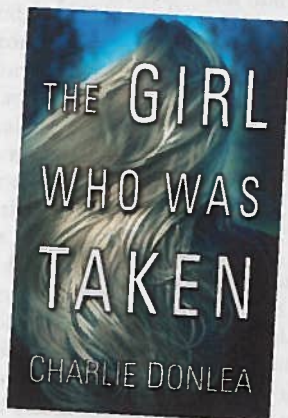


# Stolen Women

Dionne, Karen. *The Marsh King's Daughter*. Putnam. Jun. 2017. 320p. ISBN 9780735213005. \$26; ebk. ISBN 9780735213029. F

Kidnapped at age 14, Helena's mother got pregnant and gave birth in a cabin in the marshlands of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, where she and her daughter were held prisoner for more than a decade. Over the years, Helena's violent and reclusive father taught her how to survive in the wilderness. Now that she's an adult and her father is in prison, Helena has built a new and safe life for herself. But when he escapes from prison, leaving behind him a trail of bodies, Helena knows she is the only person who can successfully track her father through Michigan's wilderness. **VERDICT** Echoing Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale of the same title, Dionne's (*The Killing; Uncommon Denominator*) latest is a well-crafted, eerie, and unnerving psychological thriller. With a strong setting and swift pacing, this novel is recommended for readers who enjoyed



Emma Donoghue's *Room* and Travis Mulhauser's *Sweetgirl*. [See Prepub Alert, 1/4/17.]—Emily Hamstra, Seattle

Donlea, Charlie. *The Girl Who Was Taken*. Kensington. May 2017. 320p. ISBN 9781496701008. \$25; ebk. ISBN 9781496701015. F

After two college-bound girls in North Carolina go missing during a beach party, one of them, Megan, escapes. A year later, she reluctantly tells her tale of abduction and survival in a best-selling memoir and in television interviews, but she isn't as healed as everyone thinks—her clouded memory always threatens to clear and reveal details

she has forgotten or suppressed. Meanwhile, Livia Cutty, a forensic pathology fellow and the guilt-ridden older sister of Nicole, the still-missing girl, begins an unauthorized investigation into the abductions and possible connections after she learns a man she recently autopsied had been hanging out with Nicole that summer. When Livia asks Megan to help her learn more about the night of the disappearances, both risk discovering things they might not want to know. Readers may roll their eyes at yet another suspense novel with "Girl" in the title, but Donlea's sophomore effort (after *Summit Lake*) is solid. He effectively tells the story using shifts in time, and despite deploying too much scientific terminology, keeps the reader guessing and second-guessing until the end, thanks to an expertly crafted abundance of potential suspects. **VERDICT** For fans of medical suspense and forensic thrillers, especially those who like morgue scenes in television crime shows.—Samantha Gust, Niagara Univ. Lib., NY

## SHORT STORIES

★Arimah, Lesley Nneka. *What It Means When a Man Falls from the Sky*. Riverhead. Apr. 2017. 240p. ISBN 9780735211025. \$26; ebk. ISBN 9780735211049. F

**DEBUT** Arimah has lived in Nigeria and the United States, and her stories reflect international breadth but also capture an expat's sense of alienation. In "Light," a Nigerian father tries to raise his daughter while her mother is away studying in the United States. The mother and daughter in "Windfalls" are a pair of grifters, traveling through America and living off staged accidents and liability suits. Some stories reach for different genres and often come with a surprising twist or ending. "Who Will Greet You at Home," a Na-

tional Magazine Award finalist for *The New Yorker*, is a surreal tale about a young woman who crafts a baby out of hair that's also an extended metaphor on a woman's ultimately life-draining desire to have a child. "What Is a Volcano?" is a mythic folktale, while the title story is a remarkable piece of Afrocentric sf: mathematicians discover a formula that can allow some people to extract grief from others, which enables some people to fly—if not reliably. **VERDICT** Several pieces in this powerful debut collection already have garnered awards, and each story, tightly crafted and unique, will etch into your memory. Highly recommended. [See Prepub Alert, 10/31/16.]—Reba Leiding, emeritus, James Madison Univ. Lib., Harrisonburg, VA

★Dawkins, [redacted] Graybar Hotel. Scribner. 2017. 224p.

ISBN 9781501162299. \$26; ebk. ISBN 9781501162312. F

**DEBUT** Written by an inmate currently serving life in prison, this first collection is a powerful and closely observed depiction of life behind bars. While the tales involve numerous characters in a range of situations, there is an overall structure to the collection as it moves from stories of county jail to state prison and finally to release. In "A Human Number," an inmate phones random numbers just to hear strangers talk about life on the outside. In "The Boy Who Dreamed Too Much," an inmate who copes by telling others of his nightly dreams "walks toward the wall" after his fellow prisoners let him know they've heard enough. "573543" features an inmate who asserts himself in prison and thus finds his true identity. The book's final tale, "Leche Quemada," explores the disorientation that comes with freedom as a prisoner goes home to his wife.

**VERDICT** What's freshest and most surprising here is Dawkins's absolute focus on the humanity of those behind bars—of how inmates survive, or don't, as they struggle to maintain self and sanity in the face of the tedium, deprivation, and loneliness of incarceration. A fully realized debut. [See Prepub Alert, 2/13/17.]—Lawrence Rungren, Andover, MA

★MatchUp. S. & S. Jun. 2017. 464p. ed. by Lee Child. ISBN 9781501141591. \$27; ebk. ISBN 9781501141614. F

This follow-up to the best-selling anthology *FaceOff*, which teamed male thriller writers, switches it up by pairing male and female authors and their series protagonists. This fresh approach exposes favorite characters in a new light. Child's insight to each story paints a picture of the writing process and joint effort to meld two characters into a smooth partnership. Child reveals how Sandra Brown admitted that she was "short story challenged" when she embarked on writing "Honor in..." with C.J. Box. However, the authors found common ground for their characters in the Wyoming setting. Kathy Reich's Temperance Brennan and Child's Jack Reacher meet in "Faking a Murderer." When Temperance is immediately implicated in a murder of a reporter, who else but Jack would show up to investigate what seems to be an open-and-shut case? **VERDICT** This fun format offers the best of both worlds, matching up favorite thriller characters within the intense confines of a short story.—Susan Carr, Edwardsville P.L., IL