



# The Halo Effect

*M.J. Rose*

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## **The Halo Effect M.J. Rose**

The mutilated body of a prostitute in a nun's habit, her pubic hair shaved into a cross, appears on page one of this suspense thriller, making it plain that Rose's latest (after *Sheet Music*) is not for the squeamish.

The novel is the first in a new series featuring the Butterfield Institute, a Manhattan sex therapy clinic employing psychiatrist Dr. Morgan Snow. One of Morgan's patients, the clever and selective call girl Cleo Thane, has written a memoir full of thinly disguised portraits of her clients, powerful men with odd fantasies and fetishes. She leaves this potentially explosive manuscript with Dr. Snow and then misses several appointments, causing Morgan to suspect foul play.

Yet NYPD Det. Noah Jordain and his team, diligently pursuing leads in what's become a gory, ritualistic series of prostitute murders, have no evidence that Cleo, whose clientele puts her in a class by herself, might be a victim. Noah and Morgan are drawn to each other, but when Morgan can't persuade Noah to devote more effort to the search for Cleo, she determines to go undercover and meet Cleo's principal clients herself.

Ill-equipped for this masquerade, Morgan is soon in over her head and in peril. The mystery takes second place to the catalogue of sexual eccentricities, but Cleo is an engaging guide to the world of dysfunction Rose painstakingly constructs.

## **The Halo Effect Details**

Date : Published June 28th 2005 by MIRA (first published July 1st 2004)

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Author : M.J. Rose

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Genre : Mystery, Thriller, Fiction, Mystery Thriller, Suspense

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# From Reader Review The Halo Effect for online ebook

## Jean Cogdell says

The Halo Effect (The Butterfield Institute) by M.J. Rose is a real surprise for me. I have been looking for a well written suspense thriller and I have finally found one. At first glimpse the book appears to be the typical serial killer type book. But the plot is not the only thing I found so intriguing about the book, as good as it is. Ms. Rose pulls the reader into the story. Her ability to make you feel, hear and see what you are reading. It is a rare ability to be able to write with an eye for details and for the reader it is literate, shocking, intelligent and just exquisitely done. This is a very gruesome murder suspense thriller but somehow Ms. Rose also tells a beautiful story, compelling us to care about the characters. Dr. Morgan Snow is a perceptive therapist and a newly divorced mother, an expert in sexuality and because she cares for her patients she must have become an amateur sleuth. <http://jeans-ereading.blogspot.com/20...>

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## Terri says

Morgan Snow is a professional therapist specializing in sexual issues. When her client (an expensive call girl who is writing a book about her lifestyle) disappears, it seems possible that one of her clients is involved. Also, that it may be connected to a series of ritualistic murders of prostitutes. Morgan feels her only way to help Cleo is to investigate herself because she can't legally or ethically violate her patient's confidences.

This book is interesting in many ways. The first is how it switches from Morgan's first person point-of-view to third person POV when focusing on the police investigation to actual book excerpts from the expose' in question.

Additionally, I liked both the pacing of the story and the level of insight Morgan's character showed.

I am not sure whether or not the story actually needed the romantic element in it, but that might just be because it seems an overdone theme to me.

Overall though, I really enjoyed the book

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## Hayley says

What a GREAT book! This was a recommendation to me from a great friend of mine and I am SO pleased she told me to read this.

M.J. Rose is a phenomenal story teller. This was a great crime/action/thriller novel that at the end had me racing through the pages to find out what was going to happen next!

Morgan Snow is a sex therapist who sees many patients but one has held her attention for quite awhile and she has a special bond with. That would be Cleo. Cleo is a prostitute. But not just any prostitute. She's high class, rich even. She's beautiful. But, she has secrets. She has a darkness. She ends up getting kidnapped and Morgan tries to save her.

But, should Morgan trust the police? Should she trust the men in Cleo's lives?

Sometimes Morgan did get on my nerves. She was a little overly paranoid when it came to Noah, the detective, and not cautious enough when it came to others. My only complaint I had with this book was the predictability. I figured out WHO was the murderer/kidnapper before the book was done.

