

Holocaust scholar publishes novel on Nazi hunters

Peninsula resident's novel partially inspired by her heritage

BY PATRICK WEBB

A retired protest singer who rubbed elbows with Joan Baez and campaigned for farmworkers' rights with Cesar Chavez has published her first historical fiction novel.

Amber Rose is the author of "When I Am Ashes," released earlier this month. Rose, 74, moved to the Long Beach Peninsula a couple of years ago after working around the U.S. as a healer and social worker. In her younger years, which coincided with the radical 1970s, she was a songwriter and musician. Her Jewish heritage inspired a lifelong research into the Holocaust.

The subject matter of her novel is not new to Rose, although fiction is. Other published books by Rose are about healing arts, including acupuncture and treatments using bee venom.

Rose and her husband, Barry Fruchter, wrote a play, "The Bride of Auschwitz," inspired by research on genetic experiments at Auschwitz. The play has been staged on university campuses and in synagogues. Rose and Fruchter's research included an emotional 2010 trip to the concentration camp.

Rose's novel tells the story of Sasha, a woman who encounters love in 1938 Paris, just before World War II breaks out in Europe. She is besotted Anne-Louis Girodet's painting "Atala's Funeral."

The 1808 painting in the Louvre depicts a scene from a novel by Chateaubriand. A young Christian woman has taken her life rather than break a vow. Her action causes heartbreak for Chactas, whose tribe is an enemy of Atala's family. The bereaved youth clings to her lifeless body while a monk, who had offered to marry the couple, supports her head.

Sasha goes to the museum gift shop to buy a postcard copy of the painting. She is smitten by the sales clerk. Their brief romantic bliss is shattered when Sasha receives a telegram to return to the U.S.

Her father was stabbed while observing a pro-Nazi rally in New York. Sasha resolves to catch his murderer, despite learning the man has fled to Poland.

Years pass. Sasha's son (whose father is the sales clerk) grows up to inherit his mother's obsession and becomes a



Amber Rose

Read the book

'When I am Ashes'

By Amber Rose

www.amazon.com, paperback, \$18.99; autographed copies at Time Enough Books in Ilwaco, Washington

A novella titled 'Soul of a Rose,' about a resistance member in World War II occupied France, is available at www.forever-amber-rose.com

Nazi hunter in Italy.

The climax features a war crimes tribunal with real-life characters including Hannah Arendt, a magazine writer, and Holocaust survivor Simon Wiesenthal, a Nazi hunter. Arendt later became a professor at multiple institutions and was Rose's undergraduate thesis advisor at the University of Chicago in the 1970s.

Part of the plot highlights the secret paths — dubbed



"ratlines" — that allowed Nazis like Holocaust coordinator Adolf Eichmann and "Angel of Death" Josef Mengele to escape Europe. Eichmann was traced to Argentina, where Mossad agents seized him in 1961 and returned him to Israel, where he was tried for war crimes and hanged. Mengele died in Brazil in 1979.

As the tribunal gets under way, the accused Nazi is torn between self preservation and pride in his warped beliefs; he cannot seem to help incriminating himself. Two unusual revelations involving key characters ameliorate some of the tragedy that goes before.

Rose's next book will be about the Nazi presence in Chile after World War II.



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