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The Rossetti Letter

By Christi Phillips



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The Rossetti Letter By Christi Phillips

In this captivating debut, Christi Phillips blends fact and fiction, suspense and sensuality into a vibrant, richly imagined novel in which a modern historian uncovers a courtesan's secret role in a shocking conspiracy of seventeenth-century Venice.

Claire Donovan always dreamed of visiting Venice, though not as a chaperone for a surly teenager. But she can't pass up this chance to complete her Ph.D. thesis on Alessandra Rossetti, a mysterious courtesan who wrote a secret letter to the Venetian Council warning of a Spanish plot to overthrow the Venetian Republic in 1618. Claire views Alessandra as a heroine and harbors a secret hope that her findings will elevate Alessandra to a more prominent place in history. But an arrogant Cambridge professor is set to present a paper at a prestigious Venetian university denouncing Alessandra as a co-conspirator -- a move that could destroy Claire's paper and career.

As Claire races to locate the documents that will reveal the courtesan's true motives, Alessandra's story comes to life with all the sensuality, political treachery, and violence of seventeenth-century Venice. Claire also falls under the city's spell. She is courted by a handsome Italian, matches wits with her academic adversary, bonds with her troubled young charge, and, amid the boundless beauty of Venice, recaptures the joy of living every moment. . .

Layering wit and warmth into her portraits of two very different yet equally dynamic heroines, Christi Phillips shifts effortlessly between past and present in a remarkable novel that is at once a love story, a mystery, and an intriguing historical drama. Filled with beautifully rendered details of one of the world's oldest and most magical cities, *The Rossetti Letter* marks Phillips's debut as a writer of extraordinary skill and grace.



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

When the Venetian courtesan Alessandra Rossetti wrote a letter that exposed the 1618 Spanish Conspiracy, Venice was saved. Four hundred years later in Phillips's lovingly researched half-historical, half-contemporary debut, Claire Donovan, an American graduate student, struggles to finish her dissertation on the courtesan's brave act. Claire attends a Venice conference to check out the work of British superstar historian Andrew Kent, who sees Rossetti as nothing more than the pawn of very powerful men in a diplomatic double cross: once Andrew's work is published, his ideas could derail Claire's fledgling career. Phillips, developing parallel plots, unspools Alessandra's story directly to the reader in detail denied Claire and Andrew, who overcome their initial animosity to solve the greater mystery. Academic machinations and missing manuscripts soon add complications. Further, Claire has to deal with her difficult teenage charge, Gwendolyn Fy, and with Giancarlo Baldessari, a handsome and rich admirer. Andrew has to deal with his gorgeous harridan of an Italian girlfriend—and, inevitably, his growing attraction to Claire. Such a profusion of textual plots and characters spread out over past and present recalls A.S. Byatt's *Possession*, but Phillips, while not aiming as high, misses her mark. Despite a nicely detailed Venice, a clear affection for the main characters and extensive period touches, Phillips's ambitious debut founders long before its predictable happy ending. (Mar.)

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From [Booklist](#)

With impeccable research into seventeenth-century Venetian politics, Phillips plots an intriguing literary suspense debut novel contrasted with the delightful modern romance between two rival academics. For Claire Donovan, it is critical that her thesis regarding the role of Alessandra Rossetti, a Venetian courtesan in the Spanish conspiracy to overthrow the Venetian government, be accepted as her entry into her chosen profession. On learning that an academic conference in Venice features a Cambridge professor who may refute her theories, she is desperate enough to take on the thankless task of chaperoning a troubled teen to Venice to finance her trip. Not only will a Harvard doctorate fulfill Claire's academic aspirations, it will also be her ticket out of the bad memories of a failed marriage. The parallel tale of Alessandra Rossetti gives the reader a compelling look at the mind of an intellectually curious young woman forced into the life of a courtesan because of poverty and loss of family. Moving effortlessly from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century and back, Phillips crafts an entertaining story with intrigue, espionage, and romance in both centuries. *Laurie Sundborg*

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Review

"Christi Phillips's sexy and suspenseful novel makes you want to hop on the next flight to Venice, book in hand. Reading it is like a visit to that sensual city."

-- Janis Cooke Newman, author of "Mary"

"Saucy...nicely told...An amiable first effort sure to appeal to many fans of the genre." -- "Kirkus"

"Reading Christi Phillips's lush, beautifully written novel is like enjoying a sumptuous meal in the Venice it describes with such loving detail. You want to savor every moment."

-- Ayelet Waldman, author of "Love and Other Impossible Pursuits"

"With impeccable research into seventeenth-century Venetian politics...an intriguing literary suspense debut novel...an entertaining story with intrigue, espionage, and romance." -- "Booklist"

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Bryan Smith:

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Jean Ashburn:

This book untitled The Rossetti Letter to be one of several books that will best seller in this year, that's because when you read this e-book you can get a lot of benefit in it. You will easily to buy that book in the book retail store or you can order it via online. The publisher on this book sells the e-book too. It makes you easier to read this book, because you can read this book in your Cell phone. So there is no reason for your requirements to past this guide from your list.

Louise Graham:

The book untitled The Rossetti Letter contain a lot of information on the item. The writer explains your girlfriend idea with easy way. The language is very straightforward all the people, so do certainly not worry, you can easy to read the idea. The book was authored by famous author. The author will take you in the new time of literary works. It is easy to read this book because you can continue reading your smart phone, or gadget, so you can read the book in anywhere and anytime. If you want to buy the e-book, you can wide open their official web-site in addition to order it. Have a nice go through.

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