

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

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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 Salmon Salt

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 House

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 Art Of Death Series

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 House Meaning

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.

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. 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 Auzello's 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

## Mistress Of The Copper Mountain

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 I expect three things from historical fiction:

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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 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

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

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Mistress of the Ritz

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

## Mistress Of The Game Sidney Sheldon

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

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. 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.

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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.

## Mistress of the Ritz

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, its 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 than 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.

Although the book was slow to start and seemed to center a bit on the marital problems of the Auzellos, I found that by the second half that I couldn't put the book down. 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 smoothly 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

## Mistress Of The Lake Eso

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 capto 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

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Mistress of the Ritz

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

Thank you to Netgalley and Random House for the opportunity to read this ARC in exchange for an honest review. Melanie Benjamin excels at doing the necessary research and writing novels that have real people as the main characters...be it Anne Lindbergh, Mary Pickford or Truman Capote. In her novel "The Mistress of the Ritz", she introduces us to the little known true story of Blanche and Claude Auzello during the WWII German occupation of Paris. Claude is the director of the Ritz Hotel. Blanche is his high spirited American wife. Both have secrets that contribute to turbulence in their marriage and danger to their lives. I love historical novels for their ability to educate as well as entertain. This book did both for me. Written in alternating chapters, Claude and Blanche tell their story of mingling with famous guests such as Hemingway, Coco Chanel, etc. and more importantly dealing with the Nazi when the Ritz becomes their headquarters. I highly recommend this book that will be out in May 2019.

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## Mistress Of The Salmon Salt Meaning

4 French Resistance stars to this historical fiction tale

A fascinating glimpse of what life was like at the Paris Ritz during the German occupation and American liberation. We get to know Claude, the French manager of the Ritz and his American wife Blanche. Their tempestuous marriage is chronicled in this historical fiction story by Melanie Benjamin. Part of their issues stem from cultural differences, part result because they aren't completely honest with each other.

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There are many famous patrons who flow in and out the story and the luxurious setting of the Ritz " Coco Chanel and Hemingway to name a few. And Germans too " Goring and Stupfnagel are real characters that populate the book. The book alternates timelines, but it is easy to keep the flow of the story straight.

Like many French during the war, Claude and Blanche find ways to disrupt the German war machine. On the surface, Claude must serve the Germans who take over the hotel, but he has unique insight by their very presence at the hotel. Blanche plays a unique role as an American who also now speaks French and knows German from her childhood. She gets drawn into some dangerous assignments by a dear friend Lily. It was fascinating to read at the end that this was inspired by real people " I always find these to be the most interesting of historical fiction books.

I had the pleasure of meeting Melanie Benjamin in February 2019 at a Denver book event and she spoke a bit about writing this book, so it was thrilling to read an early copy. I recommend this one if you are a fan of WWII historical fiction.

Thank you to NetGalley, Melanie Benjamin, and Random House for an early readers copy of the book to read in return for a fair review. ...more

What a great story! Love the book cover!

This is a work of fiction, inspired by the nonfictional account " The Hotel on Place Vendrome" written by Tilar J. Mazzeo, which describes the events that happened at the Ritz under Nazi occupation and the people involved, including famous guests, employees and the manager, Claude Auzello and his

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Mistress of the Ritz

American wife, Blanche.

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I was captivated by the whirlwind romance of our protagonists and the day to day life of running the fabulous Ritz hotel in Paris. Although I have gotten tired of reading about WWII, the vivid descriptions of each setting and character made me feel as though was living there with them. Each personality came alive when reading the book. I especially felt drawn to Blanche's friend, Lily.

The risks that average people took for others they didn't even know, except that they were fellow human beings, was contrasted so sharply by the military rule of the Nazis which had no regard for other people at all.

Such an emotional ending too, totally unexpected, at least by me. Highly recommended! ...more

## Mistress Of The Spices

This book opens with Claude and Blanche Auzello returning home to Nazi-occupied Paris. Their first stop is the Ritz, a place they call home, and Claude is the director. They are shocked and saddened to discover that it has been overrun by Germans and that they have been displaced in their own home.

This book spans two decades and is told in alternating POV's between Claude and Blanche. We learn how they meet, their quick courtship, marriage and so on.

Claude and Blanche's marriage ran hot and cold. This book opens with Claude and Blanche Auzello returning home to Nazi-occupied Paris. Their first stop is the Ritz, a place they call home, and Claude is the director. They are shocked and saddened to discover that it has been overrun by Germans and that they have been displaced in their own home.

This book spans two decades and is told in alternating POV's between Claude and Blanche. We learn how they meet, their quick courtship, marriage and so on.

Claude and Blanche's marriage ran hot and cold. Claude is French and Blanche is American. A lot of their struggles seemed to stem from their vastly different backgrounds. Although it seemed like they would almost be better off without each other, they did share a deep unbreakable love that was worth fighting for.

I enjoyed the use of the Ritz as the backdrop to this story. The Ritz itself went through quite the transformation throughout the years. It housed the rich and the famous and had its share of scandals, unsavory characters, and unfortunate deaths.

I had some trouble connecting with these characters. The best way for me to describe this book is peaks and valleys. I was up and down with it throughout until the end when it became very intense and I could not pull myself away until I found out how it would end.

Be sure to read the Author's Note at the end. It reveals a very shocking event that took place in the life of the real Claude and Blanche Auzello that did not make it into the story.

\*Thank you Delacorte Press for the opportunity to read and review this book via NetGalley for my honest opinion. ...more

One of the reasons why I love historical fiction is we get to read a-not-so-famous person in a book and we get curious about that person. I do remember reading a little bit of Blanche Rubeinstein Auzello somewhere - either in a novel or article - and I wanted to know more about her. Blanche and the Ritz " somehow this two are still tied together even today.

Mistress of the Ritz

I was so excited when I receive this copy from NetGalley that I can finally read her story "fiction or not.

Blanche is an American spirited One of the reasons why I love historical fiction is we get to read a-not-so-famous person in a book and we get curious about that person. I do remember reading a little bit of Blanche Rubeinstein Auzello somewhere - either in a novel or article - and I wanted to know more about her. Blanche and the Ritz " somehow this two are still tied together even today.

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Blanche is an American spirited daughter of German-Jewish parents who came from New York and married a Frenchman. Her husband Claude ran the famous Ritz Hotel in Paris while she has been dubbed as the "Mistress of the Ritz" as she helped famous people stayed in the hotel and brought many important businesses in the hotel.

While I do not want to give so many details here, her story is quite remarkable, and she should be seen as one of the unsung heroes as she did help with the French Resistance along with her friend Lily Kharmanyoff.

Famous people mentioned in the book:

Coco Chanel " it's long been known that she has a Nazi German lover named Hans Gunther von Dincklage.

Ernest Hemingway " "I liberated Paris!"

F.Scott Fitzgerald

Pablo Picasso

Cole Porter

Recommended to those voracious readers of the World War II!

Thanks to NetGalley for an advanced readers copy for an exchange of unbiased review. ...more