

The 19th Christmas (A Women's Murder Club Thriller, 19)

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Interesting Women, American brio confronts European sophistication—and diverse cultures collide with surprising results—in brilliant, sometimes outrageous stories of seduction and self-discovery by acclaimed New Yorker writer Andrea Lee. In vivid prose shot through with mordant irony, Lee takes us into the hearts and minds of a number of extraordinary women—intelligent, seductive, self-possessed—who, with wit and style, must grapple with questions of identity in a shrinking world where everyone is, in some way, a foreigner. In "The Birthday Present," a loyal and conventional American wife explores the wilder shores of marital devotion by giving her Italian husband a costly present: a night with a high-class Milanese call girl. "Winter Barley" is the account, alternately lyrical and perverse, of the brief love affair in Scotland between an elderly European prince and a thoroughly modern New England beauty half his age. And in the collection's title story, "Interesting Women," an American woman on vacation in Thailand reflects with mocking detachment on the confessional relationships that spring up between women ("another day, another soul laid bare"), before falling into one herself, which culminates in a hilarious and absurd odyssey through the jungle. Lee's beautifully crafted stories, reminiscent of Colette's, offer the reader a rare combination: sensual evocation of the moment, and profound insight into the underlying struggles—of gender, race, and class—that shape relationships worldwide.

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