BUT I am so thrilled that this book is part of a series, can't wait to read the next and many others by M.J. Rose!

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### **G.E. Johnson says**

I'm a sucker for psychological thrillers, especially when they are well thought out and have an intricate plot. "The Halo Effect" did not disappoint. This is the story of Dr. Morgan Snow, a sex therapist who finds herself pulled into the investigation of a serial killer and the disappearance of one of her clients. The plot lines surrounding both of these facets of the story were entertaining and had just enough twists to create intrigue while remaining realistic.

I did suspect who the killer was early on in the story, but there was still enough mystery and uncertainty that I couldn't be 100% sure until the end. The sensual aspect of the plot, plus a sexual rediscovery of sorts for the main character, add a heat factor that gives this novel an edge over your standard crime novel. Add in the amazing detail and scene description that flows throughout the book, and this could easily be a candidate for a movie along the lines of "Basic Instinct".

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### **Lance says**

Dr. Morgan Snow is a well-known therapist who helps patients deal with sexuality issues. One of her clients, Cleo, is a high-priced call girl who has written a book with details on some of her better-known clients that could cause trouble if this is published and these men are identified. Cleo wants to also have a relationship while working in this profession, the reason she is a patient of Dr. Snow. When Cleo misses two appointments and is determined to be missing, a riveting story of murder, deviant behavior, high-stakes police work and even a budding romance to boot evolves.

Sold as an "erotic psychological thriller", this book delivers on all three of these themes. The "erotic" portions are excerpts from Cleo's book, describing the fetishes of some of her clients. For those who read erotic literature and are expecting detailed, explicit sex scenes, they are not present here. They are written in a manner that will certainly arouse and make the reader sit up and take notice, but these are not graphic. That also includes the scene when Dr. Snow and the investigator in the case, Noah Jordain, end the sexual and emotional tension of their budding relationship. As with the book scenes, this is not graphic but arousing.

The "psychological" aspect is well written as Ms. Rose delves deeply into the minds of the main characters of the book – Cleo, Noah and Dr. Snow. The first two characters, while they have issues, seem to be grounded and working on these, while Dr. Snow has a LOT of issues – questioning her profession at times, a newly divorced woman with a 12 year old daughter, still living with the memory of her mother's death, and her daughter wanting to pursue an acting career that her grandmother did and led to her early demise (at least

in the mind of Dr. Snow). Because there are so many issues with the main character of Dr. Snow, in whose POV the story is told, I believe that all of these issues were a distraction from the main story – mainly what happened to Cleo and was she going to be found before it was too late?

The only one of Dr. Snow's multiple issues that I felt was central to the story made this a great "thriller" – that she felt she might be getting too close to this particular patient. So much so that she launched her own investigation by posing as a client for Cleo's escort service and talking to selected clients of Cleo for more information to determine if they would give clues to the whereabouts of Cleo or worse, if they would do harm to her. This went on while the police were not active in the case, save for investigator Noah Jordain, whose conversations with Dr. Snow led to a budding relationship between them.

Overall, I thought this was a good thriller/mystery. It was the type that could be figured out who did it early. Those are fine as long as the story is engaging in coming to that point, and this one is. While I believe that Dr. Snow's character was overanalyzed, much like the good doctor did herself repeatedly through the story, this tale is interesting enough to make the reader curious so that he or she would read the next saga of the series.

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## **LJ says**

THE HALO EFFECT (Amateur Sleuth/Psychiatrist-New York City-Cont) – Okay

Rose, M.J. – 1st in series

Mira, 2004 – Trade Paperback

Psychiatrist Dr. Morgan Snow is a sex therapist. One of her clients is Cleo Thane, a very high-priced prostitute. When Cleo disappears, Detective Noah Jordain approaches Morgan for information. Someone is ritualistically murdering prostitutes. Cleo has left with Morgan the manuscript of a book she's written about her life and her clients. Due to client confidentiality, Morgan can't give Noah any information but decides to interview five of Cleo's clients herself in an attempt to find Cleo.

