



The Midnight Rose

Lucinda Riley

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The latest novel from international multi-million-copy bestselling author Lucinda Riley is a stunning, epic saga. Filled with unforgettable characters, *The Midnight Rose* is a multi-layered, heart-breaking tale, and marks Lucinda Riley's most ambitious novel to date. Spanning four generations and two very different cultures, it sweeps from the glittering palaces of the great maharajas of India to the majestic stately homes of England, following the extraordinary life of a girl, Anahita Chaval, from 1911 to the present day . . . In the heyday of the British Raj, eleven-year-old Anahita, from a noble but impoverished family, forms a lifelong friendship with the headstrong Princess Indira, the privileged daughter of rich Indian royalty. Becoming the princess's official companion, Anahita accompanies her friend to England just before the outbreak of the Great War. There, she meets the young Donald Astbury – reluctant heir to the magnificent, remote Astbury Estate – and his scheming mother. Eighty years later, Rebecca Bradley, a young American film star, has the world at her feet. But when her turbulent relationship with her equally famous boyfriend takes an unexpected turn, she's relieved that her latest role, playing a 1920s debutante, will take her away from the glare of publicity to the wilds of Dartmoor in England. Shortly after filming begins at the now-crumbling Astbury Hall, Ari Malik, Anahita's great-grandson, arrives unexpectedly, on a quest for his family's past. What he and Rebecca discover begins to unravel the dark secrets that haunt the Astbury dynasty . . .

The Midnight Rose Details

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From Reader Review The Midnight Rose for online ebook

Diane Lynn says

I really enjoyed this book and would have given it five stars if it hadn't been for a few bizarre events in the present day story. The present day story also dragged in parts. On the other hand, the story set in the past was well researched and held my attention. I love it when an author includes a bibliography. This book could have easily ended up on my favorites shelf. Five stars for the past, three for the present, equals four overall.

Aditi says

“The more you leave out, the more you highlight what you leave in.”

---Henry Green

Lucinda Riley, the *New York Times* bestselling author, has penned an enchanting tale of love, loss and royal family secrets, in her book, *The Midnight Rose*. This is the story of a girl named, Anahita, spanning across many generations, and with the help of another protagonist, Rebecca, the readers get to revisit the life of Anahita and her royalty and her family secrets.

Synopsis:

In the heyday of the British Raj, eleven-year-old Anahita, from a noble but impoverished family, forms a lifelong friendship with the headstrong Princess Indira, the privileged daughter of Indian royalty. As the princess's official companion, Anahita accompanies her friend to England just before the outbreak of World War I. There, she meets young Donald Astbury—reluctant heir to the magnificent, remote Astbury Estate—and his scheming mother.

Ninety years later, Rebecca Bradley, a young American film star, has the world at her feet. But when her turbulent relationship with her equally famous boyfriend takes an unexpected turn, she's relieved that her latest role, playing a 1920s debutante, will take her away from the glare of publicity to a distant corner of the English countryside. Shortly after filming begins at the now-crumbling Astbury Hall, Ari Malik, Anahita's great-grandson, arrives unexpectedly, on a quest for his family's past. What he and Rebecca discover begins to unravel the dark secrets that haunt the Astbury dynasty .

Ari, the great grand son of Anahita, received the papers containing the life story of her great grand mother, that leads him to the Astbury Hall in England to find Anahita's lost son, Moh. At the same time, Rebecca, an American actress, visits the Astbury Hall in England for a film shooting, where she befriends the current Lord Astbury. Fate brings both these characters together, where together they try to find Anahita's lost son, Moh, thereby unraveling some great and hidden Astbury family secrets. Will they be able to find Moh?

I've been quite a huge fan of this best selling author. Riley's exquisite writing style and eloquent words along with a free-flowing and addictive narrative, make the book one hell of a page-turner. The book is so enslaving that the story lingers in the minds of the readers long after it's appalling climax. From the very first half of the book, the story delves deeper into the historical aspects of both the countries- India, during British

Raj, and England- both in present and in the past.

The layering of the story line is quite intricately, especially both the stories, one of Rebecca and the other of Anahita, are in perfect tune with one another. Thus when the readers shift from one timeline to another while reading, they can easily set back into each of the timelines with ease. From the cultural in-differences to the fashion statement to the linguistic gap to the political strata, social prejudices etc, are all very thoroughly portrayed in the story line. Each and every scene from the book is so vividly described that it feels like the scenes are playing out before the eyes of the readers.

The author not only transports her readers back in time but also takes them to see various eye-catching destinations that are not only strikingly featured but also evocatively described. The characters of the book plays out to be the most strongest aspect in the story, which are extremely well-developed layered both with flaws and skills. Anahita's painful and heartbreaking story has lot of power to move the readers whereas Rebecca's story helps the readers to contemplate with the past. The supporting cast is also developed with lots of flair and charm that can leave a lost lasting impression in the minds of the readers.

In short, the book is rich in history and the backdrop is vibrantly painted that supports an equally poignant story of two women.

