



Death by Roses

Vivan R. Probst

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Funny and sweet, this book is a charming and captivating love story for the ages.

Death by Roses is an endearing, delightful, and possibly life-changing romance.

Argument after argument, Mae Rose and Art have been married for what feels like forever. Even when Art tries to do good by his wife, things go wrong. After one final fight, Mae Rose stomps off to the bathroom—where she dies sitting on the toilet.

Fast forward to the afterlife: after meddling one too many times, Mae Rose is banished (yes, banished) back to earth to coexist with another soul in the same body—Mary Lee, a famous screenwriter and director trying for an Oscar before her death. Using Mae Rose's life story, she wins her Oscar, leading to Art and his family discovering that this new wonderful movie is about their very private life.

Vivian R. Probst writes with a sense of humor, such as when Mae Rose is waiting in a skimpy drape at a doctor's appointment: "It amused her that even the most famous people in the world did this, including the president of the United States, the Dalai Lama, George Clooney—they all wore this attire at one time or another. She burst out laughing." Or, during Mae Rose's funeral, when Art "imagined Mae Rose's VW with tin cans tied to the back bumper. Instead of 'Just Married,' the sign read 'What Happened?'"

The novel includes numerous, entertaining subplots, which add rich layers to the book. Art Jr. falling in love, for example, and Mary Lee's hospice nurse and doctor's odd love story, and even Art and Mae Rose's son John as he marries and learns he is to be a father, all add honesty and compassion to the writing.

Timeless and enthralling, even educational, *Death by Roses* is top shelf.

BETH VANHOUTEN (Spring 2015)

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