



Season of Light

Katharine McMahon

Download now

Read Online ➔

Season of Light

Katharine McMahon

Season of Light Katharine McMahon

Season of Light begins in 1788, in the heady days just before the French revolution, when Paris is fizzing with new ideas about liberty and equality. Asa Ardleigh, the impressionable 19-year-old daughter of a country squire, has traveled to the city with her older sister, Philippa, and Philippa's new husband. In Paris, they are introduced to the literary salon of Madame de Genlis. It is in this salon that Asa meets, and falls in love with, a dashing intellectual and idealist, Didier Paulin. Their affair is curtailed when Asa is forced to return to England, but they continue to write as the storm clouds gather over France and war with England seems imminent. Meanwhile back at home, no one knows of Asa's liaison. Asa's middle sister, Georgina, has met Harry Shackleford, the most eligible man in London that season, and to whom the Ardleigh estate is entailed. After the death of their mother, the Ardleigh girls' father began to drink heavily and now the estate is nearly bankrupt. In Shackleford, Georgina sees not only a fortuitous marriage for her sister, but also the solution to their financial woes. However Asa's accomplishments need some polishing. Georgina therefore employs Madame de Rusigneux, a French Marquise. Asa soon discovers there is more to this woman than meets the eye...

Season of Light Details

Date : Published November 10th 2011 by W&N

ISBN : 9780297853398

Author : Katharine McMahon

Format : Hardcover 352 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, Cultural, France, Romance, European History, French Revolution

 [Download Season of Light ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Season of Light ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Season of Light Katharine McMahon

From Reader Review Season of Light for online ebook

Sarah says

Having read The Rose of Sebastopol and The Alchemists Daughter I was looking forward to this. Something however just did not click with this book. I struggled to become engaged with the characters and felt like Katherine McMahon had too. For a more enjoyable historical fiction read I would suggest Madame Tussaud by Michelle Moran instead.

Tracey Watson says

Fabulous historical romance set in era of the French Revolution. I really didn't fancy reading this as I wanted to read more of a crime/supernatural novel but decided to get it out of the way. Well so pleased that I did! Very well written with a great authentic feel - I had trouble putting it down. I would definitely recommend - NOW to my Phil Rickman book

Fariha says

I stayed up till 5 in the morning finishing this book, I literally could not put it down!

It's not at all what it starts off being, I thought I was reading a romance during the French Revolution that spans several years. And in a way, it is. But there's just so much more to it.

Asa's character is wonderful; she's strong headed, opinionated, passionate and intelligent. but what's wonderful about her is that these ideas that she has are not just things she talks about in drawing rooms. She realises that just spewing opinions but not doing anything or acting upon these ideas is almost as bad as the very things she's against. It is this realisation that makes her different, and in my opinion, far more loveable than other strong minded female characters in period novels.

I can't say much about the other characters without giving too much away, but what I can say is that no character is one dimensional. From Asa's seemingly vapid sisters to the rich, slave owning Mr Shacklemore, no one is single faceted. Even Didier, the handsome, French revolutionist who looked like he'd be an archetype; the romantic, roguish boy who fights for the people, turned out to be much more. I cant actually say I hate any characters.

Off I go to cry myself to sleep at the perfection of this book.

CuteBadger says

A young English woman, Asa Ardleigh, travels to Paris in 1788 with her sister and brother-in-law. While

there she becomes ever more sure of her egalitarian political views and is swept up in a romance with Didier Paulin, a dashing French lawyer who is fighting for changes to society. On her return to England her family try to persuade her to consider marrying someone else, and employ a French widow to teach her some feminine accomplishments to make her more marriageable. Some time later, however, her French lover sends for her to join him in France and Asa must decide where her future lies.

I hadn't read any of Katherine McMahon's other novels, so I wasn't sure what to expect when I started this book. I was drawn to a quote by Kate Mosse on the cover, which says that McMahon's writing is "on a par with Sarah Waters". Having read the book I'm afraid I can't say I agree with Ms Mosse. While I quite enjoyed "Season of Light" I found it to be more of a romance novel than a serious look of the French Revolution, the politics of the time or women's place in society. It was more fluffy than gritty or realistic, and seemed more akin to Georgette Heyer than to Sarah Waters.

On the positive side, the novel is well written and the lead character, Asa, is sympathetic, if somewhat self-centred at times. The French scenes, both pre- and post-Revolution, are engaging, though a little less squalid than they would have been in reality. The plot has many twists and turns which keep you reading, but which are mostly fairly obvious. There are no real big surprises.

