



## A Royal Likeness

*Christine Trent*

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## **A Royal Likeness** Christine Trent

As heiress to the famous Laurent Fashion Dolls business, Marguerite Ashby's future seems secure. But France still seethes with violence in the wake of the Revolution. And when Marguerite's husband Nicholas is killed during a riot at their shop, she leaves home vowing never to return. Instead, the young widow travels to Edinburgh and joins her old friend, Marie Tussaud, who has established a touring wax exhibition. Under the great Tussaud's patient instruction, Marguerite learns to mold wax into stunningly lifelike creations. When Prime Minister William Pitt commissions a wax figure of military hero Admiral Nelson, Marguerite becomes immersed in a dangerous adventure--and earns the admiration of two very different men. And as Britain battles to overthrow Napoleon and flush out spies against the Crown, Marguerite will find her own loyalties, and her heart, under fire from all sides.

With wit, flair, and a masterful eye for telling details, Christine Trent brings one of history's most fascinating eras to vibrant life in an unforgettable story of desire, ambition, treachery, and courage.

Praise for Christine Trent's *The Queen's Dollmaker*

"Exuberant, sparkling, beguiling. . .brims with Dickensian gusto!" --Barbara Kyle, author of "The Queen's Lady"

"Winningly original. . .glittering with atmospheric detail!" --Leslie Carroll, author of "Royal Affairs"

"Unique, imaginative. . .replete with delightful details and astounding characters, both real and imagined." --Donna Russo Morin, author of "The Courtier's Secret"

Christine Trent writes historical fiction from her two-story home library. She lives with her wonderful bookshelf-building husband, three precocious cats, a large doll collection, and over 3,000 fully cataloged books. She and her husband are active travelers and journey regularly to England to conduct book research at historic sites. It was Christine's interest in dolls and history that led to the idea for *The Queen's Dollmaker*.

## **A Royal Likeness Details**

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Author : Christine Trent

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## From Reader Review A Royal Likeness for online ebook

### Taylor says

Setting: It's 1803 and England is in the mits of fending off a war with Napoleon Bonaparte and English citizens are beginning to get anxious; therefore, causing riots to break out.

Synopsis: A Royal Likeness is the sequel to The Queen's Dollmaker. Years have passed and Marguerite is now the sole heir of Claudette's Fashion Doll business. She couldn't be happier living the life of a tradeswoman with her devoted husband, Nicholas Ashby, constantly at her side. It would seem nothing could bring Marguerite's spirits down until a raging band of rioters end up on her doorstep harassing and accusing her of conspiring with the enemy as a result of being a French émigré. Suddenly, the riot breaks loose and descends upon her shop breaking everything in their path. While defending his wife's work, Nicholas is brutally murdered right before Marguerite's eyes and her life ceases to matter.

Marguerite decides to escape everything that reminds her of Nicholas and goes to stay with her Aunt Claudette and Uncle William in the country. She soon finds herself immersed in the depths of depression, until one day her aunt gets the idea to send Marguerite to work as an apprentice for Madame Marie Tussaud, who has a wax exhibition residing in London.

Just when Marguerite becomes settled in her new life working for Madame Tussaud, England's Prime Minister William Pitt, sees Tussaud's wax work as a useful war strategy and decides to commission a wax figure of Admiral Horatio Nelson. Madame Tussaud decides Marguerite has developed enough skills to go to London herself. Upon arrival, Marguerite captures the attention of two completely opposite men who desperately try to compete for her affection. It doesn't take long for disaster to strike again and Marguerite finds herself entangled in a dangerous adventure that no woman should ever be subjected to.

Review: A Royal Likeness is such an amazing adventure that greatly surpasses The Queen's Dollmaker, which was a surprise because The Queen's Dollmaker was such a refreshing read. What made me love A Royal Likeness even more was how the wax figures were intertwined with England's fate in the Battle of Trafalgar and how the battle was described in such great detail.

I was quite fond of Marguerite's character because she was so prone to accidents, which I can relate to in my own life. I loved how she could pick herself right back up and move on to the next big thing. She really did have a way with ensnaring men without meaning to. Madame Tussaud was a woman to be commended. She was a true business woman who really knew her craft and would never let anything or anyone get in her way. Officer Darden Hastings was a true man of duty and definitely didn't wear his emotions on his sleeve, which made him come off a little harsh sometimes. I guess you could say he reminded me a lot of Mr. Darcy in Pride and Prejudice.

