



# Rosalie l'infame

*Evelyne Trouillot*

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## **Rosalie l'infame** Evelyne Trouillot

Saint-Domingue, 1750 : de nombreux cas d'empoisonnement déclenchent la terreur parmi les propriétaires de plantations. La menace vient surtout de Makandal, le meneur des " marrons ", esclaves en fuite pour qui le rêve de liberté est plus fort que tout. Lisette, née en esclavage, découvre à travers les récits de sa grand-mère Charlotte et de sa marraine, Man Augustine, la douleur de la liberté perdue, la mémoire de la traversée à bord du négrier Rosalie. À son enfant qui va naître, Lisette décide d'offrir espoir et avenir. Évitant le piège de l'évocation douloureuse de la cale du bateau négrier, Évelyne Trouillot déroule son récit au rythme des craintes et des désirs de son héroïne. Grâce à une langue riche mêlant violence et pudeur, ce roman éveille avec finesse les émotions du lecteur.

## **Rosalie l'infame Details**

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# From Reader Review Rosalie l'infame for online ebook

## Carrie says

While reading up on Haitian writer Evelyne Trouillot, I came across a great interview she did with Edwidge Danticat:

<http://bombsite.com/issues/90/article...>

In discussing a short story of hers, she had this to say:

"We think we know our history when in fact we only know a part of it. We do not talk about the enslaved men and women, we talk about the heroes, and since most of the heroes in the traditional history books are men, we talk mostly about great men. I rather like the big mass of enslaved people, the ones I called the "invisible," since nobody wanted to pay attention to them. And of course, there were many invisible women."

She brings those women vividly to life in *The Infamous Rosalie*.

As for the novel itself - I hope to put together a more eloquent review, but it's more poignant and more full of genuine pain than anything I've read recently. She knows the history of Haiti (here still Saint-Domingue) intimately, and she spares nothing; however, she brings deep, vital humanity to the "invisible" women she hoped to pull from the shadows of the brutal past - there's inspiration to be found in the horror. I hope more of her works are available soon.

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## Purple Iris says

I am beyond glad that this book has been translated into English. I don't love the translation, though. I wonder if it's even possible to fully appreciate a translation if you've read and loved the original. How do you read a translation without "hearing" the original in your head? And I'm sure translating this was no easy task. The original is written in very complex, intricate language. I imagine the translator was trying to be as faithful as possible to the original, but at times, it felt like it made the English text heavier than it needed to be, and confusing. Still, it's by no means a bad translation. The power of the story is not lost, even upon rereading.

Love the last paragraph of the author's afterword:

*I wasn't intending to write a historical novel. May I be forgiven, then, for the few discrepancies and creative liberties I've taken. I seek only to acknowledge my characters' humanity. Yet I must refuse any responsibility for the torture and punishment described in the text. They are all unfortunately true, born of the cruel and perfidious imagination of those who proclaimed themselves to be civilized.*

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## Wiley R says

I read the English translation and it was not well written, but it was a fairly interesting book. The ending felt

like a let down, though.

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### **Jordan Holoman says**

There is no fluff in this book! It's a quick read, and every sentence is important.

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### **Charlotte Blessing says**

This is an intense story, told from the viewpoint of voices often not heard from in historical fiction. Add this book to your list if you are interested in reading works set on the Island of Hispaniola.

This was a new writer to me and I must say I love her style of writing. Beautiful word imagery, on par with Allende.

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### **Zoé says**

I know it's a translation, but the languages was so precise, so lovely and poetic I found myself putting post-it notes in so many passages. It's a heartbreaking story with a solid narration.

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### **Richard Magrath says**

This was a harsh, sad look at slavery from the perspective of a young woman, Lisette, living as a house-slave on the island of Saint Domingue in 1750. Trouillot writes that she immersed herself "in the historical time of the great fear of poisoning on the island of Saint Domingue and all the excesses it brought out in the relationships between human beings as well as the tragedies and horrors, atrocities and indignities, that define the institution of slavery." It is so heart-wrenching to read about the horrors of slavery and the desire all have for freedom. At one point Lisette expresses, "How can we feel both alive and dead in the kingdom of the dead, unhappy and eager to live, lost in the darkness of despair and aware of each ray of light." To desire life and freedom and happiness, and to be treated as property by owners who thought nothing of physically and sexually abusing those who were bought and sold. "I am seized by the crushing truth that I am nothing but an object at the mercy of whites...." At roughly 130 pages, this is a powerful novella that is sure to stay with you as a reader.

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### **Linda says**

A novella inspired by the history of a midwife around the time of the Haitian revolution who killed 70 babies to prevent them from living in slavery. First person narration by a young house slave preparing for marronage. Original in French.

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## Ethan says

Some things I loved about it:

It's just about a person's experience in slavery, and that's enough: it doesn't need to be about her successful revolution, or Haiti's revolution. Lisette will die before that revolution happens, or she will be very old. It's enough just to explore the inner life of a person who is finding ways of resistance, ways to live in a world that does not actually want her to be a person.

It's unabashed in bringing to beautiful, terrible life the perspectives of women, who intimately understand the ins and outs of the institution they're enslaved in. The white men in the story have no idea what is going on in the enslaved people's heads, but by virtue of being unfree, the enslaved people completely, bitingly, mournfully understand the psyches of their masters. The story is centered on the experience of the enslaved people, but you understand the mechanics and twisted personal psychology without having to waste sympathy or empathy on the enslavers.

How short it is. Beautiful quick writing that is a little deceptively easy to breeze through. It's a lovely reminder that sometimes I need to slow down. When I did with this novel, it was worth it!

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## Diego Fleitas says

The Infamous Rosalie is a very remarkable book told through a perspective that is often historically silenced or outright ignored. Trouillot's undertaking in terms of historical research as well as narrative fiction is a tremendous one, and it shows based on the presence the book exudes. The prose is beautiful, often hauntingly so, and even poetic at times, yet was oftentimes not overly gripping (to me). All the same, it was a text that I appreciated reading, and has me thinking about the ways in which writers can reimagine history with meaning.

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## Tanya says

tired to read this in the original french. i was unsuccessful, but glad to read it in translation. it is gripping. the first few pages illustrate the injuries --physical and psychological--inflicted by the system of slavery. Early in the novel, the protagonist, Lisette, witnesses Paladin's execution:

I inhabit the final spasms of Paladin, whose face, before it was turned into a mask of horror by the sizzling stake, I'm unable to reconstruct. I inhabit the fingers of this same man as he plucks the strings of his banza on a night of calendas, with the music enchanting us. I inhabit the streaks that disfigure him, from his shoulder to his ribs, long tracks of raised welts swollen with memories of the hot branding irons, and their imprints, of belonging and suffering. I inhabit the chica, dancing under the bower, prisoner of the advancing hour and the stars that herald the end of our illusory freedom. I am the wind, tethered to the ground (2-3).

A few sentences later, there is a line about the ash from Paladin's execution landing on Lisette.

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