\*\*\* There are some very interesting characters in this book; Cleo is beautiful, smart and a survivor; Noah is a dedicated cop with a secondary life as a jazz composer and pianist; and Morgan is a leading psychiatrist in her field, a mother and a woman struggling with her own needs and barriers. But it was also the character of Morgan that caused me a lower my rating. I identified the villain very early in this book and, was Morgan as good at her profession as she was supposed to be, so would she have. Also, the interviewing of Cleo's clients not only put Morgan in the TSTL (too stupid to live) category, but felt like fill and a reason to expound on the acceptance of different sexual needs rather than crucial to the investigation. I think I'd have like this book better had Noah been the primary character and it be a police procedural with Morgan as a secondary character, than the way it was. Parts of the romance between Noah and Morgan felt extraneous and gratuitous. That's not to say the book is bad, just that it feels to me to be more a romantic suspense than a traditional mystery.

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## **Naomi says**

3.5/5 Stars

Great read by Ms. Rose, but I have to be honest and say that I prefer her historical fiction novels more than her contemporary literature. This book had more sexual overtones/undertones and every kind of "tone" to it, so I had to adjust to that (wasn't that difficult), but I must admit that I find her Historical Fiction books to be "deeper and more soulful"

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### **Zeek says**

Typical me, I read *The Delilah Complex*, the second in this series, first. Fortunately, other than a little more background on Dr. Morgan Snow's (the heroine) relationship with Det. Noah Jordain (the hero), there really wasn't a need to read them in order. And, as I found out, I enjoyed the second more.

Both are well written- 1st person from Morgan's POV. Both have engaging side characters and a plot reminiscent of the tv show *Law and Order SVU*, (I love that show!). However, TDC's central theme I found edgier and, well, titillating, making it a better read, imo.

In *The Halo Effect*, Morgan, a sex therapist/occasional forensic psychologist ala BD Wong's character in *SVU*, finds herself in the middle of a ritualistic-serial-killer-who-targets-prostitutes investigation, when one of her clients disappears. Her client, the infamous yet discreet Madam, Cleo Thane, had just started to let Morgan into her confidence when she disappeared, and Morgan suspects the tell-all book Cleo was about to publish contains the key to the disappearance. Fortunately Cleo gave her a copy of the manuscript, and though ethical reasons keep her from giving the copy to the police, Morgan uses it to conduct her own investigation. Things get more complicated for Morgan when she begins to realize that Cleo's disappearance very well could be connected to the serial killer that the police are desperate to stop.

The details from the tell-all are interesting reading, however not as erotic as one would suspect from a high class "Madam" like Cleo. But then I suppose, that is the point. Ultimately, men who procure prostitutes at that level, are looking for the thrill of a kink that's slightly off- something that their significant others wouldn't understand or even consider performing - more than the depth of depravity.

Still, one of Cleo's regulars is guilty and though the author gave us plenty of specific details to figure it out early on, the fact that she made the otherwise sharp-witted Morgan obtuse enough to overlook the killer, irritated me. I realize it was for dramatic effect, after all, you can't reveal the killer too early in a suspense thriller or the book would be over before it began, but C'mon- Morgan overlooking what was obviously before her just didn't make sense. Huge drawback, in my opinion.

Don't get me wrong, I'm really enjoying this series. I'm fascinated by the psychological implications of people's sexual peccadilloes, and Rose does an excellent job of allowing Morgan to sort it out for us. I'll be picking up the third as soon as possible.

In the end, I'm giving this one 3 out 5- For making the heroine imperceptive when it really wasn't necessary.

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### **Matt Schiariti says**

Flawed characters always make for the most engrossing stories do they not? At least they do when they're in the hands of a skilled author..

in the world of thrillers it's easy to trod on well established ground...psycho serial killer, psychologist helping the cops to make a profile to stop the brutal killings...this has some elements of that..but with a twist..Dr. Morgan Snow is a therapist..a sex therapist at the Butterfield Institute...she spends her professional life helping people deal with their sexual issues no matter how mundane or exotic..she's heard it all..she hasn't seen it all but she's heard it all...as the book progresses she'll end up seeing more than she's likely willing to remember..

