The Guest Book.

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Reviews
“Starred Review” "One of those families who used to run the world . . . WASPs." That's how a man describes the Miltons as he admires the grand wreck of their Maine island estate in a brief, shivery foreshadowing. Blake's breathtaking saga then begins in full with a lush, sweeping overture, though it carries its own kind of chilling undertow. Think Gershwin, Copeland, Ellington. It's 1935, spring has suddenly turned Manhattan verdant and promising, and Kitty Milton, 30 and privileged, can't help but quietly revel in her splendid good fortune. Blake sets out the silver of Kitty and her husband's blue-blood pedigrees and Ogden's accomplishments running the family bank. But intercut with Kitty's satisfaction with her perfectly ordered life are scenes of shocking loss and Ogden's business deals in Germany, which lay the foundation for long-concealed family traumas. As in her best-selling The Postmistress (2010), Blake saturates each scene with sensuous and emotional vibrancy while astutely illuminating sensitive moral quandaries. Tackling between the present, in which Kitty and Ogden's grandchildren may not be able to hold onto "the Island," which defines their legacy, and the fateful summer of 1959, when the Milton kingdom is infiltrated, thanks to the younger generation, by two inquisitive men, one Jewish, the other African American, Blake deftly interrogates the many shades of prejudice and "the ordinary, everyday wickedness of turning away." HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: Blake's brilliant and ravishing novel promises to hit big, inspiring extensive publicity. Copyright 2019 Booklist Reviews.

LJ Reviews 2019 May

This epic historical tale follows the lives of three generations of New England's wealthy Milton family from the 1930s through the present. However, the novel encompasses much more than the history of one family, as Blake (The Postmistress) also recounts some of America's own growing pains during this period. Delving into politics, race, and the question of what makes a person especially good, the plot is extremely thought provoking, and the characters make it absorbing. From family patriarch Ogden, purchaser of the island property where the titular guest book is housed, to his children, grandchildren, and friends, all the characters are well rounded and add to the story. VERDICT Blake's well-written sophomore novel will interest her fans. Those who enjoyed Jessica Shattuck's The Women in the Castle, as well as fans of traditional historical fiction, such as Herman Wouk's The Winds of War, will enjoy. [See Prepub Alert, 11/19/18.]-Elizabeth McArthur, Bexar Cty. Digital Lib., BiblioTech, San Antonio

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Blake (The Postmistress) tells the history of the privileged Milton family from 1935 to present day in this powerful family saga. In 1935 New York, Kitty Milton, wife of Ogden, is enjoying the life of a New York society wife with her three children—five-year-old Neddy, three-year-old Moss, and one-year-old Joan—when Neddy dies in an accident. To help his wife heal, Ogden buys Crockett's Island off the coast of Maine, and through the decades, the island becomes the Miltons' summer refuge. In 1959, Moss is working in his father's investment bank and invites his Jewish friend Len Levy, a fellow employee at the firm, and Reg Pauling, a black man and friend of Moss and Len, to visit the island. Len and Joan have been secretly dating, but Len isn't certain if Joan will acknowledge their relationship in front of her family. The tensions of Len and Reg's visit result in an argument that brings family secrets to light and ends in drama that will haunt those present for years to come. And in the present-day, as Milton family members must decide what to do with their island inheritance, they discover some answers to their family's past. Blake has a particular knack for dialogue; she knows exactly how to reveal the hidden depths of the characters both through what is said and what is unsaid. The result is potent and mesmerizing. (May)

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Steeples, Kimiko Glenn, Jimmy Tatro, and Dan Beirne. The series centers on the lives of the employees of, and visitors to, vacation rental properties: season one focuses on the renters of Froggy Cottage in the small mountain town of Mount Trace, while season two follows the renters of Barefeet.