



## Every Secret Thing

*Susanna Kearsley , Emma Cole (originally published as)*

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‘No one lives for ever. But the truth survives us all.’

Kate Murray is deeply troubled. In front of her lies a dead man, a stranger who only minutes before had approached her wanting to tell her about a mystery, a long-forgotten murder. The crime was old, he'd told her, but still deserving of justice.

Soon Kate is caught up in a dangerous whirlwind of events that takes her back into her grandmother's mysterious war-time past and across the Atlantic as she tries to retrace the dead man's footsteps. Finding out the truth is not so simple, however, as only a few people are still alive who know the story...and Kate soon realises that her questions are putting their lives in danger. Stalked by an unknown and sinister enemy, she must use her tough journalistic instinct to find the answers from the past – before she has to say goodbye to her future.

## Every Secret Thing Details

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## From Reader Review Every Secret Thing for online ebook

### Hannah says

I am so incredibly happy that I have found a current author who I am unabashedly in love with their writing style. I have to confess that most of my favorite authors are dead:

*RIP Daphne DuMaurier, Mary Stewart, M.M. Kaye and Elizabeth Peters/Barbara Michaels :(*

I love these writers, but let's face it, there will never be another new release from any of them, unless they actually become ghost writers (weak pun attempt, sorry).

Which brings me to Susanna Kearsley (here named Emma Cole) in her book, *Every Secret Thing*. If I didn't know any better, I'd think she was Dame Stewart's grand-daughter, and quite possibly DuMaurier's great-niece (with a bit of Kaye's second-cousin twice removed thrown in for good measure). Kearsley has quite deftly managed to incorporate the flair of Stewart's writing genius and infuse it with her own brand of poignant characterizations and turn of phrase. *Every Secret Thing* is Kearsley's/Cole's peon to all the best that Stewart offered in her romantic suspense novels, and she pulls it off fantastically. I found myself devouring page after page of this book featuring 2 intersecting storylines involving World War II espionage, the search for justice in an unknown and unsolved murder 60 years previously, and the acknowledgement by a young woman of the worth, the courage, and the sacrifices of people grown elderly, and therefore "invisible".

Kate Murray is a successful Canadian journalist covering a murder trial in London when an old man strikes up a conversation with her and cryptically informs her of another murder in which justice was denied. Before leaving Kate, who really wasn't paying much attention to the old man's ramblings, he asks after her grandmother, and then leaves her and is immediately run down and killed by a hit-and-run driver. Kate's subsequent search for the story behind this man, Andrew Deacon, lead her on a suspenseful search for answers that covers several countries, and on a personal discovery of her beloved grandmother's past life.

Kearsley/Cole excelled in bringing so much of the descriptive narrative that Mary Stewart was reknown for in her novels. What Kearsley/Cole does even better than Stewart, IMO, is to bring a level of bittersweet poignancy to what could have been just a well written suspense novel. I found myself actually weeping at the end of *Every Secret Thing*, which isn't the norm with me. But Kearsley/Cole rendered the character of Andrew Deacon so lovingly and so deftly that it was hard not to feel that his sacrifice and his loss was as lovely a thing as the most romantic fiction I've read. I can only equate my feelings for Andrew to that which I felt for Rick, in the classic 1940's movie, *Casablanca*. Here's looking at you, kid, indeed.

This book is recommended for any fan of Mary Stewart, to fans of WWII literature, to fans of old-fashioned suspense, and to fans who love a good love-lost story. You won't be disappointed.

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### Kim says

Highly recommended by some of my GR friends, this is the first book I have read by this author, who generally writes under the name Susanna Kearsley. It has dual intersecting timelines - contemporary and World War II - and is set in London, Toronto, New York, Lisbon and Washington. The different timelines

and the range of settings give the book something of the feel of an epic, although it is not one. Rather, it combines traditional (albeit low-key) thriller with history and romance.

I very much enjoyed a number of aspects of this novel. The author writes clean, lucid prose, without flourishes but elegant nonetheless. The connections between the timelines are interesting and well done. In addition, the author is able to create a good sense of time and place: crucial to readability given that the novel is set in two time periods and in multiple locations. The romance element is sweetly and poignantly realised, as is the recurrent theme of the need to pay attention to the stories and experiences of older people.

