



Letters to Kezia

Peni Jo Renner

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It is 1693 in Hereford, Connecticut, when Mary Case, the spinster daughter of a Puritan minister, finds herself hopelessly smitten by the roguish thief, Daniel Eames. Betrothed to a man she does not like or love, she is soon compelled to help Daniel escape from jail. Suddenly, she finds herself on the run, not only accused of being Daniel's accomplice, but also of murder.

The fugitive pair soon finds solace-and a mutual attraction-among the escapee's Algonquin friends until two men from Daniel's dark past hunt them down. After Mary is captured and returned home to await trial, a tragedy takes the life of her younger sister, revealing a dark secret Mary's father has kept for months. But just as Mary learns she is pregnant, she makes a horrifying discovery about Daniel that changes everything and prompts her to develop an unlikely bond with his mother, Rebecca, who soon saves Mary from a shocking fate. It is not until years later that her daughter, Kezia, finally learns the truth about her biological father and family.

Letters to Kezia shares a courageous woman's journey through a Puritan life and beyond as she struggles with adversity and betrayal, and discovers that loyalty can sometimes mean the difference between life and death.

Letters to Kezia Details

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From Reader Review Letters to Kezia for online ebook

Darlene says

Originally posted at Peeking Between the Pages: <http://www.peekingbetweenthepages.com...>

Letters to Kezia by Peni Jo Renner is Book 2 of The Puritan Chronicles. I read the first book Puritan Witch: The Redemption of Rebecca Eames which I really enjoyed so I was thrilled to see a second book and it is just as good so I flew through it quickly. Letters to Kezia picks up in the years following Puritan Witch and tells the story of Rebecca Eames son, Daniel. Letters to Kezia can definitely stand on its own but I found it nice to have the story of Daniel's mother Rebecca and all that had gone on in Daniel's life as a younger man. For me, reading the first book enriched my enjoyment of this one.

In the course of Daniel's life he has a daughter named Kezia who grows up with her mother Mary Case. Kezia, in present time, finds sealed letters that have her name on them. She questions her mother as to what they are and Mary tells her that they chronicle the history of who Kezia's biological father was and just how she came to be. As Kezia begins to read the letters we are taken back to 1693 and to how Daniel and Mary first meet. Daniel, accused of being a thief, is being held in jail and Mary, the reverend's daughter brings meals to the jail for him. Mary, betrothed to another that she does not want to marry, finds Daniel intriguing. There is something about him that draws her in although she doesn't know what it is. Soon enough though she is persuaded to help him escape from jail. What she doesn't expect is to find herself a fugitive and a murderer. The two escape and thus begins their harrowing journey just to stay alive meeting with an Indian tribe and others out to hunt them down. When Mary learns she is pregnant she is shamed and horrified. Girls in her time and those of a Puritan minister do not get themselves pregnant. What will she do? Will Daniel be hung? Will she? As Kezia reads these letters she learns so much about her mother and real father. How her mother faced adversity and betrayal in a time when women had no rights. It still amazes me how easily a woman could be accused of witchcraft and worse. The things we take for granted today could have had you shackles back then.

This is a great read for those who enjoy historical fiction. I urge you to read both books but as I said they stand on their own and both are very enjoyable reading. I have always found anything to do with the Puritan way of life or the Witch Trials extremely interesting and what makes Peni's books even better is that they are based on findings from her own ancestors – she's actually distantly related to Daniel and Rebecca Eames. What an exciting history to have!

Definitely recommended for historical fiction readers!

Must-have says

This is a Winner! Peni Jo Renner has certainly grabbed my attention with this intriguing story. It is so easy to feel her passion and connection to this time period when reading Letters to Kezia. Readers are going to be delighted and truly appreciate its craftsmanship. From its vivid scenes, authentic emotions, and its gripping plot, it does not cease to entertain and will keep its readers engaged! From the very first page it will grab hold of you. The feelings expressed are strong, genuine and deep. The tenderness of the words Mary shares with her daughter Kezia are so touching, and the bond they share is even more so. Which is the exact

opposite of the struggles Mary faces. From an unforbidden love, death, deadly accusations, and so on Mary's challenges and triumphs are so real and heart felt. It makes reading about the 1600's truly enjoyable, and despite all the emotions within this book (which I thoroughly enjoyed by the way) it's far from predictable. This author should definitely be commended. The journey she allows her readers to go on with Mary is unforgettable.

