



Hotel Sacher

Rodica Doehnert , Alison Layland (Translator)

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One woman takes hold of her legacy in an epic tale of Viennese romance, deception, and danger.

Vienna, 1892. Against all odds, at the height of Belle Époque splendor, Anna Sacher has taken possession of her late husband's hotel, across the street from the famous opera house. At a time when controlling such a business was an opportunity afforded only to men, Anna is as vigilant as she is relentless. Now, under her ownership, the Hotel Sacher thrives amid the tumult of a changing continent, even as intrigue follows in the shadows.

Through its opulent halls stride visitors from all walks of life, including some of the most glamorous figures of Viennese society—opera singers, princes, princesses—and the maids and manservants who wait on them.

Some guests will find romance. Some will unearth secrets. And some will discover much more than they expected...

Hotel Sacher Details

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From Reader Review Hotel Sacher for online ebook

Jane Willis says

This was a book that I wanted to love and couldn't, something that very often happens to me when real life characters such as Anna Sacher and her family find their way into works of fiction. The story moves rather like a waltz - sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly, which can be both intriguing and frustrating. There were spur of the moment decisions that seemed to me to be too important to be made so rashly, and questions that were left unanswered, both of which put me off enjoying it as much as I wanted to. Also the mixture of fact and fiction had me breaking off to Google things to see what and who was real or part of the story, which interfered with the flow of my reading.

Decent story but I'd have been happier if it had been totally fiction rather than a confusing muddle.

The Just-About-Cocky Ms M says

Here are my credentials: I have read the entire book, not the blurb; I have been to Vienna and spent several weeks there, drinking rich coffee and eating Sachertorte; I have actually made Sachertorte using the real ingredients--it takes pretty much all day and generates muttered curses, but worth the effort; and I'm a historian and understand not only the political history of the Belle Epoque in the Austro-Hungarian world but also its social, economic, and artistic worlds, which often appear as a foggy, chilly, seedy, grey environment heavily overlaid with gold leaf, jewels, silks, and whipped cream... lots of whipped cream.

So make of that what you will.

The first scenes and chapters of the book reminded me of a lush but slightly askew Klimt painting, where you catch glimpses of first one character, then another utterly different and far removed from the first, as scenes shift from opulence to grittiness. Readers who prefer linear progression and an immediate introduction to the "main characters," with a fairly concrete idea of what the storyline will be, might not like this very different "now you see it, now you don't" narration. It captivated me from the beginning, when Love in her elegance, wanting a cigarette, and Death, wondering if tonight he could manage a "two for one" feat, made their amazing appearances. The rest of the novel proceeded in this fashion, sometimes teasing, but more often offering tastes of deep emotional interactions and thoughts, interesting--and unexpected--interactions between unlikely folks, and other examples of a highly colored canvas of fin de siecle Vienna.

Kudos to Anna Sacher for her determination and guile and perseverance in an age when she stepped outside her position logically and with a minimum of ridiculousness and, thank all the readers' gods, not a trace of feistiness. Same to the haughty, complacent, privileged and slightly smug von Traunsteins, who avoid being cliches of Austro-Hungarian nobility less than two decades away from their annihilation in the guns of August. And for Marie, sold to the wealthy predators of the underbelly of Vienna, much as children were in other cities of this era. Lots to love about the people crowding this novel, high, low, and in the middle.

The language also alternates between prosaic when required and positively baroque when called for. I have to applaud the translator; I speak and read German, and I could hear the echoes of the original language in the translation, which was clever enough to know the difference between literal and literary.

The novel does not skimp on descriptions, either, but I didn't think they were either gratuitous or inserted to demonstrate the author's grasp of her subject. Rather they served the purpose of all good and judicious descriptive passages--set the scene, appeal to all five senses, although not all at once, and put you in the middle of the story. These descriptions also make certain you are in no danger of thinking you are in London or New York or Berlin that last decade of the 19th century, the sort of "one size fits all" failing of many writers who lack the skills of this author. And yes, I know some readers balk at expositions, descriptions, and whatever else they think interferes with the plot moving forward. In my opinion, I'd rather spend time in another era, like this one, smelling the roses and enjoying the rich desserts, than barreling along to the conclusion, whatever it may be.

Thus I definitely recommend this jewel, one of the very few I have unearthed from the First Reads collection in many months.

Jan says

One woman takes hold of her legacy in an epic tale of Viennese romance, deception, and danger.

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Karma♥Bites ^.^~ says

I went to select this month's First Read, saw this book & immediately thought:

With biertgärten, wiener schnitzels & desserts like the famous Sachertorte, how could I *not* gain weight whilst in Wien??

