



The Rose and the Sword

Gina Marinello-Sweeney

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Can a rose survive in winter?

Rebecca Veritas is a new college graduate, eager to pursue her dreams as a clinical psychologist. After receiving a full scholarship for an internship recommended by her old professor and friend Dr. Everson, she leaves the quiet suburban town of Cedar Heights for the big city of Los Angeles. As she adjusts to her new surroundings, beginning to work with her assigned mentor and a wide variety of clients with all the enthusiasm of a fresh intern, she finds solace in a mysterious antique bookstore. Yet, as her thoughts still linger on someone from her past, she is unaware that the present has the potential to haunt her the most. As time passes, a growing sense of unease quickly transitions into more disturbing events that make her question if all is as it seems. When circumstances take an eerie turn, Rebecca will find herself a player on a larger scale than she had ever anticipated, a scale that could cause one to pay the ultimate price.

The Rose and the Sword Details

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From Reader Review The Rose and the Sword for online ebook

Leslea Wahl says

The Rose and the Sword by Gina Marinello- Sweeney, is the second novel in her Veritas Chronicles series. These delightfully charming books follow the life of college student, Rebecca Veritas. If you enjoy beautiful, poetic prose, these books might be just what you're looking for. Marinello-Sweeney's writing style is unique and incredibly creative. The imagery she creates in her stories is unlike any other books I've read. And, as a fan of mysteries, I thoroughly enjoyed the elements of mystery and suspense added to this novel.

Many young adult novels center around main characters that are in high school, these books however, are about college age students. While this series is completely appropriate for teens, the depth of the relationships and topics put them on a slightly different level than most YA. This book is full of snippets, thoughts and moments of Rebecca's world as she moves into a new phase of her life, living away from home and working at an internship in psychology.

There are many interesting issues Rebecca has to face in this novel, such as deepening relationships, discovering just how strong she is, standing firm for her beliefs and faith, speaking up for those who are unable, and protecting the vulnerable. I loved seeing the growth of this young woman through the two books. Rebecca is an incredibly likeable and relatable character. In fact, I wish I could meet her for coffee at the fictional Coffee Bean, although she would be drinking "anything but coffee" (This line made me smile, reminding me so much of myself at that age).

The readers of Ms. Marinello-Sweeney's previous novel will be happy to know that many of the characters are back, friendships grow, relationships deepen and Rebecca remains wonderfully quirky. This is a beautiful, faith-based book for teens and young adults.

Christopher says

The Rose and the Sword is a compelling page-turner that will keep you guessing what is going to happen next. The readers will find that the characters are very relatable and will see the concept of true friendship. I would highly recommend this book to anyone who loves a compelling story that leaves you wanting more.

Josh Baker says

I thoroughly enjoyed the multi-layered presentation of Ms. Marinello-Sweeney's first book, "I Thirst", and looked forward with great anticipation to this follow-up work. While reading the first few chapters of "The Rose and the Sword" I found myself happily settled back into the familiar escape that is the author's brilliant storytelling rhythm. This unique quality sets Ms. Marinello-Sweeney even further apart from her peers this time around.

Each time I picked up the book, it was like being greeted by the sincere smile of an old friend. An effortless stream of fresh comical musings, clever dialog, poetry, complex relationships and suspenseful adventure followed, completely muting the reality of day-to-day life. When you find yourself dying to squeeze in, "just one more chapter" before retiring for the evening, you know you have a good book on your hands!

It was delightful to revisit these characters again, in particular Rebecca. The author was wonderfully generous in sharing Rebecca's intimate, private thoughts which covered a wide spectrum of emotions. The exposed vulnerability of the main character greatly intensified my connection to her, and made the story even more satisfying. I was impressed that the author addressed the very real intra-Christian friction among denominations, and from the Catholic point of view. This was depicted in a way relatable to any reader, regardless of their background.

Like its predecessor, prominent Catholic themes are the vehicle that "The Rose and the Sword" uses to progress the story along. I appreciated their presence in this contemporary story because it demonstrates how the tenets of the Church remain relevant today. There is no question that the author has great reverence for the Magisterium of the Church, and reveals these elements in ways that can only be described as beautiful.

