

Media Release

February 19, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

After Hours Conversation with Marina Endicott and Jacqueline Baker: a STARFest event

St. ALBERT—Marina Endicott, local favourite and one of Canada’s most critically acclaimed and beloved storytellers, returns to STARFest with *The Difference*, a sweeping novel set on board a Nova Scotian merchant ship sailing through the South Pacific in 1912. Marina Endicott will be in conversation with Jacqueline Baker at this special STARFest event on Friday, March 13 at 7:00 p.m. in Forsyth Hall at the downtown St. Albert Public Library.

The Difference opens with a three-masted barque from Nova Scotia sailing the trade winds to the South Pacific. On board, young Kay feels herself not wanted on her sister’s long-postponed honeymoon voyage. But Thea will not abandon her young sister, so Kay too embarks on a life-changing voyage to the other side of the world. At the heart of *The Difference* is a crystallizing moment in Micronesia: forming a sudden bond with a young boy from a remote island, Thea takes him away as her son. The repercussions of this act force Kay, who considers the boy her brother, to examine her own assumptions—increasingly at odds with those of society around her—about what is forgivable, and what is right.

Madeleine Thien, Giller Prize-winning author of *Do Not Say We Have Nothing*, says this about *The Difference*: “Marina Endicott allows her characters to exist without being afraid of their (and our) moral dilemmas and failures, or the gap between our intentions and our understanding. She writes about goodness so well – so beautifully and joyfully. I loved being at sea with Kay and Thea, and found it hard to part from them. A wonderful, brilliant book.”

Born in Golden, BC, Marina Endicott grew up in Nova Scotia and Toronto. She began her career as an actor and director in Ontario and England, where, in the gaps in work, she began to write fiction. Back from London, she went west to Saskatoon and then to Alberta. Her first book, *Open Arms*, was shortlisted for the Amazon First Novel award. Her second, *Good to a Fault*, was a finalist for the 2008 Giller Prize and a CBC Canada Reads choice, and won the Commonwealth Writers Prize. *The Little*

Shadows was shortlisted for the Governor General's Award, and longlisted for the 2011 Giller Prize, as was *Close to Hugh*, one of CBC's Best Books of 2015.

Jacqueline Baker's debut short story collection, *A Hard Witching*, was shortlisted for the Writers' Trust Fiction Prize, and won both the Danuta Gleed Literary Award and the Alberta Book Award for short fiction. Her first novel, *The Horseman's Graves*, was published in 2007. Her most recent novel is *The Broken Hours*, a ghost story about the final days of H. P. Lovecraft's life. She teaches creative writing at MacEwan University in Edmonton, Alberta.

Tickets are also still available for STARFest's February 29 event featuring Jumoke Verissimo in conversation with Lisa Martin about Verissimo's stunning first novel, *A Small Silence*. This event runs at 7:30 p.m.

Tickets to the Endicott-Baker event and the Verissimo-Martin event are \$7 each and are available at St. Albert Public Library's downtown and Jensen Lakes customer service desks, at Eventbrite.ca, and at the door. Both events will be followed by receptions featuring refreshments and a toonie bar. Books will be available for purchase and signing.

STARFest runs in October, 2020 – stay tuned for more information in the coming months. STARFest 2020 will continue the traditions of this award-winning festival, presenting numerous events featuring writers ranging from the new and noteworthy to long-time favourites from across Canada. For more information visit www.starfest.ca.

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