



## The Night the Lights Went Out

*Karen White*

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**From the *New York Times* bestselling author of the Tradd Street series comes a stunning new novel about a young single mother who discovers that the nature of friendship is never what it seems....**

Recently divorced, Merilee Talbot Dunlap moves with her two children to the Atlanta suburb of Sweet Apple, Georgia. It's not her first time starting over, but her efforts at a new beginning aren't helped by an anonymous local blog that dishes about the scandalous events that caused her marriage to fail.

Merilee finds some measure of peace in the cottage she is renting from town matriarch Sugar Prescott. Though stubborn and irascible, Sugar sees something of herself in Merilee—something that allows her to open up about her own colorful past.

Sugar's stories give Merilee a different perspective on the town and its wealthy school moms in their tennis whites and shiny SUVs, and even on her new friendship with Heather Blackford. Merilee is charmed by the glamorous young mother's seemingly perfect life and finds herself drawn into Heather's world.

In a town like Sweet Apple, where sins and secrets are as likely to be found behind the walls of gated mansions as in the dark woods surrounding Merilee's house, appearance is everything. But just how dangerous that deception can be will shock all three women....

## **The Night the Lights Went Out Details**

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Author : Karen White

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Genre : Fiction, Mystery, Womens Fiction, Chick Lit, Contemporary, American, Southern

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## **From Reader Review The Night the Lights Went Out for online ebook**

### **Norma \* Traveling Sister says**

This was an impressive first book for me by this author and a delightful listen with enjoyable narrators that was entertaining and filled with southern charm! I will definitely be reading more books by this author.

THE NIGHT THE LIGHTS WENT OUT by KAREN WHITE is a relaxing, comforting, and amusing women's fiction and suspense/thriller novel that had me totally engrossed and savouring every moment while I was listening to this book.

I absolutely love the cover of this book and found the title also appealing and very fitting which draws you right into this modern day southern tale of family drama, a murder mystery, revenge, secrets and lies while exploring the true meaning of friendship.

THE NIGHT THE LIGHTS WENT OUT is cleverly told in three different points of view of Merilee Talbot Dunlap, Sugar Prescott, and an anonymous blogger all from Sweet Apple, Georgia. Sugar's point of view also alternates between stories of her past and her present day voice bringing past mysteries into the storyline which come together in the present. Sugar was my favourite character but I am not going to say why as you have to experience her personality all on your own!

I absolutely loved each installment of the blog as the blogger was extremely entertaining, funny, cheeky, and spirited. I even loved the title of the blog! The Playing Fields Blog: Observations of Suburban Life from Sweet Apple, Georgia; Written by Your Neighbor. The blogger reveals some local gossip, observations, life lessons, and offers a few entertaining Southernism sayings at the end of each installment which I found absolutely amusing! No one knows who the anonymous blogger is but I had a sneaky suspicion who I thought it might have been and my observations were correct and it was pleasing.

I really liked KAREN WHITE'S writing style, narrative, and how the storyline was delivered as I was entertained and interested to the very end. Even though I had a good idea how it was all going to play out it was still an extremely enjoyable listen. Would recommend!

All of Brenda and my reviews can be found on our Sister Blog:  
<http://www.twogirlslostinacouleereadi...>

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### **Pouting Always says**

Merilee Dunlap is recently divorced, after her husband cheats on her with their daughter's teacher, and has moved out of their house to a cottage behind an old women's, Sugar Prescott, house. Merilee's in laws have paid for her two kids to attend the private school in the suburb and as Merilee tries to juggle taking care of the kids on her own she must also learn to navigate in the new social circle she becomes part of after being pulled into the more hands on approach the rest of the mothers take with the school. As Merilee adjusts to her new life she finds friendship with Sugar, whose life story draws them closer together, no matter how much Sugar wants to resist getting close to someone new. The two find solace with one another and their

shared past tragedies.

