



## The Turning Tide

*Brooke Magnanti, Belle de Jour*

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A thriller about secrets and lies, from an author who knows what it's like to lead a secret life...

Erykah Macdonald has a nice life – the kind of life you're meant to want. But she's about to cross a line.

Several hundred miles away in the shallow waters of a Hebridean island, a body is found. It's been in the water long enough to make identification tricky, but it's clear this is no accidental death.

Erykah knows she's about to make a choice you can't reverse – but she's lived with secrets most of her life and she thinks she's ready. The trouble is, there are far worse secrets than her own about to emerge.

If she's going to keep her head above water, Erykah must leave behind her comfortable life and start breaking rules.

## **The Turning Tide Details**

Date : Published February 25th 2016 by Orion

ISBN :

Author : Brooke Magnanti , Belle de Jour

Format : Mass Market Paperback 288 pages

Genre : Mystery, Crime, Whodunit, Thriller

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## From Reader Review The Turning Tide for online ebook

### S Andreesen says

This was an unexpectedly different book. It starts like a classic thriller, dead body, mysterious circumstances. So far so usual. But once the set pieces are done it rapidly spins into an unusual and complex story of relationships and politics, both the national and interpersonal kind. A thoughtful eye for inner lives sets this story apart. Recommended highly.

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### Paul says

A complex & compelling thriller, intricately plotted & securely rooted in social and political events of the past few years.

Readers of Brooke Magnanti's previous work will be unsurprised by the sharp observational humour on display here, and there are some pointed observations about what it's like to have been at the centre of a media furore (her main character, Erykah, spends her life dreading the digging up of her youthful involvement with a murderous boyfriend), but these are carefully couched within a highly intricate, page-turning plot, starting with the discovery of a very decomposed corpse in the Highlands, moving through political shenanigans set in post-Indyref Scotland, and peopled with intriguing characters like a moustachioed ex-Army officer who's become the figurehead for a sort of Scottish UKIP, a grumpy Scottish pol who would rather spend her valuable time in Westminster than with her constituents, a missing geologist whose work on Scottish mineral deposits may have led to his demise, a London radio talkshow host whose programme seems to be somehow involved with this murderous conspiracy, and - most of all - the very relatable protagonist, Erykah, who starts out as a middle-aged woman trapped in a loveless marriage but by the end of the book has seen and done things she never would have believed possible.

In between, the story presents opportunities for absorbingly detailed mini-treatises on forensics, rowing, whisky, Florida, ballistics and other subjects about which the author clearly knows plenty. The whole thing is bedded in a beautifully evoked Scottish Highland landscape - there's even a wonderfully Hitchcockian chapter set in a sleeper en route to London, a nicely anachronistic element alongside all the fracking and Twitter references, as well as nods to Merle Haggard and Dario Argento...

All in all, a very rewarding read, as well as a hugely entertaining one.

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### Bennie says

I read this book in draft and am currently reading the final version. The premise of the story is a woman whose estranged husband wins the lottery, setting off a chain of events that leaves a lot of people dead. Meanwhile there is a parallel story of how the events are being covered in the media with biting observations about 24 hour news culture. It starts off so fast-moving and absorbing, which is good because it takes time for the different strands of the story to come together.

It is not often you read a political drama with gay women at the centre. The characters are flawed in real

ways. The heroine frustratingly swerves from confident to broken and back again at the drop of a hat but you are rooting for her and as her backstory is revealed the uncertainty under her polished mask makes sense. It is also slyly funny, a touch satirical. I won't give away the exact nature of what happens in the rest of the tale, in part because the ending may have changed from earlier versions. Overall it reads like a standalone but I would like to see the main character come back. Masses of potential here.

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### **Breakaway Reviewers says**

A REASONABLE PAGE TURNER, NOT GREAT, NOT BAD EITHER!

Erykah Macdonald has a nice life, but on her twentieth wedding anniversary, she's at a crossroads. Several hundred miles away in the shallow waters of a Hebridean island, a body is found. It's been in the water long enough to make identification tricky but it's clear this is no accidental death. Erykah knows she's about to make a choice she can't reverse, but she thinks she's ready. The trouble is, there are far worse secrets than her own about to emerge.

