



Scent of Darkness: A Novel

Margot Berwin

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In her best-selling debut, *Hothouse Flower and the Nine Plants of Desire*, Margot Berwin brought us to the rain forests of Mexico—to a land of shamans, spirit animals, and snake charmers—in the search for nine rare and valuable plants. Now, with her hotly anticipated second novel, Berwin takes us somewhere darker: deep into the bayous of Louisiana, to a world of fortune-tellers, soothsayers, and potent elixirs. *Scent of Darkness* is a magical, seductive story about the power of scent, and about what happens when a perfume renders a young woman irresistible.

Evangeline grows up understanding the extraordinary effects of fragrance. Her grandmother Louise is a gifted aromata, a master of scent-making and perfume. When Eva was a girl, Louise carefully explained that lavender under her pillow would make her dream of the man she would marry; eucalyptus would make her taller; almandine, fatter; and jasmine, Louise promised, would wrap her life in a mystery. When Eva is eighteen, Louise leaves her the ultimate gift—a scent created just for her. The small perfume vial is accompanied by a note in Louise’s slanted script: “Do not remove the stopper, Evangeline, unless you want everything in your life to change.”

From the moment Eva places a drop—the essence of fire, leather, rose, and jasmine—on her neck, men dance closer to her, women bury their noses deep into her hair, even the cats outside her bedroom cry to be near her. After a lifetime spent blending into the background, Eva is suddenly the object of intense desire to everyone around her. Strangers follow her down the street; a young boy appears at her door asking for a favor; and two men, one kind and good, the other dark and seductive, fall deeply, madly in love with her. As her greatest gift becomes an unbearable curse, Eva must uncover the secret of her scent and the message her grandmother, the woman who loved her most, wanted to tell her.

A bewitching tale of love, blood, power, and magic, *Scent of Darkness* is a wildly inventive novel that will seduce the reader’s every sense.

This ebook edition includes a Reading Group Guide.

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William Martel:

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