I'm so glad I read this one and honestly it's all thanks to Norma and this is why I always trust her reviews. I loved the writing and I loved the story line so much. There was a lot going on in this book but it all worked together. Usually when books have so much going on I get annoyed because the story lines get messy and things don't tie in together. Everything came together here though and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I also even loved the blog posts through out the book and I thought it was cute that (view spoiler). Definitely one of my favorites this year.

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### **Myrna says**

Wow! This book is a jumble of all things that make a novel fantastic! There is so much going on with the main characters as their stories are told in present, past and an anonymous blog. Some parts are predictable but some are not and they take you on wild and crazy ride (to quote Steve Martin). I had a hard time tearing myself away from reading the latter part of the book. *The Night the Lights Went Out* is southern, full of charm, wit, and heartache. I need to read more of Karen White. 4.5 stars!

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### **KAS says**

4.5 Stars

Well, hush my mouth! What a southern stunner!

Karen White is a master at spinning a southern yarn. Just the names alone, Merilee and Sugar, clue you in right away you are about to get knee deep into the lives of women born and bred in the south.

Ms. White's ability to develop unforgettable characters is superb and her writing skills are exquisite.

We first meet Merilee Talbot Dunlap and her two children, Lily and Colin, ten and eight respectively, as they are packing up the van and moving. After eleven years of marriage, she is still reeling from her recent divorce. Her ex-husband, Michael, had an affair with their daughter's third grade teacher, and got her pregnant, no less. They are moving into a cottage owned by a ninety-three year old woman by the name of Sugar Prescott. And, of course, the children will be attending a new school. The scandal is front and center news in the small town of Sweet Water, Georgia.

Sugar is quite particular with whom she befriends, and they have always been few and far between. She has no filter, and says whatever is on her mind.. She has her "stink-eye" look down to a science. When Sugar hears a newly divorcee and her children are in need of a place to stay, she is willing to rent out the cottage behind her farmhouse, but wants to keep their relationship strictly as landlord and tenant. But Merilee and her children stir up feelings from her past, and she can't seem to keep her distance from them. An unlikely friendship blossoms between the two women, and they discover just how much they have in common once they begin to share stories they would much rather keep buried.

And then ..... there was Heather. An unforgettable woman of which I could write six paragraphs, but I won't.

The role she plays in this story is pivotal, but I will let you discover all about her personality for yourself.

I loved the following quote from Heather .....

**? "I can always tell a native Georgian. Hard to hide it, isn't it? It's almost like no matter how far you go in life, all you have to do is open your mouth and somebody knows exactly where you're from."**

This was a delightful read with twists, turns and unimaginable events the residents of Sweet Water, Georgia, have never seen the likes of. Bless their heart!

\*I received an advanced copy of this book, via Netgalley, in exchange for an honest review\*

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### **Suzanne Leopold says**

Merilee Dunlop is entering into a new stage of her life. She is recently divorced and is moving with her two children to Sweet Apple, Georgia. The divorce was amicable after her husband was found cheating with their daughter's third grade teacher. She rents a cottage house from an elderly woman named Sugar Prescott. Sugar at ninety-four is very opinionated and is the self appointed town matriarch.

Merilee has enrolled her children in an elite private school to avoid the gossip around her failed marriage. The children adjust quickly to their new life while Merilee struggles with her social status. Merilee feels different because she is a divorced, working parent who doesn't play tennis. Heather Blackford is the poster child for this stereotype and is living the life that the local women crave. She is at the top of the social ladder and others seem to worship her friendship. Heather eventually befriends Merilee and starts to dominate her life with carpool and awkward gifts. At the same time, Sugar starts to take an active interest in Merilee and her children. They forge an unlikely friendship that becomes stronger as drama and secrets unfold.

This is a story about a woman transitioning into a new phase of her life. She is forced to evaluate new acquaintances and along the way discovers a lot about herself. Karen White does a great job of blending drama, mystery, southern fiction, and romance in her new novel.

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### **Margritte says**

This is one of the most skillfully crafted mysteries that I have read in a very very long time.

