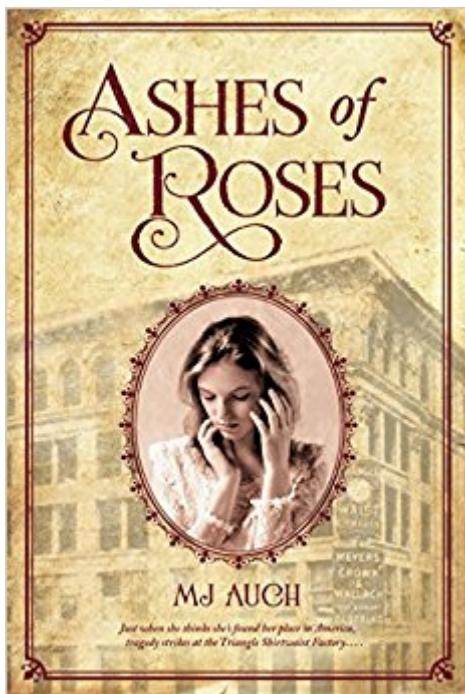


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# Ashes Of Roses



## **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 stirringly real, 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: 4.4 out of 5 stars 66 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #93,129 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #16 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Emigration & Immigration #63 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > United States > 20th Century #96 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Prejudice & Racism

Age Range: 12 - 15 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

Auch (Journey to Nowhere) combines a classic immigration tale with the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in this spirited novel. The narrator, 16-year-old Rose Nolan, arrives at Ellis Island with her family, but right away they are beset by obstacles. Her baby brother is diagnosed with trachoma,

and her father must take him back to Ireland; her uncle's family, while taking them in, makes it clear they are unwelcome. Rose finds work in a sweatshop and, after her mother, too, gives up on America, Rose rents a tiny room with her 12-year-old sister from the father of a union organizer, a girl named Gussie. High-minded Gussie helps Rose deal with her dishonest boss and finagle a job at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. There, Rose makes friends and begins to enjoy New York, but when the infamous fire breaks out, she finds herself trapped, along with all of her fellow employees (management locked the girls in each day); Rose's friends, including Gussie, are among the 146 fatalities. Fast pacing sweeps readers from the initial confusion of Ellis Island to the horrific fire, while Auch supplies vivid period detail and strong female characters to build toward a hopeful conclusion ("I was goin' to reach out and grab this new life in America with all my strength, because I was brought here for a purpose," says Rose). Dear America graduates will be hooked. Ages 12-15. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Grade 6-9-The Nolan family's dreams of prosperity in a new country are shattered when baby Joseph fails the medical exam at Ellis Island and must be taken back to Cork by his father. Though Da promises a quick return, Ma is miserable. Frustrated by her dependence on the unwilling hospitality of prosperous relatives, she gladly accepts money from her brother-in-law for herself and her three daughters to return home. Having few opportunities in Ireland, 16-year-old Rose rebels and she and 12-year-old Maureen are allowed to remain in New York to seek work and schooling. Rose finds them a room with a kindly Jewish family, and the landlord's labor unionist daughter, Gussie, gets her a position at the Triangle Waist Company. The teen feels especially happy one morning, wearing a dress in a new color called "ashes of roses" in anticipation of a nickelodeon outing with friends after work. Within hours, her clothing choice takes on a macabre appropriateness as she, Gussie, and Maureen, who also works there, fight for their lives in a fire still recalled as one of the worst industrial disasters in U.S. history. Fast-paced, populated by distinctive characters, and anchored in Auch's convincing sense of time and place, this title is a good choice for readers who like historical fiction. Starr E. Smith, Fairfax County Public Library, VA  
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I had seen a documentary on the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire and was interested in reading this novel based on the history of that period. Very well written and does a good job of taking the reader into the experience of immigrants who came to this country for a better life. Poignant and well

researched.

Good book for children and adults who are looking to learn TOGETHER about the immigrant experience for Irish coming to NYC in the early part of the 20th Century. Good 2nd book to accompany others with similar material, namely "The Locket:Surviving the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire" by Suzanne Lieurance. Once you read about what went on, you won't buy 21st Century items made in foreign sweatshops again.

My daughter had to read this for her 6th grade social studies class and she really enjoyed it. I think it gave her a much clearer perspective on the history of the US.

My son needed to read this book for class. I wanted to read it with him not realizing how much I would enjoy it. It gives information about coming to America.

I hate most books... But this book was a wonderful fright taking adventure as she ran thou the fire. This book was sad thou- I almost cried. So if you are a big cryer you will cry when you read this book. But this book was my 2 favorite book in the world my first favorite is - Bridge To Terabithia

I LOVE this book!! I read it before when I was in junior high school and I was recently thinking of it and thought I'd like to read it again. It was just as great as the first time I read it! It really deals with the struggles of coming to America and going through Ellis Island and making a life in early 20th century America. And it also has a gripping account of the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire (through a fictional character). I highly recommend this book!! :)

Excellent story. Well written. I felt I knew the characters and how they responded to the situation they were in. Interesting to find out about the beginning of Unions, especially to help oppressed women. My grandmother had told me much about the Triangle Fire and all in this book confirmed what happened. Only problem was not reading ahead to get to fire, but story held such interest that worked out OK

This is such a history of the work ethic in this country.

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