The story centres around a high-profile, politically murky scam involving murder, money-laundering and a sham lottery win. It starts well enough but gets bogged down in the middle and only just pulls itself around in the latter part of the book. The plot is multi-layered and drawn out and, if I had to summarize, doesn't quite come off.

There is a rather ludicrous sub plot about a fictional new political party in Scotland which does take fiction to the outer limit, although it may be the author's attempt at dark humour. Characters are drawn together at various stages of the book, but the relationships and motives are far-fetched and lack credibility. and the story becomes increasingly fanciful and slightly ridiculous.

The book is over long with detailed descriptions of every character, even those that disappear after a couple of chapters and I still don't really know whether some of it is meant to be tongue-in-cheek or not. The ending hinted at a follow up but, unfortunately, I probably will not be reading it.

Digger95

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review

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### **Alex says**

This was good, but not quite what I was expecting. It was much more complex than that, in a good way, and the author is an excellent writer.

The downsides of this book for me were that the protagonist seemed to be a bit inconsistent in her thoughts

and actions at times and I just didn't gel with her at all, and I'm not particularly fond of politics. There were also some editing errors (several typos in my ebook version), and I kept thinking "what?" at what seemed to be minor continuity errors (generally these were on completely irrelevant minor details).

I am intrigued by the fact the cover (on my ebook version, at least) says it is "Cameron Bridge Book 1". This is odd because the location of Cameron Bridge didn't seem like it was the focus of the book in any way so I wouldn't have expected to see further books in a series. It's good news though, as I really loved the Cameron Bridge mortuary scenes, and the author has a background in forensic science amongst other things so I definitely would read the heck out of a murder mystery/forensics series based in Cameron Bridge, especially if future books have a little less political thriller thrown in.

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### **Adrienne Twain-witton says**

I really loved this book. My only problem with it was that it wasn't obviously set up as a series, and I want more.

There's no neat way to categorize this book. It's a thriller, but not a police procedural or straight -up mystery. The plot was gritty and I felt drawn into the wet, chilly world that Erykah inhabits. It was impossible to read this without needing a strong cup of tea to go with it. The characters were complex and the writing razor sharp. Followers of Magnanti's writing would expect nothing less from her, and they will not be disappointed.

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### **Chris Nicholson says**

I wasn't certain what to expect from this book. A Taggart or Rebus set in the Highlands? However, what followed was a surprise and a delight. It's closer in tone to something like Andorra, with its evocative and immersive descriptions of a lush Scottish landscape full of secrets. There's a dose of David Lynch's "Twin Peaks" in there as well, with smalltown eccentric characters such as the death metal fan morgue attendant, Iain, who could've stepped out of Glasgow's Solid Rock Cafe.

When it's not dwelling on a mysterious dead body found in the loch or the disintegrating relationship of the sympathetic London-based protagonist Erykah, there's another surprise; it's funny and slyly satirical, with a few jabs at politicians. Morag, the MP in the story, is drawn as an ambitious and increasingly alienated Westminster politician in her own constituency, that bears a suspicious similarity to a scuffed Fort William. In fact, some of the political narrative reminded me a bit of Iain Banks's more scathing diatribes about Scottish culture and politics. This does lead to one (very) minor criticism of the book, which are that the politics are a bit too archly described. Major Gaspar could be a melding of Nigel Farage and Roger Helmer, while Morag herself is a Scottish Labour MP, a now endangered political species. However, this is a minor complaint, seeing as 2015 is probably the year where British politics started out-satirising satire and Armando Iannucci started accidentally making documentaries.

A highly recommended thriller for a dark and rainy day, then, especially with the rain spattering ominously against the window.

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## **Marina Sofia says**

An entertaining read, something between thriller and chick lit, with enough topical satire and amusing turns of phrase to keep you powering through till the end.

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## **Liz Barnsley says**

\*\*3.5 stars\*\*

Enjoyed this one although I did find it a little convoluted and all over the place for the first bit. Wasn't really sure what the point was going to be. Really well written though so I stuck with it and all was good in the end.

Decent thriller worth a read.