There are aspects of the novel which I enjoyed somewhat less. In particular, the plot piled coincidence upon coincidence in a manner which at times strained my very earnest willingness to suspend disbelief. In addition, the author used my least favourite plot device: that is, a lengthy and detailed confession of misdeeds given by the baddie to the investigator. It's probably just a personal quirk of mine .... but it drives me insane whenever I come across it!

All in all, this was a most enjoyable read. My enduring memory of the book will be the character of Andrew Deacon, only briefly seen alive at the beginning of the novel, but vividly recreated through the recollection of other characters. A lovely creation indeed.

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## Frances says

Closer to 2.5\*

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## Brittain *\*The Baddest Female\** says

*Every Secret Thing* by Emma Cole (Susanna Kearsley) is an emotional roller coaster of book and I absolutely loved it.

Kate Murray is a reporter working the case of a serial killer in London, far from her home in Toronto where she lives with her grandmother. An older gentleman named Andrew Deacon approaches her, saying he has a story for her. Kate gets stuff like this all the time and brushes him off but not before he makes a brief observation relating her to her grandmother back in Canada. Before she has the chance to say anything, tragedy strikes.

She sets out to figure out just what Deacon's story was and how it involved her family. How strange was it that a British man would know her grandmother? Why would he approach her and what was so important that it must be published? *Every Secret Thing* takes the reader from England, to Canada, to Portugal and then back again to London all in attempt to unravel a WWII murder and reconnect with the past.

I'll admit, this book started slow. I was a little confused at the beginning because there seemed to be so many irrelevant details and characters cropping up. I just wanted to get to the action! But, as usual with this

author's books, I quickly realized that everything that is written is deliberate. Every detail has a purpose in the story. After a few pages, it was easy to get into and I honestly couldn't put this book down. I was entranced by it and I couldn't leave it until I had finished it.

### **Reasons why I loved this book:**

1) It's a murder mystery. It's a thriller. It's an adventure. It's a different take on Kearsley's normal time slip novels. It is a beautiful and heartbreaking romance. This book takes you through multiple genres and it all works. I was reading this while babysitting and the scary parts of this book were so creepy that I had to get the family dog to sit next to me and I dreaded the walk back to my house in the wind and rain. I felt like someone was going to jump out and get me. An hour or two later, this book had me in tears.

2) It is so supremely planned out. Like I said earlier, everything means something in this novel. That character that was mentioned briefly at the beginning is just as important to the plot as the main character. There are no loose ends and you can tell that it was a well thought out story, right from the beginning. You never run into superfluous characters in her writing and sometimes, you just have to be patient to figure out where she is going with her story.

3) There is absolutely no reason in my mind that this story could not have happened. **I was convinced** by this novel that this tragic couple existed. It didn't seem like a story that you just come up with. It felt like an author's take on real life events. The small details (the jet beading on the dress, the tea roses, the photograph of the windmill) were all so lifelike to me that it made the story that much more convincing. It had a *Casablanca* feel to it when it was describing the events that happened during the War and a modern thriller feel when Kate is running around Portugal. Lisbon really comes to life and it is just as much a character in the book as every body in it.

4) Oh my goodness, the romance. I sometimes feel like I can be that person in the back of the movie theater, throwing popcorn at the screen yelling "JUST KISS HER ALREADY!" I never had that compulsion with this book. The story of Amelia and Andrew is tragic and it brought me to tears. It made me want to reach into the pages and give the characters hugs and thank them for their story.

There is a thrill I get from reading a well thought out, well written book and I got it from this one.

I was held captive by the story and it wouldn't let me go until I finished it. I went into it, thinking it would be more like Kearsley's other time slip novels but this one was a surprise. I adore this author and I will faithfully read everything that she puts out.

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**Zoey says**

2.5★

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## Erin says

Well, I guess that I am going to have to take back something I said about a week or two ago. I had stated that Susanna Kearsley's contemporary thrillers don't impress me. However, I have just finished this book and SK (Emma Cole) sure knows how to deliver in this book offering. Kate Murray, is a Canadian journalist covering a murder trial in London and is soon approached by a friendly and talkative older British man that claims he needs to talk to her. Kate is intrigued especially when she is told that she looks like her grandmother. But before she can press for more information, the man, Andrew Deacon, is killed in a hit-and-run accident. What happens next will take Kate to her Grandma's kitchen in Toronto, to being on the run in Lisbon, to sneaking around in Washington. All in the attempt to capture a killer .

