


# Ashes of Roses

*By MJ Auch*

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**Ashes of Roses** By MJ Auch

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.

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**Ashes of Roses By MJ Auch Bibliography**

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
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.
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From School Library Journal
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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From Booklist
Gr. 7-12. The harsh side of the Irish American immigration story is dramatized in this first-person narrative of Rose Nolan, 16, who is filled with hope when she comes with her family to New York City in 1911, but faces so much hardship and disappointment that she almost returns to the misery she left back in Limerick. Her parents do go back, and Auch shows clearly why, even as Rose and her younger sister, Maureen, insist on staying, despite the wrenching family parting and the girls' daily struggle for survival. This is, unfortunately, very much a step-by-step docunovel, and the research sometimes shows. But the facts are riveting, whether it's the inspection on Ellis Island (Rose's baby brother has trachoma so the officials won't let him in); the prejudice as well as the support the sisters get from other immigrants; or the unspeakable working conditions in the sweatshops. Rose finally gets a job at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, and the unforgettable climax of the story is her account of the tragic fire: her friends are among the 146 people who perish in the flames. They leave her with the drive to work for fair, safe working conditions, and she finds

her courage and her place. Excellent supplementary reading for social studies classes and a good addition to the women's history titles reviewed in the March 1 issue of *Booklist*. *Hazel Rochman*
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## Users Review

**From reader reviews:**

**Joseph Singleton:**

Do you one among people who can't read satisfying if the sentence chained from the straightway, hold on guys this specific aren't like that. This Ashes of Roses book is readable through you who hate those perfect word style. You will find the information here are arrange for enjoyable reading experience without leaving perhaps decrease the knowledge that want to deliver to you. The writer of Ashes of Roses content conveys the idea easily to understand by many individuals. The printed and e-book are not different in the information but it just different by means of it. So , do you nevertheless thinking Ashes of Roses is not loveable to be your top collection reading book?

**Mamie Crossett:**

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**Laura Clark:**

Is it you who having spare time in that case spend it whole day simply by watching television programs or just laying on the bed? Do you need something new? This Ashes of Roses can be the answer, oh how comes? A fresh book you know. You are thus out of date, spending your time by reading in this completely new era is common not a nerd activity. So what these publications have than the others?

**Stacy Knarr:**

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