

The background of the entire page is a gradient from dark purple at the top to a bright pink at the bottom. Overlaid on this is a complex network of white circular nodes connected by thin, light purple lines. Some nodes are larger than others, and the connections form a web-like structure. There are also some faint, larger geometric shapes in the background, possibly representing a map or a constellation.

# Mistress of the Ritz

Written by Melanie Benjamin

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Published by griefconvention

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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 Art Of Death Series

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 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. 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:

â€• A good story

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

â€• 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

## 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 Spices

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 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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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 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.

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Mistress of the Ritz

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 "œl 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

## Mistress Of The Salmon Salt Meaning

I think this is the best of Melanie Benjamin's novels. She writes about the rich and famous and sometimes tends to go overboard on her appreciation and admiration of them. This is slightly different. It is the story of Blanche Auzello and her husband, Claude, the director of the Ritz Hotel in Paris before and during WWII. But for fans don't worry. There are plenty of rich and famous staying at the Ritz including Coco Chanel, Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald and not too many Jews to spoil the atmosphere. I think this is the best of Melanie Benjamin's novels. She writes about the rich and famous and sometimes tends to go overboard on her appreciation and admiration of them. This is slightly different. It is the story of Blanche Auzello and her husband, Claude, the director of the Ritz Hotel in Paris before and during WWII. But for fans don't worry. There are plenty of rich and famous staying at the Ritz including Coco Chanel, Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald and not too many Jews to spoil the atmosphere.

Blanche is a young American who comes to Paris as an aspiring actress and girlfriend of an Egyptian prince. She is swept off her feet by the charming and debonair Claude. They are soon married and he secures the position of manager of the Ritz. The Ritz becomes the third party in their marriage and Blanche spends all of her time there to be with Claude. She likes to drink and entertain the rich and famous. Claude hones his abilities to provide for his guests desires.

Claude is also French and takes a mistress he visits every Thursday. He can not understand why Blanche is so upset as French women accept this. There is a rift in their relationship. Blanche makes new friends including a young girl, Lily, who is a waif and homeless.

As the Germans take Paris over they make the Ritz their headquarters. The couple must serve them but Claude draws the line. He refuses to shake their hands as he provides for their every need. He has no choice if he wants to keep them and the staff safe. Because of the mistrust in their relationship, neither knows the other is working for the Resistance. The scenes of occupied France are heart breaking.

There have been a lot of books about WWII in 2019 and I don't know why it's so popular lately. I was getting a little tired of it but with the bombing of so many synagogues lately I have decided that they are important to remind people of what hate does. We all need to be reminded of where the slippery slope of undeserved dislike of other people can take us.

Thanks to NetGalley for a copy of this book in exchange for a fair review. ...more

I have read most of Benjamin's historically based novels and enjoyed them all; this is another winner. This time around she focuses on the manager of the Ritz, Claude Auzello, and his wife Blanche. As famous people come in and out of the hotel, as the Nazis make this iconic residence a meeting spot for SS powers, and as danger lurks around every corner as the secret workings of the French Resistance occupy the workers, we see the inner workings of the Paris Ritz. What I found most fascinating ab I

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## Mistress Of The Lake Eso

This one really surprised me. I was skeptical of the shifting times and POVs, and the slow stage-setting, only to be mesmerized by how everything suddenly fit together, like a Flemish bond brick facade--elegant, perfect, and enduring.

And Paris was perfect. And so was the bitter, oppressive, and dangerous world of the Occupation that debilitated and destroyed both bodies and souls. This was not chick-lit or Harlequin WWII. At all.

More substantive review to follow. Thanks to NetGalley for a great    This one really surprised me. I was skeptical of the shifting times and POVs, and the slow stage-setting, only to be mesmerized by how everything suddenly fit together, like a Flemish bond brick facade--elegant, perfect, and enduring.

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More substantive review to follow. Thanks to NetGalley for a great read for a change--the polar opposite of that potboiler, *The Lost Girls of Paris*.    ...more

Iâ€™m a voracious reader of WW2 fiction and non-fiction, I love Paris and I enjoyed Melanie Benjaminâ€™s *Swans of Fifth Avenue* (though not so much *The Girls in the Picture*), so there was no chance I wasnâ€™t going to read this book. On the other hand, I was underwhelmed by a recent book about The Ritz in World War II, Tilar Mazzeoâ€™s *The Hotel on Place Vendome*. Because of those competing experiences, I went into this with a wait-and-see attitude.

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The book started off a little too self-consciously portentous for me, as Claude and Blanche Auzello return to the Ritz from the south soon after the Nazis have taken Paris and commandeered half of the Ritz. Then, a hint is dropped early on about some secret of Blancheâ€™s, and you just know this will be oh-so-subtly alluded to several times before there is finally a big reveal. That kind of plot element always seems gimmicky to me, especially when (as in this case) itâ€™s not difficult to guess what the secret is.

Despite this inauspicious start, I read on. Iâ€™m not finding the story of Claude and Blancheâ€™s relationship particularly interesting, but I continue. Iâ€™m figuring things will become more compelling

when the focus is on the WW2 era when the Germans occupied Paris and one of the two wings of the Ritz became home to the Nazi command.

Well, it would have been more compelling except for one thing or, actually, two things. First, so much of the plot depends on Claude and Blanche not confiding in each other. In fiction, this is called the "idiot plot" and I really dislike the idiot plot. But even worse than the idiot plot is a character you are supposed to like but who behaves like an idiot. And that's Blanche, the quintessential too-stupid-to-live character. Not that she's actually stupid; no, she's worse because she does things that are needlessly risky and dangerous for herself and others. It's infuriating and unnecessary to the plot, because all the same things in the plot could have happened without Blanche behaving stupidly. In other words, let's have the woman character behave idiotically for no good reason. This is not something I admire in a novel.

On the plus side, the last 10% of the novel, from the time the Allies re-take Paris, is strong and affecting. Too little, too late for me, though.

Melanie Benjamin writes that she was inspired to write a novel about Claude and Blanche Auzello because there is little historical documentation about them, even though he ran the Ritz for decades and he and Blanche lived there through the intense WW2 period. She's absolutely right that this makes them seem like great characters for a historical novel. I just wish she had not treated Blanche so shabbily. ...more