And how could I not select this book? :-)

Floortje says

Wat kan ik intens genieten van een roman vol historische feiten, dat gegoten is in een fictief romantisch verhaal. Vanaf de eerste bladzijde ben ik in 1892, loop ik door het prachtige hotel en ontmoet ik allerlei belangrijke mensen. Voor mij is dit de ultieme manier om meer over een bepaalde periode te weten te

komen. Het verhaal is bovendien boeiend geschreven, je gaat van de ene verhaallijn naar de andere, wat maakt dat het interessant en fris blijft.

Het verhaal staat soms vol historische feiten, maar soms kijk je naar de wereld door de ogen van fictieve personages. Toch voelt het verhaal oprecht en geheel waarheidsgetrouw aan. Het Hotel Sacher is beroemd vanwege de mensen die er verbleven, zij geven je inzicht in de opvattingen en de samenleving van die tijd. Maar zoals in elke tijd en in elke geschiedenis, de dood, liefde, overspel, drama en opkomen voor jezelf, blijven tijdloze onderwerpen.

Simon says

A series of interesting, well-conceived and executed characters (with the minor exception of Marie; I just didn't believe the child would have become the woman she did) operating against a vivid, fascinating background. Read it in one sitting, which means I was completely engrossed. Doehnert's greatest achievement is not *fin de siecle* Vienna as the setting, although she manages to make a convincing job of depicting it. It is the enormous sense of dread that permeates the book. Dread of what will come for Austria, for Vienna, and for the characters who will survive the book's end. She never explains, as her story ends shortly after World War I. But she knows damned well that fascism and Hitler are lurking somewhere in the immediate future, and you tremble for Martha. But kudos for stopping when she does. What the reader can feel in his bones is more chilling than anything Doehnert could write out.

Recommended.

D. Starr says

Semi-historical ... But with Metaphorical Figures

That Love and Death are presented throughout the story as sentient beings was distracting to me. In fact I found it annoying at times.

The writing style reminds me of Mary Roberts Rinehart, who wrote many of her novels pre-WWI. By this, I mean that the "voice" I hear as I read is smooth, soft, rather grandmotherly, and tends to make me sleepy. This is unfortunate since the story has potential.

We follow 3 women from the 1890s until just after WWI. One becomes the owner of the Hotel Sacher, which was unusual for a woman in those days. I expected her to be the main character, but instead the action of the story flowed mostly around the hotel, its staff, and the other two women. One of these women married into aristocracy, finding little fulfillment in her marriage, but an outlet in writing. The other, along with her husband, runs a publishing house.

Happiness seems to elude them all as they strive to find it.

Because I don't share the author's view of life, I didn't care for it. Other readers will probably love it and its somewhat fatalistic themes.

Tracey says

Normally I don't like books that bounce around between the various characters but the flow of this book was wonderful. It's smartly written and should be required reading for high schoolers. Maybe they would finally

understand that war didn't solve anything.

Christina Merrill says

Picked this as my Kindle First because theoretically, this should have hit all my buttons - historical setting, multiple characters, strong female protagonist. What I expected was an engaging historical novel that captured the atmosphere of turn-of-the-century Vienna. What I got was a rushed, disjointed narrative with characters that felt like puppets. I have to wonder if elements of this story were lost in translation because I didn't understand so many of the choices with regards to plot and characterization. The allegorical characters of Love and Death made absolutely no sense to me - what was even the point, because there were no other elements of magical realism in the story at all. I really thought the author should have spent more time fleshing out her principal characters instead of just jumping around from vignette to vignette. I didn't like any of the characters that we did get to spend time with, either. This novel could have been so much more than it was. Blah.

Marlene Kessler says

Nicht beendet. Die Personen waren irgendwie eindimensional und eine wirklich Geschichte war nicht so sehr klar. Die Historie war nicht schlecht beschrieben. Hat mich aber nicht überzeugt.

Dagmar Garciová says

Historické romány zbožňuji a po fantasy literatuře zaujímají čestné druhé místo. Líbilo se mi, že kniha mapovala delší období a že vyprávěla více příběhů a ne jen jeden. Na city mi překvapil zános Marii, holčiče, která vyrůstala od osmi let skryta před všemi zraky a která byla velkou obdivovatelkou císařovny Sisi. Kniha je strukturovaná do třech oddílů s názvy Smrt, Život a Láska.

Více zde: <https://recenzarium.webnode.cz/l/hote...>

Linda says

I am a fan of historical fiction so it is not a surprise that I enjoyed this book. If you enjoy historical fiction involving the aristocracy, I dare say you may enjoy this one too. Interestingly, the vast majority of the human characters in this book are fictional characters. The central historical character is the hotel itself, with the family who owned it at the time and especially Anna Sacher secondary. Two other characters that I enjoyed quite a lot were Love and Death who were wound throughout the story. Social hierarchy and gender roles and expectations of the mid and late 19th century are the basis of the novel with the three primary female characters violating the norms in various public and private ways. My one criticism of the novel is about the character of Lechner. Initially, I understood his inclusion but by the end of the story I no longer understood his purpose. Ironically, I felt as I read that the story would make a good movie. I say ironically because I learned in the end matter that the author has worked for 20 years as a screenwriter.

