



Stealing Heaven

Marion Meade

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This fiction is based on fact: the 12th century love letters of the novel's main character, Heloise, the most brilliant and learned woman of Christian Europe who, at the age of 17, fell in love with her tutor, Peter Abelard. A celebrated philosopher, he was considered a cleric and forbidden to wed. Nevertheless they married clandestinely and Heloise secretly bore him a child. Discovered, they were forcibly separated and Abelard viciously punished by castration. Both then devoted themselves to contemplative lives. He became a monk and established a religious order; she founded a great convent, The Paraclete.

Stealing Heaven Details

Date : Published July 1st 2003 by Soho Press (first published December 1st 1985)

ISBN : 9781569470114

Author : Marion Meade

Format : Paperback 415 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, Cultural, France, Romance, Literature, 12th Century, Religion

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From Reader Review Stealing Heaven for online ebook

Bernadette says

I have only recently heard to the towering love story of Heloise and Abelard, so I was interested to learn of the story from Heloise's point of view. Two towering intellects from the 12th century, who met and loved, are the center of this story. Yet, I found the story focused too much on their physical attraction and not on their intellectual meeting, who ch I think fueled their love more. Only hints of Heloise's intelligence and intellect are given in the book- instead she continually longs for Abelard in a school-girl lusty fashion.

Diana says

Loving the way this book is so far :) . . . an easy read . . . I have been reading this book for a couple of days now and am completely obsessed with this couple . . . I have been also researching the lives of these two . . . Absolutely AMAZING!!! and also so heart wrenching . . .

Finished this book now . . . I must say it is one of the best stories I have read in a long time! I got really wrapped up in the story and also the lives of these two incredible and incredibly human people. A definite read :)

Shauntee says

This was the first work of historical fiction that I've ever read.

It sparked my interest in both the lives of Heloise and Abelard and the time period.

The work gets a lot of criticism for how "believable" it is but I think those that have nothing positive to say seem to forget that it is a work of fiction. And it seems that most readers seem displeased by the story being one sided, but I think that since it's from the point of view of Heloise and based on the letters exchanged between the two, it can still be an enjoyable read.

I felt that the writing was vivid enough to spark my interest in the characters and their time period. I think that the author did well in breathing life into the legend, myth and letters of this historical and romantic couple.

Jeanette Ritchey says

Beautifully written. You become part of this true story. Appreciated the authors extensive research as she wove together information from many sources. The characters are fully fleshed out. The dialogue is believable and vibrant. Heloise's agony is identifiable these hundreds of years later. She led a difficult life but through grit and guts made her world a greatly improved place.

Anyone who enjoys history or historic fiction will enjoy this book. I highly recommend it. She brings to life the student culture on the Ilse de France, the convent life outside of Paris

and her life as a child raised by nuns.

Kitty says

Love story of Heloise and Abelard. Kept my attention throughout, but not my fave.

Kristen McQuinn says

Loved it. The letters of Abelard and Heloise constituted some of my favorite literature in college. I did think in a few places that Heloise was a little too needy but overall this was a terrific read.

Meg says

This book is very hard for me to rate. It is a pet peeve of mine when an author starts with an amazing concept, or in this case amazing historical figures, and flops it. In the first part of this book it is very apparent that the author is going for shock value. Heloise and Abelard were some of the most celebrated lovers of all time, and yet this book made them seem dirty, selfish, and more lustful than loving. The book spent the majority of its time on the early part of their lives when they continued to bring strife to not only all of those around them, but most of all to themselves, and concentrated very little on Heloise's later accomplishments. I know from first hand experience that love can make you do CRAZY things, but this was less like love and more like a terrible obsession. It was embarrassing to read, and I had a hard time having any respect for them. I think I was supposed to be rooting for them, but instead I kept thinking, "Please! Know when to quit!" I think a good author would have been able to rise some compassion in me, as it was I couldn't wait for the torture to end.

Marisella says

A book of letters between Heloise and Abelard, two lovers in medieval France who can attest that the path of true love was never easy. Abelard is a professor, celibate, as was expected of one of higher learning. Heloise was the very beautiful and very young orphaned niece of a wealthy cleric/landowner. Their affair was conducted virtually under the nose of Heloise's uncle, who was enraged when he learned the truth and eventually had Abelard castrated. They then turned to the holy orders, Abelard taking vows and Heloise becoming an Abbess. Their story remains one of the greatest love stories of all time. I buy this book every few years, then give it away, only to buy another copy.

