

The Angel of the Mansion

Victoria Rich

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Worlds collide in this inventive romance that has hints of the supernatural.

The Angel of the Mansion by Victoria Rich is an exciting thriller that delves into the worlds of fashion, high society, and the supernatural, exploring what happens when those worlds collide.

Eighteen-year-old Anis is new to the modeling stage but rises quickly due to her ethereal beauty. She draws the attention of Michael, a scion of the very wealthy and mysterious Solomon family, and they soon fall in love. Their complicated wedding ceremony, fraught with ritualistic Greek and contractual agreements, is just the beginning of the weird and haunting world that Anis finds herself thrust into.

The story begins clearly with Anis at an audition for a modeling job, but from there the story line is hard to follow. It summarizes, skips over, and belatedly mentions events, switching between large blocks of exposition and long sections of unclear dialogue. Small and seemingly unimportant developments are given a disproportionate amount of focus, while scenes of greater interest receive short space. Large chunks of time are often skipped over, which makes the story choppy and makes connection with the story line and characters difficult.

The characters are thinly drawn and not relatable. Their thoughts are rarely described and their actions and words often do not make sense. Anis's character is not believable, and she does not change much throughout the course of the book. The same is true of Michael, whose actions are unpredictable at best. Michael and Anis's relationship, though it features many declarations of love, does not seem authentic. No time is dedicated to exploring their feelings for each other or their process of falling in love; instead, the narration simply states that they are in love and moves on.

The novel goes in too many different directions, beginning in the world of fashion and modeling, transitioning to a world of high society, social events, and contractual obligations, and finally moving toward the world of phantom figures and supernatural aspects that muddies the book's direction. Various small seeds of the supernatural world are integrated early on in an attempt to subtly introduce the transition; instead, these small inclusions are awkward and confusing. The transitions between worlds hinder the flow of the narrative. The text also has many distracting grammatical and spelling errors.

Victoria Rich's *The Angel of the Mansion* is a romantic novel that includes an interesting exploration of colliding worlds.

EMILY CASUCCIO (November 4, 2016)

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