



A Flame in the Dark: A Reformation Novel

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The Reformation changed the world—and the lives of ordinary people.

Heinrich is a university student learning from Doctor Martin Luther in Wittenberg. When Luther posts his Ninety-Five Theses, Heinrich's life—along with the lives of his family and friends—is changed forever.

Join Heinrich and those he loves as they learn to give and receive grace, but more importantly as they learn about the free grace God offers His children. A Flame in the Dark shows how the reverberations of Luther's Reformation echoed not only throughout the world, but also in the lives of ordinary people.

Praise for A Flame in the Dark

“A warm and engaging tale.”

—Heidi Goehmann, author of *Altogether Beautiful*

“Reading A Flame in the Dark is like stepping back into Reformation-era Wittenberg, Germany. Sarah Baughman carefully crafts a believable tale with a fresh perspective.”

—Sue Matzke, avid reader and pastor's wife

“Even though this story takes place during the Reformation, the message in A Flame in the Dark is nevertheless prevalent today, tomorrow, and well into the future.”

—Adriann Harris, book reviewer

“If you enjoy historical fiction, be sure to add this one to your list!”

—Jamie Lapeyrolerie, *Musings of Jamie*

A Flame in the Dark: A Reformation Novel Details

Date : Published June 12th 2018 by Concordia Publishing House

ISBN : 9780758660039

Author : Sarah Baughman

Format : Paperback 400 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Christian Fiction, Novels

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From Reader Review **A Flame in the Dark: A Reformation Novel** for online ebook

Rachel says

This is one of the best books I've read so far this year. Actually, it's one of the best books I've EVER read. It's filled with such rich character development and meaty discussions of how God's words apply to our lives. I talk a lot about how important characters are to me when it comes to enjoying a book or coming to love it -- these characters were so real and wonderful, I actually worried about what was happening to them whenever I wasn't actively reading the book. That's some powerful writing, folks.

I also loved how Martin Luther was portrayed: kind, humorous, compassionate, stubborn, hasty, and wholly dedicated to understanding the Word of God and illuminating it for others. He's shown to be an intelligent, determined, Christ-focused man, both human and humane.

The main character, Heinrich Ritter, is studying law at the University of Wittenberg. When he can, he attends Dr. Luther's theology lectures. Heinrich boards with a middle-class family, the Diefenbachs, who live just outside town. He's romantically interested in their oldest daughter, Marlein, but hesitates to make his interest known to her because she spends all her time caring for her family. Her father is a busy candlemaker, kind but often distracted. Her mother suffers from crippling depression centered around multiple miscarriages, among other things, and rarely leaves her room. That leaves Marlein to run the household and cares for the children.

Into this hectic world bursts Brigita, Heinrich's younger sister who's running from her past and carrying a secret. Through caring for his sister and trying to ease Marlein's load, Heinrich comes to understand that God's plans are not always our plans, and that sometimes the best way to help someone is just to ask, "What can I do?" instead of trying to solve their problems for them. He seeks guidance from Dr. Luther several times, trying to understand what his role is as a brother, a possible suitor, and a friend, and I think the thing I loved best about this book (aside from the characters) was how it looked at vocations and burdens from so many angles.

Plus, it's beautifully written, paying wonderful attention to historical details. I don't know what Baughman intends to write next, but I do know I already want to read whatever it is.

Heidi Goehmann says

Sarah Baughman manages to weave a warm and engaging tale of family and community life during an extremely tumultuous time in history while introducing the reader to fascinating characters and details of what we know as the Reformation. With a powerfully descriptive pen, Baughman will break your heart and mend it again with topics of loss, shame, honor, depression, and the challenges of family life. As an avid reader, as a wife and mom, and as a mental health professional I found insight and application in every page of this meaningful work.

Steve Bender says

I won this book in a Goodreads Giveaway. It follows the stories of several people in Wittenburg at the time that Martin Luther was posting his 95 Theses. Nice romance with the additional bonus that it shows the effects of Luther on some ordinary people. It doesn't follow the trials of Luther or his fight with the Church. Good read.

