

Mysteries and Thrillers discussed on Lattes with Librarians, April 9 2021

***Finlay Donovan Is Killing It* by Elle Cosimano**

Finlay Donovan is killing it . . . except, she's really not. She's a stressed-out single-mom of two and struggling novelist, Finlay's life is in chaos: the new book she promised her literary agent isn't written, her ex-husband fired the nanny without telling her, and this morning she had to send her four-year-old to school with hair duct-taped to her head after an incident with scissors.

When Finlay is overheard discussing the plot of her new suspense novel with her agent over lunch, she's mistaken for a contract killer, and inadvertently accepts an offer to dispose of a problem husband in order to make ends meet . . . Soon, Finlay discovers that crime in real life is a lot more difficult than its fictional counterpart, as she becomes tangled in a real-life murder investigation.

Fast-paced, deliciously witty, and wholeheartedly authentic in depicting the frustrations and triumphs of motherhood in all its messiness, hilarity, and heartfelt moment, *Finlay Donovan Is Killing It* is the first in a brilliant new series from YA Edgar Award nominee Elle Cosimano.

***Who is Maud Dixon?* by Alexandra Andrews**

Florence Darrow is a low-level publishing employee who believes that she's destined to be a famous writer. When she stumbles into a job the assistant to the brilliant, enigmatic novelist known as Maud Dixon -- whose true identity is a secret -- it appears that the universe is finally providing Florence's big chance.

The arrangement seems perfect. Maud Dixon (whose real name, Florence discovers, is Helen Wilcox) can be prickly, but she is full of pointed wisdom -- not only on how to write, but also on how to live. Florence quickly falls under Helen's spell and eagerly accompanies her to Morocco, where Helen's new novel is set. Amidst the colorful streets of Marrakesh and the wind-swept beaches of the coast, Florence's life at last feels interesting enough to inspire a novel of her own.

But when Florence wakes up in the hospital after a terrible car accident, with no memory of the previous night -- and no sign of Helen -- she's tempted to take a shortcut. Instead of hiding in Helen's shadow, why not upgrade into Helen's life? Not to mention her bestselling pseudonym . . .

Taut, twisty, and viciously entertaining, *Who is Maud Dixon* is a stylish psychological thriller about how far into the darkness you're willing to go to claim the life you always wanted.

***Later* by Stephen King**

SOMETIMES GROWING UP MEANS FACING YOUR DEMONS

The son of a struggling single mother, Jamie Conklin just wants an ordinary childhood. But Jamie is no ordinary child. Born with an unnatural ability his mom urges him to keep secret, Jamie can see what no one else can see and learn what no one else can learn. But the cost of using this ability is higher than Jamie can imagine - as he discovers when an NYPD detective draws him into the pursuit of a killer who has threatened to strike from beyond the grave.

LATER is Stephen King at his finest, a terrifying and touching story of innocence lost and the trials that test our sense of right and wrong. With echoes of King's classic novel *It*, *LATER* is a powerful, haunting, unforgettable exploration of what it takes to stand up to evil in all the faces it wears

***Win* by Harlan Coben**

Over twenty years ago, the heiress Patricia Lockwood was abducted during a robbery of her family's estate, then locked inside an isolated cabin for months. Patricia escaped, but so did her captors -- and the items stolen from her family were never recovered.

Until now. On the Upper West Side, a recluse is found murdered in his penthouse apartment, alongside two objects of note: a stolen Vermeer painting and a leather suitcase bearing the initials WHL3. For the first time in years, the authorities have a lead -- not only on Patricia's kidnapping, but also on another FBI cold case -- with the suitcase and painting both pointing them toward one man.

Windsor Horne Lockwood III -- or Win, as his few friends call him -- doesn't know how his suitcase and his family's stolen painting ended up with a dead man. But his interest is piqued, especially when the FBI tells him that the man who kidnapped his cousin was also behind an act of domestic terrorism -- and that the conspirators may still be at

large. The two cases have baffled the FBI for decades, but Win has three things the FBI doesn't: a personal connection to the case; an ungodly fortune; and his own unique brand of justice.

Hairpin Bridge by Taylor Adams

Three months ago, Lena Nguyen's estranged twin sister, Cambry, drove to a remote bridge sixty miles outside of Missoula, Montana, and jumped two hundred feet to her death. At least, that is the official police version.

But Lena isn't buying it.

Now she's come to that very bridge, driving her dead twin's car and armed with a cassette recorder, determined to find out what really happened by interviewing the highway patrolman who allegedly discovered her sister's body.

Corporal Raymond Raycevic has agreed to meet Lena at the scene. He is sympathetic, forthright, and professional. But his story doesn't seem to add up. For one thing, he stopped Cambry for speeding a full hour before she supposedly leapt to her death. Then there are the sixteen attempted 911 calls from her cell phone, made in what was unfortunately a dead zone.