Verdict: *This is a must read book for historical fiction readers.*

Courtesy: *Thanks to the author, Lucinda Riley, for giving me an opportunity to read and review this book.*

Anna says

On Anahita's 100th birthday, her family gather in the Indian mountains to celebrate. Taking her eldest great-grandson Ari to one side, she gives him a pile of papers. It's her life story, she says, written down in case her long-lost son can ever be found; Anahita (Anni) was told that little Moh died when he was two, but she's never accepted this and knows her now 80 year old son is out there somewhere. Reading her papers, Ari travels to Astbury Hall in England where Anni spent some time during the Great War and begins to retrace her steps.

Also visiting Astbury Hall is American actress Rebecca. Shooting a film set in the 1920s, she becomes friendly with the current Lord Astbury. Seeing her dressed in period costume, he's stunned to find her the image of his American grandmother, brought over with a handsome dowry to save the crumbling Astbury Hall after the war. Armed with Anni's papers and the Astbury family diaries, Ari and Rebecca work together to uncover the truth about what became of Moh.

Anni's story was vibrant and rich in historical detail, with an ending that was both shocking and poignant. Unfortunately, Rebecca's story was weak, taking up far too many pages whilst achieving nothing, full of superfluous characters and simpering conversations. A decent edit could have solved a lot of this, but nothing could have saved the latter stages of her tale which descended into complete farce.

The best dual-timelines get the balance right between past and present; the past story will always be the stronger of the two, with the present-day story complementing it rather than fighting it, as Rebecca did here. Anni deserved so much better.

Four stars for Anni, one or two for Rebecca.

Josiemaus85 says

Also die eine Sache habe ich ja so nicht kommen sehen ?? aber alles in allem ein sehr tolles Buch ?

Jess The Bookworm says

This book spans so far and wide that it felt almost epic to me. It starts out in India following the family of Anahita as she celebrates her 100th birthday. Anahita has always felt as though something was missing from her life: when she was young she had her first son, and was informed that he had died, but she never believed it, even when she was given his death certificate. She has written down her life story, and decides to pass it on to her great grandson, Ari, hoping that he can find out the truth of Anahita's past.

Ari, a successful businessman, is at a cross roads in his personal life, having just been through a break up, and decides to undertake his great grandmother's quest. He begins to read the story, which begins in India in the early 20th century, where Anahita was a young girl, born into a high class, but poor, becomes the companion to Princess Indira, and is introduced to the lavish lifestyle of Indian royalty. She is given the opportunity to travel to England to boarding school with her royal friend, where she stays at Astbury Estate, and meets Donald, the heir to the estate, who she seems to connect with straight away.

The book then switches to modern day England at the Astbury Estate, where American actress, Rebecca Bradley is filming a period drama movie, and when Ari arrives at the Estate, the two of them begin their interest in uncovering the secrets that the Estate has to offer.

I loved the glimpse into Indian royalty, the various characters along the way, both the modern and the past characters. The book contains family mystery, forbidden love stories, scandal, and a bit of a gothic element (which I always enjoy).

Lucinda Riley really knows how to weave a story, and make the reader feel like they're travelling, both abroad and through time. It was a story that gripped me and held my interest until the end, it really was wonderful.

Allison says

The Midnight Rose was completely absorbing. I love these gothic novels with rich atmosphere and dual timelines, although I sometimes have to take more tragedy and bleakness than I would like along with them. I've read one novel by Lucinda Riley before, and loved how her story included exotic locations as well as England. But it was so sad that I couldn't bring myself to read another of her books for several years.

This time I was braced for tragedy at least in the earlier timeline, and ended up cursing myself for still getting attached to the characters. There's no doubt that Riley can suck you in and make you dread what's going to happen to them. The haunting sadness of their story clung to me for several days after I finished reading.

The thing that disappointed me about this one is the modern timeline. I was really hoping it would make up

for the tragedy of the past. It did offer a bit of redemption, but it was not nearly as satisfying as it could have been. The romance was underdeveloped, and materialized almost out of nowhere. I didn't have the chance to become invested enough in it. That dissatisfaction also lingered with me for several days, making me waver between 3 and 4 stars on my rating.

Still, the haunting nature of both books I've now read by Riley tells me that I will be back for more in the future. Like a moth to a flame.

Joy (joyous reads) says

As Anahita's century-old life draws to a close, she yearns for the son she had to give up when he was but a child of three. While everyone had told her that he died soon after she left, she knows from the depths of her soul that he was still alive. Ever the perceptive, she also knows that death will soon knock on her door. As she sets her affairs in order, she leaves her first grandchild a letter; one that she's written to her missing son. In the letter is the story of her life and details of the events leading up to her abandoning him.

Ten years after she died, her grandson sets about finding Anahita's son; an endeavour that will take him to England, particularly, Astbury, the estate where Anahita worked as a healer at a time when people of colour are considered to be only as valuable as servants.

In the present Astbury, he finds Rebecca Bradley, an American actress on location shooting a film. He also meets Lord Anthony Astbury, a recluse who can tell him where he can start his search for Anahita's son. At first, the lord of the manor did not take kindly to Ari unearthing history. But the more he reads her letter, the further he gets drawn in to the past.