The characters are so well defined and each plays a wonderful role in making this story so intense. The detailing is outstanding and will put you in the very center of it all, as if standing amongst all the chaos. It is very well written, easy to read and get lost in. Reading the letters with Kezia and going back and forth from past and present heightens the anticipation, and adds suspense. With shocking obstacles, unforeseeable circumstances, and lots of stunning surprises, this book is highly recommended. For its beauty, fascinating characters and power of love theme will stay with you long after the last page.

Heather Osborne says

Reviewed on behalf of Readers' Favorite

Letters to Kezia: Book Two of the Puritan Chronicles by Peni Jo Renner tells the tragic, yet heartwarming story of Mary Case, a Puritan girl in the settlement of Hereford, Connecticut. The daughter of the minister of the settlement finds herself enraptured with a thief and rogue, Daniel Eames. Succumbing to his pleas to help him escape the jail, Eames flees, with Mary in tow. Thrown into this mix is a man, Noah Parker, whom Mary and her family trusted to be a loyal successor to her father, but he is less than honorable. Forced to return to the village by ruthless men on the hunt for Eames, no matter what the cost, Mary must face her own accusers, as well as her conscience.

A bittersweet novel, Letters to Kezia captivated me from page one. I felt so much for Mary's plight, attracted to a man who was considered beneath her by Puritan society. She was used as a pawn in many cases, both by Noah and her father, although his motives were entirely selfless. I enjoyed how the novel was laid out, third person narrative interspersed with first person perspective in the form of the letters to Mary's daughter, Kezia. I must also comment on the historical accuracy. Miss Renner has clearly taken great time and effort to convey as realistic an environment as possible, while still providing a very engaging story. Letters to Kezia: Book Two of the Puritan Chronicles by Peni Jo Renner is a definite must read for any fan of historical fiction, with an interest in Puritan life, with the added bonus of a tragic love story.

Margaret says

This and other reviews can be found at justonemorechapter.com

The first book in this series, The Puritan Witch was one of my favorites of 2014, it centers on the time period when Rebecca Eames languishes in jail accused of being a witch. Though you don't have to read it before this one, I highly recommend it. Coming in at 208 pages Letters to Kezia isn't a long read but rather a fast paced and emotional story.

Daniel is Rebecca's son where he is first introduced in the previous book, the direction his life has taken was a true reflection of the time period, especially with what he had endured in the past. Though Daniel is a

supporting character in this book, he is the ancestor of the author.

Mary is a likeable woman, her growth throughout this book brought out a courageous young woman. One that stand up for what she believed even when powerless, at times, to act on it. That time period was not friendly to the desires of women, putting them at the mercy of others. Scandal was severely punished and lives ruined.

I liked the way this book was written, with journal entries by Mary as well as narrative reading and at times jumping ahead 20 years. Sound confusing? Well it wasn't at all, very easy to follow and hard to put down. There is a lot going on in this book, scandal, heartache, betrayal, love, relationship between Iroquios, forgiveness and more. At times I wished it was a little longer and maybe a little more depth into Daniel's thoughts would have been nice. But all in all a great little story that is sure to please those interesting in this time period.

Barbara says

This is book 2 of The Puritan Chronicles. I enjoyed the first which was The Puritan Witch but this one was even better. It is based an actual happenings. The letters are from a mother to her daughter explaining who her father is. It is both an adventure story and a sweet love story. I would recommend it to all. Peni Jo Renner really knows how to tell a story.

Erin Al-Mehairi says

Peni recently released the sequel, Letters to Kezia, which picked up in the times following Puritan Witch and features Rebecca Eames son, Daniel, of whom eventually has a child named Kezia. Kezia is born to and lives with her mother, Mary Case, and as a character she starts the book in a present time by finding letters that will allow her to learn about her family's past.

As soon as she begins to read the letters, we are taken shortly back in time to the meeting between Mary Case and Daniel Eames. He's awaiting a trial for witchcraft in jail, and Mary, being a Puritan minister's daughter, takes him food. She seems entranced by him and then rescues him, following him into hiding within a Native American tribe. Danger, turn of events, and emotional secrets all ensue that are quite shocking to Mary. From her courageous struggle to survive in the wilderness, to having to battle against the men searching for Daniel, to a personal betrayal, to the death of her beloved sister and all she holds true in her heart, Mary runs from one bad situation to the next.

This story is very short. I could skim through the material in about an hour, but it was an enjoyable tale for a quick historical read. Based on the true story of Daniel Eames, it has elements of authentic history to it, as he was the author's ancestor. It certainly was full of action that kept one wondering what might happen next. In parts, it tugged at the heart strings as it was emotional in respect to Mary, but Mary was presented as a strong woman of great character. This time the novel really focused on Mary, with Daniel as a supporting role. Rebecca reappears in a most kind way and we see Puritan and a witch accused together in way that shows us the compassion of people.

