

Before the Mayflower: A Novel

The story before the *Mayflower's* famous Atlantic crossing in 1620 is filled with risk and romance. In the thirty-three years prior to the journey to the New World, follow the Brewsters and their narrow escape from England to the Netherlands, where they find religious freedom and are safe from persecution. This historic novel illuminates the importance of the printing press through the Okes family, a fictional family living in London, and inextricably linked to those English who separated from the King's Church, like the Brewsters and Brewers, who jointly publish controversial books in Holland. A romance between one of the Okes daughters and a Brewster son brings the families back together, standing on the docks in Southampton, waiting for the ships to be readied for the Atlantic voyage. In the end, who will make the dangerous journey, and will it be for love, land, or religious freedom?

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- No Pass for Ports • Removal from Amsterdam to Leyden • Visit to the Verger • Death Escapes No One • Wool and Books • John Robinson's Congregation and the Green Close • The Printers • 1615 • 1616 • 1617 • 1618 • 1619 • 1620
- Main Character List, Fact or Fiction • Suggested Reading • Touring the Novel's Path

MARKET / AUDIENCE

Markets: Historic Fiction, History, Art History

Audience: Ages 18 and beyond, all genders. General public, students, scholars, professors, historians.

BISAC Codes:

REVIEWS

Before the Mayflower is not only a moving story on the Pilgrims in England and The Netherlands before they embarked on their most important journey to the New World, but is also interesting because of the vivid and accurate descriptions of several locations in the vicinity of the dwellings of the Pilgrims in the University town of Leiden. The Pieterskerk, the Botanical Garden and the Anatomy Theater of the university really come to life in this novel by J.L. Rose. The visitor unknown to the city of Leiden may use *Before the Mayflower* as a guide to follow into the footsteps of the Pilgrims during their 11-year stay in the city. *Drs. Kasper van Ommen, External Relations/ Scaliger Institute, University Library Leiden*

J.L. Rose pulls her readers into the secretive community of 17th century English Separatism, telling a story as vivid and vibrant as the magnificent Dutch paintings from the period. She follows an obscure group of religious dissenters as they move briefly from England to Holland before voyaging to America, and forever changing world history as they do. Rose has brought to life a fascinating history, woven rich in details and high drama as only a master storyteller can.

Desiree Mobed, Executive Director, Alden House Historic Site

J.L. Rose has written a wonderfully immersive story, fluently and convincingly uniting the origin story of the Pilgrims with a tale of family, love and destiny. Her narrative and language really bring to life a distant period in history, in a way that is both richly detailed and genuinely heartfelt. Seeing 17th century Leiden through the Pilgrims' eyes was both a new, enriching experience and what is called in Dutch *een feest der herkenning* (a feast of recognition).

Ward Hoskens, Curator and Conservator, Pieterskerk, Leiden, the Netherlands

Before the Mayflower reads as a movie. It visualises details of the past which is not even that long ago when you walk in the Netherlands through the same streets. It gives a good insight in the life at that time, the reason why people went to America. As a guide in several museums I try to give the base of America and the rest of the western world extra attention. The fact that freedom of religion is still something unusual in many parts of the world. The idea of freedom of religion in the Netherlands started pretty simple. For the nobility at that time it was unimaginable that you were killed for your believe. In our modern times it would be good to realise how religious refugees tried to be safe in the past. Which difficulties they had before they actually put their lives in danger again to finally worship what was important to them.

Marcella van Zanten, Expert Museum Guide, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

MARKET SPOTTERS

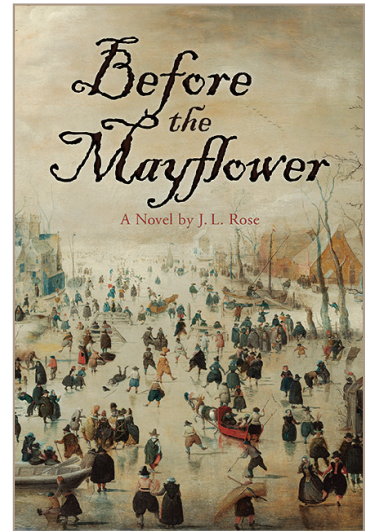
9781443428484. *The Miniaturist: A Novel*. J. Burton. Harper Collins, 2014. Paperback. 416 pp. \$12.00

9780452282155. *Girl With a Pearl Earring*. T. Chevalier. Penguin Group, 2001. Paperback. 234 pp. \$12.00.

9780743227445. *The Other Boleyn Girl*. P. Gregory. Simon & Schuster, 2003. Paperback. 664 pp. \$15.00.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jennifer Sinsigalli, (Pseudonym J. L. Rose), is a Williams College graduate and former historic interpreter at Plimoth Plantation in Plymouth, Massachusetts.



Cover image: Winter Landscape with Skaters, c. 1608, Hendrick Avercamp, Rijksmuseum, Netherlands

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