



A coup is a coup when TWO *New York Times* bestselling authors, whose books have been memorialized in films, come to the Lowcountry for the first time. And a week apart! What a summer for literature!

On Tuesday, July 24th at the Hampton Hall Clubhouse, Bluffton, **Chris Bohjalian** will talk about his 15th book,

The Sandcastle Girls

which will undoubtedly debut at the top of the *New York Times*

bestselling list as did most of his other books. Advance reviews have heralded it to be as powerful and emotionally resonant as

Midwives,

an Oprah's Book Club selection

. *The Sandcastle Girls*

is the first time Chris has based a novel on his Armenian heritage. It's a sweeping saga set in the cauldron of the First World War, a tale of love and loss – and a family secret that's been buried for generations.

Over the course of his career, Chris Bohjalian has taken readers on a spectacular array of journeys. *Midwives* took place on an isolated Vermont farmhouse on an icy winter's night during a homebirth gone tragically wrong.

The Double Bind perfectly conjured the Roaring Twenties on Long Island – and a young social worker's descent into madness. And *Skeletons at the Feast*

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chronicled the last six months of World War II in Poland and Germany with nail-biting authenticity. As

The Washington Post Book World

has written, Bohjalian writes "the sorts of books people stay awake all night to finish."

In *The Sandcastle Girls*, he takes a very different kind of journey. This spellbinding tale travels between Aleppo, Syria in 1915 and Bronxville, New York in 2012—a sweeping historical love story steeped in the author's Armenian heritage, making it his most personal novel to date.

When Elizabeth Endicott arrives in Syria she has a diploma from Mount Holyoke College, a crash course in nursing, and only the most basic grasp of the Armenian language. The First World War is spreading across Europe and she has volunteered on behalf of the Boston-based Friends of Armenia to deliver food and medical aid to refugees of the Armenian Genocide. There Elizabeth becomes friendly with Armen, a young Armenian engineer who has already lost his wife and infant daughter. When Armen leaves Aleppo to join the British army in Egypt, he begins to write Elizabeth letters, and comes to realize that he has fallen in love with the wealthy, young American woman who is so different from the wife he lost.

Flash forward to the present, where we meet Laura Petrosian, a novelist living in suburban New York. Although her grandparents' ornate Pelham home was affectionately nicknamed "The Ottoman Annex," Laura has never really given her Armenian heritage much thought. But when an old friend calls, claiming to have seen a newspaper photo of Laura's grandmother promoting an exhibit at a Boston museum, Laura embarks on a journey back through her family's history that reveals love, loss – and a wrenching secret that has been buried for generations.

And a Week Later....

NY Times Best Sellers Highlight Summer Series

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