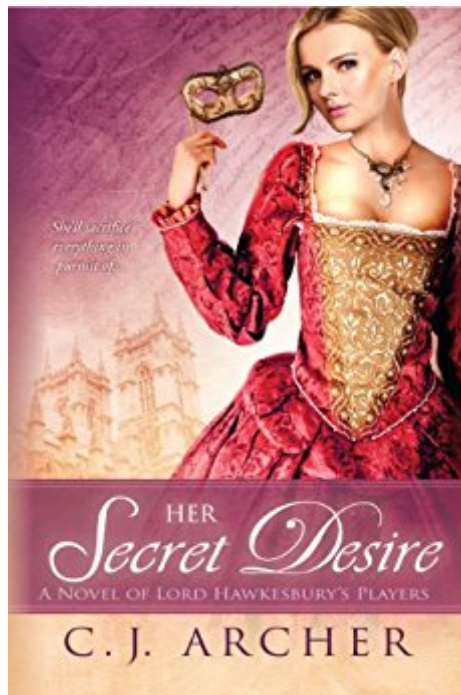




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Her Secret Desire (A Novel Of Lord Hawkesbury's Players Book 1)



Synopsis

Previously available as *A Secret Life*. Prepare for a romp through Elizabethan England, where finding love is written in the stars... Comely, courageous Minerva Peabody, a poor but passionate playwright, is determined to make her mark. Ill-fated to live in Elizabethan England, when women were deemed the inferior sex and most assuredly did not write plays, Min will prevail. With her finished play in hand, she implores Roger Style, a local theatre manager in London, to read it. Though desperate in his own right due to a string of commercial failures, all Style sees before him is a woman playwright, and refuses to even look at her work. On impulse, Min changes her story, claiming the play was written by the man standing across the street, and secures the manager's agreement to review it. But her choice of surrogate, Robert Blake Blakewell, promises to be a mixed blessing indeed. Blake, a handsome blue-eyed sea captain with his own agenda, is a man with a mysterious past, a pair of breathtaking shoulders, and an irresistible aura of intrigue. Though he agrees to her outlandish proposal, she has to wonder, as she gets lost in his eyes, what in the world she's gotten herself into. Blake's own mission? To ferret out the cad in Roger Style's theatre company responsible for getting his sister with child. And when that objective threatens to derail Min's nascent career, his dilemma is a daunting one: protect either his family's honor or the woman who's slowly but surely softening his heart and winning his love. Funny, fast-paced, and with a deliciously dark edge, *Her Secret Desire* speaks to any woman who's ever had to fight for her dreams in a world that just won't take her seriously.

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Customer Reviews

If an author wants to set a book in 16th-century England, then shouldn't she attempt to represent the customs, habits, and social structure of the period? In *The Secret Desire* CJ Archer writes a story that is superficially of the 16th century - with an Elizabethan privateer and William Shakespeare as main characters - but she really ignores how people would have talked or interacted at the time. So the 16th-century ends up being just window dressing for a fairly mundane plot with quite under-developed characters, who speak in 21st-century language and show no real awareness of class distinctions. What's the point?

Great original storyline that kept me interested despite the plain vanilla male lead. The female lead is wonderfully written and easy to cheer for throughout the full length novel. Minerva and Blake meet under unusual circumstances. Blake is trying to find the seducer/impregnator of his sister and Minerva is trying to get her play accepted and uses Blake at the last instant as the male who wrote the play because 'women can't write plays.' Minerva is a great character sorely neglected by her father living on the edge of poverty. She struggles to find the way to write the 'passion' needed into her play and Blake 'helps' her. Blake seems a bit too shallow and doesn't have the depth of character I like to see in leading male characters. The sizzle level is a mild-medium with an overall raw sexiness about it.

Most of the time, period romances are a bit disappointing to me, largely because the authors don't fully realize their characters or do so using very tired stereotypes. "*Her Secret Desire*" does the exact opposite of this, and as such was a delightful surprise. It captivated my interest from the very start. The romance between the two main characters felt genuine, and I loved how independent the female protagonist is. I also like that her male counterpart isn't just the usual abusive, shouting brute that a lot of romance novels rely on. While he is a bit prickly, those behaviors are in line with his character and I even noticed Archer thumbing her nose at a few of the usual romance tropes. (Which delighted me no end) Even better, I felt like the book was set in a living, breathing world--not

just a convenient back drop with corsets and wenches. This is a story that literally takes you back through time, and makes you feel like you're inhabiting these spaces with the characters. It's great fun. To top it all off, the ending is incredibly satisfying. I got this book for free, but I'd be happy to pay for it, and encourage anyone who's a fan of romance and strong characters to do the same. Thumbs-up.

Loved every moment and word of this book, I was spellbound in the story line, couldn't put it down, can't wait to start book two.

I've read many of Archer's series and decided to go back to the start. As always you push through to the first few chapters and then there's the first twist that captures you and you cannot break free. A funny historical romance.

Min was a strong female protagonist most of the time in a world before women were thought to have a brain for more than a hat rack. Very sweet romance even though the premise of what brings Blake and Min together is a bit random, but hey, I'm up for "not probable, but possible" introductions. I'm reading the next book in the series.

It's a good enough read but forgettable... The heroine was interesting but in the end she almost made a mistake that would ruin the book for me... The hero is sexy but I didn't find him growing through the book, you know? The best part is that it is a little different from the historical romances that I've read since it involves a very poor girl and a theater company in the sixteen century.

Great book.

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