A series of religious themed murders happen in Manhattan..prostitutes...one of which happens to be a patient of Dr. Snow. When one of Morgan's more troubled clients (who happens to be a worker in and owner of a high priced brothel in the city) goes missing it can't be mere coincidence..or can it? The fact that said patient was getting ready to release a tell all book about some of her most powerful clients, Dr. Snow gets quite worried..is it the boyfriend? The fiancé? One of the men mentioned in the book? Dr. Morgan bites off more than she can chew when she decides to do some sleuthing in Manhattan's sex industry to try to find out what really happened to her missing patient..

brothels..sex..prostitutes...almost sounds so...lurid..so..trashy doesn't it? Well it isn't!...I'm not a Puritan by ANY stretch of the imagination..but harlequins and erotica are very much not my bag...in fact some of my favorite series have denigrated into sex scene after sex scene to the point where there's little story and I've all but washed my hands of them..I don't mind a little sauce in my books, but I don't want that to be the soul plot point...

Being that the protagonist is a sex therapist, sex and sexuality permeates the book..but maybe not the way you'd think. In many ways it's delved into on an emotional level..and it's used as a good backdrop that SERVES the story but doesn't BECOME the story...Is there a relationship aspect? Yes..are there some steamy passages? Yes, but MJ Rains seems to know how to balance that in just enough so as to not overpower the story..if the book turned into scene after scene of marathon Olympian sex acts I would have just written the book off..but it wasn't like that at all..

I liked the character of Morgan Snow..she's strong, she's professional and has a great deal of empathy for her clients...but she's not without her issues as becomes more and more obvious as the book progresses..she's not some tough as nails 'girl power!!!' Mary Sue that gets everything done quickly and easily...she doesn't judge anybody..women or men..Physician heal thyself as the saying goes and she's just as human as anybody else...

the supporting cast is really good as well..Mitch the ex husband, Dolcie, the precious 12 year old daughter, Nina the owner of the institute, fellow Doctor and mother figure, Detective Noah, the New Orleans implant....

Very well written and engaging story..read it in a day..when the character's back story is nearly as interesting as the overall plot, well I didn't want to put it down because I had to see what breaks were made in the case as well as how Dr. Snow was going to handle the next challenge, both outside and within..

Looking forward to starting the second book in the series tomorrow!

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## **Gina says**

I really liked this book. I was introduced to the series from a Kindle freebie and it was a great investment. I like how we see inside Morgan's thoughts and fears and learning about her background. It definitely helps

the later book since I read them out of order. I also liked how it is different than most murder mysteries b/c it's not your typical "police procedural". As a psych major and teacher/counselor (at one time) I like hearing about her therapy sessions and how she is interacting with all of her patients. The author definitely did her research on psychology with the relationship between Cleo and Morgan. Although the author doesn't name the trappings of a psychologist you can see the transference and attachments Morgan is making with Cleo that are unhealthy for a therapist/client relationship and the motive for Morgan to do what she does so she doesn't cross any patient/doctor boundaries. I like the more edgy plotline and the characters. It definitely is a fresh take on your plain old murder mystery. I can't think of anything that I didn't like other than the descriptions of the setting, Central Park. I cannot stand overdone descriptions of setting because it feels like just a filler to add more pages. So really a 4.5 but I can't do that here so a 4 star it is!

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### **Paula Phillips says**

Looking for a new psychological thriller to get your brain juices flowing ? After reading a special written by MJ Rose called "In Session" which featured what would happen if characters like Jack Reacher (Lee Child ) and John Rain ( Barry Eisler) were to stumble upon Dr. Morgan Snow's couch , for those who don't know - Dr. Morgan Snow is a Sex Therapist and works for the Butterfield Institute, they are the best in their profession. You come to them, not the other way around. After reading In Session, I decided to give MJ Rose a go and checked out her book "The Halo Effect" from the local library and I really enjoyed it , a bit slow in places though but where she made up for the slow pace was the adventure and the details which I normally don't enjoy but it's what made The Halo Effect well enjoyable. The other part I enjoyed was the grisly murders as for me , a murder needs to be graphic -the more the better :P. In The Halo Effect, as you can guess from the title has a religious feel to it and the victims are all prostitutes. When one of Morgan Snow's patients , a high end prostitute goes missing , Morgan feels compelled to find out who dunnit and the only clues that she can think are all written in the manuscript of Cleo's memoirs , that she holds a copy of. Now Morgan must infiltrate Cleo's life to discover who's who in her memoirs and find out whether any of them are willing to kill to keep their secrets buried. Reading this made me think of the PLL Theme song "Two can keep a secret , if one of them is dead "and with Morgan newly divorced , is she looking for another man , is Detective Noah Jordain her cup of tea ?

