

August 14, 2017

1. The Gray Bar Hotel Curtis Dawkins Short Stories

In this stunning debut collection, Curtis Dawkins, an MFA graduate and convicted murderer serving life without parole, takes us inside the worlds of prison and prisoners with stories that dazzle with their humor and insight, even as they describe a harsh and barren existence.

In Curtis Dawkins's first short story collection, he offers a window into prison life through the eyes of his narrators and their cellmates. Dawkins reveals the idiosyncrasies, tedium, and desperation of long-term incarceration—he describes men who struggle to keep their souls alive despite the challenges they face.

In "A Human Number," a man spends his days collect-calling strangers just to hear the sounds of the outside world. In "573543," an inmate recalls his descent into addiction as his prison softball team gears up for an annual tournament against another unit. In "Leche Quemada," an inmate is released and finds freedom more complex and baffling than he expected. Dawkins's stories are funny and sad, filled with unforgettable detail—the barter system based on calligraphy-ink tattoos, handmade cards, and cigarettes; a single dandelion smuggled in from the rec yard; candy made from powdered milk, water, sugar, and hot sauce. His characters are nuanced and sympathetic, despite their obvious flaws.

The Graybar Hotel tells moving, human stories about men enduring impossible circumstances. Dawkins takes readers beyond the cells into characters' pasts and memories and desires, into the unusual bonds that form during incarceration and the strained relationships with family members on the outside. He's an extraordinary writer with a knack for metaphor, and this is a powerful compilation of stories that gives voice to the experience of perhaps the most overlooked members of our society.

2. The Lying Game Ruth Ware Novel

On a cool June morning, a woman is walking her dog in the idyllic coastal village of Salten along a tidal estuary known as the Reach. Before she can stop him, the dog charges into the water to retrieve what first appears to be a wayward stick, but to her horror, turns out to be something much more sinister...

The next morning, three women in and around London—Fatima, Thea, and Isabel—receive the text they had always hoped would NEVER come, from the fourth in their formerly inseparable clique, Kate, that says only, "I need you."

The four girls were best friends at Salten, a second rate boarding school set near the cliffs of the English Channel. Each different in their own way, the four became inseparable and were notorious for playing the Lying Game, telling lies at every turn to both fellow boarders and faculty, with varying states of serious and flippant nature that were disturbing enough to ensure that everyone steered clear of them. The myriad and complicated rules of the game are strict: no lying to each other—ever. Bail on the lie when it becomes clear it is about to be found out. But their little game had consequences, and the girls were all expelled in their final year of school under mysterious circumstances surrounding the death of the school's eccentric art teacher, Ambrose (who also happens to be Kate's father).

Atmospheric, twisty, and with just the right amount of chill that will keep you wrong-footed—which has now become Ruth Ware's signature style—*The Lying Game* is sure to be her next big bestseller. Another unputdownable thriller from the Agatha Christie of our time.

3. The Magpie Murders Anthony Horowitz

When editor Susan Ryeland is given the manuscript of Alan Conway's latest novel, she has no reason to think it will be much different from any of his others. Alan's traditional formula has proved hugely successful. So successful that Susan must continue to put up with his troubling behavior if she wants to keep her job. Conway's latest tale has Atticus Pünd investigating a murder at Pye Hall, a local manor house, but the more Susan reads, the more she's convinced that there is another story hidden in the pages of the manuscript: one of real-life jealousy, greed, ruthless ambition, and murder.

4. Into the Water Paula Hawkins, 386 pgs.

A single mother turns up dead at the bottom of the river that runs through town. Earlier in the summer, a vulnerable teenage girl met the same fate. They are not the first women lost to these dark waters, but their deaths disturb the river and its history, dredging up secrets long submerged.

Left behind is a lonely fifteen-year-old girl. Parentless and friendless, she now finds herself in the care of her mother's sister, a fearful stranger who has been dragged back to the place she deliberately ran from—a place to which she vowed she'd never return.

5. The Address Fiona Davis, 368 pgs.

Fiona Davis, author of *The Dollhouse*, returns with a compelling novel about the thin lines between love and loss, success and ruin, passion and madness, all hidden behind the walls of The Dakota, New York City's most famous residence.

After a failed apprenticeship, working her way up to head housekeeper of a posh London hotel is more than Sara Smythe ever thought she'd make of herself. But when a chance encounter with Theodore Camden, one of the architects of the grand New York apartment house The Dakota, leads to a job offer, her world is suddenly awash in possibility--no mean feat for a servant in 1884. The opportunity to move to America, where a person can rise above one's station. The opportunity to be the female manager of The Dakota, which promises to be the greatest apartment house in the world. And the opportunity to see more of Theo, who understands Sara like no one else . . . and is living in The Dakota with his wife and three young children.

In 1985, Bailey Camden is desperate for new opportunities. Fresh out of rehab, the former party girl and interior designer is homeless, jobless, and penniless. Two generations ago, Bailey's grandfather was the ward of famed architect Theodore Camden. But the absence of a genetic connection means Bailey won't see a dime of the Camden family's substantial estate. Instead, her -cousin- Melinda--Camden's biological great-granddaughter--will inherit almost everything. So when Melinda offers to let Bailey oversee the renovation of her lavish **Dakota** apartment, Bailey jumps at the chance, despite her dislike of Melinda's vision. The renovation will take away all the character and history of the apartment Theodore Camden himself lived in . . . and died in, after suffering multiple stab wounds by a madwoman named Sara Smythe, a former Dakota employee who had previously spent seven months in an insane asylum on Blackwell's Island.