It will take you to a time when Royal India boasts the most lavish of courts. When girls are told education was nothing but a fantastical dream. Anahita grew up with a father who thought it otherwise, however. And when he died, her mother made sure that that dream was kept alive. You can say that this was how her story started; when she met a precocious princess in the person of Indy. Their childhood friendship span years, and had gone through the ups and downs of having two different backgrounds. But short of adopting her, Indy's had become her family when Anni's mother died. Indy's family provided for her education and shelter in England. In the end though, Anni had to make choices for herself – which proved to be both a blessing and the tragedy that she couldn't prevent.

While Anahita's story was as beautiful as it was heartbreaking, Rebecca's was as gothic as stories of the past. Her part in this epic story is that her resemblance to Lord Astbury's grandmother was quite uncanny. And having been the person to discover his grandfather's diary attaches herself to this tragic tale. What Rebecca stumbled into is a madness that started three generations past. If I had to compare it to any gothic novels I've read in the past, I'd say it's comparable to Jane Eyre. It's having another resident to Astbury Estate but no one would know who it was until the bitter end.

Lucinda Riley crafted a cast of characters whose stories were seamlessly tied with love, family, and murder three generations old. I must admit that the major draw for me was the mystery surrounding the lost son. The Midnight Rose is a beautiful tale of love and tragedy. It's lush, and full of history. It's also dark and as mysterious as a decrepit manor losing its battle with time. This book just proves to me that not all historical fiction are created equal. Once you crack open this novel, you would not be able to stop.

Anne says

This is a huge story, not just in length but in the quality of the writing, the detail and the meticulous research that has gone into its creation. A saga that spans the decades and spreads across continents, it is dramatic and compelling and swept me off to another era.

The Midnight Rose is Anahita's story, and begins in India in 1911. Anahita (Anni) comes from a family whose wealth has been lost over the years, brought up by parents who allowed her to believe in herself and her skills, she becomes the companion of Princess Indira. Indira is a flighty girl, spoilt but warm hearted and the two girls become the best of friends. When the girls are sent to England, Anni realised that it is here that she can gain a proper education, and maybe achieve something that wouldn't be possible back in India. It is also the place that she meets Donald Astbury, the man who will shape her whole future.

The story is told as a dual-time narrative, and the reader is soon transported to modern-day Astbury estate. No longer the venue for parties and dinners, the house is now owned by the present Lord Anthony who lives alone with just his housekeeper for company. Financial worries have meant that the estate has been hired out as a location for a Hollywood film starring the beautiful, but unhappy Rebecca Bradley.

When Anni's great-grandson Ari arrives at Astbury to try and learn more about his ancestors, he and Rebecca stumble upon evidence that the things that Anni claimed in her letter to Ari may well have been true.

This is a truly captivating story spanning continents and decades. The descriptions of life in the royal palaces of India during the time of English rule are stunning, and the way of life for the English aristocracy is cleverly compared and contrasted, showing that in fact, although miles apart, there were many similarities in how they lived. Exotic, vibrant, colourful India and the opulence and grandeur of the Royal family contrast with the sometimes staid and stuffy gentle elegance of the English countryside.

Anni is a complex character, seemingly compliant, kind and caring - yet with a steely determination to protect those who are dearest to her, whilst being prepared to sacrifice her own happiness for the sake of others.

The modern-day story unfolds quite slowly, as Rebecca and Ari learn a little bit more about Anni and her journey to Astbury, the full horror of her treatment from Donald's mother, Lady Maud Astbury becomes clear. Lady Maud was a woman who was determined that nothing would stand in her way, determined that the Astburys would continue to live on the estate for generations to come, her hard-hearted actions shaped the whole future for many years.

A story of love, courage, consequences, family relationships and mystery. The attention to detail and the perfect parallel timing of this novel makes it a joy to read.

Lizzy says

If you want to read about India in the time of the Raj, England during World War I, prejudice, terrible mothers, and doomed love affairs with its echoes into the present, Lucinda Riley's *The Midnight Rose* might be the book for you.

It is an enjoyable read to be sure, but not what I expected. Two parallel stories are told simultaneously. In the past, we read the tale of young Indian Anahita Chevrán, as she travels between her homeland and England, where she is trapped at the beginning of World War I. In present day, actress Rebecca Bradley is filming a

1920's period drama set in the same Astbury Hall, in Dartmoor, where Anahita lived part of her time in England.

Let me shortly explain my disappointment. To tell two story lines concomitantly is not always easily well done. Anahita and Donald story seemed solid, although I could not like Donald and Anahita's behavior were not always easy to understand. Rebecca and Ari's story, on the other hand, was weaker and less developed; the characters flatter. The power of a dual time-line novel depends on the past and the present being equally believable. That did not fully happen with *Midnight Rose*. A pity, the story had potential. However, I kept reading because of the strength of Anahita story, wanting to learn how her life story ultimately ended.

Considering all the limitations pointed up above, still a reasonable good read. 2.5/3 stars.

Mirjana Luki? says

Pravo uživanje i opuštanje. Sve knjige Lucinde Riley su pune iskrene ljubavi, iskrenih suza, radosti, praštanja i ko voli da iz surove realnosti pobegne u neke lepše i bajkovitije pri?e ovo je pravi izbor :)

Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

Dual review with Swedish first and then English!