Including poetic sequences in modern literature can be a precarious (win-or-spectacular fail) risk. Luckily, great care has been taken by Ms. Marinello-Sweeney to treat the reader to several exquisite sequences of literary imagery that stir the heart, but never come off as adolescent or corny.

There is so much to enjoy in this book! Do yourself a favor and add "The Rose and the Sword" to your reading list. You'll be glad you did!

Anna Elizabeth says

I was so excited to hear that Gina had published her second book of the Veritas Chronicles! And while I thought *I Thirst* was amazing, I was absolutely blown away by *The Rose and the Sword*. (Those who follow me on tumblr will attest to this – I was live blogging about this book all night.) I finished the entire 373 pages in a few hours – I didn't even know I could read that fast?? I guess it's just because I was just so captivated and *had* to find out what happened next.

The Characters

The characters were all so loveable and relatable?? (My English teacher would murder me if she saw me using the word 'relatable.') Rebecca is a characters I relate to quite deeply, but the crazy, quirky Adriana also speaks to me on a spiritual level. Peter is quiet, but such a fun guy. While I loved the play-within-the-story in *I Thirst*, I fell in love with all the different patients Rebecca worked with. Gina wove in their stories so effortlessly – it was seamless and they all became their own people so quickly. An old man with PTSD, two sisters with emotional problems, a woman who lost her child, a man who was beaten as a child and now believes he is Tybalt from Romeo and Juliet, and a woman who thinks she is ugly and worthless and has grown terrified of mirrors... they are all so near and dear to me, just as much as the main character herself.

The Plot

While *I Thirst* reminds me of hot summer days and waves lazily lapping against the beach, *The Rose and the Sword* is as busy and bustling as Los Angeles itself. (I mean, I've never been there, but I assume it is busy and bustling.) In other words, it's faster-paced. (view spoiler) Seriously, there's a lot of running involved. Of course, time slows down for some important moments and deep philosophical thoughts. I just think this novel is such a perfect combination of both the fast-paced and the philosophical.

I love how many of the chapters end with a poem, one of the chapters' prose even fading into poetry as it

ended. Gina is such a talented writer – she has such a way with words that makes this girl who hates a dictionary suddenly fall in love with sophisticated, colourful words. In fact, even the prose sounds like poetry to my ears.

Some Meta-Like Thoughts

I don't want to go a whole lot into detail, but there was a scene or two I wanted to discuss because it seemed very important to me. This part will probably make more sense to those who have already read the book.

(view spoiler)

These are just two sections of the book, but I think it is sufficient to show the masterful writing that goes on in The Rose and the Sword – the foreshadowing, the wordplay... It makes me very happy because I love a book that makes me think.

To see a couple of my favourite quotes, you can head over to my blog.

Sarah says

I wish I could give this book 4.5 stars! It was so good!

In the first chapter we meet Rebecca at her job at the campus bookstore and begin to accompany her on her day to day adventures. And I have to be honest. The first chapter gripped me and I was hooked. I can't say what exactly did it. Was it that she was a Catholic young lady like myself trying to stay pure in the world and explain her faith to others or was it the grown up atmosphere that college themed books and movies hold? Probably both. I also enjoy how the story is written in first person.

The book does have some mature content throughout (which is not necessarily surprising in a book about college students), so I would suggest it for mature 17 year olds to 18 year olds and up. Of course, there is nothing severely inappropriate. I think the authoress has done a great job writing a thrilling book for young people without including anything inappropriate or scandalous.

Even though this is the second book in the series, it stands well on its own as I haven't read the first one. The book is written exceptionally well with easy to read chapters. I like how the book did not always explain things right away, but left you thinking about what might have happened, or will happen, from chapter to

chapter. The book was written in a thought provoking manner and the use of poetry provided ample stimulation for the imagination. Peter quickly became one of my favorite characters and kindred spirits. Of course the best thing about the novel is that the Catholic faith is Rebecca and Peter's center and strength. There aren't many good books about young people in the 21st century who live the beautiful Catholic faith. This book is truly one of them.

