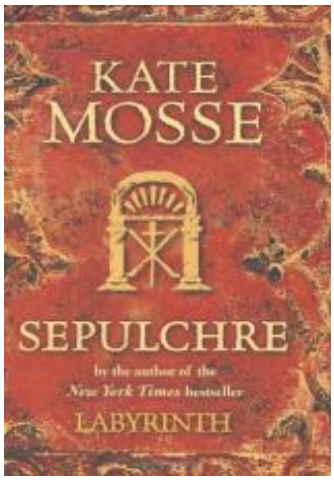
Sepulchre

by Kate Mosse



About the Book

From the author of the *New York Times*-bestselling novel **Labyrinth** comes another haunting tale of secrets, murder and the occult set in both nineteenth-century and twenty-first-century France.

In 1891, young Léonie Vernier and her brother Anatole arrive in the beautiful town of Rennes-les-Bains, in southwest France. They?ve come at the invitation of their widowed aunt, whose mountain estate, Domain de la Cade, is famous in the region. But it soon becomes clear that their aunt Isolde --- and the Domain --- are not what Léonie had imagined. The villagers claim that Isolde?s late husband died after summoning a demon from the old Visigoth sepulchre high on the mountainside. A book from the Domain?s cavernous library describes the strange tarot pack that mysteriously disappeared following the uncle?s death. But while Léonie delves deeper into the ancient mysteries of the Domain, a different evil stalks her family --- one which may explain why Léonie and Anatole were invited to the sinister Domain in the first place.

More than a century later, Meredith Martin, an American graduate student, arrives in France to study the life of Claude Debussy, the nineteenth century French composer. In Rennes-les-Bains, Meredith checks into a grand old hotel --- the Domain de la Cade. Something about the hotel feels eerily familiar, and strange dreams and visions begin to haunt Meredith?s waking hours. A chance encounter leads her to a pack of tarot cards painted by Léonie Vernier, which may hold the key to this twenty-first century American?s fate . . . just as they did to the fate of Léonie Vernier more than a century earlier.

Discussion Guide

1. The story opens with a riot at the Palais Garnier opera house. Why do you think the author chose to begin the story with this incident? What thematic or other connection does it have to the rest of the story?

2. Consider the characters of Léonie and Meredith. How is each woman shaped by the era in which she lives? Do you think the story would have gone differently if their places were reversed, and Meredith had been in born the eighteenth century and Léonie in the twentieth?

3. Claude Debussy is a presence throughout the book, yet he never appears in person. What is the symbolic importance of his presence in the story? More broadly, what thematic role does music play in the novel?

4. Victor Constant commits a series of murders in order to convince the people of Rennes-les-Bains that the demon who terrorized the town in Jules Lascombe?s time has returned. Do you believe that these earlier attacks were genuinely the work of the demon? Or does the demon always work through the hands of men?

5. It appears that Audric Baillard is much older than he seems. What secrets do you think he is hiding? Is it more than a coincidence that he died in the presence of Shelagh O?Donnell, who then plays an important part in revealing Julian Lawrence?s crime? What do you think he was looking for in the Sabarthès mountains?

6. Did you find Anatole?s decision to face Victor in the duel heroic or foolish? How is this decision indicative of his character? Are there flaws in that character that made his fate inevitable?

7. Victor Constant, Julian Lawrence, and the demon Asmodeus are all described as having the same penetrating blue eyes. What is the significance of this? Is it possible that, as with Meredith Martin and Léonie Vernier, there is a blood connection between them?

8. By the end of the novel, we have learned that the story we have just read was written by Meredith Martin. Does this alter your view of the story in any way?

Author Bio

Kate Mosse is a multiple *New York Times* and #1 internationally bestselling author with sales of more than eight million copies in 38 languages. Her novels include LABYRINTH, SEPULCHRE, THE WINTER GHOSTS, CITADEL, THE TAXIDERMIST'S DAUGHTER, THE BURNING CHAMBERS, THE CITY OF TEARS and THE GHOST SHIP. Kate is the founder director of the Women?s Prize for Fiction, a visiting professor at the University of Chichester, and in June 2013 was awarded an Officer of the Order of the British Empire for services to literature. She divides her time between Chichester in the United Kingdom and Carcassonne in France.

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