

January 22, 2018

King of Lies

By John Hart

About the Book

This book is set in Salisbury, NC and those familiar with this city will recognize several places mentioned—including the site of the murder.

Jackson Workman Pickens—known to most as Work—mindlessly holds together his life. He was in practice with his father Ezra who was a very successful lawyer, but Work’s clients were not as prosperous as his father. He has not been in love with his social-climbing wife Barbara for several years, his sister Jean is very fragile due to how life has treated her. Work and Jean’s mother “fell” down the stairs and was killed. That same night Ezra disappeared. Now, eighteen months later when a mall is being demolished, Ezra’s body is found with two bullet holes in his head.

Set to inherit his father’s fortune, Work becomes a prime suspect. But so does Jean. Fearing the worst, Work launches his own investigation, crossing paths with a power-hungry detective, a string of damning evidence, and the ugly rumors that swirl within his small, moneyed Southern town. Desperate for the redemption that has eluded him for so many years and stripped of everything he once valued, Work fights to save his sister, clear his name, and regain the love of the woman to whom he gave his heart so many years before.

About the Author

John Hart is the author of five New York Times Bestsellers:

The King of Lies

Down River

The Last Child

Iron House

Redemption Road.

His latest book, *The Hush*, will be available on February 27th.

The only author in history to win the best novel Edgar Award for consecutive novels, John has also won the Barry Award, the Southern Independent Bookseller’s Award for Fiction, the Ian Fleming Steel Dagger Award, the Southern Book Prize and the North Carolina Award for Literature. His novels are translated into thirty languages and can be found in over seventy countries.

A former defense attorney and stockbroker, John spends his time in North Carolina and Virginia, where he writes full-time.

February 26, 2018

The Hope Chest

By Viola Shipman

About the Book

From the website: <https://violashipman.com>

Ever since she was diagnosed with ALS, fiercely independent Mattie doesn't feel like herself. She can't navigate her beloved home, she can't go for a boat ride, and she can barely even feed herself. Her devoted husband, Don, doesn't want to imagine life without his wife of nearly fifty years, but Mattie isn't likely to make it past their anniversary.

But when Rose, Mattie's new caretaker, and her young daughter, Jeri, enter the couple's life, happiness and the possibility for new memories return. Together they form a family, and Mattie is finally able to pass on her memories from the hope chest she received from her mother.

With each item—including a favorite doll, family dishes, an embroidered apron, and an antique Christmas ornament—the hope chest connects Mattie, Don and Rose to each other and helps them find hope again in the face of overwhelming life challenges.

A beautiful story about the unconditional love and support of family, *The Hope Chest* will remind you that hope can be found where and when you least expect it.

About the Author

VIOLA SHIPMAN is a pen name for Wade Rouse, a popular, award-winning memoirist. Rouse chose his grandmother's name to pay tribute to the woman whose heirlooms, life, lessons and love inspire his fiction. To date, *The Charm Bracelet* and *The Hope Chest* have been translated into over a dozen languages and become international bestsellers. *The Recipe Box* will publish in 2018. Rouse writes regularly for *People*, *Good Housekeeping* and *Coastal Living*, among other places, and is a contributor to *All Things Considered*. He divides his time between the resort towns of Saugatuck-Douglas, Michigan, and Palm Springs, California.

My novels are a tribute to my Ozarks grandma, Viola Shipman. The jangling of her charm bracelet was as ever-present as the call of the whippoorwill, the scent of her hope chest as vivid as cedars after a spring rain, and her burnished wood recipe box stuffed with family recipes that still make my mouth water.

Her heirlooms, life, lessons and love not only inspire my fiction but also inspired me to become a writer and, I hope, the person I am today. She taught me that the simplest things in life – family, friends, faith, fun, love, and a passion for what you do – are truly the grandest gifts. My fiction is meant to honor the elders in our lives whose sacrifices and journeys helped make us who we are today. I couldn't be prouder of my novels, which I hope reconnect you to your own family's stories, heirlooms, histories and traditions.