At first I didn't like Peni's portrayal of the Algonquin Tribe, but I realized later that she was really delving

into what someone truly like Mary, in Mary's position and situation, might feel towards them. When Mary came to conclusion in one section that she wasn't anymore sure who the heathens were, the Native Americans or the white religious men, I could understand the sentiment that Peni was getting across with her writing about not judging others.

Peni seems to have a heart for what many people went through with the Puritan's skepticism and rigid life. We are all intrigued by witches, but the more that books are written truly identifying with the real people and families from this time period, the more we realize how much some people truly endured. We learn a lesson in judging others.

I do wish that Peni would have fleshed out this novel more, however. I think there was room to make a longer novel with this tale, full of more description of setting, people, and their interactions, rather than quickly moving us onto the next without fully being able to delve into the moment. I wanted to read more about Daniel and understand his life and decisions even further. However, Peni does write lovely, detailed sentences with wonderful structure that absorb you into the novel.

Peni is constructing a fabulous Puritan series that will take us back to a time and place in history that is not always fondly remembered but that we all need to continue to learn upon. She showcases for us some of the real people of the time and place. This sequel is another stepping stone to an overall historical legacy of the time.

Received this book in exchange for honest review!

Lori Crane says

This is one of those rare books you cannot put down until you've finished it. The characters are based upon known facts of the author's ancestors, and she has transformed them into a ripping tale of trust, lies, and deceit. Mary Case was a colonial woman of Connecticut, seduced into trusting a man who almost became the death of her, literally. Her daughter, Kezia, was the product of that tangled web, and Mary ultimately faced the task of telling Kezia the truth about her life and her father. The characters are rich and compelling. Their adventure is fascinating.

Diana says

copy received from Historical Fiction Virtual Book Tours for an honest review

I was so excited to read "Letters to Kezia" by Peni Jo Renner, I was a little worried that the book would not meet my expectations. I'm so glad to say it surpassed them. First, this is a relatively short book, only 194 pages. I was surprised that Renner was able to provide such a historically rich and emotional story. First, she grabbed my attention from page one. The inevitable has happened, Kezia has come upon letters that will give her a lot of insight into her past and her mother's past. Mary, Kezia's mother has carried a secret for a long time and now her past is coming to light. The flashback takes place in the 1600's, the history is the Puritan's and the Salem Witch Trial. Mary is the daughter of a Puritan minister. She falls in love with Daniel. Daniel is Mary's complete opposite. She is also Rebecca Eames' son. I first became fascinated with the Salem Witch Trials when I read "The Crucible" by Arthur Miller in high school. Since then I have visited Salem many times and always learned something new. This is such a rich time in U.S. history, the effects of

that point in time are still felt.

The story takes part with flashbacks and Kezia realizes that Daniel is really her father (this is not a big spoiler-it's very evident) and Kezia learns about how Mary fell in love with him, helped him escape from jail and finds herself on the wrong side of the law. I loved everything about this book. I loved reading about this always interesting time in history, loved Daniel and Mary. I was saddened to see that their love story did not have a happy ending although having Kezia is notably a great thing. I didn't read the first book in the Puritan Chronicles, Puritan Witch: The Redemption of Rebecca Eames, it didn't stop me from thoroughly enjoying this story. I imagine it would be more rewarding for a reader to read the first book but I was still really humbled by Mary's bravery and her courageous as she faced the wrath of her community. Very sweet, and historically rich story.

F. says

I received this free book from the goodreads-first reads giveaway. This was an interesting story on how Kezia was told about her past through a series of letters written by her mother. As the story progresses, I was transported to the 1600's with all their insecurities, rituals, bias, and way of life. Mary was so very naïve because of her upbringing and trust in others that she suffers so much with her 'first love'. I was shocked with the revelations at the end about Daniel (won't spoil it for anyone) but overall, enjoyed this book. This story was well written and the descriptions were very good to the point that you felt you a witness to the events.

Nancy May says

A really satisfying read. Peni Jo Renner knows her craft.

See my entire review here: https://www.goodreads.com/author_blog...

Kelly Clare says

Letters to Kezia by Peni Jo Renner

I received a copy of this book to review.

Within the first few pages of this historical romance novel, I was struck by the beautiful description. It created a strong visualisation of the setting without overly slowing the pace. This was true for the remainder of the book, though the setting changed several times.

