



The Magdalene Mystery

Christine Sunderland

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Ten years ago a gunman opened fire in a parking lot, killing her parents. No one ever found out why. But a trip to Rome might reveal the truth. Thirty-year-old Kelly Roberts receives a mysterious envelope from her late godfather, director of a news service dedicated to exposing media lies, summoning her to Rome for a promising legacy. After losing her job, Kelly, a single parent, fears for herself and her five-year-old son. She could sure use the money implied in her godfather's letter, but she can't afford to go to Rome, she can't leave Matt, and she can't take him with her. Even stranger, the note says to contact Daniel Weaver, a professor familiar with Rome. To receive the legacy, Kelly must first locate her godfather's hidden research on Mary Magdalene. Accompanied by thirty-five-year-old Daniel, Kelly embarks on the journey of a lifetime, finding clues in Rome basilicas, the Apostles' Creed, and her godfather's letters. But she is shadowed by another professor who preys on the young, both online and on campus. Desperate to find the manuscript that could expose him as an academic fraud, he is willing to do anything to keep that from happening...even murder. Unlock the Magdalene mystery...and the power of historical truth. "A gripping tale surprisingly easy to read. So much Gnostic and sub-Gnostic nonsense has been written about Mary Magdalene that it comes as a relief, as well as a pleasure, to read The Magdalene Mystery. Truth is often stranger than fiction-and much more fascinating."-MICHAEL DONLEY, Ph.D., author of St Mary Magdalen in Provence, The Coffin and the Cave. "The Magdalene Mystery has history, intrigue, romance, and predatory Internet behavior. Where else can you see a single parent and a theology professor compete with a cyber-predator to find a manuscript revealing the real St. Mary Magdalene? It made me yearn to visit Rome again!"-Paul S. Russell, Ph.D., author of Looking Through the World to See What's Really There. Don't miss Christine Sunderland's stellar Trilogy--Pilgrimage, Offerings, Inheritance--set in breathtakingly beautiful settings, or Hana-Lani.

The Magdalene Mystery Details

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Peter Mongeau says

Will the real Mary Magdalene please stand up! Much has been written on this saint, in the form of sensationalist fiction on the one hand, or dry academic essay on the other. If you long for a trustworthy antidote to both that is thoroughly enjoyable and well-written, *The Magdalene Mystery* by Christine Sunderland is for you.

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Susan Prudhomme says

Will the real Mary Magdalene please stand up! Much has been written on this saint, in the form of sensationalist fiction on the one hand, or dry academic essay on the other. If you long for a trustworthy antidote to both that is thoroughly enjoyable and well-written, this novel is for you. It is a satisfying book on many levels: mystery, romance, Church history and theology, and travelogue. I recommended it for anyone who loves the Church, or who may be unsure about the faith, and especially for those who have been confused by recent books and movies that purport to give a different and “more up-to-date” view. It is preeminently a book about truth, and the truth of the Christian faith – finding it in a world determined to discredit it, and coming to rest in it as the heart’s true home.

Aditi says

"Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means."

---Luke 8:1-3 (English Standard Version), *Mary in the New Testament*

Christine Sunderland, an American author has portrayed the most notorious and most debated theory about Mary Magdalene's life and truth in her new thriller, *The Magdalene Mystery*, which is a subtle tale about a middle-aged woman trying to live up to her late god father's last wish in order to bring the truth of Mary Magdalene's life in front of the whole world.

Synopsis:

Ten years ago a gunman opened fire in a parking lot, killing her parents. No one ever found out why. But a trip to Rome might reveal the truth. Thirty-year-old Kelly Roberts receives a mysterious envelope from her late godfather, director of a news service dedicated to exposing media lies, summoning her to Rome for a promising legacy. After losing her job, Kelly, a single parent, fears for herself and her five-year-old son. She could sure use the money implied in her godfather's letter, but she can't afford to go to Rome, she can't leave Matt, and she can't take him with her. Even stranger, the note says to contact Daniel Weaver, a professor

familiar with Rome. To receive the legacy, Kelly must first locate her godfather's hidden research on Mary Magdalene. Accompanied by thirty-five-year-old Daniel, Kelly embarks on the journey of a lifetime, finding clues in Rome basilicas, the Apostles' Creed, and her godfather's letters. But she is shadowed by another professor who preys on the young, both online and on campus. Desperate to find the manuscript that could expose him as an academic fraud, he is willing to do anything to keep that from happening...even murder. Unlock the Magdalene mystery...and the power of historical truth.

Sounds like a gripping tale, and indeed it is. But I don't know why I got a feeling like I was once again reading Dan Brown's *Angels and Demons*. Since Brown has used all his hypothetical theories to craft *Angels and Demons*, it not only irked the readers all around the world but has also disturbed the truth behind Mary Magdalene. Hats off to Christine, for researching extensively for her plot and showing us the real truth behind Mary Magdalene's life and her connection to the Son of God. Well this story is going to take you to Rome and the author has done full justice by giving life to Rome with her choice of simple words. The author has written this story with so passion that for a moment I felt like I was lost into the story, hopping from one church to another in Rome, along with Daniel to look for the hidden clues. This was a completely roller-coaster ride filled with myriad of emotions, not to mention Kelly was a very loving mother and also had an aching and lonely heart, and thrill and fear!