March 26, 2018

The Stolen Marriage

By Diane Chamberlain

About the Book

This book was inspired by the true story of the citizens of Hickory, NC building – and getting up and running – a hospital for polio patients in just 54 hours in 1944.

In 1944, twenty-three-year old Tess DeMello abruptly ends her engagement to the love of her life when she marries a mysterious stranger and moves to Hickory, NC, a small town struggling with racial tension and the hardships imposed by World War II. She soon realized she was trapped in loveless marriage. Her husband is admired in the town and she is seen as an outsider. What does everyone know about Henry that she does not?

Feeling alone and adrift, Tess turns to the one person who seems to understand her, a local medium who gives her hope but seems to know more than he is letting on. When a sudden polio epidemic strikes the town, the townspeople band together to build a polio hospital. Tess, who has a nursing degree, bucks Henry's wishes and begins to work at the hospital, finding meaning in nursing the young victims. Yet at home, Henry's actions grow more alarming by the day. As Tess works to save the lives of her patients, can she untangle her husband's mysterious behavior and save her own life?

The Stolen Marriage was published in October, 2017.

About the Author

RR Readers has read two of Diane Chamberlain's books in the past: *Necessary Lies* and *Pretending to Dance*.

Diane grew up in Plainfield, New Jersey and now lives in North Carolina. She has written books with settings in both places. She received both her bachelor's and master's degrees in social work from San Diego State University. After graduating, she worked in youth counseling agencies and then focused on medical social work. She worked in hospitals in San Diego and Washington, D.C. before opening a private psychotherapy practice in Alexandria, Virginia, specializing in adolescents

While working in San Diego, Diane started writing. She has written twenty-five novels. Diane describes her writing this way: "My stories are often filled with twists and surprises and – I hope – they also tug at the emotions. Relationships – between men and women, parents and children, sisters and brothers – are always the primary focus of my books. I can't think of anything more fascinating than the way people struggle with life's trials and tribulations, both together and alone."

April 23, 2018

A Mother's Promise

By Sally Hepworth

About the Book

All their lives, Alice Stanhope and her daughter Zoe have been a family of two, living quietly in Northern California. Zoe has always struggled with crippling social anxiety and her mother has been her constant and fierce protector. With no family to speak of, and the identity of Zoe's father shrouded in mystery, their team of two works – until it doesn't. Until Alice gets sick and needs to fight for her life.

Desperate to find stability for Zoe, Alice reaches out to two women who are practically strangers, but who are her only hope: Kate, a nurse, and Sonja, a social worker. As the four of them come together, a chain of events is set into motion and all four of them must confront their sharpest fears and secrets – secrets about abandonment, abuse, estrangement, and the deepest longing for family.

Imbued with heart and humor in even the darkest moments, *The Mother's Promise* is an unforgettable novel about the unbreakable bonds between mothers and daughters, and the new ways in which families are forged.

About the Author

Sally Hepworth is a former event planner and human resources professional. A graduate of Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, Sally started writing novels after the birth of her first child. Sally has lived around the world, spending extended periods in Singapore, the U.K., and Canada, and she now writes full-time from her home in Melbourne, where she lives with her husband and three children.

Sally's novels are *Love Like the French* (2014), *The Secrets of Midwives* (2015), *The Things We Keep* (2016 – which RR Readers read in 2017), *A Mother's Promise* (2017) and *The Family Next Door* (due out in March, 2018).

In 2015, *The Secrets of Midwives* was the highest selling debut fiction of the year in Australia. Her novels were published in English worldwide and have been translated into several languages.

May 21, 2018 (Meeting the 3rd Monday due to Memorial Day)

The Light Between Oceans

By M. L. Stedman

About the Book

This book is set in Western Australia in the 1920s. It is a story about good people making bad decisions for all the right reasons.