The use of real life historical figures in fiction is always a difficult one to pull off – it's easy to end up with dialogue along the lines of, "Why, here comes Mr Byron, the scandalous poet. And who's that with him? Shelley you say?". This novel doesn't make that mistake, but the use of some of the well-known names from the Revolutionary era does feel forced at times.

All in all, then, I did quite enjoy reading the novel, but didn't find it wonderful or terrible, just pleasant enough and somewhere in-between the two extremes. I don't think I'll feel the need to read any of her other books.

Vicki says

Full review here: <http://lilmissvixreads.blogspot.co.uk...>

The moment I discovered that this book was primarily set in Paris I was sold. Be it revolutionary Paris or the opulence and excess of Jazz Age Paris, the city holds some kind of mystical romantic appeal for me that I just can't resist. Katharine states in her author's notes that it was her intention to create an Austen-esque heroine and place her in the context of the French Revolution. On reflection, there are indeed elements of some of Austen's heroines; Asa is not unlike Fanny Price in her steadfast devotion to Didier, whilst her longing for adventure is reminiscent of Catherine Morland. She is blinded by her ideals, and it is this that leads to her downfall.

The thing that I liked most about this novel was how it championed the underdog; despite being introduced as a clingy lovesick Mr Collins type figure - a demeanour that doesn't really change - we actually come to like Harry Shackleford. He is devoted in his love for Asa and would do anything for her. He represents all of the downtrodden male figures in literature who are passed over in favour of some romantic ideal (which, as Asa discovers with Didier, isn't always all it's cracked up to be).

Full of twists and turns that I didn't see coming, *Season of Light* is so much more than a historical romance -

it is more a historical novel with a hint of romance thrown in. The story is so compelling that I read it in a day and had what can only be described as a 'book hangover' when I had finished.

5/5 stars: In the words of a review by The Guardian Season of Light is "one of those books so intensely alive in the past that it makes the world you actually live in feel flimsy and thin." Safe to say that I will definitely be reading more of McMahon's work!

Jo Barton says

Paris in 1788 is on the brink of revolution. In the genteel salons of the aristocracy, nineteen year old ingénue, Thomasina Ardleigh is introduced to the scintillating world of the revolutionary, where she falls completely in love with the handsome and dangerous, Didier Paulin. When family circumstances force Thomasina to return home to England, she never forgets her love affair, and continues to hope for future happiness with Didier. However, the wheels of the revolution threaten the very safety of all those who remain in Paris and in 1793 when Thomasina secretly returns to France, her search for Didier involves her in dangerous political intrigue.

Reminiscent at times of the early work of Georgette Heyer, this novel is primarily a love story, and yet in the background, the French revolution is always bubbling under the surface, with enough description of historical events to make the story meaningful, and informative. I particularly enjoyed the social and political imagery of the revolution, and felt that the involvement of real historic figures helped to put the story into context. The social observations of Georgian England with all its faults and failings is very well done, particularly the descriptions of matrimonial conspiracies, and the lengths people went to, in order to maintain wealth and prosperity.

Overall, I thought that this was a really enjoyable read. The French Revolution is a huge topic to write about, and yet the author manages to convey the story without becoming over involved in sheer horror. There are some nice touches throughout, with likeable and believable characters, and a pleasing conclusion. I enjoyed it, and recommend it to those of my friends who enjoy historical novels.

Felicity says

I think this is the fourth novel I've read by Katharine McMahon, and although I admire her interest in women of history, her stories never quite get there. The French Revolution is an interesting setting for a flawed hero and a young principled woman trying to make a difference in the world, and there are too many interconnecting coincidences for the story to be credible. Having said that, I couldn't put it down towards the end.

B.j. Thompson says

Picked up this book off the library shelf based on the fact that I enjoy historical fiction and this is a period of history I am unfamiliar with, and based on the cover recommending this book if you enjoy Philippa Gregory novels (which I adore.) Found out it was a romantic historical fiction, blech. I didn't find the historical information surrounding the characters detailed enough. I was not in love with the characters either. This book is nothing like a Philippa Gregory novel.

Debs says

Set in the French Revolution, the love story of two who meet at the beginning of the Revolution, fall in love but are separated and their journey towards each other and then away again while at the same time depicting in great detail the separate lives in England and France. Loved this story and would recommend it to anyone who loves historical books and romance.