Starting out as a one-way street to happiness for Merilee Talbot Dunlap, a newly divorced mother of two in the Southern idiom of *chicken-soup-for-the-soul read(s)*, so aptly named by Porsha, the story completely turns the mystery genre on its fine head. Included in the upside down view are the botoxed, helicopter-moms of Sweet Apple, Georgia, with their bling medals of social standing in the suburban road to social nirvana. The Windwood Academy got them all grouped together: the sleek perfected bodies of yoga-ed, gym-ned, tennis visor-ed, dark Chanel sunglass-ed, SUV-ed gang of super beautiful moms, who had all men insisting to take the kids to school. Such a parade of beauty cannot not be missed.

Instead of opening with the murder, like all well-respected, good murder mysteries is suppose to do, and working the story backwards as the sleuthing progresses, this story begins with an introduction and focus on bitchdom at its finest with no criminal intent anywhere near the plot.

Head of the pack is the childless 93-year-old Sugar Prescott, or Alice Prescott Bates, a vigorous opponent of consumerism and social aspirations, who rents out The Craftsman cottage on her land to Merilee. Soon the ruler of bitchdom, Heather Blackford, enters the story with her clinging troupes of desperate wannabe groupies, opening up like the red sea for her to reach Merilee at the school gates. And as they say... *the mix is on ....*

Just one fly in the happily-ever-after soup: THE PLAYING FIELDS BLOG written by 'Your Neighbor'. And boy, does this blogger have the goods on everybody. A lot of huffing and puffing ensue when old secrets and new threats are charmingly woven into the weekly word feasts. Merilee, not named in the blog, is embedded in the blogger's introduction of an old southern expression: *the new broom might sweep clean but it's the old broom who knows the corners*. Merilee is the past-expiry-date ex-wife, who is replaced by a trophy wife, and Merilee is hardly in her Thirties! Euphemisms isn't the blogger's beat. It is clear that the blogger knows the way around the perpetually haunted, and is slowly but surely flashing them out of their hiding places...*Truth, after all, was as sticky as molasses*. Yes, *Truth, like oil, will always rise to the surface*.

*You better clean up your own backyard before you start talking trash*, another favorite expression of 'Your Neighbor', has many faces red, veins at aneurysm point, with nervous fluttering of eyes when nobody is around to witness the effect of the blogger's southern wisdoms.

Sugar Prescott and Merilee slowly become friends when their co-habitation on the same land encourages a new bond which neither of them ever had with anybody before. Their tragic pasts enfold in trusted conversations around Merilee's kitchen adventures as Sugar teaches her to cook proper southern meals for the kids.

The old dame, with her yoga classes three times a week at the Prescott Bend Country Club; her Fitbit which forces her to walk everyday; her Bible classes; and her giant old baby blue Lincoln car, has a firm grip on life, which she does not plan to exchange for a room in a godforsaken old age facility. She also does not have the problem to be always nice to her children who will choose her nursing home one day. ...*the indignity of being moved into such a place, like a box of old toys that a child has outgrown but doesn't want to get rid of completely*, passes her by in her childless state. She is happy in her own home, tapping out long letters to her dearest and oldest friend, Willa Faye Mackenzie Cox, on her 1949 Smith-Corona typewriter, her bottle of White-Out sitting nearby. She has a bag of principles left at her age, but also the promise to herself that she would never love anything again that she could not bear to lose.

Merilee has to come to terms with her past, her divorce and her future. The new bond opens up the possibility for her to become the person she always wanted to be. Not only must she confront all the events in her earlier life, but also her ability to handle it all.

In the history of Sweet Apple, the next thirty days promise to become like The Tower of Terror, Times Square and Armageddon rolled into one. Life no longer will be an unbroken road full of wonderful for the town. The new curves in the road, winding through old memories, heartbreak and tragedy will test the people of Sweet Apple's mettle and character. But with the friends and those who loved each other along for the ride, the bridges to overcome will be put into place where the puddles wait.