A survivor of the First World War trenches, Tom enjoys his life of solitude, but one trip to the mainland brings him a wife, Isabel, with whom to share Janus Rock. Tom and Isabel Sherbourne live alone on this remote Australian island where Tom is the lighthouse keeper. Their world is turned upside down the day a boat washes up on the shore. In the boat are a man's body and a wee baby.

Isabel has been unable to carry a baby full-term, and her multiple miscarriages have taken an emotional toll on her and on Tom. Do they keep the baby and claim it is their own, or do they report the incident and risk having to return the baby girl to her biological mother?

About the Author

This is M. L. Stedman's first novel. She set it in her native Australia although she did much of the research in British Library. She has worked as a lawyer and lived in England for many years. On her publisher's website there are a series of questions that she answers about writing this book.

Were you able to visit any lighthouses in researching your novel?

Yes, I visited the Leeuwin Lighthouse and the Cape Naturaliste Lighthouse, as well as spending time in the Australian National Archives going through the old log books and correspondence of the lightkeepers of the period. I also visited Trinity House in London, which is in charge of UK Lighthouses, and did a lot of research in the British Library. I wrote some of the book there, some of it on my sofa, and some of it in little cottages looking out over the Indian Ocean, down near where I imagine Point Partageuse to be. I found the research completely captivating, and an essential part of bringing that world to life for the reader.

Much of the plot occurs in the very limited space of the island on which the lighthouse sits. Was it challenging to keep the descriptions of the same environment vivid?

Actually, I didn't find that difficult. Because Janus Rock only exists in my imagination, I had great freedom to explore it and describe it, and there was always something else to discover about it. Thankfully, readers seem to love being taken away to that world, and they too are able to conjure it vividly in their imagination, which is incredibly gratifying. It's a rather strange sensation hearing people in boardrooms in New York and pubs in London recount 'their' Janus Rock to me. Fabulous.

June 25, 2018

Before We Were Yours

By Lisa Wingate

About the Book

Two families, generations apart, are forever changed by a heartbreaking injustice in this poignant novel, inspired by a true story,

Memphis, 1939. Twelve-year-old Rill Foss and her four younger siblings live a magical life aboard their family's Mississippi River shantyboat. But when their father must rush their mother to the hospital one stormy night, Rill is left in charge—until strangers arrive in force. Wrenched from all that is familiar and thrown into a Tennessee Children's Home Society orphanage, the Foss children are assured that they will soon be returned to their parents—but they quickly realize that the truth is much darker. At the mercy of the facility's cruel director, Rill fights to keep her sisters and brother together—in a world of danger and uncertainty.

Aiken, South Carolina, present day. Born into wealth and privilege, Avery Stafford seems to have it all: a successful career as a federal prosecutor, a handsome fiancé, and a lavish wedding on the horizon. But when Avery returns home to help her father weather a health crisis, a chance encounter leaves her with uncomfortable questions—and compels her to take a journey through her family's long-hidden history, on a path that will ultimately lead either to devastation or redemption.

Based on one of America's most notorious real-life scandals—in which Georgia Tann, director of a Memphis-based adoption organization, kidnapped and sold poor children to wealthy families all over the country—Wingate's riveting, wrenching, and ultimately uplifting tale reminds us how, even though the paths we take can lead to many places, the heart never forgets where we belong.

About the Author

"I can't remember a time when I didn't write. I started writing books before I started school, and I never quit writing. I had a very special first-grade teacher in Peasley School in Northboro, Massachusetts, who recognized a little ability and a lot of desire in a shy transfer student. Mrs. Krackhardt wrote on my report card that she expected to see my name in the pages of a magazine one day, and I suddenly felt incredibly special. She started reading my stories to the class, and I was hooked. I quickly discovered the joy of having an audience, and set out on many, many writing projects. Even though I always dreamed of becoming a writer, I didn't begin pursuing the goal in earnest until after college, marriage, a career as a journalist and technical writer, and then the birth of my oldest son (ordered girl, got boy, fell in love with boy)."

