

EYE OF THE MOON A novel by Ivan Obolensky

WINNER of "Best First Book (Fiction)" in the IndieReader Discovery Awards

GOLD MEDALIST "Fiction: Intrigue" in the Readers' Favorite International Book Awards

SILVER/2nd "Mystery/Thriller/Suspense/Horror" in the Feathered Quill Book Awards



Stanley flicked what looked like a light switch. There was a click, a hiss, and the edge of a door appeared where before had been a blank wall. Light streamed from the opening. Johnny and I followed into a chilly space that was filled floor-to-ceiling with wooden shelving holding books of all shapes and sizes in no apparent order other than a series of numbers and letters.

"You are looking at probably one of the most extensive libraries on witchcraft and black magic in the world."

The house was magnificent, but it had a dark side that would seep into my dreams and disturb my sleep.

— from **EYE OF THE MOON**

Percy was brought up with his childhood friend Johnny Dodge at Rhinebeck, the Dodges' sumptuous estate overlooking the Hudson. The two parted company after a business disaster, and his ties to the Dodge family splintered. Reunited after several years, Johnny persuades Percy to join him for a weekend house party at Rhinebeck, as part of a volatile group of family and guests.

Once owned by Johnny's legendary socialite Aunt Alice, Rhinebeck holds more than just childhood memories. Alice mysteriously died while reading the Egyptian Book of the Dead when Johnny and Percy were ten. Both have been kept in the dark about that night ever since. This weekend, the family butler, long a faithful servant to the Dodge household, agrees to reveal what happened, and they learn

that Alice's history is far darker than they were led to believe. Family secrets, strategic alliances, new love, unexplained visitations: it falls to Percy to build something new or lose everything.

Extraordinary Praise for *Eye of the Moon*:

"A deftly crafted and simply riveting gothic mystery by a master of the genre, Ivan Obolensky's *Eye of the Moon* is especially and unreservedly recommended for community library Mystery/Suspense collections."

— *Midwest Book Review*

"A thrillingly eerie mystery novel with a Gothic ambiance and supernatural elements seeping through the storyline... a fabulously spine-chilling plot."

— *Readers' Favorite, 5 Stars*

"Sumptuous in its description of white-tie dinner parties and sexual tensions with baronesses, and sharp in its maneuvering of several secret puzzles at once... a gothic mystery of the finest order."

— *IndieReader, 4.7 Stars, IR approved*

"Wealth, family politics, and the occult make for a strangely captivating and exotic brew... it has a timeless feel."

— *Clarion 4 Stars/Foreword Reviews*

"Obolensky conjures a remarkably imaginative tale, seamlessly juxtaposing the quotidian and the magical in a way that renders the latter mesmerizingly plausible... ingeniously constructed... an engrossing tale of mystery and magic."

— *Kirkus Reviews*



IVAN OBOLENSKY grew up regaled by tales of his aristocratic and trailblazing ancestors while surrounded by high society. He was inspired at an early age

by intrigue, mystery and adventure. He brings his love of storytelling to his writing. *Eye of the Moon* is his first novel.

Book Information

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Awards:

Winner "Best First Book"

Gold Medalist "Fiction: Intrigue"

Silver Medalist "Mystery/Suspense/Thriller/Horror"

Finalist "Paranormal" and "Best Cover (Fiction)"

From reviewers:

"Ivan Obolensky has written a gothic classic; his assured style is easy to digest and I would recommend his work to anyone who wishes to experience five crammed days of the high life mixed with the mysterious and finishing off this event with a surprise ending. *Eye of the Moon* is a grand novel worthy of admiration and an extensive audience."

-Carl Delprat, Compulsive Reader

"... By the page 30, or so, I was well ensnared by Obolensky's captivating spiderweb. Richly nuanced, complex, highly readable, this yarn combines mystery, implied horror, the patrician class seen through a glass darkly, romance, and a wholly acerbic view of the inherent goodness (or evil) of man (and woman). *Eye of the Moon* is anything but an author's 'first work.' It is clearly the sophisticated, mature effort of a seasoned veteran of the war that is life and the veneer of 'civilized society' that is only the smallest step above savagery.

