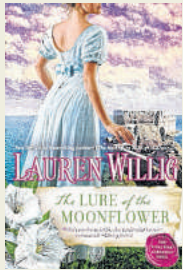


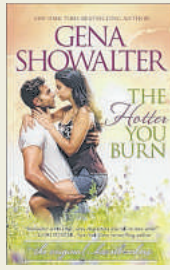
Reviews in brief: Romance



"The Lure of the Moonflower"

By Lauren Willig (NAL, paperback, \$16)

The happily ever after is never more delicious than when it comes at the end of a romance series, as it does in the 12th and final installment in Willig's Pink Carnation series. Her novels follow a collection of British and French spies during the Napoleonic Wars as they battle for love and the Crown. Here, readers finally hear the story of Jane Wooliston, the Pink Carnation herself (think Scarlet Pimpernel), as she travels through Portugal on a particularly dangerous mission. — *Washington Post*



"The Hotter You Burn"

By Gena Showalter (HQN, paperback, \$7.99)

Showalter is best known as a queen of paranormal romance, but this month has published her latest foray into the contemporary genre. Harlow Glass is the most hated woman in Strawberry Valley, Okla. The artist has returned home penniless and homeless — readers meet her while she is stealing food from the house in which she grew up, which is inhabited by the exceedingly handsome Beck Ockley. What begins as a love-hate relationship quickly becomes emotional and deeply sexy. — *Washington Post*

BOOKS

D6 / THE STAR-LEDGER / SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2015

AFFILIATED WITH



MEMOIR

Why Kissinger mesmerizes us

"Kissinger's Shadow: The Long Reach of America's Most Controversial Statesman," by Greg Grandin (Metropolitan, 270 pp., \$28)

Henry Kissinger has not held high government office since 1977, almost 40 years ago. True, he accomplished a great deal during his eight years as national security adviser and secretary of state in the Nixon and Ford administrations — for better (opening China, arms control with the Soviet Union, peace in the Middle East) or for worse (secret bombings and cold-blooded diplomacy that, some scholars argue, contributed to genocidal outcomes in Bangladesh and Cambodia). Nonetheless, it is remarkable how visible, even at age 92, Kissinger remains.

Conservatives who once denounced him as a dangerous appeaser now seek his autograph and blessing, especially if they're running for president and want access to his pals in the New York money crowd. He has not lost his power to charm.

Greg Grandin, an accomplished historian, wants us to think of Kissinger as the Dr. Frankenstein of foreign affairs. He blames Kissinger and "Kissingerism" for a perpetual national security state that engages in "constant, unending war"

and has coarsened our national morality.

Kissinger, Grandin argues, has accomplished this by the power of his personality and undeniable brilliance — and by metaphysics. Deconstructing Kissinger's 1950 Ph.D. thesis, which Grandin contends still informs his worldview, the author argues that Kissinger has touched on the "most American of conceits: self-creation." With his funereal German accent and fond allusions to Metternich and the Congress of Vienna, he sounds like a gloomy Old World realist resigned to cynical zero-sum games. Actually, he believes that since life is "ultimately meaningless and ... history is tragic," Americans — or right-thinking ones — are free to endlessly shape their own reality, or so Grandin argues.

Meaning comes from the exercise of power; morality is mostly what you make it. There are a few limits, but most can be ignored — the key is to act. Grandin would have us believe that Kissinger laid the foundation for a national security state that is in constant motion, with spy satellites and drones relentlessly attacking our enemies and creating new ones.

Grandin is a persuasive polemicist, and he has a lot of material to work with. It is hard not to cringe while reading transcripts of White House tapes that recorded Kissinger and President Richard Nixon cynically talking about a "decent interval" in Vietnam — building in enough time between America's exit and the inevitable fall of Saigon to protect Nixon's political fortunes.

Grandin, a professor at New York University, is one of a small group of academics who defy the stereotype of a turgid, jargon-ridden pedant whose prose is accessible only to his colleagues.

— *Washington Post*

FICTION

It's hard to reach the top

"Everybody Rise," by Stephanie Clifford (St. Martin's, 376 pp., \$26.99)

Little is more delicious than watching an ambitious but tragically flawed protagonist brought down — especially in a designer cocktail dress. In "Everybody Rise," debut novelist Stephanie Clifford has written a smart tragicomedy about a young woman attempting to infiltrate the "Primates of Park Avenue" crowd.

It all starts at Sheffield, the tony prep school of heroine Evelyn Beegan. "There was hardly a post-1996 car to be seen on the field," Clifford notes.

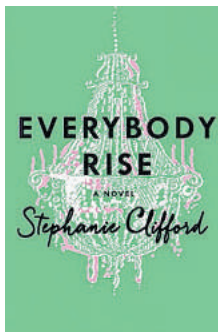
Among these old-money Volvos and creaking Mercedes, Evelyn is setting up an alumni tailgate fete with her smarmy parents, Dale and Barbara. Evelyn has reluctantly returned to her alma mater to bag valuable new members for her new job at a start-up called People Like Us.

Mrs. Beegan is a scheming and superficial Mrs. Bennet doppelganger, criticizing everything, including her daughter's lusterless pearls and her choice in men. "I don't want you to make the same mistake I did," she tells Evelyn. "Marrying someone on the edges of the circle just puts you on the fringes of the circle, don't you see?"

Occasionally, Clifford's writing can't keep up with her ferociously incisive class commentary. But the author demonstrates her chops as a journalist (she's a New York Times reporter) when the action moves from satin dresses to slapstick, which has the pacing of a tight news piece.

Although "Everybody Rise" owes much and pays homage to its predecessors, particularly Edith Wharton's "The House of Mirth," it's no copycat — especially since Evelyn's fate takes a turn as sharp and smart as her creator's intellect, making this tale a 21st-century fable of one woman's reconstruction.

