



The Innamorati

Midori Snyder

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A brilliant fantasy novel set in an alternate Renaissance VeniceDo you know the city Labirinto?

The blind know it, and the frustrated in love know it; the barren women, the silenced poets, the drunken priests, the stuttering actors -- all the unfortunates who suffer from cursed lives. They flock to the Maze at the heart of the city Labirinto to be relieved of their curses. It is said that when a pilgrim enters the Maze in good faith, any curse that hounds him will be lost within the twists and turns.

Four companions, the innamorati, are journeying across a richly imagined Renaissance Italy alive with magic to meet at the front of the great labyrinth. Here, their adventures will grow ever more baroque, comical, and magical until they achieve the heart of the Maze -- and, perhaps, their hearts' desires.

The Innamorati Details

Date : Published July 1st 1998 by Tor Books

ISBN : 9780312861971

Author : Midori Snyder

Format : Hardcover 381 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, Historical Fantasy, Science Fiction Fantasy

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Kt says

Goodness! It took all I had to persist with this book. An interesting concept, the setting of Renaissance Italy brought to life, descriptions which did not mar the narration (I am looking at you George Eliot)-all positives in my opinion.

Perhaps the characters were introduced too frequently for my taste and they jarred. I don't have a problem with number, Anna Karenina was just fine with me. Some characters ended up as caricatures, satirical shadows of what they were supposed to have been. A further account of backstories would have solved the problem in this regard.

Kenny Gastmans says

De setting is absoluut mijn ding niet (historisch Italië - toneelgebeuren), maar de vermenging met mythen en fantasy maakt het aanvaardbaar :).

Monica Davis says

If you felt your life was somehow cursed, and you could rid yourself of that curse by walking the Maze in the city Labirinto, would you do it? Could you confront your deepest fears and sorrows? The wonderfully imaginative stories of some who did unfold in the well-written pages of *The Innamorati*.

I found this book utterly fascinating; blending mythology, theater, history, humor, and a lively cast of characters in an alternate Renaissance Italy setting. Highly recommend this book.

Margaret says

A multi-layered tapestry woven of threads from Renaissance Italy and Greco-Roman mythology, *The Innamorati* tells the story of the magical maze in the city of Labirinto, where it is said that curses may be lifted, and of the pilgrims who enter the maze: Anna, the mask-maker who cannot make masks; the actor Fabrizio, who stutters; Rinaldo, cursed to live by the sword; Erminia, the siren, condemned to silence and exile from the sea; Zizola, the street girl whose curse almost dooms the maze and its inhabitants; and many others, whose stories start separately and then intertwine into a satisfying conclusion.

Apart from the occasional awkwardness of language, I found this an entrancing book, with picturesque but realistic characters and a deeply imaginative storyline.

Nathaniel says

This was more than a novel, it was a journey for me. The author did something spectacular and amazing. When the characters step foot into the labirinto, you are right there with them. Wide eyed with wonder. The characters were exactly that, full of character. By the time they reach the maze you are already attached and in love with them. You want to see them find their hearts desires. You want them to be free from their curses.

The imagery contained in here will stretch your imagination. Even your wildest of dreams will pale in comparison. I encourage everyone to read this!!

Teresa says

This book has certainly gained a special place in my heart. The story is just amazing, it mixes fantasy with Renaissance Italy and Comedia del'Arte. The Italian comedy theatre where some of the characters, the best well known today, were Harlequin, Columbina, Pulcinella, and others I didn't know before. It's so magical and well crafted, and in my opinion really original. The destination of the cursed characters: in the city of Labirinto there's a magical maze that is supposed to be able to lift all curses...

Alyson Grauer says

This. Book. Is. STUNNING.

I gasped aloud. I laughed noisily in public. I held my breath for fear of sighing too loudly.

This is a delectable, delicious, mind-boggling love letter to Commedia dell'Arte, a theatrical form and tradition very near to my own heart. This book fills the mind with what ifs and then whats, and I shall read it over and over and over again.

Bookwormthings says

Wow, an unexpected surprise, I picked this up in a jumble sale thinking it looked interesting. Struggled a bit through the first thirty pages, working out what was going on, and then loved it. This is an excellent book, deserving of a wider audience.

J. says

It's rare to discover a fantasy novel that breaks new ground in the genre, and a delight to be able to forgo comparisons with Tolkien. *The Innamorati*, by Midori Snyder, is such a novel.

It is said that to enter the great maze at the center of the city of Labirinto, one can lose any curse that might haunt them. Thus begins the story of *The Innamorati*, and from the first page the reader will find himself engrossed in Ms. Snyder's story and unwilling to stop turning the pages.

