

Secret

By L. Marie Adeline

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Secret By L. Marie Adeline

The erotica series for readers of 50 Shades and Sylvia Day, now an international bestseller

In S?E?C?R?E?T there are…
No judgments. No limits. No shame.

Cassie Robichaud's life has been filled with regret and loneliness since the death of her husband. She waits tables at the run-down Café Rose in New Orleans, and every night she heads home to her cat and solitary one-bedroom apartment. But when she discovers a notebook left behind by a mysterious woman at the café, Cassie's world is forever changed.

The notebook's stunningly explicit confessions shock and fascinate Cassie, and eventually lead her to S?E?C?R?E?T, an underground society dedicated to helping women realize their wildest, most intimate sexual fantasies. Cassie soon immerses herself in an electrifying ten-step journey through a series of rapturous fantasies with gorgeous men who awaken and satisfy her like never before. As she is set free from her inhibitions, she discovers a new confidence that transforms her, giving her the courage to live passionately. Equal parts enticing, liberating, and emotionally powerful, S?E?C?R?E?T is a world where erotic fantasy becomes reality.

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Secret By L. Marie Adeline Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #672616 in Books
- Size: in title
- Color: white
- Brand: Broadway Books
- Published on: 2013-02-05
- Released on: 2013-02-05
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.90" h x .74" w x 5.10" l, .56 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 288 pages

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Editorial Review

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Q&A with L. Marie Adeline

Q. What made you decide to write erotic fiction?

A. Quite truthfully, a week before I started writing S.E.C.R.E.T., I hadn't thought of writing erotic fiction. In fact, I'd *never* thought of writing erotic fiction. Writing sex is difficult for a lot of novelists, including me. Sex is so subjective, after all. And the few times I'd tried left me feeling queasy and vulnerable. But E.L. James did something rather remarkable. She showed writers that there was an incredible appetite for erotica, and I felt it was time to write a book people wanted to read as opposed to writing a book I wanted to write and hoped that others would read. Luckily, I found writing S.E.C.R.E.T. creatively satisfying; I couldn't have completed it otherwise.

Q. How did the *Fifty Shades* series influence your writing?

A. *Fifty Shades* was like a Zamboni that smoothed over the pocked ice so I could skate behind it rather safely. I owe her a debt of gratitude. And she also did something extraordinary, which was to commit to a love story amidst all the panting and sweating. That definitely influenced my approach as well. But the book that had the biggest influence on me was Caitlin Moran's *How to Be a Woman*. Her chapter about sex in pop culture was utterly brilliant and so true--especially how it can often be so devoid of human desire. I made sure that desire underpinned every single one of my sex scenes.

Q. Where did you get the idea for the concept of S.E.C.R.E.T.?

A. It's one of those things that came to me in an instant. I know it sounds insane, but it's true. I was talking to my editor about the Fifty Shades phenomenon, and she said that if I could come up with a concept and write it, she'd take a look at it. If it was good, she said, there was a chance they'd publish it, as the appetite for new erotic titles was so strong. How could I resist the challenge? I was, at the time, trying to finish a collaboration on a financial guide, which was vexing the hell out of me. Then Cassie showed up. So in a way, this book was born on a dare.

Q. Is the secret society within the novel based on a real group? Do you think this might inspire a few people to start one?

A. Again, this is something my editor and I darkly joked about--that people might be inspired to start their own S.E.C.R.E.T. societies. I don't know what to say about that except that the "S" stands for Safe. I've always been a fan of the step-by-step approach to fixing, changing or recovering from anything. I know people who've been helped by groups that consist of people who've gone through what they're going through, whether it's quitting smoking, over-eating, grieving, or drinking too much. When creating S.E.C.R.E.T., I imagined a group that could help a woman like Cassie, who is sexually deadened, come alive to herself again. So many women of a certain age feel that way, and I started from the point of change that Cassie arrives at and went from there.

Q. Why did you choose to write this novel under a pseudonym? How did you choose the pseudonym?

A. My original intention was to stay anonymous, not out of any notion of shame, but to let the reader develop a relationship with the book rather than the writer. Because with a book like this, which I hope people find immersive, the less the reader is thinking about the writer, the better. But then it grew and grew and became harder and harder to maintain the secret. Also, I'm a very private person. I had decided to write under a pseudonym to give myself permission to write about sex without thinking about the ramifications, or what my poor old (Catholic) dad would think. My previous novels are nothing like S.E.C.R.E.T. I hoped a pseudonym would help delineate the differences between the kinds of things I write--which include literary fiction, business books and now erotica. Adeline is actually my maternal grandmother's maiden name. She was born in 1899 and was quite prudish about sex. When I asked my sister if it would be mean or weird to use her name on an erotic novel, she said, "No. It'd be funny." So that's what I did.

Q. We'd all like to be introduced to the true-life Jesse. Are any of these men based on people you have known?

A. I've dated a couple of Jesses--guys covered in tattoos who push their fingers through their dirty hair, and can rock a tank top (even though that's just *not* a great look for most men, to be honest). Jesse is quite literally based on the character Jesse from the TV show *Breaking Bad*. (I hope the creators don't mind a little fan fiction from me.) I adore Jesse on that show. My friends and I talk about him, think about him, worry about him, hope he turns out okay. But wow, he'd be a crappy boyfriend. The rest of the men in S.E.C.R.E.T. are mostly of a type that I think most women will find attractive (sexually at least)--six-pack abs, wavy, thick hair, tanned, tall, and so on. I hope I'm right.

Q. What can we expect next in the series?

A. More sex of course, but what I'm looking forward to exploring is the inner workings of S.E.C.R.E.T. and what Cassie's role will be in the group. We'll see how all those fabulous men are recruited, and, of course, how Cassie's relationship with Will (and Tracina) evolves. There'll be some twists and turns, and there will be another woman going through the Steps, someone Cassie helps to guide. It will be sexy, empowering--and fun!

About the Author
L. MARIE ADELINE is a pseudonym for the bestselling author Lisa Gabriele. She writes and produces for television and radio, and her writing has appeared in the *New York Times Magazine*, the *Washington Post*, *Salon*, and *Glamour*. Visit her at www.secretnovels.com.

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