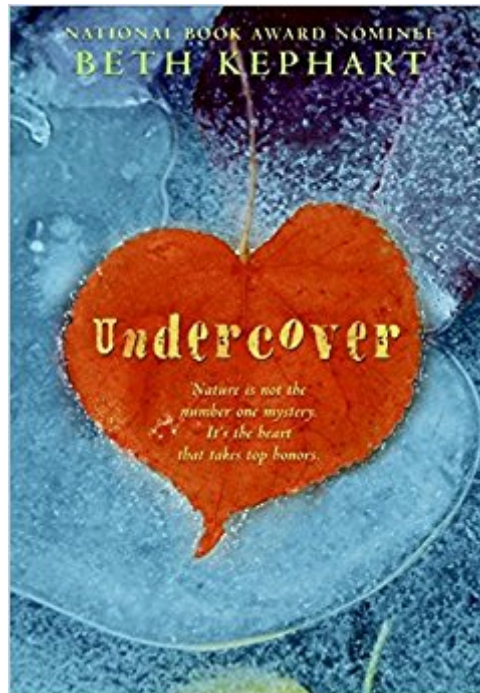




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Undercover (Laura Geringer Books (Hardcover))



Synopsis

Like a modern-day Cyrano de Bergerac, Elisa ghostwrites love notes for the boys in her school. But when Elisa falls for Theo Moses, things change fast. Theo asks for verses to court the lovely Lila—a girl known for her beauty, her popularity, and a cutting ability to remind Elisa that she has none of these. At home, Elisa's father, the one person she feels understands her, has left on an extended business trip. As the days grow shorter, Elisa worries that the increasingly urgent letters she sends her father won't bring him home. Like the undercover agent she feels she has become, Elisa retreats to a pond in the woods, where her talent for ice-skating gives her the confidence to come out from under cover and take center stage. But when Lila becomes jealous of Theo's friendship with Elisa, her revenge nearly destroys Elisa's ice-skating dreams and her plan to reunite her family. National Book Award nominee Beth Kephart's first young adult novel is a stunning debut.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“A beautifully written, engrossing tale”
“This is a book that no serious-minded teen will want to miss, and high school English teachers may also take note as it has a well-crafted and highly teachable text.”
—Rhona Campbell, Washington, DC Public Library (School Library Journal (starred review))
“Readers will fall easily into the compelling premise and Elisa’s memorable, graceful voice, and have no trouble recognizing the teen’s quiet courage as she leaves her comfortable isolation, claims her own talents, and embraces the

people who matter most. (Booklist (starred review))“(An) intelligent, multilayered love story|Neatly balancing action and contemplation, Kephart offers a plethora of images, ideas about literature and even some well-known poems along with a plot that will speak to many teens. (Publishers Weekly (starred review))

Beth Kephart was nominated for a National Book Award for her memoir *A Slant of Sun*. Her first novel for teens, *Undercover*, received four starred reviews and was named a Best Book by Kirkus Reviews, School Library Journal, and .com. In 2005 Beth was awarded the Speakeasy Poetry Prize. She has also written *Into the Tangle of Friendship: A Memoir of the Things That Matter*; *Still Love in Strange Places: A Memoir*; *Ghosts in the Garden: Reflections on Endings, Beginnings, and the Unearthing of Self*; *Flow: The Life and Times of Philadelphia's Schuylkill River*; *Zenobia: The Curious Book of Business*; and *House of Dance*. She lives in Pennsylvania with her family.

the book is well written, the poems throughout the book show the author's talent. the end of the book seems like it could use a little more closure but if you get the book with the extras in it then a little bit of that closure can be found. i read this book for my own fun and really enjoyed it, but i would also like to see it used in classrooms - it is a book that demonstrates great writing and one that the students may actually like to read.

Taken by the premise (I'm always looking for new literature that obviously takes from "classics") and the author's reputation, I decided to give this book a chance. I'm glad I did. The story follows Cyrano de Bergerac's desire to help others with love and heartache ensues. What makes this story so wonderful lies in the poetic nature of the writing style. It is a warm book, even through the winter setting, that grabs your heart. Well done.