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## Diane Lynn says

What a wonderful book. Once again Susanna Kearsley pulled me right into this story. She writes wonderful descriptions that remind me of Mary Stewart. There was one point near the beginning of the book that may have been a little hat tip to Mary Stewart. The description of two pictures hanging on a wall brought to my mind *My Brother Michael* and *The Moonspinners*. She can also write a sweet tender romance that just takes my breath away and also leaves me teary-eyed. Besides the romance there is a very good mystery with a few suspenseful moments where I couldn't turn the pages fast enough. Everything fits together like a puzzle!

I won't recap the plot as there are many good ones already.

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## Faith Freewoman says

I never cry. Well, except for when I read this book or Kathleen Eagle's "Sunrise Song."

Honestly, even now, the 4th or 5th time I've read *Every Secret Thing*, I spent the last 1/4 of the book at least bawling my eyes out.

And now I'm doing the other thing I always do: immediately re-reading it so I can sit back and admire just how cleverly Kearsley built the story, laid the clues, and made me fall completely in love with a character who was only 'on screen', so to speak, for about 5 minutes.

World War II spy stories have always fascinated me, and this one approaches the legend called Intrepid and all that was accomplished under his aegis from a new direction, and takes us to the dangers of Lisbon at the height of the war.

Kearsley makes such powerful and poignant points about ageism that it seemed to me to be one her pivotal reasons for telling this story, and structuring it the way she did.

And for anyone who enjoyed the character of Tom Beckett in Kearsley's book 'Mariana,' he has a cameo in this story, and contributes important wisdom gleaned from his sister's experiences in 'Mariana.'

**WARNING & SPOILER FOR ROMANCE READERS:** This is a tender, touching and poignant love story, but it is NOT a romance. There is deeply satisfying resolution, and justice, but no HEA for either

protagonist. There is, toward the end, a tantalizing possibility for her, but ... It's not a probability at the end of the book, at least.

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### **Christy B says**

There are going to be more books with these characters, right? RIGHT? Because I need there to be!

Ahem, anyway, yes, I loved this book. It had everything, really: history, mystery, romance, and sadness. Yes, there was some achingly sad parts, I almost shed a tear.

Kate is in England covering a murder trial when she meets an old man named Andrew Deacon. This sets her off on a path involving his connection to her grandmother, their pasts, and some shady business that went on during WWII. People are turning up dead, people are following Kate, and she expects to be next.

Kate changes her appearance and jet sets from Canada, to Portugal, to London, to America, and sometimes more than once. She meets people who worked with her grandmother and Deacon during WWII, and through their memories, finds herself transported to a different time, filled with secrets and shady dealings.

All the parts to this book were neatly woven together and the story flowed well. As far as the mystery goes, I loved how things started to unfold bit by bit, and by the end, everything fit together. The characters were engaging, and I loved Kate as a protagonist. I hope there's a sequel in the future!

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### **Jo says**

Why have I never read anything by Susanna Kearsley before? I have been missing out from a great author! This book was absolute perfection. I am so happy that there are many more books by Kearsley. I have been drawn to the covers of her books - even to the point of buying two of them when they went on sale at Amazon. I had no idea I was sitting on a gold mine. The writing was beautiful while maintaining a tension that kept you flipping the pages. I loved, loved, loved Deacon. He is the type of man that reminds me of my husband. It was so refreshing to read about a good guy and not some bad boy. This was also one of the sweetest and most romantic love stories I have ever read. My heart broke for Deacon and Amelia. And just for the record, Kearsley does all of this without foul language or graphic sex scenes. I enjoyed every second of this book, and I am eagerly (fangirling) looking forward to my next book with this author.

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### **Sophia says**

It all begins with a forgettable old man telling her he has a story about murder to share with her and then Kate watches him die before her eyes in a hit and run. Starting slowly like the dropping of a stone into a body of water and the waves increasing steadily in size. This is a story of discovery and an unforgettable story of past sacrifices and secrets touching the present with danger and murder.