Jennifer Merila Van Hoy says

Sarah's writing of this historical fiction novel is magnificent. She paid careful attention to detail and the love of Christ was woven in so gently. I loved the bond between Luther and Heinrich, and also Luther's sense of humor throughout.

Jacinta Carter says

This novel starts off with the characters discussing Martin Luther nailing his 95 Theses to the church door, so I assumed that would be one of the central plot lines. In actuality, Luther only shows up occasionally throughout the story, and is only there to offer advice to the main character just when he needs it. The main plot follows a young man and his desire to balance his studies, his apprenticeship, his duty to his sister, and his feelings for his boss' daughter. While the romance and family dynamics were fairly interesting, the religion aspects of the story would have been more effective if Luther hadn't been used merely as a "wise old sage" type of character, meant only to point the main character in the right direction.

ansel says

“An inspiring story“

Sarah's wonderful gift of storytelling exhilarates me. Her characters in this heart-stirring story each endure various trials and tribulations in their lives, and it isn't until they each assimilate God's teaching and accept his love do they find healing, peace, and joy.

Even though this story takes place during the Reformation the message in *A Flame in the Dark* is nevertheless prevalent today, tomorrow, and well into the future. I learned a lot about my own shortcomings reading Sarah's story, and I thank you Sarah for reminding me to seek God's words and his forgiveness.

Fortunately, I have had the honor of reading all of Sarah's exquisite stories and have so enjoyed watching her grow as an author. *A Flame in the Dark* without a doubt is her best work thus far and I cannot wait to read what she writes next.

I received a complimentary copy of this book from Concordia Publishing House. Opinions expressed in this review are completely my own.

Ruth Meyer says

In this novel, Sarah Baughman give readers a glimpse of what life was like in Germany during Luther's Reformation. This is not a novel about Martin Luther, although he does make a few cameo appearances. Nor is it a deep theological read. Rather, it follows the story of real-to-life people who are members of Luther's parish, students in his classes, and fellow residents of Wittenberg. I appreciated the chance to view life in a time far different from our own; a time when Bibles were not readily available in the common language and when Luther's teachings stood in stark opposition to what the Church had been teaching for years. The struggles, both religious and personal, were well portrayed, the characters likable, and the plot interesting enough to keep me turning the pages late into the night.

Mike says

Well written book with good character development. Interesting take on how Martin Luther's interpretation of scripture may have changed the life of locals. Unlike many religious theme books that end up teaching a theology of glory, this author weaves a clear theology of the cross in her story of grace and mercy.

Shelley Moeller says

Concordia Publishing House has ventured into historical fiction and I wasn't disappointed. I truly hope there will be more from this author and possibly continuing this series.

I'm not sure what I liked best about the book because it satiated my love of history, geography, and the study of God's Word. Sarah took me back to Wittenburg at the very beginning of the Reformation. My memories from a visit to that city blended easily with her artful use of words. Without difficulty I could imagine the characters in their day to day lives. Every once in a while she'd slip in a simple German word into the text which reminded me the characters are actually in old Germany.

She effortlessly added in historical markers through her character development, including information on Father Martin (Martin Luther as a monk and teacher).

Sarah's love for the Lord shows through her characters as one by one they discover truths in God's Words. I rejoiced in the enlightenment of the characters as they learned more about God's of loving Grace. The characters shared their questions and their faith with such ease that I wondered why we are so timid these days to share God's love and grace.

When I first picked up the book I was a little skeptical that it would hold my interest. I am very happy to say that I would recommend this book to anyone looking for a good summer read. Actually, anytime of the year!

JMBooher says

WOW What a book

I loved the characters and storylines. I quickly fell in love with all. Thank you Ms. Vaughan for the book.