Lola says

Insgesamt unterhaltend, aber leider war mir die Geschichte an vielen Stellen zu wenig ausgearbeitet, sodass z.B. Handlungsstränge ziemlich plötzlich abgerissen sind.

Ray Akerboom says

Aardig boek, maar wel veel gemiste kansen. Veel flat characters. Je verwacht bovendien dat het over het Hotel Sacher gaat, het dagelijkse leven, de ontwikkelingen, problemen, overwinningen etc. Maar eigenlijk gaat het boek over mensen die in een bepaalde periode in Midden-Europa woonden. ook niet onaardig, maar de titel doet toch anders vermoeden. Hier en daar springt het verhaal met grote sprongen voorwaarts, daar waar nu juist veel ruimte zit voor een prachtig verhaal. In het Sacher zelf dan met name. Al met al had ik er - door de titel en het onderwerp - meer van verwacht. Maar als geheel best wel onderhoudend geschreven.

Kelly Garcia says

Hmmm. I could not enjoy this book.

I couldn't finish this book. I really WANTED to love this book based on its blurb. But I knew from the first few pages that this was going to be a drag. And I love reading. So FYI, after days and days of trying to get myself interested in this book, I Gave up at 45% and proceeded to write this review.

I enjoy good lengthy storyline with extensive discription, engaging dialogue, and well established charters and relationships (not just romances: mother-daughter, friend-friend etc), and clean romances. This book met none of those delights.

This wasn't like reading a novel. It was like reading postcards stacked on top of each other. The author gave a quick discription of the scene and then "this" happened. You have no chance to connect with any character before you're pushed, prodded and shoveled into the next postcard with all the gentleness of a charging rhinoceros.

Probably the most interesting things in this book were the personifications of Death and Love. Today's typical writing doesn't usually include this style and at first it was refreshing.... Until you see what the author deems as Love has no intention of fulfilling her namesake (true love does not envy or selfishly think only of its own desires but protects, trusts, hopes and perseveres--1 Cor 13:4-8, Bible). No, instead the Love character is just a typical personification of selfish, self-serving Lust, a dry and poor excuse to sate selfish passions--and did I mention selfish?

So no, I really don't recommend this book if you're looking for any of the qualities I crave written above. I recommend this book if you enjoy shallow reading: in scenery, character development, plot, and moral fibre.

Emily says

While this book had promise, I cannot recommend it.

Perhaps due to format (I read the Kindle version), it seemed to jump around from one character's story to another character's story within the span of a paragraph or two.

The author had a cast of many characters, and with that, none of them ever really got fleshed out. You got bits and pieces of everyone's story, but never a enough story to explain what the author had designed in her head. In the beginning of the book Anna Sacher seemed to dislike her children then flipped back and forth as they were older between loving and hating them. The dialog was oddly simply between these characters lacking real emotion.

The portrayal of Maxmillan was strange. At two points in the book he forced himself on women who were saying no, but then it was written as if their bodies' gave in and they were fine with the whole situation. The scenes were glossed over and written as if it wasn't an issue.

This could have been a good historical story, but it was a shallow story with too many characters without character building.

Ellen says

Engaging story

I found the characters to be well developed and enjoyed seeing them evolve over time .The history of Austria during that period was interesting to learn.

Susan Rosoff says

Perhaps one shouldn't be disappointed in a free book, but I expected, as reviewed, that the book would be more about Anna Sacher and her management of the hotel. It was more about those in her circle, and their lives. The writing style was jerky, and the transitions poor. Overall, this was not a book I appreciated.

Irene Herman says

I selected this novel because I planned a vacation to Vienna. The title intrigued me because I have heard of the sachet torte. I thought t.. Love and Death are always hanging around the characters. When I'm in Vienna. I will certainty visit the Hotel Sachet and have myself a slice of sachet torte. Story takes place in the late 1800s to the end of world war I to 1916. This novel talks about the end of royalty with the turn of the century and changing of times after the war.

I selected this novel because I planned a trip to Vienna. The title intrigued me because I have heard about the sachet torte. It was created in 1932, at age 16, by Franz Sachet. I'm definitely going to have a slice. This book eventually blended historical facts with fictional characters of royalty and the working class.

Edris Segree says

Waste of time

I signed up for Amazon First Read and was disappointed with this book. Will be unsubscribing. Pages were missing making it difficult to follow story line. Half of the time I didn't know what happened or how/why the next event occurred. This may be a good read but I will never know.
