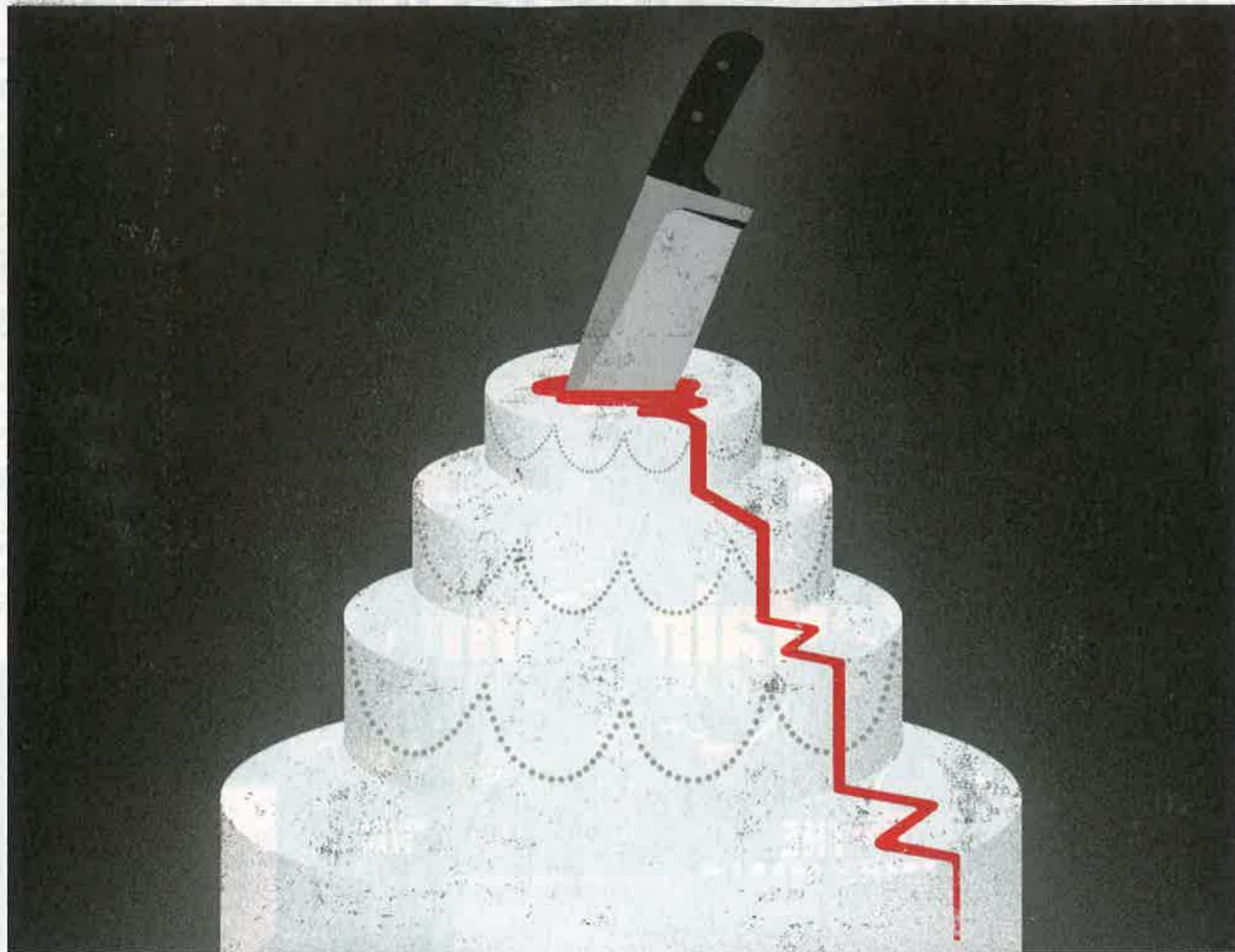


# Books



## Till Death Do Us Part

In the wake of *Gone Girl* comes a wave of sinister psychological dramas, all linked by a common theme: How well do you *really* know your spouse?

