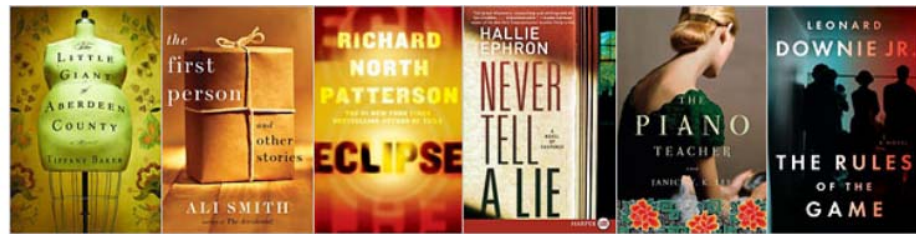


As seen in *The New York Times*

January 15, 2009



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Newly Released Books

By AMY VIRSHUP

THE PLANO TEACHER

By Janice Y. K. Lee

328 pages. Viking. \$25.95.

Two narrative strands flow together in this story of British ex-pats in Hong Kong. In one, told 10 years after the occupation of Hong Kong during World War II, Claire Pendleton has just arrived in Asia with her new husband, Martin. Unworldly and unsophisticated, Claire slowly begins to open herself to the possibilities of Hong Kong, giving piano lessons to the daughter of a wealthy Chinese couple, Victor and Melody Chen. At a party she meets the mysterious Will Truesdale, who is working as a driver for the Chens. In the other plotline, which takes place just before the war and during the occupation, Will carries out an affair with beautiful, flamboyant Trudy Liang, the daughter of a Portuguese mother and a Shanghai millionaire. Then the Japanese invade and their gossamer life is destroyed. It is left to Claire, after the war, to unravel what happened next. This is Ms. Lee's first novel.