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Roundup: First novels of mystery, whimsy, personal pain

By [Craig Wilson](#), [Bob Minzesheimer](#),
[Carol Memmott](#) and [Jocelyn McClurg](#),
USA TODAY

Lisa Genova captures the plight of a woman in her prime watching life slip away. Janice Y.K. Lee embarks on love and betrayal in Hong Kong. Hallie Ephron pens a mystery even Hitchcock would love. And Rodes Fishburne is out with a whimsically sweet novel.

The Piano Teacher

By Janice Y.K. Lee
Viking, 328 pp., \$25.95

The past, both personal and political, can't be escaped in this atmospheric, finely wrought novel set in Hong Kong. Dealing with love, betrayal and the moral ambiguities of colonialism, it's told through two alternating narratives. In 1952, a provincial British newlywed moves to Hong Kong with a husband she barely knows. She gets involved with an older man, another British ex-pat, whose secrets unfold in flashbacks set a decade earlier during the brutal Japanese occupation. The author grew up in Hong Kong and, after working as an editor at *Elle*, returned to live there. Her city is as much a character as her international cast.

— **Bob Minzesheimer**