Lisa has won several awards for her writing including being a New York Times Best Seller author. She has several series of books in the thirty novels she has written. Her novels have been translated into 25 languages. She is the mother of two sons.

July 23, 2018

The Keeper of Lost Things

By Ruth Hogan

About the Book

Once a celebrated author of short stories now in his twilight years, Anthony Peardew has spent half his life lovingly collecting lost objects, trying to atone for a promise broken many years before. His fiancée died the day he lost one of her keepsakes.

Realizing he is running out of time, he leaves his house and all its lost treasures to his assistant Laura, the one person he can trust to fulfil his legacy and reunite the thousands of objects with their rightful owners. But the final wishes of the Keeper of Lost Things have unforeseen repercussions which trigger a most serendipitous series of encounters...

With an unforgettable cast of characters that includes young girls with special powers, handsome gardeners, irritable ghosts and an array of irresistible four-legged friends, *The Keeper of Lost Things* is a debut novel of endless possibilities and joyful discoveries.

The back stories, real or imagined, of lost-and- found objects form the centerpiece of this exquisite, absorbing novel, a potent cocktail of insightful psychological realism, whimsy and glittering magic, where hopes and new beginnings glint off the sharp edges of grief and loss. It grabs you right from its intriguing opening scene... Hogan's prose is considered, expressive and vivid, but never overwritten. Her characters reveal themselves gradually, much as the found objects acquire layers of meaning as we become acquainted with their provenance and history.

About the Author

Ruth was born in the house where her parents still live in Bedford, England. She studied English and Drama at Goldsmith College, University of London. She worked for ten years in a senior local government position (Human resources – Recruitment, Diversity and Training). She says she was a square peg in a round hole, but it paid the bill and mortgage.

“In my early thirties I had a car accident which left me unable to work full-time and convinced me to start writing seriously. I got a part-time job as an osteopath's receptionist and spent all my spare time writing. It was all going well, but then in 2012 I got Cancer, which was bloody inconvenient but precipitated an exciting hair journey from bald to a peroxide blonde Annie Lennox crop. When chemo kept me up all night I passed the time writing, and the eventual result was *The Keeper of Lost Things*.

“I live in a chaotic Victorian house with an assortment of rescue dogs and my long-suffering husband. I spend all my free time writing or thinking about it and have notebooks in every room so that I can write down any ideas before I forget them.”

From Ruth *Hogan's website: ruthhogan.co.uk*

August 27, 2018

Here and Gone

By Haylen Beck

About the Book

Audra just wants to reach California. She's finally found the strength to flee her abusive husband and make a fresh start for her two children. With little Sean and Louise in tow, she has carefully made her way across the country, taking back roads and avoiding attention.

So when an unsettling local sheriff pulls her over in the middle of the Arizona desert, Audra works to hide her nerves and keep calm. She has to. But then he pulls a bag of drugs she's never seen before out of her trunk, and nervousness turns into panic. She thinks the worst has happened. Audra and the readers cannot imagine all that would transpire over the next four days.

Unfortunately, she's wrong. The worst is yet to come.

Here and Gone is a flawlessly crafted thriller—breathhtakingly propulsive, relentlessly suspenseful, and shocking to the very last page—about one woman's fight against unimaginable evil to save everything that matters to her.

This book was published in June, 2017.

About the Author

Haylen Beck is a pen name for acclaimed author Stuart Neville. It seems that Haylen Beck's books are set in the United States whereas Stuart Neville's books are set in Northern Ireland. Below is information about Stuart Neville from his website.

“Stuart Neville's debut novel, *THE TWELVE* (published in the USA as *THE GHOSTS OF BELFAST*), won the Mystery/Thriller category of the Los Angeles Times Book Prize, and was picked as one of the top crime novels of 2009 by both the New York Times and the LA Times. He has been shortlisted for various awards, including the Barry, Macavity, Dilys awards, as well as the Irish Book Awards Crime Novel of the Year. He has since published six more critically acclaimed books.

