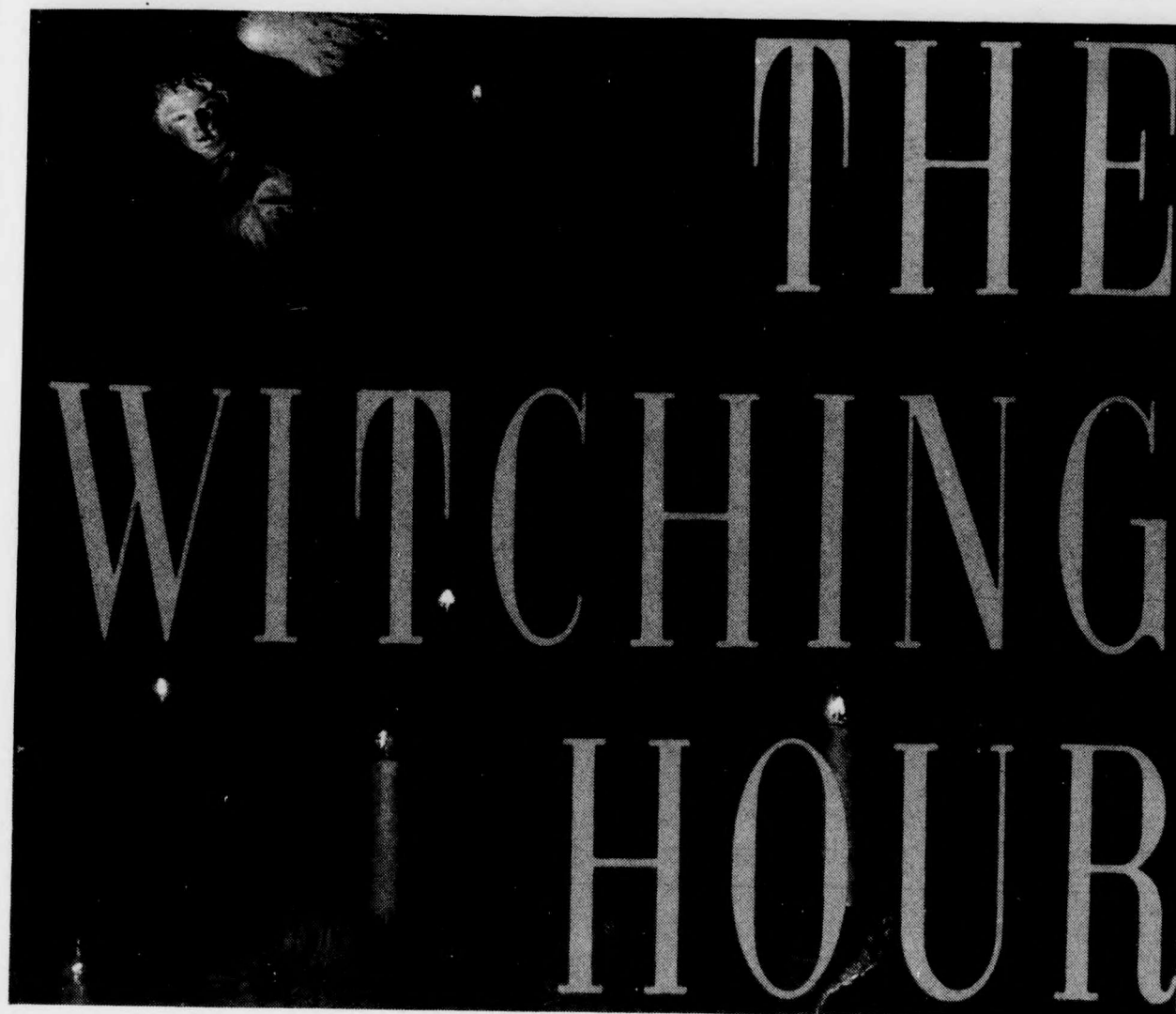


ARTS



Literature of love and the fantastic

by "Switch"

*The Witching Hour*  
Anne Rice  
Random House

For those of you waiting for the sequel to *The Mummy* or the newest installment in the Lestat series, Rice has done it to you again: she's introduced a new series of Witch history before satisfying your vampire and mummified remains cravings. Shall we forgive her? Oh Why Not?!!

*The Witching Hour* recounts the story of a modern family of witches who live in New Orleans.

The Mayfair family as we find out little for little, are rather odd. The decomposed remains found in rugs, skeletons in the closet (not literally) and the famous Mayfair emerald lead us to the conclusion somewhere in the middle of the book that these people might have some relationship to witchcraft.

Throughout the first two sections of *The Witching Hour* two stories are going on simultaneously and the two story buds bloom later into one rather unusual flower.

