

[PDF] The Vespertine

Saundra Mitchell - pdf download free book



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Author: Saundra Mitchell
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Description:

It's the summer of 1889, and Amelia van den Broek is new to Baltimore and eager to take in all the pleasures the city has to offer. But her gaiety is interrupted by disturbing, dreamlike visions she has only at sunset—visions that offer glimpses of the future. Soon, friends and strangers alike call on Amelia to hear her prophecies. However, a forbidden romance with Nathaniel, an artist, threatens the new life Amelia is building in Baltimore. This enigmatic young man is keeping secrets of his own—still, Amelia finds herself irrepressibly drawn to him.

When one of her darkest visions comes to pass, Amelia's world is thrown into chaos. And those

around her begin to wonder if she's not the seer of dark portents, but the cause.

Q&A with Sandra Mitchell

Q: Historical fiction meets paranormal romance in your newest book, *The Vespertine*. This is a bit of a departure from your last book, *Shadowed Summer*, which was more of a mystery/thriller. Where did you get the idea for *The Vespertine* and why did you decide to make the switch?

Mitchell: If I'd managed to write my original version of *The Vespertine*, it would have been a lot more like *Shadowed Summer*! It started out as another contemporary southern gothic novel--still about a girl who could see the future in the sunset. Her prophecies were supposed to set off a chain of modern-day Salem Witch Trials. It was definitely meant to be a thriller.

I got about sixty pages into it, and it just didn't work. So I tried moving the same idea to a still-contemporary boarding school in Maine. I only got about 30 pages into that. I was starting to think it was just a bad idea, and I should move on.

Shortly after abandoning version two, my best friend and I watched the new BBC adaptation of *Wuthering Heights*. And then suddenly, I had a first scene in my head--Amelia van den Broek, half-mad, returning to her ancestral home in the dead of night, and being locked in an attic by her furious brother. I have to admit, I intended for someone in *The Vespertine* to be a serial killer--right up until the third chapter, I still thought I was writing a thriller. Then said character decided he'd rather be a painter, and the rest is paranormal romance!

Q: Did you always know you wanted to write for young adults? What do you enjoy the most about it?

Mitchell: Writing YA novels is actually my second writing career--my day job is screenwriting and producing. For fifteen years, I've worked with Dreaming Tree Films on various teen filmmaking programs. I've written screenplays based on teen ideas, and have seen at least four of the young screenwriters I have taught go on to careers in film! It's extraordinary to me how talented, and how dedicated, teens are--and I love the richness and rawness of their emotions and their experiences. Everyone's so passionate and so real.

And now it's an extraordinary pleasure to write books for teens, and connect with them directly, author to reader. I didn't grow up thinking that I wanted to write for young adults--but my whole life has been dedicated to doing just that. I wouldn't want to write for anyone else.

Q: The city of Baltimore in the late 1800s, where *The Vespertine* takes place, offers a rich and dynamic historical backdrop for your story. Were you always interested in Victorian Baltimore? Why did you choose to set your story there?

Mitchell: Once I realized *The Vespertine* would be a historical novel, I knew it had to be set in Baltimore. The city has a great history--their soldiers fought in the American Revolution, then in the Civil War, the city offered up both Union and Confederate troops. Francis Scott Key wrote "The Star Spangled Banner" about a flag that yet waved over Baltimore's Fort McHenry. Edgar Allen Poe died there, as dissolute as any gothic hero. And Baltimore is also home to one of the first free public libraries in the United States.

Since I wanted to write about middle class girls, I wanted to set the novel in an integrated city. Baltimore has had a free black middle class for three hundred years, neighborhoods that overlap,

people from a myriad of cultures and backgrounds working and playing together. It's a major world port, and a working-class city.

Other people have done more than enough justice to the white elite upper class in Gilded-Age New York. With *The Vespertine*, I wanted to explore the kind of American city that many of the rest of us came from. The fact that Baltimore has fabulous parks and monuments and architecture to set beautiful scenes didn't hurt, either.

Q: Amelia, the book's protagonist, leads a very different life than most young girls of today; however, a lot of the things that she experiences--friendships, romance, social class issues--have not changed much over the last 100 years! What can a sixteen-year-old girl of today take from Amelia's experiences?

Mitchell: I know when I was sixteen, I was a lot like Amelia--I didn't know who I was, or what I really wanted. I just wanted my life to be exciting, so a lot of times, I just went along.

Amelia definitely goes along--telling fortunes to get popular, not actually her idea. Sneaking to see Nathaniel in Annapolis, also not her idea. But even though she didn't actively make those choices, those choices have a huge impact on her life and the lives of everyone around her. Amelia ultimately has to own up to the fact that not deciding her own fate is still a decision.

I really feel like this is a book about making a transition from being someone that things happen to, to becoming someone who makes things happen. And I think young women today still need to be reassured that they are their own person, they have agency to make decisions, and they should be the heroes of their own stories!

--This text refers to the edition.

Review Praise for *The Vespertine*:

"[A] richly conceived historical romance. . . . Fans of Libba Bray's *A Great and Terrible Beauty* will find themselves enchanted by this atmospheric tale."—*Bulletin*

"Equal parts vivid period detail, gothic melodrama, and foreboding premonitions coming true . . . an absorbing tale."—*Booklist*

"Written in a passionate, inviting voice, *The Vespertine* is a rich, historical novel of otherworldly power, forbidden romance, and questionable motives."

—Aprilynne Pike, *New York Times* Bestselling Author of *Wings and Spells*

"Sheer pleasure from beginning to end."—TeenReads.com

"I savored every word of *The Vespertine*; I knew it was an amazing book from the first page and I was entranced until the very last."—Carrie Ryan, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Forest of Hands and Teeth* series

Praise for *The Springsweet*:

"A lovely historical romance. . . . The author conjures a convincing picture of life on the Oklahoma prairie, painting an absorbing portrait of the landscape and of the people there. . . . A high-quality, absorbing drama."—*Kirkus Reviews*

"*The Springsweet* will steal your heart. Zora is a wounded heroine who had me cheering as she rediscovers the strength she thought she'd lost. Blend in a smoldering, yet refreshingly subtle hero, and add a twist of magic and you have a perfect romance in the Old West with another of Sandra Mitchell's signature rich and nuanced historic settings!"—Aprilynne Pike, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Wings and Spells*

"I didn't think YA historicals could get better than *The Vespertine*. *The Springsweet* proved me wrong. This is a gorgeous, unputdownable book that will stay with you long after it's through.

Saundra Mitchell just gets better and better."—Sarah MacLean, NYT and USA Today bestselling Author of *Nine Rules to Break When Romancing a Rake* and *Ten Ways to Be Adored When Landing a Lord*

"With Saundra Mitchell's trademark evocative and gorgeous language, *The Springsweet* takes us across the plains, where the people thirst for love just as the land thirsts for water. I never wanted this book to end!"—Carrie Ryan, *New York Times* best-selling author of *The Forest of Hands and Teeth* series

Praise for *The Elementals*:

"In *The Elementals* the worlds of *The Vespertine* and *The Springsweet* collide with glass-brittle hopes and devastating consequences. The children of the supernatural must learn what their parents have long known, that even the most innocent magic demands a cost. A sumptuous read, as bittersweet as it is beautiful."—Aprilynne Pike, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Wings and Spells*

"Saundra Mitchell pulls off a thrilling conclusion to a mesmerizing series! She just gets better and better!"—Carrie Ryan, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Forest of Hands and Teeth* series

"Mitchell convincingly portrays the glittering, raucous L.A. of the burgeoning movie industry and the oppressive unease of looming war."—*Booklist*

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