

right touch of menace and mystery. DeMarco is an appealing protagonist with a familial past he'd rather forget and a group of multitalented friends to help him in his reluctantly assumed quest. While the villains are stereotyped and several supporting characters are regulars in the covert operational game (the computer expert, the surveillance wizard, the telephone company insider), this witty, lightning-quick read is recommended for popular fiction collections. [See Prepub Alert, *LJ* 1/05.]—Ronnie H. Terpening, Univ. of Arizona, Tucson

Lee, Marie Myung-Ok. *Somebody's Daughter*. Beacon, dist. by Houghton. 2005. c.288p. ISBN 0-8070-8388-7. \$23.95. f

The author of four YA novels, including *Finding My Voice* and *Saying Goodbye*, Lee has now written a beautiful story for adults. It is the tale of two women: Sarah Thorson, a young Korean American college student who had been adopted by a couple in Minnesota; and Kyung-Sook, an older Korean woman living in the village of Enduring Pine. Their parallel stories intertwine slowly as the reader discovers that Kyung-Sook is Sarah's birth mother. It is Sarah's mission in Korea to find her, but the two pass each other at Chosun University. Told with grace and elegance, this novel shows a wonderful talent at work. Lee is a gifted writer who has composed a stirring, heartfelt tale without sentimentality that will appeal to many readers. Highly recommended for all libraries, particularly those interested in Korean culture.—Lisa Rohrbaugh, *East Palestine Memorial P.L., OH*

★ **McMillan, Terry. *The Interruption of Everything*. Viking. Jul. 2005. c.365p. ISBN 0-670-03144-5. \$25.95. f**

Marilyn Grimes, age 44, is angry, whiny, and perhaps perimenopausal. With three children in college, a boring husband, a live-in mother-in-law, and her own mother showing signs of dementia, she finds little joy in her suburban California world. Just when she comes up with an escape plan—graduate school—her life is interrupted yet again. Marilyn finds out she's pregnant and that her husband, Leon, is leaving for a month-long men's retreat in Costa Rica. During his absence, Marilyn ricochets in several directions but finally confronts her biggest enemy—herself. Girlfriends Paulette and Bunny, mother-in-law Arthurine, and sister Joy play significant cameo roles as this no-holds-barred, dialog-driven story tackles numerous contemporary issues, most notably our perceptions of aging. With twists on familiar themes, irreverent

humor, and a heroine who has more backbone than we initially thought, McMillan's latest (after *A Day Late and a Dollar Short*) brings it all back home. This is life-affirming women's fiction delivered by one of the best in the field. Destined for the best sellers lists, the book belongs in most popular fiction collections. [See Prepub Alert, *LJ* 3/15/05; BOMC alternate.]—Teresa L. Jacobsen, Santa Monica P.L., CA

Martin, Lee. *The Bright Forever*. Shaye Areheart: Harmony. May 2005. c.288p. ISBN 1-4000-9791-6. \$23. f

In his new novel's opening chapters, Martin (creative writing, Ohio State Univ.; *Quakertown*) creates an idyllic vision of a small Indiana town in the 1970s before exposing its sinister undercurrents. Katie Mackey is the nine-year-old daughter of the man who owns the glass factory, the town's main employer. One summer evening, she rides her bike to the public library to return some books and never returns. Suspects include Mr. Dees, the lonely and eccentric high school teacher who was tutoring Katie in math, and a construction worker named Raymond, who has befriended Dees and might in fact be blackmailing him. Even Katie's father and teenage brother are not who they seem. The events swim inside the heads of these characters, as well as that of Raymond's wife, Clare. Martin shifts back and forth in time, skillfully dropping clues, countering readers' expectations, and building tension. Combining elements of family fiction, psychological thriller, and small-town nostalgia, this book is written in lyrical prose that will engage readers of all types. Highly recommended for all fiction collections.—Reba Leiding, James Madison Univ. Libs., Harrisonburg, VA

Modiano, Patrick. *Missing Person*. Verba Mundi: Godine. May 2005. 167p. tr. from French by Daniel Weissbort. ISBN 1-56792-281-3. pap. \$16.95. f

The titular missing person is Guy Roland, a P.I. who suffers from amnesia and resolves to rediscover his own past, lost to him years before during the Nazi occupation of France. With little more to go on than vague, barely discernable memories, he methodically unearths one small fact after another—a name, a photograph, an address—creating dossiers on himself and others from his past. Moody, atmospheric, and dreamlike, this novel follows conventions of both noir fiction and ghost stories but can be read on many levels. Is Guy's memory loss a metaphor for France's collective amnesia about the occupation? Modiano is a prolific novelist and screenwriter, best

known to American audiences for his screenplay of *Lacombe Lucien*, cowritten with director Louis Malle, and more recently for his screenplay of the Jean-Paul Rappeneau film *Bon Voyage*. *Missing Person* was the 1979 winner of France's prestigious Prix Goncourt. Weissbort's excellent English translation first appeared in Great Britain in 1980. Recommended for all fiction collections.—Janet Evans, Pennsylvania Horticultural Soc. Lib., Philadelphia

Murray, Albert. *The Magic Keys*. Pantheon. May 2005. c.256p. ISBN 0-375-42353-2. \$24. f

Murray is best known as a jazz historian and social critic and for his friendship with writer Ralph Ellison, which resulted in the wonderful collection of letters, *Trading Twelves*. In 1974, he published *Train Whistle Guitar*, the first volume in his autobiographical saga illustrating his controversial thesis that American culture is not divided into strict categories of black and white but is instead a hybrid, "omni-American" mix. In this fourth and final installment, Alabama-born Scooter is enrolled in graduate school at New York University. He haunts the neighborhood bookstores, galleries, and jazz clubs and spends hours chatting with his friend Taft Edison, a writer struggling to create a new fictional language. Murray forgoes dramatic action for conversation, writing in a vivid blend of slang and hardcore intellectualism similar to what he first proposed in *The Hero and the Blues* (1973). Recommended as a rhapsodic tour guide to mid-century New York and as a unique take on American race relations. [See Prepub Alert, *LJ* 1/05.]—Edward B. St. John, Loyola Law Sch. Lib., Los Angeles

Nedjma. *The Almond: The Sexual Awakening of a Muslim Woman*. Grove. Jun. 2005. c.256p. tr. from French by C. Jane Hunter. ISBN 0-8021-1805-4. \$23. f

This steamy, pseudonymously written autobiographical novel traces the life of Badra, a Muslim woman in northwest Africa. At 17, Badra is forced to leave school and is married off to a man more than twice her age. After numerous years in a stifling, loveless relationship, where sex is an obligation without pleasure, she flees her husband, family, and small-town life to join a liberated aunt in urban Tangiers. A torrid love affair helps Badra learn to love her body and revel in her sexual desires. Badra narrates her story, mixing past with present as she chronicles her sexual history and her childhood curiosity and experimentation. The novel provides a fascinating view into Muslim culture—its restrictions on women, its sexual mores, and the

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