



The Rossetti Letter

Christi Phillips

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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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