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The Witch Of Painted Sorrows (The Daughters Of La Lune Book 1)



Synopsis

Possession. Power. Passion. New York Times bestselling novelist M. J. Rose creates her most provocative and magical spellbinder yet in this gothic novel set against the lavish spectacle of 1890s Belle Époque Paris. Sandrine Salome flees New York for her grandmother's Paris mansion to escape her dangerous husband, but what she finds there is even more menacing. The house, famous for its lavish art collection and elegant salons, is mysteriously closed up. Although her grandmother insists it's dangerous for Sandrine to visit, she defies her and meets Julien Duplessi, a mesmerizing young architect. Together they explore the hidden night world of Paris, the forbidden occult underground and Sandrine's deepest desires. Among the bohemians and the demi-monde, Sandrine discovers her erotic nature as a lover and painter. Then darker influences threaten her cold and cruel husband is tracking her down and something sinister is taking hold, changing Sandrine, altering her. She becomes possessed by La Lune: A witch, a legend, and a sixteenth-century courtesan, who opens up her life to a darkness that may become a gift or a curse. This is Sandrine's wild night of the soul, her odyssey in the magnificent city of Paris, of art, love, and witchery.

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Customer Reviews

Sorrow and disappointment pulse through all of M. J. Rose's heroines; in "The Witch of Painted Sorrows," the first installment in Rose's "Daughters of La Lune" series, first person narrator Sandrine Verlaine is no exception. Grieving for the death of her father and receiving no sympathy from her brute of a husband, Sandrine flees from her home in New York to the Paris of the Belle Epoque. Her grandmother, the fiery red-headed courtesan of the demimonde, embraces her with open arms, providing a sanctuary where Sandrine can recover and pull the pieces of her life back together. With almost no experience in the art of love, Sandrine finds little to relate her life of strangled pleasures to that of her grandmother's lusty experiences--that is until she becomes fascinated with the Maison de la Lune, a house wreathed in the history of her family and recently closed for some unknown reason by her taciturn grandmother. Rose explores Sandrine's hungry desire for identity in the same way that she depicts the angst of her character Jac L'Etoile in *The Book of Lost Fragrances: A Novel of Suspense*, *Seduction: A Novel of Suspense* and *The Collector of Dying Breaths: A Novel of Suspense* who is plagued by dreams and images of reincarnation until she finds her ultimate happiness.

There are no words for how much I loved this book. *The Witch of Painted Sorrows* is the tale of a young American woman who flees to her grandmother's mansion in Paris to get away from her tyrant husband. When she gets there, however, Sandrine finds more than she bargained for in the form of La Lune, a woman of family lore who may still be haunting the house. Through her influence, Sandrine learns to paint, exert her own willfulness, and perhaps most shockingly (to herself at least) embrace her sexuality and sensuality. This book was incredibly atmospheric evoking the glamour and mystery of La Belle Epoch Paris, nearly gothic in places - it gave me shivers! The house and city become as much characters as the people in the book. Though Sandrine isn't much developed as a character before her first encounter with La Lune, the changes wrought in her serve to show the reader what she must have been like before. (And I have to say, go La Lune! A woman before her time.) I wish Julien had been a little more developed, but he still served as the perfect pairing of the empowered Sandrine, and foil to her husband. Sandrine's courtesan grandmother may have been the most developed of all the characters. Watching what happens to her was heartbeaking. And the sex! *fans self* This is not erotica by any means, but in the hands of a skilled author like MJ Rose, the sex scenes are amazing. Give me this over 50 Shades any day. As a fan of all things mystical and occult, this book was right up my alley. I loved the reference to the fire opals and rubies (hope she does more with the stones' symbolism in later books) and the depiction of spiritualism and the occult rites toward the end was spot on from research I've done.

I was excited to receive a copy of *The Witch of Painted Sorrows* by M.J. Rose from Atria for review. I fell under Ms. Rose's enchantments after zooming through the first four books in *The Reincarnationist* series a few years ago. I discovered that her books often combine the paranormal with mysticism and historical fiction. She is deft at sharing history and creating suspense that keeps me turning the pages. Sadly, I was disappointed upon finishing *The Witch of Painted Sorrows*. The elements that I love about Ms. Rose's books were there, but it just didn't quite come together. I felt Rose was holding something back. The history of La Lune, her power and her connection to the occult were never quite revealed. It was hiding there in the shadows and it became quite frustrating waiting and wondering when it would all spill out. Because things were not revealed and did not quite come together, the ending was muddled, rushed, confusing and unsatisfying. I loved Sandrine's passion and desire to become her own person in a time when women were not necessarily allowed to do so. I admired her bravery to stand up to her husband and escape an abusive relationship. The downside to Sandrine's character is that it was hard to figure out whether her decisions (after her arrival in Paris) were her own or were due to the influence of La Lune. I believe that Sandrine naturally possessed some of those characteristics. However, she's influenced by La Lune so quickly, you do not get to know much about Sandrine alone to know which actions are hers versus those of La Lune. Despite my love for past books by M.J. Rose, I was not impressed with this latest release.

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