“His first five novels have each been longlisted for the Theakstons Old Peculier Crime Novel of the Year, and *RATLINES* was shortlisted for the CWA Ian Fleming Steel Dagger. *Juror 8*, from the *OxCrimes* charity anthology, was shortlisted for the CWA Short Story Dagger. *THE FINAL SILENCE* was shortlisted for the Edgar award.

“Stuart's novels have been translated into various languages, including German, Japanese, Polish, Swedish, Greek and more.”

September 24, 2018

Magic Hour

By Kristin Hannah

Deep in the Pacific Northwest lies the Olympic National Forest--nearly one million acres of impenetrable darkness and impossible beauty. Even in this modern age, much of it remains undiscovered and uncharted. From the heart of this old forest, a six-year-old girl appears. Speechless and alone, she can give no clue as to her identity, no hint of her past. Until recently, Dr. Julia Cates was one of the preeminent child psychiatrists in the country, but a scandal shattered her confidence, ruined her career, and made her a media target. When she gets a desperate call from her estranged sister, Ellie, a police chief in their small western Washington hometown, she jumps at the chance to escape. In Rain Valley, nothing much ever happens--until a girl emerges from the deep woods and walks into town. She is a victim unlike any Julia has ever seen: a child locked in a world of unimaginable fear and isolation. When word spreads of the "wild child" and the infamous doctor who is treating her, the media descend on Julia and once again her competence is challenged. State and federal authorities want to lock the girl away in an institution until an identification can be made. But to Julia, who has come to doubt her own ability, nothing is more important than saving the girl she now calls Alice. To heal this child, Julia will have to understand that she cannot work alone and must look to others--the people in the town she left long ago, the sister she barely knows, and Dr. Max Cerrasin, a handsome, private man with secrets of his own. Then a shocking revelation forces Julia to risk everything to discover the truth about Alice. The ordeal that follows will test the limits of Julia's faith, forgiveness, and love, as she struggles to ascertain where Alice ultimately belongs.

About the Author

In May, 2017, Rocky River Readers read *Nightingale* by Kristin Hannah. This is an earlier novel by this author.

Kristin was born in September 1960 in Southern California. When she was eight years old, her father drove the family to Western Washington which they called home.

After working in a trendy advertising agency, Kristin decided to go to law school. "But you're going to be a writer" are the prophetic words she would never forget from her mother. Kristin was in her third-and final-year of law school and her mom was in the hospital, facing the end of her long battle with cancer. Kristin was shocked to discover that her mother believed she would become a writer. For the next few months, they collaborated on a novel. After her mom's death, she packed up all those bits and pieces of paper and research they'd collected and put them in a box in the back of her closet. Kristin got married and continued practicing law.

Then Kristin found out she was pregnant and was on bed rest for five months. Her husband reminded her of the book she'd started with her mom. Kristin pulled out the boxes of research material, dusted them off and began writing. By the time their son was born, she'd finished a first draft and found an obsession. . Kristin feels truly blessed to be a wife, a mother, and a writer.

October 22, 2018 (We hope to have an author visit for this month—date may change to mesh with author’s schedule. We will meet in the Fellowship Hall.)

Queen of Hearts

By Kimmery Martin

About the Book

Zadie Anson and Emma Colley have been best friends since their early twenties, when they first began navigating serious romantic relationships amid the intensity of medical school. Now they’re happily married wives and mothers with successful careers – Zadie as a pediatric cardiologist and Emma as a trauma surgeon. Their lives in Charlotte, North Carolina are chaotic but fulfilling, until the return of a former colleague unearths a secret one of them has been harboring for years.

