

Bookouture

PRESS RELEASE

An epic story of love, passion and a remarkable legacy

Set between modern-day and 12th Century Pisa, this is an extraordinary novel which tells the story behind the creation of one of the most iconic buildings in the world.

Beautifully written, *Secrets of the Tower* brings to life the woman that history forgot – Berta di Bernardo. Without her, would the tower ever have been built?

A richly drawn and absorbing novel that will delight fans of **Victoria Hislop**, **Tracy Chevalier** and **Kate Furnivall**.

Review copies available now. Publication 27th March 2015

Pisa, 1999

Sam Campbell sits by her husband's hospital bed. Far from home and her children, she must care for Michael who is recovering from a stroke. A man she loves deeply. A man who has been unfaithful to her.

Alone and in need of distraction, Sam decides to pick up Michael's research into the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Immersing herself in the ancient city, she begins to piece together the mystery behind the creation of the tower, and discovers the woman that history forgot...

Pisa, 1171

Berta di Bernardo, the wife of a rich merchant, sits in her chamber, dressing for a dinner party. A gathering that will change the course of her life and that of a young master mason, Gerardo, forever.

A strong, intelligent woman, Berta's passion for architecture also draws her to Gerardo.

As she embarks on a love affair, her maid Aurelia also becomes spellbound by the same man. Yet for Berta, her heart's desire is to see the Tower built, and her determination knows no bounds...



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About Debbie Rix

Debbie Rix began her career at the BBC where she was a presenter on BBC's Breakfast Time before moving to present a variety of factual programmes. She is now a Communications Consultant, specialising in the charitable sector.

Secrets of the Tower is inspired by Debbie's own story: her husband, a television producer, had a stroke whilst making a film for Channel 4 about the Leaning Tower of Pisa in the 1990s. The novel also reflects her love of architecture - an interest which is hard-wired into her DNA as both her parents were architects. Many of the historical characters featured are based on real people.

Debbie is in her early 50s and has two teenage children.



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Secrets of the Tower excerpt

The candles sputtered their last, and the sky glowed violet through to pink as the sun began its journey across the sky. A cart rumbled noisily past, its wheels clattering, crashing into the quiet of the early morning, drowning out the birds who had embarked on their morning ritual. She had worked at the table all night, and was looking at a revolutionary vision of a tower which soared out of the ground like a delicate woven column.

'Like a piece of Venetian lace,' she murmured as she rolled the vellum and placed it carefully in the big oak chest.

And blowing out the candles, she took herself, finally, to bed.



Secrets of the Tower

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