

## The Rose and the Thistle

**Laura Frantz**

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In Laura Frantz's eloquent Georgian romance novel *The Rose and the Thistle*, an English lady goes into exile during the Jacobite uprising and has a fateful encounter with a Scottish earl.

Blythe, the duke of Northumbria's only child, is Catholic, forthright, and a multilingual scholar whose marriage prospects are nonexistent. She neither expects people's favor nor diminishes herself; she's aware that she's dependent on others. In the turmoil following the start of King George's reign, Blythe is sent to her godparents' home to await the return of the Stuart dynasty. But its newest earl, Everard, is brusque, shrewd, and skeptical about bringing her into a Protestant stronghold. He's also preoccupied by the brewing political uncertainty, so he keeps Blythe and her lady's maid hidden away.

Everard and Blythe develop a curiosity-based connection to one another—even as Blythe creates tension by wandering in the castle. They are both headstrong, tender, and perceptive about each other's needs—more alike than they at first seem to be. Blythe adopts a caring posture toward Everard's youngest brother, who loves literature; she becomes involved in the household's goings-on. The book's themes of self-worth, service to others, and healing are intriguing. But when Blythe's father sends her a suggested solution to her problems, she loses confidence and hides her passions. Still, her relationship with Everard continues, bolstered by their belief that God will provide, even in times of treason and danger.

Marked by majestic Scottish scenery and a memorable trip to Edinburgh, *The Rose and the Thistle* is a delightful historical romance set during a tumultuous time.

KAREN RIGBY (January / February 2023)

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