Christine Trent really out did herself with this one! It really takes a hold of you from the beginning and doesn't let you go until it's over. The detail in this story is so mesmerizing both with the wax figures and the battles. I would recommend this book to anyone who loves a thrill-seeking adventure with a damsel in distress sort of feel. I can't wait to see what Christine has in store for us next!

If you would like to read more of my reviews visit my site: <http://allthingshistoricalfiction.blog...>

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## **Aoife says**

French born, English raised Marguerite is a married doll-maker who is quite content with her life, her husband and her little doll shop in London. That is until some drunkards come to her shop, shouting about the French and end up skewering her husband. Afterwards, Marguerite finds it difficult to discover any reason she should stay on in the world. Eventually her beloved aunt ships Marguerite off to become an apprentice under Madam Tussaud. Yes, that Madam Tussaud.

Madam Tussaud fled France several years earlier with her waxwork figures and her young son. With a grim sense of determination and a work ethic that would please any soldier, Marie Tussaud is determined to make her waxwork show a success. Under Tussaud's guidance, Marguerite slowly begins to come out of her shell, rediscover her creative flare and maybe even fall in love. Marguerite also becomes entangled with a famous man of history - Lord Nelson!

Overall, I found this a very enjoyable book! From the get go, Marguerite was quite a likeable character and I actually found it remarkable how fond I became of Nicholas within the few mere pages he was actually alive. Their relationship was so sweet and sincere, I found myself hoping the blatant obvious wouldn't become true.

I also liked the strong character of Marie Tussaud. She faced every single situation the same, showing off a very tough character, only letting in a few cracks for softness now and again. She was a constant source of strength and admiration. And certainly sounded like someone who would become a very famous success!

I found the first half of the book a very slow read, despite the timeline in it being quite fast paced. The second half of the book went much quicker for me, and I enjoyed the bit of 'real' action in it much more!

Although Mr. Philipstral was portrayed as the 'villain', I wouldn't quite label him so. Yes, he was certainly a scoundrel and a trickster, and you probably couldn't trust him as far as you could throw him but I believed that he would never really hurt Marguerite, and truly did care for her. In the end, the last time Marguerite talked to Philipstral was actually quite a sweet one, and showed that he thought of her even when his own life was at risk.

The characters of Darden Hastings and Brax Selwyn reminded me an awful lot (at first) of Mr Darcy and Mr Bingley from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Hastings has the dark, grumpy exterior but is really quite a sweetheart inside, while Selwyn was full of jokes and easy smiles.

There were definitely times that Marguerite irritated me, in particular when she kept taking certain characters at face value. I wish she hadn't been so naive and sometimes some straight questions and answers would have solved some problems (and eradicated some subplots)

Overall, I think when an author can create a fictional character and place them in moments of history, and build them friendships with people of historical importance, making them seem like they've always belonged there...that's a real talent. And Trent did it so, so perfectly.

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## **Diana says**

Marguerite is a dollmaker but when her husband dies, she becomes an apprentice to Madame Tussaud.

Marguerite learns how to make wax figures of famous and infamous people, set up displays, and run the wax figure emporium. They move the emporium from London to Scotland and finally, Dublin. Meanwhile, the planned invasion of England by Napoleon is thwarted by Admiral Nelson and his fleet. The author's notes reveal which parts of the story are based on historical fact which made the story even more interesting. Previously, I had read a novel entitled, "Madame Tussaud" which chronicles her rise as a wax museum owner and a wax sculptress as well as her life during the French Revolution. Trent's book helped complete the story of Tussaud's life in Britain. I look forward to reading some of Trent's other books.

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### **Pemberleyaddict says**

A disappointing sequel to the delightful "The Queen's Dollmaker".

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### **Heather C says**

Christine Trent's second novel blows her first one away – and that is quite a feat as *The Queen's Dollmaker* was phenomenal. Right from the very first chapters the events that unfold suck you right in to the story and immediately embed these characters in your mind. By the time you hit roughly page 200 you will not be able to put the book down – and if you have to, you will run right back to it ASAP.

The main character, Marguerite Ashby, was a young woman when we last left her in *The Queen's Dollmaker*. Throughout *A Royal Likeness* we see her grow up right before our eyes. She becomes the apprentice to the renowned Madame Tussaud. I really loved Madame Tussaud because she was a very industrious businesswoman and she was so enjoyable to read about.

I was most surprised by how much I enjoyed the Battle of Trafalgar scenes in this novel. I am not one who usually enjoys battle or war scenes – but this was very well done. There was the right amount of the description of the battle topside as well as the action below deck. This was where I became enamored with this story and could absolutely not put it down – I sacrificed sleep to stay up and finish the last 100 pages.

