

Book reviews

Summer may be over but that's no excuse to get out the habit of "losing yourself" in a good book. Here are a few recommendations.

By GABRIEL LEIGH



LONDON - AMONG GANGSTERS, RABBIS, OLIGARCHS, REBELS AND OTHER CHILDREN OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

by Nazneen Khan Østrem

→ A deep dive into London's incredibly diverse past and its multicultural present, focused on the contributions of the city's immigrants and their myriad cultural contributions to the fabric of one of the world's most important cities.



SOMEDAY JENNIFER

by Risto Pakarinen

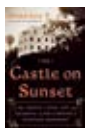
→ A feel-good novel about a man who wants to travel back to the 1980s, but since he can't actually time-travel, he simply fills his world with things from the 80s to get the same effect.



CODE NAME: LISE. THE TRUE STORY OF ODETTE SANSOM, WWII'S MOST HIGHLY DECORATED SPY

by Larry Loftis

→ The sort of biography that reads like a spy novel, this is a riveting look at a lesser-known figure in World War II, tracking the incredible exploits of the heroine Odette Sansom. Filled with thrills as well as romance, it will appeal to just about everyone, not just those with a penchant for military history.



THE CASTLE ON SUNSET: LOVE, FAME, DEATH AND SCANDAL AT HOLLYWOOD'S CHATEAU MARMONT

by Shawn Levy

→ Anyone who's driven past the famed Chateau Marmont on Sunset Boulevard, to this day a favored celebrity hangout in LA, has likely wondered what secrets lurk behind its classic facade. With this book, it's now all out in the open and the result is a fascinating tale and a rare behind-the-scenes look into an LA institution.



Photo: Susanna Kronholm

5 QUESTIONS TO...

Risto Pakarinen about his book *Someday Jennifer*

What's your new book about?

Someday Jennifer is the story of a man in a mid-life crisis who, having watched *Back to the Future* at the end of a drunken night, decides to solve his problems by traveling back to the good old 1980s, when everything was all right. Going back in time, he knows things worked out OK. Also – and this is important – back in the 1980s, he had Jennifer in his life. But, since he's not crazy, he knows he can't build a time machine. He simply re-creates the world around him in the 1980s style by wearing old clothes, listening to all those great tunes and watching movie classics such as *Trading Places* and *Ghostbusters* while moving back in with his parents. It's a feel-good book for sure, because I wanted to read a book that gave me hope and didn't deal with the horrors of life. I promise that you'll smile while reading *Someday Jennifer*.

Tell us a little about yourself and your background.

It's sort of funny that I have been a freelance writer for 15 years because I never planned it that way. I have a business degree from Helsinki Business School and I originally wanted to be either in advertising or a hockey agent. Then I moved to Stockholm to work with custom publishing and was asked to write. My pieces got longer, and I became a writer. I even managed to combine hockey with my work, and I've covered World Championships and Olympics, and big games in Europe and the NHL since 2003. When I got the idea for this book, I decided to give writing a novel a serious shot. And here we are – *Someday Jennifer* came out in

English in August, while Swedish and Finnish editions will be published by HarperCollins in September. A German edition will be published next summer.

How did you come to write this book? What inspired it?

Well, it wasn't a huge leap for me to get into the shoes of a middle-aged man in a mid-life crisis. I also love *Back to the Future* and remember vividly the first time I saw the movie. And don't we all sometimes wonder what might have happened had we taken door number two? One night a couple of years ago, I was walking home from the gym, listening to my 1980s playlist, when Peter, the main character, popped into my head and told me he'd figured out a way to become a time traveler. The book is set in Finland, so I'd already done most of my research by living through the 80s.

Is there a next book in the works?

There's always a book in the works, but it did take me a while to get completely out of this book's fictional world and back to creating a new one. I do hear new voices in my head now, and they seem to belong to a gang of interesting and funny people that I want to write about. But that part of writing a book is easy. It's the sitting down and actually writing one that makes it feel like work.

And if you had a time machine, where would you go?

I'd go to 7 July, 1978 and walk right into the Roxy in LA and catch a Bruce Springsteen show. Fortunately for all of us, we can travel to 2020 and see him in Asbury Park, NJ.