

Serpent and Dove**Shelby Mahurin****Reviewed by: Ritika Chhabra, 13****Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity****www.bethestaryouare.org**

Louise le Blanc is a witch, one of the feared, hunted and burned. A runaway from her coven, she lives in Cesarine, pushing away her magic in favour of stealing and thievery. When she crosses paths with Reid Diggory, one of the revered witch hunters of the Church, she knows she is in for a world of trouble. After a series of disastrous stunts, the two end up bound together in a highly unlikely marriage. As her enemies close in at all ends, Lou's growing feelings threaten to shatter her fragile cover and reveal her to a world that would call for her death.

My favourite part about this book was the enthralling, magical atmosphere, which wrapped me up and drew me in from the first word. With gorgeous, dazzling language, the story paints a picture of the 1700s in France, while maintaining a surreal, fantastical feel to the plot. Both main characters were a whirlwind of emotions and excitement, and I couldn't help but laugh and cry along with them. Lou was snarky, humorous and true to herself throughout the whole story, while Reid was a respectful, perfect gentleman. The dynamic between these two opposing personalities was shockingly colourful and realistic, and I loved watching their story unfold before me.

In addition to the interesting characters, the plot had the perfect balance of secrets, romance and mystery and flowed forward at an excellent pace. One aspect that may be frustrating for some readers is the lack of context at the beginning of the story. Instead, the details and backstories are embedded throughout the plot, in a way that helps maintain the tension and intrigue. With twists and turns, this story kept me on my toes through the whole journey. Serpent and Dove is an imaginative, descriptive and magical book that will capture the hearts of all readers. It would be best for readers 13+, as it has some explicit and mature content.

Recommended Titles:

The Shadows Between Us by Tricia Levenseller

The Queen of Nothing by Holly Black

From Blood and Ash by Jennifer L. Armentrout

Sorcery of Thorns by Margaret Rogerson

House of Salt and Sorrows by Erin A. Craig