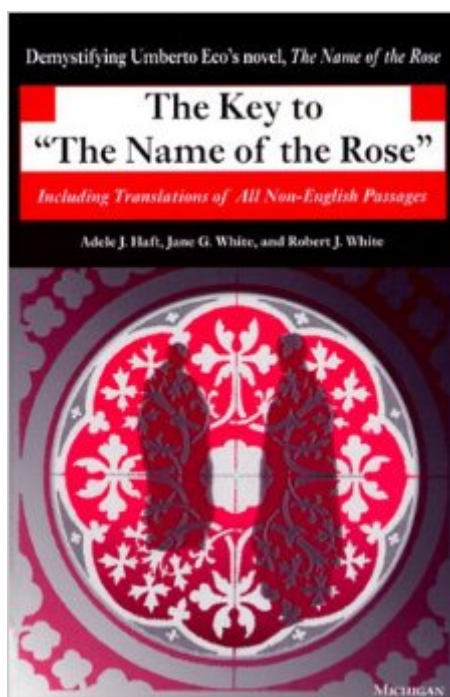


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The Key To The Name Of The Rose: Including Translations Of All Non-English Passages (Ann Arbor Paperbacks)



Synopsis

Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* is a brilliant mystery set in a fictitious medieval monastery. The text is rich with literary, historical, and theoretical references that make it eminently re-readable. The Key makes each reading fuller and more meaningful by helping the interested reader not merely to read but also to understand Eco's masterful work. Inspired by pleas from friends and strangers, the authors, each trained in Classics, undertook to translate and explain the Latin phrases that pepper the story. They have produced an approachable, informative guide to the book and its setting--the middle ages. The Key includes an introduction to the book, the middle ages, Umberto Eco, and philosophical and literary theories; a useful chronology; and reference notes to historical people and events. The clear explanations of the historical setting and players will be useful to anyone interested in a general introduction to medieval history. Adele J. Haft is Associate Professor of Classics, Hunter College, City University of New York. Jane G. White is chair of the Department of Languages, Dwight Englewood School. Robert J. White is Professor of Classics and Oriental Studies, Hunter College, City University of New York.

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Customer Reviews

This is a very good guide to *The Name of the Rose*. Not perfect, but good. The non-English translations are very helpful, and beat sitting next to a Latin dictionary. The biographical information for historical characters is very good too. My only beef about this is that it doesn't address the

historical backdrop of the novel well enough: the Renaissance of the previous century, the conflicts in the Church at the time, and the looming disasters of the 14th century between the time the novel takes place and the time the narrator lays the tale down. Get this volume if you're going to read the book. But don't rely strictly on this.

i am hoping to do an intricate performance art piece based on the novel "the name of the rose;" however, many of the lush details and layers were lost on me, because i am not a historian or a scholar well-versed in semiotics... the task is still daunting, but i feel more confident having this "hint book" to fill me in on the background information. it renders the novel much more accessible to a lay person, and makes the story even MORE fascinating than it already is. i suggest that anyone reading "the name of the rose" should have a copy of this to help them along... also, there is a text that does this same task for dante's "divine comedy" (dante has a large influence on the novel, so reading dante will help the reader to understand the apocalyptic attitudes of the characters). joseph gallagher wrote "a modern reader's guide to dante's 'the divine comedy'" which you may also find helpful.

The Key to the Name of the Rose includes annotated translations of all the Latin that Eco included in his text . The Key also provides a brief chapter on the interaction among semiotics, detective mysteries, and medieval thought and a brief chronology of the Middle Ages. The pearl, however, is the chapter of historical annotations including brief descriptions of the saints, heretics, mythological allusions, and a multitude of medieval figures, both the important and the insignificant. The authors provide just the right amount of information for most readers; a paragraph or two on most. The book's central historical figures, Michael of Cesena, Ubetino of Casale, and Bernard Gui are all there, but so are many others. Peter Abelard, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Prester John each merit an entry. I still don't understand why Eco wouldn't provide translations at the bottom of the page. In the recent translation by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky of War and Peace (Vintage Classics), the hundreds of French passages were included as in the original text, but translated at the bottom of the page without harm to the reader's appreciation that French was the language of the noble class. However, if he had, then perhaps this exceptional little guide would never have been published. I wish I'd had this guide before I read The Name of the Rose, but it is worthwhile in its own right and an encouragement to re-read Eco's mystery.

The Name of the Rose was the book that introduced the most people to Umberto Eco then better

known as a semiotician. This book was my introduction to Eco, and made of me a devoted reader. Even so it read like the work of a professor frustrated by the disinterest of his students and attempting to use well-written fiction to teach recalcitrant students. For non students of the various sects and heresies of the Catholic Church in the dark ages much of the mystery to be solved in this book is tied to Latin quotes obscure scholars and matters generally more esoteric than "whodunit". The Key to the Name of the Rose is the book that will guide the curious reader through the more curious contents of Eco book. Ideally Name of the Rose will be reissued with the Key included to make an annotated single purchase. This new publication is only likely if: first there remains enough sales for this 1980 book to financially justify a more expensive new edition and second if the original author decides to make it easy for his now international readership. Professor Eco is probably mellowed over these many years but I suspect his original preference was for you to do your own research. Bottom line is if you want to know the translations and the academic obscuria, and you want to know it now you're not going to get a better set of annotation than that provided by The Key to the Name of the Rose. If you're the kind who likes to reread a good mystery novel, you'll definitely want The Key ready to hand. If you have not yet read the novel and you are a detailed reader you will definitely want The Key.

I grew up with Medievalists - a professor Medieval Literature and a professor of Medieval History, my Aunt and Uncle respectively so I am familiar with the era, the people, even the food. Yet, I would not tackle "The Name of the Rose" without this companion volume. This brief, but thorough book gives you the chronology that is pertinent to the story without weighing you down. It also gives succinct biographies of the hundreds of men and women referenced in The Name of the Rose. I found myself reading The Key in full before reading TNR. The notes section dissects difficult passages within TNR as well as translates the Latin. Not only do they give you the translation, but also when appropriate they give you the context in which the translation makes sense. Not all translations are equal, the authors do a great job of creating appropriate translations. This book is for everyone reading TNR. You will jump a few IQ points just skimming the pages. It is even useful as a stand-alone short primer on the Middle Ages.

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