The Innamorati, set against the backdrop of Renaissance Italy, centers on no single protagonist, but instead

chronicles the bête noirs that haunt a number of co-protagonists. Ms. Snyder has deftly taken the concept often used in television today - several sub-plots within a single episode, each mini-story tied to an appropriate character - and adapted it for *The Innamorati*. Among the co-protagonists: a mask-maker from Venice who can no longer make masks; a swordsman from Milan who wishes to give up the sword that rules his life; a would-be actor who speaks with a stutter; and a siren condemned to a silent exile far from the sea and her native island. There is also a poet, who at one time wrote the most beautiful sonnets, who loses his "voice" upon discovering his wife's infidelity. While Ms. Snyder places far too great a burden on this poet for his wife's infidelity, claiming he failed to provide for her wants (one could argue the wife's inability or unwillingness to accept what her husband was able to provide her - magnificent sonnets written to her and about her - as the impetus for her action), it is a subject best saved for debate and certainly not a flaw.

Ms. Snyder writes with a combination of clarity, wisdom and a playfulness that is rare today. Her narrative is evocative; her characters are real, and the reader will be easily drawn to them and able to relate to them on a very personal level. Best of all, *The Innamorati* is about personal identity - how we perceive ourselves beneath the masks we present to others, and how others perceive us. Readers may find themselves wondering whether they are who they are as a result of how others perceive them. While *The Innamorati* may not appeal to the purists of the fantasy genre (those who read Robert Jordan or Orson Scott Card), those whose appetite is for something more avant-garde will not be disappointed.

Bob Nolin says

What a way with language Snyder has! A rather droll, slow-paced fantasy, expertly done. The Shakespearean cast of characters makes it hard to remember who everyone is. Characters sharing the same initial letter of their names (Roberto, Rinaldo) doesn't help. An enjoyable read. A new favorite author!

Amanda says

What a change from the other Midori Snyder books that I have read, and what a delight. Based on, and sometimes about, the characters of the Italian Commedia dell' Arte, *The Innamorati* features a huge cast of lovers, con artists, thieves, actors, mask makers, degenerates, a Siren (that was unexpected!), killers, whores, magicians, and a Pantheon of Greek gods. From across Italy, they meet in the mysterious Maze of Labirinto.

If I got nothing else out of this book, I got a wonderful sense of how dramatic and over the top curses in Italian are! A simple English "damn" would never be sufficient for one of these characters. They curse and insult each other extravagantly, vulgarly, and thoroughly.

"I curse you, you pox-faced shiteater."

"Fuck off, you shitty, bed-pissing hangman's knot!"

"You slimy snot-nosed, prickless son of a bitch! I'll beat you to a pulp if you don't shove off!"

"You old nun's fart!"

"Tool of another's lust!"

"Drawbridge mouth that's always open!"

"Stinking sardine!"

"Bowel builder!"

And they love with just as much fervor:

"Columbina, my little cheese, do you know that I love you?" the mask asked.

"Arlecchino, my big sausage, tell me the whole of it!" Mirabella answered.

"I love you more than sailors love their cabin boys!" the mask crooned.

"I love you more than girls love rich old men!"

"I love you more than friars love brandy!"

"I love you more than actors love applause!"

"Hold it right there," Arlecchino exclaimed, a finger held up in the air. "That's too much!"

"Yes, I can't help it. Look, Giano," she said, pointing. "They seem so small, so helpless from up here. And yet I think each one of them deserves a happy ending. Life should be full of the good things, a warm bed..."

"Sex!"

"Food!"

"Sex!"

"You said that already," Zizola grinned.

"Sorry. How about love then? That encompasses all of it. You can love the roasted capon or the pretty wife of your neighbor, the act of sucking on peaches or your neighbor's pretty wife's--"

"What makes a man leave the comfort of his table, take to the road, brave dragons and savage women that threaten to tear him into shreds? It isn't the promise of thumping ripe melons or acquiring a widow's wealth," he said good-humoredly. "It's the power of the woman herself. It's the force of her glance that penetrates like the arrows of Eros. It's the silk of her skin, the sweet scent of her breath, the strength of her hands. I could do nothing else but follow. When Anna left Venice, nothing else in Venice existed."

Sigh...

The Innamorati, The Lovers, mixes a real Italy with one that exists only on stage, in between the covers of books, and in our imaginations. It is dark, dangerous and dirty, though it is also filled with acts of kindness, sacrifice, humor, and love. I thoroughly enjoyed it and have heard, on her website, that Midori Snyder may be writing a sequel, or companion book, that takes us back to the world of the Maze. I would like that...

MA says

This book is really hard to rate. I'm not giving it a rating, because I don't want recommendations based on it. (I'm looking at you, DeLint. You stay off my recommendations.) One of the cover blurbs is a Charles DeLint compliment. If you like DeLint, don't believe anything negative I say in this review. You'll love *The Innamorati*. DeLint has really neat ideas and really gorgeous cover art, and manages to just fall so very, very flat for me every time.

