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The Oracle Glass

By Judith Merkle Riley



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***New York Times* and *USA Today* Bestseller!**

"Absorbing and arresting." —*New York Times*

"Fascinating and factual." —*Los Angeles Times*

"Chilly, witty, and completely engrossing ... great, good fun." — *Kirkus Reviews*

"An outstanding historical novel of 17th-century France ... based on a real-life scandal known as the Affaire des Poisons, this tale is riveting from start to finish." —*Library Journal*

For a handful of gold, Madame de Morville will read your future in a glass of swirling water. You'll believe her, because you know she's more than 150 years old and a witch, and she has all of Paris in the palm of her hand. But Madame de Morville hides more behind her black robes than you know. Her real age, the mother and uncle who left her for dead, the inner workings of the most secret society of Parisian witches: none of these truths would help her outwit the rich who so desperately want the promise of the future. After all, it's her own future she must control, no matter how much it is painted with uncertainty and clouded by vengeance.

"Take a full cup of wit, two teaspoons of brimstone, and a dash of poison, and you have Judith Merkle Riley's mordant, compelling tale of an ambitious young woman who disguises herself as an ancient prophetess in order to gain entry into the dangerous, scheming glamour of the Sun King's court. Based on scandalous true events, *The Oracle Glass* brims with our human foibles, passions, and eccentricities; it's a classic of the genre and unlike any historical novel you have ever read." —C. W. Gortner, author of *The Confessions of Catherine de Medici*



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

From the author of *In Pursuit of the Green Lion* comes a novel set in 17th-century Paris and Versailles, tinged with the occult and a feminist sensibility. The younger daughter of a loveless marriage between a scholar and a woman of high breeding, Genevieve Pasquier appears to have few prospects, since she was born with a deformed leg. Taught Latin by her father, however, she has a keen intelligence that stands her in good stead when, after leaving home as a teenager, she is adopted by a wealthy fortune-teller as her protegee. Genevieve has the gift of seeing the future in water, a talent that Catherine Montvoison, a real-life figure who was both a seer and an undercover abortionist to the aristocracy, quickly exploits. Played out against the background of Louis XIV's court, the narrative offers ample glances into the lives of the nobility, as well as intrigue and a love triangle involving Genevieve, an outlaw and a society playwright. Unfortunately, the author's impressive knowledge of the time is offset by wooden characterization and predictable plotting, and her story never quite breaks the bounds of competent genre fiction. Toward the climax, scenes of torture, witch-hunts and executions will satisfy those who like their historical fiction laced with a touch of horror; for readers who enjoy an exotic setting with a celebrity slant, the novel offers an intriguing vacation read. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From School Library Journal

YA-Genevieve Pasquier is an educated, skinny, crooked-backed 15-year-old when her beloved father dies. After her uncle rapes her, she runs away, desiring only to end her pain by drowning herself. Instead, she is taken in by La Voisin, a wealthy fortune-teller, abortionist, and chemist who rules the seamier side of 17th-century Paris. La Voisin sets her up in her own business disguised as "Madame de Morville," an 150-year-old seeress who interprets images that appear in an oracle glass. This profitable venture throws young Genevieve into a world of court intrigue, political back-stabbing, demonology, and revenge, and she discovers that she enjoys the independence denied to most women of the time. When she is invited to the palace to read the waters for Louis XIV, she slides from favor and is suspected of participating in a poisoning ring. In a desperate race against time, she must rely on her own wits and on a man she loves to save herself. Mature YAs will relish her development from a weak and naive child to a witty and powerful woman who manipulates degenerate, superstitious Parisian society to her own advantage.

Susan R. Farber, Chappaqua Library, NY

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From Library Journal

Once again Riley (*Vision of Light*, LJ 10/ 15/90; *In Pursuit of the Green Lion*, LJ 1/ 89) has written an outstanding historical novel of 17th-century France, permeated by a feminist consciousness that enlivens her work without dominating it. Genevieve Pasquier, the ugly, scholarly daughter of a financier who fell along with Nicholas Fouquet, is beloved by her father but no one else; when he dies she is imprisoned by selfish relatives convinced that she has access to a secret fortune. Escaping, she is saved from suicide by a notorious occultist and her secret organization. They transform her into the Marquise de Morville, whose mystery and fortune-telling gifts capture the attention of members of the Sun King's court. Based on a real-life scandal known as the "Affaire des Poisons," this tale is riveting from start to finish. [Literary Guild selection.] - Cynthia Johnson, Cary Memorial Lib., Lexington, Mass.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Nathan Marker:

Have you spare time for just a day? What do you do when you have more or little spare time? Yes, you can choose the suitable activity to get spend your time. Any person spent their spare time to take a move, shopping, or went to often the Mall. How about open as well as read a book entitled The Oracle Glass? Maybe it is being best activity for you. You realize beside you can spend your time along with your favorite's book, you can better than before. Do you agree with it is opinion or you have additional opinion?

Margarito Rone:

Playing with family within a park, coming to see the sea world or hanging out with close friends is thing that usually you may have done when you have spare time, in that case why you don't try issue that really opposite from that. Just one activity that make you not feeling tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition details. Even you love The Oracle Glass, you are able to enjoy both. It is very good combination right, you still wish to miss it? What kind of hang type is it? Oh seriously its mind hangout people. What? Still don't have it, oh come on its called reading friends.

David Rivera:

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Carlton Wood:

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