I Look forward to reading more of the Dr. Morgan Snow books and to see what else Morgan will discover in and out of the office.

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### **Kevin Dowson says**

Well written and different - review date 5 June 2014

Format: Kindle Edition

I was very unsure before starting this book. The synopsis looked promising, but the tagline - Erotic Psychological Thriller? Very off-putting, as i feared a writer who would be aiming for Erotic at the expense of Thriller. I'm pleased I took a chance. This is not an Erotic Psychological Thriller at all. It is a Psychological Thriller which happens to feature prostitutes and sex therapists.

So if you are expecting, or hoping for, pornography or bodice-ripping, move along, you will be disappointed. Not a single bodice is ripped, there is actually very little reference to sex, and most of what is there, is described either sensitively or biologically. Because many of the characters work with sex in one form or



another does not make the story "erotic".

What we do have is well developed and human characters, a good old fashioned serial killer nut-job, and a thriller written from a different perspective - the sex therapist / shrink of a girl who's disappearance may or may not be related to the brutal killings. Enter cliched and jaded detective who forges his own path to do the right thing, and we have an interesting variation on the proven formula.

Erotic? No, not at all. Don't make a decision to read or not read this book based on that word. Decide to read it because it is a suspenseful thriller by an author who can write properly and knows how to build a plot. And hopefully because it is the beginning of a promising series. I'll let you know after I read the next one...

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## **PJ Who Once Was Peejay says**

This was a mostly enjoyable read, the first book in a thriller series, although M. J. Rose's voice is always problematic for me. In some books it grates so much that I have to stop reading, but I was able to get through this one.

The heroine/narrator spends an awful lot of time in early chapters explaining herself to the reader—and not all of it is relevant to the story. The heroine also does some rather stupid things which mostly seem to be more for the author's convenience in moving the plot along rather than a genuine outgrowth of her character and motivations. But the story starts cranking after awhile, and there's an interesting hook up between the heroine and another character. I wound up enjoying it enough to buy the next book in the series.

However, Ms. Rose clearly did not do sufficient forensic research on blood coagulation. Perhaps only a forensic nerd like myself would give a darn. If I could give this a 2.5 I would.

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## **Marcy says**

Dr. Morgan Snow, a psychiatrist specializing in sex therapy, is drawn into a murder investigation and search for a serial killer of prostitutes when one of her clients goes missing. Despite the good reviews I had read for this book, I was unimpressed and struggled to finish it. I thought the characters were pretty flat, disliked what I thought was merely a gratuitous romance and guessed the bad guy early on.

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## **Maria says**

I like The Halo Effect.

\*\*\*\*\*

*The Halo Effect* was the sore thumb among the *Butterfield Institute* series. This is the first book and Rose was just building Morgan's story, so maybe that's why i didn't enjoy it as much as i would've? Because i love The Delilah Complex and The Venus Fix; imagine my suprise when this one fell short for me.

The serial killings were elaborate and grisly, but the killer's motive to do the acts were rather... plain? It was too simple for me to warrant that kind of deviant behavior towards prostitutes. Dr. Morgan Snow is effective as a sex therapist but like most women who have successful careers, her family life was kind of in shambles. Noah Jordain sounds like a god to me, knowing he's a cop but a great cook and musician. Not to mention he has no problems with money. Highly impossible to be true, right? Still, I like his character.

*The Halo Effect* is an ok read for me. Perhaps you can start this series with little expectation, because when you get to *The Venus Fix* (my favorite), Rose will surely satisfy your thriller/suspense cravings. It will be worth it. :)

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