SWEDISH REVIEW

Jag älskar att läsa böcker med exotiska platser och Midnattsrosen verkade ha alla ingredienser som jag gillar i en bok med två tidslinjer: en sorglig historia, ett intressant mysterium och starka kvinnliga karaktärer. Och på ett sätt fick jag det, i alla fall delvis. Men för att en bok med två tidslinjer, en samtida och en i det förflutna, ska fungera är det nödvändigt att de är lika intressanta att läsa. Visst, det är inte ett problem om den ena berättelsen är lite bättre än den andra. Problemet med den här boken är att nutidshistorien aldrig blir intressant och att Rebecca, den vackra filmstjärnan, aldrig fick chansen att skina. Det känns som om hon är bara där, så att Anahitas barnbarn Ari, skulle ha en kvinnlig följeslagare i sin sökning efter Anahitas "förlorade son. Rebecca's egna historia försummas tyvärr.

Bokens början är mycket spännande med den gamla Anahita som ser tillbaka i sitt liv och ger Ari en nedskrivnen redogörelse om sitt liv. Det är Anahitas återberättelse som höll mig intresserad genom bokens gång, hennes tidiga liv med sin mamma och pappa, när hon möter den rika Indira och flyttar hem till dem och senare resan till England med Indira för att börja skolan där. Det här är den del jag älskade mest i den här boken. Sedan möter Anahita Donald Astbury, och för att vara ärlig tyckte jag inte att de hade mycket kemi. Det kändes mest som en typisk händelse, två olämpliga människor möts och förälskar sig i varandra och det hela kan bara sluta på ett sätt. Olyckligt! Jag ogillade inte Donald, han var bara inte en intressant karaktär. Sedan uppstår naturligtvis problem och Anahitas måste åka tillbaka till Indien. Och det är här jag började få problem med Anahitas berättelse. Det blir förutsägbart, och för mitt liv kan jag inte förstå Donalds handlingar och ännu mindre kan jag förstå hur Anahita fortfarande kan älska honom tillräckligt för att acceptera hans ursäkter.

Den sista delen av boken blev det en hel del skumläsning för att komma igenom, eftersom mitt humör växlade, ena minuten var handlingen irriterade att för att sedan bli tråkig. Det som höll mitt intresse uppe

ända till slutet var att jag ville få ett svar på vad som hände med Anahitas son. Tacksamt nog var slutet bitvis bra.

Midnattsrosen var en besvärlig bok att läsa i och med att handlingen var så ojämn. Med nästan 600 sidor hade handlingen behövt vara jämnare. Jag önskar att boken hade tagit upp mer om Anahitas liv i Indien efter att hon hade lämnat England för gott och jag skulle gärna ha bytt ut Rebeccas historia för det. Om jag inte hade gillat Anahita så mycket skulle den här boken varit mycket svårare att läsa.

Tack till Bazar Förlag för recensionsexemplaret!

ENGLISH REVIEW

I love to read books with exotic locations and Midnight Rose seemed to have all the ingredients that I like in a dual-timeline book; a sad story, an interesting mystery, and strong female characters. And, in a way did I get it, partly. However, for a book with two storylines, one contemporary and one in the past to work is it necessary that they are equally interesting to read. Sure, it's not a problem when one is slightly better than the other. The problem with this book is that the contemporary story never gets interesting and that Rebecca, the beautiful movie star, never got the chance to shine. She's just there, in the present, so that Anahita's great-grandson Ari while searching for Anahita's "lost son" has a female companion in his search. Her own history is sadly neglected.

Now, the beginning of the book is very intriguing with the old Anahita looking back at her life and giving Ari a written down account of her life. It's Anahita's life throughout this book that kept my interest up, her early life with her mother and father, coming to live with the wealthy Indira and later on traveling to England with Indira to start school there. This is the part I loved the most in this book. Then Anahita meets Donald Astbury, and to be honest, didn't I think that they had a lot of chemistry. It felt just like a typical kind of thing that happens in a romance book, two unsuitable people meet. I did not dislike Donald, he was just not an interesting character. Then, of course, problems arise and Anahita has to go back to India. And, here is when I started to get a problem with Anahita's story as well as Rebecca's. It gets predictable, and for my life can't I understand Donald's actions and even less can I understand how Anahita can still love him enough to accept his excuses.

The last part of the book did I skim a lot to get through since my mood alternated between annoyed and bored. What kept my interest up until the end was that I wanted to get an answer to what had happened to Anahita's son.

Midnight Rose was a hard book to read, with almost 600 pages to read had I hoped the story to be more even, but it had a lot of ups and down. I would have loved to have read more about Anahita's life in India after she left England for good and I would have gladly exchanged Rebecca's story for that. If I had not liked Anahita so much would this book have been much harder to read.

Thanks to Bazar Förlag for the review copy!

TL says

Side note: One version of this book says 496 pages while my UK copy is 671 pages.

“Physical comfort--materialism, if you like--is the enemy of any serious spirituality, I think. When we're warm and well fed, our souls can be empty and we still make it through the day. And as I've discovered recently, it is the greatest poverty of all.”

“My father always said that to push a rock an inch in a lifetime was the same as throwing a hundred pebbles into the sea every day. Big change comes slowly, but it will come”

What a story...

