

of him has been removed from her phone. Her computer and iPad have been similarly sanitized, all of Matt's social media accounts have been deactivated, and his telephone number is no longer in service. He even went so far as to quit his job.

Hannah is devastated; Matt was her world, and he gave her no indication that he was unhappy in their relationship. Sadness and humiliation quickly give way to obsession, though, and soon, Hannah is spending every waking moment searching for her wayward ex. Readers can't help but sympathize—until Hannah starts receiving disturbing texts from unknown numbers and finding evidence of an intruder in her home. While a sane person would be terrified, Hannah becomes inexplicably convinced that Matt is trying to communicate with her and redoubles her efforts to find him.

Fans of Claire Mackintosh and J.T. Ellison will find plenty here to love. The concept is unique, with a clever setup that hooks on page one. Torjussen's character work is solid and she does an excellent job of placing the reader inside Hannah's increasingly unhinged mind. The writing is sleek, the pace is propulsive, and the tale's tension remains palpable throughout.

In a subgenre where third-act twists are the norm, *Gone Without a Trace* is the rare domestic thriller that simultaneously shocks, challenges convention, and delivers an important social message. Readers will likely be split on how they feel about Torjussen's big reveal (and whether or not she laid enough groundwork to earn it), but her authorial ambition is laudable, and the book's final page is guaranteed to chill.—*Katrina Nidas Holm*

Death in the Dark

by Stacey Bishop

Locked Room Intl, Feb. 2017, \$24.99

Stacey Bishop was the pseudonym of George Antheil, an avant-garde composer known for his eccentric work, including the infamous *Ballet Mécanique*, which required a variety of mechanical engines for its performance. *Death in the Dark*, originally published in 1930, is an excellent Golden Age mystery set in the New York entertainment world that Antheil knew well.

Theatrical manager Dave Denny is killed at the beginning of the novel, in the first of three impossible crimes. Denny has been shot precisely in the center of his forehead in a pitch-black room during a party, with his wife, mother, and other acquaintances on the scene.

New York Public Prosecutor Howard



Mary Torjussen

Wayson is friends with the Denny family and also on the scene during the murder, but much like District Attorney Markham calling in Philo Vance in an S.S. Van Dine novel, he's dismayingly incompetent, and so requests the help of his friend Stephan Bayard to sort out the confusion. In fact the parallels between this book and those of Van Dine (Willard Huntington Wright) are striking. Bayard is a cultural intellectual who frequently comments on art and music, the action takes place largely in the Denny's stylish New York apartment during the 1920s, and the book is narrated by Bayard's companion and purported author, George Stacey Bishop, who is almost as invisible as was Van Dine in the 12 Philo Vance novels. Bayard, however, is in no way annoying, as Vance could sometimes be, and neatly unravels this brainbuster of a case.

There are parallels between the real lives of Antheil and Wright as well. Wright solicited and published the work of T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound in *The Smart Set* magazine, and Eliot and Pound helped Antheil write *Death in the Dark!* Antheil's life and the story behind the book are almost as complex as the plot. Dr. Mauro Piccinini, an Antheil expert, provides details, including Antheil's work with actress Hedy Lamarr to design the spread spectrum technology used in all cell phones today, in a lengthy afterword.—*Brian Skupin*

If We Were Villains

by M.L. Rio

Flatiron Books, April 2017, \$25.99

Shakespearean drama and murder become reality when a group of actors at an art school are questioned over the suspicious death of their colleague, Richard. One of the actors, Oliver Marks, is convicted of the death and spends a decade in prison for manslaughter. The day he is released, the detective who'd been in charge of the case comes to see him. Detective Colborne has always had lingering questions about what really happened 10 years ago and asks Oliver to tell him. What follows is Oliver's recollection of the events that culminated in Richard's death and Oliver's imprisonment, revealing for the first time the hidden secrets and dangerous lies of the tight-knit group of young, ambitious theater friends.

M. L. Rio's debut novel pulls the reader in from the first page with an air of mystery and questions about what Oliver knows. The group of actors range from the seductive Meredith to volatile Richard, from gentle, quiet Wren to free-spirited Alexander, whose roles on stage match those in their real lives. But when Richard begins to lash out at his fellow actors over a change in roles—and then turns up dead—the friends find themselves in the most challenging performance of all: hiding the truth of Richard's death from the police and from their own consciences.

If We Were Villains is a well-written and gripping ode to the stage, with a dose of theater terms, Shakespearean allegories, and dialogue sometimes written as script. While anyone could enjoy this mystery about the dark side of friendship, love, and the unintended consequences when people step out of the "roles" they take on in real life, readers with a basic knowledge of Shakespeare and the theater will get more from it.

As Oliver tells Colborne what really happened, he confronts the past and his role in the scandal so he can move on with life outside of prison...and free himself from the mental prison that keeping secrets has kept him in for 10 years.

A fascinating, unorthodox take on rivalry, friendship, and truth, *If We Were Villains* will draw readers in and leave them pondering the weight of our biggest actions and their consequences. Recommended.—*Sarah Prindle*

Mister Memory

by Marcus Sedgwick

Pegasus Books, March 2017, \$25.95

Imagine having a perfect memory—never