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The Secret Dead (Kindle Single)



A short story featuring Giordano Bruno: heretic, philosopher and spy. Perfect for fans of C.J. Sansom. Even the dead have a story to tell. Naples, 1566. During a sweltering summer, eighteen-year-old Giordano Bruno takes his final vows at San Domenico Maggiore and is admitted to the Dominican Order despite doubts over his tendency to ask difficult questions. Assisting in the infirmary, Bruno witnesses an illicit autopsy performed on the body of a young woman. Her corpse reveals a dark secret, and Bruno suspects that hers may not have been an accidental death. His investigation leads him to a powerful figure who wants to keep the truth buried and Bruno is forced to make a choice between his future in the Order, and justice for an innocent victim and her grieving family. S.J. Parris is the bestselling author of *Prophecy* and *Heresy*. Her historical thrillers follow the renegade monk, philosopher and heretic Giordano Bruno, as he uncovers dark mysteries and plots in Elizabethan England. Cover design by Adil Dara Kim.

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History

If author S.J. Parris's intention in writing *The Secret Dead* was to interest readers in her series of

novels featuring fictional character Giordano Bruno's exploits in 16th century Europe, she succeeded splendidly. It was an intriguing story of eighteen-year-old Giordano Bruno, who had recently taken his vows in a Dominican order in Naples, Italy. One night, in a move he would later deeply regret, Bruno followed Fra Gennaro, the order's physician, to see what he was up to. Suddenly drawn into a situation that Bruno was both repulsed and fascinated by, the young friar soon realized the danger he faced from powerful forces. Set against the backdrop of the Spanish occupation of Naples and the Inquisition, *The Secret Dead* is a compelling story of intrigue and mystery, and a nice introduction to Fra Giordano Bruno.

This is a well-crafted story that is well paced and a pleasant reading experience. It tells of an early fictional episode in the life of famed heretic, astronomer, theologian, and all-together arrogant, pompous misanthropic scholar. Throughout his career, whether it be in Italy, France, Germany, or England his caustic personality was his worst enemy. That being said, the young Bruno here, is presented in a different light. While his future propensity for alienating people is shown here, he is a more sympathetic character as he is involved in an illegal anatomical study performed by his mentor, the death of a young girl, and the solving of the crime. There is a nice atmosphere but we are not talking of an Umberto Eco medieval piece and it is plain to see the obvious disposition of the writer to the characters and his enemies and authorities. It is a bit too one dimensional in this regard but it, as a short story, does give the reader an enjoyable time spent reading it.

I have not read such a well written medieval murder mystery since the days of my beloved Cadfael series. This short story hooked me from the first sentence and as a lifelong reader, of mysteries in particular, that is a very hard thing to do. I was amazed at the amount of character development the author achieved in such a short period of time, yet none of it felt ridge or constrained in any way, while the descriptions of city life in sixteenth century Italy were breathtaking. If I had any one criticism it would be that the main character, Far Bruno, seems awfully mature and self-possessed for his mere eighteen years, but that is hardly worth mentioning, especially in the face of the stories many, many positives. I am given to understand there will be more. Yes, please!

It is short enough as a travel book to read, but I am an older woman who does not like to read unnecessary bad words or read about unfortunate sexual situations. I will avoid this author, but that is because of my preferences.

This was a well written quick short story, with great atmospheric details. Characters are easily recognized; saints & sinners & good old Catholic demons abound. I enjoyed the plot, the setting and overall details. It read like the opening to a bigger novel, but easily stands on its own. I would have liked to read more.

I was fascinated by the friars who are both evil and corrupt. It just remind us that such monstrosity is sometimes hidden in people who are religious pretending to be good.

Great story. I just wish it was longer. I'd like to read more about these characters.

I like the darkness of the novel and the era it had taken place in. Would recommend this to medieval lovers

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