



# Book Reviews, Book Lover Resources, Advice for Writers and Publishers

Home / Reviewer's Bookwatch

## Reviewer's Bookwatch

Volume 10, Number 3

March 2010

[Home](#) | [RBW Index](#)

### Table of Contents

<a href="#">Reviewer's Choice</a>	<a href="#">Amy's Bookshelf</a>	<a href="#">Ben's Bookshelf</a>
<a href="#">Bethany's Bookshelf</a>	<a href="#">Buhle's Bookshelf</a>	<a href="#">Burroughs' Bookshelf</a>
<a href="#">Carson's Bookshelf</a>	<a href="#">Christy's Bookshelf</a>	<a href="#">Clark's Bookshelf</a>
<a href="#">Crocco's Bookshelf</a>	<a href="#">Daniel's Bookshelf</a>	<a href="#">Debra's Bookshelf</a>
<a href="#">Duncan's Bookshelf</a>	<a href="#">Fern's Bookshelf</a>	<a href="#">Gary's Bookshelf</a>
<a href="#">Gloria's Bookshelf</a>	<a href="#">Gorden's Bookshelf</a>	<a href="#">Harwood's Bookshelf</a>
<a href="#">Henry's Bookshelf</a>	<a href="#">Janie's Bookshelf</a>	<a href="#">Jessica's Bookshelf</a>
<a href="#">Karyn's Bookshelf</a>	<a href="#">Liana's Bookshelf</a>	<a href="#">Logan's Bookshelf</a>
<a href="#">Margaret's Bookshelf</a>	<a href="#">Nicole's Bookshelf</a>	<a href="#">Palombi's Bookshelf</a>
<a href="#">Paul's Bookshelf</a>	<a href="#">Peggy's Bookshelf</a>	<a href="#">Regis' Bookshelf</a>
<a href="#">Richard's Bookshelf</a>	<a href="#">Sandra's Bookshelf</a>	<a href="#">Theodore's Bookshelf</a>
<a href="#">Victoria's Bookshelf</a>		

### Reviewer's Choice

**The Farringford Cadenza**  
**Robert D. Sutherland**  
 The Pikestaff Press  
 PO Box 127, Normal, Illinois 61761  
 9780936044088 \$15.95 [www.pikestaffpress.com](http://www.pikestaffpress.com) [www.robertdsutherland.com](http://www.robertdsutherland.com)

Aaron Paul Lazar, Reviewer  
[www.aaronlazar.blogspot.com](http://www.aaronlazar.blogspot.com)

October 18, 1947

As the train slows to a crawl for its scheduled stop at Bristow, Pennsylvania, its cars glide like dark

coffins past the lights spaced evenly on poles along the station platform. Eight coaches back from the locomotive, the window of a particular sleeping compartment presents a blank and staring eye to the lights as they tick rhythmically past. Each, in its turn, briefly illuminates the table just inside the window - the highball glasses and overflowing ashtray - the formal dress-suit, with tailed coat, hanging on the wall - the rumpled bed - the body on the bed.

When the train has chuffed to a halt with a rumbling shudder and hissing of steam, a light-pole stands directly opposite the window. Should anyone look in - that porter, say, trundling past with his baggage cart - he'd see, starkly displayed among the tangled bedclothes, a man of middle-age - lean, angular, face-up and stretched full-length in striped pajamas. Left arm bent across the chest; right flung far aside to hang in space. Dark chestnut hair just slightly streaked with gray. Face like putty, gone to sag; backward tilted, mouth agape; eyes slitted upward with a jellied stare.

A closer look: the pajama shirt is wrongly buttoned, the trousers twisted awkwardly askew and backside front."

The Farringford Cadenza is evocative of a deliciously complex British mystery, underpinned with American sass and laced with luscious musical themes. When a rare six-minute piano composition by musical genius Charles Philip Farringford disappears, a nut and shell game extraordinaire begins. After decades of mystery, like a leaf flitting on a playful breeze, the cadenza appears in a piano bench in a dusty old shop, only to be stolen, re-stolen, diverted, hidden, passed around, stolen again, and disappeared, time and time again. Just when you think you know which shell the cadenza is under, the scales tip and the hunt begins anew.

When American composer Charles Farringford dies in bed on a train bound for New York City in 1947, he's discovered dressed with his pajama pants on backwards and his top buttoned wrong. This untimely death follows three rare performances of the hand-written piano cadenza, integral to the fourth movement of Farringford's Fifth Concerto. Performed only to three audiences whose lives were literally changed by the legendary music, powerful enough to bestow stallion-like powers on the impotent, to haunt the lives of those affected, to cause rare collectors to salivate and offer millions for its return, the music disappears on the day the beloved composer dies, only to turn up over thirty-four years later in Baltimore.

With the press agog and musicians stirred up all over the world, music lovers prepare to be thrilled by the cadenza. This life-changing music that propelled listeners to states of rapture when first heard in 1947 is scheduled to be delivered to Lunner and Dinch, the publishers of the original Concerto. The music went to press without the cadenza, but was performed by pianists who've written their own interpretation of the missing movement. But the mystical music is not yet to be heard by the public, for bodies begin to drop with an alarming rate and the cadenza once again disappears.

Detective N. F. Trntl (yes, there are no vowels in her last name), a tough, clever, persistent investigator who can foil the worst villain, is hired by Farringford's family and Lunner and Dinch to find the cadenza and bring it home. She and her assistant, Carol, begin a series of misadventures that have them bouncing between Baltimore and New York, pursued by the Mob and rubbing shoulders with the elite, including spunky and talented pianist Rosamond Foxe, who is lusted after by the rich and powerful Victor Zyzynski and who also is intricately and intimately woven into this delightful mystery. I'll not spoil the plot, but the finale of this masterful novel spirals to a page turning end, moving from St. Croix to New York City, and kept this reviewer up into the wee hours of the morning.

Sutherland's style is professional and polished, his wit delightful, but what I found most intriguing were his character descriptions. For example:

"He was a wizened gnome, extremely short, with an exceedingly thin and pointed nose, the skin of his

**face cross-hatched with deep lines and creases. Behind rimless lenses, steel-blue eyes stared unblinking; the sphincter of his mouth was a tight pucker. On the table before him, his hands rested plump and pawlike, corrugated with prominent blue veins and freckled with age spots. His nails glistened as if painted with clear lacquer."**

**And this:**

**"Fingers was a squat, burly man with large ears, ponderous jowls road-mapped with crimson capillaries, and restless belly-button eyes."**

**If you like twists and turns, if you've ever been emotionally stirred by music, if you love an intellectual chuckle, or if you're a fan of page-turning chase scenes, you'll find The Farringford Cadenza a delightful read.**

### **The Help**

**Kathryn Stockett**

**Amy Einhorn Books/Putnam**

**375 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014**

**9780399155345 \$24.95**

**Angela Scott**

**Reviewer**

**As circulation staff at my Canton Public Library, the first time I had heard of Kathryn Stockett's first book, The Help, was when a patron asked me to put it on hold for them. I looked it up in the computer and a phenomenal number of 47 people waiting for it. I looked up at the patron and told her disappointedly how long she may have to wait for the book, but she smiled about the fact that we carried the book in stock and said "Put me on the list." Released on February tenth two-thousand-ten by Amy Einhorn books, I have seen this book cross my counter to be checked out at least once a day. I knew that I had to read it and it almost instantly became one of my new favorite books.**

**Now, close your eyes and breathe deep to take yourself to a place in the deep, south cotton plantations of Mississippi. The year is 1962 and integration has hardly begun. Most white women rarely finish college because their place is in the home. They become young mothers, some more successful than others and many can afford the luxury to hire help. Slaves have been free for over one hundred years, but something that has not died with slavery is the typical mammy figure, a big strong black woman that takes care and nurtures the children of white women.**

**Most likely, the mammy figure is who Stockett was referring to as The Help. The definite article "the" in front of the word "help" universalizes each individual black woman, making much less than minimum wage, into one substance representing the mistreatment of African Americans in the time of segregation. Or could Stockett have been referring to the rising help for these women?**

**One young white woman, Skeeter goes against the grain. Even though she grew up on one of the biggest and most fabulous cotton plantations in Mississippi her attachment to the maid that raised her, Constantine, has produced sympathy for the other maids around town. Much against her mother's wishes Skeeter graduates college and decides to become a writer. Paying special attention to how her friends treat their black maids after they proclaim they need a separate bathroom, Skeeter decides to interview maids and collect stories about their work. Few maids agree to help and as the book goes on naive Skeeter realizes more and more how dangerous of a project this book is, especially when she learns in her town a young black man was blinded just for accidentally using the wrong toilet. However, if Skeeter's project succeeds than this book may become a breakthrough in integration.**

Stockett tells this tale using the first person of three different voices, two from maids, Aibileen and Minnie, and one from Skeeter. Not only does she succeed in creating these three separate women distinct personalities, but she also manages the southern maid's dialect. It took me about two pages to get used to it, but that problem was easily solved as I said the words out loud to myself and it brought this time, these characters and their way of speaking alive. It is truly an original style. As Skeeter says within the book "Everyone knows how we white people feel, the glorified Mammy figure who dedicates her whole life to a white family. Margaret Mitchell covered that. But no one ever asked Mammy how she felt about it." Well, everyone knows how the mammy character spoke, but until now I have never seen her dialect tell a story in first person. It is absolutely beautiful and astonishing that Stockett has pulled this off.

This book also shines in originality from many of the books I have read during times of segregation, because it demonstrates the complicated relationship between the maid and her employer, or the maid and the child she raised. It shows the maid did not necessarily hate her employer and the employer did not always treat her help bad. In fact, Stockett has succeeded in showing the complication of relationships between women in general, whether it is a class difference between Miss Hilly and her ex-boyfriend Mister Johnny's wife, or the respectful admiration Skeeter must carry for her mother, simply because she is her mother no matter how she has treated anyone.

I will not give the ending away, but let me just say this it is open ended. Not in a way where I was left unsatisfied or unhappy with the results, but in a way where I enjoyed reading Kathryn Stockett's book so much I would not mind a sequel.

**And Picasso Painted Guernica**

**Alain Serres**

**Allen Unwin**

**PO Box 8500, 83 Alexander Street, NSW 2065, Australia**

**9781741759945 AU\$35.00**

**Ann Skea, Reviewer**

**<http://ann.skea.com>**

This is a slim, large-format, richly illustrated book with a dramatic cover, but it is far more than the coffee-table pictorial browser that it might seem. For one thing Alain Serres tells the story of Picasso and his creation of Guernica in prose which is spare, poetic and powerful, and his Spanish has been translated into English by Rosalind Price with no loss of that poetic power.

Serres begins his story with Thomas Edison's demonstration of electric light. The year is 1881 and "Night will get brighter on Earth". New fast trains mean that "the distance between countries is shrinking" and there is new hope for unity and accord in the world. And in Spain, on 25 October, 1900, Pablo Ruiz Picasso is born.

A picture of doves painted when Picasso was eight years old, shows his precocious talent. His own self-portrait and the portraits of his mother and father, painted when he was fourteen, are amazingly sophisticated. And his picture of a child holding a white dove, which has become one of his most famous and popular images, was painted when he was just nineteen. So talented was he, that his father, a painter and teacher at the School of Fine Arts in Barcelona, gave up his own artistic efforts when Picasso was thirteen and presented his son with his palette and brushes. By the time of his death, Picasso had created more than 30,000 works of art.

Central to this book, however, is the masterpiece, Guernica, and the way in which Picasso came to create this enormous, intense and shocking response to the horrors which devastated a small Basque market-town on Monday 26 April, 1937. In this book, the colourful pages of Picasso's early work give

way to sombre reproductions of photographs, newspaper cuttings, sketches, and constantly changing images of bulls, horses, people. And the text tells with stark simplicity the story of the bombing, strafing and death inflicted by German and Italian planes on defenceless civilians. Picasso's reaction to this destruction and pain hurled him into a fury of creation which produced the great canvas, Guernica, which he exhibited at the International Exhibition in Paris later that year. Serres repeats the telling story of a German visitor to the exhibition who pointed at Picasso's harrowing depiction of the Guernica massacre and asked "Did you do this?". "No", replied Picasso, "You did". And Serres looks closely at the imagery of the painting and suggests some of the meanings to be found there.

This was not the end of the story. Picasso never forgot his dream of world peace and, as war receded his paintings (and the pages of the book) grow more colourful. Light and lightness and playfulness returned to his work. His aim, Serres says was "to create, the way children create": to lighten the darkness, as Edison's lamp did, but with "lamps no one can extinguish" - art works that "speak to men, women and children" of hope.

The story of Guernica is never ending. The creation of the painting and all its stages and development were documented by Dora Marr, and her photographs together with Picasso's sketches, plans, changes and the finished canvas now hang in the Reina Sophia National Art Museum in Madrid, Spain. Images from the work have appeared, and still appear, in anti-war protests and demonstrations around the world, and the life-size tapestry reproduction of the painting, commissioned by Nelson Rockefeller in 1955, hangs permanently outside the Security Council at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. Just last year, the tapestry was loaned to the Whitechapel Galley in London, where the painting had hung in 1939 to raise support for the Republicans fighting in the Civil War in Spain, and its anti-war message is still as strong and as necessary as ever.

At the heart of Serres book, a four-page foldout of Picasso's painting conveys some of the shocking impact of the huge original: enough to let us share some of the anger, horror and despair Picasso was feeling as he created this moving masterpiece.

**Standard Operating Procedure**  
**Philip Gourevitch & Errol Morris**  
The Penguin Press  
375 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014  
9781594201325 \$25.95

**G. Richard Bozarth**  
Reviewer

**Standard Operating Procedure is an excellent companion for The Dark Side by Jane Mayer (Doubleday, 2008). Both deal with the war crimes inflicted on WOT (war on terrorism) detainees authorized by the Bush 2 Gang and committed by U.S. intelligence agents and U.S. soldiers. Dark covers all the territory of this national disgrace. SOP concentrates on the war crimes committed at Abu Ghraib and the U.S. troops who did the dirty deeds that were authorized by W. Bush. SOP wants the reader to understand who these now infamous enlisted soldiers were and why they did what they did, and also to understand that punishing only them is a terrible injustice.**

**It is amazing Abu Ghraib was selected at all. If the U.S. wanted the liberated Iraqis to believe our intentions in Iraq were benign, the prison where so many atrocities had been committed by Saddam Hussein's thugs should have been blown up the day after Saddam's statue was toppled in Firdous Square in Baghdad. Using it as a U.S. prison and then committing atrocities there were incredible PR blunders. Even B2G, which may have broken the U.S. record for incompetence, should not have been that incompetent. Were Iraqi hearts and minds supposed to be won because the atrocities our troops and agents committed were less atrocious than what Saddam's thugs had done?**

The decision to engage in war crimes and the twisted exegesis of the lawyers assigned to create the illusion of legality for violating the Geneva Conventions on torturing POWs are covered, but not extensively. These are good chapters that have the purpose of establishing without doubt that the war crimes committed by the U.S. soldiers at Abu Ghraib were authorized by their commander in chief and accepted all the way down their chain of command. These chapters show that abusing WOT detainees was SOP for the U.S. military and intelligence agencies everywhere. The "enhanced interrogation techniques" were introduced at the WOT detainee prison at Guantanamo Bay. They spread first to Afghanistan and then to Iraq when the U.S. began operating WOT prisons in those countries. The point being made is that the war crimes committed at Abu Ghraib were not isolated incidents committed by a few rogue enlisted soldiers.

One of the unpunished major perpetrators is Captain Carolyn Wood of the 519th Military Intelligence Battalion. She was assigned as the officer in charge of interrogation operations at Abu Ghraib in August 2003 after a tour of duty at the WOT prison on Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan. When Lieutenant Wood arrived at Bagram, she was "under heavy pressure from Washington to extract 'actionable intelligence' from several hundred prisoners who were classified as unlawful combatants. On her arrival, Wood had issued a new interrogation policy to induce these prisoners to talk by allowing a variety of techniques that had no precedent in Army doctrine: isolation for up to thirty days; nakedness; shackling in painful stress positions; sensory deprivation; and the use of barking dogs to induce extreme fear. MP guards were given the task of administering many of these harsh tactics, and some of them accepted their new license with zeal. On Wood's watch, three prisoners were beaten to death.....An Army investigation eventually found that violent abuse was blatant and routine at Bagram, and that guards and interrogators who had a taste for beating prisoners, stripping them naked, kicking their genitals, stepping on them, making them lick soldiers' boots, slamming them against walls, pouring water down their throats until they choked, or hanging them in handcuffs from doors and ceilings could do so without fear of reproach."

Did Wood go to prison? No. She was awarded a Bronze Star, promoted to captain, and sent to Abu Ghraib to establish the same interrogation techniques there.

Capt. Wood also did not become one of the disgraced "stars" of Abu Ghraib. That "glory" settled on Sabrina Harman, Javal Davis, Megan Ambuhl, Charles Graner, Ivan Frederick, and Lynndie England. Their unit was the 372nd Military Police Company of the U.S. Army Reserves. They were combat MPs, which meant their mission was "to support the operations of front-line forces - to conduct route reconnaissance, escort convoys, run patrols, go on raids." That meant they did not know anything about operating prisons, and were assigned to Abu Ghraib without any training to do that and no written SOP. The MPs assigned to the military intelligence block were told they were the flunkies of the MI interrogators. They were initially shocked by the abuses inflicted on the MI detainees, but were told it was MI SOP and essential to extracting the intelligence desperately need to win the WOT. Chapter 8 is very good about how the MPs surrendered to the moral degradation and participated in the war crimes their leaders wanted them to commit.

The Abu Ghraib war crimes might have been successfully concealed if photos had not been taken by some of the "stars". If they had only talked about abusing detainees to reporters or Criminal Investigation Department agents, the atrocities might have been sufficiently covered up so that they never became Big News. "Without the photographs there would have been no scandal." When these photos became public, a successful Plan A cover up (keeping it a secret) became impossible. The Plan B cover up was to persuade U.S. citizens and the rest of the world that the war crimes were an aberration committed by a few rogue enlisted soldiers. The goal was using their punishment to create the illusion of justice being achieved, thus ending the news value of the story. Unfortunately for the Army and B2G, the photos made Abu Ghraib Big News, which meant Plan B inevitably had to collapse and the full extent of inflicting war crimes on WOT detainees would be exposed. The collapse and exposure has not

done the Abu Ghraib "stars" any good, so the smart thing would have been taking no photos. Why didn't they do the smart thing?

Sabrina Harmon was one of the photographers. She actually did very little to any of the MI detainees. She was often used as a "force multiplier" by being present when naked detainees were tied up. Her job was simply laughing at them because it was believed that a woman laughing at them while they were naked was an unendurable humiliation for Arab men. The infamous photo of Harmon leaning over a murdered MI detainee while grinning and giving a thumbs-up was just a humorous stunt after an MI interrogator had murdered the detainee during an interrogation. She said she was certain crimes were being committed at Abu Ghraib and had started taking photos because she did not think she would be believed without photos to prove it. She had this fantasy of being an undercover reporter who would expose Abu Ghraib with her words and photos on CNN after she rotated back to the U.S. It was a way that allowed her to live with the guilt of her participation.

Charles Graner was another photographer. He participated in using "enhanced interrogation techniques", but was afraid they were illegal. He also wanted photos as proof that the war stories he would tell later were true. He had been in the Gulf War and had been upset that his war stories had not been believed, especially by the VA doctors who denied him PTSD treatment. This time he would have evidence. His concern about legality made him show his photos to superior officers. Their response was that the MPs worked for the interrogators and, if the intelligence guys said it was legal, it was legal. What was a corporal supposed to do?

PFC Lynndie English became one of the icons of Abu Ghraib because Graner was her boyfriend and he liked putting her in the photographs, which often were staged for amusement instead of being photos of actual war crimes being committed. One of her infamous photo sessions involved the images that seemed to show her dog-walking and dragging an MI detainee nicknamed Gus. She didn't do anything to Gus except pose the way Graner wanted for the photos. The worse thing that happened to Gus was being required to pretend he was being abused by English. Yes, it was abuse, but not the war crime the photo seems to depict.

SOP makes a good point about the infamous photos being images of events that did not always tell what really was happening. Some of the photos were artificial events involving only the abuse of the MI detainees being required to pose like the MPs wanted them to. Some of the photographed detainees were insane and had self-inflicted the physical damage shown in the photos. Some of the photos captured events that actually were much less horrifying. One of the most infamous photos was of the detainee nicknamed Gilligan, the one showing him standing on a box, hooded, wearing a poncho, arms out, and electric wires attached. Seeing this photo is to automatically believe he's being tortured by electric shocks. However, the wires were inactive props and what was really being done was keeping him awake and scaring him by making him believe he might be electrocuted. Some of the photos did capture actual war crimes. The photos of the human pyramid and forced masturbation depicted punishment inflicted on seven men suspected of starting a riot that injured an MP with a thrown brick. This incident later troubled some of the participants enough for them to tell their senior NCOs and officers, who gave their seal of approval by being indifferent and taking no action.

The photos became public and ignited the public scrutiny that eventually revealed that "enhanced interrogation techniques" were approved by W. Bush, though the person who should receive the most blame is Veep Cheney, who is still vigorously defending the legality, necessity, effectiveness, and morality of the war crimes W. Bush authorized under his disastrous influence. Why Joe Darby dropped the dimes he had gathered to CID Special Agent Tyler Pieron on 13 January 2004 has more to do with payback than his moral outrage. Doing it allowed him to punish Graner for dumping English to become Ambhul's boyfriend and for harassing him about his weight problem by calling him "Fat Bastard". He would also get payback on Frederick for the same kind of harassment. England said she believed another motivation was to get the promotion he received after exposing the abuses, because Darby had

been frustrated by his failures to get promoted (he couldn't pass the physical training tests).

One thing I like about SOP is it never lets the reader forget that punishing only a small number of low-rank MPs is a terrible injustice. We must never forget that "no soldier above the rank of sergeant ever served jail time. No civilian interrogators ever faced legal proceedings. Nobody was ever charged with torture, or war crimes, or any violation of the Geneva Conventions. Nobody ever faced charges for keeping prisoners naked, or shackled. Nobody ever faced charges for holding prisoners as hostages. Nobody ever faced charges for incarcerating children who were accused of no crime and posed no known security threat. Nobody ever faced charges for holding thousands of prisoners in a combat zone in constant danger of their lives [refers to the mortars fired at Abu Ghraib]. Nobody ever faced charges for arresting thousands of civilians without direct cause and holding them indefinitely, incommunicado, in concentration camp conditions. Nobody ever faced charges for shooting and killing prisoners who were confined behind concertina wire. And nobody has ever been held to account for murdering al-Jamadi in the Tier 1B [where MI detainees were kept] shower, although Sabrina Harmon initially faced several charges for having photographed him there."

SOP asks, "If you fight terror with terror, how can you tell which is which?" The answer is simple: there is no difference. It also asks, "But what happened to command responsibility? There would have been no liberties to be taken, and no extremes to go to, if anybody had wanted to keep the MPs in check. Nobody wanted to because at Abu Ghraib lawlessness was the law." Those violations of the Geneva Conventions were authorized by the MPs' commander in chief and accepted all the way down their chain of command to the senior NCOs of their unit, hence SOP makes the case for punishing every person above the punished MPs. The prosecution of these war crimes should have started at the top with W. Bush and Veep Cheney. The MPs should have been the last instead of the first to be punished. Those who believe the U.S. government should not seek justice all the way up to the top of the chain of command because it would cause a Category 5 shitstorm need to read this book.

Standard Operating Procedure is an important contribution to the history of the Iraq War and should be considered a must-read by every person who wants to understand it.

**From Mistress to Minister**

Nel Endaluz Prentiss

Sage Press

40960 California Oaks Road, Suite 369, Murrieta, California 92562

9780981953816 \$14.95 [www.sagepress.us](http://www.sagepress.us)

Janet Ravas

Reviewer

Could be a multi-cultural 'film' starring the Pitts.

Guardianship of life in a civilized society is a monumental responsibility, especially for those whose window to the world has blinds on both sides that shields the Good, the Bad and even the Pangals. They only have a cloistral view that offers no real education by application: a tried and tested experience of the consequences of the before when they toss caution to the wind, and the what ifs after they taste the forbidden fruit.

"From Mistress to Minister" by Nel Endaluz Prentiss is as a whole, exceptionally narrated chronologically with no stones unturned when it comes to details, in fact, too much repetitive details to the point where a reader would toss it aside or in my case, I take deep breaths to keep me on her road to victory. Although the book is an autobiography, I don't believe it is necessary to be so self 'how-do-it' and then reminded in future scenes. This is an adult read; in fact, numerous R-rating events. There is just no room for the reader to use their own 'soap' which will also remove the stains of addiction.



Nevertheless Nel was robbed of her innocence and necessarily not by choice; moreover the adult role models in her life who branded as Pangal (ugly), and then added more salt to the wound by repeatedly flaunting their favoritism to her same gender sibling in the public eye. A big Ouch - huge stain for any child, but then she found the way to self-heal, mast the words by showing her real God-given gift: A beautiful mind, one that academically assures every educator their career choice was the right road.

Although all guardians want the best for those who they guide, 'rose bushes' in an adolescence stage should stay rooted in their own soil until they have matured; are strong enough to withstand being transplanted from the field to another place with 'divine' surroundings. I would not have separated my child from their soulful best friend; those bonds become the pillars to support the weights of sorrows, and nor would I have also chosen the higher educational institution, because I now can afford it to pay the tuition, and then expect for them to not feel the peer pressure of having to travel to and from by 'donkey' verse their other classmates standard transportation: Daddy's gifts of sports cars and chauffeurs.

On the other hand, I do not want to paint a picture that author Prentiss was deprived of family love, kindness and morality. Those were obvious passages she fondly wrote about, even though, she was not privy to all of the '31 flavors' - but fortunately her childhood was blessed with the perks of happiness. Unfortunately when a person is exposed to more than they have rightfully earned, born into as well as lack the maturity to mindfully realize the gap between need and want is only separated by the stains from starvation.

In Nel's case mixed with her ever-changing human female physiology, the sprout of her endowments became more of an antidepressant to treat her scarred self-confidence of not being pangal. She was further injected with the assurance by her first love, whose adoration that probably started out to be just another notch on the bedpost, united two in addiction: Nel's need for emotional love, Leon's physical (no playwright would have to add to spice up the scenes) and all blended with trappings of wealth; and mainly her life began a hovering over the devil's pit.

As Nel recants her life in "From Mistress to Minister", it may seem like the 'pit' was always within a few steps before she was finally 'raised up' and put on the righteous path that formed a new unity of two, and then two more gifts sprouted, but I am quite confident Nel was never without a higher support. He gave her a monumental prize to love, to care for and all her tears of sorrow became the water as her rose came to full bloom on October 6, 2006. But there still remains a question in my mind. The house Nel built in her heart has many rooms now that hold all her treasures acquired in the right place, but I sense hidden out of sight is a door that only one earthly man can truly unlock. If not, she would have honored his wishes and torn up his letter and not have exposed it to the public. That act is not closure, in a way willful, but still a heart yearning to feel the pounds of youth, the softness of love that finally comes as a union ages, with the self-assurance of no more hurt; moreover hearts that finally bond at the right time.

**Winning in a Man's World**

Renee Weisman

Xlibris

1663 Liberty Drive, Suite 200, Bloomington, IN 47403

9781436364225 \$19.99

**Kelly Martinez**

Reviewer

As a single mother juggling career and family, I am always on the lookout for new books to help me advance my career and regain balance in my life. **Winning in a Man's World** is full of terrific tips on

everything from dealing with difficult coworkers, getting the attention and credit you deserve, negotiating for yourself, getting organized, and achieving your overall career goals. The book describes issues you may come across as a woman (or man!) in the workplace and provides "Try it Now" exercises and "Renee's Rules", to apply to these issues in order to get the results you want. I especially enjoyed the examples about raising a family while working her way up through the corporate world. Through entertaining examples, the author reminds us that she is a real person - mother, teacher, engineer, mentor, and business woman. There are a few chapters that I have even found myself going back to for a 'refresher course'. Great tips and interesting and insightful exercises!

Renee is also the author of a new ebook, *5 Ways to Get a Man to Listen*.

