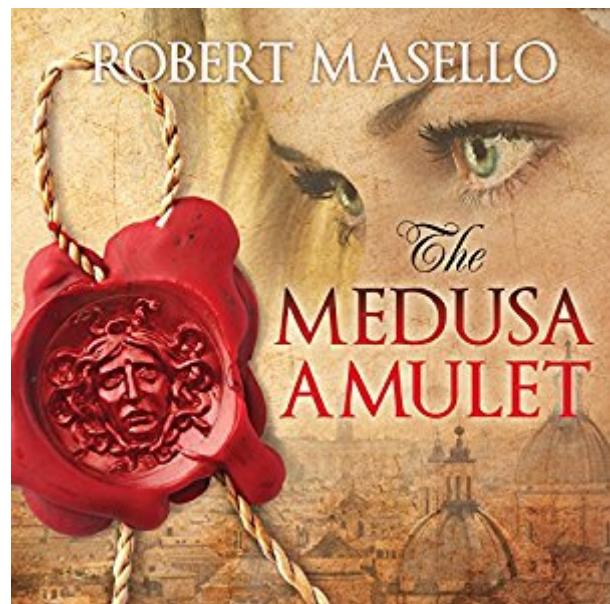


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The Medusa Amulet



Synopsis

Benvenuto Cellini, master artisan of Renaissance Italy, once crafted a beautiful amulet prized for its unimaginable power - and untold menace. Now the quest to recover this legendary artifact depends upon one man: David Franco, a brilliant but skeptical young scholar at Chicago's world-renowned Newberry Library. What begins as a simple investigation spirals into a tale of dangerous intrigue as Franco races from the châteaux of France to the palazzos of Rome in a desperate search for the ultimate treasure and an answer to a riddle that has puzzled mankind since the beginning of time. Aided by a beautiful young Florentine harboring dark secrets, pursued by deadly assassins, and battling demons of his own, Franco must ultimately confront an evil greater than anything conjured in his worst nightmares.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Great characters, terrific pacing, and a riveting plot make this a page-turner in the very best sense. The story charges between past and present, with the time periods cleverly connected through the mysterious amulet. Historical anecdotes and art history are smart background to a novel that moves forward at breakneck speed. The author has a light touch with supernatural elements, making them integral to the story without ever feeling forced. The novel is grounded in facts about the artist Cellini and the author's deep knowledge and intelligence shine through at every turn. The hero David Franco is compelling and his emotions seem real, making this a great read for everyone. Masello has become one of the very best writers in this genre. Can't wait for his next.

I loved Robert Masello's previous book, Blood and Ice, so I bought The Medusa Amulet the day it was released; I couldn't wait to sink my teeth into it. The premise is right up my alley: history blended with a touch of the supernatural. In 16th century Italy, artist Benvenuto Cellini creates a looking glass with water from a gorgon pool hidden behind the mirror granting immortality to anyone that gazes into it. Powerful, mysterious people would do anything to acquire it. The story is told in third person giving multiple character's points of view, and the time frame alternates between skipping through history to present day until the story converges at the finale. The book is filled with lavish descriptions of Renaissance art and history, and since it's told in third person (in this case, somewhat distancing), it felt like an unnecessary data dump at the expense of character development. I couldn't connect with any of the characters. Immediately I felt manipulated by the contrived plot: A mysterious woman asks David Franco to look for an amulet that he's not sure even exists, but ultimately he accepts the job with the hope of saving his sister who is dying of breast cancer. Readers are told they're close, but I just didn't feel it. As soon as Franco lands in Italy, he encounters a beautiful experienced scholar working as a tour guide that agrees to help him. Too easy. In chapter twenty-four there is a battle between two dark arts practitioners at a private gathering at Marie Antoinette's home. This was masterfully written, and I got my hopes up for the rest of the book, but the finale, the big reveal, was anti-climactic, once again because it was far too easy for the characters to pull off. As it turns out, this book really wasn't for me. My expectations were too high because I enjoyed Blood and Ice so much. I have to rate The Medusa Amulet: Okay, but didn't blow my skirt up. The Medusa Amulet by Robert Masello received a starred review by Kirkus, and has a good average rating on Good Reads. Readers that enjoy books by Dan Brown may want to give this book a try.

I was sadly disappointed. This type of book is right in my wheelhouse. The premise itself revolves around mysticism and some elements that alone stretch the imagination. That's not so bad...works of fiction, especially this genre do that, and I can buy into that. But by the final chapters of the book, some of the characters introduced just pushed the plot over the top. Specifically, the "monster" was too much to accept - it smacked of "everything but the kitchen sink". Also, the anti-climactic ending just seemed to drone on and on. I would give the first 3 parts of the book 4-5 stars, but the final part no more than 2.

In Chicago Dante scholar David Franco knows his beloved sister Sarah is dying from breast cancer.

He would do anything even give up his soul like Marlowe's Dr. Faustus to save her life. Kathryn Van Owen is a contributor to the Newberry Library where David works. She asks him to search for a reflecting glass created by the renowned Renaissance artist Benvenuto Cellini. The mirror is said to contain an image of Medusa. If he succeeds, he will be promoted; but more important is the million dollar reward that he can use to pay for Sarah's treatment. He follows clues that lead from Florence and Paris. Tour guide scholar Olivia Levi assists him on his quest while assassins try to prevent him from achieving his mission. The Medusa Amulet is an exciting fast-paced thriller in which the scholar faces death seemingly on every other page, which appears over the top of the Willis Tower (unless he is the cook in Steven Seagal's Under Siege). Although the romantic subplot feels more like a forced requirement, a desperate David risks his life to gain the mirror to save Sarah; fans will enjoy joining him on his action-packed misadventures. Harriet Klausner

Upon picking this up, I was perhaps just expecting another DaVinci code copy. How wrong I was, this was actually an urban fantasy novella with believable and likeable characters, some unexpected twists, creative use of some old clichÃ©s (like invisibility magic) and a few bad guys with a conscience - or at least a doubt in if they were doing the right thing or not. This story spans over centuries, including the French Revolution and WWII, but focusing on today, and a struggling scholar of arts who gets an offer he cannot refuse, sets off to Europe to find this book's Elven Ring, a magic mirror with a picture of the gorgon Medusa on its back end. Naturally this quite unwilling hero David Franco gets himself a female side kick, becomes annoyed with her and then falls for her. Here the bad guys are more ragged and less organized than usually, and the charming and mysterious Benvenuto Cellini are really an interesting acquaintance. And so is his mystery muse Catherine / Katrine. And then there's the stranger in the lost castle, a Blofield, who's real identity was quite a surprise. This book provides with a nice mix of action and mystery, a side story with a sister dying in cancer, which actually does not become too melodramatic (which those stories often do otherwise) and even some funny twists. The only thing that pulled down the rating was the fact that I'm so over Nazis by now.

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