

The background features a complex network of white nodes connected by thin purple lines, set against a gradient background that transitions from dark purple at the top to a bright pink at the bottom. The nodes are scattered across the frame, with some forming distinct geometric shapes like triangles and polygons. The overall aesthetic is modern and digital.

Mistress of the Ritz

Written by Melanie Benjamin

Published by cns-cabarete

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Mistress of the Ritz

By Melanie Benjamin

Mistress Of The Robes

A captivating novel based on the story of the extraordinary real-life American woman who secretly worked for the French Resistance during World War II--while playing hostess to the invading Germans at the iconic Hotel Ritz in Paris--from the New York Times bestselling author of *The Aviator's Wife* and *The Swans of Fifth Avenue*.

Mistress Of The Ritz Reviews

Nothing bad can happen at the Ritz; inside its gilded walls every woman looks beautiful, every man appears witty. Favored guests like Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Coco Chanel, and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor walk through its famous doors to be welcomed and pampered by Blanche Auzello and her husband, Claude, the hotel's director. The Auzellos are the mistress and master of the Ritz, allowing the glamour and glitz to take their minds off their troubled marriage, and off the secrets that they keep from their guests--and each other.

Mistress Of The Salmon Salt

Until June 1940, when the German army sweeps into Paris, setting up headquarters at the Ritz. Suddenly, with the likes of Hermann Goring moving into suites once occupied by royalty, Blanche and Claude must navigate a terrifying new reality. One that entails even more secrets. One that may destroy the tempestuous marriage between this beautiful, reckless American and her very proper Frenchman. For the falsehoods they tell to survive, and to strike a blow against their Nazi "guests," spin a web of deceit that ensnares everything and everyone they cherish.

Mistress of the Ritz

Mistress Of The House

But one secret is shared between Blanche and Claude alone--the secret that, in the end, threatens to imperil both of their lives, and to bring down the legendary Ritz itself.

Mistress Of The Art Of Death Series

Based on true events, *Mistress of the Ritz* is a taut tale of suspense wrapped up in a love story for the ages, the inspiring story of a woman and a man who discover the best in each other amid the turbulence of war.

4.5 stars

"How can you recognize a Semite?" Throw her in the back of a Nazi truck with her hands tied too tightly behind her back, and point a German gun at her head."

Ahh, the Ritz. A grand and glamorous hotel which hosts Coco Chanel, Ernest Hemingway, and F. Scott Fitzgerald to name a few. It is the place to see and be seen. It is where Blanche Auzello, who is American, and her French Husband and Hotel Director, Claude Auzello live. They use the glamour of the Ritz to mask the trouble in their marriage. 4.5 stars

"How can you recognize a Semite?" Throw her in the back of a Nazi truck with her hands tied too tightly behind her back, and point a German gun at her head."

Ahh, the Ritz. A grand and glamorous hotel which hosts Coco Chanel, Ernest Hemingway, and F. Scott Fitzgerald to name a few. It is the place to see and be seen. It is where Blanche Auzello, who is American, and her French Husband and Hotel Director, Claude Auzello live. They use the glamour of the Ritz to mask the trouble in their marriage. Then in June 1940, the German Army sweeps into Paris and uses the Ritz (and other hotels) to set up their headquarters. Their safe haven from the world and their troubled marriage, is not so safe anymore. Both have secrets, both live secret lives which they live while trying to walk a fine line between keeping their "guests" happy and their staff alive.

The book begins with the couple meeting and showcases the issues in their marriage, their cultural issues and through the use of differing POV, chapters, the reader is given each character's inner thoughts, motivations and secrets. Some have found the beginning to be slow, but I actually enjoyed the pace. I appreciated how the Author took her time introducing each character and their marital issues. I thought this was nicely done to show how they grew to keep secrets, had misconceptions about the other, lacked effective communication skills and how this affected each other throughout their marriage and especially during a time of great danger. They loved each other, but how well did they know each other?

"It is devastating to see a loved one suffer; it is harder to bear than you own pain. Love is despair, love is delight. Love is fear, love is hope. Love is mercy. Love is anger."

This book was inspired by the real-life couple and the use of the Ritz during the invasion by the Nazis during the war. As not much is written about the real-life Claude and Blanche Auzello, the Author did

Mistress of the Ritz

fictionalize their lives. I enjoy books about real life events and people. Even though very little is known about the actual couple that these characters is based upon, the contribution to the Ritz and the war effort have been documented even if minimally. While reading this, I couldn't help but wonder, "would I have been so brave?", "would I have risked so much?"