We start off in the present day with Anahita (love that name) as she prepares to meet her extended family: *I am a hundred years old today. Not only have I managed to survive a century, but I've also seen in a new millennium.*

As dawn breaks and the sun begins to rise over Mount Kanchenjunga beyond my window, I lie on my pillows and smile to myself at the utter ridiculousness of the thought. If I were a piece of furniture, an elegant chair for example, I would be labeled an antique. I would be polished, restored and proudly put on show as a thing of beauty. Sadly that isn't the case with my human frame, which has not mellowed like a fine piece of mahogany over its lifetime. Instead, my body has deteriorated into a sagging hessian sack containing a collection of bones.

The story continues after (view spoiler).

The story is split between Rebecca (an american actress filming at Astbury Hall), Ari, and Anahita's story of growing up in India and living England, including the real story of what happened to her.

I had certain feelings when I came upon events in the story but overall it went in directions I didn't expect. It is beautifully told... you get a keen sense of both India and England (past and present) and quickly get attached to these people.

It was a different time back when Anahita was little but some of the attitudes back then I still had to shake my head at. Especially Maud Astbury... I didn't think much of her at first but as we got to know her...

Even after you learn some about why Maud is the way she is and why she thinks like that.. it doesn't excuse her actions.

One of many things that had my blood boiling (view spoiler) Oooh, that woman!

So many secrets kept from so many people for different reasons... to some, certain things were vitally important and unfortunately, some of those caused alot of turmoil and heartache.

Anahita was/is a strong, resourceful, and compassionate woman. She deserved better treatment but I admired her for picking up the pieces of her life and rising above what happened to her.

At first, Rebecca's portion and contribution to the storyline was confusing. She is easy to like and the filming of the movie of the state was fun to see through her eyes but it did have me wondering from the get go. It does pay off, so be patient :).

Ari Malik wasn't easy to like at first but he grew on me. I could sense he was a good person who needed time to find his way... I was glad when he decided to explore his great-grandmother's story

Anthony did seem kind but odd... his full story when it is revealed, I just wanted to give him a big hug.

That one small section in the ending with (view spoiler)
Would recommend, happy reading!

Cathy Branciforte says

This could be my favorite Lucinda Riley book....I LOVED it! What a beautifully written story! I was drawn in right from the start and it just kept on going. It had everything that I look for in a good read: great characters, and a story that just wouldn't quit! It was told from various viewpoints, and it went back and forth in time and places around the world, until the whole story was told. I won't give a synopsis of the book, but can only say that I highly recommend this book! I was so sorry for it to end!!

Thank you to Netgalley and Atria Books for the advance copy...can't wait to share it with everyone in March!

Γι?τα Παπαδημακοπο?λου says

Εν αναμον? της κυκλοφορ?ας του τ?ταρτου βιβλ?ου της σειρ?ς των "Επτ? αδελφ?ν" της Lucinda Riley, οι εκδ?σεις Δι?πτρα μ?ς ?φεραν ?να ν?ο βιβλ?ο της αγαπημ?νης συγγραφ?ως, αρκετ? διαφορετικ? απ' ?τι μας ?χει συνηθ?σει, με την ?δια, ?μως, δυναμικ? κι ?νταση συναισθημ?των. ?να βιβλ?ο που μας ταξιδε?ει αν?μεσα στο παρ?ν και στο παρελθ?ν, που συνδ?ει δ?ο ιστορ?ες που σ' ?να πρ?το επ?πεδο μοι?ζουν να μην ?χουν κ?ποιο κοιν? σημει?ο επαφ?ς και που, ?μως, το π?ντρεμ? τους γ?νεται με τρ?πο μαγικ? και ονειρεμ?νο, παρασ?ροντ?ς μας σε μια β?λτα που θυμ?ζει περισσ?τερο roller coaster και που δεν μας αφ?νει να π?ρουμε αν?σα. ?να βιβλ?ο για το οπο?ο θες να πεις πολλ?, και που την ?δια στιγμ?, δεν θες να πεις τ?ποτα γι' αυτ?, για να μην καταστρ?ψεις τη μαγε?α που καλε?ται να βι?σει ο αναγν?στης διαβ?ζοντ?ς το.

Δεδομ?νου ?τι η περ?ληψη του οπισθ?φυλλου ε?ναι αρκετ? αναλυτικ?, δεν θα ?θελα να πω περισσ?τερα, για να μην κινδυν?ψω να σας αποκαλ?ψω πρ?γματα που καλ? ε?ναι να τ' ανακαλ?ψετε μ?νοι σας. Οπ?τε, θα σταθ? στην αν?λυση ?σων μπορο?ν να ειπωθ?ν, ?τσι ?πως τα β?ωσα και τα ?νωσα εγ?. Και, πραγματικ?, αυτ? ε?ναι π?ρα πολλ?! Τα συναισθ?ματ? μου χτ?πησαν κ?κκινο, οι σκ?ψεις μου ?τρεχαν σαν τρελ?ς, και σε κ?θε ν?ο δεδομ?νο δεν ?ξερα πως πρ?πει ν' αντιδρ?σω. Χαρ?, λ?πη, φ?βος, ενθουσιασμ?ς, αγων?α, θυμ?ς, ε?ναι μ?νο μερικ? απ? τα εντελ?ς κ?ντρα συναισθ?ματα που αισθ?νεται κανε?ς διαβ?ζοντας την ιστορ?α αυτ?, και κυρ?ως την ιστορ?α της Αναχ?τα, ο χαρακτ?ρας με τον οπο?ο, σε προσωπικ? επ?πεδο, ταυτ?στηκα περισσ?τερο, νι?θοντας συμπ?νοια και τρυφερ?τητα απ?ναντ? της, αφο? ε?ναι εκε?νη που κλ?θηκε να σηκ?σει στις πλ?τες της το μεγαλ?τερο β?ρος ?λων, μα και να πληρ?σει το πιο βαρ? τ?μημα. ?να τ?μημα που ?σως να μην ?ξιζε, αλλ? που δεν μπορο?σε να εναντιωθε? απ?ναντ? του, αφο? υπ?ρχουν οι φορ?ς εκε?νες που η μο?ρα και το καθ?κον στ?κονται πιο δυνατ? απ? τα θ?λω μας.

