



Diamonds and Deceit: At Somerton

By Leila Rasheed

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A house divided... London is a whirl of balls and teas, alliances and rivalries. Rose has never felt more out of place. With the Season in full swing, she can't help but still feel a servant dressed up in diamonds and silk. Then Rose meets Alexander Ross, a young Scottish duke. Rose has heard the rumors about Ross's sordid past just like everyone else has. Yet he alone treats her as a friend. Rose knows better than to give her heart to an aristocrat with such a reputation, but it may be too late. Ada should be happy. She is engaged to a handsome man who shares her political passions and has promised to support her education. So why does she feel hollow inside? Even if she hated Lord Fintan, she would have no choice but to go through with the marriage. Every day a new credit collector knocks on the door of their London flat, demanding payment for her cousin William's expenditures. Her father's heir seems determined to bring her family to ruin, and only a brilliant marriage can save Somerton Court and the Averleys' reputation. Meanwhile, at Somerton, Sebastian is out of his mind with worry for his former valet Oliver, who refuses to plead innocent to the murder charges against him--for a death caused by Sebastian himself. Sebastian will do whatever he can to help the boy he loves, but his indiscretion is dangerous fodder for a reporter with sharp eyes and dishonorable intentions. The colorful cast of the At Somerton series returns in this enthralling sequel about class and fortune, trust and betrayal, love and revenge.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 8 Up—The intrigue continues in this addition to the series. The Averleys are in London for "the Season," a ceaseless parade of parties and events designed to foster advantageous family alliances. Having failed to secure a suitable match in her first two seasons, Charlotte is determined to snare a husband this summer but is unwilling to let go of Lord Fintan, Ada's betrothed, and he seems unable to resist her advances. Ada is keenly aware that becoming Lady Fintan will save her family from the financial ruin wrought by her brother William's gambling debts. She is fond of Lord Fintan and believes she has resigned herself to give up her love for Ravi. Rose is still trying to adjust to her new position as the recognized daughter of Lord Westlake but cannot escape her past as a lady's maid. She is unwittingly drawn into a relationship with the heir to one of the wealthiest families in England, completely unaware of his playboy reputation. Michael returns to Eton so that he will be better able to provide for Priya. William takes advantage of his absence to take unwanted liberties with her. Meanwhile, Sebastian continues his desperate search for a solution to Oliver's imprisonment. Despite the multitude of characters, Rasheed does an admirable job of keeping each of their stories enticing, steadily bringing each situation to a soap-opera-worthy cliffhanger. While there are a few satisfying resolutions, enough remains unsettled to keep fans anxiously awaiting the next installment.—Cary Frostick, formerly at Mary Riley Styles Public Library, Falls Church, VA

Review

More scheming servants and conniving debutantes at Somerton. On the eve of World War I, technology and shifting social mores are eroding the fabric of London society as the pace of life accelerates. In the second installment of this soapy series, the focus shifts to Lady Ada's secret half sister, Rose, who was raised as a housemaid at Somerton and elevated to a member of the family at the conclusion of *Cinders & Sapphires*. As Rose attempts to navigate her first London season as a participant instead of a supporting player, she is confounded at every turn by malicious rivals and conflicting messages about her role in the evolving societal landscape. Gossip (and the fear of it) is the driving force at the heart of the story. Although there is some mustache-twirling villainy-and brutal consequences for aristocratic license-most of Rasheed's characters are satisfyingly complex and flawed. With a few notable exceptions, no one is all good or all bad, leaving plenty of room for outlandish plot twists and changes of heart. Deft descriptions embroider the subplots that provide the historical context and intrigue-the trains of London's Underground Railway roar "like an imprisoned dragon"-and the anxiety of the age is leavened somewhat by humorous touches. Add this to the list of recommended reading for *Downton Abbey* enthusiasts. (Historical fiction. 12 & up) Kirkus"

