



# Enchantress of Paris

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## READING GROUP GUIDE

### About the book:

**Fraught with conspiracy and passion, the Sun King's opulent court is brought to vivid life in this captivating tale about a woman whose love was more powerful than magic.**

The alignment of the stars at Marie Mancini's birth warned that although she would be gifted at divination, she was destined to disgrace her family. Ignoring the dark warnings of his sister and astrologers, Cardinal Mazarin brings his niece to the French court, where the forbidden occult arts thrive in secret. In France, Marie learns her uncle has become the power behind the throne by using her sister Olympia to hold the Sun King, Louis XIV, in thrall.

Desperate to avoid her mother's dying wish that she spend her life in a convent, Marie burns her grimoire, trading Italian superstitions for polite sophistication. But as her star rises, King Louis becomes enchanted by Marie's charm. Sensing a chance to grasp even greater glory, Cardinal Mazarin pits the sisters against each other, showering Marie with diamonds and silks in exchange for bending King Louis to his will.

Disgusted by Mazarin's ruthlessness, Marie rebels. She sacrifices everything, but exposing Mazarin's deepest secret threatens to tear France apart. When even King Louis's love fails to protect Marie, she must summon her forbidden powers of divination to shield her family, protect France, and help the Sun King fulfill his destiny.



## Discussion Questions

- 1) Marie acted on the belief that she could alter her fate. Did she change this belief at different points in the story? Do you believe in destiny? Why, or why not?
  
- 2) Consider who has the bulk of the Mazarin diamonds during different points of the story. What might these diamonds symbolize?
  
- 3) In the middle of the novel, Marie throws away a love charm rather than use it to make King Louis marry her. If you had the power to make someone fall in love with you, would you do it?
  
- 4) At what point did Marie and Louis fall in love? Why? Consider times you may have fallen in love and try to define why. Do you think love is its own kind of magic?
  
- 5) Discuss how seventeenth century Parisians blurred some superstitious beliefs with religious ones.
  
- 6) Cardinal Mazarin hoarded both wealth and power, each enabling him to amass more of the other. Can you think of anyone from modern times like him?
  
- 7) Seventeenth century people had little control over their health and little opportunity to improve their status. Discuss why some resorted to witchcraft to take control and improve their lives. How and why have things changed?
  
- 8) Marie held to superstitious beliefs passed to her from her ancestors. Do you hold to any superstitious beliefs? Discuss how you came to have these beliefs.



9) Only priests were deemed qualified to practice necromancy. Why did the Catholic Church consider it dangerous for laypeople like Marie and her father to practice necromancy?

10) Marie and her father also practiced astrology. Discuss why astrology was more tolerated by the church.

11) Discuss ways Marie uses herbal healing in the novel, and whether any of her cures may have modern uses.

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