



Black Venus: A Novel

James MacManus

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A vivid novel of Charles Baudelaire and his lover Jeanne Duval, the Haitian cabaret singer who inspired his most famous and controversial poems, set in nineteenth-century Paris.

For readers who have been drawn to *The Paris Wife*, *Black Venus* captures the artistic scene in the great French city decades earlier, when the likes of Dumas and Balzac argued literature in the cafes of the Left Bank. Among the bohemians, the young Charles Baudelaire stood out—dressed impeccably thanks to an inheritance that was quickly vanishing. Still at work on the poems that he hoped would make his name, he spent his nights enjoying the alcohol, opium, and women who filled the seedy streets of the city.

One woman would catch his eye—a beautiful Haitian cabaret singer named Jeanne Duval. Their lives would remain forever intertwined thereafter, and their romance would inspire his most infamous poems—leading to the banning of his masterwork, *Les Fleurs du Mal*, and a scandalous public trial for obscenity.

James MacManus's *Black Venus* re-creates the classic Parisian literary world in vivid detail, complete with not just an affecting portrait of the famous poet but also his often misunderstood, much-maligned muse.

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