Mhairi says

I read a couple of Katharine McMahon books a while ago and found this during a recent library trip. I'm so glad I did! Set in the time of the French Revolution, it's probably the first book I have read set in this era and in which the heroine is concerned about more than just her marriage prospects, and society (I want to marry! I don't want to marry!) a la Austen. The heroine, Thomasina, is strong-willed and an idealist, educated and naive, caring more for her principles than for the security of her future and willing to risk everything for her love.

There are two main heroes of the story - Didier Paulin, a young lawyer who plays a key role in reforms and the revolution, and Shackelford, Asa's distant relative who she despises for his wealth built on slavery. One represents everything she believes in, the other everything she abhors. Both are as flawed as Asa herself.

It was a great story which sweeps from a sleepy coastal town in England to the dangers and horrors of post-Revolution Paris.

Denise says

As usual with historical romance, I was much more interested in the history than in the romance. The setting, the French Revolution, has been a fascinating subject for me for years, which got me interested in this book in the first place. Unfortunately, the main character was so infuriatingly naive and stupid at times that it severely hindered my enjoyment of the story. The ending was also quite predictable. Still, it had its good moments and I might try another one from this author at some point.

Goddess Of Blah says

What a triumph!!! The twist to the story will leave you thinking "never saw that coming". One thing for sure, when I read this book I had not expected it to end the way it did (I'm generally disgustingly smug and rather arrogant in my abilities to predict how books would end).

Katherine McMahon has always managed to portray her characters extremely vividly. And she surpasses that talent in *Season of Light*. It's managed in a subtle, well written and intelligent manner. A fascinating study on strength and how we judge people by their actions, words and appearance. There are no one dimensional

characters here. No character is rendered as truly evil or saintly good. Everyone has their weaknesses and strength. A realistic character assessment that develops as we continue to read. A satisfying, mature reflection of human nature. It challenges our preconception of the ultimate "hero".

This book questions whether progress in any form can be justified if it inflicts pain on others. Can we really think a Dream of Freedom can be simply manifested by good intention alone? Are passionate, strong but drastic actions better regardless of the consequences rather than measured, controlled but slow actions instead?

Its also an interesting comparison of how the English man is plodding along to develop democracy while the French fight and revolt... It also raises a discussion on slavery and its complications...

Asa is very much the type of fictional heroine you would expect... But then the rest of the book is completely unexpected.

Brilliant.

Dilys says

Asa Ardleigh daughter of a country squire is in France just before the revolution with her sister & her husband. She falls in love with activist Didier Paulin but as trouble mounts she has to return home to England. This is an alluring novel of romance & revolution. Plenty of brilliant characters & masses of action. WON THIS ON GOODREADS BUT NEVER RECEIVED IT so purchased a copy instead.

Marguerite Kaye says

Loved this. Couldn't wait to get to the end, then wished I hadn't got to the end because I didn't want it to finish. Think this is the third of Katharine McMahon's books I've read, all set in totally different eras, and I have seriously enjoyed every one.

It starts in 1788, the year before the French Revolution. Asa (Thomasina) is visiting Paris with her sister and her sister's new husband. She is a rebel, an active abolitionist (a coincidence which I loved since I've just finished writing a book where my heroine was also an active abolition campaigner) and she is in love with all things French, all things revolutionary. Liberte, egalite, fraternite, could have been invented for Asa. She meets and falls in love with highly ineligible and romantic Didier, in the meantime she spurns a wealthy and highly un-romantic English suitor whose wealth is tainted with slavery. But Asa is destined to return home to England and Didier is destined to take an active part in the Revolution which unfolds. Cut to the Terror and we find - no, I'm not going to spoil it.

The book takes place over a number of years spanning Revolution, Terror, war and the beginning of the end for Danton and co. There is a deal of history mixed in with the romance, but the focus of the story is Asa. She is an idealist who is blinded by her ideals. She's revolutionary but in an impractical way. She has all the theory and none of the practice until the end, and then the story gathers pace at a terrifying rate. I had no idea who it would all turn out until the last few pages. I loved Asa, who was a very real and flawed character who stood by her mistakes, and I loved that McMahon didn't shy away from having two potential heroes who

were also seriously flawed. The ending was highly, highly satisfactory and my only complaint, as I said at the start, is that I wanted it to go on and on.

Jeane says

The book starts a bit before the French revolution but soon heavily builds on it. Asa is a young English girl who joins her sister on her honeymoon. The first stop is Paris where soon the group stays longer than planned when her sister becomes ill.

Asa starts exploring and makes friends with a family who is good friends with her best friend's family. From then on her life changes but soon Asa returns to England. She first stays in contact with one member of this French family but soon this isn't enough anymore and Asa makes a step in her life nobody would have imagined.
