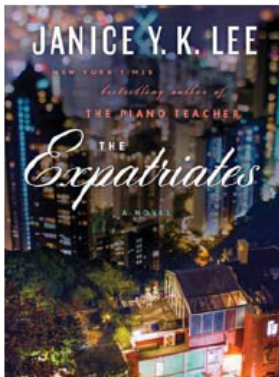


**USA
TODAY**
A GANNETT COMPANY

Roundup: Four new books by women novelists

Jocelyn McClurg, USA TODAY 8:01 a.m. EST January 31, 2016



(Photo: Viking)

Expatriate women in Hong Kong, Truman Capote and his bevy of beautiful "Swan" socialites. A young mother with a disturbing past. The final volume in a century-spanning trilogy. USA TODAY's Jocelyn McClurg looks at four new books by women novelists.

The Expatriates

By Janice Y.K. Lee

Viking, 330 pp.

**** stars out of four

Janice Y.K. Lee has deftly avoided the sophomore slump — and then some — with *The Expatriates*, the irresistible follow-up to her fine debut novel, *The Piano Teacher*. Once again Lee takes us to Hong Kong, but this time it's the present day, and we're immersed in a community of privileged American expats, and three women in particular. All are lost souls whose lives become intertwined. Mercy is a recent Columbia grad, a single Korean-American from Queens who just can't get it together. Hilary wants to adopt Julian, a mixed race orphan, but her marriage is troubled. Margaret's happy life has been nearly destroyed by the Madeleine McCann-like disappearance of her youngest son. This all sounds terribly serious, but Lee's wizardry is her ability to whip drama, pathos and humor into a scrumptious page-turning blend. Raise a glass: The first great book-club novel of 2016 has arrived.