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The Midnight Rose



Synopsis

In the heyday of the British Raj, Anahita becomes Princess Indira's official companion, and accompanies her to England just before the outbreak of the Great War. There, she meets the young Donald Astbury - reluctant heir to a magnificent estate - and his scheming mother. Eighty years later, Rebecca Bradley, a young American film star, has the world at her feet. Her latest role, playing a 1920s debutante, takes her to the now-crumbling Astbury Hall...

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 16 hours and 48 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Whole Story Audiobooks

Audible.com Release Date: January 17, 2014

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B00HX06C9S

Best Sellers Rank: #107 in Books > Romance > Historical > 20th Century #118 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Romance > Historical #378 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature > Historical Fiction

Customer Reviews

** This book review, as well as many more, can also be found on my blog, The Baking Bookworm (www.thebakingbookworm.blogspot.ca). **Disclaimer: My sincere thanks to NetGalley and Atria Books for providing me with a complimentary e-book copy of this book in exchange for my honest review. My Review: This sweeping saga follows Anahita's life, from her days as a young girl in India in the early 1900's until present day. The reader is taken from the exotic maharajas of India to the aristocracy in England as it follows the twists and turns, the passions and the losses of Anahita. This is definitely a large book (the paper version is upwards of 500 pages for the paperback). It had a lot of wonderful historical detail but didn't fall into the trap of being bogged down in too many descriptions. We're talking about piecing together the life of a one hundred year old woman so there are many places, eras and people involved and yet Ms Riley does an excellent job of keeping the reader on track. The protagonists as well as the secondary cast of characters (for the most part anyway) were colourful, intriguing and I quickly got to know them. It was a totally absorbing read

that I had a hard time putting down. The main reason why I loved this book is due to Anahita's character. I was thoroughly engaged by the writing and riveted to Anahita's story from the beginning. Seeing several periods in her life, from a young girl to a very elderly woman, helped to make her a very genuine character for me and one that I could easily root for. Being given the knowledge that Anahita lives to be an old woman didn't detract from me being utterly captivated by her story either. If anything it made me wonder how Anahita became the woman she was in her final years.

As the author of several romantic sagas (*The Orchid House: A Novel*, *The Girl on the Cliff: A Novel* and *The Lavender Garden: A Novel* that usually relate how a tragic moment in the past multiplies over time to wreck havoc on ancestors of the present day, Lucinda Riley turns her ample abilities to focus on yet another doomed relationship--set during the Jazz Age in British India and a country estate, a la *Downton Abbey*, in the jolly old England of the era. Riley excels in conveying her main character, Anahita's voice and even though the last quarter of her novel is wrought with much outlandish coincidence and convenient scenarios that tie up the novel's many loose threads, for the most part, "Midnight Rose," is an entertaining diversion from the reality of everyday life. One major event blights the long life of Anahita: she is told her three-year-old child has died. Because Anahita is blessed/cursed with a variation of the second sight, she knows from the depth of her being that this is not true and spends the rest of her days attempting to find her lost boy. At her 100th birthday party, she commissions her great-grandson Ari, a successful businessman to continue her lifelong search.

Thank you to the author and publisher for the review copy via netgalley. An epic saga of two remarkable women and two love stories spanning the years from 1920s India to modern-day England. In the gilded years before World War I, Anahita is a bright and curious Indian girl who never thought she would come to England. But as the companion to a royal princess, she is given rare access to a world of privilege and is sent to an English boarding school. When she meets young Lord Donald Astbury, they share a special bond that is only made stronger by their harrowing wartime experiences. Pressured by his family to marry Violet, an American heiress, Lord Astbury must say good-bye to a love that will haunt him for the rest of his life. I don't actually read a lot of Historical/saga Fiction although I have been getting far more into it lately, this particular story was compelling and beautiful and had me hooked right from the start. Rebecca Bradley, an American Actress, is on location in England at Astbury Hall -- the owner, Lord Anthony Astbury is stunned by

her strong resemblance to his Grandmother Violet. When Rebecca finds some old papers written by an Indian girl who visited Astbury Hall back in the twenties, an age old love affair comes to light. I adored the characters in this novel â “ Annie particularly. So real and yet ethereal, their story is a compelling one. The parts of the book set in India were very beautifully described and the sense of an era was extraordinarily well done. And this author is not afraid to write an epic â “ this is a long book but there are no wasted moments, every word paints a picture.

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