— *Washington Post*



"Monster Mash" author Mark Voger dressed as TV vampire Barnabas Collins on Halloween 1968 in Cherry Hill. (PHOTO PROVIDED)

NEW JERSEY AUTHORS

The monsters from childhood come alive again



Jacqueline Cutler

jacquelinecutler@verizon.net

They were "the monster kids," and back in the '60s, you could always pick them out.

They spent their allowances on plastic model guil-lotines. They ran home after school to catch "Dark Shadows." They stayed in Saturday nights watching "Creature Features."

I was not one of them. And I tried to like Barnabas Collins, I really did.

But Mark Voger, of Ocean Township, was one of these kids, and his artfully done new book, "Monster Mash," is a love letter to this baby-boom phenomenon. Voger has a passion for those plastic monster models that kept so many boys off the street and painting with skinny-tipped brushes.

The oversized hardback is subtitled "The Creepy, Kooky Monster Craze in America, 1957-1972," and Voger casts his net wide, starting with the Eisenhower-era arrival of TV's campy horror hosts and ending with the Nixon days of "Beneath the Planet of the Apes."

In between are all the details, and lots of photos, of countless I-can't-believe-my-mom-threw-that-out collectibles: "Ad-dams Family" board games, "Vampirella"



"Monster Mash: The Creepy, Kooky Monster Craze in America, 1957-1972"

By Mark Voger (TwoMorrows Publishing, 192 pp., \$39.95)

comic books, "Famous Monsters" magazines.

Voger, however, is more than someone with a love for pop kitsch and an artful eye (he designed the book himself). He's also a veteran journalist — first at the Asbury Park Press, now at NJ Advance Media producing The Star-Ledger — who was smart enough to keep his notes from decades of entertainment reporting.

Singer Bobby "Boris" Pickett talks about what happened when the real Boris Karloff heard "Monster Mash": "He loved

the record but didn't think it sounded a bit like him."

John Astin sticks up for those Addams family values: "Gomez is really me. ... The love of spontaneity. The appreciation of life."

And there's something deeply sweet and genuine about Jonathan Frid defending "Dark Shadows": "The variety of emotions and the complexity of Barnabas made him the most interesting character I've ever played, including Shakespeare."

There are some surprising facts, too, even for die-hard monster fans (or like me, people married to one).

You might have known that Darlene Love was a backup singer on "Monster Mash" — but did you know that Leon Russell played on the B-side, "Monsters' Mash Party"? Or that comic-book ghoul Uncle Creepy was modeled after British actor Alastair Sim?

The book, like a lot of art-heavy, small press editions, is pricey. And for a survey of the monster-movie era, it's a little light on the movies themselves. There are vintage interviews with comic-book artists and sitcom stars, but none with the modern titans of terror — Vincent Price, Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee — who were busy during the boom.

Still, there are plenty of other stars and stories to ponder over. And, as a lifelong Jerseyan, Voger also puts things in a regional context, sharing memories of how the nuns of the Camden diocese used to confiscate horror mags, or nights catching snowy broadcasts of monster-movie shows from Philadelphia's Channel 10.

"It's sad, pathetic, to say that monsters were our friends. (They were.) Or that we identified with these deformed, hated creatures who, after all, only wanted love. (We did.) Or that we saw ourselves when King Kong clutched Fay Wray; when Quasimodo sipped from Esmeralda's urn; when Boris Karloff smiled pleadingly at Elsa Lanchester and caressed her bandaged hand, alas in vain. ... Monster movies made us contemplate the big stuff: birth, death, life, love, man's inhumanity to man, the afterlife, the immortal soul."

But that's OK. Any pop-culture craze that drove a generation to start reading Ray Bradbury, H.G. Lovecraft and Edgar Allan Poe — and kids like little Stevie Spielberg to pick up a movie camera, and a young Stephen King to start tapping away on a typewriter — is worth some hyperbole. And a lot of respect.

NONFICTION

Why the world bought BlackBerrys ... and then hung up

"Losing the Signal: The Untold Story Behind the Extraordinary Rise and Spectacular Fall of BlackBerry," by Jacquie McNish and Sean Silcoff (Flatiron, 279 pp., \$27.99)

Jacquie McNish and Sean Silcoff's "Losing the Signal" is a saga of digital entrepreneurs who saw the future and made it happen. A pair of Canadians, Mike Lazaridis and Jim Balsillie, became co-chief executives of a company called Research in Motion (RIM), which launched the BlackBerry in 1998. RIM had started out in a little office above a bagel store in the small town of Waterloo, Ontario. "Handheld wireless email was a breakthrough product nobody knew they wanted," the authors say.

The first BlackBerry users were not the usual techies but rather senior legal and banking types who needed to be first with information. RIM viewed chief information officers as impediments, so the company made it easy for senior execs to link the BlackBerry into corporate email without involving the CIOs. When CEOs saw their lawyers and bankers using BlackBerrys, they wanted their own.

BlackBerrys kept Wall Street online during 9/11. Most of

Washington was out of the loop. Soon, all House members were issued BlackBerrys. Eventually the device broke out into the general public.

But rather than settle a nettlesome patent lawsuit for a small sum, RIM fought and got socked for \$612.5 million. The Canadian government hit the company with a \$90 million fine for backdating stock options. And then Apple came out with the iPhone, which began to eat into BlackBerry's market share. The company remained robust for a while, but competition wore it down. Lazaridis and Balsillie left the company, and BlackBerry's smartphones today account for less than 1 percent of the market. This fascinating story will hold your attention even though you know what's coming.

— *Washington Post*