**Await Your Reply**

**Dan Chaon**

**Ballantine Books**

**The Random House Publishing Group**

**1745 Broadway, 18th Floor, New York, NY 10019**

**9780345476029 \$25.00**

**Jessica Radzak**

**Reviewer**

Who are you? Is your identity static, defined only by your past experiences? Or is it dynamic, able to be created, altered, or eliminated as you move along in life? *Await Your Reply*, the new novel by National Book Award finalist Dan Chaon, raises questions about and suggests implications of modern identity while weaving together the story of three characters trying to figure out their own identities.

*Await Your Reply* follows three ordinary characters in less than ordinary circumstances. Ryan, a college sophomore, finds out he is adopted and disappears from his crumbling life to enter the world of identity theft. Lucy decides to leave her sleepy hometown, swept away by her charming high school teacher who promises her adventure and fortune, only to end up in a motel in Nebraska. Miles has given up living his own life, and possibly his hold on his sanity, in a desperate search to find his long-lost, possibly schizophrenic, twin brother.

Chaon uses the mundane details of the characters' lives - Ryan sitting in a rental car office; Lucy watching movies in the motel; Miles at his job in a novelty shop - to cultivate the core essence of the novel. These meaningless details show that "most people . . . [have] identities that [are] so shallow that you could easily manage a hundred of them at once." A person's identity is so often defined by one's job, hobby, or favorite movie - superficial attributes that can easily be culled from an Internet search - that anyone with a little determination could actually maintain several separate and disparate identities at the same time. It's the ramifications of these multiple identities that propel the story to its satisfying conclusion.

As is often the case in real life, the small details in *Await Your Reply* can easily be overlooked by the reader as insignificant. It is not until the end that the reader is able to put everything together and realize what's been happening the whole time. *Await Your Reply* is a novel that begs to be reread as soon as the reader finishes the final page.

**The New York Regional Mormon Singles Halloween Dance: A Memoir**

**Elna Baker**

**Dutton Adult**

**Boston**

**9780525951353 \$25.95**

**Stephanie Sortwell**  
Reviewer

**Elna Baker is unselfishly raw and honest in this unique memoir of a single Mormon girl living in the Big Apple. She reveals the struggles of remaining devout in her Mormon upbringing all while falling in love, fooling around, and even having -- gasp -- a lesbian roommate. Add to this mix a few quirky jobs as well as a boob job, and you have the inner chaos of the sweet, innocent, conservative Mormon girl trying to get by in a liberal New York City.**

**I chose to read this crazy-sounding book because I was drawn to the word Halloween. I have always had an interest in other religions, but to see the words "Halloween" and "Mormon" together in the title of a book was all it took to garner my interest. The book was a quick read that kept me interested for hours, and there were literally no slow parts throughout the detailed-filled chapters. The author's narration paints a scene so vibrant you will think you are actually going through everyday struggles with her. She is also quite the comedian, and I heard myself laughing several times throughout my reading. This story takes the reader on a journey that ultimately reveals the meaning of a personal relationship with God. Mormons and non-Mormons alike, all will find this cleverly sarcastic memoir a book to read over and over again.**

**The Shadows of Youth: The Remarkable Journey of the Civil Rights Generation**

**Andrew B. Lewis**

**Hill and Wang**

**18 West 18th Street, New York, NY 10011**

**9780809085989 \$28.00**

**Susan M. Andrus**  
Reviewer

**Having grown up in the sixties, Lewis's book, *The Shadows of Youth*, jumped right off the library shelf and into my arms. Living through those years, I often wondered what was really happening in other parts of the country, knowing that the news reports could only tap into the sensational news-bytes for a half-hour program. Lewis showed what the youth in my generation were actually doing to make change happen in just a few short years. As Lewis says, "The sit-ins that began on February 1, 1960, inaugurated the era of mass protest, the most dramatic phase of the civil rights movement and a model for other protest movements throughout the 1960s and beyond."**

**By focusing on the personalities who organized the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), including Julian Bond, Stokely Carmichael, Bob Moses, John Lewis, Marion Barry, Bob Zellner, and Diane Nash, Lewis followed their activities and showed how the movement affected civil rights throughout the world in the four decades since their first sit-in to the election of Barak Obama.**

**Although I lived during that time and remember most of the events in this book, *The Shadows of Youth* read like a thriller from beginning to end keeping me wanting to know what would happen next. These young people postponed their educations, took life-threatening chances, went to jail, and suffered from anxieties that most of us will never experience. We owe them a debt of gratitude for changing our world.**

**Andrew B. Lewis has taught at the University of Richmond, Hamilton College, and Wesleyan University, and, with Julian Bond, is coeditor of *Gonna Sit at the Welcome Table: A Documentary History of the Civil Rights Movement*.**

**Diablo: The Texans**  
**Georgina Gentry**

**Kensington Publishing Corporation  
119 West 40th Street, New York, New York 10018  
9781420108507 \$6.99 1-800-221-2647**

**Suzie Housley, Reviewer  
<http://bookreviewsbysuzie.wordpress.com>**

**A half-breed Santee Sioux was born to a white woman. Since his birth he had not been accepted in either the white world or by the Sioux culture. His white mother had been raped by a Sioux Warrior; in humiliation of being violated she ended her life. Her family couldn't stand to raise the cause of her death and turned the child over to the Sioux's. The Sioux's wouldn't accept him as an equal and made him serve as their slave; they called him He Not Worthy of a Name.**

**At the age of fourteen, He Not Worthy of a Name managed to escape from the Sioux. He set out to find some place that would accept him. He traveled for days; close to starving to death he killed a cow to stay alive. While he was eating it raw, a group of cowboys stumbled upon him. He feared they would end his life for what he had done to their steer. He was surprised that they offered him their friendship and invited him into their camp. They offered him a part of their meal and spoke of returning to their homeland of Texas.**

**The rustler cowboys were the first people who had ever shown any type of kindness to He Not Worthy of a Name. His new found friendship was short lived for his friends were cattle rustlers. The owner of the herd caught them by surprise and ordered them to hang for their crimes. He Not Worthy of a Name watched in horror as their lives ended in a matter of seconds. The owner allowed him to live, but demanded he become a walking billboard for all other would be rustlers who thought about stealing from him. He had a group of his men hold him down and tortured him, as a lasting reminder they branded one side of his face.**

**Years later, He Not Worthy of a Name was given the name Diablo which meant Devil. He was known as one of the fastest guns in the west. Revenge was a poison that ran freely through Diablo's blood. Each time he looked at his reflection in a mirror he was reminded of that one horrific day. He vowed one day soon to hunt down those responsible for his pain and suffering and end their lives in a slow agonizing death.**

**Diablo's chance at vengeance came when the person responsible for scarring him hired a group of gunslingers to run settlers off farm land in Wyoming. Diablo seen this as a perfect opportunity to get close to his worst enemies he plotted out each one of their deaths to ensure they were slow and painful. As he narrowed it down to the main ringleader, Hurd Kruger he decided to torture him by stealing his most prized possessions, one of them being his intended fiancée Sunny Sorrenson.**

**Sunny is the type of woman Diablo can only dream about for her beauty would never accept a scarred beast such as himself. As the days of her captivity progresses Diablo finds it hard to resist her kindness and charm. Will he allow himself to take of her forbidden fruit? Or will his will to seek revenge against Hurd blind him from the love that could be his?**

**Diablo - The Texans is one of the best historical romances this reviewer has ever experienced. I fell in love with each one of the characters. When they hurt I felt their pain, when they rejoiced I was right there with them. Georgina Gentry stand up and take a bow, you have written a romantic masterpiece.**

---

**Amy's Bookshelf**

**Haunted Destiny****Kelly Abell****CreateSpace/Hearts on Fire Books****www.hearsonfirebooks.com****9781449512347 \$19.99**

Up to now Destiny's life as a teenager has been a happy one; she has a nice home, lots of friends and she's even a cheerleader in school, until the horrible day a car accident claimed the lives of her parents and baby brother. Not only is Destiny grief-stricken and guilt-ridden, her life as she knew it is gone. Suffering from a reoccurring nightmare of her mothers' decapitated head screaming at her to save her brother, Destiny wakes up to face her new life; an unfamiliar town, no friends and living in a trailer with a bizarre grandmother she knows nothing about. You would think life couldn't get more complicated for Destiny, right? But it does.

When Destiny meets Amy and her boyfriend, Jake, she hopes to become friends with ease, but right away Destiny notices that Amy has no intentions of befriending her; she's too worried that Destiny will steal her boyfriend. But Jake, on the other hand, is determined to make Destiny his friend, no matter what. Destiny is miserable living in the town of Arcadia. She learns that some of the townspeople think that her Grandmother is a witch because she's the owner of The Mystic Cat Bookstore and Palm Reading business in town, plus she can see and talk to ghosts. What Destiny never expected was gaining this "gift", as her Grandmother calls it. It's also the reason her Mother severed connections with her Grandmother, turning her back on the ability to help ghosts who are stuck in limbo and also the grieving families seeking closure.

Will Destiny be able to embrace her newly acquired "gift" and accept her calling as a Ghost Whisperer? Or will she follow her Mother's path, tuning out the otherworldly cries for help that's haunting her? Destiny will soon have to make a choice when she encounters an evil entity that is hell bent on destroying Amy and her entire family.

Haunted Destiny is truly a keeper. This amazing page-turner will enchant the reader until the very last page. Kelly Abell has superbly created a fascinating world with vivid characterization, impressive verbal imagery, and an unwavering plot. The emotions exuding from Destiny is heartfelt and sincere and the frustration dealing with Amy is tense and aggravating. Kelly Abell has, in fact, captured the true nature of a teenager experiencing the traumatic event of losing her entire family and having to settle into an unfamiliar new world. This book will absolutely be added to my shelf of books to save and will be recommended to all my readers no matter what genre. Kudos to you Kelly Abell!!

**One Soul For Sale****Cate Masters****Eternal Press****9781926704128 \$5.95 www.eternalpress.ca**

Madelyn is miserably depressed with the direction her life is going; work, dating, the whole aspect of her existence, is spiraling out of control fast. She dreams of becoming a successful artist and someday exhibiting her paintings in the gallery of Whitney Center of Arts and Science. Unfortunately, she is stuck in a dead-end day job working with a prudish boss whom she refers to as "The Evil Dragon Lady", among other deriding names Madelyn has created for her. When her friend and coworker, Gwen teasingly suggests that she auction off her soul on Ubuy, Madelyn decided, what the heck; she was curious as to what would happen. Not even considering the consequences of her actions and the evil she has just attracted to lay claim over her soul. Will Madelyn be powerful enough to endure the tests which stand before her and the terrifying evil raring to take her soul?

One Soul For Sale offers plenty of suspense that will have the reader rapidly devouring the pages

seeking answers. Cate Masters has woven a uniquely intriguing and spine-chilly story about a lonely woman searching for love and ends up bargaining her soul to Satan. Vibrant characters, clever world building and a rich plot makes this tale, *One Soul For sale*, a must read for individuals who desire an immediate skin crawling short story.

Amy J Ramsey, Reviewer  
[www.trinagon.blogspot.com](http://www.trinagon.blogspot.com)

---

## Ben's Bookshelf

**Tears of Stone And My Deal With God**  
Estherleon Schwartz  
Privately Published  
Post Office Box 7488, Beverly Hills, California 90212  
0615286348 \$14.95 [www.estherleon.com](http://www.estherleon.com)

A book with many revelations including the dots . . .

Some books are read because the already words expressed serves as an endorsement about what we found in the first several pages. There are also other visual reasons that come into play, including the cover, the inside pages as they are fanned, and the title. Of course, there is mainly one reason why lovers of the written word choose to read: the pure enjoyment. This self-satisfaction is not one that is acquired overnight; it is a learning process. We have discovered to avoid potential disappointment, what categories, subject matters, and who the author is from past books read, are the guides for our selections. However for myself, there are two other reasons that excite my choices: the mystery of this he/she unknown to me and that personalization felt from the clips I read in the initial scan, but written only by the author.

Estherleon Schwartz's "Tears of Stone And my deal with God" took me on a whirlwind page-turner. Her written style of presentation, which I will call a diary read, but blended with prose, I found to fulfill the descriptions of delightful and charming. I can envision her life being retold on the silver screen, beginning during 1930-40s, all staged on the East Coast and fictionalized with the drama elements found in both a Jacqueline Susann and Sidney Shelton novel, but no scene with the Oreo cookies. I can only picture Joan Collins munching on caviar on crackers, and I am certain any experienced playwright could put together a rags to riches, 'hooker' to holy woman film, that when compared to Alex Hailey's jumbo jet flick by the box office reviewers, Mr. Hailey's would view like they were just crop-dusting on Walton's Mountain, dull as watching cement harden.

"Tears of Stone And my deal with God" is not for one who wants more in their biography and history reads or even those who want and need to reap a gladness in the end that the earthly man and woman are seen riding off into the sun. However, this is a book about only one woman's personal life journey, laced with all of the trails and errors, ups and downs, ins and outs, the starvation for a mother's acknowledgement for her achievements, that love that truly bonds a daughter to a mother as well as son to father, but in the end and although He is not humanly visual, Estherleon "Esty" Schwartz does like Dudley Do-Right and achieves her goal and she is not twenty paces behind Him.

Visit this spiritual songbird at [www.estherleon.com](http://www.estherleon.com) and if possible, your financial as well as other means of support keeps her calling by Him in an endless mode of Goodwill - paying forward.

At The Corner of Music Row and Memory Lane

**Stan Hitchcock**  
**Hitchcock Enterprises, Inc.**  
**111 Shivel Drive, Nashville, Tennessee 37075**  
**9780615270203 \$24.95 www.CornerOfMusicRow.com 615-264-3292**

**Nashville! Nashville!**

**'Little Giant' tells it his way**

Stan Hitchcock's "At The Corner of Music Row and Memory Lane" is a book that recants the many paths he has journeyed on, covering a span of over four decades from the 1960s and through the 1990s, in this book of some 50 plus chapters of stories, his travels records the ins, the outs, ups and downs on what it has taken this 'Little Giant' to not only make it in the country music business, but also this book serves as a testimony, a profoundness of character about of Hitchcock, who in the words by Poet William Wordsworth (1770-1850) once said, "The best portion of a good man's life is his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love." I strongly believe those who have had the opportunity to feel the touch of his 'country wand' - will emphatically agree with me, Stan's humble reminisces of those days gone by, are undoubtedly factual artworks of truth.

Written in a true storyteller style, this book, also packaged graphically with an eye of robust flavor, beckoned me to read it and although it is not one of those literary masterpieces I had to digest in my higher learning years, those with chapters half the size of "At The Corner of Music Row and Memory Lane", however Stan's book gave me a feeling of intimacy. I could see the youngster in myself swaying back and forth in the porch swing; looking out over hills and valleys of a colorful sea of greens, blues and yellows; flows of warm air caressing my skin not covered by my usual white undershirt attire; the intermingling of chatter among my best friend with a few of the Stan's greats as they are now, and him telling about "The Road" (Chapter 34) when touring with Loretta Lynn and Doyle and Teddy, aka the Wilburn Brothers.

There is one male area in life I don't usually convey openly, but "At The Corner of Music Row and Memory Lane" has served as a reminder for what the man in me felt. It has renewed my knowledge with the self-assurance that I have a heart and I had a friend in Him, when the boy in me in 1994 on Father's Day was confronted with a passing of my Dad, my mentor, confidant, do no wrong advisor, and dearest best male friend, which shattered my whole self into a million pieces. And there is another that deals with what men do, one which I know Stan and I can share with the public that has been said by Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) polish-born British writer, sailor and explorer: "I don't like work, no man does, but I like what is in work; the chance to find yourself, not for others, but what no other man can ever know."

In concluding my review, I certainly recommend this book to be certainly on file at the Tennessee State Library for historical content; in fact on every public library's must purchase list. I am also confident this author's "child" can easily appeal to Dolly Parton's "I Will Always Love You" country song crossover "pop" readers of biography and history, and I somewhat have this invisible feeling, the book's publisher will strive to immortalize Stan on the big screen and should have a selection of good friends in "lo-o-o-w places" to cast.

**Mr. Rhythm-A Tribute to Frankie Laine**  
**Richard Grudens**  
**Celebrity Profiles Publishing/Edison & Kellogg**  
**Post Office Box 344, Stonybrook, New York 11790-0344**  
**9780976387763 \$29.95 www.richardgrudens.com 631-862-8555**

**Crosby's 'Historian' spotlights**

## **legendary songster of rhythm**

**Francesco Paolo LoVecchio aka Mr. Steel Tonsils , Old Leather Lungs, and Mr. Rhythm, but mostly known as Frankie Laine (1930-2007) has been given a posthumously validation by the authorship of Richard Grudens in his 2009 book entitled: "Mr. Rhythm-A Tribute to Frankie Lane."**

**Grudens, who has been tagged as "the musical historian of our time" by Kathryn Crosby, wife of Bing, has editorially captured this legendary singer's life with not only endless professional and personal written commendations, but also on exhibit is an abundance of Big Band era-related photos of Laine with a cast of song, movie and industry legends. These photos undoubtedly displays the visual truth that supports Laine's monumental humility, one that I found to even rank higher in achievement than his 1957 blockbuster tune, "That's My Desire."**

**Although I cannot claim the same results as written by Clint Eastwood in the book's Foreword, mainly because of the twenty-something difference in age when a number of Laine's songs of amorousness were at their listening height, but in my audio research, Eastwood's word to describe results; I certainly found his modifier a joy, an unblemished presentation of respect for love-making; in fact, it made my day as well as reinforces his man of dignity persona.**

**As the old cliché goes in reference to evaluation - "...don't judge a book by its cover" - I find beyond the front cover, the book design to be one of amateurish for a person of Laine's global prominence, who left an indelible mark on the performing arts industry. It does not validate by visual appearance, the Kennedy Center Honor class Laine rightfully has earned in my view.**

**The printing, the typeface and the photo reproduction shows distortions and way too dark. Furthermore, I don't get Page 111 with the photo of Laine duplicated in a screen effect. Must had space to fill? In addition, from 204-211 including the back cover, if I was the publisher, I would used separate methods to pump up myself and less participatory display of gratitude; after all, this is a tribute to Frankie Lane. One other note and this does not have to do with the book review, but on Richard Gruden's website, it is noted what I initially referenced by Mrs. Crosby as "the musical historian of our time." Mrs. Crosby comment was in regards to Gruden's 1999 book, "Jukebox Saturday Night." She also added, "Without him, the magic would be lost forever. We all owe him a debt that we can never repay." I suggest the author's PR person to add the periods before/after to show an excerpted passage. Facts are facts.**

**Now back to 'wikipediariichardgruden' on his celebrity profile books. Would I shell out \$29.95 plus tax if I was in a bookstore? Certainly because the historical content prior to Laine's March 2006's "Moments to Remember" PBS appearance, immensely serves as a strong 'I Believe' reading about one man's life travels who are truthfully documented by greats in my assessment, regardless of place on the musical rung or as once said by American playwright Tennessee Williams (1911-1983): "Life is partly what we make it, and partly what it is made by the friends we choose." Undoubtedly, Laine's associations has forth rightfully attested to his "canonized" in the league of the bests, and "Mr. Rhythm - A Tribute to Frankie Lane" illustrates Gruden's rolling, rolling promotional style of keeping those memories alive.**

**Concluding, I repeat to Richard what his mentor and friend always said: "May God Bless" but I add: I will be looking forward to your authorship about Dr. Steven Kiley's lover.**

**Cottonwood Whispers  
Jennifer Erin Valent  
Tyndale House Publishing, Inc.  
351 Executive Drive, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188**



**1414333269 \$12.99 www.tyndale.com www.jennifervalent.com**

**A book with much historical heart**

**I am very much into reading historical novels and Jennifer Erin Valent is a new author in my library of Christian novels.**

**"Cottonwood Whispers" held my interest from the first page. In this historical work, I developed an awareness of the racial tensions in the South in the 1930's. They lived very simple lives, worked hard, took care of their families, and were always there to help others.**

**The Lassiter family was a bright light in a somber world where there were human beings who were capable of doing evil things. Then there were those who looked down on violence, but the good overcomes the evil.**

**It didn't matter if you were black or white, you were treated with respect. You will like the characters because author Valent makes them interesting, thusly keeps you turning the pages. Many lessons can be learned when you take the words to heart.**

**I enjoyed every part of this book and it is a keeper in my library; in fact, I look forward to her next book.**

**My Rustic Sandwiches**

**Sam Sidawi**

**Daniel's Rustic Bread**

**3484 Sources Blvd. Suite 423, Dollard-Des-Omeaux, QC H9B 1Z9**

**9780981293509 \$18.95 www.danielsrusticbread.com 514-684-6598**

**Sam's book is a chef's palette**

**I find it amazing how several hefty handfuls of wheat grains can take on other visual forms in a variety as food staples, especially breads. I find it amazing how hands of mankind when anointed with their touch; the outcome multiplies, thusly producing a thought of 'inquiring minds want to know' while at the same time energizing our human brain waves to follow one's standard route of exploration: Through the lips, over the mountain, and down the valley. Sam Sidawi's book, "My Rustic Sandwiches" is a Bo Derek on all scales that ranks from a one to the Best in Show - a 10 juried evaluation. His book is inexplicably a pleasure trip for the sensory glands.**

**Although I have not participated in a direct exploration taste of one of Sam's creations, his ingredients are well-known to me from previous culinary trips; they do not crush the deliciousness of artisan breads. I find the word like, mouthwatering, would be an understatement that does not adjectively provide an earnest evaluation; of course, awesome, a Ten or simply a want to do it all over again because from an academic as well as from an artistic viewpoint, I remain confident droves of others will agree with me that Sam's sandwiches explode with savvy sensory growls.**

**Like works of art, everyone has their preferred choices - those acquired that come from an active viewing, forming the foundation of what we know will fit, a blend with the assurance of no dissatisfaction. Some of Sam's cuisines which have raised my mouth watertable to flood stage, range from his Grilled Chicken Caesar Wrap with Shaved Parmesan Cheese. I can see it as a definite lunch selection.**

**On the other hand, I find myself in the early afternoon making an outside cafe stop, after viewing an exhibit with my wife at the Musee d' Orsay, and ordering Chef Sidawi's Camembert Cheese on**

Baguette with a tall glass of a chilled white Zinfandel of blended exotic fruits to hold me over for when one of his hot delights, Burger au Poivre with Portenie Mushroom on Sesame Kaiser Bread, makes it debut. This one will reign as the star of the main course served to friends that evening in my 'Cro-Magnon' retreatment center aka Man Cave, a place where Minnesota Fats would go totally eight-balled over the size of the billiard table, a place where Ted Danson would roar with cheers of delight, and a domain where the entertainment activities include not only the sounds and sights from the roll the dice, cards shuffling, darts as they plunge, but also the audio joys of fun times of fellowship in an action.

Undoubtedly to me, "My Rustic Sandwiches" is a book that will get you going to create one of Sam's look-alikes; moreover, a book, aside from a teaching artisan bread aspects and packaged like a classy art gallery, it comes chalked with recipes as well as scrupulous visual aids. It is a book that also overwhelms with creative culinary inspiration. This book supports 'I can do it' and you really don't have to be a Sam Sidawi in the kitchen.

For more information, visit [www.danielsrusticbread.com](http://www.danielsrusticbread.com).

Ben Rayman  
Reviewer

## Bethany's Bookshelf

**Educating Nurses**  
Patricia Benner & Collaborators  
Jossey-Bass  
c/o Wiley  
989 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94103-1741  
9780470457962, \$40.00, [www.josseybass.com](http://www.josseybass.com)

Nurses are the first line of care for many people. "Educating Nurses: A Call for Radical Transformation" is a discussion of the modern state of nursing and how the requirements and what's expected of nurses has rapidly and evolved over the past forty years, and that the standards for modern nurses are highly outdated. The collective minds behind this volume offer many potential solutions that the nursing world should consider and adapt to help those that practice the profession and those who want to get into it should more readily embrace.

**Getting Real: Challenging the Sexualization of Girls**  
Melinda Tankard Reist, editor  
Spinifex Press  
PO Box 212, North Melbourne, VIC 3051  
1876756756 \$18.95 [www.spinifexpress.com.au](http://www.spinifexpress.com.au)

Getting Real: Challenging the Sexualization of Girls is an anthology of essays by learned authors challenging the way in which modern-day culture - from television and magazines to internet sites, and sometimes even news sources - applies an unhealthy level of sexualization upon children at a young age, in essence denying them the opportunity to be children while making them vulnerable to physical and psychological harm. Young girls are the most at risk in a society rife with child beauty pageants, dolls that hype skimpy clothing, and worse, but young boys are also endangered, physically and psychologically, by a society that neglects to take female sexual predators who target boys in junior high seriously. The costs of premature sexualization of children range from anorexia and other forms of

self-harm to teenage pregnancy and lasting psychological obstacles to forming stable, healthy relationships. Individual essays address critical points regarding this issue, including "Good Is the New Bad: Rethinking Sexual Freedom", "Sex on the Street: Outdoor Advertising and the Sexual Harassment of Women", "The Harmful Medicalization of Sexualized Girls" and more. An absolutely invaluable addition to women's studies shelves, and an extremely salient resource in today's world, where children grow up in an increasingly sex-saturated popular culture. Highly recommended.

**The Collected Novels of Paul Laurence Dunbar**  
 Herbert Woodward Martin, Ronald Primeau, & Gene Andrew Jarrett  
 Ohio University Press  
 19 Circle Drive, The Ridges, Athens, OH 45701  
 9780821418598, \$55.00, [www.eurospangroup.com](http://www.eurospangroup.com)

In a time where black Americans simply did not have respect, Paul Lawrence Dunbar made his mark as a man of literature. "The Collected Novels of Paul Laurence Dunbar" is an anthology of the novels written by the titular author, who is better known for his work as a short fiction writer and poet. A popular figure in his day with work that sounds clear through the ages and was revolutionary for its time, "The Collected Novels of Paul Laurence Dunbar" is a solid addition to any literary studies collection focusing on black authors.

**A Short History**  
 Clyve Jones, editor  
 Boydell Press  
 668 Mt Hope Ave, Rochester, NY 14620  
 9781843835035, \$145.00, [www.boydell.co.uk](http://www.boydell.co.uk)

To know Parliament is to know the evolution of the United Kingdom's laws. "A Short History of Parliament: England, Great Britain, The United Kingdom, Ireland, and Scotland" looks at the history of the non-monarchal governing body in the British Isles, the parliament. Looking to its origins and how it has served as a counter balance to the crown, and further. Broken into chapters as different historians offer their own insight on the House of Lords and the House of Commons, its roots of nearly a thousand years ago, to the parliaments of the individual nations and how they converged under the banner of the empire, and so much more. A scholarly and very informative history, "A Short History of Parliament" is a top and must have to any community or college history collection.

**The Abyss of Human Illusion**  
 Gilbert Sorrentino  
 CoffeeHouse Press  
 79 - 13th Avenue NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413-1073  
 9781566892339, \$14.95, [www.coffeehousepress.org](http://www.coffeehousepress.org)

Life is merely a sum of its parts, and the work of Gilbert Sorrentino is the same. "The Abyss of Human Illusion" is a collection of short narratives as Sorrentino puts together a unique and highly entertaining story filled with humor that doesn't hold itself back and leaves readers laughing as well as thinking. "The Abyss of Human Illusion" is a selection that would do well in any literary fiction collection.