"Character-driven, with twists and turns so subtle as to surprise the reader at every turn, this epic saga harks back to the more classic times of Trollope and Fitzgerald, when one did not have to rush a novel in graphic 'bytes', but simply sat by and absorbed the unfolding of 'interesting' events. A stellar, highly auspicious opening to a successful career."

-Hugo N. Gerstl (bestselling author)

"Wealth, family politics, and the occult make for a strangely captivating and exotic brew in Ivan Obolensky's *Eye of the Moon*. The surprising revelations and apparent coincidences come fast and furiously as the novel approaches its climax, but the groundwork was carefully laid for this intricate plot structure."

-4 stars, Clarion rating

"*Eye of the Moon* by Ivan Obolensky is a thrillingly eerie mystery novel with a Gothic ambience and supernatural elements seeping through the storyline. The intriguing tale is told from the main character Percy's point of view, engaging the reader with his articulate and conscientious personality. From the beginning, Percy relates his history and that of each person in the narrative, melding their past with the present. Despite the chronology of the many events the characters had experienced before the story began, they are combined to create a fabulously spine-chilling plot. This is an amazing novel, and I recommend it to those who love a spooky mystery with a supernatural flavor."

-5 stars, Readers' Favorite

"Ivan Obolensky's *Eye of the Moon* is a house party mystery much in the style of Agatha Christie—without the body... Readers have time to get to know the characters and the lifestyle they'll do so much to protect. It's like having brandy and a cigar in the library with Lord Peter Wimsey rather than confronting bad guys a la Kinsey Millhone."

-BlueInk Review

"*Eye of the Moon* by Ivan Obolensky is a classic Victorian mystery, set in modern times. It's an absorbing, multilayered tale of family secrets, intrigue, ghosts, rivalries, and mysterious treasure. Through letters, diaries and narratives, *Eye of the Moon* weaves a richly layered, spellbinding story."

-Jefferson Hawkins, author

"A gothic mystery [of the finest order] set in 1977—involving the occult, stolen treasure, family secrets, and financial sabotage—*Eye of the Moon* is sumptuous in its description of white-tie dinner parties and sexual tensions with baronesses, and sharp in its maneuvering of several secret puzzles at once... The mysteries are finely woven together, and readers must think fast on their feet if they hope to keep up with the meticulous minds of the weekend guests."

-4.7 stars, IndieReader

"*Eye of the Moon* is a rare and authentic glimpse inside the hidden world of America's upper class—that small and exclusive society of the super-rich and powerful. This story covers the events of a shockingly dramatic weekend at one of the country's great estates—one that starts out as a genteel and elegant celebration of an anniversary, and then mysteriously degenerates into a series of cutthroat battles, pitting family members and friends against one another as hidden betrayals and long-suppressed secrets surrounding the death of family member, come to light—revelations that threaten to destroy not only personal reputations, but devastate individual lives socially, financially, and professionally... Plan to stay up late. Once you get caught up in this extraordinary drama, you'll find it hard to put it down. In ambience it rivals *Downton Abbey*, but the plot tells a far more intense and shocking story."

-Tom Hyman, author

"*Eye of the Moon* throws you into the middle of the story, in a perfect way. It's gripping, intense, thorough. Everything I wanted in a thriller, and then some. For a first novel, Obolensky's work is brilliant, and I'm on the edge of my seat awaiting his next!"

-Nick Thacker, USA Today bestselling author

"What a great time I had reading Ivan Obolensky's *Eye of the Moon*! Full of wonderfully fresh characters, it's a story full of stories that become interwoven as the novel unfolds. Looming over the book and all the characters is the fabulous estate of Rhinebeck, part gothic castle, part *Downton Abbey* and part upstate New York country home. The estate holds many secrets, mysteries and the hearts of all who have lived there or hope to. But it's the characters that we take with us and hope to see again. Finely drawn, unique and complex these are less characters in a book and more people we come to know better as we spend time with them. Comedy, romance, death, passion, mystery and magic are all elements that drive the story. Full of suspense and always revealing new surprises this novel is just plain fun to read."