Gr 8 Up The intrigue continues in this addition to the series. The Averleys are in London for "the Season," a ceaseless parade of parties and events designed to foster advantageous family alliances. Having failed to secure a suitable match in her first two seasons, Charlotte is determined to snare a husband this summer but is unwilling to let go of Lord Fintan, Ada's betrothed, and he seems unable to resist her advances. Ada is keenly aware that becoming Lady Fintan will save her family from the financial ruin wrought by her brother William's gambling debts. She is fond of Lord Fintan and believes she has resigned herself to give up her love for Ravi. Rose is still trying to adjust to her new position as the recognized daughter of Lord Westlake but cannot escape her past as a lady's maid. She is unwittingly drawn into a relationship with the heir to one of the wealthiest families in England, completely unaware of his playboy reputation. Michael returns to Eton so that he will be better able to provide for Priya. William takes advantage of his absence to take unwanted liberties with her. Meanwhile, Sebastian continues his desperate search for a solution to Oliver's imprisonment. Despite the multitude of characters, Rasheed does an admirable job of keeping each of their stories enticing, steadily bringing each situation to a soap-opera-worthy cliffhanger. While there are a few

satisfying resolutions, enough remains unsettled to keep fans anxiously awaiting the next installment. Cary Frostick, formerly at Mary Riley Styles Public Library, Falls Church, VA SLJ"

4Q 4P J S The London Season in 1913 is in full swing, and the women of Somerton are in attendance. Rose, still struggling with her transition from housemaid to being the second daughter of the Earl of Westlake, is intrigued by the roguish Duke of Huntleigh. Her sister, Ada, is newly engaged to Lord Fintan but is secretly struggling with memories of the magical moments she shared with Ravi. Ada knows her family needs the financial stability her union with Fintan would bring, but Fintan seems to be dallying with her sister Charlotte. Sebastian is still digging to find helpful background on his former valet, Oliver, who is on trial for a murder that he did not commit, while Michael is serious about pursuing a relationship with nursemaid Priya. And if the upstairs intrigues are not enough, downstairs there are conflicts as Annie becomes discontent with her role, Mrs. Cliffe is replaced with a woman of iron will, and Celine seems to have ulterior motives for her work with Rose. Welcome back to a young-adult version of Downton Abbey. This Somerton tale resumes where the first volume, *Cinders and Sapphires* (Hyperion, 2013/VOYA December 2012), left off. Fans of the first book will be more than happy to dive into this continuation of the pre-World War I soap opera that involves lords, ladies, and servants alike. The only stumbling block for some readers might be the French-derived fashion terms, but the story moves at a quick pace from start to finish and is sure to keep readers of this genre fully engaged. Junior and senior high librarians will want to add this to the Somerton series, which promises to continue after this one.-Mary Ann Darby. VOYA"

About the Author

Leila Rasheed is the British author of a middle grade novel, *Chips, Beans and Limousines*, and its sequels. She was previously a children's bookseller in Brussels, but now writes and teaches creative writing full time.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Gary Sandler:

Nowadays reading books be a little more than want or need but also work as a life style. This reading routine give you lot of advantages. The advantages you got of course the knowledge your information inside the book that improve your knowledge and information. The details you get based on what kind of guide you read, if you want send more knowledge just go with schooling books but if you want sense happy read one having theme for entertaining including comic or novel. The particular *Diamonds and Deceit: At Somerton* is kind of guide which is giving the reader capricious experience.

Sarah Winship:

A lot of people always spent their own free time to vacation or perhaps go to the outside with them family members or their friend. Were you aware? Many a lot of people spent that they free time just watching TV, or maybe playing video games all day long. In order to try to find a new activity here is look different you can read any book. It is really fun to suit your needs. If you enjoy the book that you just read you can spent all day every day to reading a guide. The book *Diamonds and Deceit: At Somerton* it is very good to read. There are a lot of individuals who recommended this book. These were enjoying reading this book. In the event you did not have enough space to deliver this book you can buy the particular e-book. You can m0ore quickly to read this book from your smart phone. The price is not to cover but this book offers high quality.

Clyde Miller:

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Belinda Fergerson:

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