I would recommend this book to everyone. It is not absolutely necessary to have read *The Queen's Dollmaker* first – you will still have a very enjoyable story – but I would recommend it because they are both amazing.

**This book was received for review from the publisher - I was not compensated for my opinions and the above is my honest review.**

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### **Amy Bruno says**

In Christine Trent's sophomore release, *A Royal Likeness*, readers meet up again with Marguerite Ashby, niece to Claudette from Trent's first novel, *The Queen's Dollmaker*. Marguerite now owns the doll shop Claudette made famous, but when tragedy strikes she retreats to her aunt's home to nurse her wounds. To help Marguerite conquer her grief and move on with her life, Claudette suggests that Marguerite join her

friend Marie Tussaud and become her apprentice in the wax modeling business.

During her time as Tussaud's assistant, Marguerite learns the intricate art of creating wax sculptures as they travel throughout Great Britain, running the exhibition and sculpting various members of the aristocracy. When her skills as a wax sculptor are in need to aid the English against the invading Napoleon, she accepts the assignment and ends up participating in what is known now as the Battle of Trafalgar.

All in all, *A Royal Likeness* is a fun read, complete with treacherous sea crossings, scheming businessmen and political intrigue, plus a dash of romance. It's about losing love and finding it again and the endurance of the human spirit after tragedy occurs. I highly recommend!

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### **obsessedwithbooks says**

I was impressed with Christine Trent's debut *The Queen's Dollmaker* in early 2010. The novel appealed to me because it featured a strong, independent heroine with the unique employment of being an artist and entrepreneur in dollmaking. I am equally as impressed with Trent's sophomore release *A Royal Likeness*. Marguerite is a sympathetic character and it was a great pleasure to read about her escapades. I had planned on reading the book over a couple days but once I started reading I couldn't put it down and stayed up to the wee hours of the morning to finish it!!

*A Royal Likeness* combines history of the Napoleonic Era, including fascinating details about the Battle of Trafalgar, an abundance of adventure and intrigue, and a good dose of romantic interest. The novel stands on its own, although I do recommend reading *The Queen's Dollmaker* first, to better understand the enmity between Marguerite and her husband's mother and brother, Maude and Nathaniel Ashby, two characters easy to dislike intensely. I also recommend reading *The Queen's Dollmaker* so you can meet the hero and heroine of that novel, Claudette and William, who appear in *A Royal Likeness*.

Marguerite's naivety and preoccupation with overcoming the grief from the loss of her husband gets her into a bit of trouble, ok more than bit, but she soon learns to become independent and face challenges with courage and determination. I would like to mention the hijinks Marguerite gets up to, but I think this would spoil the story a bit so I will refrain. The author gives this character more adventure than she ever expected, when all she was trying to do was survive the death of her beloved husband.

For me, Christine Trent's novels stand out from others through attention to the details. Beyond the historical content, I learned things about ships I never knew before and the process of wax modeling was fascinating. I highly recommend this novel if you love quality historical fiction, adventure and intrigue, and original characters.

My Rating: 4.5

<http://myobsessionwithbooks.blogspot...>

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### **Tocotin says**

I don't even know why I finished this book. I guess I regretted having wasted ¥350 so I wasted something much more valuable - time. Go me. There were moments when I sat on the train and just stared out the window because I couldn't take it anymore.

The Battle of Trafalgar is in it. Also Madame Tussaud. Early 19th century. Napoleon, Jane Austen and *Vanity Fair*. I won't make any smartass remarks about wax figures being more alive - and smarter, and with much better sense of purpose - than the characters in this novel, no I won't, but I have to say that almost no one in it behaves reasonably, certainly not the Mary Sue, or any of her suitors.

As for authenticity, here is the reasoning of the officer dude who committed treason (therefore could be hanged, drawn and quartered):

"But you can certainly see why I was forced to do it? After all, I was languishing without a promotion, with no guarantee of ever receiving one. I had to have an alternate plan."

I rest my case.

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### **Virginia Winfield says**

It was ok. Did not keep a lot of my attention.

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### **Erin says**

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Go into this novel with an open mind. Having any sort of preconceived expectation of greatness will result in sound disappointment. *A Royal Likeness* picks up where *The Queen's Dollmaker* left off, makes a dramatic departure from its processor and never looks back.