But first they have to weather the storm. An extraordinary tornado is brewing over the town. Wade Kimball

fixes the cellar doors at Merilee's house, for just in case. However, metaphorically it becomes a lake on the make, with old resentments and bad karma becoming fast friends in a very short span of time. The calamity becomes critical to the plot, central to the *The Night The Lights Went Off*. It will be the night when sound waves will solidify and become lightning - the sawmill of a storm, and split pine trees in half. Mimetic, like the real thing, it will flash down into the middle of everyone's secrets. It becomes the portal to new beginnings. A meteorological phenomena in the lives of everybody. (Using the storm, lightning and rain as pathetic fallacy in this book, was highly effective.)

Needless to say, this is a must-read for those who need a *chicken-soup-for-the-soul read*. Brilliantly constructed. Excellent entertainment. Funny, soul-enriching, pleasant, sad, but just beautiful! Chick-lit fluff present, but not annoyingly so.

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## Judy Collins says

The 30 Best Books of 2017

**Destined for the Big Screen** (see my cast selection on my blog) The queen of the south, Karen White returns following Flight Patterns on my Top 50 Books of 2016 with the highly anticipated **THE NIGHT THE LIGHTS WENT OUT**.

As sweet as a Georgia peach, and as scandalous as *Desperate Housewives' Wisteria Lane, and Big Little Lies*. Set aside the time, readers . . . you are going to love Sugar!

**The Southern Queen B** has created her best yet! Yay Atlanta . . . From the stunning WOW cover and the memorable characters, Karen White grabs you and pulls you into this Southern suburban neighborhood filled with drama, revenge, secrets and lies, while exploring the true meaning of friendship. *It is not always as it appears.*

**Alternating between the 1930s** Depression-era Georgia and a modern-day 2016 Sweet Apple, Georgia (fictional) suburb of north Atlanta. *Let the games begin.*

### Meet the 3 leading ladies:

- Merilee Talbot Dunlap, newly divorcée, single mom, mysterious past
- Alice Prescott Bates, Matriarch aka Sugar Prescott, landlady
- Heather Blackford, Socialite, beautiful, perfectionist

**An anonymous blogger** offers up entertaining essential Southernisms any Yankee in the South should know, sprinkled throughout. "It's never about the secret itself, but the keeping of it."

From the wealthy private school, social climbing moms to a young single divorced mom who discover (the hard way) . . . the true meaning of friendship and the dangers of deception.

Against the modern-day scandals, we meet matriarch Sugar Prescott who is at the center of the novel. A grounding force. A courageous woman you want on your side. Sugar is wise, and has had her own share of tragedy and can relate to her new tenant, on more than one level.

**Merilee Talbot Dunlap** had learned in eleven years of marriage, it was the simple fact that you could live

with a person for a long time and never really know him. One day the mask slips. Her husband, Michael has an affair with their daughter's third-grade math teacher, Tammy. Merilee decides she does not want to stay in the house with all the reminders. She was traded in for a younger woman. She needs to escape from all the gossip.

However, she is unaware, it may be the lesser of two evils. *What lies ahead at the new location, maybe even more devastating.*

Merilee is the mother of ten-year-old old daughter Lily and eight-year-old Colin. They were now moving into a quaint furnished Craftsman historic cottage (with a cellar) for tornados, located behind Mrs. Prescott's farmhouse in Sweet Apple, GA.

The landlord is a southern matriarch and well-respected in the community. Some say she is harsh. She is known as Sugar. She is widowed (Tom killed in the war) and no children. A mystery, to some. Fascinating and eccentric to others.

**Sugar Prescott** (Alice Prescott Bates) is ninety-four years old (what a great character)! She lives alone in an old farmhouse on her family's land. Her loyal best friend Willa Faye Mackenzie. Willa Faye moved to a senior living facility. While Sugar was staying put as long, as possible. A realtor had found the young mother and her two children as her new tenants.

