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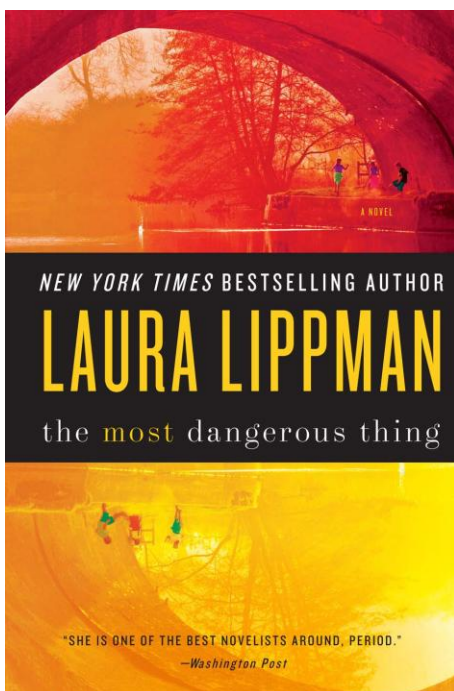
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From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *I'd Know You Anywhere* and *What the Dead Know* comes a gripping tale of lost innocence and childhood regrets

# THE **MOST** DANGEROUS THING

By Laura Lippman



## A SEPTEMBER INDIE NEXT PICK!

“...Edgar-winner Lippman's **superbly unsettling** tale of the consequences of long-buried secrets.”

—*Publishers Weekly Starred Review*

“No one explores the **delicate interplay** between children and the adults they grow into better than Lippman.”

—*Kirkus Starred Review*

“Lippman’s wise and **provocative** novel of destructive choices reminds us that the greatest mystery of all is the inner lives of others... a powerful novel **beyond category.**”

—*Booklist*

Throughout her prolific career, both as a reporter for the *Baltimore Sun* and a novelist, Laura Lippman has written an impressive collection of tales, ranging from the beloved Tess Monaghan series to her riveting and intellectually complex stand-alones. Critics and fans alike have praised Lippman’s unparalleled ability to weave together thought-provoking, intricate plotlines with fully realized and compelling characters. *USA Today* calls her work “disarming and fascinating,” while *The Washington Post* simply proclaims that Lippman is “one of the best novelists around, period.” Now with her new stand-alone, **THE MOST DANGEROUS THING** (William Morrow, On-Sale: August 23, 2011, ISBN: 9780061706516, e-book ISBN: 9780062092588 Hardcover, Price: \$25.99/ \$33.99 Can.), Lippman solidifies her position as one of the best voices of contemporary fiction.

In the spring of 1977, sweet, slightly overweight Gwen and scrappy tomboy Mickey strike up a friendship with the neighborhood Halloran brothers—Tim, Sean and Go-Go (short for Gordon). They become like the five points on a star, stronger together but ultimately targeted at different directions and destinies. Their aimless games of kickball soon grow into larger, not-quite-forbidden expeditions deeper into the terrain of Dickeyville, a quiet suburb just inside Baltimore. Soon, they discover a log cabin hidden in the woods, home to a mysterious man named “Chicken George.”

Sensing a new ally, the children keep Chicken George and the house in the woods a secret until a disaster strikes. Confused and desperate for guidance, Gwen, Mickey and the wild Halloran brothers turn to their parents for help. What happens next is never spoken of again and the group quietly drifts apart.

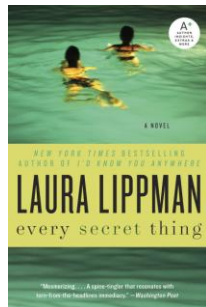
~MORE~

## *some skeletons refuse to stay buried.*

The years creep by and the five settle into their adult lives, relieved and content to be apart. But the old friends are thrust back together again when Go-Go, the troubled ne'er do well member of the group, dies unexpectedly in a mysterious car crash. Amidst this sudden tragedy, things start to unravel as the secret they thought was locked away begins to come to light. Could they have been betrayed by one of their own?

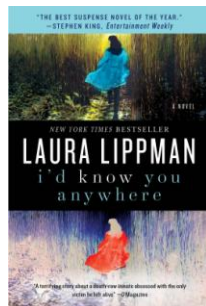
At once heartbreaking and unflinchingly clear-eyed, **THE MOST DANGEROUS THING** is a captivating psychological thrill-ride in which the author effortlessly weaves between the secrets of the past and the trials of the present. Lippman delivers a haunting, complex study of the consequences that come from the heedlessness and naïveté of youth.

### **NEWLY AVAILABLE IN TRADE PAPERBACK:**



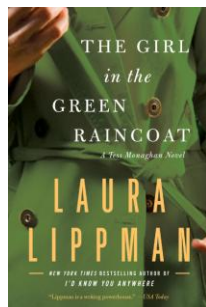
#### ***Every Secret Thing***

By Laura Lippman  
William Morrow Paperbacks  
Publication Date: August 16, 2011  
ISBN: 9780062074898  
Price: \$12.99/\$14.99 Can.



