



Mozart's Last Aria

By Matt Rees
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The news a

Introduction

rives in a letter to his sister, Nannerl, in December 1791. But the message carries more than word of Nannerl's brother's demise. Two months earlier, Mozart confided to his wife that his life was rapidly drawing to a close . . . and that he knew he had been poisoned.

In Vienna to pay her final respects, Nannerl soon finds herself ensnared in a web of suspicion and intrigue—as the actions of jealous lovers, sinister creditors, rival composers, and Mozart's Masonic brothers suggest that dark secrets hastened the genius to his grave. As Nannerl digs deeper into the mystery surrounding her brother's passing, Mozart's black fate threatens to overtake her as well.

Transporting readers to the salons and concert halls of eighteenth-century Austria, *Mozart's Last Aria* is a magnificent historical mystery that pulls back the curtain on a world of soaring music, burning passion, and powerful secrets.

Questions for Discussion

1. The physical similarity between Nannerl and her dead brother Wolfgang plays a role in *Mozart's Last Aria*. What other similarities do there seem to be between the two of them?
2. The most famous person mentioned in the book, Wolfgang Mozart, dies without us meeting him. What do we learn about him from the other characters? Were you surprised to find him portrayed that way? What did you know about him before reading this novel?
3. Nannerl Mozart was a child prodigy, playing her music all over Europe, until her father decided to focus on Wolfgang. Was she overshadowed by her brother because he was a greater talent? Or was it because she was a woman?
4. Nannerl is surprised to learn that Wolfgang's wife Constanze resents the way she treated her when they first met years before. What else does Nannerl learn about her past behavior? And how do the events of the novel change her?
5. Though she falls in love with Baron van Swieten, Nannerl leaves him and returns to her family. Does she go back to her husband and children out of love for the children? Or just out of the kind of duty people of that period felt?
6. Would you have stayed in Vienna with the Baron, if you had been Nannerl?
7. Wolfgang's music plays an important role in the plot, particularly *The Magic Flute*. Did this change the way you listen to Mozart's music?
8. All the book's characters are real historical figures. But Matt Rees points out in his Author's Note that he changed some of the events of their lives for his fictional purposes. What do you think of that?
9. Did *Mozart's Last Aria* enhance your knowledge of classical music and make you want to listen to it more?

About the Author

Matt Rees is an award-winning crime novelist and foreign correspondent. He is the author of the internationally acclaimed Omar Yussef crime series, including *The Collaborator of Bethlehem*. He is also the author of *Cain's Field*, a nonfiction account of Israeli and Palestinian society. Matt lives in Jerusalem.