



The Mercy of Thin Air: A Novel

By Ronlyn Domingue

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The Mercy of Thin Air: A Novel By Ronlyn Domingue

New Orleans, 1920s. Raziela Nolan is in the throes of a magnificent love affair when she dies in a tragic accident. In an instant, she leaves behind her one true love and her dream of becoming a doctor -- but somehow, she still remains. Immediately after her death, Razi chooses to stay *between* -- a realm that exists after life and before whatever lies beyond it.

From this remarkable vantage point, Razi narrates the stories of her lost love, Andrew, and the relationship of Amy and Scott, a couple whose house she haunts almost seventy-five years later. *The Mercy of Thin Air* entwines these two fateful and redemptive love stories that echo across three generations. From ambitious, forward-thinking Razi, who illegally slips birth control guides into library books; to hip Web designer Amy, who begins to fall off the edge of grief; to Eugenia, caught between since the Civil War, the characters in this wondrous novel sing with life. Evoking the power of love, memory, and time, *The Mercy of Thin Air* culminates in a startling finish that will leave readers breathless.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

A gothically tinged historical take on *The Lovely Bones*, this debut novel manages to carve out some of its own territory. In late 1920s New Orleans, Raziela "Razi" Nolan carries on a passionate college love affair with Andrew O'Connell (while planning to be a gynecologist). She desires immortality ("One lifetime isn't enough to make all the trouble of which I'm capable") and gets her wish when she slips poolside, dies and finds herself in a state "between life and whatever comes next" in which she may observe the world she's left behind and even meddle mildly. As she learns the rules of "the between" Razi finds it too painful to keep track of Andrew. But 70 years after her death in 1929, she is curious to know what happened to her beloved and is drawn to a young couple, Amy Richmond and Scott Duncan. Domingue captures the equally repressive and uninhibited culture of 1920s America, creates a convincing world of "the between," and gives nice shape to the loving but troubled relationship of Amy and Scott as Razi uncovers her connection to them. The novel lacks a fully distinctive voice, but is certainly several cuts above the genre mysteries and historicals it most resembles.

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From [Booklist](#)

Echoing Alice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones* (2002), debut novelist Domingue places her protagonist, Razi Nolan, "between," that is, in the place where souls go after death, perhaps for decades, before proceeding to whatever comes next. Razi dies in a drowning accident in July 1929, just after graduating from Tulane. Headed to medical school, she was involved with the dissemination of, at the time, illegal birth control information to unmarried women. Now, 70 years later, Razi attempts to find out what happened to Andrew, the love of her life. A parallel plot involves a young couple, Amy and Scott, who are drifting apart because Amy is unable to forget her first fiance, who died tragically 6 years earlier. In each plot, so different in time and place, Domingue takes a probing look at what produces strong and independent women, be it environment, education, or genes. Though Domingue gets a little bogged down in the intricate details of hidden family ties, the well-drawn characters of Razi and Amy ensure that this is an engaging tale. *Deborah Donovan*

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Review

"Entrancing and ethereal." -- *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

"This is that rarest of first novels -- a truly original voice, and a truly original story." -- Jodi Picoult, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Tenth Circle*

"Through the alchemy of Domingue's rich, lovely prose we are transported back and forth through time." -- *The Boston Globe*

"Filled with vivid descriptions of . . . marvelous human sensations that people take for granted and that spirits can only wistfully recall, this is a novel that gets under one's skin." -- *Library Journal* (starred review)

"Domingue's vision of the shifting, shadowy world of the dead is convincing and surprisingly affecting . . . and stays just the right side of romantic." -- *Daily Mail* (London)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Dawn Hicks:

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