**The Fearless Mind**  
 Craig Manning  
 Cedar Fort  
 2373 W. 700 S., Springville, UT 84663  
 9781599553962, \$14.99, [www.cedarfort.com](http://www.cedarfort.com)

Mediocrity is something to be beaten, not settled for. "The Fearless Mind: 5 Essential Steps to Higher

**Performance" is a guide to rising above the pack and overcoming any mental adversity that may be in one's way. Sports psychologist Craig Manning comes to readers with advice in defeating their own personal anxieties and pushing themselves to reach what they seek, no matter what field it's in. "The Fearless Mind" is a choice and highly recommended pick for those who want to conquer their own reservations.**

**Mind Well the Witch**

**Susan Nettleland Gerbi**

**Outskirts Press**

**10940 S Parker Road - 515, Parker, CO 80134**

**9781432740511, \$16.95, [www.outskirtspress.com](http://www.outskirtspress.com)**

**Nothing can possibly go wrong for a witch in Colonial America. "Mind Well the Witch" tells the story of Mindwell Thayer, an aging witch in Massachusetts in 1750. Her adventures are strangely intriguing, as she copes with her problems of being an outcast in her society yet trying to make her own way. "Mind Well the Witch" is an endlessly entertaining and highly recommended read, and a top pick.**

**Susan Bethany**

**Reviewer**

## **Buhle's Bookshelf**

**Free College**

**Doug Hewitt & Robin Hewitt**

**Prufrock Press**

**PO Box 8813, Waco, TX 76714-8813**

**9781593633813, \$14.95, [www.prufrock.com](http://www.prufrock.com)**

**You don't need thousands upon thousands of dollars to get a college education. "Free College Resource Book" is a guide for those who want to attain their higher education, for themselves or for their children. Scholarships, grants, financial aid, government assistance and more as valuable tools for getting someone through college when you don't have the huge wads of cash to toss about for it. An invaluable reference for even those already in college, "Free College Resource Book" is the ultimate and very highly recommended preparational guide.**

**Damaged Goods**

**Gerry Boyle**

**Down East**

**PO Box 679, Camden, ME 04843**

**9780892727964, \$24.95, [www.downeast.com](http://www.downeast.com)**

**The search for the truth is the driving force behind many professions. "Damaged Goods" is the story of freelance reporter Jack McMorrow. When his social worker wife has a standoff with one of her clients, Jack finds himself dragged into a Satanist plot which makes his wife's work a bit more complicated than working with neglected children, as the plot soon drags Jack's family into it as well. "Damaged Goods" is a choice and very highly recommended read that should not be missed for mystery fans.**

**Us**

**Daniel L. Tocchini**

**David C. Cook**

**4050 Lee Vance View, Colorado Springs, CO 80918**  
**9781434764737, \$14.95, www.davidccook.com**

**A little faith can make a good marriage great. "Us: A User's Guide" is a relationship guide taking a Christian approach to strengthening one's marriage and embracing faith to keep that love and marriage strong through the years, while defeating the selfish thinking that tends to consume many relationships as they drag on. "Us" is a choice pick for relationships which seek God to strengthen them.**

**1947**  
**M. Zahir**  
**Trafford Publishing**  
**1663 Liberty Drive, Bloomington, IN 47403**  
**9781426915017, \$15.34, www.trafford.com**

**1947 was not only the start of the Indian Nation, but the start of its closest rival in Pakistan. "1947: A Memoir of Indian Independence" offers one man's perspective on the events that led up to the foundation of an independent Indian nation in 1947. His family split between India and Pakistan, he tells an original perspective on the splitting of the countries and his views on the development since then. "1947" is a top pick for memoir collections focusing on international issues.**

**Willis M. Buhle**  
**Reviewer**

---

## **Burroughs' Bookshelf**

**Boiling Mad!**  
**Sam Lembo**  
**Privately Published**  
**9781608621187, \$27.95**

**Veterans faced hell to make the country what it is today and it saddens them to see it go south. "Boiling Mad!: Memoirs, Musings, and Views of a World War II Veteran" is a collection of memoirs from Sam Lembo, a man who has spent a good chunk of the last hundred years fighting for freedom both in war and on the home front, seeking to encourage people to keep their country in check. With uplifting words and hope among his own fears, "Boiling Mad!" is insightful and recommended reading.**

**The Independent Film Producer's Survival Guide, third edition**  
**Gunnar Erickson, Harris Tulchin, Mark Halloran**  
**Schirmer Trade Books**  
**445 Bellvale Road, PO Box 572, Chester, NY 10918**  
**9780825637230, \$27.95, www.medialawyer.com**

**Art knows no budget, and independent filmmakers know this like no other when lawyers aren't on the payroll. "The Independent Film Producer's Survival Guide: A Business and Legal Sourcebook" is a guide for those independent filmmakers who want to navigate the rough legal mine field of filmmaking so that they may focus on what's truly important - making their film the best it can be. With countless bits of advice from entertainment lawyers, it serves as a complete and comprehensive resource, and a top pick that makes "The Independent Film Producer's Survival Guide" something to be at the hands of any filmmaker who has to watch their money.**

**Next Steps****Jan Warner & Jan Collins****Quill Driver Books****2006 S. mary Street, Fresno, CA 93721****9781884956966, \$14.95, www.quilldriverbooks.com**

Your retirement is your statement that you are set for life, but without being smart about it, that's a tougher statement to make than ever. "Next Step: A Practical Guide to Planning for the Best Half of Your Life" is a guide for readers entering their golden years and want their retirement to act as if is, so they can stay retired through their retirement years and make it so money is the last thing on their minds. Medical care, divorce, nursing homes, and many more elements of twilight life, "Next Step" is a choice pick for those who want to be fully prepared for a fun old aged life.

**By Leaps and Bounds****Louis Daniel Brodsky****Time Being Books****10411 Clayton Road, Suite 201-203, Saint Louis, MO 63131****9781568091310, \$15.95, www.timebeing.com**

Young life is a collection of challenges all its own. "By Leaps and Bounds" is a collection of poetry from a mother reflecting on her daughter growing up and the moments that she sees as time seems to roll on over the years. "By Leaps and Bounds" is a fresh and insightful book of poetry mothers and fathers will relish. "Seeing Eye to Eye": As I rush homeward, after two business days away,/White scintillas fly at my eyes.//The intimidating sky descends, absorbs my passage,/Predominating vision, which bends in endless parallax.//The soul's only hope is in reaching the refuge/That lies in the valley between sense and memory,//Where my wife and child await my return./I follow the snow; it guides me to their searching eyes.

**Seasons of Defiance****Lance Lee****Birch Book Press****PO Box 81, Delhi, NY 13753****9780978997472, \$17.50, www.birchbookpress.info**

Prolific and experienced poet Lance Lee comes to readers with his fourth collection of poetry, "Seasons of Defiance" . His thoughts and musings about life and the lessons you learn day to day, his verse is honest and insightful, giving the reader much to think about. "Seasons of Defiance" is well worth considering for poetry lovers. "A Thundercloud on a Hill in Maine": I saw a thundercloud lean on a near, steep hill:/ when it rolled downwards I bolted south/with my loved ones/as it came on faster than I thought possible,/swallowing its brilliances.

**Patience****Eknath Easwaran****Nilgiri Press****PO Box 256, 3600 Tomales Road, Tomales, CA 94971****9781586380458, \$9.95, www.nilgiripress.org**

If you can endure life, you can endure anything. "Patience: A Little Book of Inner Strength" is a book outlining the importance of patience and how empowering one's own patience can do wonders for facing their life. Patience is wisdom, and author Eknath Easwaran comes to readers with many uplifting aspirations that will help readers take patience as the virtue that it is. "Patience" is a top pick and very highly recommended read for self-help collections.

**In Celebration of Simplicity****Penelope Wilcock****Monarch Books****c/o Kregel****733 Wealthy SE Grand Rapids MI 49503****9780825463143, \$13.99, www.kregel.com**

Simple is easy to understand by definition, and it is what life should strive to be. "In Celebration of Simplicity: The Joy of Living Lightly" is a guide to embracing a simpler life of simple faith, simple food, and a simple routine. Penelope Wilcock elaborates on how one can move to embracing this train of thought to lose the complications of their life. For those who hurt their brain in the complexity of their normal routine, "In Celebration of Simplicity" is a choice and highly recommended pick, not to be missed.

**Sex, Sinners, & Hippies****Susan Zuber-Chall****Booksurge****7290-B Investment Drive, Charleston, SC 29418****9781439248195, \$15.95**

A hippy was a bit of all the cliches really. "Sex, Sinners, & Hippies" is a memoir of one of these hippies as Susan Zuber-Chall reflects on her own time in the world of peace, love, and revolution, as she reflects on the many things she experienced during the height of the hippy movement of the sixties and early seventies, granting first person insight into this world and everything around it. "Sex, Sinners, & Hippies" is an intriguing and enticing read, highly recommended.

**Why?****Mandeep Khera****Ozark Mountain Publishing****PO Box 754, Huntsville, AR 72740****9781886940673, \$13.00, www.ozarkmt.com**

All questions can be boiled down to one word - why? "Why?: Answers to Life's Most Important Question" is a spiritual inspirational guide aimed at helping readers find their faith in life, whatever it may be and look into finding the many answers in one's life that seem to elude and puzzle them in their pursuit of life's many questions "Why" is a fine read for seekers of many answers, highly recommended.

**Choices****Valorie Cunningham****Xlibris****1663 South Liberty Drive, Bloomington, IN 47403-5161****9781441592323, \$19.99, www.xlibris.com**

Through history lives are intertwined with each other, through one generation to the next. "Choices" tells the story of a series of families as their lives go from the civil war to modern ethnic cleansing in the sadder portions of the world. In the quest for purpose in life, "Choices" tells the story of trying to make one's own, and author Valorie Cunningham does well in letting those stories out.

**John Burroughs****Reviewer**

---

## Carson's Bookshelf

**Edmund Fitzgerald**  
**Elle Andra-Warner**  
**North Shore Press**  
**PO Box 26, 103 W 1st, Grand Marais, MN 55604**  
**0974020737, \$9.95, www.northshorepress.com**

The Edmund Fitzgerald has become part of the folklore of the Great Lakes. "Edmund Fitzgerald: The Legendary Great Lakes Shipwreck" delves into the history of the ship, detailing the events that led to the wreckage, the aftermath as people tried to figure out what led to the ships demise and how recovery efforts have proved far more than difficult than expected. "Edmund Fitzgerald" is an ideal read for those curious about the ship and its legend.

**Hines Sight**  
**Frazer Hines**  
**Telos**  
**c/o Fitzhenry & Whiteside, LTD**  
**311 Washington Street, Brighton, MA 02135-3303**  
**9781845839987, \$TBA, www.frazierhines.co.uk**

The British love their icons of television just as much as the Americans love theirs. "Hines Sight: The Life and Loves of One Britain's Favourite Sons" is a memoir of Frazer Hines, star of television in countless British sitcoms and television shows, as he reflects on his television career and becoming an early television celebrity when the television began to take hold in the United Kingdom. "Hines Sight" is a fine and recommended read for those looking into British television.

**Running the Table**  
**Jackie T. Shirley**  
**Publish America**  
**PO Box 151, Frederick, MD 21705-0151**  
**9781448985005, \$27.95, www.publishamerica.com**

Becoming the best of the best isn't something limited to only a single sex. "Running the Table: The Story of Tama Thunder, Indian Princess" tells the story of the titular character and her journey to become the best pool player in America, as she claws her way up through the women's ranks, and has no intention of stopping at that when she peers through at sees that pool may not be something that needs to be divided by gender. "Running the Table" is an ideal novel for the women who happens to enjoy billiards.

**Simone's Secret**  
**Pat Matuszak**  
**Living Ink Books**  
**6815 Shallowford Road, Chattanooga, TN 37421**  
**9780899578767, \$12.99**

Finding the truth is a hard job, but a little help goes a long way. "Simone's Secret" is the second book of the Angel Light series, following Simone as she tries to find her mother who has been written off as in Paris on business, but Simone realizes it is something far more sinister, and finds herself hot on her trail. But she's not alone, as something divine has it out to help her on her mission. "Simone's Secret" is a fine read for young fiction readers who have a thing for angels.



**Witch Dance****Glenna Luschei****Presa Press****PO Box 792, Rockford, MI 49341****9780980008173, #13.95, www.presapress.com**

Words can be a song all their own without music. "Witch Dance" is a collection of new and selected poems from Glenna Luschei, bringing forth vivid verse and thought. A farmer by trade, her thoughts are not exclusively what one would expect out of a farm girl. "Witch Dance" is a worthy addition to any poetry collection. "Cottage": Whatever tramped over the shingles/I know it wasn't your ghost./You didn't believe/in the afterlife/and you wouldn't dare/and you wouldn't dare/scare me.//But at five AM a luscious breeze/drifted pass/I thought of you.

**Lethal People****John Locke****iUniverse****1663 Liberty Drive, Bloomington, IN 47403****9781440151736, \$26.95, www.iuniverse.com**

Evil is greed that knows no remorse. "Lethal People" tells the tale of Donovan Creed, an Assassin who abandons his old ways and finds himself matched off against a ruthless crime boss called Joe DeMeo, a boss who wants nothing more to keep his power, even if it means killing an innocent family and permanently scarring a little girl. An exciting thriller of pitting killers against killers, "Lethal People" is a choice read, highly recommended.

**Come Raw****Lars Rasmussen****Serving House Books****editor@servinghousebooks.com****www.servinghousebooks.com****9780982546222 \$10.00, www.amazon.com**

South African Jazz expert (among his other passions) Lars Rasmussen presents Come Raw, an anthology of twenty brief, bizarrely compelling tales - some haunting, some grim, some poetic, and some a blend of macabre and delight. Many of these stories are only a few pages or less, winding up to a shocking swerve that hits the reader every time. The result is a collection that is perfect for reading on the go, when one might have only a couple minutes or less to spare at a time - though the jumpstart from Come Raw is so powerful it can also be read all at once for even greater impact. Highly recommended.

**The Five Realms trilogy****Nathan Aaseng****Privately Published****www.nathanaaseng.com www.amazon.com**

Award-winning author Nathan Aaseng presents The Five Realms trilogy, a saga set in a mystical world of incredible beauty and dire terror. In "The Cold Flames" (9781440452369, \$12.95) Roland is suddenly and accidentally stranded on a mysterious river island. An avalanche of paranoia surrounds his appearance; he and his companions must flee for their lives, and adapt to the wondrous yet unforgiving world around them or die. In "Realm Law" (9781441418630, \$12.95) these "free realmers" turn their struggle for survival into a dual mission - Delaney must confront their deadly enemy in his home territory, while Roland braves the cruel vicissitudes of the spirit realm. In a world where magic,

science, and spirituality interleave, reality itself is malleable - but how much does this fluidity of being truly matter when one is fighting desperately to stay alive? In "To Shame the Strong" (9781441418654, \$14.00) the very laws of nature vanish, leaving the open world vulnerable to the predations of the supernatural. The free realmers are running out of options to survive against an increasing cascade of immortal dangers, and existence as all who live know it may hang in the balance. A captivating, atmospheric, and suspenseful saga from beginning to end, highly recommended especially to fans of the genre.

Michael J. Carson  
Reviewer

---

## Christy's Bookshelf

**A Killer's Kiss**  
William Lashner  
Harper Collins  
10 East 53rd Street, New York, NY 10022  
9780061143465 \$24.95 [www.harpercollins.com](http://www.harpercollins.com)

Although Philadelphia defense attorney Victor Carl's fiancée left him for another man, the flame for her has never completely diminished. When Julia steps back into his life, claiming regret, Victor once more finds himself falling for a woman who never reveals much about herself. When her husband is murdered, the evidence initially points to Julia, but Victor becomes a person of interest because he was with Julia the night her husband was killed. It isn't long before the case takes a serious turn as more evidence is garnered, with Victor now the primary suspect. Victor's goal is to prove himself and Julia innocent, but his efforts are hampered by a Russian thug and his hit man, who want Victor to find the 1.7 million dollars Julia's husband stole from them.

This seventh installment of the Victor Carl series is as entertaining and fun to read as the first. Victor Carl is a man of cynicism and wit, with a high sense of self-awareness as to his flaws, yet who is not invested in changing his, at times, unethical behaviors. Lashner inserts the usual cast of quirky characters in a plot that moves at a fast pace and is amusing throughout. This reviewer is disappointed to read this series is going on hiatus while Lashner pursues other writing endeavors. Hopefully, fans will see Victor Carl in print again soon.

**Bad to the Bone: Memoir of a Rebel Doggie Blogger**  
Bo Hoefinger  
Citadel Press/Kensington Publishing Corp.  
119 West 40th Street, New York, NY 10018  
9780806531298 \$14.95 [www.kensingtonbooks.com](http://www.kensingtonbooks.com)

Bo Hoefinger is a 1'10", 63-pound dog who claims to be a "mutt on the outside" but "a purebred on the inside." Bo takes the reader on a delightful journey as he relays his life, beginning as a shelter dog who finds his forever home through a "revenge adoption". We meet Bo's feline sister Moose who suffers from constipation, canine sister Copper who passes gas when she walks, and Bo's owners, a naive young couple who don't know what they're in for when they adopt Bo. This dog blogger's antidotes about his family and furry friends are heartwarming and filled with humor. Sprinkled throughout the book are Bo's lists, including his favorite non-food smells, ten things he's had in his mouth, and states he's peed in. From the preface to the interview at the end, this dog biography is zany and so laugh-out-loud funny, the reader will be reluctant to put the book aside. **Bad to the Bone** is sure to be a favorite among

**animal lovers and those who enjoy a fun read or simply want (or need) a good laugh.**

**Important to note is that the book is dedicated to rescue and shelter workers and a portion of the proceeds is donated to help homeless dogs. Bravo!**

### **Mind Your Own Wellness: Turning Thoughts into Reality**

**Alex Ong**

**OCL Publishing**

**P.O. Box 5618, Villa Park, IL 60181**

**9780980155662 \$14.95**

**Author Alex Ong incorporates the disciplines he learned in martial arts into his guide to naturally losing weight, improving health, having more energy, boosting confidence and reducing pain. He begins by relaying the dismaying statistics about America's poor health, moving on to the worst foods and drinks Americans consume and how they negatively affect our bodies, physically and mentally. He stresses the difference between organic and processed foods and the damage processed foods can cause. He provides a Letter of Commitment for readers to sign and read twice a day. He discusses the power of positive thought; mental, physical and financial burdens of eating unhealthy; the role stress plays in our lives and ways to combat it; the importance of getting enough sleep and drinking enough water; and provides simple breathing and physical exercises to do. His color belt strategies (white, green, purple, red, and black) are simple and easy to follow as the reader progresses from eating mostly junk food to eating light and healthy.**

**The program Ong has devised is by far the best this reviewer has read simply because it's basic, pragmatic, and very easy to follow. No superfluous data or advice is given, providing a guide book packed with essential information readers can use as they go about their daily lives. This is one book that should be in every home.**

### **The Sculptor**

**Gregory Funaro**

**Pinnacle Books/Kensington**

**119 West 40th Street, New York, NY 10018**

**9780786022120 \$6.99 [www.kensingtonbooks.com](http://www.kensingtonbooks.com)**

**A hunt for a deranged killer begins when a replica of Michelangelo's Bacchus, formed from human corpses, is discovered in a topiary garden. FBI Special Agent Sam Markham contacts art historian Cathy Hildebrant for two reasons: she published a book on Michelangelo's work and the killer dedicated the sculpture to her. Hildebrant is brought into the investigation as a consultant, working closely with Markham. Grieving the loss of their spouses - Hildebrant through divorce and Markham through death - both are somewhat surprised at their attraction to one another. The media quickly learns of the macabre sculpture and dubs the killer The Michelangelo Killer. When another statue is discovered, this one a replica of the Pieta, the killer leaves a message calling himself The Sculptor. Through extensive research, Markham and Hildebrant begin uncovering clues as to The Sculptor's identity. The killer, now seeing Hildebrant's aid to the FBI as betrayal, begins to plan his next sculpture, one utilizing Hildebrant's body.**

**Funaro delivers a galvanizing thriller, packed with suspense around a mystery readers will enjoy trying to solve. Woven into the story are intriguing historical facts about Michelangelo and his works of art which enrich the read. Characterization is exceptional and the plot moves at a fast pace and with such intensity the reader will be vested throughout the book. An excellent debut thriller.**

### **Lost Witness**

**Laura Elvebak**

**L&L Dreamspell**  
**Friendsville, TX**  
**9781603181440 \$17.95 [www.lldreamspell.com](http://www.lldreamspell.com)**

**Niki Alexander, counselor of runaway teens at the Open Palms Shelter, becomes involved in the investigation into the murder of a young woman from Mexico when Barky, a runaway, finds the woman's body near a small boy hiding behind a dumpster. Barky, afraid he will be blamed for the murder, turns the boy over to Niki. The traumatized boy refuses to talk but connects with Niki and she is reluctant to hand him over to child protective services. Not long after he is placed with a foster family, he disappears and Niki, feeling guilty, is determined to find him. So are homicide investigator Luis Perez and his partner Nelson Spalonetti, who suspect the dead woman was a drug mule and that the small boy may have witnessed her murder. Niki turns to the street for answers to the boy's whereabouts while peripherally teaming up with Nelson Spalonetti. As they follow clues to a case that becomes more complex as it develops, the attraction between Niki and Nelson heats up, as does the unknown danger awaiting them.**

**Lost Witness is Elvebak's second thriller featuring teen counselor Niki Alexander. Niki is an intriguing character, a former police officer who quit the force after tragically shooting a teenage boy and now is committed to helping runaways so they don't suffer the same fate. Elvebak delivers a well-written mystery, set against the colorful backdrop of Houston, Texas. The galvanizing plot is filled with twists and turns and enough red herrings to keep the reader guessing throughout. Characters are realistic and credible, and Elvebak's portrayal of runaways insightful and empathetic.**

**Christy Tillery French**  
**Reviewer**

---

## **Clark's Bookshelf**

**The Many Loves of Buffalo Bill**  
**Chris Enss**  
**TwoDot Press**  
**an Imprint of Globe Pequot Press**  
**9780762748150 \$16.95**

**Over 100 books and articles have been written about the man who made the Wild West come alive, "The Many Loves of Buffalo Bill" by Chris Enss adds another dimension to the stories about the life of William F. Cody. He was a showman extraordinaire, a scout for the United States Government, a soldier in the Civil War, an Indian fighter, and above all, he loved the ladies.**

**Chris Enss, who has written many books about western culture, its people, and the lives of many interesting personages of the old west, has assembled a succinctly remarkable characterization of who 'Buffalo Bill' really was. He was a family man, a showman, and a person who was able to take care of business. According to Annie Oakley, who was a star performer for 17 years in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, "His words were better than most written contracts."**

**Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show traveled around the world and gave audiences in Europe and the United States a taste of the 'Wild West'. This all took place in the late 1800's and early 1900's. His troupe had several hundred members who roped, rode horses, and demonstrated shooting acuity. His people were extremely loyal to him and stayed with the show for years.**

**One of the most interesting facts about his life is that in the span of 50 years of marriage, he attempted to divorce his wife Louisa twice. The contested divorce trial ended with the Judge not granting the parties what they had sought. In later years they reconciled their differences, but the jealousy of his philandering in many dalliances with young ladies kept his wife on a suspicious crusade to catch him by hiring a private detective.**

**Quoting from the trial transcripts and other documentation, we are made privy to many of Louisa Cody's witnesses' statements about some of the women he dallied with. With an almost puritanical recitation of facts, we are told of his affairs with Indian maidens, theatrical ingenues, and some pretty interesting ladies of the evening.**

**Buffalo Bill Cody outlived his children and died at the age of 70 in 1917. He lived an exciting life that took him through an untamed land in the old west as a pioneer in a developing civilization.**

**He was instrumental in the settling of the 'Wild West' and was one of its last glamorous heroes of a by-gone generation. He became well known across the world as he mingled with Kings, Queens, and other royalty of Europe. His life as depicted in this non-fiction account was about bravery, honesty, and courage that made him a righteous man even though he had an eye for the ladies. His love of this land was more important than his indiscretions.**

**The legendary career of Buffalo Bill Cody, the only Western Hero mentioned in Who's Who in America, makes this book a must read.**

### **Riches Among the Ruins**

**Robert P Smith with Peter Zheutlin**

**Amacom Books**

**9780814410608 \$24.95**

**Robert P. Smith is the founder and managing director of Turan Corporation in Boston and established an international debt collection practice. For more than 30 years, Smith made and lost millions by investing in emerging markets while traveling through many war-torn countries riddled by war, poverty and corruption. Robert Smith engaged in fascinating adventures while pursuing his quest for money.**

**Starting in 1984, Robert Smith traveled the streets of El Salvador during its civil war to make money trading dollar denominated bonds. He became the middleman "buying various forms of government debt in the world's battered economies from pessimists and selling to optimists". He performed his job while keeping a low-key profile. He made friends easily and learned from taxi cab drivers. They always seemed to know about local conditions from economics to political insight. In these early years, he made \$100,000 profit on each trip.**

**Bob began debt trading in Turkey, a country he describes as "mystical". He remembered the walk through the bazaars where displays of copper and brass, gold jewelry and exotic spice were enjoyed 15 years earlier. Instead, he found Istanbul a ghost town. In 1980, the country went broke, came under military power, with political and financial unrest. Sent by an American client, Smith was hired to collect a \$25,000 debt. He stood to make a lot of money on other claims. He bought and sold Turkish trade claims until 1982, making over 2 million dollars.**

**Ready for another adventure and looking for more "Riches Among the Ruins", Smith went to Nigeria to make money. In 1988, the onset of computers aided Smith and his partner. He says "the days of keeping crude records were over". Business became easier and busier. Nigeria intrigued Bob even with its risks and heavy drug trade. Smith got to be well-known as the "King of the Jungle Bonds" due to his Nigerian connection. In a period of over 3 to 4 years, Nigeria bought back about 1.5 billion of its 4.7**

billion in debt. Bob's company sourced more than 1.2 billion of this debt. Never had Bob made so much money as he did in Nigeria. He says "that life has a way to even things out", a lesson he learned from the "new" Russia.

In 1988, Smith went to Russia to get a feel for the country after the fall of the Soviet Union. Crime was almost non-existent during Soviet days. Moscow had transformed into a grand and elegant city, but was fraught with drugs, thugs, gangs, prostitution, and organized crime. This seemed the perfect time for Bob to do some business in collecting Russian debts. Russia was rich with natural gas and oil, diamond and gold reserves, and had 14.5 billion of foreign exchange reserves. Russia became deeply in debt borrowing more than it could repay to investors. Bob's 20 million dollar investment declined to 5 million. Russia's inflation soared to 100% and Smith went back home with Russian debt, including Euro bonds. Smith came out whole when his investments regained their value and he recouped his paper losses.

All of Smith's economic lessons were learned along the way in search of "Riches Among the Ruins", making him a very wealthy man. His skillfulness, adventuresome spirit, and fearless bravery, made him one of the best financial entrepreneurs in the world.

"Riches Among the Ruins" reads like a spy novel and its suspenseful travel episodes make for a very entertaining read.

### **The Shipwreck of a Nation**

**H. Peter Nennhaus**

**Outskirts Press**

**9781432734039 \$26.95**

H. Peter Nennhaus penned his memoir of Germany in pre-WWII and during the war in an attempt to show how the Berliner experienced life in his book entitled "The Shipwreck of a Nation". Growing up at this time, he witnessed and experienced many tribulations, but it was from the viewpoint of a victim of propaganda.

Accounts of his childhood indicate that he was the son of a Nazi party member, was among those who had been duped by Adolf Hitler's regime, and all these descriptions preceded the invasion of European countries by the German Army which resulted in World War II.

Nennhaus remembers fondly his childhood and trips to a farm belonging to a close relative. He writes of the joy he had as a youth without care or understanding of the events going on around him. He remembers that in 1938 there was an episode called Kristallnacht, "the night of broken glass", where the Nazis smashed windows of stores owned by Jews, but he was ignorant of its meaning at that time. He only recalls the store owners in his neighborhood were out cleaning up glass and trying to once again resume their lives. His father never explained to him what was meant by the propaganda that this was supposed to be a spontaneous outburst; whereas, historically, it was Hitler's Brown Shirts who commenced a campaign which was to be the "final solution".

The attempt to play ignorant is futilely established by his references to facts which are supposedly from authoritative sources. Many times he tells of the stories he overheard or those which were promoted by the Nazi German government as truth with regard to historical events. Modern history books refute many of his perceptions. For example, he accepted as fact, Poland was going to invade Germany and it was a pre-emptive strike by the German Army to prevent this from happening. Even the invasion of Russia by Germany was again described as a means of stopping Stalin's Russian troops from attacking Germany.

