits as a ladies man but it also has a healthy dash of intrigue and mystery having to do with the Knights Templar (always an exciting topic for me to read more about). I have to admit that I was a little skeptical of This is a great pick for those looking for a historical setting that has a bit of the flair of the fantastic!

Like I said, I didn't know much about Casanova before reading this book. I knew that it's a word that is used to describe someone who loves the ladies and isn't necessarily content with just one woman. You do get to see this side of him but you also get to see another (and in my humble opinion, more interesting) side of him. In a way, Casanova feels very much like an early day James Bond. On one hand he isn't afraid to get his hands dirty and putting his life in danger in some points. He's smart and savvy and knows exactly how to use his charm in order to get what he wants. I really liked reading the juxtaposition between how he gets the ladies and how he gets into and begins to solve the mystery in the book surrounding the Knights Templar.

The writing of the book was pretty good. Michaels was able to take a basic historical story and add a lot of interest to it to create a story that pulls you in. I liked the pacing of the story for the most part but thought that there were a couple parts that could have been slimmed down a little bit. I really, really liked the part of the book where Casanova was looking into the whole mystery.

Jen Gilbert says

The Secrets of Casanova is like poetry. The words are sensual and they take you along on an adventure throughout other regions. Greg Michaels writes with such depth and intensity. The book has class and seduction all at once. It is an intense read, but one I would recommend to anyone looking for Dan Brown meets Phillipaa Gregoire.

Joseph says

The Secrets of Casanova by Greg Michaels is a very fictionalized account of Jacques Casanova and his adventures after escaping prison. Michaels holds a BA in anthropology from the university of Texas in

Austin. He has also worked as an actor in Hollywood in over forty roles, including the role of Scott Garrett in The X-Files.

Never judge a book by its cover...or title. When I first was offered this book for review, I thought oh, no. Visions of Valentino's The Sheik and Fabio covered romance novels came to mind. I was hesitant, but the publisher explained that, yes, it was historical fiction and not a romance novel set in a historic time period. I agreed and readied my notebook for fact checking.

I started the book was positively surprised. The characters all came to life in the way that makes the reader feel like an observer in the story and not an outsider looking in. Jacques Casanova seemed much more like Rousseau in thought and James Bond in action. He was a thinker and associated with great thinkers of the times like Voltaire. He name drops others like Locke and carries around a book of quotations from Horace to impress the ladies.

The James Bond part is more the smooth talker, the living by his wits and tricks, and the international setting. He escaped prison in Venice and went on the run to Paris where the story starts. Casanova may have been lucky at love, but he was not lucky at gambling. In fact, gambling debts in Paris and his exile from Venice guide his hand to accept the quest offered by the Vicomte. The story moves through Europe and the Mid East as Jacques his servant Petrine and his brother's wife Dominique (he is Casanova after all) enter on a quest. The quest involves the secret of the Knights Templar which is believed to be a treasure...and an impressive and unexpected treasure it will be if it can be found.

The fast action, historical input, and Catholic Church's Templar Knights mythology all combine to make this a great story. Jacques Casanova may have his way with the ladies, but this is far from a romance novel. This is 18th Century action adventure at its best. Add in a bit of philosophy, mathematics, and a mystery to complete the mix and it is a well thought out novel that will keep you at the edge of your seat. Character development is excellent to the point that the characters seem real in the actions and words. The time period creates an interesting setting that is distant, but fully believable and understandable to most readers. I highly recommend The Secrets of Casanova to all lovers of adventure, the Romantic Period, The Age of Enlightenment, and the rise of science and reason. As far as my fact checking went, I was too involved in the story to take many notes, and Michaels makes clear that this is a complete work of fiction in his afterword. So enjoy the story.

Joseph Spuckler gives The Secrets of Casanova 4 1/2 Stars

Susan says

Excellent characters, a complex mystery, adventure and history - The Secrets of Casanova is a wonderful, engrossing read! I've been a big fan of historical fiction for years, and in my opinion there is one thing that separates the great from the so-so: if you find yourself transported to the novel's time and place, experiencing the characters' way of life, and holding your breath even though history has already foretold the outcome, you've got yourself a winner. Greg Michaels meets hits the mark again and again.