"Το ρ?δο του μεσονυχτ?ου" ε?ναι, κυρ?ως, μια ιστορ?α χαρακτ?ρων. Ε?ναι μια διαδρομ? που εστι?ζει στις δυσκολ?ες της ζω?ς, σε διαφορετικ?ς περι?δους και συνθ?κες, και το πως οι ?νθρωποι καλο?νται να τις αντιμετωπ?σουν, να σταθ?ν απ?ναντ? τους και να διεκδικ?σουν τη θ?ση τους στον κ?σμο. Ε?ναι μια ιστορ?α ωρ?μανσης, αυτογνωσ?ας και γν?σης. Μια ιστορ?α που προσπαθε?

να ερμηνεύσει τα ανθρωπίνα πύθη και τις αδυναμίες, να εξηγήσει το σωστό και το λάθος, την τιμή και το καθήκον, την αγάπη και το πώς την βιώνει κανείς μέσω των προσωπικών του επιλογών που μπορεί να σημαδύσουν όχι μόνο τον ίδιο και τους γύρω του, αλλά και τους θα τον διαδεχτούν στην πορεία της ζωής, αφού θ' αποτελούν, ψυμμεσα ή ψυμμεσα, προέκταση του δικού τους εαυτού, έναν αντικατοπτρισμό τους στο πέρασμα του χρόνου που περνά και χάνεται, αλλά αφήνει ανεξίτηλα σημάδια να θυμίζουν τι κερδήθηκε και τη χύθηκε στη διαδρομή αυτή.

Είναι εμφανές πως η Riley έχει κάνει μια μελέτη εις βάθος, τόσο της εποχής που τοποθετείται η παρελθοντικής της ιστορίας, όσο και των ηθών και των εθμών της Ινδικής κοινωνίας του τότε. Αυτή προσδίδει έναν ωμό ρεαλισμό στην αφήγηση της, που μπορεί να θύει το συναίσθημα σε δεύτερη μορφή, αλλά αυτή είναι μόνο η επιφάνεια, γιατί, κάτω απ' αυτήν, σιγοβράζουν όλα εκείνα τα πύθη και οι επιθυμίες που μπορούν να σε κψουν και να σε διαλύσουν, να σε αλλάξουν και να σε κάνουν να μην είσαι ποτέ ο ίδιος. Βάβαια, το στοιχείο αυτό, κάνει την ιστορία του σήμερα, που είναι σαφώςτατα φρσσκια και σύγχρονη, να φαντίζει συγκριτικά λόγο πιο αδύναμη, όχι επειδή της λέπει το νερό και νταση, αλλά γιατί στερείται κάτι απ' τη μαγεα και τη διαφορετικότητα που, αβανταδρικά, συνοδεύει κάθε ιστορία εποχής, ειδικά όταν αυτή έχει μελετηθεί, δομηθεί και αποδοθεί με τον αρτιότερο τρόπο που θα μπορούσε.

Οι πρώτες εκατό σελίδες του βιβλίου δεν είναι εκείνες που σε κερδίζουν, αφού σου προκαλούν έναν εκνευρισμό που μπορεί να σε αποσπεί, ξεπερνώντας, όμως, τον σκπέλο αυτό, παραδνεσαι στην ανγνώση μιας ιστορίας που έχει να προσφέρει πολλά, και που απαιτεί απ' τον αναγνήστη χρόνο, συγκέντρωση και αφοσώση. Αγπήσα τη Ρεμπκα, θύμισα πολλές φορές με τον ρι-αν και οφέλω να παραδεχτή πως είναι ο χαρακτήρας με την μεγαλύτερη εξέλιξη, καθώς κάνει μια τερστια διαδρομή και ωριμίζει εξαιρετικά μέσω αυτών-, όμως η αγαπημένη μου, πως προεπα, παραμνει η Αναχτα, όχι μόνο για το πρότυπο γυναικάς και ανθρωπου που παρουσιάζει, αλλά γιατί μέσω αυτών αποτυπνεται η εικνα μιας ολκλήρης εποχής, μιας ολκλήρης κουλτοράς, φιλοσοφίας και νοοτροπίας, τόσο ως προς τον προσδιορισμό της ταυτότητας του φλού σε μια κοινωνία διαφορετικής απ' το σήμερα, όσο και ως προς την ηθική την οποα ακολουθεί.

