



2010

# The Duchess of Northumberland

Laurien Clay

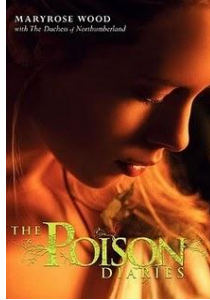
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Wood, Maryrose and The Duchess of Northumberland. *The Poison Diaries*. Balzer + Bray, 2010. ISBN 9780061802362. \$16.99. 288 p.

Reviewer: Laurien Clay

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young Adult, All

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Fiction; Historical Fiction;

Subject: Human-plant relationships--Juvenile fiction; Poisons--Juvenile fiction; Medical care--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

What is more powerful than poison? Jessamine Luxton, the daughter of a well-respected and studious apothecary with an obsession for anything poisonous, knows plants—that is, until a beautiful young man named Weed is dumped on her front doorstep. Intrigued by Weed from the outset, Jessamine notes his abnormal sensitivity to growing things. He appears to know everything about anything with leaves -- from the smallest daisy in the field to the fatal beauty of the belladonna behind the locked gate of Mr. Luxton's poison garden. However, both Jessamine and her father suspect that Weed is more than what he seems, and in the end, it may require love—as well as a knowledge of poison—to reveal all and to save her life.

In this well-written beginning to what appears to be a promising trilogy, Maryrose Wood and The Duchess of Northumberland spellbind readers with delicate traces of romance, deception, and poison. An artful blend of suspense and darkness that heralds back to Hawthorne's "Rappaccini's Daughter," *The Poison Diaries* is a tale of surprising psychological and spiritual depth that leaves no heart untouched, no corner of the soul un-awakened, and no bibliophile satisfied with just a single toxic dose.

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