Originally published under another pen name, Emma Cole, *Every Secret Thing* is now released by Susanna Kearsley as the first book in the Kate Murray series.

The story begins with Canadian journalist in London for a big murder trial. She's covering the story and when the verdict comes in, she'll wrap up and head back home to Toronto. While the jury is out deliberating, Kate encounters a bland forgettable older man outside the courthouse. He strikes up a conversation and then speaks of her writing up a story he has about an old case of murder that never saw justice. Kate is distracted by thoughts of her own story and thinks he's just a forgettable, lonely old man until she watches him walk away and die when struck by a car. He made one comment that disconcerts her- she has her grandmother's eyes. How would this stranger know that?

Next thing she knows, she is being warned away from Andrew Deacon's story, his things are ransacked, and everyone connected to him is meeting with fatalities. It really strikes home when just after she gets back to Toronto, her grandmother tells her a story- a story of a life during the war years when her grandmother worked for a top man in British intelligence in NYC. Kate is flabbergasted to discover that not only did her grandmother know Andrew Deacon, but they were close. Then her grandmother is shot.

Kate goes on the run for her life and knows that she'll never be safe until she discovers the truth behind that old murder that Andrew Deacon wanted to come to light. Her investigations take her back into the past- Lisbon of the 40's. She must avoid those who are trailing her and keep those who know of the past safe even as someone is dead set on the opposite.

Alright, this book solidified what I already knew. I love Kearsley's work. I love her dual plotted stories that make the past come alive with the present story line and pose a cunning suspense and light romance plot as well. Every Secret Thing got going with some excitement and then turned gently paced in the middle. The end picked things up again.

But it was not just the pacing so much as how the plot was teased out. The reader is given an explosion of early facts and situation, characters, tone, and setting to draw them in and get things started. Then details come along that start making sense while also confusing matters. Things are not always what they seem. Kate learns that she has to figure out who to trust and who is telling the truth. But that end-wow, a twist on a twist on a twist. So many details that I saw and didn't grasp the significance made the puzzle pieces finally fit and give the full picture. Some I worked out, but other pieces left me amazed.

Beyond the suspense, there was a beautiful bittersweet story of star-crossed lovers, people affected by war, honor, and duty, and hard truths. Many of the players in this one particularly in the past story line were so alive to me. At first, the reader is introduced to this old man who soon dies and he seems to be almost throwaway just to get the plot moving. Even now, I get emotional just thinking of how wonderful and heroic that self-effacing man really was and I had to hear his story knowing that he was gone- murdered. Kate is the central figure, but her story is tangled up with those in the past. I bawled my eyes out there near the end at the loss, pain, and poignancy of this story that goes well beyond the usual engaging romantic suspense piece.

The settings both historical New York City and Lisbon and modern day London, English country village, Lisbon, DC, and Toronto were well drawn. I felt I was there and could appreciate these international settings.

I enjoyed this book in audio format. It was my first time with Katherine Kellgren as the narrator. I thought her voice really matched well with the characters from the past. I think it is a gift to not only portray a persona and their accent, but a person not from modern times and then switch it with people from the present and representing several nationalities. She really gets into her storytelling and startled me the first time she told an exciting part because I wasn't ready for her to break out of her steady storytelling voice. But I adjusted and came to enjoy her dramatic telling.



This story felt complete when it ended, but I noticed that it had been labeled as the first of a series. I assume the main character, Kate, will have more suspenseful adventures and maybe do something about the attraction she shares with a certain someone.

In summary, this was abso-fab and I can't praise it enough. The mystery plot would have been enough, but the blend with that historical time, the people, and the tone made it extraordinary. Romantic suspense and historical mystery lovers really should grab it up.

My thanks to Audible for the opportunity to listen to this book in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Lynn Spencer says**

**4.5 stars** This early novel by Emma Cole/Susanna Kearsley is fantastic. While it's suspense rather than timeslip, the book still features strong writing and interesting glimpses of the past. The story centers on Canadian journalist Kate Murray, and her attempts to track down her grandmother's secret past.