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## **Luke says**

Brooke Magnanti has written a number of books as the more salaciously autobiographical (and until recently, private) *Belle de Jour*. *The Turning Tide* is the first fiction work published under her own name (*The Sex Myth*, a non-fiction work, was released in 2012.)

If you're familiar with the author's earlier work, this outing without an alter ego will surprise: it's a thriller which begins with the discovery of a body in a bag on the remote Scottish coast, and ends somewhere completely different. Along the way you'll run into philosophic thugs, new and old media, headbanger mortuary attendants and a distinctly Cicely, Alaska-if-it-were-in-the-Hebrides oddness.

(You can find out if there's shagging in it for yourself, mind.)

The writing in the *Belle de Jour* series was always clean and tight, but there's extra focus here. There's a strong streak of science through the text, and it's fitting that mathematical proofs and problems make an appearance, as the elegance of a proof seems to inform how the novel is constructed. Everything slides together just so, and the reveals (expected or second-guessed) are never as obvious as one would expect for the genre. Indeed, the work is slippery as far as genre goes: it begins as a murder mystery but soon veers off into some very different territories. Constructionwise, it proves Magnanti has an excellent sense of orchestration for fictional worlds.

What *The Turning Tide* has in common with the *Belle de Jour* works is that its author is present throughout. Parts of Magnanti's life - her Florida upbringing, her knowledge of rowing, her familiarity with the island and the amber products of Scotland - are farmed out to characters in the work, so that their backstories, their predilections have a strong ring of truth about them. Especially poignant is the examination of the secret life, of the necessity of concealment, and the toll it takes on an individual.

It's difficult to review a thriller without giving away the manifold twists which form the story. But what pleases most about this work is that it provides a platform for the investigation of strong female characters. There's a bunch of them here, and - like the rest of the figures in the book, save a couple of stereotypes - are drawn very strongly. Men are not the overwhelming concern here, nor are they usually calling the shots.

Instead, through the lens of the novel's determined core, Erykah, we're told a story and asked to reflect on matters as diverse as poverty, relationships, power, money, the media, and whether we can truly ever escape our pasts.

There's a lot to chew over, for sure. But it doesn't affect the speed of consumption. This is a work which heads towards its resolution at a fair clip, with cinematic vigour. It's thrilling in a surprising way, and I hope is the first of more from Magnanti in the genre.

Grab something peaty and settle in.

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### **Harmony says**

If you're looking for a compelling story that will keep you up late at night, turning the pages with a loud thumping in your chest, this book is for you.

If you're looking for a gripping mystery with nuanced characters who, though fantastical, are extraordinarily relatable, yep, definitely pick this book up.

If you want to read a story that is unapologetically and effortlessly feminist, with complex, powerful, satisfying female characters, dive in.

If you long for narratives where women aren't omnisciently punished for their sexuality, you should probably read this book... naked.

And if you want a gripping, gritty, realistic, complex, effortless feminist, sex-positive, multi-dimensional, exciting, and original crime drama, you may have found the only one of its kind.

What are you waiting for?!?!?

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### **Matthew says**

This is a great read. A well paced thriller, with an intriguing and unusual set up, and plenty of murky goings on to hold the interest! The various strands of the story benefit from care and attention in the set up and I enjoyed the way they wove together as more of the story was revealed.

I found the writing to be witty and engaging, and with some deliciously snarky turns of phrase. It is certainly a page turner and an enjoyable read. This author has a gift for story telling and holding the attention. The voices felt authentic and the overall ambience was very smart and contemporary. I look forward to reading more from her!

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### **Laura says**

Reviewed on [www.snazzybooks.com](http://www.snazzybooks.com)

*The Turning Tide* is a gritty and at times quite shocking thriller which has elements of political and social commentary mixed with well-written descriptions of Scottish highlands and the murky world of MPs!

Though I felt this was really well written and felt quite smart and sophisticated to read, the storyline just didn't pull me in as much as I'd expected. I love crime/ thrillers and hoped I would be helplessly sucked into this, especially as reviews have on the whole been very positive, but I found myself getting a little distracted whilst reading... I'm not 100% sure why. It might be because there was a lot of focus on the political party in question and dialogue between people that I got a little bored reading. Although I'm really interested in politics, I didn't find this aspect of the story that thrilling. Unfortunately, that is kind of what the entire plot is about!