Η γραφή της Riley μς ταξιδεύει, πως κάθε φορά, με την αφήγηση της να ρει σαν νερό παρασφροντς μας σε μια δνη εικνών, συναισθημάτων, και την εναλλασσμενη απεικνιση ενς παρελθόντος κι ενς παρνόντος που ρχονται σε πλήρη αντίθεση, προκαλώντας μας κοινωνικούς, μα και εσωτερικούς, προβληματισμούς και σκψεις. Η διαδρομή αυτή ολοκληρνεται μ' ένα φινλέ ανατρεπτικό, απ' αυτό που σγούρα δεν θα περιμενε κανείς σε μια ιστορία πως αυτό, που να μεν δικαιώνει ορισμένα πράγματα σ' έναν βαθμό, αλλά δεν χαρζει την ολοκληρωτική, την απλυτή λήτρωση. Ώς το στοιχείο αυτό να ενοχλσει κάποιους, εμνα, όμως, με κέρδισε με την ιδιαιτερότητ του, αντίθετα με το ρομαντικό στοιχείο που είναι κπως επιφανειακό, στο σήμερα, και όχι τόσο δυνατό και ισοροπημένα αναπτύγμένο, όσο θα μπορούσε. Αν εξαιρσουμε, όμως, αυτή τη μικρή λεπτομρεία, το βιβλίο αυτό σγούρα πρέπει να διαβάστε, όχι μόνο απ' τους fans της Riley, αλλά κι απ' τους αγαπούν τα ιστορικά μυθιστορήματα που πραγματεύονται την αγπή, την δικαώση, την πίστη και την αφοσώση, μα και την ανακλύση του ποιοι πραγματικά εμάστε.

Cora ? Tea Party Princess says

5 Words: Beautiful, breath-taking, haunting, magical, heart-breaking.

This book.

Just... This book.

It's been one hell of a ride reading this. The Midnight Rose is the type of book you read slowly and devote time to. It makes you think. The writing is so beautiful, the story so magnificently crafted, that it takes your breath away.

I have to confess that I didn't like the beginning of this book. The first 100 pages or so are so, so different from the rest of the book. And I hated Ari. But by the end he'd developed and grown and changed so much.

But then the two stories started weaving together, and things got very interesting.

Anahita. Poor Anahita. This is her story more than anyone else's and I don't think I'll ever forget the story. As much as Rebecca was my favourite character for the first half of this book, Anahita is the one who really takes the spotlight.

This is a deep book, thoughtfully written and incredibly well researched. By turns it made my heart soar and then brought tears to my eyes. I don't think I can put into words just how amazingly beautiful this book is. Read it. Read it and weep.

The ending was one hell of a shocker, an excellent twist. And those last pages made me cry. What a ride. What a wonderful, haunting experience it was to read this book.

Huge thanks to Shaz at Shaz's Book Blog for giving me the opportunity to read The Midnight Rose and for introducing me to Lucinda Riley.

Teresa says

A 3.5 star read for me.

Sometimes I need a good dollop of escapism in my reading material, especially during the dreary Winter months when sunshine is in short supply. Fortunately I had The Midnight Rose, Lucinda Riley's latest novel, to keep me entertained when the Christmas festivities had fizzled out.

This is the story of Anni (Anahita) Chavan, a tale which spans four generations and two continents. As Anni celebrates her 100th birthday in Darjeeling, India, surrounded by her extended family, she decides to entrust her great-grandson, Ari, with the task of uncovering long buried family secrets – secrets which will lead him to Astbury Hall and the staid world of the English aristocracy.

As the novel progresses, we see the vivid colours of India at the height of the Raj; a warm, vibrant setting which contrasts sharply with the cold, reserved atmosphere which awaits Anni when she comes to England. The characters are larger than life, particularly the strong women in the shape of Anni and her nemesis, Lady Maud Astbury.

The Midnight Rose is a thoroughly entertaining read which will appeal to those who enjoy historical sagas in the style of Barbara Taylor Bradford and Lesley Pearse and perhaps fans of Downton Abbey. Yes, there are a few predictable elements but there's no doubt Ms Riley can spin a good yarn to keep her readers captivated. - See more at: <http://www.lovelytreez.com/?p=786#sth...>

Zorana says

Sjajna knjiga, uzivala sam u njoj od prve do poslednje strane. Divna prica, sjajni likovi, lep stil i cesticke na vrlo lepom prevodu.

Cleo Bannister says

I'm a big fan of fiction written against a well-researched historical background and this 688 page novel delivers the tale of young Indian Anahita Chevrn which weaves between her homeland and England where she is trapped at the beginning of World War I. During her time in England she spent time at Astbury Hall as the companion to Princess Indira. Lady Maud Astbury makes it quite clear that poor Anahita is an unwelcome addition to the household but with few options as an orphan, it is clear that she has to endure her time spent in this remote stately home.

In the present day Rebecca Bradley is an actress filming a period drama set in the 1920's at Astbury Hall, in Dartmoor. Rebecca is eager to escape the press interest about her private life and so the trip to England is the perfect solution. There is a surprise in store when she becomes friendly with the resident Lord Astbury who is amazed at her likeness to his Grandmother Violet.