If you've read any Anne Rice or the pseudonyms she is known by, Rampling, and Roquelaire, you know there's always a hero and a heroine.

This time the hero is Michael the house restorer, who drowns and is resurrected with a strange visionary ability which is triggered by touch. The heroine is Rowan, a neurosurgeon who has a strange power to heal and to well . . . I can't give the whole story away can I?

Rowan and Michael are of hero and heroine body-types but within the constructs of Rice's web are caught up in a very complex structure. They are, as characters, a far cry from your dime store romance, but if you've ever met Anne before in some shadowed existence you know that already. As far as characters go in general they are typical of Rice's skill to procreate, never shallow and never wavering as the shadows might.

I have a problem with Rice's two offerings to the world of a yet undefinable genre, *The Queen of the Damned*, and *The Witching Hour*. Rice has fallen into the inevitable void of worldly wordiness. She tells everything we would ever need to know, and loses the pace of the novel dragging us through the mire of detail with her. I went with her into the nuck as she explained to Michael and I all about the history of the Mayfair witches, it was tiring and hard going at times, but then,

Michael and I made it through, I had just hoped there was a point to it.

There wasn't in this first book of witches, but I have faith that Anne wouldn't take me anywhere I didn't want to go without good reason.

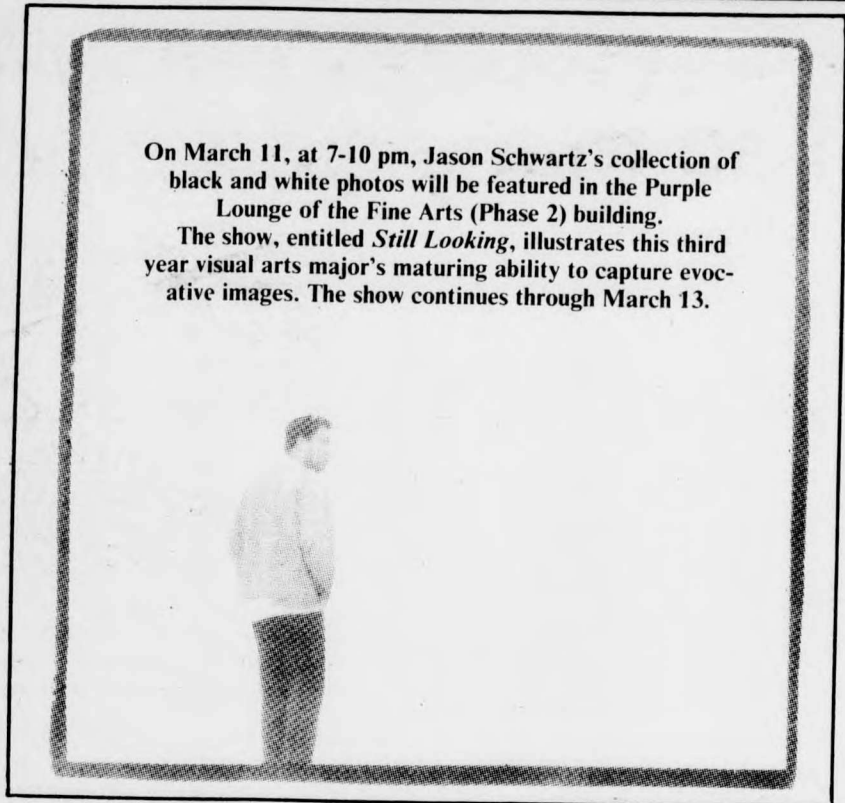
Again I'm left waiting for THREE sequels now, the newest Lestat, the Next in the Mummy series and one for what happens to Rowan and Michael and the newest addition to the Mayfair family . . . shudder. In the meantime, I've got the Lestat and Mummy comic book series to abate my ever growing hunger.

Anne Rice's *The Witching Hour* takes many midnight page turning sessions to finish, but if you like detail and passion and romance with a dark-shadows twist, you'll find your time well spent.

Rice may be heralded as the mistress of the horror genre but she and Barker and Strieber, as far as I'm concerned are leaders of their own fields.

I just can't help myself, I have to be patient and wait for the next installments . . . all Rice ever does is satisfy me and turn around and bewitch me with desire for her every word.

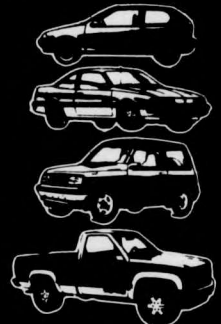
Anne Rice is a powerful spellcaster . . . beware the reader who enters her dark domains.



On March 11, at 7-10 pm, Jason Schwartz's collection of black and white photos will be featured in the Purple Lounge of the Fine Arts (Phase 2) building. The show, entitled *Still Looking*, illustrates this third year visual arts major's maturing ability to capture evocative images. The show continues through March 13.

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