

# Simon Rose

## [www.simon-rose.com](http://www.simon-rose.com)

### Historical Research

Editors, teachers, librarians and critics will usually scrutinize the facts in a historical fiction story. The historical details have to be well researched for the story to remain credible.

In *The Sorcerer's Letterbox*, Jack discovers a letter in a drawer and finds himself corresponding with Edward V, one of the princes imprisoned in the Tower of London in 1483. After penning a reply, Jack finds himself trapped in late medieval England. While it was not overly important to explore the political complexities of England in the aftermath of the Wars of the Roses, facts had to be checked and rechecked. Some of this naturally involved research into the clothing of the era, everyday life, maps of medieval London and so on, but some aspects of the novel required more attention. The language of the scroll Jack finds had to be appropriate for the time period and be written in both the style and the alphabet of Middle English, as it was spoken in 1483.

Real characters are also used in the book, such as Richard III, so that their exact location at the time described in the story had to be accurate. Research focused on the Tower of London, such as which buildings existed within the complex in 1483 and the layout of the grounds. I also researched the leading personalities late medieval England, Richard III, Edward V, the Wars of the Roses, the mystery of the Princes in the Tower, pretenders and imposters, medieval maps, the history of the English language and all about the time period depicted in the story.

When writing *The Heretic's Tomb*, I studied the subject of the Black Death, which is estimated to have killed over twenty five million people in Europe in the mid fourteenth century. In novel, Lady Isabella Devereaux comes into the possession of a mysterious amulet that has the power to restore life to the recently deceased. Living at the time of the Black Death in 1349, the noble and virtuous Lady Isabella intends to use the mysterious artifact to cure the relentless disease. However, the villain of the piece, Sir Roger de Walsingham, is also determined to secure the amulet for himself, in order to raise an army of the dead in order to seize the kingdom and make himself King of England.

*The Heretic's Tomb* involved considerable research into the world of fourteenth century England, especially the era of the Black Death and its impact on England and Europe. Some dialogue is spoken in Middle English, which had to be authentic. The story also features a spell book written in Latin, so it was very important to get all the words and phrases correct. I read extensively on the harsh realities of medical treatments in the Middle Ages. I delved deeply into the world of the medieval church, monasteries, abbeys, the long reign of King Edward III, the Hundred Years War between England and France, the history of scrolls, manuscripts and printed books, medieval cities, villages, houses, and castles, as well as archaeological excavation sites for the portions of the novel set in the present day. Some of the information I needed was readily available online, but books also played a large role in the research process.