I can only admire Lucinda Riley's story-telling as a large part of this story not only demanded that the historical details felt authentic, but also that the tale of Anahita's life in India felt equally genuine and on both counts she succeeded. Although romantic attachments are key to the lives of a number of the characters there is also a dark mystery to be uncovered.

For me the power of a dual time-line novel depends on the past and the present being equally believable and although for me understanding what the truth was of Anahita's life was what kept me reading the tie-in to the present day story was integral to the whole tale, one could simply not have existed without the other.

The pacing of this story is masterfully done, after all this is a long book yet one that I immersed myself in as letters, diaries and long-held family secrets were slowly uncovered. The central character in this book is Anahita and her character was well fleshed out although what stopped me awarding this book five stars is although there were other engaging characters including Princess Indira and Mrs Trevathan I did find a few of them quite wishy-washy but this wasn't enough to spoil what is an epic story which beautifully contrasts different cultures, different times all wrapped up with a tale set perfectly within its time period.

I received a free copy of this book from the publishers Atria Books in return for my honest review.

Joanne D'Arcy says

Be prepared to pick up this book and be transported not just to another time and place but another continent as well.

Lucinda Riley is a skilful writer when it comes to the dual narrative, she does it so well, that it seems that the two stories set some hundred years apart in this novel bear no relation to each other. But of course they do as they the story weaves from 1911 to the present, and evokes many emotions through the characters and shows class, tradition, love and war in many forms.

In the present day we meet Rebecca Bradley, an American film actress, who has the world at her feet and has the world press there to watching her every move. She flies to London to take part in a period drama film, and ends up at Astbury Hall, Dartmoor, Devon playing a young girl in the 1920s. It is a far cry from the life she leads and she uses the fact that she can escape into a past life through her character to actually escape from the person she is or is at least becoming. The press cannot reach her there and neither can her famous actor boyfriend. Rebecca has time to breathe freely.

Halfway round the world Ari Malik is struggling to come to terms with his life, he has neglected his personal life for the sake of his business and career. However it is not fulfilling and when the death of his great-grandmother, leaves him a quest he now has the means to escape and discover something about her past and his future. Ari is unsure why him of all her descendants was chosen. Perhaps the journey to Astbury Hall will answer everything?

It is Ari's great grandmother who we get to know in the past narrative to this story, in fact it is her who tells it to us. Anahita Chaval is nobility in terms of Indian culture, but the death of her father means that she is somewhat impoverished. We are transported to the heyday of the British Raj, Riley has brought to the page and let it jump out and envelope us; the smells, the sounds, the sights and the warmth of India where we can glimpse a life of Indian Royalty.

It is into royalty that Anahita becomes a companion to Princess Indira, a rather spoilt brat of a girl who sulks until she gets her own way. However, Anahita somehow seems to be the calming influence and they forge a lifelong friendship that takes them through their days in India and also to England when they are both sent to school. Anahita thrives at school, whilst Indira knows her destiny and just treats it all as some social whirl. When they are despatched to Astbury Hall one summer, because war is looming they find their lives change very much.

Astbury Hall is the tie that binds the present day with the past, it is where Ari, Anahita and Rebecca are all drawn to. It does not give up its secrets easily and it is fiercely protected by Mrs Trevathan the housekeeper who only attends to the present day Lord Astbury.

Ari learns the truth about this house and Anahita's role in it with patience and insight.

Rebecca learns that ghosts can perhaps never be laid to rest and that they manifest themselves in some startling ways.

Anahita learns to love deeply and honestly, without regard for social class, status, money and colour of skin.

As readers we finally learn how all of this comes together, how each part of the story fits with the other parts. There were times when I could predict what was going to happen, but they were few and far between which is why I had to keep on reading. I was saddened that the book had to end at some point as I wanted more, but it was right it did end.

Lucinda Riley has left a legacy with this book. Her passion is in this book, it did not feel like a formulaic novel with a dual narrative. Riley has given us the colours of India, rich, bright and vibrant, to the classic

English house and countryside. The difference between cultures just not in the present day; the american actress versus the fading English aristocracy but in the past where; the poor Indian girl versus the rich moneyed American girl. The characters get right under your skin, you care about them, you want to see happiness but you also want justice. Good must overcome prejudice and ultimately over evil actions to.

This is an absorbing read and with nearly 700 pages to get through you will be drawn in. An excellent read.

Cassandra says

Ich habe keine Ahnung, warum mich gerade dieses Buch angesprochen hat. Irgendwie war mir danach und obwohl ich zunächst skeptisch war, weil ich solche Bücher eigentlich nicht lese, war ich letztlich begeistert! Meisterhaft wurden hier verschiedene Zeiten miteinander verwoben. Sonst habe ich meist das Gefühl, dass ich immer wieder aus der Geschichte gerissen werde, wenn es Rückblenden gibt - Hier wurde jedoch die Geschichte trotzdem weiter erzählt. Die Charaktere sind mir so ans Herz gewachsen, dass mich ihr Schicksal wirklich berührte und ich Tränen in den Augen hatte. Die Sprache der Autorin öffnete Tür und Tor, zu der von ihr erschaffenen Welt und so ließ ich mich entführen in indische Paläste und auf einen britischen Landsitz.