The main reason this book is being reviewed is to point out what had transpired in Nazi Germany as

**told by the author is not an account of what really happened. What really happened is that religious people of all faiths were exterminated, the Holocaust was a reality, and those who opposed the government were put to death. Nennhaus states that the ordinary Berliner was not aware of these atrocities during the war. It was only after the war and being forced to view films by the allies did he first learn what happened to those who were taken from their midst.**

**As a youth, Nennhaus was indoctrinated as a member of "Hitler Youth" and the training which he received is clearly revealed in his memory of what had happened. History is distorted to reflect a stilted viewpoint which is what he had believed to be true.**

**He states, without remorse, that he wanted to join the Army in order to receive the Iron Cross medal and the badge of honor for the destruction of a tank, but he was too young and the war was ending. The way that he describes this phase, the reader is given the impression he really felt cheated that he could not attain these indicia of his allegiance.**

**He describes his brothers; one a hero who died in the war and the other being sent to a prison camp in Russia after the war. He had extreme animosity toward Russia throughout the book because of them.**

**This book carries a caveat by the publisher that the views expressed by the author are not those of the publisher.**

**This book is not recommended as a good read. In fact, it is one that you should cast aside and let it become the 'Shipwreck' of a lost generation.**

#### **Drake's Bay**

**T. A. Roberts**

**The Permanent Press**

**9781579621971 \$28.00**

**T. A. Roberts is a mystery writer who has been held in esteem by his colleagues in the Mystery Writers of America when they made him a finalist for the prestigious Edgar Award in 1972 and 1989 "Beyond Saru" and "Heart of the Dog". Now, "Drake's Bay", is being released in April and it too is well-contrived to keep you guessing throughout.**

**Living aboard a wooden sailing vessel is not unique for a main character. Travis McGee did his investigating from a setting on a houseboat and appeared in 21 paperback novels penned by John D. MacDonald. Roberts has created Ethan Storey as his sleuth living in the San Francisco bay area.**

**What makes this book stand out from the rest of the fleet is the excellent prose. Descriptive language which heightens many sensations is on every page. When taking courses in composition, each student strives for that ultimate set of words that will capture the reader's senses. Ethan Storey consistently tells his story in graphic detail so you can easily picture where he has been and where he is going.**

**A scholarly professor, Ethan Storey and his girlfriend, lead the search for the log books of Sir Francis Drake's travels through the Northwest Passage. An influential California family with ties to Europe tries to prevent this discovery from happening and is driven by greed to do all in their power to disrupt Storey's life. They hire people who work undercover and spy upon Storey's progress by posing as helpers when they are actually plotting against him.**

**A good mystery novel will not allow you to second-guess what is happening next. T. A. Roberts achieves this chapter after chapter. Just when you think you know what the result of an encounter will be, suddenly, it is as if the main sail has shifted in the wind and you are now tacking (going) in a different direction. This book centers on sailboat language and jargon related to it. However, do not despair,**

**explanations are liberally given and the reader subconsciously receives a sailing education.**

**'Indiana Jones' would have been an idyllic substitute for Ethan Storey. The same swashbuckling attitude is from a 60 something-year-old with a PhD flair and makes this novel most entertaining.**

**T. A. Roberts is a very talented writer and leaves his audience wanting more reading material from him. Be prepared to spend a few hours enjoying this delightfully woven sea adventure in San Francisco Bay whilst you are swept away on sea and land. Mates, you will climb on board and take the voyage to enjoyment.**

**Clark Isaacs  
Reviewer**

---

## **Crocco's Bookshelf**

**Saving Cicadas  
Nicole A. Seitz  
Thomas Nelson  
Nashville, Tennessee  
1595545034 \$14.99**

**Saving Cicadas is an extraordinary story about powerful family memories we all carry with us. But, are these really memories or former past selves that we have to deal with and learn from? If we do not acknowledge these pasts, do we remain stuck living past lives? In this story, God uses a child to speak to us. It is a mystery of God that reminds us that life is truly a miracle.**

**This is a difficult review to write without giving away the story. It is suspenseful and thought provoking. It has conflicting story elements which played havoc with my emotions. I cried with feelings of happiness and sadness at the same time. I can tell you the characters were developed in such detail you will feel their emotions as strongly as they do. The dialogue is so powerful at times I had to put the book down to digest. The overall message in this story was more than inspiring.**

**I absolutely recommend this wonderful novel, Saving Cicadas, to readers of every age. It is a quick read and you will not want to put it down until the end.**

**The King and Dr. Nick  
George Nichopoulos  
Thomas Nelson  
Nashville, Tennessee  
9781595551719 \$24.99**

**Is this the way it was?**

**In today's media frenzy about celebrities, we all know there is more than one story uncovered in every celebrity death. The question the public is still obsessed over is; did Elvis Presley die of a drug overdose?**

**Dr. Nick, George Nichopoulos, describes to his readers the intimate role he played as Elvis's personal physician. He takes his readers to Elvis's home and on tour to explain the reasons he prescribed the variety of drugs he gave to the King, from 1967 - 1977. Dr. Nick feels compassion for the King, as he**



suffered from ailments such as: insomnia, gastroenteritis, anxiety, panic disorders; the list is endless. He takes us through his numerous court cases to validate the drugs he prescribed as necessary vs. desired. Discrepancies regarding the two autopsies are brought to light for his readers.

I think the book itself contains an abundant amount of information about Elvis and Dr. Nick. It may fill the void for some Elvis fans; however, I feel it was more of a catharsis for Dr. Nick. George Nichopoulos writes his well - intentioned book to set the record straight, but I think it is just one more book about Elvis where readers should ask themselves, is this the way it was?

Mary Crocco  
Reviewer

---

## Daniel's Bookshelf

**Pursuit of Honor**

Vince Flynn

Atria Books

A Division of Simon & Schuster Inc.

1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020

9781416595168 \$27.99 [www.simonschuster.com](http://www.simonschuster.com) 1-866-506-1949

I finally listened to my ex-boss, my good fortune to have been with him on two previous jobs. He was my work-skill mentor helping me to excel at ASQ, and he prodded me to read Vince Flynn. I was reminded me more than a few times to read this author. I did notice some of his books at the bookstore, and in book fairs pondering whether I should take him up at it. I finally picked Flynn's latest book at a local library book sale. I came to the conclusion, that I have been putting this off too long. I determined that his political thrillers are just the welcome breath of fresh air, I needed from the detective thrillers and legal fiction. I needed a balance in novels to be well-rounded, and give me a wider perspective. I nod my head or tip my hat to my mentor who proves himself sometimes very wise.

The action begins after a series of explosives devastates Washington D.C. The point of the attack is against the National Counterterrorism Center. The tragedy is that it kills 185 people including public officials and CIA employees. Due to the bizarre act of extreme violence, that called for extreme measures with the elite counterterrorism operatives Mitch Rapp and his team member Mike Nash. Key Washington officials are upset whether the methods of the agents who stepped between the enemy and countless American lives regardless of legal consequences. Rapp is placed in this position not strange to him of having to illustrate the realities of national security to people whose view of the problems are not clearly seen from the sidelines. In the meantime there are three more al Qaeda terrorists who are at large, and Rapp is unofficially ordered to find them by any means necessary. Nash is folding under the pressure of this mission, and the memories and horrors he witnessed of the terrorist attack. Rapp makes a decision he hopes will help Nash, address the negative responses over what has been done so far. He has to get on the move to curb the enemy before it's too late. He has to get through a fine line between what is right, and the violence of people who are threatening our country's safety for the sake of its freedom.

Vince Flynn has written eleven novels that have been placed on the New York Best Selling List. I finally have gotten hooked on a totally different genre with the political thriller, and maybe I can switch gears moving from the detective fiction. The Extreme Measures was his first, and now the Pursuit of Honor is his latest. I definitely will take a swing to his other fine good novels, which other readers have already discovered. Now I have a fine author to turn to in this interesting genre.

**Bones of Betrayal****Jefferson Bass****William Morrow****c/o Harper Collins Publishers****10 East 53rd Street, New York, NY 10022-5299****9780061284755 \$7.99 [www.harpercollins.com](http://www.harpercollins.com) 1-212-207-2000**

I recall reading one of their earlier books in the Body Farm Novels and with the wide wealth of novels and authors already on my plate, I am glad I got back and will go back to catch up on the series. I enjoy forensic novels, and that's why I enjoy Jeffrey Deaver and his Lincoln Rhyme books so much. I love detective fiction and crime novels while dabbling with the legal fiction running parallel in most of my reading. I believe Jefferson Bass adds a broad authoritative look at the genre of forensic science in this fiction form. It doesn't surprise me that it could be such an interesting team-up of two good team writers collaborating together to make for fun reading. I believe this is one of their best efforts to-date, but I like to capture more of them to get the full benefit.

In the crucible of World War 11 in Oak Ridge Tennessee, the body of a renowned physicist is discovered. The site was a top-secret military installation where the it was the start of the Manhattan Project. Forensic Bill Brocken, who is the founder of the Body Farm learns that an autopsy reveals the cause of the Dr. Leonard Novak's death was a deadly radioactive pellet inside the elderly scientists body. Questions are raised over the possibilities of his involvement of American's deadliest weapon and who could do this to him? The answers might come from his unreliable storyteller ex-wife, Beatrice, so Brockton must go through the maze of history, fantasy, dementia, and lucidity. He must sift through the memories leading him to even darker secrets than he could have imagined.

Jefferson Bass is the author of five fiction novels and two non-fiction books on the Body Farm. His first fiction novel was written in 2006, and his next is due to be released in March of 2019 entitled The Bone Thief. His latest Bones of Betrayal has been a good read, and I am encouraged readers to delve into the forensics of the stories which has outlined the discovery of crimes from the very beginning. I look forward to his next book and I hope others can discover the storylines along with a fuller understanding of the Body Farm.

**Daniel Allen****Reviewer**

---

## **Debra's Bookshelf**

**The Sociopath Next Door****Martha Stout****Broadway****9780767915823 \$14.95**

Apparently, about 4% of us are sociopaths. One in 25 people--and therefore, likely, someone we already know--has no conscience and can, without that internal bridle on their behavior, do anything at all to gain whatever their ends may be--world domination, advancement in a career, a good parking space. In her often fascinating little book The Sociopath Next Door, Martha Stout, a clinical psychologist, discusses sociopathy and conscience, including composite sketches of sociopaths she has come across in her career.

The book starts with an interesting look at a young lawyer's decision to miss an important meeting at work to go home and feed his dog. Stout unpacks his decision, considering the various factors that can have influenced it: conscience is just one possibility. The author also discusses the Stanley Milgram experiments at Yale, the factors that can temporarily diminish a normal person's conscience, and the causes of sociopathy. Less interesting to me, at least, were the author's discussions of the history and religious theories of conscience.

Stout's book was an eye-opening read for me. It started me wondering--as I'm sure it would most readers--whether I've come across any sociopaths in my life, and I think it will have a lasting impact on the way I evaluate people's behavior. Anyone who is involved in an abusive relationship or who has been charmed by a friend into doing something uncharacteristically dangerous would do well to read Stout's book to see if they recognize the behavior she describes.

### **Ordinary Thunderstorms**

**William Boyd**

**Harper**

**9780061876745 \$26.00**

William Boyd's *Ordinary Thunderstorms* starts well. A chance meeting in a restaurant leads Adam Kindred, a young academic in London for a job interview, to the scene of a murder. His DNA on the weapon and his accidental possession of certain information means he's being sought by both the authorities and the killer, so Adam does the only thing he can think of: he goes off the grid and starts playing a waiting game. What follows isn't quite the story this tense beginning led me to expect. It might have been an action-packed, edge-of-your-seat kind of read, the hero surviving by stealth, slipping away from his would-be captors via fast cars or daring feats. Instead, Boyd offers a less exciting but presumably more realistic story about how someone in Adam's position could manage to evade capture while building a new life from scratch. The stories of a number of other characters whose paths intersect with Adam's are also told: Rita, a policewoman with the marine unit, a CEO who, in a nice touch, has a penchant for not wearing underpants, the killer.

The book is not always gripping, but I like that Adam's story of life on the run seems realistic. I'm tempted to say that the book is put together well, in that the various stories do finally meet up and things make sense, but upon finishing it I realized there were some threads which seemed not to fit into the book as a whole. It's not that I want absolutely everything neatly packed away at the end, but I was left wondering what the point of large swaths of the story were, enough that I triple checked the cover copy to see if there's any indication that we're to expect a sequel: Nothing obvious, and I wouldn't think the story would really lend itself to a part two. Kindred isn't a particularly admirable character, or fascinating because of quirks or extreme intelligence or anything of that sort. I believe him as a character, but I probably won't remember him.

### **Shmirsky**

**E**

**Shmirsky Universal**

**PO Box 181697, Coronado, CA 92178**

**9780615294551 \$25.00**

Shmirsky (wonderfully subtitled "Think Inside the Box"), by the enigmatically abbreviated "E", is a short little book about vaginas, specifically vaginas that are in or are nearing perimenopause. "Shmirsky," in the author's parlance, means both "vagina" and "female," and she happily uses the word throughout the book in both senses. In *Shmirsky E* describes her experiences going through menopause, and she offers a lot of platitudes as well as real information to readers: lists of menopause-related internet resources, information about hormone therapy options and thyroid conditions, and so on. *E* is very big on menopausal shmirskies (shudder) getting support--not only from their gynecologists

but also from family and friends, one's "shmirsky [shudder] board": perimenopause can be something of a party.

I understand that the author's cutesy terminology and writing style are meant to put the reader at ease, but as my parenthetical shudders above may suggest, I have a hard time with it. Give me bare medical terminology any day over this. The cutesiness is often over the top:

"While you're doing this research [to find a gynecologist], think of yourself as a shmirsky private investigator at the center of a sexy espionage thriller. It's always the middle of a hot summer in those stories, so your hot flashes set the mood perfectly. Put on a big-brimmed hat and speak with a 1940s New York accent, and you'll be good to go. You see, looking for a gynecologist can get pretty exciting!"

I also think that it's not always clear who the intended audience of the book is: the perimenopausal shmirsky (shudder) is unlikely to require a definition of "gynecologist" or "PMS," for example.

All that said, if you're a shmirsky (sigh) nearing menopause, this book may offer some helpful advice.

**The Chopin Manuscript**  
Deaver, Jeffery et al.  
Vanguard Press  
9781593155599 \$25.95

The Chopin Manuscript is a serialized novel written by fifteen different thriller writers, including some of the biggest names in the business: Lee Child, Joseph Finder, Lisa Scottoline, David Hewson, and so on. Jeffery Deaver conceived the story's characters and setting, though from what we're told in my edition's introduction it does not sound as if he controlled the plot, except insofar as he provided the introductory and concluding chapters. An interesting project, certainly, and the story that results manages not to feel as if it's the product of too many hands. If we weren't told that the book was written by multiple authors, I would not have guessed it from the prose style, which seems consistent throughout.

The story, though, does feel as if it needs more room to expand. There are a lot of characters, not always easy to keep straight, and none of them is fleshed out enough for us to care about them. While the story has its good moments--the opening scene in which piano tuner Henryk Jedynak is interrupted at work is memorable, for example--it never manages to excite. In part this is because we're not invested in the characters. But it's also because it's never very clear what's going on or what the stakes are for the various players. Having just finished the book, I'd be hard-pressed to cough up a good summary: suffice it to say that one-time war crimes investigator Harry Middleton is in possession of the manuscript of the book's title, which turns out to be more valuable than he has supposed. People are after it and are leaving a trail of dead bodies behind them, most of them having been shot in the face--the preferred mode of death in the book.

The Chopin Manuscript is packaged in my edition together with its sequel, The Copper Bracelet, a single volume entitled Watchlist. Many of the same authors contributed chapters to the sequel, which again features Harry Middleton and, as the jacket copy tells me, involves an international terror plot and a potential nuclear war between India and Pakistan. But as exciting as that sounds, I think I'll probably be skipping the sequel.

Debra Hamel, Reviewer  
<http://www.book-blog.com>

## Duncan's Bookshelf

### Treasure of Khan

Clive Cussler & Dirk Cussler

Berkley Books

375 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014

9780425216224 \$7.99

Dirk and Al ...'semi-lost' in the Gobi desert ...they find a desiccated corpse inside a wrecked 1930's plane ...and discover the dead scientist was betrayed by his assistant Borjin ...his plane shot down by Japanese fighters ...at stake is the location of the long-hidden tomb of Genghis Khan.

The assistant Borjin uses the tomb relics to finance a massive project to disrupt the flow of oil. His people destroy Iran's oil shipping port and the port that serves China. Borjin's goal is to open an oil field below Inner Mongolia and sell oil to China for a set price.

Dirk and Al, meanwhile, are approaching Borjin's compound; their task is to rescue three marine geologists who were kidnapped and forced to work on Borjin's seismic data to locate the oil. Dirk and Al manage to free the geologists. Dirk re-enters the compound in a 1921 Rolls Royce Silver Ghost that he uses to drag the marble coffin of the great Genghis out of harm's way.

Dirk Pitt (in his 19th adventure) is a true hero, a man who acts and mesmerizes his readers with a story of meglomania and the power of oil and the courage of his friends. Cussler (and son) have succeeded in giving us another enjoyable romp.

### Art of War

Sun Tzu

translated by Thomas Cleary

Shambhala Dragon Edition

300 Massachusetts Ave, Boston, MA 02115

0877734526 \$12.95 [www.omagadh.com](http://www.omagadh.com)

Written over two thousand years ago, Art of War presents the words of Master Sun Tzu, a warrior philosopher. A manual for managers and administrators, the Art of War is a book of strategy that applies to "competition and conflict" within organizations. The book is used by modern leaders as a guide to achieving "unassailable strength through understanding of the physics, politics, and psychology of conflict." (Thomas Cleary, in the 'Preface').

No amount of training and education can prepare a manager for the massive conflict that occurred in the 1981 teacher negotiations that resulted in 35 strikes. Twenty five years later I studied Master Sun's 'proverbs' for avoiding conflict. I see the Master telling me to 'see' the global nature of the conflict, gather intelligence, and know the ground that the School Board will cover to achieve success. Then, with clarity, I know for a certainty that I was an 'Innocent' in the woods in 1981.

In those years we hung onto our own proverbs, 'It will be over,' and 'Only when they are ready will it be over.' And this proverb: 'When one side sees an advantage, then there will be movement.' At the time, the 'local' expert advised me on the strategies used by Alinski; strategies that urged the strikers to use rumor and innuendo to divide the school board. We came to believe we had no leverage to urge an end to Minnesota's longest teacher strike. Indeed, we had no leverage. Our people suffered for three months and six days (October 4, 1981 to January 10, 1982).

(Iron Lake Burning tells the inside story of this strike. See Amazon)

**The Art of War emphasizes the importance of deception. As the Tao Te Ching says, "One with great skill appears ineffective." Cleary notes in the Preface, "Confucius said that it is a disgrace to be rich and honored in an unjust state, and he himself nearly died for his independence. According to the classics, loyalty does not mean blind obedience to an individual or state, but includes the duty of conscientious protest." Master Sun said, "Leadership is a matter of intelligence, trustworthiness, humaneness, courage and sternness."**

**As 'local' school board leaders, we exist in a political realm. The state has tied our hands in negotiations; we have one foot in the alligator's mouth by seeking 'peaceful' relations with our employees. To be stern is to be ineffective, we believe. That is our error. It is a glaring error. It leads to larger settlements than the school board can afford. In the end, our compliant leadership helps the state avoid the necessity of adequately funding our schools.**

**Marty Duncan  
Reviewer**

---

## **Fern's Bookshelf**

**Religious Compulsions and Fears: A Guide To Treatment  
Avigdor Bonchek, PhD  
Feldheim Publishers  
208 Airport Executive Park, Nanuet, New York 10954  
9781598263589 \$29.99 [www.feldheim.com](http://www.feldheim.com)**

**Is there a fine line of separation between scrupulous adherence to halachic law; translating into meticulous observance of religious commandments and that of finding oneself tethered to obsessions, compulsions and fears regarding the proper method in which to perform them? Avigdor Bonchek, PhD, an ordained Orthodox rabbi who holds a doctorate in clinical psychology from New York University, tackles this question and much more, as he shares his vast knowledge regarding treatment options for those suffering from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder in his recently published book, "Religious Compulsions and Fears - A Guide to Treatment" (Feldheim Publishers).**

**Clearly, OCD is a universal anxiety disorder that does not differentiate or distinguish between peoples or nationalities, yet the far reaching and complex repercussions of its devastating symptoms have, over the last several decades, been acutely felt in the spheres of the Orthodox Jewish world. The foreward to this book includes the wisdom of renowned psychiatrist, Rabbi Avraham J. Twerski, MD who states, "The hallmark of a religious Jew is his dedication to fulfilling his religious duties. However, when a person becomes overly obsessed, to the point that he becomes neurotic, and is unable to function properly, it may be a sign of OCD."**

**Armed with over 40 years of experience in treating those afflicted with OCD and attendant phobias, Dr. Bonchek's inherent compassion leaps forth from the pages of this book as he assures the reader that there is indeed a light at the end of the tunnel as evidenced in a litany of pragmatic modalities of treatment. What is most heartwarming is the fact that the pages of this erudite guide are permeated with the genuine care, concern, devotion and esteem that Dr. Bonchek holds for his patients, as he offers an earnest yet sensitive discussion of religious obsessions, compulsions, fears and phobias. Most common among these are obsessions pertaining to personal hygiene and cleanliness and how they impact on the performance of religious rituals. The case studies presented here include a young man who spends an inordinate amount of time in the bathroom after relieving himself, never quite feeling**

that he is clean enough to daven, an incessant hand washer who is obsessed with the proper observance of kashrus in the kitchen, as well as women of child bearing age who are beyond exceptionally meticulous in their preparations for the mikveh.

Other religious obsessions and compulsions include a woman who endlessly checks for bugs in vegetables, a man who spends many hours per day engaged in davening, as he never feels quite satisfied that he prays with the proper level of kavanah (dedication) so he resorts to repeating words and the entire tefilla, ad infinitum, and one who keeps repeating words of Torah during his regular learning sessions. Fears and phobias include children's fear of Purim masks, fear of reciting brochos and tefillos in shul, and an exaggerated fear of a spouse's infidelity. Because OCD is called "the doubting disease", the tragic ramifications of this disorder also include constant questioning of one's own faith. Says the author, "The individual is plagued by thoughts that undermine his beliefs; How do I know that G-d exists? How do I know that Judaism is the right faith? How do I know that the Torah and the Oral Law are valid?" He responds by telling us, "When a person performs a mitzvah and it causes him stress and anxiety, it indicates that it is not G-d's mitzvah that he is performing, but rather some foreign behavior masquerading as a mitzvah. Among those who cannot perform a mitzvah without enduring much psychological pain is the OCD sufferer."

Addressing the nuances of varied therapeutic approaches of treatment, Dr. Bonchek dismisses Freudian psychoanalysis or dynamic therapy as essentially ineffective, but rather embraces the more expedient Cognitive Behavior Therapy and familiarizes us with its theory and practical application. We sit in on CBT therapy sessions with Dr. Bonchek as he employs such methods as Exposure/Response prevention technique (ERP), Response Repetition, Guided Imagery (GI), Emotional Habituation, and Exposure and Closure. Because treatment of OCD can be a protracted process, Dr. Bonchek suggests that in addition to procuring a qualified therapist, a patient is advised to find a "buddy" who can assist him or her during the sometimes agonizing ordeal of working on daily compulsions that are indeed paralyzing. Sympathetically acknowledging the fear, shame and humiliation that the OCD sufferer feels, the author reveals that with much motivation, faith and hard work, the trajectory towards complete recovery and a return to a normative life is not beyond the reach for those who relinquished hope of ever extricating themselves from their personal darkness and despair.

Essential to treatment, the author tells us, is the paramount relationship between the patient and a rabbinical authority. "The rabbi must not only be a competent posek, he must also be aware of the psychological problem of OCD and how it manifests itself in the area of religious practice." For many OCD sufferers, a clear psak from a respected rav on matters of halacha is not always a sufficient deterrent for their overwhelming compulsions because of their obsession with perfection in the performance of a mitzvah and their nagging doubts that they've correctly fulfilled their obligations. Yet and still, having a rabbinic advisor and familial support are essential components for successful treatment. As Dr. Bonchek advises patients in terms of fulfilling halacha as it should be, "It is not a matter of doing what "I" think is right; it is a matter of following the words of the Torah poskim."

In terms of mitzvah observance for the OCD sufferer, Dr. Bonchek feels that "less is more" and as such brings down poignant stories from the Torah, Talmud and Kabbalistic sources illustrating the strength of character it takes for one to adopt a more flexible view of mitzvah observance; rather than clinging to their own stubborn insistence of what is proper. Of the Torah the author quotes the posuk, "It's ways are ways of pleasantness, and its paths are paths of peace. What does Hashem, your G-d, ask of you? So that it shall be good for you. That is the bottom line - "so that it shall be good for you." This book is a must read for any OCD sufferer, family member, friend, teacher and rabbi as we absorb profound lessons of mitzvah observance and love of Torah.

**Purim and the Persian Empire: A Historical, Archaeological & Geographical Perspective**  
 Yehuda Landy  
 Feldheim Publishers

**208 Airport Executive Park, Nanuet, NY 10954  
9781598265194 \$34.99 [www.feldheim.com](http://www.feldheim.com)**

**As Jews, we are blessed to enjoy the observance of many holidays; all of which are steeped in rich meaning, symbolism and profound lessons for life. We are taught that the one holiday that will endure forever, even after the coming of Moshiach and the final redemption will be that of Purim. As we immerse ourselves in the joy and gladness of Purim, we are also cognizant of the fact that the timeless and eternal story of Purim, as told in Megillas Esther, is one that genuinely embodies the resilience of the Jewish soul as manifested in total faith and hope in Hashem and the determination to survive against all odds.**

**In this recently published book, "Purim and the Persian Empire - A Historical, Archaeological & Geographical Perspective" (Feldheim Publishers), Rabbi Yehuda Landy, a noted Torah scholar, lecturer, author and archaeology expert examines the enigmatic qualities of Purim and answers the litany of questions that we have all pondered as he takes us on a trenchant sojourn into the fascinating world of the Persian Empire. Megillas Esther virtually comes to life as we gain a cogent understanding and new insights as we study excerpts of the text that are laden with Talmudic, historical and archaeological scholarship as evidenced in the presentation of ancient artifacts, maps and magnificent photographs.**

**This book is the culmination of a four-year research project which spanned three continents, as the author explains that his inspiration for this endeavor began on a visit to a special exhibition at the British Museum in London named "Forgotten Empire", that dealt exclusively with the material culture from the same Persian Empire with which we are familiar from the Book of Esther. While this book is not "meant to resolve any halachic issues", says the author, "it is meant as a tool for understanding and visualizing the events of the Megillah." Beginning with a historical backdrop of the Persian Empire in Jewish history, the author informs us that after the conquest of the Babylonian empire by the kings of Persia and Media, life improved dramatically for the Jews as their new Persian rulers permitted them to return to their land and to "rebuild the Beis HaMikdash and the wall around Jerusalem." While the darkness of the Babylonian exile had ended and Jews lived in relative freedom from oppression, it became clear that their new Persian rulers were not immune to strains of virulent anti-Semitic proclivities as manifested in the city of Shushan prior to the story of Purim.**

**The narrative is greatly enhanced by the stunning photos of original artifacts from that era which included clothing, cosmetics and furniture as well as the gold and silver tableware and drinking vessels from Achashverosh's palace. We transform into time travelers as we embark of a guided tour of the cities of Shushan and Jerusalem in all their resplendent glory and are treated to spectacular visuals of the king's gate, the courtyard of the women's residence, the king's treasuries, the inner courtyard and the king's gardens among many other ancient sites of the empire.**

**The author delves into the chronology of the Persian empire according to Chazal and provides us with a historical backdrop of the reign of such Persian kings as Daryavesh (Darius the Mede), Coresh, Cambyses and Xerxes, who is also believed to have been the real Achashverosh. "Although his name was pronounced by the Greeks as Xerxes, the Persian pronunciation was Chashiarsh. Chashiarsh, when pronounced in Hebrew, turns into Achasverosh" says Rabbi Landy. A most intriguing and informative chapter on the archaeological evidence of such ancient cultures as Assyria, Babylonia and the Persian cities of Pasargadae, Shushan, Persepolis and Hamadan sheds light on the decadence of the era and the societal influences that held sway amongst the respective populations. "The earliest documented identification of Shushan appears in the diary of Benjamin of Tudela (1165). He also makes mention of the tomb of Daniel which is located there", the author concludes.**

**Historical and archaeological material are the predicate for our study of Megillas Esther in the second part of the book. Citing numerous sources from mesechta Megillah in the Gemara as well as historical proof, we get a rare glimpse into the inner machinations of the mind of Achashverosh, the faith-based**



**motivations of Queen Esther and Mordechai and the hatching of Haman's diabolical scheme of annihilation of the Jewish people. Following the miracle of Purim, the author clues us in to what became of Esther and Mordechai. "The Jews of Persia had a tradition that Mordechai and Esther are buried in the city of Hamadan, which was the original capital of Media. The custom to visit their graves before Purim continues until this very day."**