Stephenie Hovland says

I really enjoyed the book. I like historical fiction, but even more so, I like learning more about the Reformation. Martin Luther is a secondary, but important, character in the book. I found that pretty fascinating, to see how the author would handle such a big figure in history. She did it well! I wanted to hang out with him and chat as much as the main character did.

The two main characters are Heinrich and Marlein. I really grew to love them and wished I could be in their heads even more than I was. (Minor issue: I felt the many POV just weren't necessary. Give me more Heinrich and Marlein!)

Some issues I think will resonate with female readers especially are the haunting stillbirths/miscarriages of a side character, the role of devoted daughter, and how to deal with sexual assault. I think some readers (most?) will find it unsatisfying to realize how assault would've been handled in that time and place. (I wanted to see more justice.)

The cover of the book looks like an oil painting from that time period, so I loved that as well. I enjoyed the setting, being curious about the Reformation, myself. It seemed very authentic and well-done.

I would recommend this book to women who like historical fiction romances (though, I generally don't - and this is not heavy on romance) and those who want a fictional look at church history. I'd love to see a follow-up to it with more Heinrich and Marlein (and a side of Martin Luther, please.)

Catherine says

I was given a copy of this book by the publisher and author in exchange for an honest review. Furthermore, I am friends with the author. However, everything written in this review is my honest opinion.

I'm Lutheran (of the Missouri Synod variety). Being Lutheran, I have a keen interest in Lutheran history, and the history of religions in general. So of course the premise of this novel is right up my alley. When I found out Sarah was writing a novel set during the early days of the Reformation, I knew I had to get my hands on it. And I was not disappointed.

Carefully researched, with excellent characters and message, it was everything I'd hoped it would be. Luther himself is more of a side character, but his influence on every other character is felt strongly, and he is the backbone of the novel. His preaching on salvation through Christ effects the lives of the main characters deeply and in different ways.

The characters were all different and interesting. Each had their own internal story, and it didn't feel like any character was there as a device. Each one had their own motivations and inner life, and they all felt very true. Though the characters live five hundred years in the past, their hopes, troubles, and dreams are still relevant and resonant with the modern day, just perhaps a bit differently.

The story is very much character driven, which I liked very much as a character-driven sort of reader. The story unfolded and drew the characters together until they became their own community bound together by their love for each other and their faith, and their vocations in their roles in the community.

I found myself reading more and more, as I wanted to know more about these characters and how they would

solve their problems in life. I found myself smiling at the tender romances, and sighing at the troubles of each character. It was a joy to read, and I recommend it to anyone who enjoys Christian fiction or historical fiction in general.

Nick says

Let me be upfront with regards to this book. If you enjoy heart warming family stories in line with Hallmark then this book is for you. If you are looking for true 16th Century historical fiction about the Reformation I'd recommend looking for another read such as *Q* by Luther Blissett. *A Flame in the Dark* is a well written novel. The title, however, is deceptive with relation to the story that is told. The novel recounts the story of a 16th Century family situated in and around the city of Wittenberg and addresses challenging family issues within a Christian context. Discovering the story was really a timeless one that only used the Reformation period as a historical backdrop was a big disappointment. In my opinion the story would have probably been better told using a modern setting rather than 16th Century Germany - it would have related to a larger reading audience. I was hoping for historical fiction engaging multiple historical figures and significant historical events. There really isn't much in this story directly related to the Reformation or any of the political events surrounding the Reformation. Instead there are a few events where Martin Luther makes an appearance as a mentor to the story's protagonist providing advice to the young man as he navigates through his first love and supports his sister.

Sandra says

I won this book off Goodreads. Loved it!!! Awesome!!!

Chani Reeder says

I simply loved this story. It is obviously well researched, with German phrases and place names used appropriately. I also appreciated that the authoress kept to the timeline and did not portray Luther as we are used to thinking of him. Then there's the actual fiction in the story, which I found to be engaging. I find myself wishing for a sequel so we could see these characters develop as the Reformation continues.