But perhaps most troubling of all, the state trooper is referred to by name in Cambry's final enigmatic text to her sister: *Please Forgive Me. I couldn't live with it. Hopefully you can, Officer Raycevic.*

Lena will do anything to uncover the truth. But as her twin's final hours come into focus, Lena's search turns into a harrowing, tooth-and-nail fight for her own survival—one that will test everything she thought she knew about her sister and herself...

A Dark and Secret Place by Jen Williams

When prodigal daughter Heather Evans returns to her family home after her mother's baffling suicide, she makes an alarming discovery--stacks and stacks of carefully preserved letters from notorious serial killer Michael Reave. The Red Wolf, as he was dubbed by the press, has been in prison for over twenty years, serving a life sentence for the gruesome and ritualistic murders of several women across the country, although he has always protested his innocence. The police have had no reason to listen, yet Heather isn't the only one to have cause to re-examine the murders. The body of a young woman has just been found, dismembered and placed inside a tree, the corpse planted with flowers. Just as the Red Wolf once did.

What did Heather's mother know? Why did she kill herself? And with the monstrous Red Wolf safely locked inside a maximum security prison, who is stalking young women now? Teaming up with DI Ben Parker, Heather hopes to get some answers for herself and for the newest victims of this depraved murderer. Yet to do that, she must speak to Michael Reave herself, and expose herself to truths she may not be ready to face. Something dark is walking in the woods, and it knows her all too well.

What Waits For You by Joseph Schneider

A serial killer lurks in people's homes for hours or days before he strikes...

The nightmare descends on a Tuesday. An elderly couple's home is transformed into a scene straight out of a horror film, their mutilated bodies the only clue left behind by the killer--and they are only the unlucky first in a series of impossible crimes. Soon dubbed the Eastside Creeper, the murderer stalks Hollywood, camping out undetected in his victims' homes until he's ready to strike. After killing, he vanishes like smoke.

Considered an expert in the grotesque, Detective Tully Jarsdel lands this seemingly unsolvable case. Jarsdel, an academic-turned-cop, is intrigued by the Eastside Creeper. The Creeper's methods are vicious, his path untraceable--nothing about this killer makes sense. But as the murders become more gruesome and the clues more inscrutable, widespread panic sets in. And amid the terror and suspicion, Jarsdel's unconventional investigation may be the only thing left between a killer and a city about to descend into chaos.

***What Waits for You* is the hardboiled detective story of a terrified community, the only cop in LA who might be able to put a stop to the hysteria, and a murderer with nothing left to lose.**

When All Light Fails by Randall Silvis

When powerful men pull strings to get what they want... someone almost always ends up dead

There's not much that would convince retired police sergeant Ryan DeMarco to take on another private investigation case, but he can't refuse a nine-year-old Michigan girl begging for help finding her biological father. The road trip to the Upper Peninsula promises DeMarco and his partner, Jayme, a chance to heal from their last case, which ended in a traumatic brush with death for DeMarco. But things aren't as they first appear in the woods of Michigan, and the seemingly simple paternity investigation soon morphs into something deadly.

The deeper DeMarco, Jayme, and the rest of their team dig, the more ugly truths they reveal, all while doing their best to keep one member of their team, from falling prey to her own kind of darkness. This investigation just might be the most emotionally troubling one DeMarco and Jayme have yet encountered, for there are plenty of people who will do whatever it takes to shut them down before the truth comes to light.

Anonymous Rex by Eric Garcia

Vincent Rubio, a Los Angeles private investigator, is down on his luck: He's out of work. His car's been repossessed. His partner has died under mysterious circumstances. And his tail just won't stay put. Vincent is a dinosaur--a Velociraptor, to be precise. It seems the dinosaurs faked their extinction 65 million years ago and still roam the earth, disguised in convincing latex costumes that help them blend perfectly into human society. A heightened sense of smell allows the dinos to detect one another--Vincent's got an odor like a tasty Cuban cigar. When Vincent is called to investigate a two-bit case of arson at a hip dino nightclub, he discovers something much more sinister, which lures him back to New York City--the scene of his partner's death and a dangerous nexus of dinosaur and human intermingling. Will Vincent solve the mystery of his partner's death? Will a gorgeous blond chanteuse discover his true identity, jeopardizing both their lives? Will Vincent be able to conquer his dangerous addiction to basil, or will he wind up in Herba-holics Anonymous? Will he find true love, or resort to crumpled issues of Stegolicious?

Somewhere between Jurassic Park and L.A. Confidential lies Eric Garcia's Anonymous Rex, one of the smartest, wittiest, and most entertaining debuts this side of the Ice Age.