I was hooked immediately when Mary left Kezia alone with the letters. The relationship between Mary and Kezia was loving and respectful and I thought the author balanced these two qualities well. This followed through for the other relationships. Characters were well-developed, had their own unique voice and I didn't feel like there were any major inconsistencies in their dialogue or the way they reacted.

Several plot twists took me by surprise. I really enjoyed this, as I often find this genre can often be predictable. You could also tell this author had researched extensively before setting out to write this book. The food, the dress, the housing and the language were consistent for what I imagine was around during this era.

Overall this novel displayed all of the qualities of a good read. Clear characters, a surprising (but realistic) plotline, a nice pace and a satisfying resolution. The only quibbles I had were in regards to Mary's letters, which seemed overly descriptive of her setting for a letter to a daughter and I did feel there were a couple of minor inconsistencies with Mary's character. She seemed to go from prim and proper to the 'ensuing story line' quite quickly with a strong attraction being the only catalyst. Later in the book it was explained that she was a daydreamer, which went someway to explain the change. These points barely tripped up my reading and did not affect my overall enjoyment of being in Peni Jo Renner's world.

Lise Gagné says

A very good story and very well written. It is a trip back in the days of the colonial era in the 17th century. Loved the fact that Letters to Kezia follows Puritan witch in the sense that we follow Daniel Eames after he was out of jail for being sentenced of witchcraft in 1692. We are introduced to Mary Case who is the one relating the story to her daughter through her letters of how she met Daniel and the events that brought her to be pregnant. It is a great story of a mother willing her daughter to know who her biological father really was... And all she went through during that period. Loved reading it...

Stephanie says

Mary Case is the daughter of the town's Puritan minister in Hereford, Connecticut in 1693. When prisoners are brought in, it is Mary's job to take care of their wounds and feed them. When Daniel Eames is brought in for thievery, Mary finds herself taken with him after several visits and when Mary learns of Daniel's fate, she quickly decides to help him escape. When the escape plan goes awry, Daniel convinces Mary to leave with him. Not wanting to leave her ill sister, Lizzy, but also not wanting to marry the manipulative assistant preacher Noah, Mary reluctantly escapes with Daniel and begins an adventure and builds their relationship trying to evade the men looking for them. Years later, Mary's daughter Kezia finds the letters that Mary wrote about her time with Daniel and learns the true story of her father and her parentage.

Continuing the story of her family's history, Peni Jo Renner now turns to Daniel Eames. Equipped with only one note from his and Mary's trial, a beautiful and intriguing story has been woven. At first, I was a little unsure of Mary's actions that lead her to leave with Daniel. She seemed very naive to be taken with this prisoner so quickly that she would trust him so fully and leave with him. However, looking at Mary's Puritan background, upbringing and actual history, this is a little more believable. I enjoyed reading about Mary's time on the run with Daniel and his faithful dog Riff, especially her encounters and time within the Algonquin Indian camp. It was interesting to see her perspective of the 'savages' change as she spent time with them. Mary's character grew for me as the duo was recaptured and returned to Hereford, at this point she was a much stronger person and able to stand up for what she wanted. I was glad to see the reappearance of Rebecca Eames toward the end of the story and the bond that she was able to create with Mary.

This book was provided for free in return for an honest review.

Loren Lockner says

A mesmerizing historical tale of courage and pluck. A young girl in Puritan times seeks to know her history and stumbles upon letters her mother has written regarding her origins. From the moment of the mother and child's first exchange, I was instantly hooked and drawn into the storyline which alternates from letters to 'real time' in the story of the life of Kezia's mother, Mary. She is a vibrant character who questions the restrictions and judgments of her Puritan life, and in doing so, changes the course of her future. The novel touches on many important topics such as women's rights, the Puritans treatment of Native Americans, the ostracization of suspected witches, and of course how actions considered either 'right & wrong' were dealt with in her strict, unforgiving puritanical society. Because Mary is one resilient girl of twenty she survives far better than I think I could have given her circumstances. This is an excellent book in both its style and storytelling and thus, I couldn't put it down once I started. Highly recommended.

Bill Ward says

This is a really interesting and original story set in the 1600s. We have Mary, the daughter of a Puritan Minister and Daniel, a complete rogue, who captures her heart. These and the other characters are all excellently brought to life, as is the atmosphere of living in those times. Every detail of daily life in the 1600s seems very realistic.

My only small issue would be how quickly and easily Mary changes from a puritan girl to falling in love with the criminal Daniel. Still, girls often seem to fall for the bad boy image!

We have an interesting plot about greed, deception, love, scandal and many other aspects of life, which are as relevant today as then. There is also an excellent ending.

A thoroughly entertaining book, which quickly captured my interest and was difficult to put down!