Not that she had any desire to befriend her new tenants and neighbor, but Sugar had the feeling that Merilee was suddenly on her own and in need of help. Sugar was in a position, to understand that need more than most. She suspected but would deny if anyone asked, that she was *getting soft in her old age.*

**Of course, Sugar** did not realize this single mother would be this young and pretty. Mid-thirties. She wonders what happened to her marriage? Surely the woman had flaws. Sugar soon discovers a few. Heaven forbid, the woman does not even know how to cook, nor does she know her proper Southern graces! *Sugar must teach her a thing, or two.*

... "At least by the end of the day, you'll know how to bake cookies and fry okra. It might be against the law for a Southern-born girl not to know how. Along with changing a tire." . . .

**Despite all her attempts** to keep her new tenant at arm's length, a tenuous connection had been formed. They may have more in common than they may suspect. Merilee at first thinks Sugar is a little strange and is judging her. However, soon their bond strengthens.

**The best award-winning part** Think: *To Kill a Mockingbird* This is where White always "shines" with the historical past and dual timelines. Sugar begins telling Merilee bits and pieces of her life on the farm as a girl during the Depression, **starting from 1934.**

She usually is closed-mouthed about her past (in a world of oversharing), she likes keeping some things to herself. However, somehow, she feels comfortable opening up to this younger version of herself.

**Sugar's dark life** during the Depression in Sweet Apple provides a very different look at life compared to the present-day of the same town, especially those in Heather's world.

A great addition to the story: **Wade Kimball** is Willa Faye's grandson, and he looks in on Sugar. The

developer, and handyman. He helps with any of the maintenance issues for Sugar and her new tenant.

**As Merilee and her children** begin to get settled in, she meets a variety of moms. One, in particular, Heather, which is like “perfection.” The perfect wife, mother, house, children, food, social standing, glamorous, clothes, and home (s) with the good-looking nice husband, Daniel. Merilee feels inferior next to her.

As the kids become involved in their new school and Merilee in carpools and committees. She just wants to be accepted, like a kid at school. Peer pressure is tough. Soon her daughter comes home and tells her about this anonymous blogger.

It is called: **THE PLAYING FIELDS BLOG.** Observations of Suburban Life from Sweet Apple, Georgia Written by Your neighbor. *Who is this person and how does she know so much about their Sweet Apple lives?*

**The blogger dishes** out a variety of gossip and offers a few Southernism tidbits for all the newbies at the end of each installment. No one knows but they think it could be a mom at Windwood since she seems to know a lot about what goes on at school, the community, and their lives. (yes it is spicy, sassy, and oh so funny)!

In the meantime, the perfectionist mother Heather at school is befriending her. Merilee gets pulled in by the attention and her affluent lifestyle. She has taken her under her wing. Merilee grabs on, desperate for new friends and acceptance. Looks can be deceiving. Of course, Sugar does not trust her. A backstory. Merilee also has a mysterious past; however, she is not so forthcoming, until it all unravels later.

**Between Sugar's stories** from the past, Merilee's own drama with her wealthy friends in the present; the school, her children, her ex-husband, his girlfriend, and a baby on the way, worrying about measuring up to her new friend Heather, and the constant reminders of her life from an unknown blogger and social media —she feels like she is on a reality TV show.

. . . and there are some other strange happenings. Daniel and Heather are acting weird. Plus, Merilee has her own memories and guilt from the past which may be coming back to haunt her.

**Then someone is murdered** at the lake house (Lake Lanier). The suspicions are pointing to Merilee. Is someone setting her up? How will she prove she is innocent based on her past? What motive do they have for hurting her?

**From murder, attempted murder, revenge, and a tornado.** It wouldn't be the South without a little drama and deceit sprinkled with some sugar. Female friendships are at the heart of this page-turner.

**5 Stars +++ Top books of 2017!** Move this one to the TOP of your list. You are going to love it! (cover obsession) Karen White just keeps getting better and better.

From southern "grit lit", a murder mystery, historical, women's fiction, domestic suspense, family drama, motherhood, social media, bullying, friendship, romance, humor, contemporary, to psychological and suspense! **THE NIGHT THE LIGHTS WENT OUT** has it all!