I enjoyed the story which showed how people resisted in their own way, how people found courage and offered help to others at great risk to themselves. This book is historical fiction, but it also examines a marriage over a course of time. This is a book about love, about courage, about pain, about loss, about fear, about the war, about resistance, and the hardships of war. This is a great book for discussion as it touches on many issues. I was captivated by the book and was sucked into these characters lives. There are many characters, including the Ritz itself.

This was a Traveling Sisters Group Read.

Thank you to Random House Publishing and NetGalley who provided me with a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. The thoughts and opinions are my own. ...more

Mistress Of The Lake Eso

When the Nazis occupied Paris the Luftwaffe (including Hermann Goering) took over half of the Ritz as their headquarters. The other half was inhabited by civilians among them Coco Chanel. The director of the hotel (Frenchman Claude Auzello) and his American wife (Blanche) are forced to continue to operate the hotel to the usual stellar standards in order to survive. Based on a true story that is mostly unknown, Mistress of the Ritz fictionalizes the marriage and resistance work undertaken by them. When the Nazis occupied Paris the Luftwaffe (including Hermann Goering) took over half of the Ritz as their headquarters. The other half was inhabited by civilians among them Coco Chanel. The director of the hotel (Frenchman Claude Auzello) and his American wife (Blanche) are forced to continue to operate the hotel to the usual stellar standards in order to survive. Based on a true story that is mostly unknown, Mistress of the Ritz fictionalizes the marriage and resistance work undertaken by the couple. I found the second half of the novel to be more compelling than the first half where the Auzellos' argumentative marriage is displayed to the nth degree. I got it. They had a troubled marriage. Although the big reveal is anticipated, the final three paragraphs are not. All in all, this is a worthy addition to WWII historical fiction. ...more

I expect three things from historical fiction:

• A good story

• The ability to paint a picture so true I feel immersed in the time and place

• To learn something I previously didn't know.

The Mistress of the Ritz manages all three. Based on true events, the Auzellos are the master and mistress of the Ritz, he the manager of the famous hotel. The story gives us their history from their tempestuous beginning through their 17 years of marriage when the Nazis arrive in Paris and take over the hotel. And

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Blanche is headstrong, independent and hiding secrets from everyone including her husband. Claude is shocked to learn his wife has the vocabulary of a dockworker. It takes him quite a while to cotton to the differences between French and American sensibilities.

It took me a while to warm to this book. I was worried at the beginning it would be too much romance, not enough history. It tackles some interesting issues, especially when Blanche struggles with liking

Mistress of the Ritz

some of the ordinary German soldiers that work at the Ritz. Or when Claude struggles to maintain his cool when being forced to kowtow to the Nazis, all the while with his own secrets.

Benjamin takes her time but then weaves enough historical facts into the story to win me over as to the third item on my list. She doesn't pull any punches, she shows us both the resistance and the collaborators, like Coco Chanel.

For readers who enjoy Martha Hall Kelly, Pam Jenoff or Kate Quinn, I would recommend they give Melanie Benjamin a try.

My thanks to netgalley and Delacorte Press for an advance copy of this book. ...more

Mistress Of The Game Sidney Sheldon

American Blanche falls for Frenchman Claude. After a brief, dizzying, whirlwind romance, they marry. The bliss quickly turns to petty fights, in part because of their different cultural upbringings. However, they both enjoy the glitz of the Ritz in Paris, where Claude is the hotel's director. They revel in hobnobbing with the likes of Hemingway and Coco Chanel and F. Scott Fitzgerald. But when Nazis take over the hotel during World War II, Claude has kept his disdain and anger toward them to himself. American Blanche falls for Frenchman Claude. After a brief, dizzying, whirlwind romance, they marry. The bliss quickly turns to petty fights, in part because of their different cultural upbringings. However, they both enjoy the glitz of the Ritz in Paris, where Claude is the hotel's director. They revel in hobnobbing with the likes of Hemingway and Coco Chanel and F. Scott Fitzgerald. But when Nazis take over the hotel during World War II, Claude has kept his disdain and anger toward them to himself, while Blanche acts out, but subtly.

It shouldn't surprise me that Germans would take over the fancy hotels wherever they wanted, but this was not a story that I'd heard before—the true story of this married couple I'd never heard of.

For fans of historical fiction, Melanie Benjamin doesn't disappoint.

Thanks to NetGalley for the opportunity to read this novel, which RELEASES MAY 21, 2019.

