



The Marlowe Conspiracy

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1593, Elizabethan England: With his life on the line and the clock ticking, playwright/spy Christopher Marlowe teams up with William Shakespeare to uncover a high-level government conspiracy. Together, they race through Marlowe's tangled life of crime and espionage to expose the conspiracy and save him from the hangman's noose... But will anything save a man as troubled as Marlowe?

The Marlowe Conspiracy Details

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From Reader Review The Marlowe Conspiracy for online ebook

Linda says

The lives of contemporary poets/playwrights Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare are cloaked in mystery, and it's always fun to read books set in Elizabethan London. The Marlowe Conspiracy is no exception, and particularly interesting is the imaginary, adventurous friendship shared between two of England's most famous authors. What is perplexing, however, is the number of errors in the text that were overlooked by both author and editor. Common misspellings (you're for your) abound. Even more annoying are the verbal anachronisms - The Rose Theater manager Philip Henslowe would never have asked Marlowe to write a "prequel". Overlook those flaws, and what remains is a quick, easy read with plenty of period action and detail. (But I still believe that Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare...)

Oshun says

Got it on Kindle cheap because I was curious about Christopher Marlowe and had read none of the historical fiction exploring the mystery of his death and/or the question of his sexual preference. I'll probably finish it, but I wish it were better done. I copy check a lot and I've been wanting to grab my virtual pencil and write all over this manuscript from page one. It's not bad, just not stunning, and breaking my heart that it could be so much better with the tiniest bit more care.

Now that I am a few chapters in (cleverly labelled Act I, Scene 11--that whole thing is actually not as cute as the author hoped it would be!), I think I know exactly where the book is headed. Not wild about the choices the writer is making. When I finish, I will find another one to read on the same subjects. Next time, I will probably pay full Kindle price after looking for recommendations.

Erika says

Although there is plenty of evidence showing that Marlowe was involved in the espionage dealings of Elizabeth I's time, this novel felt sort of "forced" to me. It was ok, but I wasn't really engaged by the characters or the plot.

Trish says

An entertaining story, but the writing, editing and anachronisms leave a lot to be desired.

Alice Yeh says

In The Marlowe Conspiracy, Scarsbrook draws us into Elizabethan England and the double life of Christopher Marlowe, or Kit. As a spy for his patron, Thomas Walsingham, Kit has given his allegiance to

his country and his heart to the stage, in spite of recent jadedness over the limitations of his craft.

As far as conspiracies go, the standard formula goes something like this: innocent hero finds himself in trouble; innocent hero runs away from trouble; hero and confederates uncover an increasingly messy plot; hero saves the day and lives to tell the tale. Scarsbrook turns this step-by-step process on its head, as the suspected plot is actually more intricate than the real one, and the truth behind the conspiracy is revealed to the reader right from the get-go. In spite of this foreknowledge, the storyline remains intriguing, with surprises and stressful situations that are wholly unexpected. Seemingly unimportant information becomes crucial in later scenes, forcing the reader to pay attention. Also, taking a larger view, parts of the tale coincide quite well with the real Marlowe's Hero and Leander.

The author paints Marlowe as a friendly man with a good sense of humor but a terrible temper. As a spy, he has both physical skill and mental resourcefulness, and both prove vital as the situation around him worsens. In spite of his pride and his occasional bouts of arrogance, he is a likable protagonist who makes you urge him to succeed while shaking your fist at the villainy of his enemies. In fact, Scarsbrook's renderings of both Marlowe and Walsingham are delightfully human, and the changes in their characters interesting to behold.

The tension between Audrey and Kit is fantastic, and their hesitancy and internal struggle are in keeping with such a conservative society. The love scene is a bit hard to swallow, however, given its setting and the nature of their relationship before. I can see the importance in terms of hardening Walsingham's attitude towards Kit. All the same, the insertion of the act itself feels a bit contrived.

Equally difficult to absorb is the start of the friendship between Kit and William Shakespeare. Once it is underway, it is believable enough, but the start of it feels rushed, lacking the instant chemistry that would account for such suddenness. Something about Will's deportment also had me picturing him as a teenager, and Marlowe as the experienced adult. This could be due to the forced growth curve of espionage; even so, it was hard to imagine that they are the same age.