**This detailed account of the holiday of Purim will surely be a captivating treat for history buffs and a must read for anyone who wishes to slake their desire for Talmudic and historical knowledge of this juncture in the annals of Jewish history. We are left incredibly inspired; even breathless, as we witness Hashem's miracles as they unfold before our very eyes and as we forge a personal connection to those who summoned up the kind of faith that has sustained our people since time immemorial.**

**Fern Sidman, Reviewer  
www.phyllis-chesler.com**

---

## **Gary's Bookshelf**

**The Eleventh Victim  
Nancy Grace  
Hyperion Books  
77 West 66th Street, New York, NY 10023  
9781401303457 \$25.99 www.HyperionBooks.com**

**I had high hopes for this first novel by the well known former prosecutor turned CNN Headline News talk show host. Unfortunately the work is very uneven. It has some good points in the main character Hailey Dean who I am sure is based on Grace's own experiences. The judge who is more concerned with his own political ambitions, the victims, and the person brought to justice for a rash of killings are all realistic and help move the story along. Even the fact that Hailey changes professions moves to another city and that those close to her are being murdered makes for a tense read but the novel also has characters that seem to have no place and the ending is a whimper because there are loose ends that are not tied up at the conclusion. I was very disappointed in this tale that had so much going for it.**

**While My Sister Sleeps  
Barbara Delinsky  
Anchor Books  
9780307473226 \$7.99 www.anchorbooks.com www.barbaradelinsky.com**

**Wow this one is the second title I have read by this author and its just as intense as "The Secret Between Us." This time the story is of two sisters Robin and Molly Snow who are very close or so Molly thought until she receives word that Robin is in the hospital after having a severe heart attack. What Molly begins to learn is that Robin kept a secret from her on her health. Robin is a runner who was practicing for a forthcoming race when she had her attack and was taken to the hospital. What emerges is that other runners knew about her condition, but she never confided in her own sister. Another part of the novel that makes it so good is that their parents are faced with the conflict of what to do with their daughter who they have been told will never regain consciousness. She will always be in this vegetative state. The parents the dilemma: do we keep her alive on machines or let her go. The author handles the conflicts realistically and moves the story along with strong characters in believable situations.**

**Adventures of Rusty Son of Tall Elk**

**Charles H. Bertram**  
**Infinity Publishing.com**  
**1094 New DeHaven Street, Suite 100, West Comshohocken PA 19428-2713**  
**00741452138 \$12.95 www.buybooksontheweb.com 877-BUY-BOOK**

**I have not read other novels in the series. Fortunately, you do not need them to enjoy this one. The author briefly tells how the character of Rusty began living with the Cheyenne tribe he is now a part of. Though he is a child of the white man, he does fit right in as a member of the people he is now with. The author, like Kevin Costner's "Dances With Wolves" depicts a very different view of the Indian characters. They are not on the warpath as so many westerns have always portrayed them. Instead they are hardworking people who value the world they live in and are just trying to survive the everyday perils they face. Some of the things they have to deal with are other Indian groups like the Crow, finding enough food to live on, and places to put their living facilities. I especially liked how Rusty told stories based on the Bible, Shakespeare, and other pieces of literature and told them as if they were parts of the Indian culture. Readers of all ages should enjoy this one.**

**The Crush**  
**Sandra Brown**  
**Grand Central**  
**Hachette Book Group USA**  
**1271 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020**  
**9780446195515 \$7.99 www.HachetteBookGroupUSA.com**

**Brown is once again a master of suspense with this nail biting novel that races along with smashing speed and a blast of an ending. Dr. Rennie Newton serves on a jury in a court case about a notorious hit man. She and the other jurors do not convict him for lack of evidence. Afterward a professional rival of hers is murdered. Somehow Rennie becomes the prime suspect. She joins forces with a rouge cop who has a grudge against the hit man. They are out to prove beyond a doubt that the hit man had something to do with the murder she has been accused of. The characters are finely drawn while Brown tensely takes the reader on a rollercoaster ride that keeps going to the very end.**

**Murder Has a Sweet Tooth**  
**Miranda Bliss**  
**Berkley Prime Crime Mystery**  
**375 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014**  
**9780425231609 \$6.99 www.penguin.com**

**This series is amusing with the ladies who go to cooking class. The fun is in what they learn while solving a set of murders. This time Annie Capshaw is about to be married. The best man is accused of murder. Capshaw delves into the case and finds lots of interesting things about friends of hers that she never knew. The story is a light hearted tale of fun.**

**First Degree**  
**David Rosenfelt**  
**Grand Central**  
**Hachette Book Group USA**  
**1271 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020**  
**978044655511 \$4.99 www.HachetteBookGroupUSA.com**

**This one is personal for defense attorney Andy Carpenter as his girlfriend Laurie Collins is charged with the murder of a cop. All the evidence points directly to her. Carpenter must use everything he can to save her from being convicted for a crime she says she did not do. The novel races along with great dialogue and lots of interesting characters to its revealing ending. This one was a lot of fun to read.**

**Kitty's House of Horrors****Carrie Vaughn****Grand Central****Hachette Book Group USA****1271 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020****9780446199551 \$7.99 [www.HachetteBookGroupUSA.com](http://www.HachetteBookGroupUSA.com)**

**Just when you thought nothing new could be done to the werewolf genre, comes Carrie Vaughn with this great story of Kitty Norville, a radio talk show host who just happens to be a werewolf. She is to appear on a supernatural reality show that she does not think very much of. She believes it will be a staged affair for viewer ratings. Something changes and somehow she is in a fight for her life. The story races along with interesting characters, situations and a biting ending.**

**True Blue****David Baldacci****Grand Central****Hachette Book Group USA****1271 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020****9780446195515 \$19.99 [www.HachetteBookGroupUSA.com](http://www.HachetteBookGroupUSA.com)**

**This one roars off the page and races along to its final smashing conclusion. With this novel Baldacci continues to show why he is one of the best suspense writers today. Mason "Mace" Perry a tough as nails cop was convicted of a crime she says she never did. Now after serving time she is focused on being a cop again. Beth, Mace's sister is chief of police in the city Mason moves to. Beth has to be extra careful how she deals with her sister because Mason is perceived to be a bad cop. There are several conflicts that are masterfully handled by the author. "True Blue" is a gem of a pager turner thriller.**

**Angels in the ER****Robert D. Lesslie, MD****Harvest House Publishers****Eugene, Oregon 97402****9780736923156 \$11.99 [www.harvesthousepublishers.com](http://www.harvesthousepublishers.com)**

**These are true stories of hospital professionals who have faced some of the worst life and death situations to keep their patients alive. The author, who is a doctor in a major hospital in the country tells the real stories and shows that they really care about the people they take care of. I thought this book had a religious element with the term angels'. It doesn't but I think the reference must be that the care givers are like angels because they are protecting their patients.**

**Z.E. O. A Zombies's Guide to Getting A (Head) in Business****Scott Kenemore****Skyhorse Publishing Inc****555 Eighth Avenue, Suite 903, New York, NY 10018****9781602396487 \$12.95 [www.skyhorsepublishing.com](http://www.skyhorsepublishing.com)**

**This is a fun excursion of what Zombies do when they work in the business world. It also has tips for Zombies to get ahead of everyone else. The author gives new depth to the world of zombies.**

**Gary Roen****Reviewer**

## Gloria's Bookshelf

### **Lullaby for the Nameless**

**Sandra Ruttan**

**Leisure Books**

**c/o Dorchester Publishing, 200 Madison Ave., NY, NY 10016**

**9780843962864 \$7.99 800-481-9191 [dorchesterpub.com](http://dorchesterpub.com)**

Part I of this newest entry in the Canadian Constables series had me feeling somewhat at a disadvantage, referring as it does in large part to events that took place three years in the past, including a serial killer investigation which continues to haunt the three protagonists. When the dead body of a young girl is discovered, it appears to follow the pattern of that killer's victims, and the horrors which they had tried to bury from that earlier time are suddenly, and sickeningly, revived.

Complicating the current investigation is the fact that the man everyone was convinced was the killer is dead, and another man still in prison. Or did they get it wrong the first time? The three constables, Craig Nolan, Ashlyn Hart, and "Red" Tain, who have a history from what was dubbed the earlier Missing Killer investigation, are joined in the present search, the latter two having been called in for that purpose. At the same time, there is a hunt going on for a man who apparently murdered his estranged wife and three children, only increasing the pressure on all involved.

Things become somewhat clearer in Part II and beyond [and even in the brief prologue], which brings the reader variously back in time from three years ago to eighteen months ago, back to the present, and back again. I have to admit I nearly got whiplash from the sharp shifts in time frame. As well, often the identity of the main person in a given scene wasn't immediately clear to me, at first being referred to only as "he," likewise proving a distraction.

Each of the protagonists has his or her own personal baggage, much of it inter-connected, although I would have preferred to have all of that more fully fleshed out. Tain is the one [or, as he says, 'token'] team member of Aboriginal, or Original Nation, ethnicity, and that subject is at times touched upon. Much of the heart of the book deals with family, especially [but not exclusively] young women and their babies, and the tragedies that can arise from those ties, in moving fashion. This was a very different kind of book, and a very interesting one. I look forward to further entries in the series, which may give the reader even deeper insight into its protagonists.

### **The Fashion Hound Murders**

**Elaine Viets**

**Obsidian Mystery**

**c/o Penguin**

**375 Hudson St., NY, NY 10014**

**9780451228420 \$6.99 800-847-5515 [penguin.com](http://penguin.com)**

Elaine Viets, author of two popular series, brings back Josie Marcus in this fifth entry in the Mystery Shopper series. Josie, a St. Louis "mall moll," is employed by Suttin Services, whose latest assignment brings her to doggie boutiques, a category of stores I am embarrassed to say I didn't know existed. In the process, Josie, and the reader, gets an unwelcome view into the world of puppy mills, an apparently thriving and big-money enterprise catering to those seeking "celebrity dogs," cheap pedigreed [and abused] pups sold for high prices, often providing nothing more than accessories for their owners. No sooner does Josie get information regarding just such a local mill from Edna, an employee of the store she is mystery-shopping, than Edna is run down and killed in a hit-and-run 'accident.' But there seems little doubt that it was no accident. Josie can't help feeling a small measure of guilt: "did her amateur meddling kill an innocent woman?"

Josie describes herself as "not much of a bargain in the marriage market . . . a thirty-one-year-old single mom [with] no money, a lot of debt, and a ten-year-old daughter with a smart mouth." But she is also an endearing protagonist, and her mother, Jane [Josie's landlord and live-in babysitter], her daughter, Amelia, and best friend Alyce no less so. Her relationship with her clueless boyfriend, Stan, is going nowhere, but she is unsure what to do about it. As she observes: "delusions . . . they're the only way to survive dating."

When Josie's mother is attacked by a vicious dog, things take a more personal turn. Suspects in that attack and Edna's death, among others, include 'millers,' as those who run the puppy mills are called, and those with more intimate motives. By the end of the novel, Josie [and the author] become advocates for a stricter puppy mill code and more thorough inspections of breeding facilities, and the reader cannot help but feel strong support for such measures.

The novel is enlightening as well as thoroughly entertaining, and is recommended.

**Let Darkness Come**

**Angela Hunt**

**MIRA Books**

**225 Duncan Mill Rd., Don Mills, Ontario, Canada M3B 3K9,**

**9780778326533 \$7.99 MIRABooks.com 416-445-5860**

Briley Lester, a junior associate with a prestigious Chicago law firm, is handed a career-making case. Jeffrey Tomassi, the son of Antonio Tomassi, a major client of the firm, has been found dead, and his wife is accused of his murder. Briley is excited at the prospect, but somewhat daunted: She has never before handled a murder case, usually being assigned low-profile matters such as shop-lifting and assault. The dead man was a State senator and on the verge of announcing his campaign to run for the U.S. Congress. Antonio is a wealthy patriarch with reputed ties to organized crime. What Briley doesn't know is that her obvious experience is exactly why she was given this case. Antonio has directed that the lawyers "make sure that everything's done by the book. But don't allow her to walk free of that courtroom with my son's blood on her hands." Accordingly, she is given almost no budget or assistance in the preparation for the looming trial.

Briley has lost some of her idealism. "She used to dream about making a difference in the world, but three years of dealing with criminal defendants has taught her that the practice of law would be far more enjoyable if she didn't have to deal with so many guilty people." But she gradually becomes convinced of her client's innocence, despite the overwhelming evidence against her. Erin is unwavering in her claim that she did not murder her husband. Which would be no problem at all for the reader to accept, except for the fact that the opening two pages of the book describe a woman slipping out of bed and injecting her sleeping husband with a lethal dose of insulin.

Jeffrey Tomassi was thirty-five years old and, other than the fact that he was diabetic, in excellent health. His wife, Erin, had for the five years of their marriage been well taken care of, if one ignores the fact that for all that time she was the victim of her husband's constant verbal and physical abuse.

The novel proceeds at a rather deliberate pace up until the time the trial commences, at which point the suspense intensifies and the reader is fully engaged in the courtroom battle and rooting for the accused woman. The scenes were mostly very realistic, with one exception: I found it nearly delusional for Erin, on the eve of closing arguments, to find herself thinking when a guard approaches her cell that "maybe the judge has decided that the trial was a mistake and she's free to go."

Erin's tenacity and legal and human instincts are impressive, and the final pages see her heading in a new direction, one which should be on display in what one can hope will be a follow-up novel, if not a

series. The book is recommended.

### **All the Colors of Darkness**

**Peter Robinson**

**Harper**

**10 E. 53rd St., NY, NY 10022**

**9780061687426 \$7.99 800-242-7737, harpercollins.com**

The deaths about which much of the plot of Peter Robinson's newest Inspector Banks novel revolves occur just before the opening pages, when a particularly brutal murder is soon followed by the apparent suicide of the prime suspect. All the evidence points to that sequence of events, with none indicating the presence of any third person. The two men had been lovers, and the subsequent investigation turns up photos of the murder victim with another man, the conclusion being obvious: A 'simple case' of extreme jealousy, rage, and remorse. Banks remains unconvinced of that scenario, however, based solely on a nagging suspicion that there is more here than meets the eye; the discovery of a business card which had been in the possession of one of the dead men on which is printed a phone number which does not exist; the fact that so much effort is taken and pressure exerted to ensure that the case is closed and that no further investigation is undertaken; and the feeling that there is some kind of Othello analogy at play.

Othello is the current production of the amateur theater group performing at the Eastvale Theater, where the suicide victim worked. When Banks attends the play with his girlfriend, he describes it to her as being about 'jealousy, betrayal, envy, ambition, greed, lust, revenge . . . All the colors of darkness.' Of the murder victim, he is told others only saw "a small part of him. The rest was shades of darkness, shadows, smoke and mirrors." And, as the end of the book nears, Banks perceives "all of it nothing but a distortion of the darkness he was beginning to believe lay at the center of everything."

On a lighter note, part of his investigation brings the DCI to the office of a pretty private investigator who, upon meeting Banks, exclaims with delight: "Are you Brian Banks' father?" This is a first for Banks, whose son is a guitar player in a rock band and apparently somewhat of a rock hero.

When DI Annie Cabbot says to her superior "We have to pursue the truth," she is told "Since when? That's a luxury we can ill afford." The novel deals with the unexpected and perhaps unintended consequences of lies told, or matters otherwise misconstrued. The author, celebrating the 22nd anniversary of the first Inspector Banks novel, never fails to deliver a book filled with gorgeous prose, and this one is, like the others, highly recommended.

### **The Semantics of Murder**

**Aifric Campbell**

**Serpent's Tail**

**c/o Profile Books Ltd., 3A Exmouth House, Pine St., London EC1R OJH**

**Meryl Zegarek (public relations)**

**9781846687334 \$14.95 www.serpentstail.com 917-493-3601**

Jay Hamilton is a 51-year-old West London psychoanalyst who, unknown to his 'clients' [as they apparently, since he is not a doctor, cannot be called 'patients'], has made the stories of several of them the basis for his fictional forays, having already published successful commercial novels. Jay is planning a new book, comprised of eleven short stories based upon selected case histories. But he has now become a source for another writer, a young woman who is writing a biography of Jay's brother, Robert, older than him by eighteen years and a brilliant professor of mathematical linguistics at UCLA who was a murder victim at age 41.

Ten years later, Jay had left Southern California for good, and must now revisit in his mind that

harrowing time so that he can regurgitate those memories for author Dana Flynn. "In December 1971, at the age of twenty-three, Jay found he'd buried his entire family in the space of two years." His thoughts run thus: "Jay could not be sure if these were memories at all, or if it was just the absence of presence that he remembered, all the things that didn't happen, walking scrub-kneed to church on Sundays alongside the click of his mother's unaccompanied heels, past other families who made a perfect set, when the Hamiltons had a missing piece, a father who wasn't dead, only unaccountably absent. A deserter." Those few lines should provide a glimpse of the quality of writing which is in store for the reader.

According to an author's note, the book is based on the real-life murder in 1971 of a brilliant and controversial UCLA Professor of Philosophy, unsolved to date, who was "apparently gay, highly promiscuous and had a particular preference for rough sex with black guys," at least two of whom were thought to have strangled him to death in his own home. And this is the likely scenario of how the fictional Robert Hamilton died.

The book, fittingly for one where a main character is a semantics and linguistics luminary, is only nominally a murder mystery, and for about the first hundred pages is elegant in its language and the scope of its interest, including a page-long discussion of a book by Primo Levi, among other topics. It turns considerably darker in the last half of the book and became, for this reader, ultimately profoundly disturbing. Nonetheless, the prose is a joy to read, one I recommend you discover for yourself. The author, Irish by birth and now living in Sussex, England, speaks of being "bewitched by language," something certainly evident here and which will assuredly be experienced by the reader as well.

#### **Dead Air**

**Deborah Shlian and Linda Reid**

**Oceanview Publishing**

**2817 West End Ave., Nashville, TN 37203**

**9781933515502 \$25.95 oceanviewpub.com 615-297-9875**

A shiver runs down the reader's spine in reading the first few pages of this fine new novel by Deborah Shlian and Linda Reid as a glimpse is offered as to what is about to unfold. Ellsford University is a prestigious and ultra-conservative New England college whose Student Health Services program is harboring some truly frightening secrets. Sammy Greene, a junior and host of her own college radio talk show, stumbles upon those secrets following her discovery of the body of a beloved professor of science and genetics at the college. When the official cause of death is determined to be suicide, her inner reporter and amateur sleuth kicks in, only to be made more determined when a talented student appears to have committed suicide as well, and Sammy believes that neither one fit the profile of a potential suicide. Animal studies [and the concomitant animal-rights protests] and other pharmaceutical testing, as well as the question of whether special interests have influenced academic and other decisions at the college, become part of the ensuing inquiries.

When Sammy, a New Yorker who doesn't back down from a challenge, discovers that there had been a third 'suicide' in the past two months, and two students have apparently disappeared from campus, her investigation goes into full swing, occasionally putting her in some TSTL moments but, what the heck, she is a reporter, right? There is little that is subtle in the writing, but that doesn't lessen the mounting suspense as Sammy's life is threatened when she gets too close to the truth. After a little while the reader, unlike the protagonist, isn't sure who, if anyone, can be trusted. A splendid supporting character is Gus Pappajohn, the Greek former Boston detective and current campus police chief, with whom Sammy has a mostly antagonistic relationship.

The topic is eerily timely: No less than the New York Times has in recent days published lengthy articles on the less sinister and more altruistic aspects of animal and human drug trials, in those

instances dealing with current and apparently so far successful genetically targeted cancer 'cures.' The authors of "Dead Air" are both physicians and former medical directors of universities and principal investigators in medical research, so one must assume the plausibility of the plot, as comfortable as it might be to think otherwise. Which only serves to escalate its more terrifying aspects. Sammy is a terrific protagonist, one with, as she might say, a lot of chutzpa. The novel is a very satisfying read, and is recommended.

### **Ticket to Ride**

**Ed Gorman**

**Pegasus Books, 80 Broad St., NY, NY 10005**

**9781605980706 \$25.00 212-504-2494 pegasusbooks.us**

The year is 1965 - a turbulent year across the cities of the US. There is an unpopular war going on in a place called Vietnam, and in the small Iowa town of Black River Falls, Sam McCain has helped organize an anti-war rally. A small affair, drawing only about 30 people, it is nonetheless polarizing, and when the wealthy and influential Lou Bennett, father of a casualty of that war and a war hero in his own right, takes the microphone to assert his rage against the protesters, things take an even more dramatic turn. For later that night, on the grounds of his estate, Bennett is stabbed to death.

McCain, a local attorney now in his late twenties, has a p.i. license and is an investigator for four-times-married Judge Esme Anne Whitney. Sam lovingly refers to her as the Ice Maiden, and says of her "for a striking woman of noble bones, she had the ability to suddenly turn into Joseph Stalin when she threatened you." She is a well-respected member of the judiciary in Black River Falls, a town where everyone knows everyone else, and has known them all their lives. Sam becomes involved in the investigation into Bennett's death in both capacities, as his former girlfriend implores him to absolve the man arrested for the crime - a celebrity of sorts who was the main attraction at the rally, and who is not coincidentally now her lover.

The residents of Black River Falls are just as quirky and charming as one might expect. Sam's good friend, Kenny Thibodeau, for example, who knows more about everyone in town than almost anyone else, and is described as "our town's soft-core pornographer and writer of tall tales for men's magazines," and whose high-school heroes were Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg. Then there is the local minister who rails against "commies" in the community on his radio show, considers Elvis Presley the anti-Christ, and holds ceremonies where books and records by the Beatles and Rolling Stones, among others, are to be burned [and which go hilariously awry]. On a darker note, the mystery broadens when a fire two years prior, which killed a beautiful young woman and was deemed accidental, appears to have been less than accidental.

The writing is wonderful, e.g., "The temperature was July, but the slant and quality of sunlight was autumn, the golden color thinner and not as burnished. I used to hike in the woods, and I became aware of how different the sunlight is season to season. I once tried explaining this on a first date. Can you guess why there wasn't a second date?" The political issues are presented clearly, but the writing is not preachy, and the present-day relevance is inescapable. It had been a while since I read a Sam McCain book, and I fervently hope it will not be too long before there is another. Highly recommended.

### **The Wings of the Sphinx**

**Andrea Camilleri, author**

**translated by Stephen Sartarelli**

**Penguin Mystery Original**

**375 Hudson St., NY, NY 10014, 800-847-5515**

**9780143116608 \$14.00 penguin.com**

**Inspector Montalbano is feeling his age: Only 56, he finds warring elements in his psyche pulling him**



between a bright, optimistic outlook, and a distinctively gloomier, perhaps more realistic one. His colleagues are, for the most part, decidedly grumpy fellows, and altogether endearing, e.g., Catarella, being whatever the Italian counterpart is of a malaprop, who can never manage to get a word or a name correctly. For his part, Montalbano is a man who savors a great meal and can be moved to tears at great art, and may have missed his true calling as an actor, and is a totally wonderful creation on the part of the author.

The body of a young woman is discovered, completely naked and with no possible way of identifying her. The only clue is a unusual and distinctive tattoo of a sphinx butterfly on her left shoulder. During the ensuing investigation Montalbano discovers that there are at least two other beautiful young women who had a similar tattoo in the identical spot, with similar backgrounds; unfortunately, they seem to have disappeared.

The apparent kidnapping of a wealthy, fifty-year-old businessman only serves to make life even more difficult for Montalbano, only added to by difficulties in his long-distance, long-term relationship with his girlfriend Livia, of which he says: "The tiniest thing, the wrong word, a minor angry outburst, might send them both down a path of no return. Meanwhile they were both left hanging as though in mid-air, like children's balloons which, half-emptied of helium, can't manage either to rise to the sky or fall to the ground."

In another excellent translation by Stephen Sartarelli, the eleventh entry in the series finds the Sicilian citizenry facing hard times: "the police stations had no gasoline, the courts had no paper, the hospitals had no thermometers." But of course there is no shortage of corruption or mafia involvement in everyday life. There are many references to real-world political and other aspects of Italian life, only contributing to the complete delight in reading Mr. Camilleri's newest novel, wonderfully well-written with a good mystery and charming characters, and highly recommended.

Gloria Feit  
Reviewer

---

## Gorden's Bookshelf

**Fool Moon, Book Two of the Dresden Files**

**Jim Butcher**

**ROC**

c/o New American Library a division of Penguin Putman Inc.

375 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014

9780451458124 \$7.99

Butcher has created a great character in Harry Dresden. Great characters have a few common traits. They have enough human weaknesses for the reader to connect with. They have the knack of either doing or saying something we wish we were capable of doing. Finally they just keep on going.

For wizard Harry Dresden the situation is normal. He is broke and looking for a job. His relationships with his friends and even enemies are tenuous and things just happen to get worse. First his apprentice Kim Delaney asks him about magic too dangerous for her to handle and then detective lieutenant Karrin Murphy insists on driving him to a crime scene to look at a mutilated partially eaten corpse. He just finds the paw print when the FBI shows up and nearly shoots Murphy. With two full moon nights coming up can Harry survive?

**In Fool Moon, Butcher adds werewolves to the list of supernatural characters in his series. In each book in the Dresden Files series, the magical world becomes richer and deeper. It is nearly as fun learning about this world as it is reading about Harry's colorful action adventures.**

**Fool Moon is highly recommended escapist reading. As with all good escapist writing, the quality of the storytelling is hidden behind the action but it is also a joy to read the prose of a good writer. Do not make the mistake of thinking escapist writing can not have the qualities looked for in more literary genres. Good writing is good writing no matter the genre.**

**Wicked Prey**

**John Sandford**

**G.P. Putnam's Sons**

**c/o Penguin Group Inc.**

**375 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014**

**9780399155673 \$27.95**

**As expected, Wicked Prey is a very good detective tale. It doesn't break any new ground in the genre and it doesn't have the power of some of the previous Prey novels. But it is a very good detective story. Sandford has limited the setting of the novel by using the Republican nomination of McCain as a background for the story. While this brings the story into an immediate connection to the reader it does limit the story to a relatively non-event. This surprisingly dampens the suspense in the story.**

**A criminal gang, willing and able to kill at the least provocation, head to the Twin Cities to prey upon the money flowing into the region for the political convention. Nearly immediately, Lucas Davenport, head of the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, gets wind of their arrival. A possible sniper and an insane criminal out to get Davenport get into the mix of characters and events.**

**Wicked Prey is a good tale with enough violence and suspense to hold the reader. It isn't Sandford at the top of his game but his average tale is better than most writers. The one character that you wish there was more of is Letty Davenport, the adoptive daughter to Davenport. Lucas and Letty would make a good detective team in a future story. Wicked Prey is a story you will enjoy but you might want to wait for the paperback.**

**S.A. Gorden, Reviewer**

**[www.paulbunyan.net/users/gsirvio/content.html](http://www.paulbunyan.net/users/gsirvio/content.html)**

---

## **Harwood's Bookshelf**

**The Rise and Fall of Jesus**

**Stuart Campbell**

**WritersPrintShop**

**50 Penn Road, London N7 9RE, UK**

**9781904623731 10.00 Brit. pounds**

**Stuart Campbell maintains that the person best qualified to write a definitive biography of Jesus is an ex-Christian. Certainly a Christian cannot do so, for if he had any ability to reach conclusions compatible with the evidence, he could not remain a Christian. I have met Christians who have actually read the Bible, yet continue to regard Jesus as a nice guy. That is like reading Mein Kampf and continuing to regard Hitler as a nice guy. And someone who has never been Christian would have little interest in obtaining information about other people's weird beliefs.**

**I can testify to that. I have no interest whatsoever in writing a rebuttal of Mormonism or Islam, since to do so would require me to learn far more about those absurdities than I ever want to know. I write about the beginnings of Christianity because I was a believer, and the first time I encountered the falsifying evidence, I conducted a desperate search for rebuttal evidence (there isn't any). Campbell is likewise a former Christian, and as such started with sufficient knowledge and interest in the Jesus of Churchianity to find further study rewarding, even when it led to the opposite conclusion to what he had hoped to find.**

**But mere willingness to go with the evidence is no guarantee of reaching the right conclusions. Campbell writes of Albert Schweitzer (p. 192), "Contrary to the current view that little in the Gospels is historical, Schweitzer regarded it as a miracle that so true a record of Jesus has been preserved." But he then states that Schweitzer "stands above all others who have attempted to make sense of the life of Jesus" (p. 193). He adds that his own reconstruction is primarily "based on Schweitzer" (p.14). But whereas Schweitzer foreshadowed The Passover Plot in concluding that Jesus conspired to have himself crucified, Campbell proposes that "Jesus rose by his own efforts and ... planned to continue rising. His fall was not expected and was accidental.... His remains lie buried in the earth" (p. 15). In other words, he is dead but Christians refuse to bury him, even though "Not a single word of Jesus is of any relevance today" (p. 17).**

**Campbell fills a 22-page chapter with arguments for Jesus' historicity, compared to my five pages in For This We Thank Our Fuhrer (Booksurge.com, 2007). While his chain of reasoning is generally valid, some of it is suspect, and certainly insufficiently convincing to change many minds. He does use the most logical argument, that too much of Jesus' authorized biography is negative for it to be something an admirer would have invented. But he ignores the testimony (and in fact disagrees with it) that Jesus was an ugly, deformed man, a description that could only have originated in a non-Christian source, even though six centuries of Christian apologists conceded the point. Nonetheless, it is a chapter all purveyors of the "no such person ever existed" school should be required to read.**

**Campbell's chapter on Jesus' birth pretty much parallels my own account in God, Jesus and the Bible: The Origin and Evolution of Religion, right down to identifying his birthplace as Capernaum. And practically all scholars, both upholders of a historical Jesus and deniers, have similarly traced the various birth myths to their pre-Christian sources. Campbell takes several paragraphs to debunk attempts to "explain" one of Matthew's borrowings from Hinduism, summarizing (pp. 48-49), "Astronomy has ignorantly attempted to explain a problem which does not exist. There never was a Star of Bethlehem." He does not bother mentioning that the gospel author, writing a full century after Jesus' birth, knew that he could safely make such a preposterous claim, because nobody knew the precise year that Jesus was born and therefore could not refute the fantasy that it coincided with a spectacular astronomical event.**

**On many issues, although not any involving absurdities, Campbell is far too credulous. For example, he appears to believe that the tax collector Matthew, one of six names invented by the anonymous author of Mark to round out his mythical Twelve Apostles, was a real person. And he thinks that a disciple named John wrote the equally anonymous fourth gospel. Clearly he does not date the fourth gospel to the decade 130-138 CE, when the Christians were again trying to dissociate themselves from the rebellious Jews, as I do. He also accepts the physician Luke as author of the gospel credited to him, even though Acts contains mistakes no companion of Paul could have made, and the common authorship of Luke and Acts is reasonably established.**

**In accepting non-theological scenarios in the fourth gospel as factually based, such as the Beloved Disciple's adoption of Jesus' mother, his identity as a disciple named John, and Jesus appearing to turn water into wine, Campbell goes way beyond naive. He writes (p. 116) that, "The only scholar to come close to the truth ... suggested that some liquor was poured into the water to give it the taste of wine."**

And Santa Claus comes down the chimney on Mithra's birthday. The fourth gospel author transformed Jesus the king into Jesus the god, and backed up that transformation by having Jesus turn water into wine, as the god Dionysus had done at his wedding to Ariadne. Similarly, Campbell's attempt to explain Judas's alleged betrayal as something other than the "Mark" author's desperate attempt to convince Vespasian that the sicarius among Jesus' lieutenants was "really" his enemy and ultimately betrayed him, can be compared with the harmonizers' attempts to equate the Star of Bethlehem with a real-world phenomenon.