One hundred years apart, Sara and Bailey are both tempted by and struggle against the golden excess of their respective ages--for Sara, the opulence of a world ruled by the Astors and Vanderbilts; for Bailey, the free-flowing drinks and cocaine in the nightclubs of New York City--and take refuge and solace in the Upper West Side's gilded fortress. But a building with a

history as rich--and often tragic--as The Dakota's can't hold its secrets forever, and what Bailey discovers in its basement could turn everything she thought she knew about Theodore Camden--and the woman who killed him--on its head.

6. Go Set a Watchman Harper Lee, 278 pgs.

From Harper Lee comes a landmark new novel set two decades after her beloved Pulitzer Prize-winning masterpiece, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Maycomb, Alabama. Twenty-six-year-old Jean Louise Finch--"Scout"--returns home from New York City to visit her aging father, Atticus. Set against the backdrop of the civil rights tensions and political turmoil that were transforming the South, Jean Louise's homecoming turns bittersweet when she learns disturbing truths about her close-knit family, the town and the people dearest to her. Memories from her childhood flood back, and her values and assumptions are thrown into doubt. Featuring many of the iconic characters from *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Go Set a Watchman* perfectly captures a young woman, and a world, in a painful yet necessary transition out of the illusions of the past--a journey that can be guided only by one's conscience. Written in the mid-1950s, *Go Set a Watchman* imparts a fuller, richer understanding and appreciation of Harper Lee.

7. Before the Fall Noah Hawley 391 pages

On a foggy summer night, eleven people--ten privileged, one down-on-his-luck painter--depart Martha's Vineyard headed for New York. Sixteen minutes later, the unthinkable happens: the passengers disappear into the ocean. The only survivors are Scott Burroughs--the painter--and a four-year-old boy, who is now the last remaining member of a wealthy and powerful media mogul's family.

With chapters weaving between the aftermath of the tragedy and the backstories of the passengers and crew members--including a Wall Street titan and his wife, a Texan-born party boy just in from London, a young woman questioning her path in life, and a career pilot--the mystery surrounding the crash heightens. As the passengers' intrigues unravel, odd coincidences point to a conspiracy: Was it merely dumb chance that so many influential people perished? Or was something far more sinister at work? Events soon threaten to spiral out of control in an escalating storm of media outrage and accusations--all while the reader draws closer and closer to uncovering the truth.

The fragile relationship between Scott and the young boy glows at the heart of this novel, raising questions of fate, human nature, and the inextricable ties that bind us together.

8. Madame President: The Extraordinary Journey of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

The harrowing, but triumphant story of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, leader of the Liberian women's movement, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, and the first democratically elected female president in African history.

When Ellen Johnson Sirleaf won the 2005 Liberian presidential election, she demolished a barrier few thought possible, obliterating centuries of patriarchal rule to become the first female elected head of state in Africa's history. *Madame President* is the inspiring, often heartbreaking story of Sirleaf's evolution from an ordinary Liberian mother of four boys to international banking executive, from a victim of domestic violence to a political icon, from a post-war president to a Nobel Peace Prize winner.

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and bestselling author Helene Cooper deftly weaves Sirleaf's

personal story into the larger narrative of the coming of age of Liberian women. The highs and lows of Sirleaf's life are filled with indelible images; from imprisonment in a jail cell for standing up to Liberia's military government to addressing the United States Congress, from reeling under the onslaught of the Ebola pandemic to signing a deal with Hillary Clinton when she was still Secretary of State that enshrined American support for Liberia's future.

Sirleaf's personality shines throughout this riveting biography. Ultimately, *Madame President* is the story of Liberia's greatest daughter, and the universal lessons we can all learn from this "Oracle" of African women.

9. The Summer Before the War Helen Simonson

East Sussex, 1914. It is the end of England's brief Edwardian summer, and everyone agrees that the weather has never been so beautiful. Hugh Grange, down from his medical studies, is visiting his Aunt Agatha, who lives with her husband in the small, idyllic coastal town of Rye. Agatha's husband works in the Foreign Office, and she is certain he will ensure that the recent saber rattling over the Balkans won't come to anything. And Agatha has more immediate concerns; she has just risked her carefully built reputation by pushing for the appointment of a woman to replace the Latin master.

When Beatrice Nash arrives with one trunk and several large crates of books, it is clear she is significantly more freethinking—and attractive—than anyone believes a Latin teacher should be. For her part, mourning the death of her beloved father, who has left her penniless, Beatrice simply wants to be left alone to pursue her teaching and writing.

But just as Beatrice comes alive to the beauty of the Sussex landscape and the colorful characters who populate Rye, the perfect summer is about to end. For despite Agatha's reassurances, the unimaginable is coming. Soon the limits of progress, and the old ways, will be tested as this small Sussex town and its inhabitants go to war.

10. Tightrope Steve Villano 276 pages

During a span of seven years, from 1985-1992, when Steve Villano worked with Mario Cuomo, Steve's brother Michael was at the peak of his association with John Gotti. Within days of each other in December, 1985, Gotti became the head of the Gambino Crime Family, following the murder of Paul Castellano—and Cuomo became the favorite candidate for the Democratic Party's nomination for President of the United States. In *Tightrope*, Villano shares the wrenching conflict between his family's ties to organized crime and his love for his brother, his own integrity, commitment to Mario Cuomo, and to public service.

"Steve Villano's *Tightrope* is a richly insightful, deeply moving account of love, loyalty and family lived out in the complex intersection of organized crime and big-league politics. A true story told with all the narrative power of gripping fiction, there's not a false word in these pages. Villano writes like an angel as he wrestles with the devil. *Tightrope* is a triumph."
—Peter Quinn,