As chief resident, Nick Xenokostas was the center of Zadie’s life – both professionally and personally – throughout a tragic chain of events in her third year of medical school that she has long since put behind her. Nick’s unexpected reappearance during a time of new professional crisis shocks both women into a deeper look at the difficult choices they made at the beginning of their careers. As it becomes evident that Emma must have known more than she revealed about circumstances that nearly derailed both their lives, Zadi starts to question everything she thought she knew about her closest friend.

About the Author

Dr. Kimmery Martin is an ER doctor in Charlotte. This is her first novel. Marie has exchanged e-mails with Kimmery about her coming to our meeting to discuss her book. This book is being released on Feb. 13, 2018. She is excited about our wanting her to come to Rocky River Readers, but cannot full commit to a date due to her publisher scheduling her appearances at least through the July

Kimmery Martin won her first short story contest in the first grade, and was awarded a red stuffed elephant and publication in the school newspaper. Her writing career then suffered an unfortunate dry spell, finally broken with the publication of the enthralling journal article *Lymphatic Mapping and Sentinel Lymph Node Biopsy in the Staging of Melanoma*, followed by the equally riveting sequel *Sentinel Lymph Node Biopsy for Pelvic Malignancies*, both during medical school. Conscious readers remained elusive, however, prompting her to wait another decade or so before trying again. This time, spurred on by a supportive husband and three constantly interfering children, she produced an entire novel. *The Queen of Hearts*, exploring the startling secrets in a friendship between a cardiologist and a trauma surgeon, became an instantly beloved classic amongst three of her friends. It will be published by Penguin Random House in February, 2018. (from her website)

Kimmery was born and raised in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky. A lifelong literary nerd, she reviews books, interviews authors, and works extensively with the library foundation in Charlotte, North Carolina, where she resides with her husband and three young children.

November 26, 2018

Last Christmas in Paris

By Hazel Gaynor and Heather Webb

About the Book

"August 1914. England is at war. As Evie Elliott watches her brother, Will, and his best friend, Thomas Harding, depart for the front, she believes--as everyone does--that it will be over by Christmas, when the trio plan to celebrate the holiday among the romantic cafes of Paris. But as history tells us, it all happened so differently... Evie and Thomas experience a very different war. Frustrated by life as a privileged young lady, Evie longs to play a greater part in the conflict--but how?--and as Thomas struggles with the unimaginable realities of war he also faces personal battles back home where War Office regulations on press reporting cause trouble at his father's newspaper business. Through their letters, Evie and Thomas share their greatest hopes and fears--and grow ever fonder from afar. Can love flourish amid the horror of the First World War, or will fate intervene? Christmas 1918. With failing health, Thomas returns to Paris--a cherished packet of letters in hand--determined to lay to rest the ghosts of his past. But one final letter is waiting for him..."- (From Amazon.com)

This story is beautifully told through the letters between Evie Elliot, her friend Alice, her brother, Will, and his best friend, Thomas, during the Great War. It was published in October, 2017.

About the Authors

Hazel Gaynor is the New York Times and USA Today bestselling author of A MEMORY OF VIOLETS and THE GIRL WHO CAME HOME, for which she received the 2015 RITA Historical Novel of the Year award. Her third novel THE GIRL FROM THE SAVOY was an Irish Times and Globe & Mail Canada bestseller, and was shortlisted for the BGE Irish Book Awards Popular Fiction Book of the Year.

Hazel was selected by the US Library Journal as one of 'Ten Big Breakout Authors' for 2015 and was a WHSmith Fresh Talent selection in spring 2015. Her work has been translated into several languages and she is represented by Michelle Brower of Aevitas Creative Management, New York.

Heather Webb is the international bestselling author of historical novels Becoming Josephine, Rodin's Lover, and Last Christmas in Paris, which have been featured in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, France Magazine and more, as well as received national starred reviews. In 2015, Rodin's Lover was selected as a Goodreads Top Pick. To date, Heather's novels have sold in multiple countries worldwide. She is also a professional freelance editor, foodie, and travel fiend. She lives in New England with her family and one feisty rabbit.