**Grab a hammock**, a swing, head to the beach, or a front porch rocking chair. Mark out the time and sit back and be prepared to be entertained Southern savvy style!

For my movie cast wishlist and more about this exciting book and author, Visit my Blog

*A special thank you to Berkley and NetGalley for an early reading copy.* I also purchased the audiobook for an outstanding Southern performance.

JDCMustReadBooks

Santa just arrived. Just scored an ARC Dreams of Falling #NetGalley, Coming June 5, 2018. Cannot wait to start reading.

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### **Abby Welker says**

I have NO IDEA how this book has been rated so highly. I was actually quite excited to read this book based on all of the rave reviews. Pretty much every cliche regarding women, Southern women, best friends, crushing on the guy next door, and revenge stories was included in this book. I mean, cliche all the way to the END, including "a best friend is someone, who, when you ask her to help you bury a body, she asks for a shovel..." (gag and eye roll) I couldn't end this book fast enough...so happy I can move on to something (hopefully) more interesting.

\*\*\*SPOILERS\*\*\*

I MEAN SERIOUSLY.....I get it that Marilee was a recent divorce, but are women really that naive?! And do they really fall for a guy that fast after getting a divorce?! And did she really not recognize a girl whom she went to school with and tormented?! I believe that plastic surgery, cosmetics, fitness, and hair color can make a person look quite different, which is what I'm assuming happened with Heather, but SERIOUSLY. Marilee giving out her phone & Facebook passwords and the spot she hides her spare key to get into her house?! Honestly.

Also, I knew the whole time that it was Sugar who was writing the secret blog posts. Those were actually the only decent parts of the story for me. And seriously? Heather was that cold-hearted to kill her husband with a stiletto?! Oh, and my ultimate favorite part to hate about this book is the fact that the whole revenge break-in happened on.....get this.....a stormy night!!! With a tornado!!! Merilee makes bail, comes home and, naturally, she'd want a bath because that's how all horror movies are written, right?! And then...the house loses power, of course, because of the storm and they fight in the dark....with flashes of lightning giving away the position of each other!! (the suspense, right?!) They scramble out in the pouring rain with lightning flashing and Merilee almost gets killed - but the sweet little old lady comes to save the day. oh my GOSH, the cliche is SO BAD here!!!

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### **Lori says**

I am always absolutely giddy when I am able to get my hands on an advanced copy of Karen Whites novels. What I like most about Whites novels is her ability to create memorable characters and, of course, her great southern humor. I felt a great affection for Sugar who reminded me so much of my grandmother, who grew up in rural SC working on a tobacco farm located on a dirt road named after her family. Like Sugar, she spoke her mind and was as spunky at 95 yrs old as she was at 25. Though parts of this were a bit predictable, I still really enjoyed it.

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### **PorshaJo says**

What a fun read just full of Southern charm! There is an author who writes about the South and I love her books but I've read all but one. So I was looking for another author who gives you that fun, chicken-soup-for-the-soul read. This book just fit the needs for me. I bugged my library for the audio after reading the wonderful review by Norma on this one.

The Night the Lights Went Out is told from three points of view. Merilee, a recent divorcee under scandalous circumstances, Sugar, the stubborn, firecracker landlord of the property that Merilee moves into with her children, and an anonymous blogger who dishes out gossip on the locals. Many who wish they are not mentioned in this blog. The story takes place in Sweet Apple, Georgia. Come on, with a town name like, that you know your in for a story. When the point of view switches to Sugar, it goes back in time and you learn of her past. What makes her that spunky, Southern woman that she is today. So many Southern saying explained and rules that women in the town must follow. Don't get me wrong...it wasn't all fluff. There was revenge, deceit, and murder involved too. Let's just say this one takes the concept of 'Mean Girl' to a whole new level.