For more reviews, please visit <http://www.theresaalan.net/blog> ...more

This novel takes place during the Nazis' occupation of Paris. I was quite aware of this part of history but this book talks pretty specifically about the Ritz. It's a very interesting piece of history which is inspired by true events. Quoting the author "So I would say that *Mistress of the Ritz* more than any of my other novels, is inspired by a true story and real people, rather than based on them. With so few details to go on -- and so few true glimpses into Blanche and Claude's characters,

This novel takes place during the Nazis' occupation of Paris. I was quite aware of this part of history but this book talks pretty specifically about the Ritz. It's a very interesting piece of history which is inspired by true events. Quoting the author "So I would say that *Mistress of the Ritz* more than any of my other novels, is inspired by a true story and real people, rather than based on them. With so few details to go on -- and so few true glimpses into Blanche and Claude's characters, my imagination was given free reign.

The first half of the book is pretty much devoted to Claude and Blanche's marriage and how different American and French men are. I found that while some of this back and forth between the two was interesting and even humorous at times, I think too much of the book was devoted to this. While reading on and on I wondered how in the world these two could really relate to each other??? According

Mistress of the Ritz

to the book they did spend a lot of their time apart, having different schedules and at times different suites. "Because truly, they had no idea what to do with each other after such a startling beginningSo that it was easy, at times, to forget that they might actually need to rely on, to trust in--to love--each other."

The Nazis took the Ritz for themselves although allowing the manager, Claude, and Blanche and some well known residents such as Coco Chanel to remain on one side of the building and use a separate entrance. Claude and the entire staff were at their beck and call always fearful that something done not quite right could lead to their dismissal, imprisonment or worse. There is some insight into what is going on in Paris during this time through the eyes of Lily, Blanche's close friend.

The book picks up the pace in the last third and I definitely enjoyed this focus on what else was going on "behind the scenes" to be more interesting than the discussion of their marriage.

All in all I found this to be a good read with interesting characters.

This was a Traveling Sisters read. I received an ARC of this novel from the publisher through NetGalley.
...more

Mistress of the Ritz

Mistress Of The Spices

4.5 Stars

I read Mistress of the Ritz with a few of our Traveling Sisters and we all really enjoyed this one with us having similar thoughts on it.

An extraordinary real-life American woman, a proper Frenchman and a glamorous Iconic hotel

Mistress of The Ritz explores the lives of brash and reckless real life Blanche and proud Claude Auzello The Mistress and Master of the Ritz. The story starts off slow and it's all about the characters here. The story delves into their marriage where secrets and 4.5 Stars

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An extraordinary real-life American woman, a proper Frenchman and a glamorous Iconic hotel

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The second half takes off and I flew through the pages as fast as I could as we see the secrets and lies unfold. I was completely captivated by Blanche and Claude as they learn the truth about each other. My heart was warmed yet broken after reading this one.

Melanie Benjamin wraps up that ending well and brilliantly left us wanting and needing to talk to each other about it. It was nice to be able to share how that ending made me feel and see how it made my TS feel. The Mistress of The Ritz makes for a great choice for a group read and you will want to talk about it. I highly recommend

I received a copy through the Publisher on NetGalley ...more

Captivating, affecting, & illuminating!

MISTRESS OF THE RITZ by MELANIE BENJAMIN is an engaging, suspenseful, and hauntingly beautiful historical fiction novel that totally captures something extraordinary here as well as fully capturing my

Mistress of the Ritz

heart. I was immediately taken with this story and found myself totally mesmerized and in awe of MELANIE BENJAMIN'S ability to weave such a fantastic story that is based on real-life people and actual historical events with her own liberties of juicy fiction. Captivating, affecting, & illuminating!

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MELANIE BENJAMIN delivers a vividly descriptive, interesting, and well-written read here with characters and a setting that totally captivated and intrigued me. I was totally taken and fascinated with both Claude and Blanche's dynamic relationship as well as with their lives spent in the highly acclaimed Hotel Ritz in Paris.

I was thoroughly entertained and enjoyed how this story unfolded right from the very beginning. And I was totally wrapped up in this couple's relationship and loved the suspense of the unraveling of the secrets and lies.

** This was a Traveling Sisters Read **

Norma's Stats:

Cover: Lovely, intriguing, majestic, eye-catching and a fitting representation to storyline.

Title: Appealing, suspenseful, intriguing and absolutely love how the title plays so fittingly into storyline.

Writing/Prose: Well-written, beautiful, fluid, vivid, engaging, and captivating. I totally connected with and absolutely loved MELANIE BENJAMIN'S writing style.

Plot: Haunting, memorable, fascinating, inspiring, suspenseful, perfectly-paced, original, absorbing, enjoyable and entertaining. I absolutely loved that this book was inspired by the real-life couple of Claude and Blanche and the setting of the Ritz. As I thoroughly enjoy books that are based on real life events and people. Knowing that just makes the story that much more appealing, memorable and fascinating to read.