Campbell writes (p. 59), "The epistles of Peter indicate that their author [actually authors] was familiar with the Septuagint. Would Jesus be more ignorant of Greek than his disciples? Jesus was literate, perhaps more so than most of his contemporaries. It can have been little trouble for him to learn Koine [pidgin Greek].... When Jesus spoke to Gentiles, it can only have been in Koine.... The evidence is that Jesus was as fluent in Greek as in Aramaic." I disagree on all counts (God, Jesus, Bible, p. 262). Campbell also attaches unwarranted credence to the hypothesis that Jesus was not the legitimate son of Mary's husband, even though such an allegation was first made a full seventy years after Jesus' death, by Simeon ben Azzai, as a reaction to the virgin-birth interpolation in Matthew.

By the time of Paul of Tarsus, the neo-Essene sect in Jerusalem was known as Nazoraios, which Campbell translates as "Nazarenes" rather than "Nazirites," an equally valid rendering if his theory of the name's origin is correct. He postulates that the name preceded Jesus, that the Nazarenes were a splinter sect led by John the Immerser, whose successor was his cousin Jesus, and Jesus' successor was his brother Jacob. My view is that the sect's name was derived from "the Nazirite," the title bestowed on Jesus by his detractors as a mark of scorn (analogous to calling a bald man "Curly"), after it changed messiahs from Jesus the Essene, executed 104 BCE, to Jesus the Nazirite, executed 30 CE (Campbell says 33 CE); that Jacob was already Head Essene before Jesus' became a public figure (hence his title, "the Righteous," carried by all successors of the original Righteous Rabbi), and that he went along with the change of messiahs as a consequence of Peter's preaching. John was an opposition messiah, whose sect, called "Immersers," Jesus joined before developing the belief that he was Messiah. John was assuredly not Jesus' relative.

Despite (1) the scene in Mark 10:21 in which Jesus loses a potential convert when he rejects Jesus' demand that he, "Go and sell whatever you have and give it to the Paupers"; (2) the passages in Josephus's Jewish War (2:8 ff.) in which he explains that Essene communes operated on the rule that "Each man's possessions go into the pool, and their entire property belongs to them all"; (3) the scene in Acts 4:32-34 in which, "Everything they had became communal property, for all who owned land or houses sold them and brought the proceeds"; and (4) the existence of a communistic sect of Jesus-Jews as late as the fourth century called "Paupers" (ebionim); Campbell gives no consideration to the possibility that "the Paupers" to whom Jesus' converts were required to donate their property, and the fourth century Paupers, were the same Paupers, i.e., the sect Jesus actually founded.

The foregoing are only a few of the problems I have with this book. Like Burton Mack and Burton Wolfe, Campbell constructs a scenario that can be neither falsified nor taken seriously. This is one more reconstruction of Christian origins, neither more nor less plausible than the dozens of others by scholars whose competence is not in dispute, and certainly not as far out as The Passover Plot or the imbecilic The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross. Whether this or any other Jesus biography is more credible than the last two chapters of God, Jesus and the Bible, the reader will have to decide for himself.

(The 2009 reprint of Campbell's book is described as "revised", but it is unlikely to differ significantly from the 1996 edition on which this review was based.)

The Late Great Planet Earth  
Hal Lindsey

**Zondervan Publishing House  
5300 Patterson Ave SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49530  
9780310277712 \$9.35**

**In *The Late Great Planet Earth*, Hal Lindsay concludes that the human race is on the verge of extinction. He reaches that accurate conclusion by starting from the inaccurate assumption that the Christian Bible, a 2,000-year-old equivalent of *National Inquirer*, is filled with psychic prophecies about events that were going to happen more than two millennia later. Yet instead of grasping that time is unidirectional, and that knowledge of the future cannot exceed what can be extrapolated from events already in progress (I can safely prophesy that the sun will rise tomorrow), incurable addicts of the god delusion purchased 35 million copies of Lindsay's masturbation fantasy in the belief that calling ancient psychics "prophets" makes them any less fraudulent than their modern-day equivalents.**

**"It was a perfect night for a party. In the warm California evening the lemon trees perfumed the patio and the flickering Tiki torches cast shadows over a lavish table." Whether that opening paragraph of Hal Lindsey's fantasy novel is more or less imaginative than, "It was a dark and stormy night," is irrelevant. What is significant is that 25 reprintings were purchased in the 28 years following its initial publication by people so illiterate that they were able to mistake it for nonfiction. Since readers with functioning human brains would have read no further, Lindsey was free to aim the rest of his theobabble at scientifically illiterate unteachables who lacked the rationality to recognize that the snake oil they were being sold could be valid only if information can travel backward in time. And if anyone believes that can happen, I have a bridge for sale in Brooklyn that I think will interest him.**

**Hal Lindsey received a "certificate" from Dallas Theological Seminary, and therefore conforms to H. L. Mencken's definition of a theologian as a blind man in a dark room searching for a black cat that is not there - and finding it. But he is able to write (p. vii) that, "This is not a complex theological treatise." In fact that is precisely what it is. Like all theologians, Lindsey ignores the methodology of scientific history, in which conclusions must conform to the evidence, and instead uses the methodology of theology in which evidence is distorted to whatever degree is necessary in order to make it conform to predetermined conclusions. Yet he is able to ridicule astrology and other forms of tealeaf reading while ignoring the reality that those other forms of prognostication use the identical techniques he uses himself in the rest of his book. The only difference between astrology and Lindseyology is that ancient astrology started from the assumption that lumps of fusing hydrogen were gods, while Lindsey's virtual astrology starts from the assumption that a 2,000-year-old book of fairy tales was written by persons who received information about the future from the most sadistic, evil, insane mass-murderer in all fiction.**

**Hal Lindsey knows as much about the composition of the Judaeo-Christian bible as I know about the Etruscan language - which has never been deciphered. He backs up his claim that his bible contains soon-to-be-fulfilled prophecies by arguing that it successfully prophesied events that are now part of history. And he is right. It did. There are many fulfilled prophecies in the bible. What Lindsey tries to rationalize away is that they were already fulfilled before they were prophesied. For example, Genesis shows the god Yahweh promising Abraham that his descendants will conquer and occupy the land that is now the nation of Israel. Since David was already king of Israel at the time the prophecy was concocted, the probability of the prophecy failing was zero to a million decimal places. The reason historians are able to date much of the book of Daniel to precisely 163 BCE is that all prophecies of events prior to that date were fulfilled, whereas events prophesied to occur after 163 BCE failed to be fulfilled. And the Essene portion of Revelation can be dated to July/August of 70 CE, because it "prophesied" that the Jerusalem temple would be occupied by the Roman invaders, an event that happened in July, but that the temple would never be destroyed, an event that happened in August.**

**It requires no supernatural or paranormal power to make an accurate prophecy ex post facto. I hereby prophesy that Hitler will lose World War Two. Now was I right or was I right? Lindsey's inability to**

**grasp such a self-evident reality makes him an embarrassment to the kindergarten that graduated him. But the full extent of his crass gullibility is revealed by his belief that twentieth-century psychics are something other than lying, swindling humbugs. He not only parrots the delusion that Edgar Cayce accurately prophesied the future and had the nonexistent power of telepathy; he expresses similar belief in the self-serving lies of the humbug Jeane Dixon (p. 4), and swallows the Big Lie that her prediction of John Kennedy's assassination was made before the event she allegedly prophesied. No doubt he also regards the tales attributed to Baron Munchausen as true stories. How he rates Alice in Wonderland, I can only guess.**

**Lindsey is fully aware (p. 15) that, "Many so-called Biblical scholars today try to 'late date' such predictions as Isaiah's to make his prophecies seem to be after the fact." His response is that any scholar who recognizes retroactive prophecies for what they are, "also makes the Jewish people religious charlatans and deceivers." That was essentially the same response pathetic Mormon apologists gave to the discovery that Joseph Smith plagiarized the Book of Mormon from a historical novel written by Solomon Spalding. Incurable Mormons argue that accusing that nice Mr Smith of lying is dirty pool, and Lindsey argues that accusing biblical fantasizers of lying is dirty pool. Presumably he also sees accusing Richard Nixon of lying as dirty pool.**

**When I requisitioned The Late Great Planet Earth from my local library, I had in mind to write a whole book refuting Lindsey's points one by one. What I discovered is that he only makes one point - over and over and over. He cites one after another fulfilled biblical prophecy, and argues that its fulfillment proves that ancient psychics really did have knowledge of the future. And the rebuttal of every one of those repetitions is that the spokesmen (which became prophetes in Greek) composed their alleged prophecies after the fact. He then goes on to misinterpret Revelation's failed prophecy that the final battle of the war of 66-73 CE would end in a Jewish victory at Armageddon (it ended in a Roman victory at Masada) as a prophecy of events still to come. And he declares that his bible foretells the coming of an "antichrist."**

**Hal Lindsey has clearly learned nothing in the forty years since The Late Great Planet Earth was published, and is as morally retarded, educationally handicapped, rationally unevolved, intestinally challenged, and intellectually bankrupt now as he was then. He was obliged to resign from Jim and Tammy Bakker's Trinity Broadcasting Network in 2006 over statements too racist even for them. But TBN still permits him to broadcast his propaganda at his own expense. And as recently as 2008 he described Barack Obama as the foretold "antichrist," thereby firmly aligning himself with the far-right Republicanazis of the Christian Taliban. I am only amazed that he has not been given a regular timeslot on the Faux News Channel, where subhuman evolution is not merely an advantage but a prerequisite.**

**Nonetheless Lindsey's conclusion that the species Homo sapiens is facing extinction is consistent with observable reality that is not based on, "Because Mother Goose said so." Humankind is indeed committing species suicide, and it is anthropocidal god addicts like Lindsey who are encouraging it to do so. Global warming, overpopulation, and air and water pollution are producing a planet incapable of supporting human life - and pushers of the god delusion are allowing it to happen in the conviction that their imaginary deus ex machina will intervene to save us in the last act. Newsflash: The Sky Fuhrer that the godphuqt are counting on to save them DOES NOT EXIST! Anyone who does not know that either has not read Victor Stenger's God: The Failed Hypothesis, or is dangerously insane, or perhaps both. (Note that Stenger does not attempt to prove that entities we would consider gods do not exist on the fourteenth planet of Betelgeuse, only that a god with the characteristics Judaeo-Christian-Moslem religion attributes to the character mistranslated as "God" cannot and therefore does not exist.)**

**If The Late Great Planet Earth had been published forty years later, would it have achieved the same success? Or would today's more sophisticated society have recognized Lindsey as the same kind of embarrassment to Christianity as Fred Phelps, Mel Gibson, Pat Robertson and Rush Limbaugh?**

**Before attempting to answer that, one should keep in mind the success of *Left Behind*, a series every bit as mindless, fanatic, ignorant, hate-ridden, intolerant and subhuman stupid as anything Lindsey has written before or since.**

**All godworshippers are insane. Anyone who was not insane before he started believing that mass murder was evil when Hitler did it with gas chambers but is not evil when his imaginary Sky Fuhrer does it with disease, famine, religious wars, natural disasters, transportation accidents, and old age, is certainly insane once he does acquire such a belief. But not all are so dangerously insane that they belong in cages with padded walls where they cannot pass on their mind-AIDS to the uninfected. That level of insanity is found only among the authors of books like *The Late Great Planet Earth* and *Left Behind*, and fanatics like Osama bin Laden, Benjamin Netanyahu, Joseph Ratzinazi, and Pat Robertson. The one point on which all of those incurables agree is that all of the others are raving lunatics. How any of those self-inflicted brain amputees are able to remember to take their pants down in the toilet, I cannot figure.**

**The Greatest Show on Earth: The Evidence for Evolution  
Richard Dawkins  
Free Press  
1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020  
9781416594789 \$30.00**

**In *The Greatest Show on Earth*, Richard Dawkins accomplishes something he had not previously attempted. Whereas all of his previous books started from the assumption that the theorem(1) of evolution is an established fact, he now gets around to proving that evolution is a fact (p. vii), "my personal summary of the evidence that the 'theory' of evolution is actually a fact - as incontrovertible as any in science." He adds (p. 17), "Nowadays, it is no longer possible to dispute the fact of evolution itself - it has graduated to become a theorem or obviously supported fact - but it could still (just) be doubted that natural selection is its major driving force." Furthermore (p. 18), "The aids to inference that lead scientists to the fact of evolution are far more numerous, more convincing, more incontrovertible, than any eye-witness reports that have ever been used, in any court of law, in any century, to establish guilt in any crime. Proof beyond reasonable doubt? Reasonable doubt? That is the understatement of all time."**

**An early point Dawkins makes is the similarity of natural selection to the controlled evolution of the wolf into dozens of species of domesticated dogs. "The main point I want to draw out of domestication is its astonishing power to change the shape and behaviour of wild animals, and the speed with which it does so.... The relevance to natural selection is that, although the selecting agent is man and not nature, the process is otherwise exactly the same" (p. 28). "The difference between any two breeds of dog gives us a rough idea of the quantity of evolutionary change that can be achieved in less than a millennium" (p. 81). "If so much evolutionary change can be achieved in just a few centuries or even decades, just think what might be achieved in ten or a hundred million years" (p. 37).**

**At this point let me interject my only criticisms, starting with one that concerns Dawkins' punctuation, not his arguments. "Nothing is free, everything comes with a price tag." That quotation from page 69 (and there are many other examples throughout the book) consists of two principal clauses joined by a comma with no coordinating conjunction. It is called a run-on sentence. I would expect such an error from someone who went to school in North America, where Correct English has been a foreign language since 1945. But from a Brit? When I typed Dawkins' words, my spell-check warned me that the comma should be a semicolon. Is Dawkins' editor's software less effective than mine? Surely not. My more serious objection is Dawkins' use (pp. 89, 90, 106) of the insultingly offensive Christian dating system, "BC/AD," at a time when even liberal theologians have adopted the scientifically neutral "BCE/CE." So why is a nontheist still telling the human race that they are living in the "Year of the Master"? As for his statement (p. 105) that nobody knows where the Shroud of Turin was before the**

date identified by carbon dating, he is surely not unaware that the painter who created it confessed his role to his bishop in 1389?(2)

Utilizing Robert Heinlein's observation that there is no such thing as a free lunch, Dawkins explains why natural selection usually involves a trade-off, an improved survival factor in one area diminished by a less-useful counter balance. Why are wild rats more subject to tooth decay than laboratory rates? "Surely there is no benefit in tooth decay." See his explanation on page 68. Why are thoroughbred horses more likely to break their legs than wild horses? The suggested answer is that (p. 70), "artificial selection has pushed them into a zone that natural selection would not have tolerated." How did natural selection, before artificial selection was utilized to create desired breeds, transform some wolves into man's best friend? See pages 71-73.

"If the history-deniers who doubt the fact of evolution are ignorant of biology, those who think the world began less than ten thousand years ago are worse than ignorant, [sic] they are deluded to the point of perversity. They are denying not only the facts of biology but those of physics, geology, cosmology, archaeology, history and chemistry as well. This chapter ... presents the evidence that the timescale on which life has operated on this planet is measured not in thousands of years but in thousands of millions of years" (p. 85). Is Dawkins' compilation of evidence sufficient to convince such young-earthers as a recent Republican candidate for the office of President of the United States? Even though (p. 107), "Given that the sole motive for such fiddling [with the laws of radio-active decay] is the desire to uphold the origin myth of a particular set of Bronze Age desert tribesmen, it is surprising, to say the least, that anyone is fooled by it," probably not. Is it sufficient to convince any person with a functioning human brain? Beyond question, yes.

Dawkins raises the possibility that anti-evolutionists are not really as certifiably insane as they appear, and are in fact simply conscienceless liars. In discussing the "fatuously ignorant book Atlas of Creation," he writes (p. 154), "I find it impossible to believe that the author seriously thinks evolutionists would expect to find a transition between two such differing animals as a starfish and a fish. I therefore cannot help suspecting that he knows his audience all too well, and is deliberately and cynically exploiting their ignorance." While all apologists for the god delusion deliberately and cynically exploit the ignorance of their audience, Dawkins has chosen a particularly blatant example of such exploitation to make his point. "It would be so nice if those who oppose evolution would take a tiny bit of trouble to learn the merest rudiments of what it is that they are opposing" (p. 155).

But it is an observable reality that incurables have neither the desire nor the ability to be swayed by facts, and invent "gaps" and "missing links" where there are none. As Dawkins explains (p. 203), "Museum labels are positively not allowed to say 'halfway between Australopithecus africanus and Homo habilis.' History-deniers seize upon this naming convention as though it were evidence of a lack of intermediates in the real world." Reading the transcript (pp. 198-202) of Dawkins' TV dialogue, on the subject of pretended gaps in the fossil record, with a woman(3) who kept parroting, "Show me the fossils," even after he had several times named a museum where she could see them, I found myself wondering why she was not immediately taken into custody and marched off to the nearest funny farm. Of course I wonder the same thing every time a history-denier like Mike Huckabee or Mitt Romney opens his mouth.

And that leads me to a point that, in a rational society, Dawkins would not have needed even to address. He spells out the Noah's Ark fairy tale's intrinsic absurdities, asking (p. 268-269), "Why would all those marsupials ... but no placentals at all, have migrated en masse from Mount Ararat to Australia? And why did not a single member of their straggling caravan pause on the way, and settle - in India, perhaps .... Why did the entire order Edentata ... troop off unerringly for South America, leaving not ... settlers somewhere along the way?" He concludes the diversion by writing, "I am sorry to take a sledgehammer to so small and fragile a nut, but I have to do so because more than 40 percent of the American people believe literally in the story of Noah's Ark. We should be able to ignore them and get



on with our science, but we can't afford to because they control the school boards ... and they include ... even presidential and vice-presidential candidates." In other words, with almost half of all Americans believing that Noah's Ark is more real than Aladdin's flying carpet, a detailed exposition of one of the many reasons why the Ark myth cannot be true was indeed necessary.

In showing how natural selection can explain the evolution from a sighted ancestor into blind descendants among cave dwellers that live in total darkness (even a summary would be too long to include here), Dawkins asks (p. 351), "Given that a cave salamander lives in perpetual darkness so has no use for eyes, why would a divine creator nonetheless furnish it with dummy eyes, clearly related to eyes but non-functional?" Creationists' only response to such a question is to ignore it in the hope that it will go away.

The only imperfection in Dawkins' delineation of the evidence is that he devotes only a handful of pages to the subject of macro-speciation. Only the most hardcore creationists insist on divine intervention to explain the evolution from the first species of finches to reach the Galapagos into daughter species that, while unable to interbreed, are still finches. Most creationists belong to the Dembski/Behe cult that denies only the descent of species as distinct as humans and bonobos from a common ancestor. It is not that Dawkins' response to the more specialized history-deniers is inadequate. He many times spells out the proof that all living things, from humans to viruses, have common ancestors. But his explanations of macro-speciation tend to get lost among detailed expositions of micro-speciation that the dogmatists dismiss as beside the point. Not only has no one, including Dawkins, succeeded in opening the eyes of those who will not see; at this time there is serious doubt that anyone will ever do so. So unless it can be demonstrated that scientific illiteracy stemming from the god delusion is leading the human race in the direction of species extinction, and the propagators of that anthropocidal illiteracy displayed in cages and labeled "lunatic," as was once done at Bedlam, the chances of anyone being alive to read The Greatest Show on Earth in the year 2300 CE are frighteningly low.

1 Dawkins coined the word *theorem* to mean the non-mathematical equivalent of theorem. He defines it as a theory that meets the OED definition (p. 13) that, "[It] has been confirmed by observation or experiment, and is propounded or accepted as accounting for the known facts ... a statement of what are held to be the general laws, principles, or causes of something known or observed.... common sense treats it as a fact in the same sense that the 'theory' that the earth is round and not flat is a fact."

2 Joe Nickel, *Inquest on the Shroud of Turin*, Prometheus, 1989; Walter McCrone, *Judgment Day For the Shroud of Turin*, Prometheus, 1999. Since neither of those books is listed in Dawkins' bibliography, perhaps he really is unaware of their contents.

3 The same woman declared that, "The morning-after pill is a pedophile's best friend," a statement that, as Dawkins puts it, "gives a fair idea of her powers of reasoning."

### **Superstition: Belief in the Age of Science**

Robert L. Park

Princeton University Press

41 William Street, Princeton NJ 08540

9780691133553 \$24.95

"If things were different, things would not be the way things are. If that doesn't strike you as terribly deep, you may not be suitable material for a Templeton Prize" (p. 10). The Templeton Prize, in case anyone is unaware, is the richest bribe available to scientists who "say something nice about religion."

Responding to the argument that the universe is so fine-tuned for human life that it must have been designed for that purpose, Park writes (p. 11), "But the fine-tuning argument is an example of the 'Texas-sharpshooter fallacy': The sharpshooter fires his six-gun at the side of a barn, and then walks

over and draws a bull's-eye around the bullet hole." That passage was extremely reassuring, as it followed a lengthy discussion of the claim that religion and science are not incompatible, an argument on which Park initially appeared to be on the wrong side. His clarification of the issue (p. 12) was, "Invoking a designer solves nothing. It only raises the additional question of where the designer came from." And in case there was any doubt that he rejected Stephen Jay Gould's "non-overlapping magisteria," he observed (p. 26) that, "Teaching intelligent design in a biology class would be like teaching astrology to a class in astronomy."

Park asks (p. 215), "Is there a God? As it is impossible to prove there is, so also is it impossible to prove there is not." Since he refers to "a God," as opposed to "God," I must agree. But he is apparently unaware that the existence of "God," defined as a god with all of the qualities attributed to it by major religions, has been as definitively disproven as the nonexistence of phlogiston.(1)

In explaining that the initial attraction between himself and his wife of 57 years was (p. 18) that, "our pheromones matched receptors in each other's olfactory system," he goes on to declare that, "To keep you from getting excited by your own pheromones, they do not attach to your own receptors. Nor do they attach to the receptors of closely related people such as siblings, who produce similar pheromones. This adaptation has the effect of discouraging inbreeding." And if he believes that, I have a bridge for sale in Brooklyn that I think will interest him.(2)

Commenting on the post hoc ergo propter hoc reasoning that causes millions to believe that an inert process such as prayer or a sugar pill cured them of an ailment that in 80 percent of all cases would have healed spontaneously with no treatment whatsoever, Park writes (p. 58), "Quack doctors who have a talent for invoking the placebo effect sometimes attract huge followings and wind up on the Oprah Winfrey show." He refers to Winfrey again later (p. 126) in connection with her role in turning a ridiculous masturbation fantasy called *The Secret*, which claims that just thinking about a desired objective can make it happen, into a bestseller. He did not recommend that Winfrey's kindergarten graduation be revoked, or that she be confined to a cage with padded walls where she cannot pass on her mind-AIDS to the uninfected. And that is unfortunate.

Park discusses several issues at length, including homeopathy. He notes (p. 147) that, "The most important advance in medical research has been the randomized, placebo-controlled, double-blind trial, by means of which we can learn what works and what doesn't. No homeopathic medicine has ever passed such a test." He cites (p. 146) a homeopathic medicine that sells for \$12. "The price represents the cost of guaranteeing that the medicine retains no trace of the active ingredient. Why, you may wonder, are millions of people around the world willing to pay twelve bucks for a guarantee that they are getting nothing? They are paying for the placebo effect - and placebos aren't free."

Park mentions (p. 214), "Homo erectus, an ancestor of Homo sapiens." Since accumulated knowledge has long passed the point where any individual could be expected to keep up with the latest advances in sciences other than his own, his unawareness that erectus is now generally regarded as a dead end and not a human ancestor is understandable.

The word "hypnotism" does not appear in Park's index, and the only mention of the concept in the text debunks the claims that it has been used for such purposes as recovering memories of past lives. But in a book titled *Superstition*, the failure to investigate hypnotism suggests that he is unaware that hypnotism is as much a superstition as multiple personality, facilitated communication, and a god that answers prayers.

A study published in the *Journal of Reproductive Medicine* concluded that an experimental group of prayed-for patients had a higher recovery rate than an un-prayed for control group. Park details how, when the study was exposed as a fraud, JRM succeeded in covering up the truth for three years before it was compelled to admit that it had been hoaxed. He then reports that a later, properly-conducted

study proved that prayer did not influence recovery rates, so definitively that any further study is most unlikely. He reports that Harold Puthoff and Russell Targ tested magician Yuri Geller for "psychic power," and swallowed his schoolboy conjuring tricks, hook, liner and sinker. And he reports that searches for evidence for a "soul" or "heaven" did not succeed in finding any. What he does not do is add any useful information to books by Kendrick Frazier, Martin Gardner, Joe Nickel, James Randi, and others, that make all of the same points more effectively.

I am not aware if Park has ever written any fiction. But he clearly has never learned the difference between fiction writing and nonfiction writing. Consider his opening sentence: "Almost a year had passed since the tree had fallen, but it was not hard to find." As gripping as that might be at the start of a novel, it is grossly inappropriate as the beginning of a work of science. Journalists adopt such a style to make the point, "Look how clever I am." For a scientist it should be an absolute no-no.

In most respects this is an accurate book. But it is not a good book.

1 "I am not proving that all conceivable gods do not exist. I am simply showing beyond a reasonable doubt that a God with the specific hypothesized attributes does not exist." (Victor J. Stenger, *God: The Failed Hypothesis*, Prometheus, Amherst NY, 2007, p. 228)

2 See chapter 4, "Incest: The Abolition of Endogenous Marriage," in *God, Jesus and the Bible: The Origin and Evolution of Religion*, World Audience, NY, 2009.

