

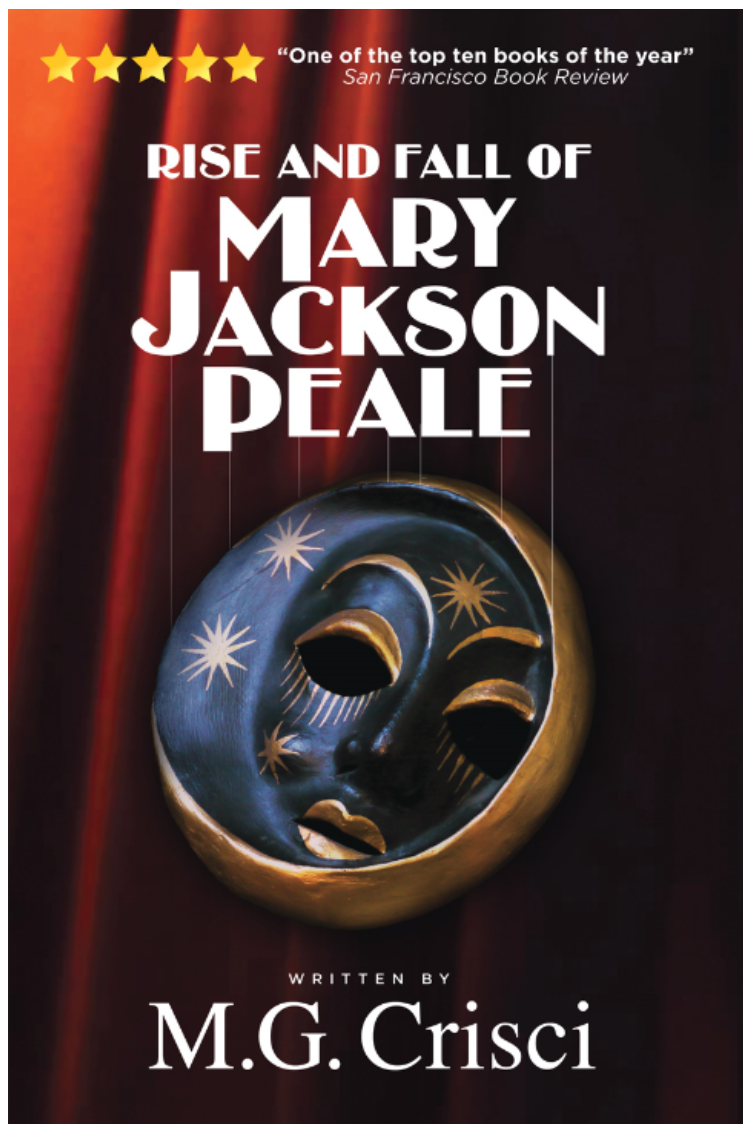
# San Francisco Book Review

July  
2012

## Rise and Fall of Mary Jackson Peale

By M.G. Crisci

Orca Publishing Company, \$15.95, 374 pages, Format Trade



I'm not going to lie; I was not initially excited about Mr. Crisci's account of "theatrical agent extraordinaire," Mary Jackson Peale. Reluctantly, I curled up under the covers, opened the book, and steeled myself for a dull retelling of this woman's life in an industry I know nothing about. What I am here to say is this: that was nothing more than contempt prior to investigation. What I found in the pages of Crisci's tome was romance, betrayal, redemption, and some serious gumption on the part of Ms. Jackson Peale. And the ending -- oh the ending -- was absolutely breathtaking. I apologize for my prematurely uninformed opinion and now rate *Rise and Fall of Mary Jackson Peale* as one of my top 10 best books of the year.

The plot twists and character developments are unexpected to say the least and incredibly hard to describe in a mere 400 words. Mary Jackson Peale man-

ages to burn her bridges in London through a series of illicit lesbian affairs and is forced to flee to America and start anew. Thus, Mary and all her baggage (mostly emotional) arrive in the states with a criminal past, no money, no contacts in the theatrical world, and nowhere to live. One by one, these complications get resolved and within no time at all, Mary Jackson Peale has catapulted herself into theater fame as an agent to the stars. Life's looking up for Ms. Peale. That is; until her world collapses on her with a bang that I'm certain was heard around the world.

Clearly, Ms. Peale will not be forgotten, thanks to Mr. Crisci's fantastic portrayal of her. *Rise and Fall of Mary Jackson Peale* takes the cake as the best theater-oriented book I've read in a while. Thank you to Crisci for reminding me not to judge a book by its cover. Glad I didn't miss this gem!