The story opens in London, where Kate has been covering a trial. An older man approaches her, telling about a story of an old crime, for which no one has been brought to justice. Before he can tell her his tale, the man is killed. Kate's search for his story takes her into her grandmother's younger days and on a quest for truth amidst old memories of WWII. Not only have many of the players involved died, but those who survive now face terrible danger.

Even though the book gets somewhat less probable toward the end, the writing style and the mystery itself had me hovering breathlessly as I tried to figure out the plot. It's not so polished as Kearsley's later work, but it's very good stuff indeed. I wouldn't mind revisiting Kate Murray one of these days.

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### **Jeanette says**

This review has a lurking threat. It could get too long if I'm not careful. So I'll try to be short and do take to mind that I am leaving out some specifics and/or flaws (well for me anyway). Because this Kearsley does have points of quirkiness and supreme sentimentality that I question make full sense to the plotting. And also because I am a Kearsley fan for the most part in nearly all of her past work, so know I could have gotten far more critical than I am here, but didn't.

It's one of those "coulda been if only the stars hadn't been crossed" pieces if you look at it from purely emotive romance prone eyes. But it is also a 25 or 30 or 35 year "afterwards" to a 1943-44 period in the British Embassy in Lisbon, Portugal complex tale. By deference and ever afterwards we are knee deep in spies. And for extremely odd and out-fashioned reasons (rumor will affect me aversely??) the murder rate in this tale is far-fetched preposterous. Even in the 1970's to 1990 period, social standing had become not such a pivot that you needed to be crispy clean. Especially for a business person as the "baddie" had become. And when IS this happening? She seems to have a laptop but then she is just using tapes to record at periods here. There are no cell phones. If it is the 1990's, then it has been closer to 50 years since the war. Some of the timelines are off within the book. More than twice I caught that crossover to periods that came later than 1990 too. But it's fiction. I get it. Still, that leaves me dubious to other criteria about "spying" issues, as well. Like what was Deacon doing all this intervening time, for instance. I wanted some Russian dirt in East Berlin

during the Cold War. LOL! (It was hinted at but never at all explained to any detail other than a location placement.) If you were alive and know actual real world news and major event realities of the 1944-1995 world, this book got truly perplexing at points. Nothing occurs in a vacuum. And recognition or non-recognition because of "age" and aging changes? No, I don't buy that at all. Not to the extent it is proposed here with Katherine and others. Yes, people can look very different but if you worked with them for months in a close office of 7 or 8 people- you will know them decades later. You will. And also would recognize their spouses too- in this kind of a secret and faintly bureaucratic hierarchy. And here, she had photos on top of it.

The main protagonist with her red flaming hair is on and off of planes about 7 or 8 times in this book (but only after she has dyed it brown after the first couple of flights). It's a long book and it holds page after page of place and building descriptions. And don't feel that I am dissing that aspect on the whole- but I just thought it became rather misplaced to stretching the tension of the pieces on the chess board at least 4 or 5 times in this book. And because you little understand the body count increasingly growing and/or the motivations for at least 1/2 of the characters in either that long past or NOW?? All of that description and breaking up (at great length) of the characters' thought motivations and mindsets just about buries my embedding to the plot lines' tension. Others feel differently. That I can understand.

Yet from the moment of that shot and another shot in her Grandmother's kitchen- this book made me stop and just go "huh?" about 10 times. Excuse me, but if someone is killing my family members I could never envision any line of thought to go investigate a connection all by myself. And/or leave the location and country nearly immediately. Nor would anyone I have ever known been that divorced from the lethal implications of not SHARING the connections made already (not just about who may have shot/committed that murder either) with far more people and authority than this protagonist did for all her travels.

It was complex enough to keep my interest in the spy case and allegiances in that 1944 situation and that was the best part of this book. Near to a 5 star. I especially was perplexed upon that suicide that was so closely witnessed. WHY did he do that?

But you knew who were the baddies and you knew who were not from the get go. I did across the boards, and I found that the methods used to make them seem "the opposite" were common writer's ploys. Just too obvious and the trite and used methods for so many other "foreign" placed and I am being followed by strangers types of stories.