William Harwood  
Reviewer

## Henry's Bookshelf

**The Life, Art, and Times of Joseph Delaney, 1904-1991**  
Frederick C. Moffatt  
U. of Tennessee Press  
Knoxville, TN  
9781572336766, \$44.95 [www.utpress.org](http://www.utpress.org)

Moffatt locates Joseph Delaney in the "middle tier" of African-American artists of the mid 1900s. Coming to New York City from Tennessee in the 1930s (a decade after the Harlem Renaissance was at its height) in the large movement of Southern African Americans to Northern cities, Delaney brought with him and always kept his Christian evangelical fundamentalism. This was expressed in the artist's considerable writings. In one piece on his feelings in observing the V-J celebration in New York, he wrote, "Something troubles my heart about all this praying on steps and public singing...[W]hen you pray go into your chamber and pray in secret...If you are too mad and in a hurry to wait for God, keep Him out of it." Because of his deeply-felt religious feelings, ideas about black liberation, black nationalism, and such did not appeal to Delaney. In an essay titled "Color Is Not Guilty," he exposed and rejected attempts by black political and ideological leaders to enlist black artists into their causes. In his essay, Delaney averred, "I have never, and do not now accept such a thing as black art."

Nonetheless, Delaney's art is inevitably categorized as African-American. Its portraits and figures are for the most African American. And he did work out of and identify himself with Harlem; though his subject matter often went beyond this while remaining largely urban. Delaney painted parades throughout Manhattan, Washington Square and a SoHo loft party in lower Manhattan, Pennsylvania Station in midtown, a Coney Island merry-go-round, and skaters in Central Park along with Harlem

street scenes, apartments, and varied neighborhood individuals. Though attached to religion more than interested in political ideas or ideology, Delaney was drawn to the social. He did not, for example, paint still lifes; nor are there symbolism such as crosses or angels in his work.

Delaney's paintings are filled with life. This is his artistic outlet for his Southern evangelicalism. Many have a coloration resembling fauvism, though the human forms and familiar settings temper this. But similar to the evangelist spirit, the impulse is to exceed the earthly forms. Delaney also has distinctive ideas about composition. The composition is often weak (this is not meant as a criticism), as if it were simply a vehicle for the true spirit of a painting. Though Delaney had a sharp eye for and interest in ordinary life and everyday individuals, his paintings are only weakly perceptibly grounded. One becomes fascinated by them for their complexity (as the crowd scenes of James Ensor).

Many of the endnotes are like short essays; thus filling in additional material on the distinctive, yet largely-overlooked artist in conjunction with the accomplished biographical, analytic, and sociological text. Not simply an introductory work, the book holds interest for scholars and advanced students in art and social history, black studies, New York City African-American culture, and related subjects. While one cannot say a first book on Delaney is the definitive work, this book assuredly is a fundamental, required work on the artist.

**Arctic Scientist, Gulag Survivor - The Biography of Mikhail Mikhailovich Ermolaev, 1905-1991**

A. M. Ermolaev and V. D. Dibner, authors

Translated and Edited by William Barr

U. of Calgary Press

Calgary, Alberta, Canada

9781552382567, \$44.95 [www.uofcpress.com](http://www.uofcpress.com)

The biography is not only a story of notable scientific accomplishment, but also of hardship and survival in the Soviet Gulag of Stalin's early years. Ermolaev was arrested in 1938, released, and arrested a second time in 1940. He was accused of being a member of a counterrevolutionary fascist organization and engaging in counterrevolutionary espionage on the basis of unsubstantiated reports by colleagues envious of his reputation for his contributions to geology and oceanography of the Arctic and his promise. Many scientists, military officers, government officials, and others arrested during the Stalinist purges were executed. Ermolaev was spared this fate, but was nonetheless sentenced to a harsh term in the Siberian Gulag. In 1941 he was put in charge of the construction of a railroad line to Siberian coal mines for fuel which would have an important part in Soviet war production.

With the help of friends, Ermolaev was able to resume his teaching career and scientific research and writings after he was released not long after the end of the War. Establishment of the Department of the Geography of the Oceans at Kaliningrad State University was one of his accomplishments in this period. In 1954, he was officially granted rehabilitation in accordance with the demented practices of Stalinist Russia.

The translation is serviceable and literal, little more complex than the style of a news article. Intended as a record and testament of this indomitable individual from recollections and writings of Ermolaev's son, the biography is basically factual rather than interpretive or explanatory. The larger framework of Stalinist paranoia and injustices and hardships to untold numbers of Russian citizens is known. Within this framework, Ermolaev's story is unique in that he was spared the worst of fates and despite the hurdles he faced, made distinctive and lasting contributions to the fields of geology and oceanography. Parts of the text and appendices document enough of this scientific work for readers to grasp its significance. While Ermolaev's survival against a hostile government and inhumane conditions is one more memorable account of the sorrows and cruelties endured under Stalinism.

**Maya Yucatan, An Artist's Journey**

**Philip Hofstetter**  
Foreword by David Freidel  
U. of New Mexico Press  
Albuquerque, NM  
9780826346940 \$60.00 800-249-7737

It's not widely known, but the Mayan of Central America's Yucatan area did not finally give up armed resistance against Spanish and later Mexican governments until 1901. The 1994 Zapatista outbreak in the Chiapas part of southern Mexico was a more recent sign of resistance to complete domination and assimilation. Hofstetter uses these historical notes to illustrate his basic point about the continuity of the Mayan way of life for centuries. Not slavery, oppression, nor isolation has been able to root out this way of life. This continuity has been nourished by the Mayan remaining close to their native land and also intentional practices such as ceremonies and dress seen in the modern world with other ethnic groups desiring and determined to keep basics of their traditional ways.

With photographs of ruins, contemporary scenes, and archaeological sites and an accompanying text that is variously history, travel-like observations and vignettes, social description and commentary, and archaeological report, Hofstetter discerns signs of the long perdurance of the Mayans and illuminates sources of their culture.

An art professor in California who is also a filmmaker whose work has appeared on National Geographic Television and the Discovery Channel, Hofstetter is particularly suited for this lesson of intertwined factors on how to read the present existence of the Maya. Alternating photographs of ruins of monuments and nearby present-day buildings and persons especially carry the author/photographer's point. A few photographs--such as one where a farm animal stands beside remains of a monument--which might otherwise seem unusual juxtapositions, in this work highlight the Mayan's natural, routine access to their roots and contemporary way of life. Contemporary homes of earthen walls and thatched roofs little different from classic Mayan residences yet with solar panels and other features of modernity also especially bring out the author's perspective.

Hofstetter's book imparts a fresh, multifaceted perspective on the perennially fascinating Mayans. One enjoys the intriguing expert photographs of age-old ruins as much as the knowledgeable and observant update on their culture in today's Central America.

**Henry Berry**  
Reviewer

---

## Janie's Bookshelf

**Magic, Mensa & Mayhem: From the Case Files of Dragon Eye, PI**  
Karina L. Fabian  
Swimming Kangaroo Books  
Arlington TX  
9781934041789 \$13.99 [www.swimmingkangaroo.com](http://www.swimmingkangaroo.com)

Karina L. Fabian has been writing Dragon Eye, PI stories for years. Fans have eagerly awaited a full-length novel focusing on the exploits of Vern, a dragon private investigator, and his associate, Sister Grace of the Faerie Catholic Church. **Magic, Mensa & Mayhem: From the Case Files of Dragon Eye, PI** is sure to please fans.

**Vern and Sister Grace are originally from the realm of Faerie, an alternative universe for which access had only recently been afforded to human beings. As humans and faerie beings interacted and crossed into each other's realms, they also began to exchange cultural and economic ideas and goods.**

**In Magic, Mensa & Mayhem: From the Case Files of Dragon Eye, PI, Vern and Sister Grace have been asked to "babysit" (as Vern calls it) a Mensa convention to which many faerie experts have been invited. Mensa is a real human organization of highly intelligent people who have to test into the organization with an IQ of 140 or higher. They often meet at conventions such as the one in this book. But here, Vern and Sister Grace soon find that babysitting intelligent humans and quirky faerie folk at a Billy Beaver's Fantasyland is not a restful vacation for them. Vern goes on nightly patrols with the hotel security staff, gets into trouble with local environmentalists when he takes a moonlit dip in the ocean, and deals with cleaning brownies, a nymphomaniac Valkyrie, a charming trickster Coyote, and ego-inflated elves who are in the midst of a longstanding feud.**

**Magic, Mensa & Mayhem: From the Case Files of Dragon Eye, PI is chockfull of comic incidents, snappy one-liners from Vern, and lots of Sister Grace's magic. And, of course, the whole faerie entourage is larger than life and full of their own humorous quirks.**

**I really enjoyed Magic, Mensa & Mayhem: From the Case Files of Dragon Eye, PI. Vern has such a unique personality and a strong sense of humor - but he still behaves like a PI. Sister Grace is long suffering and behaves - for the most part as you would expect a nun to act - except that a faerie nun uses magic as well as prayer and she is subject to a wholly different set of spiritual rules than members of a spiritual community in the human realm.**

**That, I think, is the hallmark of Karina L. Fabian's work. She has created a new "religion" for her characters who are members of the Faerie Catholic Church. (Even Vern is part of that spiritual recreation since he is the dragon that St. George conquered - except he wasn't killed. St. George subdued Vern and put a spell on him to wipe his memory and thus all of his knowledge. Vern has spent years regaining his wisdom and his powers by doing good deeds.) Fabian has been instrumental in helping writers create not only new worlds in fantasy and science fiction, but also new religions and spiritual practices. She is the co-editor of Infinite Space, Infinite God, a collection of short stories that deal with spirituality in space - a most refreshing idea in science fiction.**

**Currently, a second Dragon Eye PI novel, Live and Let Fly, is completed and being shopped to publishers**

**Creating Heaven on Earth: Unveiling the Truth that Was Always There**

**Meagan M. O'Nan**

**Dreamriver Press**

**12 Franklin Ave, Flourtown, PA 19031-2006**

**9780979790812 \$15.95 [www.dreamriverpress.com](http://www.dreamriverpress.com)**

**Meagan M. O'Nan's little book, Creating Heaven on Earth: Unveiling the Truth that Was Always There, is a power-packed devotional for unconventional spiritual seekers. In 11 short chapters, O'Nan offers practical wisdom for a life filled with peace and purpose. She does not offer pat answers but simple ones--and those are often the most profound. She encourages readers to live in the present, to seek the Divine within, and to discover the Divine in others. This idea isn't new - it is the cornerstone of Buddhism and the beautiful concept of Namaste. But O'Nan offers this wisdom in a manner that is more easily accessible to most people than Eastern philosophy or religions.**

**Her concepts can be applied by anyone from any spiritual path - and that is the beauty of her book. She does not give readers narrow definitions of spiritual concepts nor does she say that the book is the ultimate answer for everyone or that she is a guru who must be followed and obeyed to the letter. She**

doesn't even speak of the Divine in black and white terms, preferring to offer several different constructs: God, Higher Power, the Divine, Love. From the first pages of the introduction and repeatedly throughout the chapters, O'Nan reminds readers that this is what she has learned from her experience and offers it to readers in the hope that they will experience the joy of living she has had through her practice of these simple concepts.

I really appreciated this book because of O'Nan's broader approach to spirituality and the readability of the book. *Creating Heaven on Earth: Unveiling the Truth that Was Always There* will become a permanent part of my spiritual library as a book that I will take with me into meditation, pondering further on an idea, a turn of phrase, or a spiritual concept. Thank you, Meagan M. O'Nan for writing a straightforward spiritual book that doesn't preach.

#### **Treasure of Eden (The Eden Series)**

**S.L. Linnea**

**St. Martin's Press**

**175 5th Avenue NY, NY 10010**

**<http://us.macmillan.com/smp.aspx>**

**9780312942168 \$6.99**

I knew from the first page that I was going to love this series. My only regret was that I came into it on the third book. The first two, *Chasing Eden* and *Beyond Eden*, introduce Army Chaplain Jamie Richards who stumbles upon a hidden community called Eden that has existed since the beginning of time. It is an advanced civilization that sends out operatives when something happens in the world outside of Eden that could have devastating effects. Jamie, now an operative herself in the third book, *Treasure of Eden*, must prevent a global financial catastrophe by shepherding an Eden financial expert to a conference in Switzerland. When that duty is over, Jamie is kidnapped by a rogue CIA agent who is sure she knows the whereabouts of a jeweled box that will point to the location of Eden. Jamie faces betrayal, torture, and loss as she once more is tossed into undercover operations and intrigue.

I couldn't put this book down. The characters are vivid. The good guys are heroic, the evil characters are dastardly, and the rest are humanly flawed yet noble. The action is non-stop and the cultural landscape author S.L. Linnea places these characters upon is richly drawn with details that make readers live the experiences with Jamie and her cohorts. Though Jamie is a chaplain, she is fearless, heroic, and can kick some mighty butt. Yet, she is also compassionate, sensual, and sometimes slips in a curse word or two like the humans we all are. This choice was genius in Linnea's portrayal of her and the other operatives of Eden.

What I need to do now is track down the other two books so that I can be ready to read the next book Linnea has in the Eden series, *Serpent of Eden*, a special edition book that tells what happened to Jamie inside Eden. I can't wait!

#### **The Who, The Mods and The Quadrophenia Connection**

**Sexy Intellectual (part of the Chrome Dreams Group)**

**PO Box 230, New Malden, Surrey KT3 6YY UK**

**B002L59RG0 \$19.95 [www.chromedreams.co.uk](http://www.chromedreams.co.uk)**

Here in the US during the rise of The Who and other British bands, we were rather insulated from a cultural phenomenon that pervaded the UK. We were more concerned with Beatniks and hippies than with what came to be known as the Mods or the modern generation. A remarkable new DVD by Sexy Intellectual called *The Who, The Mods and The Quadrophenia Connection* offers a detailed history of the rise of this movement and what it meant. The Who, a band associated with the Mods, was really one that caught the coattails of this fad and road them as far as it could. According to the producers, music historians, and biographers of the era, the Mods began in the 50s with the growing popularity of jazz.

**The Mods have come to represent youth rebellion among the working classes. They adopted a style of dress (usually a type of men's suit that had personal embellishments and eventually incorporated what they called a parka, but was more of a oversized jacket of a military color and cut). Music was also a part of that culture, moving from jazz to the boogie rhythms of Georgie Fame and then to soul and R&B. This was at the point that Pete Townsend, principal songwriter and guitarist for The Who, became enamored with the movement and was actually the only true Mod among his bandmates.**

**The Mod movement moved through punk and was falling away by the time Townsend wrote and recorded Quadrophenia. The movie of the same name that soon followed in 1979 revived the Mod movement briefly**

**The Who, The Mods and The Quadrophenia Connection details all of this and much more, offering vintage concert footage and home movies of The Who as well as others in the early Mod movement. The DVD also offers reflections from people who knew the Mods and/or The Who best, including Richard Barnes who was a close friend of Pete Townsend, mod experts Paolo Hewitt and Terry Rawlins, Eddie Pillar who was a broadcaster and owner of Acid Jazz records; members of Mod revivalists The Chords and The Purple Hearts, and Alan Clayson, a The Who biographer and 1960s expert. Their insights add color and weight to what could be just a music journalist's theory.**

**For those interested in The Who and this most interesting cultural period in the UK, The Who, The Mods and The Quadrophenia Connection is an intelligent documentary that never drags itself into hero worship or fandom.**

**Janie Franz  
Reviewer**

---

## **Jessica's Bookshelf**

**The Wife's Tale  
Lori Lansens  
Little Brown Book Group  
100 Victoria Embankment, London EC4Y 0DY  
9781844086160 \$24.99 [www.hachettebookgroup.com](http://www.hachettebookgroup.com)**

**Mary Gooch is overweight or "obeast" as she calls herself. Years she's tried dieting but to no avail. She knows little of affection despite having been with her husband Gooch for long enough.**

**Life seems pointless made even more so when she discovers Mr Barkley collapsed on the kitchen floor. Was a poisoned rodent to blame?**

**Gooch is horrified to return home and learn Mr Barkley has been stored in the fridge so the bugs don't get at him.**

**One night Gooch doesn't return to the sanctuary of home and Mary lays awake worried. Where is he? As time passes she reflects on their life together and what it all meant. Eventually Mary comes to the unsettling conclusion Gooch has gone. She decides to go on her own journey to find out what she believes is lost.**

**However her journey turns into something else as she discovers things she never even knew.**



Throughout her journey we are reminded again and again of Mary's passion for finding Gooch. Her determination shows through and has you wanting the best outcome for her. Yet there are still many times when Mary's hope is dashed.

Will she find her beloved Gooch at the restaurant drinking beer? Will Mary's dreams and fantasies of finding Gooch come true or is it too little too late?

An inspiring story about one woman's search for the person she once was.

This author has a knack for showing readers the bigger picture and that we are each individually very small indeed.

A soft ending to this book allows the reader to put their own interpretation on what happened. But will you be decisive enough to pick up this story and allow it to capture you?

### **In Search of England**

**Roy Hattersley**

**Little Brown Book Group**

**100 Victoria Embankment, London EC4Y 0DY**

**9781408700969 18.99 Brit. pounds [www.hachette.co.uk](http://www.hachette.co.uk)**

In the introduction to this book of essays which I couldn't wait to begin, the following quotation from J B Priestley immediately gives the flavour of what this book is all about: "I am in the west coast of Italy. The sun is shining, the sea is blue and I am enjoying myself immensely. But when the time comes for my holiday to end I shall return to England with the joy of knowing that I am going home".

The author tells us he feels exactly the same and reading on I was to discover why. Roy Hattersley tells us his passport says he is a British Citizen but he feels English so as far as he is concerned that is what he is. The heritage and tradition of England is central to this book.

Roy sings the praises of the English countryside, its towns, hills, rivers and coastline. His journey studies the character of its people and their Englishness. He revels in their unique humour and stoicism. He discusses how the poets and authors of the past have portrayed the English and their country-side with all its traditions.

He gives us so many glimpses into life in England all gathered from his knowledge, inspiration and memory.

Roy writes about the Jubilee celebrations for William Shakespeare in 1995 which is a delight to read about

There is a lot to be learned about England on consecrated ground, he finds he is happy looking around graveyards and reading the headstones.

I found the author's prose a pleasure to read and often the absurdity he writes about will make you smile. It is written in a matter of fact style yet with a deep insight into life.

"Canterbury is not just a building, not even just a cathedral. It is England in stone." Brilliant I thought . He pays homage to how people cope with the English sea-side holiday and their refusal to not enjoy themselves when it rains incessantly.

His view on the Chelsea flower Show is controversial yet so true. The monuments in London and dry

**stone walling in the Peak District are all well covered in this book which is packed with fascinating material.**

**His enthusiasm is irresistible, his imagination is enticing.**

**For those of us who are lucky enough to live in this beautiful island and think of ourselves as English this book is pure magic. Captivating.**

**Scissors**

**Ray Garton**

**Dorchester Publishing Company**

**New York, NY**

**9780843961867 \$7.99**

**I have to warn you: this is my favorite Ray Garton novel and I have read quite a few of his books. Between the covers of this book, Garton shows readers why he is a master of horror and why he has been a master for so many years. Once you read this, you will see why his work commands high prices at auctions and why you may want to read his books when they are available at mass market prices.**

**Scissors is about a man named Stuart Mullond. Stuart is haunted by a bad experience from his past. Haunting him is the experience of getting circumcised. Unfortunately, in a dream that Stuart seems to continually have, before Dr. Furgeson (the doctor he had as a child) botches things up and slips with the knife, Stuart gets stabbed by a hypodermic needle in that most tender place. Garton says, "The pain is exquisite."**

**Stuart's mother has been telling him, for many years, that Dr. Furgeson did not mess up the circumcision and that, in fact, Stuart was not stabbed. Stuart doesn't believe his mother and the tension increases. His girlfriend Amelia doesn't know about the incident. His ex-wife Molly won't talk about it. Thus, Stuart is facing the monster alone.**

**"Do not read this novel if you or someone you know is about to go in for surgery--I'm not kidding." Writer Gary Braunbeck says of Scissors, as advance praise. "If Sigmund Freud and Samuel Beckett had co-written a Herschell Gordon Lewis movie starring Buster Keaton, the result would have been Scissors." I totally agree.**

**Stuart spun around, faced the owner. He spoke in a hoarse, tremulous voice. "My son, he's gone. He was just here. Playing that game, right there. The bald man. "His eyes scanned the faces staring at him. "Did any of you see the bald man? With the little glasses? Did anybody see him with my son? Scissors, he had a pair of scissors, he was standing right over there---"He pointed past the faces. "---holding up a pair of scissors."**

**Scissors, pg 40**

**You will enjoy Garton's study of the human psyche. It is savory...**

**At this point, the writer's expert pen pulls readers into the story until the experience is more like viewing a movie. And yes, it is hard to put Scissors down once you have started reading it.**

**Grown up Stuart, now a successful artist, remembers when eight year old Stuart had become totally obsessed with thoughts of Dr. Furgeson and the power the doctor had over him. Stuart can hear the scissors announcing their presence as Dr. Furgeson flexes them. Snick, snick, snick.**

**Garton provides personality sketches which present full characters which are sometimes overlooked in**

**this genre. From his over religious mother to his seemingly somewhat distracted partner, Amelia, readers will soon understand the components of Stuart Mullond's personality.**

**Scissors is a deep and satisfying experience. Try it, you'll like it.**

**Got to Kill Them All**

**Dennis Etchison, author**

**Harry O Morris, artist**

**Cemetery Dance Publications**

**Forest Hill, MD**

**9781587670930 \$40.00**

**The horror which flows from Etchison's pen is different and set apart from most of the horror available. Yes, his work is presented in an easy to read and understandable way, but there is something there - underneath the type - something trying to gnaw its way through the paper. Once you have read one of Etchison's stories, it's hard to avoid recommending all or any of his stories. That's how Dennis Etchison's writing is. It pushes you and pulls you along. Rocks you and lulls you along. Finally at the end...Who knows how frightened you will feel?**

**This book is a culmination of short stories and a fabulous introduction by George Clayton Johnson. "I want to talk to those book reviewers among you about Dennis Etchison." Johnson tells in his intro. "I think his stories merit showcase attention from the mainstream. He is a literary treasure, as these stories of his**

**demonstrate." Johnson is, of course, correct. I remember one of the stories here from his early collection, "The Dark Country," Other stories have appeared in such publications as Mike Shayne Mystery Magazine, Cavalier Magazine and Cemetery Dance Magazine, as well as many others.**

**In this volume, I would say that you absolutely must read "Sitting in the Corner, Whimpering Quietly," which is the leading story . Etchison's power of creating a regular, yet memorable tale is found here, right in this tale at the beginning. This early yarn is about a man who ventures into a Laundromat, late at night. His experience is unforgettable and one which keeps me watching my back at night! I am also choosier when it comes to striking up friendships with people I may meet in the night. This story is really a classic.**

**Another tale to make readers wonder is The Walking Man. In this scene, even the characters are wondering:**

**"How do you know no one is there?" she said.**

**"Because - " I flopped onto my back, took another lungful, executed a quick sit-up. I crossed the living room, drew open the top half of the door to the sun deck and leaned out. The tide was low, a good fifty feet from the supports, and nothing was moving but a line of sandpipers between the naked rocks. "Because there's nobody. On the beach or anywhere else around here." With irritation.**

**"What's the - " matter with you, I started to say.**

**"How do you know?" she repeated. My mouth opened. It stayed open, my jaw scissoring as I came back to the big pillows. I squatted next to her on the rug, almost over her.**

**"I need some more of that, I guess," I said, reaching for the joint, "before I can pick up what you're trying to say."**

**--Got To Kill Them All****The Walking Man, Page 22**

Continue reading the story, it will pique your brain a bit.

Other tales here are **The Pitch, You Can Go Now, Today's Special, Call Home, The Machine Demands A Sacrifice, On The Pike, White Moon Rising, The Scar, The Detailer, Home Call, Red Dog Down, One Of Us, In a Silent Way, My Present Wife, No One You Know,** and the title story **Got to Kill Them All.**

This collection is definitely a treat for any Etchison fan and a wonderful primer for anyone new to the works of Dennis Etchison. Do yourself a favor and read **Got to Kill Them All**, you won't be sorry.

Jessica Roberts

Reviewer

## **Karyn's Bookshelf**

### **Treasure Island**

**Robert Louis Stevenson, author**

**John Lawrence, illustrator**

**Candlewick Press**

**99 Dover St., Somerville, MA 02144**

**9780763644451, \$24.99**

With any re-illustrated classic it's not the story that recharges interest - it's the other elements that wrap around it. "Treasure Island," Robert Louis Stevenson's swashbuckling tale of a young boy' trek to an island where treasure is supposedly buried is what it always has been: a great, endearing, adventure-packed read. Award-winning engraver and illustrator John Lawrence is the latest artist to visually interpret the tale since it was first published in 1883. Lawrence's choice of oversized pages, measuring roughly 9-by-12 inches, lends a coffee table book feel. More practically, it's also a great size for reading aloud, with a wide enough page expanse to stretch across the laps of both an adult reader and a young listener. Although this unabridged version of "Treasure Island" is officially pegged for ages 12 and over, there are always younger children who still enjoy being read to who are ready for it. This edition works well for such listening. The typeface is also larger than a standard novel, and thus a bit easier on the eyes for reading aloud. Kids who want to read it independently may do better with a standard-sized book, however. While the typeface may lure older children for whom small print is intimidating, this edition's girth and tome-like heft may scare them off before they open it. It's also a bit awkward to hold on an single lap and has limited portability as it does not fit well in a backpack. Ultimately thought, beyond the lap reading potential, this edition really is about the art. The illustrations consist of more than 60 hand-colored vinyl and wood cuts, many taking up an entire page and some spreading over two pages. Beginning with a cover engraving of the infamous parrot-toting Long John Silver, Lawrence relies on lots of black, brown, green and orange. He offers a thorough illustrative journey, from the open sea to the ship's various spaces to island escapades, exquisitely capturing the story's intense, decidedly masculine fervor that has always drawn young boys, in particular, to "Treasure Island." For collectors who appreciate coffee table art and don't plan on carrying Lawrence's rendition around in a backpack, this is the version of choice.

### **Crows & Cards**

**Joseph Helgerson, author**

**Peter de Seve, illustrator**  
**Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company**  
**215 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10003**  
**9780618883950 \$16.00**

Measuring up to the Mississippi River antics of "Huckleberry Finn" has been a tall order for authors since Mark Twain sent his young hero down that broad waterway in 1885. Not being an original enough thinker and/or a skilled enough wordsmith to avoid second class clone comparisons to Twain's novel has dogged many writers. But in "Crows & Cards," author Joseph Helgerson comes about as close as you can get to scaling that more than century-old wall. The tale of a young boy apprenticed in 1849 to an unscrupulous St. Louis gambler is uproariously funny with snappy, regionally folksy dialogue that only smartens as intrigue deepens. The characters, that range from hero Zebulon "Zeb" Crabtree to an Indian princess and her blind father who hope to win back a prized medicine bag to a morally backboned slave named Ho-John to a broad array of dubious poker players, are sharply chiseled with complex personalities, pasts and motivations. That lends great depth to the tale set mostly in a gambling house where cheating is standard and it's unclear who's on whose side. The story has a definite moral tilt. Zeb, who ended up at the house instead of reporting to a great-uncle who was to apprentice him as a tanner, must decide whether to stay there or resume his original course, unappealing as the latter may sound. As the true natures of the gamblers around him come into focus, and Zeb realizes how much he's being manipulated and mistreated, he must summon the courage to plan and execute an exit. Interlaced with Indian language and lore, superstition, and rigged poker table exploits, "Crows & Cards," is just intense enough for its pegged 8-to-12-year-old audience, with humor continually saving the day when things begin to get too dicey. Zeb gets pushed around a bit and there's an errant pistol shot or two when card games overheat, but no one ever actually gets hurt. "Crows & Cards" is just a wildly fun, tween-gearred read that feels, in the end, like only the start of an epic journey. The conclusion leaves you wanting more, more, more with open-ended plot threads and endearing characters who have grown on you by the last chapter. It feels like Helgerson is headed toward a sequel, concluding with potential westward intrigue. Hopefully, this won't be the last we hear of Zeb Crabtree.