The characters are all pretty believable, though many I didn't really like at all. I did like Erykah, though, and preferred the narrative which focussed more on her, before it tied together towards the end- the situation with her husband and home life is complicated but interesting. The story moved along at a good pace and there were lots of action-packed, tense moments that I really enjoyed reading.

Overall, though, I just didn't find myself hugely taken with this. I think I've just read so many incredible novels in this genre that it would have to be excellent to impress me. It does get a solid 3/5 though, as I ultimately did still quite enjoy it.

\* Many thanks to the publisher and Netgalley for providing a copy of this novel in return for an honest review \*

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### Alex Sarll says

As Belle de Jour, Brooke Magnanti wrote smart, funny, hot accounts of her life as a call-girl which were head and shoulders (and other parts) above the rest of the noughties sex memoir vogue. Her previous book under her own name, *The Sex Myth*, debunks fashionable neo-Puritan bullshit with wit and precision; it's up there with Ben Goldacre's work as something which should be required reading for anyone found guilty of recasting their prejudices as fact in an article or think piece. So when I saw she'd written a thriller, I thought I'd give it a go even though I don't like thrillers\*; she'd more than earned that much. Alas, it turns out that I really don't like thrillers. So bear that in mind as regards the following - the only other one I've read this millennium was *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, which struck me as implausible nonsense, but which I know millions loved. And if nothing else, I liked this better than that - the writing's leagues ahead, and I at least believed in Magnanti's principal characters, even if the plot in which they were tangled left me entirely cold. It's stitched together from assorted disparate sources, newsworthy and otherwise (lottery winners funding Scottish politics, rowing, Labour infighting), and often the smaller details ring wonderfully true (Magnanti is unsurprisingly good on what it feels like to be the eye of a media storm), but the patchwork bigger picture just feels like the outcome of a game of Consequences. And at first I was prepared to persevere because the main lead, frustrated suburban wife with a past Erykah, was alive enough and interesting enough that I wanted to know more about her even while she was stuck in this mess of genre conventions for a genre I can't buy...but then she was obliged to do the thing where the protagonist gets themselves snared deeper in the web rather than sensibly backing away, just because that's how the genre works, and I couldn't do it anymore. Objectively, I know it's no dafter than the bit where the person who gets superpowers decides to fight/create crime; but some grammars I just accept as part of the territory, and others I don't (see also: opera). If you like this sort of thing, you may well like this. I don't, but I wish Magnanti every success with it, while also hoping she continues to write the odd thing that's not a thriller, because I

enjoy those.

\*Don't ask me to explain the distinction between crime and thriller; someone else who reads more of both could probably make a decent account of it, but I can only give the standard excuse for genre generalisations and say that I know it when I see it. For whatever reason I like some detective stories, and a bit of crime, but never take to thrillers. And never encounter a book where I'm uncertain which of those categories it inhabits.

(Apparently, for legal reasons I should note that this was an advance copy from Netgalley even when, as here, it should hopefully be fairly clear that my head was not turned by the glamour of freebies)

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### **Joanne Robertson says**

I had been looking forward to this due to having read this author as Belle de Jour and found her to be an intelligent and observant raconteur. Combining that with a fictional debut set in Scotland with a political edge this should have worked but unfortunately for me it just fell a bit short.

Erykah is about to leave her husband Rab when they unexpectedly win 20 million pounds on a lottery. At the same time, a man about to propose to his girlfriend in a remote part of Scotland, discovers a body in the water while kayaking. The threads of these stories and others eventually come together in an explosive final. This really was well written and researched. The descriptions of Scotland, the countryside and the people were spot on. Every character that appeared was also given pages of back stories, and that became a little bit much at times. For example we meet the couple who find the body and are given a great deal of information about them but then they are out of the story! Same with another character that you think has more to give but they also disappeared from the story. The plot is a twisty turny politically motivated page turner that I wanted to love but it just seemed to be trying too hard, it felt like I was reading a book that was acting too hard to be a book!!

Ultimately it wasn't for me as while I did appreciate the plot, I just wasn't blown away by an array of characters I really couldn't care about.

I received a copy of this book via netgalley in return for an unbiased review.

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