So then why did I give it a 4 star. Because the Remembrance Day "feeling" and episode near to the ending, combined with that entire English "stiff upper lip" cognition during war time and the afterwards of 30 or 40 years about the entire before, during, afterwards war experience- that atmosphere, mindset, "eyes"- that was perfectly held throughout the entire book. And that is rarely, rarely done well for all the 100's and 100's of WWII books out there. They just do not grasp that "war is necessity and worth the personal sacrifice for ultimate reasons" that were prime core cemented then. This book did.

Some believe this story was extremely sorrowful, a tearjerker. And I never felt that to any level beyond a yearning sadness. All of the characters had made their own decisions and the men especially never expressed their own true feelings or sought out their own happiness or proclivity to a wholeness when they could have done. So if you can't or won't (for any reason) seek, you will never find. Anyone who isolates for 40 years over a soulmate disappointment gets exactly what they put "out". That's a human reality. I cry for those who die when they absolutely do not want to die, like Reynolds here. For those left with chronic war wounds and damage, kids left orphan etc. Pancreatic cancer is something to cry about in this one. Missing a lost love- not so much. Especially when money and means to traipse around the world (only 1 or 2 of these people even

had any time span limits for travel, it seems) by all characters never is mentioned to any affordability questions /reality. Not for all that word count. Come to think of it, I don't believe money was ever mentioned in the present time context at all. Tickets and renting, but never money.

It was a good placement piece for the 1944 sections of the book. Looking through Deacon's eyes was far more interesting to me than through Katherine's.

Not my favorite Kearsley, but a rousing poetic in spots tale of pure English grit and resolve. Shared too by a Canadian.

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### **Anna says**

Set in both the past and present, this book is part mystery/thriller, part beautiful romance. I loved the suspense, I loved the poignancy; some scenes were so tense I couldn't turn the pages fast enough, other scenes were so tender they made me well up.

The mystery/thriller starts when Kate is approached by an old man who mentions a murder in WW2 in one breath and her beloved grandmother in the next, before becoming the victim of a hit-and-run. Shocked, but compelled to uncover the secrets of her grandmother's past, Kate chases the clues back and forth across the Atlantic whilst being pursued by an unknown enemy determined to keep those secrets hidden at any cost.

The romance scenes are set during the war and are few and far between, but it's they that pull the story together, it's they that leave you with a sad but beautiful warmth. The further you get in the book, the more poignant they become. Gorgeous. Heartbreaking.

I don't give five stars very often; this book is worth every one!

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### **Zora says**

Frustrating. 2.5 stars.

This novel is by Canadian writer Susanna Kearsley, who writes wonderful, literate Gothic romances, up there with the best of Mary Stewart and Barbara Michaels, full of atmosphere and terrific description and spunky heroines, real page-turners that I rate high among my guilty reading pleasures.

This novel is a different genre, historical mystery of a sort. A journalist delves into a World War II spy mystery that has sent tendrils into the present day and involves the journalist's own grandmother. Someone is chasing the journalist as she looks into the matter, she gets shot at, her witnesses start dying, and she runs from Canada to Portugal to England to the US trying to unravel the threads of the old crime. The whole time, bad guys are trying to get her, and any person she meets might be a bad guy, and the people she wants to interview are often killed right before she arrives, so there's a lot of tension.

Having written that synopsis, it still sounds like a book I'd love, but I barely like it and struggled to get through it. The main problem for me is that the old story is told via journalistic interviews, and we move from current time to past in the clunkiest way I've ever read. Time changes, narrator changes, interview

changes to flashback, and all with a lurch of narrative style that had me remembering how eight-track tapes changed tracks, often in the middle of the song--hissssss, ker-**CHUNK**, music fades up. The history has a touching and innocent love story that is the most vivid part of the novel, but the mystery itself gets short shrift and important points are often revealed by people who are remembering hearsay rather than having been there for the exciting bits, so that the drama is undercut. There are also about three too many coincidences in the modern plot, which also deflates the tension. (Random obscure airport encounters, and Good Samaritans who help you out on a random highway will have shocking connections to the very mystery you're trying to unravel, unlike in real life, where they're pervy guys reeking of Bud Light.)

Sigh. I hoped for more.

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