I really enjoyed this read. i thought it was very well written and helped open my eyes to the power of words in general. thank you so much for writing something that was clean and fun.

Got it for my niece as a gift so never read it. It must be good since she specifically requested it.

I bought this book because the main character shares my name - Elisa - which is unusual, as I have seen my name in print very few times in my life! There is a lot more than that to recommend it, however. The story is touching, the writing is wonderful, and the emotions represented remind me of

that terrific TV show, "My So-Called Life," which was unjustly cancelled after one season. Both "Undercover" and that show represent teens as thinking, feeling, caring people who are exploring their identities and emotions. I appreciate that perspective, and think this is a magical book for young women as well as anyone who wants a well-written, heartwarming story.

When I got this book 4 years ago, I was charmed by the notion about a girl who writes love letters for boys (the boys actually pay her to do so). I vividly remember the days when I used to write poetry too. My classmates in high school - up until in college - would approach me, state their love affair and I would compose a poem in a jiffy. No money involved. I was more than glad to help, because writing was, and is - still my passion. After reading this book, it was like going back to my old self, relinquishing the moments of pain, magic, infatuation and hope. Much like Elisa who opted to love Theo in the background, knowing that he was head-over-heels in love with Lila, a psychopath, in my opinion. This book has a heartwarming tale of a father's love to a daughter which made me cry. A light read and kinda overwhelming because of the glorious language. Anyway, here's my favorite line from the book: Have you ever watched a leaf fall from a tree? It falls upward first, then it drifts toward the ground, just as I find myself drifting toward you. Kudos to Kephart for hitting a home run with her first foray into YA fiction. She deserves a 4**** rating!

"What I knew wasn't mine. That's the thing about being undercover: You know what you know, and you cannot act on it." Elisa Cantor is used to blending into the background. At home she is always in the shadow of her glamorous mother and sister, watching and wandering like her father. At school she is self-conscious and keen to stay invisible. After all, it's so much easier to observe things when no one is looking at you. In the woods Elisa is able to observe nature, like her father, as an undercover operative. At school, she can use everything she sees and finds to secretly write love notes for the boys in her school like a modern day Cyrano De Bergerac. Elisa thinks she is fine with all of that; with being undercover. But when Theo Moses starts asking for notes to win over Lila--a pretty, popular girl who is always ready to remind Elisa that she is neither--Elisa isn't sure she wants to stay in the shadows anymore. As she hones her voice writing poems for herself--not pretending to be anyone else--and learns more about Theo, Elisa begins to wonder if there could be more to her life. With her father away on an extended trip and her family crumbling under the weight of his absence, Elisa really needs for there to be something more. When Elisa discovers a hidden pond and a talent for ice skating, she realizes it might be time for her to stop hiding in Undercover (2007) by Beth Kephart. Undercover is a marvelous novel, partly a retelling of the play Cyrano De Bergerac

and partly something entirely unique. Elisa is a narrator who sees the world not just as it is but also through her own lens, always with a sense of whimsy and wonder. Readers are easily drawn into Elisa's appreciation for poetry when she discovers new writers and forms and begins to write poems of her own (included throughout the narrative and also in bonus material at the end of the paperback edition). Kephart uses poetry and prose to tell a layered story about love in all of its forms whether for family, friends, nature or even for words. Elisa's journey as she learns to love and respect herself is also beautifully told. Undercover is a slim book that has a lot to say about honesty, family and learning who you want to be. Highly recommended. Possible Pairings: Love and Other Perishable Items by Laura Buzo, Graffiti Moon by Cath Crowley, Take a Bow by Elizabeth Eulberg, The Midnight Dress by Karen Foxlee, To All the Boys I've Loved Before by Jenny Han, Life by Committee by Corey Ann Haydu, And We Stay by Jenny Hubbard, The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks by E. Lockhart, Drawing the Ocean by Carolyn MacCullough, Cyrano De Bergerac by Edmond Rostand, This Song Will Save Your Life by Leila Sales, A Map of the Known World by Lisa Ann Sandell, The Unwritten Rule by Elizabeth Scott, Afterworlds by Scott Westerfeld

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