Thank you for this wonderful book Mrs. Sweeney!

Aria Winslet says

The Rose and the Sword is undoubtedly one of the best books I've read yet this year. The combination of light and dark - the former being Rebecca's faith and personality, the latter being much of the storyline - plus beautiful writing made for a spellbinding story. Read it; you won't be disappointed.

Sarah says

I loved it! I also liked it more than the first book, since it had a clear storyline and was action-y.

Since I have a mental illness, it was great having Catholic fiction include characters with it that weren't murderers. Actually, most Catholic fiction today only includes people with nothing wrong with them or physical health problems.

I'm thinking, "Where are my people?" THEY'RE IN HERE!!! :)

Also, since mental health is a big theme, I picked up on a lot of important things quicker, or perhaps slower.

SPOILER: Most people would probably assume Dr. Yin turning off the lights when Adi had a fear of lights would be cruel, and then they would know she was evil, but exposing patients to their fears is an actual practice, Exposure Response Prevention (exposing patients to their fear, and eventually the anxiety is supposed to go down, and the fear will be overcome. At least, that's how my disorder is treated, so I DID give Dr. Yin the benefit of the doubt)

However, we then learn Dr. Yin has no intentions of it being ERP and abuses her patients with this.

Okay, besides that, it was a nice story about how to take down evil people in power (hopefully with a drama major who will scream, "YOU'RE ALL GOING TO HELL!")

Elodie (Readable Mélange) says

Actual rating: 10/5 stars

It's rare for a sequel to improve on its original... but *The Rose and the Sword* does. Even though I loved *I Thirst*, the second book in The Veritas Chronicles is even better!

There are many things to fangirl about in this book.

Where to start.

How about the very beginning (a very good place to start)? With the FRESHMAN DUDE. GO REBECCA. Very first chapter and you already have me cheering you on. Oh and he says he's Christian! Oooookay! Yup sure! And then there is the sophomore dude. I was laughing so hard - worshiping Easter lilies, indeed. XD

Speaking of the sophomore dude, there was so much apologetics throughout the book! Which means happiness, because I love theology and specifically apologetics! (I admit every now and then I couldn't help setting the non-Catholic characters straight before Rebecca even had a chance to say her thing. :D)

Also, Peter, please come on. It is high time for you to declare your undying love for Rebecca.

Dr Yin is thoroughly evil *shudders* Harking back to *I Thirst*, she reminded me of the Abominable Snowwoman.

The humour in *The Rose and the Sword* is fresh, and, other than a wee bit of disjointedness that sometimes made the story hard to follow, the writing was excellent. The style actually reminded me of Michael O'Brien's, which is a very good thing because he's one of my favourite authors.

It can stand alone from *I Thirst*, but you'll probably have a better reading experience if you read the first book first. Lotsa inside jokes etc. :)

I 10/5 recommend *The Rose and the Sword*!

Content warning: Some pretty intense scenes where Rebecca's and Adriana's lives are in danger, not recommended for young kids. Teenagers will probably be fine.

Marianne Komek says

In *The Rose And The Sword*, Gina Marinello-Sweeney has woven a beautiful tapestry of intrigue, romance, and rich poetic expression. Her characters are well-drawn out with dialogue that rings true. The story is interesting and the mysteries to be solved therein will keep you turning the pages. She depicts patients with psychological problems in a compassionate manner which is enlightening and refreshing. Her use of religious imagery and the kindness of the protagonist, Rebecca Veritas, makes this a fine work of Catholic fiction.

Vincent says

Plot:

The Rose and the Sword has a more conventional structure than the previous book, *I Thirst*, which included

stories that the characters themselves wrote. I prefer this style much more, as the plot is laser-focused and tightly structured.

Characters:

Humanity, love, hatred, good, evil, are all themes that are explored. Ms. Marinello-Sweeney is one of my favorite writers of characters because she is not afraid to include colorful peccadilloes and weird little idiosyncrasies that are the stuff of life.

