



The Ravenmaster's Secret: Escape from the Tower of London

By *Elvira Woodruff*

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Best-selling author Elvira Woodruff's thrilling novel set in 1700s London tells of a young boy who must make some painful choices as he attempts to save the life a prisoner he's befriended.

11-year-old Forrest lives at the Tower of London prison, where his father tends the Tower ravens and guards inmates. Forrest's only friends are his pet raven, his father's prisoners (who all end up dead), and Ned, the young rat catcher. Soon Forrest's father gets a new prisoner: Maddie, the beautiful daughter of a Scottish spy. Immediately Forrest and Maddie become friends. But when she is slated for execution, Forrest must make some painful choices: Should he commit treason to help her escape, or obey the law and let his innocent friend be hung?

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The Ravenmaster's Secret: Escape from the Tower of London By Elvira Woodruff Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 5-8-Eleven-year-old Forrest is the son of the Ravenmaster in the Tower of London. Historically, this position, which fell to one of the Tower guards, was to care for the ravens that live within the walls of the fortress as a token of luck to keep it from falling to its enemies. Forrest has grown up in the Tower and has his own pet raven, Tuck. He feels confined and sheltered from the outside world. Bullies make fun of him. When dangerous Scottish rebels are captured and imprisoned, he hopes to show his bravery. His responsibility, however, turns out to be to take food to the young daughter of one of the rebels. As he learns more about Maddy, he comes to admire and respect her, and realizes that if he does not help her escape, she will be executed. To do so, though, he will have to go against all he has been taught. The story has its share of suspense, excitement, and interesting characters. Set in 1735, it does not flinch from describing the brutality of the time, including public hangings, which Forrest's mother loves to attend. While some of the plot elements may seem unrealistic and the ending too pat, the story is certainly satisfying. Its message of judging people on their own merits and not on the basis of stereotypes comes across strongly. An author's note, a history of the Tower of London, and a glossary of unfamiliar English and Scottish words are appended.

Bruce Anne Shook, Mendenhall Middle School, Greensboro, NC

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 4-7. An absorbing historical adventure with a unique and colorful setting. Eleven-year-old Forrest lives at the Tower of London, where his father is Ravenmaster, the yeoman warder whose job is to guard prisoners and care for the famous ravens that live within the walls. Though often lonely, Forrest makes three friends: a raven, a young rat catcher, and, more dangerously, a Scottish girl imprisoned in the Bloody Tower. Soon the children become involved in an intrigue that is both dangerous and treasonous. Woodruff offers vivid sensory images of eighteenth-century London in a story that brings together children from three classes of society. The novel can be read for its exciting plot and sympathetic characters, but readers will also sense its underlying theme of courage, as Forrest seeks to prove to himself--and to others--that he is brave. In an unusual but welcome move, Woodruff appends a glossary, bibliography, and five pages of notes on "The Tower through Time." *Carolyn Phelan*

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About the Author

The bestselling author of *GEORGE WASHINGTON'S SOCKS* and *THE RAVENMASTER'S SECRET*, Woodruff has written more than twenty books for children, including picture books, historical fiction, and lighthearted fantasy. Her numerous school visits each year are popular with kids and teachers. The sequel to *GEORGE WASHINGTON'S SOCKS*, *GEORGE WASHINGTON'S SPY*, will be published in November 2010. She lives with her family in Martin's Creek, Pennsylvania.

Users Review

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