



The Secret Dead

S.J. Parris

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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.

The Secret Dead Details

Date : Published June 19th 2014 (first published September 12th 2013)

ISBN :

Author : S.J. Parris

Format : Kindle Edition 50 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Mystery, Fiction, Crime

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From Reader Review The Secret Dead for online ebook

Debbie says

This little novella gives us an insight into Giordano Bruno at the age of 18 years in 1566. Bruno has just taken holy orders and is proving to be an outstanding scholar, but one with a taste for difficult questions and trouble submitting to authority.

One night Bruno stumbles across the infirmarian, Fra Gennaro, performing a secret autopsy on a young woman who has been recently murdered. Bruno is sickened by the violent way in which the woman died and has his suspicions about Fra Gennaro's claims that the woman is a whore who will not be missed.

When Bruno learns the truth of how the young woman died he finds himself caught between the powerful families who run the city and the powerless who could be destroyed by the Inquisition. Bruno must decide whether to take a course of action that will keep him safe, or follow the path of truth and justice.

This was an enjoyable wee prequel to the Bruno Giordano series, but the part I enjoyed most was the note from the author at the end revealing that Giordano Bruno was a real person whose life had inspired this series.

Tim says

A novella to die for

A captivating introduction to the young friar, Bruno, named Giordano by his order. An overly-inquisitive teenager in sixteenth century Naples can soon find trouble, and Bruno finds himself unwittingly drawn into investigating a suspicious death. A neat novella that takes the reader to the smelly streets of medieval Europe, a place of intrigue and danger.

Lisa says

I want to know more about this character!

This is a short story in the early days of Giordano Bruno's career and gives an insight into his personality when he is confronted with bare-faced corruption and murder...and revenge.

I like the style and would be interested in beginning this historical fiction series 'properly'.

Inge Janse says

Prima boekie van Parris, van wiens Giordano Bruno-serie ik (tot mijn verbazing, ongemerkt) inmiddels alle boeken heb gelezen. Ik vind haar één van de tofste middeleeuwen-mysterie-thriller-romanschrijfsters die ik ken, misschien ook wel omdat zij als vrouw een mannenwereld neerzet, en dus aan heel veel cliché's en conventies voorbijgaat.

Deel 0,5 is een novelle die dusdanig kort is, dat het lastig is om er echt een ervaring bij te beleven. Het bevat

alle elementen die Parris interessant maken (de hoofdpersoon natuurlijk, maar ook veel extra karakters die goed uit de verf komen, een mysterieuze dood, veel mooie sfeerelementen om het verhaal tot leven te brengen, prachtige settings, klassieke steden, nu ik het zo opschrijf merk ik hoezeer ik haar volledige boeken waardeer, wat een feest!), maar dusdanig beknopt dat de ervaring aan de oppervlakte blijft. Het voelt meer als een oefening dan als een serieuze exercitie. Jammer, want ze had hiervan net zo goed een heel boek kunnen maken.

Mijn advies: lees deel 1 tot en met 5 (als je van historische wodunnits houdt), en pak deze erbij als je (net als ik) moeite hebt om tot mei 2019 te wachten tot deel 6 uitkomt.

margaret chalmers says

A significant meeting.

A novella which contains more information than many full length books. We meet Giordano Bruno as a young man working as a reluctant Dominican friar but hungry for forbidden knowledge which could see him a victim of the Inquisition. He is involved in the concealing of a murder and its consequences. There is a great feeling of place and Time. Bruno himself comes across as a sympathetic and complicated character. I look forward to reading his longer adventures.

Bansari says

A short intriguing story with great blend of mystery and excellent history. I never thought a short book can be as effective as this. If you enjoy old church mysteries this series is must. Can't wait to get my hand on the next book.

Lisa *OwlBeSatReading* says

A short Novella which has got me very interested in reading more from S J Parris. Her writing style is very similar to Karen Maitland who is one of my favourite writers of this genre. Historical nastiness, superstitions galore, and believable, likeable characters. My TBR shelf is just about to become even bigger!

Ching-Bing-Ping says

“Because I believe God is bigger than the rules we impose on one another. I think He does not mind if we find different paths to Him.”

The more I keep reading these Historical mysteries , the more I come to realise that religion in its purest form still remain as Holy as ever, but somewhere down the line the "HOLY MEN" took matter into their own hands and turned religion and the concept of God, into one of the most vilified and untrustworthy of all human beliefs.

The story was fast, and the character of Giordano Bruno reminded me of another God fearing true man of

God, Brother Cadfael. The story came out as a tragedy mystery element in the story was not that potent, but the writing skill of the author kept the pace high from the very first paragraph, and never slacked in between.

My first S.J. Parris experience, and it was a sad but a beautiful one.

John Lee says

I thought that I had read all of the books in this series and was quite surprised to come across this one.

Albeit a short story, I think that I was expecting to learn more about the early life of Giordano Bruno as that was how it was billed. I have to admit to being disappointed that the book covers just one incident in his early life which, although significant, did little to tell us about that early life or explain why, specifically, the Inquisition always seemed to be a real threat lurking in his background.

I enjoyed all of the other books and appreciated the author's style and abilities of description and narration but this one seems the odd one out.

I am left wondering , why was it written? If it was an an 'advert' aimed at new converts to Bruno then it did not show the author anywhere near her best and if it was aimed at existing readers of the series then they must have been as disappointed as me at this one.

May be it was a 'taster' for the publisher before the series but apart from the character of Bruno himself there was little to show the depth of the books to come.

James Calahan says

A good quick read

I was pleasantly surprised at the depth achieved in such a short work. Well worth the time to read. A good descriptive feel for life in the era that is well written and allows you to step into the city-state of the time easily.

Joseph Demakis says

Good

Good little story, that captures the politics of the 1500. With the struggle between religion and science with a twist of drama.

Caroline says

An interesting story. I always wanted to know how Giordano Bruno became the investigator he was in later books.

A girl, rumoured to have been a prostitute, turns up dead in the Dominican's house. The infirmerer performs an illegal autopsy on the corpse and finds she was in the early stages of pregnancy. Bruno finds his way into the secret mortuary and sees most of what happens, but is sworn to secrecy.

The corpse is eventually identified, and so is the father of her child. Bruno keeps his word to the infirmerer and doesn't disclose what he knows of the illegal procedures taking place in secret. He also keeps his word to another young woman, in order to avoid her family getting into trouble with the Inquisitors. All in all an enjoyable story of Giordano Bruno's early beginnings as a Dominican Friar.

Carol McDonald says

True to her tradition, S.J. Parris reveals another slice of Giordano's life as a young friar. Ms Parris writes with such style and flair, communicating historical fiction that I hope we will have many more tales to come about Bruno. I would recommend this book to any adult who enjoys period literature with a hint of mystery and romance..

I will guarantee that you will quickly become a fan of this Italian philosopher/mystery solver! I chose this book because I had read SJ. Parris's three previous novels about our hero.

Annet says

Even the dead have a story to tell...

Awaiting the new book on Giordano Bruno, 'Conspiracy', which is due in May, I still had this novella to read. A short story, sharp, to the point. Maybe even better than the multi hundred page books on Bruno. An entertaining historic read.

Naples, 1566. During the 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. The corpse reveals a dark secret, and Bruno suspects that hers may not have been an accidental death...

Looking forward to the new book in the Bruno series!

Judi McKay says

A wonderful little book that I only picked up because it was a Quick REad in the library but which has introduced me to Giordano Bruno and has given me the anticipation of reading the entire series. A neat little plot.