Trent could not settle on a story line. Marguerite starts as the aspiring entrepreneur we know from the previous novel but quickly becomes Tussaud's apprentice, hero of the battle of Trafalgar and the central component in political dealings for the good of the empire. Personally, that never came together for me. I felt like the author opened a history book and said "hey, this looks interesting, where can I fit it in?" Trent has some talent as a writer but her inexperience is self-evident. The constant changes in storyline and characterization are exhausting to read.

Her fictitious players have such dramatic changes in their basic makeup that they almost invalidate the original novel. Claudette is content attending social outings and playing mother hen to her children? This is a character who journeyed to France during the Revolution for a doll order. I cannot believe she would settle down into a life of blissful domesticity. Where is the fire and passion that drove her to become the best dollmaker in London? Nathaniel and his mother were thrown in for comic relief but they play such an insignificant part that their presence comes off as a cheesy attempt to create continuity between the novels. And since when is Nathaniel obsessed with his sister-in-law? Marguerite was poised to follow in Claudette's footsteps but her determination and overall interest in her art is thwarted and never recovers. Her character moves into wax modeling but the inquisitive little girl who peppered the doll shop staff with technical

questions never resurfaces. Marguerite takes on the role of place holder. The story revolves around her but she never comes through as particularly interested or devoted to her craft.

The historic cast is also ill-treated. Madame Tussaud's broken English and overall characterization felt abrasive. I cannot picture a woman with her talent and level of success being such a complete stick-in-the-mud. Why were Nelson, Grey, Pitt and Fox invited to the party? Their part in the story could have been another book entirely – hopefully one with a completely separate cast since the idea itself wasn't a bad one.

In all honesty, I wish I had skipped this one. I would much rather see one well developed storyline than read a hodgepodge assortment of half-baked ideas. Read *The Queen's Dollmaker* and leave it at that.

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## **Laura says**

After reading Christine Trent's *The Queen's Dollmaker*, I was eager to read her second book, *A Royal Likeness*, whose main character, Marguerite, was first introduced in *The Queen's Dollmaker*. Marguerite now owns Claudette's doll shop (Claudette was the main character in the first book), but when tragedy strikes she leaves the shop and London. Then, through Claudette's connections, she receives the opportunity to work as Madame Tussaud's apprentice. She learns the trade of making life-size wax models of famous people and helps Madame Tussaud with her exhibitions in London, Edinburgh and Dublin. Later, because of her skill, she gets involved with the British government and the Battle of Trafalgar.

Many real historical figures play characters in this fictitious tale, and I really liked this aspect of the book. Madame Tussaud and Captain Nelson were the most interesting. The first half of the book is concentrated on Marguerite's work with Mme Tussaud. Although some readers may find the details of waxwork a little tedious, I enjoyed it and thought it quite fascinating.

Marguerite's character, on the other hand, took a while for me to like. Let me explain. Right from the onset of the story, I thought she could have better discerned the situation that led to tragedy. After they break her shop window, Marguerite flings open the door and brashly demands "a group of about twenty men, mostly drunk and on the brink of irrationality" who are carrying clubs and pitchforks what they wanted with her and her shop. Didn't she sense the danger? She should have closed the door and gone to get her husband.

Secondly, she once again acted foolishly when it came to Mr. Philipsthal. Although he was connected to Mme Tussaud financially, I did not think he needed to play such a big role in the first half of the book. He was not needed to advance the plot and could easily have played a minor character or none at all. As a matter of fact, his role really slowed down the story and only served to show how addle-brained (I'm using Marguerite's own words about herself) she could be.

Now, the second half of the book with the battle of Trafalgar, the political intrigue, and the romance was what really propelled the story forward and redeemed Marguerite in my eyes. I admired her courage and the way she looked past her dire situation and made herself useful by helping the doctor with the injured men during the war despite the horrors she witnessed. Some readers may find some of these scenes gruesome but when it comes to medical situations it doesn't bother me. The story moved quickly after this, making me eager to know how it would all come to an end.

If you are a fan of historical fiction who particularly likes a heroine who is a spirited and independent tradeswoman rather than an aristocrat, you will enjoy this book. The beginning may be slow, but stick with it



and you will not be disappointed.

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### **Tara Chevestt says**

This is one of those books that contains both good and bad for me. The heroine, Marguerite, has an unfortunate turn of events resulting in the loss of her Aunt's doll shop and her husband. Her pity party comes to an abrupt halt, however, when the opportunity to work with Madame Tussaud, famous wax figure maker arrives. For me, the story involving Marie Tussaud and even her son, the first half of the novel, was the most interesting....