Scarsbrook's writing is comfortable, and his pacing excellent as he varies quick fist fights with slower, ponderous segments. My chief complaint, however, is a fondness of apostrophes that borders on gluttony. Instances of "you're" instead of "your" aside, the manuscript is peppered with pluralized words or varying verbs that are given apostrophes for no reason that I can fathom. I lost count by the time that I was ten percent in, and the quality of the author's actual word usage and phrasing was the only thing tempering my vexation.

In *The Marlowe Conspiracy*, the author gives a colorful tale that cleverly coordinates fact and rumor with his own imaginings. The story could very well stand on its own, even without the historical tie-in, as a well-written piece of historical fiction. More proofreading would likely be beneficial, however, as would a less trigger-happy pinky.

CuteBadger says

I got this book as a freebie for my Kindle and it's been on there for nearly 4 years unread. Had a go while on holiday and overall I quite enjoyed it. I knew a bit about Christopher Marlowe already and like historical novels so what's not to like. However, the constant spelling problems such as eating bread roles, a description someone being hanged, drawn and quartered by having his bowls (bowels) pulled out, and died hair meant that I quickly grew exasperated. Add to this some anachronistic plot issues and all this greatly

reduced my enjoyment of what should have been a much better book. How anyone could release a book with such major issues is beyond me.

M.G. Scarsbrook says

I'm the author of this novel, so I just wanted to give readers a little more information about the story.

As some people may know, Christopher Marlowe was a real playwright who wrote for THE ROSE theatre alongside William Shakespeare. He was the first person to use blank verse in dramatic form. His connection to the Elizabethan spy networks is widely speculated upon due to the fact that his patron was heavily connected in the spy world, and the Privy Council (the highest governing body in the country) directly intervened on Marlowe's behalf in a dispute with Cambridge University when it tried to ban his MA. Such an action is unprecedented and clearly indicates that Marlowe had upper-level connections. Marlowe's suspicious death in Deptford also involved several figures from the Elizabethan underworld of spies.

Thanks a lot, I hope you enjoy reading my work!

Christine says

Conspiracies are always intriguing and those of Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare are no exception. I was slowly and steadily pulled into this story and was kept there right up until the end. A fascinating and interesting tale. An enjoyable read.

Shomeret says

This was a fun read. I liked the way the personality of playwright Christopher Marlowe was portrayed. There were great moments in which he was clever or outrageous. Many people believe things about Marlowe without evidence. He is widely thought to be gay. In fact, this is the first novel I've read in which he's heterosexual. I have yet to read a portrayal of Marlowe as gay where he was rendered as sympathetically as he was in this book. The only reason why this book doesn't get five stars is that I guessed where this book was going fairly early. Yet the road I traveled to get there was entertaining.

Nae says

Well, it was a bit different, but the plot itself was kind of clunky and it was difficult to keep track of what, exactly, the author was aiming for in spots.

Lisa Hall says

It was.....OK. I didn't like the fact that great chunks of Marlowe's work was reproduced (if you're going to read Marlowe, read Marlowe. The whole thing. I promise it's worth it). Some of the grammar left a little to be desired and as said in previous reviews if you just want to read a novel loosely based on historical facts, then it's fine. Just not really my cup of tea.

Nev Thomas says

Three and a half stars. Good Elizabethan Historical thriller

Djrmel says

There were parts of this book I loved (the use of well researched details of theatre life and the Star Chamber courts), parts that made me cringe (yes, it's fiction, but fiction based on something as well documented as the time line of Christopher Marlowe's short life shouldn't play fast and loose with that time line). Parts of the book seemed forced (Shakespear's created involvement in the last day's of Marlowe's life came from being an extreme fanboy?), while others made perfect sense (a man capable of writing what Marlowe wrote *should* have been able to figure out that he wasn't being invited for a friendly drink in Depshire. There are plot developments that are convenient at one moment and forgotten when they wouldn't be (view spoiler). But in the end, my over all feeling was that this was a fun, far better than average piece of real person fan fiction, and that averaged out to three stars.

David Hurst says

Great story, and interesting characterisation. Enjoyable, but writing style sometimes irritating

Chris Stanley says

Another interesting version of the murder of Kit Marlowe. I enjoyed this immensely.