I listened to the audio narration and it was wonderful. The two narrators had the heaviest Southern accents and it was perfect for the book. There was a third narrator, but the accent wasn't the same as the others. Oh there were times I laughed out loud at this one. Now, it is a bit predictable but I was not disappointed in this one bit. Merilee was a dunce for most of the story, when you can see what is going on, but she just can't. I will have to say, I was completely shocked by who the blogger was as I had thought of it being someone else. A fun read that I would highly suggest if you just want to relax and laugh and forget about what is going on for a bit.

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### **Julie says**

The Night the Lights Went Out by Karen White Is a 2017 Berkley publication.

Karen White reigns supreme when it comes to modern day southern fried storytelling. I love Karen White's novels, so it's fair to say I'm a little biased when it comes to her books, but this one is really special.

Marilee and her two children are uprooted from their lives after her husband, Michael cheats on her with their child's third grade teacher.

Moving to Sweet Apple, Georgia, Marilee rents a cottage from a gruff elderly woman everyone calls 'Sugar'.

As Marilee gets settled in, she meets the other mothers in town, forges friendships, and may even have a love interest. But, one of the most important relationships she cultivates is with Sugar, as the two women begin sharing a type of quid pro quo confession of their painful past and sins, while unearthing a few old mysteries and solving a crime along the way.

There are books I enjoy, books that touch me or move me, books that make me laugh, or keep me on the edge of my seat. Some books combine all those elements, like this one did, but few of them hit all the notes with perfect tone and pitch and harmonizing, quite like this book did. I haven't read a book like this one in a long time and I really, really, really needed this kind of story.

While books often focus on marriages, romance, and relationships within the family, allowing friendship bonds to lurk around the surface, this book places friendship front and center, and teaches a few valuable life lessons in the process.

We all have regrets, have all made mistakes, suffered painful losses, some more than others, and confession can be good for the soul. This is something Sugar discovered, albeit kicking and screaming and determined not to allow anyone to melt that carefully constructed exterior she hides behind.

Marilee finds in Sugar a dependable friend, a mother figure, and an unlikely kindred spirit. Sometimes, we still, even well into adulthood, seek approval, a salve for our loneliness, and a way to seek redemption for things we wish we could take back or redo, which is something Marilee goes through in this novel, while Sugar watches from the sidelines, ready to step in if and when necessary.

The characters in this book are going to stay with me for a long time. They are so well crafted, realistic and vivid I would swear they came to life. The plot is amazingly well crafted, quirky, emotional, witty and humorous, but also suspenseful and edgy.

The southern setting is a Karen White trademark, and as I've said many times before, there is just something about a story told with a southern flair that pronounces everything, from the food, (cookies in this case), to the scenery, to the dialogue. Karen White has that flair down to a science, and this novel is no exception, in fact, it's exceptional.

In other words, this story has something for everyone, and can be read by anyone, and enjoyed by all, and is the type of story that is good for your soul. I loved it!

So, you've heard me gush long enough. Go forth and pre-order this book, you won't regret it!

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### **Esil says**

My ratings often depend on my expectations. I decided to read *The Night the Lights Went Out* because of two recent mediocre literary fiction reads. I was ready for something light and entertaining, and I had room to tolerate the comfort of some predictability. Karen White delivered what I was looking for. Set in Georgia, the story focuses on the parallel lives of recently divorced Marilee and her 93 year landlady Sugar. Marilee is trying to fit into her new community and Sugar is way past the need to fit in anywhere or ingratiate herself with anyone. They both have secrets. The town has a few secrets. The story moves back and forth in time. Things are not always as they seem. Tensions build up somewhat predictably, but not to the detriment of my

enjoyment. It was the characters and their back story that I enjoyed the most and that made this one worth reading. I especially liked Sugar. I won't say more to avoid spoilers. It's a good book to read for light entertainment-- maybe a good beach read. It did the trick. Now I have to continue my quest for something more meaty. Thanks to Netgalley and the publisher for an opportunity to read an advance copy.

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### **Elizabeth of Silver's Reviews says**

A new town, a new home, a friend you really don't want, a blog that tells the town's gossip, and Merilee has to deal with all of this along with her divorced husband and his pregnant girlfriend.

