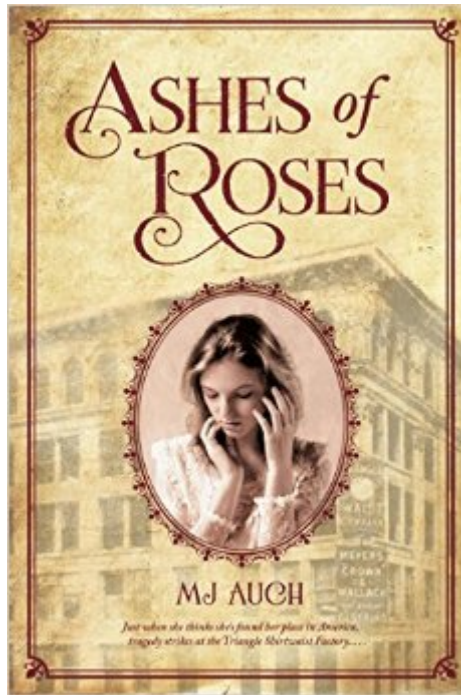


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# Ashes Of Roses



## Synopsis

When Rose Nolan arrives on Ellis Island as a seventeen-year-old Irish immigrant, she is looking for a land of opportunities; what she finds is far from all she'd dreamed. Stubborn and tenacious, she refuses to give up. Left alone to fend for herself and her younger sister, Rose is thrust into a hard-knock life of tenements and factory work. But even as she struggles, Rose finds small bright points in her new life—•at the movies with her working friends and in the honest goals of her mentor, Gussie. Still, after her exhausting days as a working girl, Rose must face the confusion of balancing her need for simple fun with her more wary feelings about joining Gussie in her fight for better working conditions. When the devastating Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire of 1911 rushes into Rose's life, her confusions are brought to an all-too-painful head. To whom and to what can she turn when everything around her is in ashes? Sharp, poignant, and stirring, MJ Auch has written a powerful historical novel that is hard to put down.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 670L (What's this?)

Paperback: 272 pages

Publisher: Square Fish; First Edition edition (July 21, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0312535805

ISBN-13: 978-0312535803

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.8 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars— See all reviews— (59 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #42,488 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #18 in— Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > United States > 20th Century #23 in— Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Prejudice & Racism #66 in— Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Prejudice & Racism

Age Range: 12 - 15 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Ashes of Roses is a work of historical fiction that tells of Margaret Rose, a newly-arrived 16 year-old Irish immigrant who desperately desires and struggles to 'become American'. Rose's journey begins in 1911 with her arrival at Ellis Island. Her first job, working in a sweat shop making paper flowers,

marks her first step towards self-reliance, but she soon encounters trouble. The owner takes advantage of her innocence and of her need for money, and late one evening physically assaults her. Rose escapes without her pay and only winter coat. The daughter of the Jewish man she rents a tenement room from, Gussie, is a union worker that gives Rose the courage to go back to the sweatshop the next day, get her coat, and demand her pay. Gussie is then able to get Rose a job at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company, which pays better. Rose is able to worry a little less and enjoy her youth. She makes friends at the factory, sees a nickelodeon for the first time, and reads her first dime novel. But the real-life tragedy of the factory fire painfully jars her back to the harsh reality of the immigrant's life. (Of the 146 people that die in the fire, many of them are young girls who either jump to their deaths or are trapped in the burning building because of locked doors) Still, Rose finds within herself the strength to hope once again that she'd find America's streets paved with gold, and make a life for herself. "...I was a grown woman now, not somebody's little girl. The fire had changed me. Like a piece of iron in a blacksmith's forge, I had come out reshaped, stronger." *Ashes of Roses* tackles tough issues of the period like child labor, women's rights, worker's rights, discrimination, racial diversity, and class distinction. But never does one feel like she is reading a history book.

*Ashes of Roses* follows 16-year-old Rose Nolan's journey through "wonderful" America, the land of golden opportunities! Having heard prosperous tales of life in America, the Nolan family sets off from Ireland, the homeland they have come to know and love, in search of exciting new experiences. Immediately after arriving in America, however, Rose is faced with harsh realities as her little brother Joseph is denied access into the country, and her father has no choice but to accompany him back to Ireland. Before long, doubts of living in a strange land surface in Rose's mother's mind, and she decides to escape the unknown and return to the familiarities of home in Ireland. Left to fend for herself and her younger sister Maureen, Rose remains determined to make a life for them in America, and matures while struggling to overcome unexpected obstacles, such as the terrible Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire. This convincing story, told in first person, succeeds in portraying the perspective of a young woman immigrant in the early 1900s. Mary Jane Auch's realistic storytelling does a good job in embracing the hardships of the time, although her writing style could be improved by more in-depth information and more detailed descriptions. Overall, *Ashes of Roses* is a nice story of independence posing some interesting situations, but it's an easy read not invoking much thought that falls into the category of a typical immigration book. What exactly does it mean to be a true American? Is an American anyone who calls America home? Or does it have more to do with a person's beliefs? Does being American come with an established set

of moral ideals? In *Ashes of Roses*, Rose Nolan strives to settle in America and become just like the other girls.

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