Ending: An exceptional and extremely palpable ending that warmed my heart but also left it a little broken-hearted.

Overall: 4.5 Stars! I was totally captivated by this book and totally taken with these characters and their lives and with the events that happened at the Ritz. A book that I am glad that I took my time with and savoured every single word! Loved this book so much!!!! Would highly recommend!

Thank you so much to NetGalley, Random House Publishing Group - Ballantine / Delacorte Press & Melanie Benjamin for the opportunity to read an electronic ARC of this book.

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Mistress Of The Copper Mountain

My first and only read from Melanie Benjamin was *The Aviator's Wife* and I enjoyed it so much that I knew I needed to read her latest. I join quite a few before me who thought the later half of the book was the strongest and what ultimately redeemed this book overall.

Claude and Blanche Auzello run The Ritz hotel in Paris, during the Nazi occupation of German forces of WWII. The book begins with the Nazi's using the hotel as their headquarters and are forced to serve and live alongside their captors. My first and only read from Melanie Benjamin was *The Aviator's Wife* and I enjoyed it so much that I knew I needed to read her latest. I join quite a few before me who thought the later half of the book was the strongest and what ultimately redeemed this book overall.

Claude and Blanche Auzello run The Ritz hotel in Paris, during the Nazi occupation of German forces of WWII. The book begins with the Nazi's using the hotel as their headquarters and are forced to serve and live alongside their captors. It is during this time, that we learn not only of the Ritz, the characters who inhabit it, but of their marriage and how the war impacted both so irreversibly.

In what seems to be a mostly minority opinion, I struggled with this book as a whole. If not for the promise of a better second half, I might have put this aside altogether due to the lackluster first half. I went into it thinking this would be much more captivating and instead felt the focus was spent way too much on the marriage troubles of our main couple. It also was quite repetitive in the back and forth of the good times and bad. I felt this was a squandered opportunity and even after having finished, I am still pondering what the point was of belaboring and highlighting the marriage so much when there were other opportunities to make this book really shine. Once we moved into the second half (or last 150 pages or so), the book finally grabbed my attention and I sat in my chair riveted, turning each page as furiously as I could. My eyes were brimming with tears reading the last fifty pages or so and I wished that this is how I felt throughout the whole book.

I will absolutely read Ms. Benjamin's next work and am still giving this a strong three rating, but I was hoping for more back and forth between the German's and the staff of the Ritz. The Nazi's who occupied the Ritz had more dimension than originally thought (especially revealed in the fantastic Author's Note), which I felt should have been capitalized on. (Especially, since this was largely a fill in the gap kind of story because a lot of the truth revolving around this story is a mystery.)

Overall, a good read, but not something I will be rushing to recommend. As always, take this opinion with a grain of salt given the many 4 and 5 star reviews that are available.

Thank you to Netgalley, Ballantine Books, Random House and Melanie Benjamin for the opportunity to read and provide an honest review of this book.

Review date: 5/22/19

Mistress of the Ritz

Publication Date: 5/21/19 ...more

A compelling read about a marriage set against the backdrop of World War II and the glamorous Ritz Hotel in Paris, France. Claude's infidelity and Blanche's brash American attitude cause troublesome times as the couple struggle with their marriage and manage life in the face of war. The couple is hiding one huge secret that would place them both in the crosshairs of the Germans. Claude, as the director of the hotel, has to bow and scrape to the Germans in order to keep his job

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Benjamin's prose flows beautifully and is engrossing. The characters are so richly drawn that you can see them and feel their emotions. There are several recognizable characters in the book - usually staying at the Ritz and hanging out in the bar: Earnest Hemingway, Coco Chanel, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Pablo Picasso, to name a few. The book provides a different view of World War II from the occupied hotel and from the French Resistance.

Thanks to Melanie Benjamin and to Random House Publishing Group - Ballantine/Delacourt Press through Netgalley for an advance copy of this book. ...more

Mistress Of The House Meaning

rounded up to 4.5 stars

I knew when Melanie Benjamin was writing a book set in Paris, one of my most beloved cities in the world and at the sumptuous Hotel Ritz on the Place Vendome no less, that I wanted to read it! Throw in the fact that it's set during WWII, and this was a must-read book for me.

Mistress of the Ritz is a fictionalized account of the lives of husband and wife Claude and Blanche Auzello, shifting time between the 1920s, when the couple met in a whirlwind love affair and got married and the novel's present time during the Nazi's Occupation of Paris.