Living in Sweet Apple, Georgia, seemed like a good town to start over and for the most part it was.

Merilee was renting a house on the property of the town's oldest citizen, Sugar Preston. Sugar was portrayed as anything but sweet, but actually she was.

Merilee and Sugar became friends and shared stories from Sugar's childhood that made sense as to why Sugar was the way she was.

Sugar and quite a few town residents had secrets, and now that Merilee arrived in town, the anonymous blog writer had more ammunition for her daily posts and Southern sayings.

As Sugar knew, there were more people in this town that had better stories than Merilee had. Sugar's past was a soap opera in itself and filled with stories but no one dared to tell them except Sugar herself and many stories were told for the first time to Merilee.

Totally and completely enjoyed the characters and the story line of THE NIGHT THE LIGHTS WENT OUT. Sugar was very lovable, Merilee was sweet, and I didn't like Heather from the minute I met her.

Readers of women's fiction will again be transported back to the days of Southern ?hospitality and then brought back to current day with women who keep secrets and have everything and like to flaunt it.

Ms. White has done it again with a marvelous story filled with wonderful characters with Southern charm?. If you have ever read any of Karen White's books, you will love this book just like all of her books and not want to put the book down.

I have LOVED all of Ms. White's books, but this has to be my all-time favorite. 5/5?

This book was given to me free of charge and without compensation by the publisher in return for an honest review.

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### **Cindy Burnett says**

Karen White's new book The Night the Lights Went Out ranks at the top of my list of books I have read in 2017. It is a must read for those who loves Southern fiction or truly anyone who loves a great read. In this

book, she creates the perfect combination of wonderful characters, a highly entertaining story line and an interesting method for unfurling the plot developments. Merilee Dunlap is recently divorced and rents a cottage in Sweet Apple, Georgia from Sugar Prescott, the sourpuss grand dame of Sweet Apple. Poor Merilee is overwhelmed with her job, her kids, and moving to a new town. As Merilee and Sugar slowly get to know each other, various secrets emerge, and events that none of them foresee begin to unfold.

While I loved every aspect of the book, my favorite part was the way White chose to tell the story. The book alternates between a mixture of a clever blog written by the anonymous "Your Neighbor", a standard present day story line, and a narration by 93-year-old Sugar Prescott of various events from her early life. This synthesis of storytelling techniques produces a unique reading experience which I thoroughly enjoyed. Frequently when various time periods are used in a novel, I will like one story line much better than the other, but here I loved every aspect of the book and couldn't wait for each new development.

White's characters are well-crafted and very authentic. While I was partial to a variety of the characters, Sugar Prescott is a clear stand out who I have thought about so many times since I finished *The Night the Lights Went Out*. She is a true literary gem.

I highly, highly recommend this book and cannot wait to hear everyone else rave about it as much as I have been to everyone I know. Thanks to Great Thoughts, Great Readers for the chance to read this ARC in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Book of Secrets says**

In *THE NIGHT THE LIGHTS WENT OUT*, Karen White intertwines the lives of two strong Southern women while telling a story of secrets, survival, starting over, and friendship. The star of this book is most definitely Miss Sugar Prescott. She's a lifelong resident of Sweet Apple, Georgia, a place that may seem perfect on the surface, but what lies beneath is a different story.

Now in her mid-90s, Sugar is still tough, headstrong, and sharp as a tack. Sugar rents a cottage on her property to Merilee Dunlap, a recently divorced mom with two children in tow. Merilee's life in Sweet Apple won't be what she expected, but luckily she's got Sugar on her side.

This book alternates between Sugar in the past (early 1930s) and Merilee's ordeal in present day Sweet Apple. All around I just enjoyed Sugar's story and character the best. Other parts I found a bit predictable and hard to believe, but overall it was an enjoyable read - nice blend of mystery, historical fiction, Southern drama, and a dash of romance. The ending was very exciting!

Disclosure: I received a copy of this book from the publisher through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

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