-Kurtwood Smith (award-winning actor)

From Amazon and Goodreads readers:

"While reading *Eye of the Moon* I felt completely transported to Rhinebeck. Through the descriptive imagery Ivan Obolensky used in his writing, I could taste the elegant dinners, I could feel the breeze outside the estate, and I could smell the pages of the books Percy and Johnny kept. It awoke in me a desire to read more and I consequently made my resolution this year to read one book per month- I want to make my way through Percy's and Johnny's collection! Thank you for this gift!" -ES

"Beautifully crafted descriptions take you to the heart of the world in itself that is Rhinebeck. I enjoyed it immensely and I can't wait to be back, I already miss Percy and Johnny. The novel has a bit of everything: humor, intrigue, unexpected turns, romance, and the element of magic. A very joyous reading! You will not be disappointed and I'm sure you, like myself, will want another journey into the depths of Rhinebeck." -JM

"I am not normally one to finish a book – I read scripts for a living and am a mom of 2 young children – but when I began reading *Eye of the Moon*, there was no stopping me! It was a wonderful escape. The characters so solid and intriguing, the location and relationships absolutely entrancing. I delighted in every page and am picking it up for a second read – I want to experience the magic all over again!! Hoping for more (perhaps a sequel?) from the author. Highly recommend!!" -VR

"*Eye of the Moon* has potions, spells, myths, legends, white- and black-tie dinners, rare wines, and especially intrigue, and lots of it. Ivan Obolensky takes you into a world that existed in the US and Europe in the not so distant past. This was a time when everybody of consequence knew each other and vast wealth was concentrated in the hands of a small group of established families who prized discretion, their reputations, and traditions. Nonetheless, they conducted themselves in ways that belied those intentions. Take a ringside seat and watch the action unfold." -DZ

"*Eye of the Moon* is an engaging and entertaining read. In it, the reader is taken on a journey in which the storyline, and each of the characters, are built around a web of mystery, intrigue, betrayal, and suspense. Based on a wonderful country estate, one is guided by the two main characters through an investigation of the family's secrets, which include magic and the occult, financial trouble, and secret relationships. Detailed descriptions of the fabulous meals and wines served throughout the story, make it a delightful journey through the various surprises that we encounter at each turn. As the story develops, one encounters everything from true friendship and romance to redemption and forgiveness. A page-turner." -PA

"A wonderful historic mystery with nuanced knowledge of Egyptian occultism, shamanic rituals, and erudite insights, this novel offers an engrossing read through the relationships and dialogs of sophisticated characters, in the cultural setting of a wealthy estate in New York. Obolensky's narrative is thick in occult knowledge, and his characters are complex and enduring. I couldn't stop reading as the story and characters evolved in completely unexpected ways. It kept me on my toes!" -CEU

[A brilliant and captivating tale! Well done!] "One of the best books I've read in ages. I loved every minute and do hope the author has a sequel planned, as I want to follow these engaging characters and the fascinating story. I was sad when I came to the end! What a brilliant book! As a writer myself, I have some idea what goes into creating a book - this author knows what he is about. The writing was lyrical and beckoned the reader follow: the story line intriguing and mysterious. Those who peopled the story were sparkling but human (well, except for the ghosts!). Just a marvelous read. Looking forward to more from this superb author!" -Jan O.

[Outstanding and unusual] "How to put this book into perspective. It is about family, friends, mystery, vengeance, greed, and personal growth. I did not expect the story and following that story was completely enjoyable. An unusual but thoroughly superb novel." -HPD

[A Riveting Tale of Mystery and Adventure] "*Eye of the Moon* immerses you in a world of mystery, opulence and old money. When Percy's childhood friend Johnny invites him to spend a weekend at the Rhinebeck estate, their exploits unlock many childhood mysteries, and they begin to unravel the secrets of Aunt Alice's death. But beyond solving an intriguing mystery with plenty of twists, as the story unfolds the characters also shift and grow. Intimate and dark family secrets come to light. You feel Percy's failures and insecurities, experience his suffering, then come to admire his insight, integrity and inner strength as he and Johnny take you on a wild adventure. "I guarantee you'll keep turning pages to discover what's next. When I finished the book I could hardly believe it was over 500 pages. The author engages you with every beat and scene. The Rhinebeck estate is itself a character, a mansion full of endless rooms, rich in shadows and a legacy of the occult. The author did a wonderful, detailed job of breathing life into the story, and it's no surprise when you discover that the Rhinebeck estate actually existed, a mansion with 30 rooms situated on 100 acres along the Hudson River. And even better, childhood visits to Rhinebeck were part of the author's storied past. "I'm very much looking forward to the sequel." -LB