For full review:

<http://www.bookbabe.blogspot.com/2011/...>

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### **Lucy says**

She has written a delicious novel based on a fictional heroine whose life runs parallel to a real historical figure, in a real historical timeframe while using real historical facts. Not only that, once again like in her first novel, *The Queen's Dollmaker*, I was highly entertained by this no-nonsense heroine. In "A Royal Likeness", Marguerite, is a gutsy, creative and talented lady with a thirst for adventure and curiosity to no end (Just love reading about these kinds of women).

Many of you will remember Marguerite as Claudette's niece in Trent's first novel, *The Queen's Dollmaker*. In this subsequent novel, Marguerite has now taken over the doll making business. After a horrible tragedy (I won't spoil it for you), Marguerite moves on to work for Madame Tussaud- Yes! The very own Madame Tussaud (who also happened to be a good friend of her aunt, Claudette, during the time of Marie-Antoinette- Read my review of the Queen's Dollmaker here;) There, she learns the art of making figures out of wax. But there is sooo much more to the story...

Throughout the book we meet several royal personages; we get a glimpse of Tussaud's life and history; there's an important historical battle; life on a war ship; mystery, tragedy, and, of course...love!

I found this book to be very entertaining with the right dose of history meshed in to keep pace with the time period; hence giving it the feeling it could have actually happened for real. I find this author's technique of paralleling her main heroine to history and historical figures without sacrificing the story she wants to write, especially refreshing.

There are already innumerable books out there rehashing history with an interesting twist of fiction that are wonderful to read (hence our love for Historical fiction!)...Yet, Christine Trent stands out from the rest by crafting in her own style; one which hooks historical buffs by sustaining us with just enough historical immersion within the plot while fulfilling us with her own great story. Bravo to this creative author with a deliciously original edge!

Christine Trent has definitely made her mark- In my opinion; I dare nickname her a modern-day Heyer!  
I Loved this book!

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### **Siobian says**

Marguerite Ashby has been running Laurent Fashion Dolls and has loved every minute of it. She has a wonderful business and a doting husband who she loves dearly, so she couldn't be happier. But when her

husband is killed by a mob seeking to determine if Marguerite is smuggling money and information to the French, she loses herself in despair and doesn't feel that life is worth living. Soon though, she is taken in as an apprentice by the famous wax worker, Marie Tussaud and begins to travel with her new employer and her touring wax exhibition. While learning the tricks of the trade, Marguerite meets many important people and is asked to perform a mission for her country to help in the battle against Napoleon. While completing her task, she meets two very different men and must decide which of them she trusts and will give her heart to.

This story picks up shortly after *The Queen's Dollmaker* ends and features Claudette (the doll maker from the last book) a bit but focuses mainly on Marguerite and her many adventures. I was immediately caught up in this book and even though it happened only 27 pages in, I still got a little teary eyed when Marguerite's husband, Nicholas, died. I really enjoyed reading about all of the many things that Marguerite got to play a hand in, although it seemed like there was a lot of things going on at once sometimes. The text was well written and easy to read and the depictions of how the wax figurines were created was really fascinating to me. I'm not a big fan of battle scenes in books, they typically lose my interest fairly quickly, but in *A Royal Likeness*, there were so many historical tidbits about how a sea battle was conducted that I read with interest and was as entertained during the Battle of Trafalgar scene as I was during the rest of the story.

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## **Reading Vacation says**

### Review

*A Royal Likeness* takes place some years after *The Queen's Dollmaker*. In this spin-of book, the doll shop that Claudette has made famous in France is now run by Marguerite. Both characters are very much alike – smart, feisty, talented, attracts trouble – your typical Girl Power material. I live for this type of character!

Let me tell you a little about Marie Tussaud, who made life-like wax figures of famous Europeans. Not only was she incredibly talented with wax, but she also had the business sense of a corporate CEO. Marie would probably win if she were on *The Apprentice* with Donald Trump.

Christine Trent knows her stuff when it comes to European history and wax figures. She explained how these wax figures come to life and how the detailed sets are created. Really cool stuff.

It's not all business for Marguerite. She has some unexpected adventures on a military ship including two military men who have major crushes on her. It all leads up to the Battle of Trafalgar. The battle scenes are intense and grizzly – just like they should be.

So there you have it; wax figures, apprentice material, romance, action, and a battle. It sounds like a crazy combination, but it works and I enjoyed *A Royal Likeness*.

### Rating

4 Liked

### Cover Comments

Marguerite's dress is a beautiful and regal color. The gold font looks rich and perfect for this book. Love!

