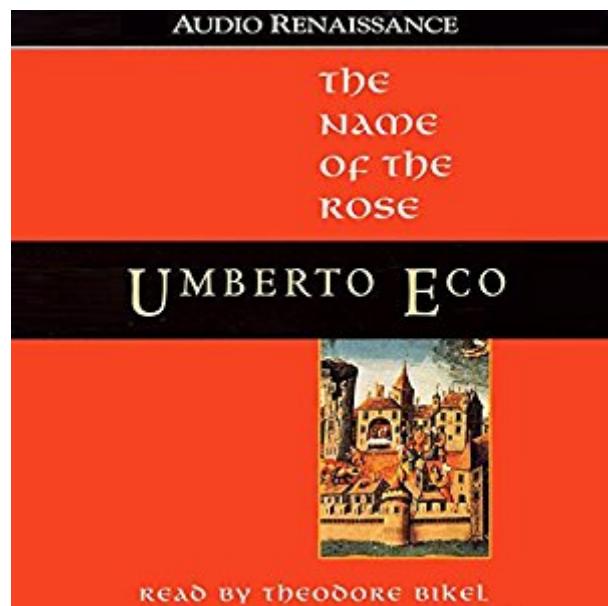


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The Name Of The Rose



Synopsis

(Book Jacket Status: Jacketed) A spectacular best seller and now a classic, *The Name of the Rose* catapulted Umberto Eco, an Italian professor of semiotics turned novelist, to international prominence. An erudite murder mystery set in a fourteenth-century monastery, it is not only a gripping story but also a brilliant exploration of medieval philosophy, history, theology, and logic. In 1327, Brother William of Baskerville is sent to investigate a wealthy Italian abbey whose monks are suspected of heresy. When his mission is overshadowed by seven bizarre deaths patterned on the book of Revelation, Brother William turns detective, following the trail of a conspiracy that brings him face-to-face with the abbey's labyrinthine secrets, the subversive effects of laughter, and the medieval Inquisition. Caught in a power struggle between the emperor he serves and the pope who rules the Church, Brother William comes to see that what is at stake is larger than any mere political dispute: "that his investigation is being blocked by those who fear imagination, curiosity, and the power of ideas. *The Name of the Rose* offers the reader not only an ingeniously constructed mystery, complete with secret symbols and coded manuscripts, but also an unparalleled portrait of the medieval world on the brink of profound transformation. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

One reviewer here on was right on the money when he said that reading a novel by Umberto Eco instantly raises your IQ by a couple of points. The *Name of the Rose* has been my first encounter with Eco's work, and I was for the most part very impressed with his skillful murder mystery set in a

14th century Italian monastery. The novel works on many levels. It is a compelling murder mystery, as young narrator Adso of Elk accompanies the wise William of Baskerville as he uses logic and semiotics to not only solve a murder mystery, but to decipher labrynths and hidden secrets of the vast monastery library. Interwoven with the murder mystery is a virtual course on philosophy and late Middle Ages religion, as Eco provides detailed accounts of the histories of various sects, includes scholarly debate on topics such as the poverty of Christ, and a history of the Catholic Church leading to the establishment of a papacy in Avignon, France. One is reminded of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson as William and Adso use logic and determination to piece together numerous bizarre deaths and occurrences at the Abbey, while encountering obstacles and outright hostility by the Abbot and his librarian, to name a couple. The setting of the novel, and the glimpse into a culture that few of us can even imagine, is reason enough to read *The Name of the Rose*. The book is not without its faults however. I think the book should stand alone, (ie you should not have to buy a separate "reader's guide") and I was very frustrated at the numerous Latin phrases that are included throughout the novel with no translation. Perhaps this is more the fault of the translator than Eco himself, but it makes for a difficult reading experience.

It is November, 1327. Adso of Melk, the narrator, has accompanied William of Baskerville to a remote, wealthy Franciscan abbey in the mountains of northern Italy. Upon arriving, William discovers that a murder has taken place and the body of the monk, Adelmo, has been discovered outside the abbey walls. The abbot, Abo, is very concerned and charges William with solving the murders. For, not only is the safety of the monks in jeopardy, a papal delegation from Pope John XXII in Avignon could well use the murders as an excuse for investigating the abbey, something Abo definitely wants to avoid. By the time the papal delegation, led by two inquisitors arrives, the situation at the abbey has worsened. Two more monks are dead and two more die soon afterward. The abbot's worst fears are realized when the papal inquisitors learn he has been sheltering monks who were once followers of the condemned heretic, Fra Dolcino. Although the abbot dismisses William, he remains and a few hours later, the mystery is solved, two more monks have died and the monastery has been consumed by fire. *The Name of the Rose* is first and foremost a mystery of the highest order, and it is possible to enjoy it on that level alone. But it is also a charming roman a clef, something I think many readers have missed. We don't have to look far to realize Sherlock Holmes in the guise of William of Baskerville or Adso as Dr. Watson. The blind Spaniard, Jorge of Burgos is easily recognized as the Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges. Eco also challenges us by thinly disguising figures from postwar Italian politics as various other members of the abbey. The

figures in the book thus correspond to other figures in different books or in real life.

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