#### ***I'd Know You Anywhere***

By Laura Lippman  
William Morrow Paperbacks  
Publication Date: May 3, 2011  
ISBN: 9780062070753  
Price: \$14.99/ \$18.99 Can.



#### ***The Girl in the Green Raincoat***

By Laura Lippman  
William Morrow Paperbacks  
Publication Date: January 18, 2011  
ISBN: 9780061938368  
Price: 11.99/ \$12.99 Can.



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Laura Lippman was a reporter for twenty years, including twelve years at the *Baltimore Sun*. Her Tess Monaghan books: *By a Spider's Thread*, *The Last Place*, *The Sugar House*, *Baltimore Blues*, *Charm City*, *Butchers Hill*, *No Good Deeds*, and *In Big Trouble* have won every major mystery prize including the Edgar, Shamus, Agatha, Anthony, and Nero Wolfe awards, and her novel *In a Strange City* was named a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year. She is also the author of five previous stand-alone novels: *To the Power of Three*, *Every Secret Thing*, *What the Dead Know* (winner of the Quill Award for Best Mystery), *Life Sentences* and *I'd Know You Anywhere*—the last three were *New York Times* bestsellers. In 2008 Lippman's award-winning short stories were anthologized for the first time in one volume, along with an original novella, under the title *Hardly Knew Her*. Fall 2008 also marked Lippman's serialization in the *New York Times Magazine* with *The Girl in the Green Raincoat*—a continuation of her P.I. character Tess Monaghan. A recipient of the first Mayor's Prize for Literary Excellence and the 2003 Maryland Author Award, she and her husband, David Simon, divide their time between Baltimore and New Orleans.

### **THE MOST DANGEROUS THING**

By Laura Lippman

William Morrow Publishers

On-Sale: August 23, 2011

ISBN: 9780061706516; e-book ISBN: 9780062092588

Price: \$25.99/ \$33.99 Can.

**New York Times Bestselling Novelist Laura Lippman**  
**On Motherhood, Childhood and THE MOST DANGEROUS THING**

An Author Essay

Several years ago, while writing a book about teenagers, I was asked – flatteringly, to be sure – how I got it right. I didn’t have any teenage children. How did I know about the way teens acted, the hot-and-cold relationships among close friends, the yearnings, the rivalries, the cliques?

My stock answer was that I don’t think people change that much. Technology changes. Standards of behavior change. But the technology doesn’t create the behavior, it only facilitates it. Fifteen feels pretty much the same from inside, no matter what you wear or what kind of phone you use.

Yet one thing has changed, and changed significantly in my lifetime. Children have much less freedom to roam. Their after-school time is more structured. They have more homework. The world is seen as a more dangerous place, with predators everywhere.

“Fleet the time carelessly, as they did in the golden world,” Shakespeare wrote in *As You Like It*.<sup>\*</sup> In childhood, I had the opportunity to do just that. I lived in a self-contained neighborhood barely inside the boundaries of Baltimore City, an old mill village known as Dickeyville. Dickeyville was bordered on two sides by a vast wooded parkland, Leakin Park. A muddy stream cut along another side. This created a sense of isolation unusual in a big city. (And Baltimore, in my youth, was one of the ten largest cities in the United States, falling out of the top ten in the 1990 Census.) I explored the neighborhood, the woods, the banks along the Gwynn’s Falls with almost no adult supervision.

A little more than a year ago, I became a mother. People said: “Oh, you’ll write differently now. You won’t be able to write novels in which bad things happen to children.” But I didn’t see it that way. Yes, there had been a lot of violence involving children in my work, especially the stand-alone novels. But in my worldview, children are human, not so much innocent as guileless, less skilled at hiding their misdeeds. Bad things happen to children in my books. But children also do bad things. Just like adults. I was in the middle of *THE MOST DANGEROUS THING* when my daughter was born, but it didn’t make me shy away from my vision of the five young people in the novel and the tragic mistakes that they seemed almost destined to make.

But the *parents* – those were the characters who were changed by my personal experience. The second section of the novel, in which I examine the events of 1979 and 1980 from the point-of-view of five parents, was written after my daughter was born. And rewritten. And rewritten again. My attitudes about children didn’t change because I had been a child and remembered it, at least on an emotional level. Being a parent, I suddenly had a lot more empathy for those who take on the enormous task of shepherding another person into this world. This is how I described it to my husband the other day: “It’s like you’re trying to pitch a perfect game into infinity. You get up every morning and think, ‘Please don’t let me screw it up today, please don’t let me screw it up today.’ But, one day, I’m going to screw it up.”

As *THE MOST DANGEROUS THING* makes its way into the world, one of the questions I’m asked most often centers on the use of the plural first person in the chapters detailing the five children and their shared history. I generally don’t like to explain the decisions I make as a writer, but I will note that those chapters are intended to represent a consensual view of the past, that all the surviving characters agree to this version of events. They have learned, much too late, that the whole really was greater than the sum of its parts.

*\*Lest you think I’m really erudite, someone with Shakespeare quotations always at my finger tips, let me assure you that I know this quotation only because it looms large in the children’s classic BETSY AND JOE.*

**Essay by Laura Lippman to Appear in the Barnes & Noble Mystery Forum**

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