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List: The Best of the Best Romance Novels of the Twentieth Century

Title: Whitney, My Love

Author: Judith McNaught

Ranking in the List: 4

Rating: 4.12

Genres: Historical Romance, Romance, Historical, Fiction, Regency, Adult, British Literature, Chik Literature.

Total Word Count: 562

Key-Words: stone, mother, father, France, relatives, childhood, love, England, dowry, arrange, marriage, assume, inheritance, estate, maintain, engagement.

Brief Summary:

After Whitney Stone's mother dies, her father sends her to France with relatives, separating her from her childhood love, Paul Sevarin. In France, Whitney matures under the tutelage of various instructors and befriends the DuVille family. Returning to England as a sophisticated lady, she aims to marry Paul, armed with an assumed inheritance. However, her father, having squandered her dowry, has arranged her marriage to the Duke of Claymore, Mr. Clayton Westland, to save their estate. Despite her attempts to maintain her engagement to Paul, who reacts poorly upon learning of her financial situation, Whitney reluctantly accepts her fate with Clayton. Their relationship, initially rocky and marked by a controversial moment, eventually finds stability. Misunderstandings drive them apart, but they are cunningly reunited by Whitney's cousin, leading to a reconciled and happy family life.

About the Author:

Judith McNaught is a bestselling author of over a dozen historical and contemporary romance novels, with 30 million copies of her works in print.^[3] She was also the first female executive producer at a CBS radio station. She majored in Business at Northwestern University.

Before gaining success as a writer, McNaught had previously worked as an assistant director for a film crew, an assistant controller of a major trucking company, president of a temporary employment agency, and president of an executive search firm. She also was the first female executive producer at a CBS radio station.

Whitney, My Love, the first manuscript, was finally published in 1985, after McNaught had proven herself with two successful published novels. Unaware that there were rules that most Regency romances followed, McNaught's early novels were unique. Her novels introduced the hero first, rather than the heroine. Unlike the typical Regency, "a light romp with no sex," her novels tended to be "intensely sensual and witty." The book is now credited with inventing the genre today known as the Regency Historical. *Whitney, My Love* captured the elements of the traditional Regency romance, but its long length, sensuality, and emotional intensity were more often associated with the traditional historical romances, which were rarely set during the Regency period. Despite the many years it took to sell the story, it was very successful, and its success influenced other editors to solicit manuscripts written in the same style.

At the beginning of McNaught's writing career, she was one of a very few authors writing for the historical romance market. By 1985, however, the genre had exploded, and over 50 new historical romances were being published each month, many of them full-length historicals set in the Regency period like McNaught's. Despite her years of success in the historical romance genre, in 1990 McNaught switched genres to write contemporary romances, hopeful that she would have a better opportunity to distinguish her work in a less-saturated market.

As her career has continued to mature, McNaught has gradually introduced elements of suspense into her writing. Regardless of their genre, however, her books tend to be fast-paced and feature strong, loyal, compassionate, intelligent female characters.