The predominant trend in modern cinema and literature is to strive for a type of faux-realism when it comes to characters. Characters are neither good nor bad, they're merely good because they were formed that way with a sense of duty or they're merely misguided or heavily flawed. Ms. Marinello absolutely rejects that trend, with a counter-cultural approach between the protagonist and the villain(s). It is classic good versus evil.

And for all the fans of the Peter/Rebecca dynamic, as much as I'd like to, I ain't sayin' nuthin'.

Style:

One of the trademarks of Ms. Marinello's writing is it includes a sentimentality that will make your heart burst. In that regard, this book takes things to the next level. You very much get the feeling that the author has put so much of herself into this book. This effectively transfers to the reader, making the book intensely personal. The story is filled with emotion that will tug at your heartstrings.

Debra Gallagher says

Great book. Great intriguing story! The characters are really great .

Tim Speer says

"The Rose and the Sword" is the second book in the "Veritas Chronicles" by Gina Marinello-Sweeney. It follows the story of Rebecca, a college student who has been granted an internship with a prominent psychologist. Rebecca soon learns that her mentor is not the person that most people believe she is, and Rebecca must ultimately choose between doing what she thinks is best for her career, or doing what she knows is right. Guided by her Catholic faith and her wits, Rebecca navigates a tangled web of deceit and danger. This book grabs the reader's attention from the beginning and keeps it throughout.

Carolyn says

If I had to choose a word to describe The Rose and the Sword, I think I'd go with "eclectic." Part poetry, part prose, contemporary with a touch of romance, humor, suspense, peril, and Catholic apologetics, I understand now why one reviewer described it as poetic.

The breaks within chapters develop a rhythm somewhat like verse, leaving the reader to discern reality from

imagination. (In that respect, it reminds me of *Falling for His Madness* by Katharine Grubb.) While the narrative advances with conflict and resolution, it often dallies with simple musings or slices of life that also contribute to the poetic quality.

The characters are well-developed, the writing solid, and the editing excellent. It's also a "clean read" appropriate for both teens and adults. I look forward to reading more from Gina Marinello-Sweeney.

(I received a free evaluation copy from the author. Opinions expressed are my own.)

Susan Peek says

I have never read a book quite like "The Rose and the Sword." While it's definitely a novel, it is also poetry. Not poetry in the sense of lines and lines of verse (although there is a little of that) but rather poetry in the way the author thinks (if that makes sense!) Gina Marinello-Sweeney takes the reader into the mind of her heroine, Rebecca, with deep musings, often about her Catholic faith, which challenges the reader to think. I was impressed how deftly she wove spiritual themes into the story, which is a blend of psychological thriller, coming-of-age, friendship, and discovery of self.

The heroine works in a psychiatric ward, which I found especially interesting. The author handles such a delicate subject with very real compassion, while not compromising her plot or characters.

This book is the sequel to "I Thirst". Although I haven't yet read that one, it was easy to slip into this story without knowing that backstory, so it's not essential to read the other one first.

While the author's style certainly isn't for everyone, I think young adults, new adults, and anyone with a sense of beauty and a love of poetry will enjoy this unique book.

Theresa Linden says

The Rose and The Sword is the second book I've read by Gina Marinello Sweeney and many of the same characters are back! The story is told in first-person from Rebecca Veritas' view. Rebecca is an intelligent, joyful, often care-free character with compassion, virtue, strong faith, and a quirky sense of humor. She is extremely well-developed through her thoughts and actions.

Sweeney has a unique poetic writing style. Many chapters contain or end with a sort of poetic or symbolic daydream that expresses the main character's mood or concerns, reminding me of how we often don't have adequate words to explain how situations make us feel. I especially enjoyed the elements of faith in the story and the lovely poetic thoughts about St. Therese the Little Flower and the Blessed Mother.

This story has so much packed into it! While Rebecca works on her internship with a popular psychiatrist, who is not what she seems, mystery, danger, and an unpleasant surprise sneak up on her. Rather than simply go along with things, Rebecca struggles to find the best way to handle the challenging situations that she faces. She is an admirable character and a good role model.