Magic for Liars by Sara Gailey

Sharp, mainstream fantasy meets compelling thrills of investigative noir in *Magic for Liars*, a fantasy debut by rising star Sarah Gailey.

Ivy Gamble was born without magic and never wanted it. Ivy Gamble is perfectly happy with her life - or at least, she's perfectly fine. She doesn't in any way wish she was like Tabitha, her estranged, gifted twin sister. Ivy Gamble is a liar.

When a gruesome murder is discovered at the Osthorne Academy of Young Mages, where her estranged twin sister teaches theoretical magic, reluctant detective Ivy Gamble is pulled into the world of untold power and dangerous secrets. She will have to find a murderer and reclaim her sister - without losing herself.

When We Were Orphans by Kazuo Ishiguro

Christopher Banks, an English boy born in early-20th-century Shanghai, is orphaned at age nine when both his mother and father disappear under suspicious circumstances. He grows up to become a renowned detective, and more than 20 years later, returns to Shanghai to solve the mystery of the disappearances. Within the layers of the narrative told in Christopher's precise, slightly detached voice are revealed what he can't, or won't, see: that the simplest desires, a child's for his parents, a man's for understanding, may give rise to the most complicated truths.

The Elizas by Sara Shepard

From the *New York Times* bestselling author of the *Pretty Little Liars* series comes a thriller “blending Hitchcock, S.J. Watson, and Ruth Ware” (*Entertainment Weekly*) filled with half-truths, suppressed memories, and ingenious twists.

When Eliza Fontaine is rescued from the bottom of a hotel pool just a few weeks before her first novel is going to be published, her family assumes that it’s another failed suicide attempt. But Eliza swears she was pushed. The problem is she remembers little of that night, a result of the large quantity of alcohol she consumed and a worsening struggle with memory loss due to a brain tumor. Feeling ignored and vulnerable, she decides she must find the truth of what actually happened.

As she searches for answers, something very peculiar begins to happen: The people closest to her start to confuse the events in her novel with those in her real life. The dividing line between fact and fiction seems to be dissolving, and even Eliza is becoming uncertain about where her protagonist’s story ends and hers begins. She glimpses a shadowy presence hovering nearby, a mirror image of herself...but is it all in her head or is there really someone following her, studying her, wishing to do her harm? Perhaps the answers to all her questions already exist in the pages of her novel, if only she could put the pieces together in the right way.

The *Elizas* is a heart-pounding, Hitchcockian double narrative composed of secrets, lies, false memories, and an unreliable narrator you’ll never forget.

Meddling Kids by Edgar Cantero

In 1977, four teenagers and a dog—Andy (the tomboy), Nate (the nerd), Kerri (the bookworm), Peter (the jock), and Tim (the Weimaraner)—solved the mystery of Sleepy Lake. The trail of an amphibian monster terrorizing the quiet town of Blyton Hills leads the gang to spend a night in Deboën Mansion and apprehend a familiar culprit: a bitter old man in a mask. Now, in 1990, the twenty-something former teen detectives are lost souls. Plagued by night terrors and Peter’s tragic death, the three survivors have been running from their demons. When the man they apprehended all those years ago makes parole, Andy tracks him down to confirm what she’s always known—they got the wrong guy. Now she’ll need to get the gang back together and return to Blyton Hills to find out what really happened in 1977, and this time, she’s sure they’re not looking for another man in a mask.

A mad scientist’s concoction of H. P. Lovecraft, teen detectives, and a love of Americana, *Edgar Cantero’s Meddling Kids* is a story filled with rich horror, thrilling twists, outright hilarity, and surprising poignancy.

The Wife Upstairs by Rachel Hawkins

A delicious twist on a Gothic classic, *The Wife Upstairs* pairs Southern charm with atmospheric domestic suspense, perfect for fans of B.A. Paris and Megan Miranda.

Meet Jane. Newly arrived to Birmingham, Alabama, Jane is a broke dog-walker in Thornfield Estates—a gated community full of McMansions, shiny SUVs, and bored housewives. The kind of place where no one will notice if Jane lifts the discarded tchotchkes and jewelry off the side tables of her well-heeled clients. Where no one will think to ask if Jane is her real name.

But her luck changes when she meets Eddie Rochester. Recently widowed, Eddie is Thornfield Estates’ most mysterious resident. His wife, Bea, drowned in a boating accident with her best friend, their bodies lost to the deep. Jane can’t help but see an opportunity in Eddie—not only is he rich, brooding, and handsome, he could also offer her the kind of protection she’s always yearned for.

Yet as Jane and Eddie fall for each other, Jane is increasingly haunted by the legend of Bea, an ambitious beauty with a rags-to-riches origin story, who launched a wildly successful southern lifestyle brand. How can she, plain Jane, ever measure up? And can she win Eddie’s heart before her past—or his—catches up to her?