The Innamorati didn't quite fall flat. I enjoyed it more than a DeLint book. But every time I started to really care about the characters, the perspective changed again, so that overall it felt very flat and artificial. That's a

shame, because it was a fabulous, layered, interesting book whose conclusion wrapped up terribly well-- I just never felt that YES to any of the characters.

Maybe that's what Snyder was going for? It IS a book about masks.

But maybe if they'd spent a few less paragraphs shouting the love scene about the sausages at each other, they could have had just a little more ... other stuff...

Myridian says

This book is set in a fictional Renaissance Italy and follows a cast of characters all of whom believe they are cursed and many of whom have some link to the theatre. There is a carnevale mask-maker, a siren, a duelist, a beggar girl. Each character is somehow plagued and either intentionally or unintentionally makes his/her way to a legendary maze hoping that by traversing the maze his/her curse will be dispelled.

My reaction to this book was very uneven. Part of my problem is that I am not overly fond of stereotypical Italian culture. The drama and emotional volatility just comes across as annoying to me. Having been in Italy one time I would attest to the fact that there is truth to that stereotype, but I still found Snyder played it up too much. Additionally, having the theatre being a theme within the book seemed to just celebrate the lack of emotion regulation rather than pointing out that this inability to handle emotion well causes the majority of the problems the characters face. The fact that characters do seem to curse each other with distressing frequency (often with dire consequences) also seemed a symptom of this to me.

I will say that the first section of the book was the weakest. Snyder introduces her enormous cast but without making any of them particularly sympathetic. While that is a brave move, I found it interfered with my ability to connect with the story. I couldn't help wondering if any of the characters had an altruistic bone in his/her body. Later we realize that this is likely a symptom of their suffering, but it made the book difficult to plow through. The first third of the book also seemed somewhat disjointed as Snyder follows the threads of the story of each of her many characters until they all reach the maze. I recognize that some fragmentation is inevitable with the number of characters Snyder takes on, but I still felt the book would have been better if we'd spent more time with a smaller cast (did we really need the duelist and the prostitute). It almost felt like Snyder didn't trust the first groups of characters to be interesting enough to hold our attention and instead had to continuously bring in more people. For that matter, the climax of the entire novel features a heroine that didn't appear until the last third of the book.

What I did like about the book really comes down to the maze. With the maze Snyder has created an archetypal representation of the unconscious with all its symbols and mysticism. The way each character goes through a personal transformation when confronted with those symbols goes back to what is most powerful in any system of mythology, Italian/Roman or otherwise. Snyder's language, particularly in how she confronts her characters with the maze accentuated the affect. I somehow wish Snyder had given us just a series of short stories linked by the maze. So while I enjoyed the novel, I am far from recommending it wholeheartedly.

Lori says

This was a thoroughly entertaining romp through old Italy when Commedia del Arte ruled. And since I did Commedia theatre, it was especially amusing. There's some fine characters, as a matter of fact all of them were people I would like to know in real life. Well, except for one or 2, but even those, not quite human, have their purpose and even become redeemable. Extremely clever spin on journeying through a life-changing maze.

So why only 3 stars? That's actually a darn decent rating from me! At this point I don't know if the book will stick, with flashes of memories, or if it was a Good Read at the time.

Victoria says

Wow... Just WOW.

5 strong solid stars.

Is this my new favorite book? I mean, I already want to read it again.

I am for once, blown away. I was left speechless for 24 hours after finishing this book because my brain needed time to absorb and relish this delicious meal of a story.

I loved this book so much, that now I am actually taking a break from everything in the world, Because I am in mourning....

::throws self to the floor::

AYY MADDODOONNNNAAA MIAAA

::puts both palms to face::

"what am I supposed to do with myself now??? Ohhhh the Drama that is this cruel life!!!"

::spits twice into palm and holds to the sky::

"Uncurse me God!! allow me to read another story as good as this in my lifetime!!"

This is an epic tale that includes beautiful unique characters that have different paths and intertwine at the center of the Labyrinth. It is chock full of suspense, drama, romance, humor, and mythological references. There is not ONE boring section to this story.

This book captures what it is really like to be an Italian. I think we are just naturally dramatic and over the top. This Labyrinth world is so surreal, and mysterious and full of superstition. As an Italian American woman, I am fully satisfied with what the author did with these characters and the construction of this story. I laughed, I cried, I gasped, I was truly touched, and most of all it made me even more PROUD to be an Italian. <3

This is TRUE literature in its finest form!

ENCORE!!!!!! ENCORE!!!!