Andrea says

I love historical fiction that is actually based on history and not just a thinly veiled romance novel. So I was really happy to read this since the author actually set out to write a biography of Heloise, but wrote a novel

since she wasn't able find enough historical documents to support a complete biography.

The book was enjoyable to read to a certain extent, it's well written and the characters obviously had very interesting lives. However I didn't love how the author portrayed Heloise. She was supposed to be the most educated woman in France at the time, but she is completely obsessed with Abelard throughout her life, even into old age. Of course in a love story some of that is expected, but the author made Heloise feel very one dimensional. She didn't care about anything or anyone else and I find that very hard to believe given her education and accomplishments. The main problem with this focus is it makes the character pretty flat and hard to really care about.

I hate to be so critical of the book, because I did enjoy reading it. I think I was just disappointed because it seemed like it could have been a great novel and instead it was just a pretty good one.

Corryn W says

(3.5) Stealing Heaven was a well-written and engaging story about a young woman with unprecedented intelligence who falls for her older teacher. Most of the substance of this story happens within the first 200 pages but seems to drag on unnecessarily in the second half of the novel. Overall, Stealing Heaven is a tragic love story that reanimates a forgotten real-life love story but the author seems to lose momentum and, with it, the reader's attention.

Jenny Nielsen says

Basically, the "Twilight" of Abelard and Heloise novels. Not the most historically accurate or "in character" portrayal of the couple out there. Some details are flat-out wrong, as Astrolabe outlived his mother, Abelard's relatives were highly literate and Denise and Heloise were likely close friends, Heloise was more widely read and intelligent herself than depicted, etc. Heloise is frustrating and maudlin rather than compelling; Abelard a wounded sex god with a guilt problem rather than a rebel with a cause. More of a woman's studies survey of medieval times with Heloise plugged in as overseer-- not in character for Heloise, who was not only anachronistic but somewhat oblivious in character, or moreover well in tune with the era as a whole, which feels here more like a Saxon outpost than 12th c Paris. Helen Waddell who read the Latin and was immersed in the zeitgeist did a much better job.

Maria says

"Stealing Heaven" is a novel based on the tragic love story of Heloise and Abelard in the 12th century. The author set out to write a biography, but found too many facts lacking, and wrote a novel instead. She stayed true to the documented history and only crafted the details that were missing. Unfortunately, she gave away a major plot point in the prologue that I would have preferred to find out while reading.

Some of it was very sad. I was occasionally frustrated with Heloise for being clueless even though she was supposed to be so smart. And although Abelard seemed to be heartless at times, considering his situation made his behavior somewhat understandable.

Near the end of the story, I was truly drawn in. I felt that Heloise and Abelard made peace with their past and

were there for each other even when separated. So that when they reached the ends of their lives, they were at peace with themselves as well.

Amy Wolf says

A darned fine historical novel about the epic (and true) love story of Abelard and Heloise during the Middle Ages. He was a teacher, and as such, had taken a vow of celibacy. She was a young, attractive girl, and when he came to board with her family, guess what? Right. The consequences of this love affair are grisly & tragic, but I won't ruin it for you. Really liked the writer's style & her meticulously-researched facts about the period. Also a very interesting film.

Mindy says

I have owned this book for years and wasn't really sure if I had actually read it or not. I knew the story of Abelard and Heloise from other sources, but Meade really does make, at least, come alive as a person. Abelard is a little harder to get a handle on and I kept wanting more-- emotion, explanation, etc.-- from him. Considering, though, that this is undoubtedly how Heloise felt in the novel, I say that Meade was incredibly successful with what she set out to do. She also managed to feed my interest/curiosity in medieval monasteries and convents.

Bonnie says

I only gave this book three stars because I like the way the author writes, however I did not like the characters or the way she developed them. As a consequence through most of the book I did not care what happened. I think Abelard was a selfish man, and found it interesting that he ended up with the one thing that Heloise wanted, her son. If nothing else, by this time Heloise should have realized what a selfish bastard he was. However, my logical brain tells me not to judge Abelard and Heloise too harshly based on the characters portrayed in this book.