Her description about the churches in Rome is very bright, vivid and striking. I can almost see the intricate details craved on the walls of those churches. Although there were not much sightseeing in Rome apart from the churches and all the while Kelly and Daniel were rushing to get to the end of the clue to save themselves from that evil and dangerous Dr. Stanby, who will stop for a second to kill, but still I felt Rome to be very alive with the author's eyes.

The characters, from evil ones like Dr. Stanby to the good ones like a mysterious and secretive Sister to the main characters like Kelly and Daniel, all were crafted with enough passion and even flaws. But their demeanor was quite striking and completely believable. I really liked the use of eloquent prose of the author, which made the narration very smooth and easy.

And that classic climax will only make you fall in love with the author and no doubt, with Mary Magdalene also!

Verdict: *You can't miss out this enchanting and thrilling story which will not only take you to Rome but will also show you the truth behind Mary Magdalene's life!*

Courtesy: *Thanks to the author, Christine Sunderland, for providing me with a copy of her book, in return for an honest review.*

Bruce Judisch says

This is my third Sunderland novel, and, as good as the others were, it is by far the best. Ms. Sunderland skillfully crafts a tale that balances intrigue with history, while sprinkling in a touch of adult romance--by that I mean romance as it was intended for adults to pursue and for youth to witness as an example.

Her godfather, Father Gilbert, bequeaths Kelly Roberts a legacy richer in truth and spirit than in gold. She is to seek his magnum opus, a manuscript containing his painstaking research on the historically true Mary Magdalene, who has been reinvented time and time again by modern "scholarship," contorted beyond recognition for reasons both spiritual and humanistic. Kelly is to travel to Italy with an associate of Father

Gilbert's, Professor Daniel Weaver, and together they piece together the mysterious trail of clues her godfather left using the Apostle's Creed as the cipher key. Thus, Ms. Sunderland takes us on a tour of the magnificent cathedrals, monuments, and grottos of Italy's and France's early Christendom, picking up piece by piece of her legacy along the way. Pursued by Dr. Lester Sansby, who desperately wants the manuscript for his own nefarious purposes, Kelly and Daniel must stay a step ahead to keep their prize from falling into the hands of its worst enemies.

The history-rich narrative is smoothed, even caressed, by Ms. Sunderland's exquisite prose. You'll learn a great deal, whether that's your intention or not, gripped by the tension and suspense surrounding the fate of Father Gilbert's manuscript and the gradual revelation of Kelly's parents' murder. (Oh, I didn't mention that, did I?)

The agenda is clear: the exoneration of Mary Magdalene's reputation from the hands of modern historical revisionists. But the agenda never overrides the storyline. Ms. Sunderland is subtle, objective, and honest in her treatment of the mysteries of history and of faith. The pendulum need not swing to an angle too acute to dispel belief for the message to come across effectively and with class. It takes an even mind and skillful pen to accomplish that. Ms. Sunderland displays both.

Flawless research, enviable prose, gentle heartfelt delivery. "The Magdalene Mystery" is a must-have for parish libraries and should be encouraged for both young adult and mature reading. Highly recommended

Bravo, Christine!

Chad says

As usual, many thanks go to the publisher, author and Goodreads for my free copy of this novel.

This book was very well researched and comprehensive regarding the many theories surrounding Mary Magdalene and her years after the Bible stories. I found the story to be less of a mystery and more the story of Kelly Roberts' spiritual journey and return to faith. Not really what I was after but still quite entertaining and interesting. One thing that held true to any good mystery is that there is a really good twist.

This is definitely a great book for Christian readers but not so much for hard-boiled murder mystery or thriller fans. I did enjoy the book but found it a little tame for my usual tastes.

Christine says

I should start this review by saying that I was fortunate enough to receive a copy of this book through the Goodreads First Reads Giveaway program.

After the death of her godfather, a Catholic priest, single mother Kelly Roberts sets off for Rome to follow a trail of clues that he has left her. Along with new acquaintance college professor Daniel Weaver, she travels from one historic church to another in search of her godfather's missing research and in hopes of finding the legacy he has left to her.

I had not read any books by this author or from OakTara Publishing before and so I was pleasantly surprised at how clean this novel was—free of language, violence, and sex. It is very evident that the author spent a lot of time researching the subject matter and especially the settings of this book. At times I felt that some of the dialog was awkward and that some of the decisions that Kelly made seemed improbable or out of character, however if you are looking for a “clean” read that explores the tenets of the Catholic faith with a little bit of mystery thrown in, then this is the book for you.
