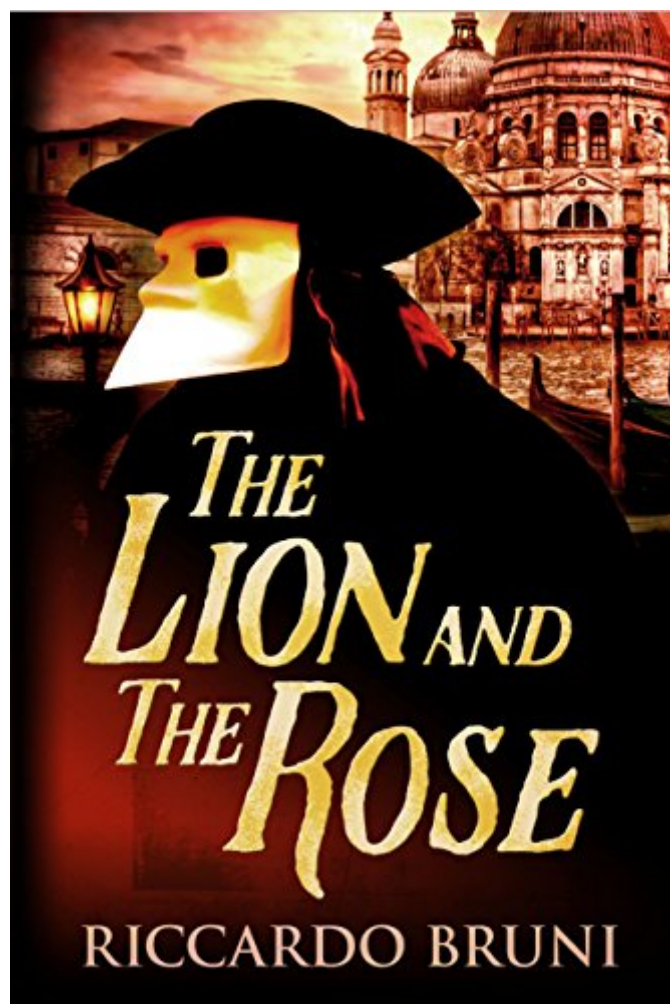


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The Lion And The Rose



Synopsis

In sixteenth-century Venice three bodies surface in the dark waters of the Canal Grande. Entrenched in a terrible war with the Turks and caught in a political struggle between power-hungry Pope Alexander VI and the newly elected Doge Loredan, the people of Venice fear that a demon has come to exact divine punishment for their sins. Doge Loredan is determined to find the real culprit before the Pope can turn the people against him. To do so, he hires unorthodox German monk Mathias to investigate the murders. Soon Lorenzo Scarpa, a young printer and nephew to one of the victims, joins in the search. The mystery leads them into Venice's underground printing industry, where they learn of a dangerous book hidden somewhere in the city, a book whose secrets could determine the destiny of the Republic—a book that others are more than willing to kill for.

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Customer Reviews

The Lion and the Rose is a solid 3 star book. I found the characters engaging, especially Mathias Munster, Lorenzo and Mariolino Scarpa, Caterina Marin, and Simone & Moses Luzzatto, and liked how the author ended the story. There are two things that bothered me about the book that made

me take away stars. The first thing that bothered me were the side stories with all the smaller characters. There were side stories, like the one with Simone Luzzatto, that made sense why they had to be there since his story ends up teaching a valuable lesson to the reader and Lorenzo Scarpa. However, there was a vagabond known as The Worm, who was promised payment for his snooping by Mathias. He just seemingly never got paid once he relayed his information but instead chose to disappear and forfeit his payment to help his fellow vagabond. Another was Righetto who just appeared to have sex on his mind and works for the same master throughout the book. Even though he allowed us to see what transpired from a working servant's point of view, learning more about him felt unnecessary since the section was also told by one of the main character's point of view, which to me was the more interesting point of view. The last thing that bothered me was the fact that I wanted to stop reading at times there were too many unnecessary side arcs like the sexual ones and the repetitive conversations about unchanging politics or what was lacking from each side. There were developments throughout the book that I would have liked the author to go more in depth into. The past memories of sexual encounters seemed enough to ensure that the characters are indeed in love with each other. The reader doesn't need to be reminded so often about what the main characters don't have. I'm glad I read this book, but if I were asked if I would read it again or pick up the sequel if it were to be released my answer would be no.

When a translated book seems bland, it is hard to know whether to fault the author or the translator. Here, the translator certainly did the author no favours by injecting modern idiom and a certain breeziness into the book. The author can be faulted too, for not colouring the story with enough detail about life in 16th century Venice. I don't mean that the book should have been cluttered with description, but we hear nothing of eating or drinking or music or culture and the story itself is "a search for a politically important artefact - might have been set in any era. What we are left with is a readable but unexciting mystery set in Venice just before the Protestant Reformation. A valuable and politically explosive book is in the city somewhere and a "devil" is murdering people trying to find it. I liked the characters but overall I found the book unexciting. An average effort, so three stars. I received a review copy of "The Lion and the Rose" by Riccardo Bruni translated by Aaron Maines (Crossing) through NetGalley.com.

When an Italian author writes a mystery novel set in the early sixteenth century and the detective is a monk, comparison with Umberto Eco's classic is inevitable. The title is even evocative of the earlier work. The books are completely different however. "The Lion and the Rose" is a standard

historical novel set in the sub-genre of mystery; what the Italians call a "Romanza". The plot is concerned with a book, the publication of which would do irreparable damage to Pope Alexander VI, the most infamous of the venal run of Renaissance popes. It is set in Venice and in true historical fiction standards utilizes many real characters. The plot is typically convoluted, the dialogue is more than adequate (thanks to the translator?), but the character development could be better. I found myself wishing for some of the originality of Eco's work.

A good read but some characters are a bit predictable and I have not quite got used to reading 15 c characters speaking using modern idioms. I have visited Venice several times in my life and was not totally at sea with the place references, so that helped set the mood. There were some historical references I did not know and it was a pleasure to follow those up after I had finished reading. All in all a great entertainment.

I liked most of the story. Some parts a little complicated with many details that I did not find interesting. I liked the details concerning Venice. I like the plot. If the reader can make it through the minute details of nobility and the Catholic Church, the reward is following a good, historical "who done it", located in 1500 Venice.

When a psychopathic serial killer strikes fear into the citizens of 16th century Venice, a non-conformist German monk is asked by an aristocratic friend to help. His investigation of the horrible crimes leads him -- and the reader -- into a tangled world of hidden agendas, secret societies, commerce-threatening war and Church politics. There are plenty of interesting characters we learn to care about, and plot twists that keep us turning the pages. The story itself anticipates the Reformation and centuries of tumultuous politics.

This was an interesting read set in an interesting time period (just prior to the reformation) in an interesting place (venice). The mystery gives an insight into the types of pressures building on the church just prior to the major breakup of the church across western europe. Anyone who enjoys historical mysteries which are well written will enjoy this book. While perhaps not quite up to CJ Sansom standard reading this was a great way to spend an evening by the fire

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