"*Eye of the Moon* is an outstanding, complex, intricate book. As a voracious reader, I'm always on the look-out for a book that immediately catches my interest and draws me into the book. *Eye of the Moon* is such a book. The activity takes place during about 4 days in a wonderful old estate owned by the Aunt Alice to Johnny - the best friend of Percy, the narrator of the book. The events are intricately woven through the multi-generational relationships of Aunt Alice's family, AND Aunt Alice's life. A whisper of the supernatural colors the story. The structure of the characters can be likened to the *Upstairs/Downstairs* because the senior servants are integral to the story. Also, some key events occur during meals. The author also helps the atmosphere of the story by describing meal dishes, clothing, room designs, etc. Aunt Alice's character comes alive through her letters, her research, and through the memories of those who knew her best. Please, please take the time to read this excellent book. Like me, I'll bet that you too will be hoping that the author writes a sequel to this book." -DL

[Easy to read thriller in a magical realism style] "*Eye of the Moon*, Obolensky's first novel, is a magnificent thriller that keeps you in suspense throughout every chapter of the 541 pages. He has a love for words, and he uses them in a very elegant and eloquent fashion as he describes the personalities of his characters, the manner of every meal and libation, the love affairs, and family secrets. He takes the reader through a tunnel of emotions, mixing the quotidian with the surreal and supernatural in the style of magical realism, where the house gets possessed by a demon and a powerful force overtakes Percy, the protagonist, after he drinks a rare potion in a ritual to discover what happened to Alice, the central character of the story, whose fascination for the occult takes her to the end of her life. The story takes place at the luxurious New York estate, Rhinebeck, where Percy and his best friend Johnny grew up amid a scent of opulence. It's fascinating the way the stories intertwine, and the characters find their destiny." -DL

"A very interesting novel, it's billed a mystery/suspense novel, but it is so much more than that. From the Steinbeck descriptive settings, to the unique character development, underlying layers of lore and secrets, this book entertains and involves you on many levels. Percy and Johnny in Hardy boys' style, try to find out what really happened at Rhinebeck, and as you are drawn into the sleuthing, you ping through dozens of life hacks, and the quirks, treachery, and sensuality of the various characters. After reading the novel, I come to find out that several of the characters were real, and there really was an Alice that was heavily into Egyptian mysticism. So now the interesting part goes way off the charts. I also like the way the ending leaves the book open for a sequel. So many directions this could go." -SA

[Very well written Gothic mystery, a must read!] "In the first few pages, I absolutely knew I was going to be enthralled in this book. By page 10 I was laughing -- hysterically at that-- and by page 283, I was wishing *Eye of the Moon* already had a sequel. Complex characters, great plot, very entertaining. I surely hope Ivan Obolensky continues delighting us with his writings, I for one can hardly wait!" -AG

[Imbued with themes of revenge, the occult, family bonds and love in its many forms] "*Eye of the Moon* is a mystery composed by an interweaved web of stories. Told through the eyes of introverted and observant Percy, the journey takes the reader on a wild and unexpected ride. Imbued with themes of revenge, the occult, family bonds and love in its many forms, the story sets you on a path where it's physically hard to put the book down! I found myself wanting to have conversations with all of these characters. They are all in their own specific way very smart. Some I loved, some I would never want to be friends with, however they all had in common that they spike your curiosity and make you feel for their plight. It is now on my list of top 5 favorite books and recommend it to anyone who enjoys captivating reading that makes your heart beat faster." -A

[Great Read!] "This book was as good as I suspected, it was fast paced and enjoyable. I couldn't put it down! I literally stayed up all night to finish it. I will certainly purchase more of this author's books." -S

[Never a dull moment] "This was a fascinating twisting story written very intelligently. It covers many subjects and personalities which made for a very interesting read." -CM

[5 stars] "Rich in detail, wit, and gothic mystery, *Eye of the Moon* reads like a carefully crafted stage play. The world, albeit almost all contained within the mansion Rhinebeck, is precise and vivid, and the characters sharply drawn. If you enjoy witty banter and dynastic politics with a touch of Agatha Christie type mystery, you'll enjoy *Eye of the Moon*." -MA