

### The Poison Diaries

By Maryrose Wood, The Duchess of Northumberland



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In the right dose, everything is a poison . . . even love.

Jessamine Luxton has lived all her sixteen years in an isolated cottage near Alnwick Castle with her father, Thomas, a feared and respected apothecary. His pride and obsession, a poison garden, contains exotic and local specimens of the most dangerous plants in the world. But Jessamine is absolutely forbidden to enter.

Her life changes forever the day a traveler brings a stranger to their cottage, claiming that the young man has special gifts that Thomas might value. Jessamine is intrigued by the young man, who goes by the name of Weed. He has an intense sensitivity to growing things, and an even rarer and more specialized knowledge about plants than Thomas does. As Jessamine falls in love with Weed, she learns his extraordinary secret—and is drawn into the dangerous world of the poison garden in a way she never could have imagined. . . .



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#### **Editorial Review**

#### From School Library Journal

Gr 7 Up-Readers will be intrigued by both the romance and complex moral questions in this fantasy set in late-18th-century England. Jessamine, 16, lives with her apothecary father, Thomas Luxton, in the remote countryside near Alnwick Castle. As she keeps house and tends to the gardens, there is one place she is forbidden to go: only her father enters the locked apothecary garden where he nurtures poisonous plants collected from all over the world. Their pastoral existence is interrupted by the unexpected arrival of Weed, a straggly teenage orphan who has an inexplicable knowledge of the medicinal uses of plants. As romance blossoms between Jessamine and Weed, she discovers that he is able to communicate with all growing things. Luxton begins to crave Weed's know-how and allows him into the apothecary garden, where the teen is made physically ill by the overwhelmingly evil personalities of the poisonous blooms. What begins that day propels the three characters into a tangled web of passion, betrayal, and the supernatural influence of the Prince of Poison. The novel explores the nature of good and evil and the consequences of choices whatever their intentions. As Luxton's explanation foreshadows, a plant that can kill used in one way can heal used in another. Told mostly in Jessamine's voice, the story has a compelling sense of urgency and mystery even as climactic events become too melodramatic. The book is based on a concept by the current Duchess of Northumberland who created the real Poison Garden at Alnwick Castle.-Cheri Dobbs, Detroit Country Day Middle School, Beverly Hills, MIα(c) Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

#### From **Booklist**

Jessamine is skilled at growing plants, but her apothecary father won't allow her into his locked garden of poisonous specimens for fear that she will come to harm. Then Weed, an orphan with a mysterious gift with plants, is left with the family, and things take a strange turn at the peaceful cottage. This intriguing fantasy has many tendrils to wrap around teen hearts: there is the budding romance between Jessamine and Weed, a grave illness that threatens Jessamine's life, Weed's supernatural skills, a series of chilling folklore-worthy tests of Weed's love, and encounters with Oleander, a figure who enters Jessamine's fevered dreams and implores her to abandon Weed and join him in death. The haunting ending will leave readers wanting to talk about the themes of cruelty, honesty, and loyalty. The setting is the area near Alnwick Castle in England, the real home of the Duchess of Northumberland, who has established her very own Poison Garden, and where (savvy fans may know) the scenes at Hogwarts were filmed in the Harry Potter movie series. Grades 8-11. -- Cindy Dobrez

#### Review

"Lyrical and lovely, a fast-paced literary gem."— (Ally Carter, New York Times bestselling author of Heist Society)

"This intriguing fantasy has many tendrils to wrap around teen hearts. The haunting ending will leave readers wanting to talk about the themes of cruelty, honesty, and loya—lty." (Booklist)

"A passionate story....Wood does a marvelous job of creating heart-wrenching decisions for her characters and portraying a doomed romance reminiscent of Romeo and Juliet." (Publishers Weekly)

"Wood fashions a narrative whose conventions of gothic romance intertwine with, then utterly succumb to, the brutal forces of human obsession. Absorbing." (Kirkus Reviews)

#### **Users Review**

#### From reader reviews:

#### **Roy Christy:**

Reading can called imagination hangout, why? Because if you are reading a book especially book entitled The Poison Diaries your head will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in each aspect that maybe not known for but surely will end up your mind friends. Imaging each word written in a e-book then become one form conclusion and explanation that will maybe you never get prior to. The The Poison Diaries giving you an additional experience more than blown away your thoughts but also giving you useful information for your better life in this particular era. So now let us teach you the relaxing pattern here is your body and mind is going to be pleased when you are finished studying it, like winning a sport. Do you want to try this extraordinary paying spare time activity?

#### Geneva Milbourn:

Do you have something that you like such as book? The book lovers usually prefer to decide on book like comic, brief story and the biggest the first is novel. Now, why not hoping The Poison Diaries that give your satisfaction preference will be satisfied by means of reading this book. Reading addiction all over the world can be said as the method for people to know world better then how they react in the direction of the world. It can't be stated constantly that reading addiction only for the geeky person but for all of you who wants to possibly be success person. So, for all you who want to start examining as your good habit, you can pick The Poison Diaries become your starter.

#### **Aaron Tolleson:**

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#### **Ralph Pettie:**

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