### APPLE TREE YARD

By Louise Doughty

**Who's the couple?** Yvonne Carmichael, a leading geneticist, and her professor husband, Guy. **What's their story?** Guy watches as Yvonne begins an affair with an unnamed—and untrustworthy—lover. **How good's the big twist?**

The opening scene pretty much announces that things won't end well for Yvonne, but it's still fascinating to see a brilliant woman destroy her life with a few impulsive decisions. In Doughty's hands, Yvonne's actions are both shocking and weirdly understandable. **A-** —Stephan Lee

### BEFORE WE MET

By Lucie Whitehouse

**Who's the couple?** London housewife Hannah Reilly and her financier husband, Mark. **What's their story?** When Mark fails to return home from a New York business trip, Hannah's illusion of a perfect marriage is gutted. **How good's the**



**big twist?** Thanks to the novel's overt Britishness, the twists that ensue are more taut and fraught than manic and frantic. Whitehouse's tale is paranoia-inducing, especially in its second half, but the author's well-mannered delivery and pacing keep it from turning into a heart-pounding thriller. **B** —Bill Keith

### THE INNOCENT SLEEP

By Karen Perry

**Who's the couple?** Architect Robin and her artist husband, Harry. **What's their story?** When an earthquake levels Tangier, Robin and Harry survive, but their son Dillon,

left alone in their apartment for just a few minutes, does not. Years later, Harry—spinning close to a nervous breakdown—becomes convinced he's glimpsed the boy on the street. **How good's the big twist?** You won't see it coming—they've both got something to hide from that long-ago day in Tangier. **B** —Tina Jordan

### THE SILENT WIFE

By A.S.A. Harrison

**Who's the couple?** Chicago real estate developer Todd and his therapist wife, Jodi. **What's their story?** After 20 years, Todd and Jodi's passion has cooled. When he

gets his mistress pregnant, everything changes. **How good's the big twist?** It's decent—but it's not the main point. Harrison's novel is more of a cerebral character study as the tightly wound Jodi teeters on the edge of insanity and the genial Todd finds himself boxed into an ever-tighter corner. **A-** —Tina Jordan

### WATCHING YOU

By Michael Robotham

**Who's the couple?** London mom Marnie Logan and her husband, Daniel. **What's their story?** The cops can't locate Daniel, who's gone missing after running up huge debts, so Marnie asks crime-solving psychologist Joe O'Loughlin to help find him. But there are whispers that Daniel isn't the first person close to Marnie to suffer misfortune. Is she a tragically wounded soul? Or a femme fatale? **How good's the big twist?** Good. It'll keep you guessing and gasping. **B+** —Jeff Labrecque

## Thirty Girls

Susan Minot

NOVEL

By Leah Greenblatt



When there is a story the world needs to know, does it matter who tells it, or just that it gets told? How much should we judge the messenger?

*Thirty Girls* takes a real-life atrocity—the 1996 abduction of a group of Ugandan schoolgirls by the Lord's Resistance Army—and novelizes it through the eyes of two starkly different narrators: 15-year-old Esther Akello, one of the “stolen ones,” and thirtysomething New York writer Jane Wood, who comes to Africa to escape her existential malaise as much as to document what has happened there. To Jane, the continent is intoxicating, “a place where everyone seemed matter-of-factly to lead a life of extremity and daring,” and where she quickly falls into an intense affair with a much younger man. To Esther, of

course, it's just her home, until she is taken with her classmates in the middle of the night by LRA rebels and deposited into a world of physical and psychological violence so constant that death is often welcomed.

Like Jane, Minot went to Uganda to cover the kidnappings without any previous experience in war journalism, and the nexus of white guilt and privilege is raised in *Girls* again and again. Floating down the Nile with her lover, Jane thinks how “at that moment, three hundred miles north of this peaceful gliding river, children were being yanked out of their homes, held captive, raped, infected with deadly disease, and made to kill. The sun shone down as the river carried them along.” Some readers may not be able to like Jane, or even tolerate her. But Minot tells both stories with such harsh, lyrical beauty that neither is easy to forget. **A-**



Susan Minot