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Mistress of the Ritz is a fictionalized account of the lives of husband and wife Claude and Blanche Auzello, shifting time between the 1920s, when the couple met in a whirlwind love affair and got married and the novel's present time during the Nazi's Occupation of Paris.

The story is told in alternating chapters by Claude and Blanche and through their different points of view, you get a real sense of their marriage and the secrets each are keeping from the other. It is the couple's mistrust of the other that threatens to ruin them.

Claude, a Frenchman, is the director of the famed Ritz and treats it as a beloved mistress; for Claude, the Ritz is everything and he seemingly will do anything to keep his precious Ritz from harm even if it means almost bowing and scraping to the Nazis who have become the Ritz's most esteemed and privileged "guests". Little does anyone know that Claude is covertly working against the Nazi by giving info to the Allies...

As far as Blanche knows, Claude's seeming compliance with the Nazis is just one more reason to be disappointed in her husband and her marriage. After all, it's already been a tumultuous one for decades with Claude insisting it's his right as a Frenchman to have a mistress, and he can't understand why this makes his American wife so angry!

But Blanche also loves the Ritz as much as Claude and it is she who is called the "Mistress of the Ritz" by those who love her as she entertains the rich and famous in the hotel bar. Yet, she is so much more than just a hostess as she wants to do more for her adopted country, especially after meeting Lily, a young Communist working for the French Resistance and getting involved herself. But that's not the only secret Blanche is keeping.

Mistress of the Ritz

Although the book was a tad slow to start as it centered a bit on the marital problems of the Auzellos, I found by the second half that I couldn't put the book down and was completely immersed in the story. I thought Benjamin did a great job with telling this story, especially since there is so little record about the Auzellos, but Benjamin takes what is known and turns it into an inspiring, captivating read about two people that I'd never heard of in history.

The characters really came alive for me in the second half, and the novel was written as smooth as silk. Of course, the Auzellos aren't the only main characters in the book as I think the Ritz took on a life of its own with the story sweeping and swirling in and around it.

I truly enjoyed this novel, and it didn't disappoint at all, thankfully, since it was a much-anticipated summer read! Definitely another favorite WWII novel that I recommend adding to your reading list!

Thank you Delacorte Press-Random House for the beautiful gifted copy of this novel to read in exchange for a fair and honest review.

*A Traveling Sisters Read ...more

Oh, how I love love love a Melanie Benjamin book! â•• â•• â•• â•• â••

Iâ€™m sure many of us knew that the Nazis claimed hotels in their occupied areas, but have you heard about the Auzellos?

The Ritz is a glorious hotel in France where the rich and famous stay. Blanche, an American, and Claude Auzello, her French husband, have welcomed into their hotel the likes of Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Chanel. Their busy work lives keep them from facing their challenging marriage.

In June 1940, the Nazis arrive in Paris Oh, how I love love love a Melanie Benjamin book! â•• ÿ• â•• ÿ• â•• ÿ• â•• ÿ•

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The Ritz is a glorious hotel in France where the rich and famous stay. Blanche, an American, and Claude Auzello, her French husband, have welcomed into their hotel the likes of Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Chanel. Their busy work lives keep them from facing their challenging marriage.

In June 1940, the Nazis arrive in Paris, and of all places, they set up their headquarters at the Ritz. Now living amongst top Nazi officials, the Auzellosâ€™ marriage is in more trouble than ever. You see, Blanche joins the French Resistance while living in the lionsâ€™ den.

Will Blanche, Claude, their marriage, and the Ritz survive the war?

Mistress of the Ritz

Mistress of the Ritz is edgy and suspenseful from the start. Even though I was vaguely familiar with the Ritz being a headquarters for the Nazis, I did not "know" the Auzellos, and their characters and storyline captivated me. To think their marriage was troubled, and not only a war, but a complete takeover of their hotel by the Nazis brought them closer together.

I was completely immersed in the setting, especially on site at the Ritz. I could feel and experience the luxury, glitz, and glamour. The story of this couple and all that Blanche took on was extremely compelling, and I loved all the well-developed characters. The celebrity sightings were always fun as well (Picasso!).

Melanie Benjamin is a skillful storyteller. She takes her time in building her stories, which completely works for me because she gets the details just right. Benjamin's writing flows and is so easy-to-read, and I remain ever a fan.

Overall, this is a beautifully-written, engaging, and powerful book, and it gets my highest recommendation for fans of historical fiction.

I received a complimentary copy. All opinions are my own.

My reviews can also be found on my blog: www.jennifertarheelreader.com ...more