

## The Dressmaker's Dowry

*The Dressmaker's Dowry* is Meredith Jaeger's first novel. It has always been her dream to write a novel about the San Francisco Barbary Coast area. She was born and raised in the Bay area. Her novel combines both historical and contemporary events. I was intrigued from the beginning to find out how the author puts the stories together to make it one story in the end.

In present day San Francisco Sarah Havensworth is struggling to complete a novel she is writing in order to receive her Master of Fine Arts degree in creative writing. She has quit her job as a journalist in order to spend full time on this novel. She is afraid to tell her husband about her writer's block and also about a secret she has kept for more than fourteen years. Then an old newspaper article sparks her interest and gives her new inspiration. The headline reads: *Missing Seamstresses Presumed Dead*.

Sarah becomes obsessed with this story and sets out to uncover what happened to Hannelore Schaeffer and Margaret O'Brien in 1876. Her search leads her to forgotten bars, brothels, the primitive housing of immigrants and the mansion of Sarah's rich in-laws, Gwyneth and Walter Havensworth. Sarah names her new story: *The Lost Dressmakers of the Barbary Coast*.

In 1876 Margaret O'Brien, Irish immigrant, and Hannelore Schaeffer from Prussia are both working hard as dressmakers to help provide food for their siblings. They both live in very poor neighborhoods. Their lives at home are sad and unbearable. They mend the delicate clothing of the richest ladies in town, dreaming what it would be like to ever wear these dresses. One day Margaret disappears and Hannelore is determined to find her friend. She enlists the help of the very kind son of the wealthy Havensworth family, named Lucas. What happens next will surprise you. Hannelore also disappears and both women are presumed dead.

The mystery also involves an exquisite diamond ring that Sarah wears. It has been passed down through the generations and given to her on her wedding day. Another mystery involves an Irish keepsake ring called a Claddagh ring.

I enjoyed the author's addition of historical pictures and facts about old buildings in the Barbary Coast of San Francisco in the back of the book.

To sum up the theme for this novel back in 1876 and present time one could say it is about those who have wealth and those who have nothing.

You can find this adult fiction book on our New Arrivals shelf.

**Happy Reading!**