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Little Demon in the City of Light: A True Story of Murder and Mesmerism in Belle

By Levingston, Steven.

Doubleday. 1 Cloth(s), 2014. hard. Book Condition: New. A veteran international journalist and now the nonfiction book editor of the Washington Post, Steven Levingston here gives us a delicious account of a murder most Gallic, whose lurid combination of sex, brutality, forensics, and hypnotism riveted fin-de-siècle France and then the world. When Toussaint-Augustin Gouffé entered 3, rue Tronson du Coudray, he expected nothing but a delightful assignation with the comely young Gabrielle Bompard; instead, he was murdered by her and her companion Michel Eyraud. During her sensational trial, the most respected minds in France debated whether Bompard, dubbed the "Little Demon," was hypnotized by her lover or simply a coldly calculating murderess. "Levingston has unearthed a whopper of a story, and lovingly crafted a dense, lyrical yarn that hits the true-crime trifecta of setting, story and so-what. Such books remind us that times may change, but the human animal does not." *NYTimes* In belle époque Paris, mesmerism, the ability to hypnotize others to do one's will, was quite the rage, and it wound up being quite the defense for one of the two accused of robbing and strangling wealthy widower Toussaint-Augustin Gouffé. Was the petite demon (little devil) Gabrielle Bompard, a good...



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