**Too Purpley!**  
**Jean Reidy, author**  
**Genevieve Leloup, illustrator**  
**Bloomsbury U.S.A. Children's Books**  
**175 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010**  
**9781599903071, \$11.99**

Bold hues and a theme that will resonate with clothing-challenged preschoolers combine in the too-true tale of a girl who just can't figure out what to put on. Sometimes it's the color or pattern, sometimes it's the feel on her skin, sometimes it's the fit or the fussiness. Nothing appeals, and frustration mounts. Finally, however, a soft, denim-looking, "so comfy" outfit saves the day. With wonderful use of color, illustrator Genevieve Leloup compliments the simple story with images of gritted teeth, discouraged eyes, drooping mouths and finally, a great wide grin. The clothes range from modern and preschool-set stylish with cute dresses and ankle boots to silly things like a "too feathery" chicken outfit and a "too leathery" cowboy getup. Smartly in step with the daily struggles of lap and story hour listeners.

**Ella Kazoo Will Not Brush Her Hair**  
**Lee Fox, author**  
**Jennifer Plecas, illustrator**  
**Walker Publishing Company, Inc.**  
**175 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010**  
**9780802788368, \$15.99**

**Young girls - and their mothers -- who have wrangled over not wanting to brush curly hair will relate to Lee Fox's tale of a girl's impossibly troublesome tresses. In "Ella Kazoo Will Not Brush her Hair," young heroine Ella hides in a cupboard, "roars at her mom like a big growly bear," and flat-out refuses to brush. Great use of rhyme fills the heart of the story as Ella buries her brush under some rocks while refusing to brush her locks, skips in the rain while refusing to tame her mane and drives her mother to exclaim "this just has to stop," while declining to brush her mop. Humorously, as the tale progresses, her hair gets longer and longer, finally filling her entire bedroom and snaking out the door. The ultimate solution is a trip to the salon where her locks are shorn short except for one wispy ponytail that's " quite simple and snappy," leaving all involved "blissfully happy." A gently written and perfectly illustrated approach to a timeless mother-daughter dilemma.**

**Karyn Saemann  
Reviewer**

---

## **Liana's Bookshelf**

**The Sorcerer's Secrets  
Strategies in Practical Magick  
Jason Miller  
New Page Books  
9781601630599 \$15.99 [www.newpagebooks.com](http://www.newpagebooks.com)**

**Jason Miller has been studying magic for the last 20 years and in this book he tries to offer readers practical magic to change the real world. Visit him at [www.inominandum.com](http://www.inominandum.com)**

**The Sorcerer's Secrets is a guide book that can `change the readers' life for the better' the author claims. "Magick should be used for spiritual evolution and mystical insight" Jason says on page 9. The readers can learn all about Meditation on page 46 and find the chapter about Love and Lust quite interesting. The author even teaches how to use magic to attract a mate, and the chapter about Meditation and Healing is nevertheless very interesting to read.**

**This book is easy to read and is enhanced by occult sketches by the illustrator Matthew Brownlee who is an occultist. You can visit him at [www.bakerstreettattoo.com](http://www.bakerstreettattoo.com)**

**It caters to those who love spiritual and occult themes and those who wish to study magic. Get this book from [www.inominandum.com](http://www.inominandum.com) or [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)**

**You Make Me Feel Like Dancing  
Allison Bottke  
David C Cook  
9781434799494 \$14.99 [www.davidccook.com](http://www.davidccook.com)**

**Allison Bottke, the creator of the successful God Allows U-Turns anthologies, is a popular speaker and author of hip-lit fiction and non fiction. She has now created [www.BoomerbabesRock.com](http://www.BoomerbabesRock.com), a place for inspiring boomer women all around the world.**

**You Make Me Feel Like Dancing is the story about Susan, a happily married woman in her early fifties, who has suddenly to face her past and future in a new way. What is going to happen to her? How will she be able to survive?**

**This novel tackles problems arising at a later age and are real in every way, as real as the characters the author describes. It is fun to read, simple and clear style, suitable for readers from all walks of life. Gripping plot, action, humor are some of the elements included. Women all over the world need this kind of fiction to make them feel good, to inspire them and to show them that they can follow their dreams despite their problems. A really gripping novel that is an exciting read from the first to the last page!**

**Liana Metal, Reviewer**  
<http://lianastories.blogspot.com>

## **Logan's Bookshelf**

**Stadttagebucher**  
**Hans Dieter Schaal**  
**Edition Axel Menges**  
**c/o National Book Network**  
**4270 Boston Way, Suite 200, Lanham, MD 20706**  
**www.nbnbooks.com**  
**9783936681314, \$98.00, www.amazon.com**

**The text of Stadttagebucher is in German and is by architect Hans Dieter Schaal, among whose professional credits is having designed stage scenery major theatres and opera houses throughout the world, an occupation that enable him to explore the cities of the world in considerable depth. As he traveled these major metropolitan communities from Rome to Tel Aviv, from San Francisco to Paris, from London to St. Petersburg, from Barcelona to Warsaw, from Singapore to New York, Schall researched the structures and patterns of these cities on foot as a way of gaining perspective on what he saw and where he went. "Stadttagebucher" is an impressive 648-page compendium of Schall's subjective impressions, which, supported by a profusion plenty of facts and occasional images, provide an informed and informative survey 'of an age dominated by cities'. "Stadttagebucher" is highly recommended for German language academic library collections**

**Caviar and Chadors**  
**Phyllis Renee**  
**Privately Published**  
**9781926633213, \$25.00**

**Iran was not always a nation ruled by radicals seeking nuclear power. "Caviar and Chadors" is a memoir of Phyllis Renee, telling her own story of Iran. Living in high society before the Iranian Revolution in the late 1970s, she tells a tale of the calm before the storm where she lived among the elite of Iran but saw much of the veils, or chadors, of the Iranian woman. "Caviar and Chadors" is a unique perspective, and very highly recommended reading for those looking for historical memoirs.**

**How Much Does God Cost?**  
**Kay Quinn**  
**Author House**  
**1663 Liberty Drive, Bloomington, IN 47403**  
**9781449039974, \$14.95, www.authorhouse.com**

**The desire for money can corrupt even the purest of intentions. "How Much Does God Cost?" looks into the mega-churches and the money-grubbing corruption that is behind them, and how the**

mega-churches leech off their patrons instead of working with them, Kay Quinn urges readers to find the truth behind their churches before continuing to go to them. "How Much Does God Cost?" is a cautionary guide to the corruption of some churches, recommended.

**How Will I Know Where I'm Going, If I Don't Know Where I've Been?**

**Elizabeth Ruderman Miller**

**AuthorHouse**

**1663 Liberty Drive, Bloomington, IN 47403**

**9781449051037, \$15.95, www.authorhouse.com**

Knowledge of one's roots can mean a lot. "How Will I Know Where I'm Going, If I Don't Know Where I've Been?: A Genealogical Journey" is Elizabeth Ruderman Miller's own memoir of searching down her genealogical history, sharing her stories of finding where she came from and how it changed her life for the better. She hopes to inspire others to find their own family history, and "How Will I Know Where I'm Going, If I Don't Know Where I've Been?" is an uplifting and motivating read.

**Stories to My Grandchildren**

**R. Tony**

**Vantage Press**

**419 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10016**

**9780533159932, \$8.95, www.vantagepress.com**

In a world filled with tragic tales, a counterbalance must occasionally be shown. "Stories to My Grandchildren" is a memoir of R. Tony growing up in the Bronx as he tells stories of a childhood where he remembers it fondly, in hopes of reminding people not everyone grew up dysfunctional. "Stories to My Grandchildren" is a simple and uplifting read, recommended.

**Finding Inner Peace During Troubled Times**

**William Moss**

**Barnabas Agency**

**c/o B&B Media Group**

**109 S. Main St., Corsicana, TX 75110**

**9780578042442, \$5.99, www.williammoss.org**

When the whole world is out to kill each other in varying degrees, finding a bit of peace can be hard. "Finding Inner Peace During Troubled Times" is a collection of Christian affirmations from William Moss, a business man by trade but a spiritual man and Christian nonetheless. The simple wisdom presented will do well in finding a place in people's days, making "Finding Inner Peace in Troubled Times" a refreshing and entertaining read, not to be missed.

**Carl Logan**

**Reviewer**

## **Margaret's Bookshelf**

**Beautiful Skin**

**Elizabeth TenHouten**

**Hatherleigh**

**5-22 46th Avenue, Suite 200, Long Island City, NY 11101**

**9781578263233, \$12.50, www.hatherleighpress.com**



**You are what you eat, as it has a massive impact on how you appear. "Beautiful Skin: Over 75 Antioxidant-Rich Recipes for Glowing Skin" is a collection of recipes and a food guide to improving skin health through a better and more targeted diet for their health. Stating that using these methods, it is a more natural approach to health and will have better results without expensive spa treatments. "Beautiful Skin" is a choice and very highly recommended pick for those who want better skin through natural methods.**

**Tending Ben's Garden  
Kim Delmar Cory  
Royal Fireworks Press  
First Avenue, PO Box 399, Unionville, NY 10988-0399  
9780880927789, \$9.99, www.rfwp.com**

**The strength of familial love is like none else. "Tending Ben's Garden" is the tale of Kate and her defense of the garden her brother loved. Her family not believing they can provide for their youngest offers him to a foster home in the era of the depression and not wanting to give up her brother so easily, Kate embraces Ben's beloved garden with a certain ferocity of love. "Tending Ben's Garden" is charming read, recommended.**

**Threads  
Virginia A. Ward  
Author House  
1663 Liberty Drive, Bloomington, IN 47403  
9781438954271, \$19.99, www.authorhouse.com**

**In search of religious freedom, many traveled halfway around the globe to find their place in life. "Threads" is a story of people who have made this journey, and why they left their homeland to find something greater and more peace, finding a new life across the world. Facing the challenges of tradition and their new life, Virginia Ward crafts intriguing stories, well worth reading. "Threads" is well worth considering.**

**The 2012 Guide Book  
Corey Deitz  
Privately Published  
9781449931964, \$18.00**

**You have to be prepared for the end if it comes, so you can get the most out of it. "The 2012 Guidebook: How to Make the End of the World Fun" is a humorous guide to the countless demises that the world will face in the future, be it from zombies, robots, nuclear war, and eating ourselves to death, Corey Deitz brings a lighter side to the end of the world and proving why we deserve it. "The 2012 Guidebook" is a choice and very highly recommended read, not to be missed.**

**A is for Alice  
George A. Walker  
Porcupine's Quill  
68 Main St. Erin Ontario, N0B 1T0  
9780889843233, \$12.95, www.porcupinesquill.ca**

**The world of Alice in Wonderland is truly one that inspires wonder. "A is for Alice" is an anthology of poems, using the subject matter of Alice in Wonderland to spun into twenty six fine poems accompanied by woodcut illustrations throughout. "A is for Alice" is a treat for fans of the tale and poetry alike, highly recommended. "D is for Dormouse": "The Dormouse is asleep again, /said the hatter, //and he**

**poured a little hot /tea upon its nose.**

### **Shooting the Mailbox**

**Dave Curkendall**

**Robert D. Reed Publishers**

**PO Box 1992, Bandon, OR 97411**

**9781934759424, \$14.95, www.rdrpublishers.com**

**Stupid childhood mistakes are the best way to learn. "Shooting the Mailbox: Coming of ge in Mid-Century America" is a memoir from three friends as they reflect on their adventure in their late teenage years. Blasting a mailbox, they believe their deeds are far more grave than they believe, and they find themselves fleeing all the way from rural New York to California to escape their punishment. What their punishment was, however, was a truly unique adventure. "Shooting the Mailbox" is a choice pick for those looking for coming of age memoirs with a twist.**

### **Invasion of the Baby Daddy**

**John E. Bell**

**Jamar House**

**c/o Lissy Peace & Associates**

**PO Box 316586, Chicago, IL 60631**

**9780615336114, \$18.00**

**To act as a father for someone else's child is truly unique adventure in itself. "Invasion of the Baby Daddy" tells the story of Dr. Sands, a man who finds himself marrying an already pregnant woman, whose child is from a previous relationship. Sands is faced with conflict from the biological father, and it seems he doesn't want to give up the biological link so easily. "Invasion of the Baby Daddy" is a tale that happens all too often, and many will find relvance within.**

### **Herbert**

**Sam Brown**

**Outskirts Press**

**10940 S Parker Road - 515, Parker CO, 80134**

**9781432748425, \$10.95, www.outskirtspress.com**

**Everyone has dreams of the heroism of a firefighter, but few actually follow through on it. "Herbert: I Am- I Can Think Safety First" is a story of Herbert, a young boy answering the call to be a Boy Scout and fire fighter. Author Sam Brown draws on his own experiences to create an inspirational story for young readers about how mark one's future as a life long fire fighter and Boy Scout. "Herbert" is a choice pick for aspiring young heroes.**

### **The World as It Should Be**

**Gregory F. A. Pierce**

**Loyola Press**

**3441 N. Ashland Avenue, Chicago, IL 60657**

**9780829429091, \$14.95, www.loyolapress.com**

**The Kingdom of God's borders extend further than most believe. "The World As It Should Be: Living Authentically in the Here-and-Now Kingdom of God" is Gregory Pierce arguing that the Kingdom of God is the Earth as well as the heavens and he hopes people will start living their lives as if this were the case, instead of simply looking to the afterlife as when to start. Spiritual with plenty of wisdom and encouragement on the subject, "The World as It Should Be" is an inspirational read for Christian readers, highly recommended.**

**Pregnant with Heart and Soul**  
**Riet Van Rooij and Beatrijs Smulders**  
**Binkey Kok Publications**  
**c/o Red Wheel, Conari, Weiser**  
**65 Parker Street, Unit 7, Newbury, MA 01950**  
**9789078302247, \$16.90, [www.binkey-kok.com](http://www.binkey-kok.com)**

**It is a revolution in one's life. The road to motherhood is like nothing else. "Pregnant with Heart and Soul" is a health guide for expectant mothers who want to be physically and mentally prepared for one's pregnancy to make the experience a healthy and enlightening one for the mother as well as the father. With an accompanying CD of exercises, affirmations, and plenty of other unique approaches to prenatal health. "Pregnant with Heart and Soul" is a solidly recommended read for those who want their pregnancy to be at its fullest.**

**Margaret Lane**  
**Reviewer**

---

## **Nicole's Bookshelf**

**Afterthoughts**  
**Lynn Tincher**  
**BlackWorm Publications**  
**10307 Chimney Ridge Ct., Louisville, KY 40299**  
**9780982006733 \$11.95**

**When perusing a thriller, readers are expected to suspend their disbelief. Circumstances that are improbable in reality are readily accepted in a fictitious world where anything is possible. Such is the case in Lynn Tincher's Afterthoughts, the first installment in her Mind Bending suspense series. The main character, Paige Aldridge, is put through the wringer. Surviving a torturous kidnapping isn't enough. Three of her family members succumb to murder or suicide within days of each other. To top it off, she begins to experience violent mental flashbacks. Her life is thrown into a state of total upheaval.**

**How does she cope? With the help of a good man, of course. There's David, the frequently absent boyfriend. And then there's Jay, the ever dependable co-worker. As Jay steps in to comfort Paige, his feelings for her take a romantic turn. He doesn't want to take advantage of her vulnerability, but the anguish of his undisclosed attraction leaves him unraveled.**

**Paige is unsure of everything. She is a complete mess. While reeling from a set of tragic events, she is in a purely emotional state. Employed as a police detective, her rational, analytical side is not displayed, because her mind is being manipulated by an outside force. Tincher introduces the concept of the collective conscious, an inner dimension composed of thoughts and dreams. It is Paige's kidnapper who begins bombarding her mind with imagery of murder. His psychic aptitude is strong enough to enter her mind at will. There is only one person who can help Paige - her long lost sister, Junna. The family's psychic abilities take center stage as the novel reaches a page-turning conclusion.**

**Overall, this is a quick and easy read that explores the power of mind manipulation.**

**Left in the Dark**  
**Lynn Tincher**  
**BlackWorm Publications**

**10307 Chimney Ridge Ct., Louisville, KY 40299  
9780982006771 \$11.95**

**Emphasis shifts from Paige (our detective protagonist in the first novel) to Junna (her long-lost sister) and from mind reading to demonic possession in *Left in the Dark*, the second installment in Lynn Tincher's *Mind Bending* series. The relationship between the newly reunited sisters is explored in greater depth as they continue to explore their psychic abilities. Their bond is strengthened as they work to save two children in danger.**

**Junna dreams of Hannah, a troubled girl who is exhibiting strange behavior. Hannah is terrified after being scratched by a shadow figure in the night. Yet she demonstrates a strong mental power by attempting to strangle Randy - a mind reader and her legal guardian - without the use of her hands. The contradiction between her overwhelming fear and her menacing strength has Randy at his wit's end.**

**When Randy connects with Junna through her dreams, she arrives on his doorstep with Paige in tow and instantly forms a connection with Hannah. Paige decides to invite Randy and Hannah to her home for Christmas in the hope that together the three of them can help the girl.**

**But Paige is having trouble coming to terms with her psychic tendencies. As she tries to find a missing boy, she feels mentally blocked. As her relationship with Jay progresses, she fears that he is not truly accepting her newfound abilities. She does not want to rush into marriage and is afraid that Jay is planning to propose on Christmas.**

**Yet Paige achieves a breakthrough when she is able to find the kidnapped boy. But her triumph is short-lived when Hannah's arrival quickly turns violent. Paige, Junna, and Randy turn to their FBI contact, Agent Riggs. He calls in an exorcist named Evan. Junna is immediately attracted to Evan but her insecurity keeps her from making a move.**

**During the exorcism, things get intense when Hannah begins growling and a masculine voice comes from her unmoving lips. When Paige makes eye contact with the girl, she is transported to a psychic realm and encounters a familiar adversary. It is up to Junna and Randy to enter this dimension to save Paige and rid Hannah of her tormentor.**

**The conclusion offers a glimpse into the plot line of the third book as the roles of Paige, Junna, and Randy are defined in a far-reaching way. Does death really bring an end to a psychic's abilities? Does the quest for revenge live on?**

**In terms of plot, Tincher ups her game in the sequel. She masterfully weaves the interactions of the main characters while introducing new faces into the mix. The relationship of Paige and Jay is put to the test, while Junna's interior life is more fully explored. The introduction of Randy and Evan into Junna's life foreshadows a possible love triangle.**

**The overuse of certain characteristics is a drawback. Paige's obsession with the amount of cream and sugar in her coffee is overstated and she spends too much time in the bathtub/shower. For upcoming editions, presenting the characters in new ways is required.**

**Overall, Tincher delivers in the sequel and leaves the reader eagerly anticipating the third.**

**Albrim's Curse  
Trevis Powell  
BlackWorm Publications  
10307 Chimney Ridge Ct., Louisville, KY 40299**

**9780982006740 \$11.95**

**Twilight's Jacob Black isn't the only teenage werewolf with issues. Meet Albrim - a young archer from Cobble, a rustic settlement on the edge of the wilderness. As a member of the peasant militia, he is enlisted to hunt a pack of large wolves wreaking havoc in a neighboring territory. With the overlord's son, Sir Garen in command, the village is left virtually undefended.**

**When the men are away, the wolves come out to play. Thankfully the remaining residents have Gran. With her curt answers and feisty resourcefulness, she directs the counterattack. Yet Gran soon realizes the one behind the offensive is not an ordinary wolf. It is a were.**

**Upon receiving word of the attack, the militia returns home. The were quickly disposes of them. Moving in for the kill, the were dismembers Albrim's arm. Just in time, Gran's silver-coated frying pan and Sir Garen's sword put an end to the were. But only Gran knows the were's bite has infected Albrim with the curse.**

**To prevent an execution by a fearful mob, Gran fakes Albrim's death. In the midst of a fever brought on by his transformation, Albrim is transported to the secluded dwelling of a mysterious hermit.**

**This solitary man nurses Albrim back to health and chains him to a rock during the full moon. During these periods, Albrim's humanity is overtaken by the blood lust of the were. With the help of an expert dwarf, a magic band is fastened to Albrim's arm to prevent his were characteristics from surfacing. The dwarf also fits Albrim with a rudimentary mechanical hand. With practice, Albrim regains his archery prowess in time to help the hermit against an imminent attack.**

**Due to a battle injury to his neck, the hermit is unable to speak. Albrim names him Mute. The two develop their own language as they work together to hunt down the remaining weres. When their plans go awry, the unlikely partners end up caught in their own trap.**

**The author, Trevis Powell is a former member of the U.S. Army Reserves. He masterfully creates a fantasy world reminiscent of the 1980s cult movie, Willow. The relationship between the changed boy and the disfigured man provides a human touch to this creature-filled romp.**

**At times, scenes run long. For example, several chapters are devoted to Albrim running from a pack of wolves. Descriptions, such as the construction of Mute's trap, are overly technical in nature. The text size is small and the line spacing is tight.**

**Overall, this is a must-have for lovers of werewolf mythology.**

**Nicole Langan, Reviewer  
www.tribute-books.com**

---

## **Palombi's Bookshelf**

**The Little Stranger  
Sarah Waters  
Riverhead Books  
c/o Penguin Group (USA)  
375 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014  
1594488800 \$26.95 www.us.penguin.com**

Listed by Publisher's Weekly as one of the 100 Best Books of 2009, *The Little Stranger* by Sarah Waters is set in post-WWII Britain. It is set in a time of decay for the old British class system and focuses particularly on the decay of the Ayres family and their magnificent estate, Hundreds Hall. There the Ayres' family has held court for nearly 2 centuries. The book is narrated by Dr. Faraday, a county doctor who is called upon to treat the Ayres' maid and ultimately begins to build a relationship with the family: Mrs. Ayres, the elegant matriarch, her son Roderick, a former RAF pilot who is scarred and disfigured from the war, and her daughter Caroline, plain and eccentric, but charming.

As the story unfolds, strange and unsettling events begin to befall the Ayres' and their crumbling estate: their affable old family dog inexplicably attacks a small child, Roderick appears to suffer a breakdown, there is an unexplained fire, and Mrs. Ayres finds herself increasingly troubled by the past. As the narrative continues, Dr. Faraday finds himself drawn deeper and deeper into life at Hundreds Hall... and the downward spiral of all those within.

This is a book that is much better suited to book club discussion than it is to review, given my strict "No Spoilers" policy. Only when it's been read and thoroughly digested can it be properly discussed. Let me begin by saying that *The Little Stranger* seriously creped me out. It is sort of *The Fall of the House of Usher* in modern novel form, complete with a family member named Roderick. It is a heavy read with a rather slow narrative, yet I found myself compelled to read it in just 2 days. *The Little Stranger* has been described alternately as mystery, suspense, horror, historical fiction. Really, it is all of those things: a throwback to the Gothic style of Edgar Allen Poe and Henry James that is brilliantly put together. The characters are engaging, the period detail is spot-on and the theme of decay is woven seamlessly into this tale. Publisher's Weekly described Dr. Faraday as "one of literature's more unreliable narrators," a perfect description that doesn't make sense at all until you've read every last word of the book.

This is the first Sarah Waters book that I have read. Having perused many of its reviews, I gather that many Waters fans thought that *The Little Stranger* was a let-down compared to her previous work. If her other stuff is even better, then sign me up for more Sarah Waters! Though I gather that this Gothic style is new territory for her, she handled it beautifully and the narrative is very well written. *The Little Stranger* can best be described as "The Blair Witch Project" of literature. The "scary stuff" isn't spelled out... it's left to your imagination to fill in the blanks at Hundreds Hall. And the imagination can be a powerful spook.

**Make That a Table for Seven**  
Angie and Storm Davis  
Authorhouse  
9781449072735 \$11.49

*Make That a Table For Seven* is a first-effort children's book by Angie and Storm Davis, published through Authorhouse and newly released in February 2010. I was fortunate to receive an advance copy from the authors to read and review with my children.

**Publisher's Description:** "Make That a Table for Seven" is a story about two bears left in the woods looking for a home. Ferbie and Peppie are scared and alone and do not think anyone really wants them. One night before dinner, there is a knock at the Grizzly's door, and there stands Ferbie and his sister Peppie. The Grizzly Family is immediately drawn to these two lonely cubs and offer them their home. The Grizzly children, Zeus, Smoo, and Princess, are excited to share their family and have another brother and sister. It is a story, based on real life events, of love, rescue, and redemption from lonely places to safe places. It is about a family expanding in number and love. It is a story that challenges us all to be the hands and heart of God to children in need.

**Review:** The story-line of *Make That a Table for Seven* is a heartwarming (if not wildly original) one about love, acceptance and adoption. The best method I have for assessing the real quality of a children's book is to judge it by the reactions of my own children (ages 7 and 4 and bibliophiles in their own right). Both really enjoyed it and understood the simple-but-sweet story well enough to discuss their favorite parts when I was finished reading it to them. For that reason, I consider this story a winner. Unfortunately, the review copy I received was a stapled printout of the story only, so I cannot judge or advise you on how the book plays out visually... a fairly critical element for any children's book. Based on the merits of the story alone, I would rate this book as Good on my usual "Poor, Fair, Good, Excellent" scale.

My sincere thanks to Angie and Storm Davis for providing this advanced review copy.

Jennifer A. Palombi, OD, FAAO  
Reviewer

---

## Paul's Bookshelf

**Finnigans, Slaters and Stonepeppers: A History of the Irish in Vermont**  
Vincent E. Feeney  
Images From the Past  
P.O. Box 137, Bennington, VT 05201  
9781884592522, \$19.95 [www.imagesfromthepast.com](http://www.imagesfromthepast.com)

When talking about the history of the Irish in America, places like Boston or New York City come to mind, not Vermont. This book aims to change that oversight.

In the 1700s, many Irish came to America by way of the British Army. Whatever the reason for signing up, extreme poverty in Ireland, or the lure of adventure on foreign shores, after fighting in the French and Indian War, many Irish stayed in the unnamed land between New York and New Hampshire. After the Revolutionary War and into the 1800s, desertion was rife among British Army units in Canada. The lure of rampant land speculation south of the border was pretty powerful. If the Irish did not come to Vermont via the British Army, they came because relatives or family members were already established in Vermont.

With the coming of Irish Potato Famine of the 1840s, the immigration trickle to Vermont turned into a flood. These new starved and half-dead immigrants, who came because they had no choice, were generally able to find work doing what they did back home. Laying railroad tracks or factory work, for instance, was backbreaking work for very little pay, but, it was work. During the Civil War, Vermont quarries were the main source for all those monuments and headstones. After the Civil War, in which Vermont Irish played their part, Yankee farmers were seized with a desire to head West, and find better farmland than Vermont's hilly, hardscrabble farms. The Irish were only too happy to buy up those farms; back in Ireland, land ownership was an impossibility for most people.

Ethnic and religious tensions among the various groups living in Vermont were never far below the surface. In the early days, living in a certain town meant that attendance at the local church was mandatory, regardless of the religion. In most towns, there was an Irish Catholic church, and a French-Canadian Catholic church; worshipping together was simply not an option. Sober, hardworking Irish Presbyterians, who came to Vermont under more favorable circumstances, called themselves "Scots-Irish" in order to distinguish them from the "shiftless, alcoholic" Catholic Famine Irish immigrants. Through the 1900s, the Catholic groups grew closer together, but, if anything, Irish Catholics and

**Protestants grew farther apart. Their children went to separate schools, and they belonged to separate business organizations.**

**Here is a beautifully-written book that is recommended for anyone interested in new England history or the history of the Irish in America. It gets two thumbs-up.**

**The Looting of America: How Wall Street's Game of Fantasy Finance Destroyed Our Jobs, Pensions and Property, Les Leopold  
Chelsea Green Publishing Co.  
P.O. Box 428, White River Junction, VT, 05001  
9781603582056 \$14.95 [www.chelseagreen.com](http://www.chelseagreen.com)**

**With America in the economic doldrums, a lot of attention has been paid to artificial financial instruments, called derivatives, created by Wall Street. No one has tried to explain them in plain English, until now.**

**Your local bank puts together a financial security pooling 10,000 debts (mortgages, credit card debt, car loans, etc.). That is a collateralized debt obligation, or CDO. An investor would get a portion of the interest owed by those 10,000 borrowers. There is always a risk that some borrowers will default on their loans, supposedly reduced by bundling together so many loans. The amount of interest an investor gets is based on the amount of risk they are willing to accept.**

**Of course, the bank has sold that security, or pieces of it, to other banks, municipalities, pension funds; anyone it could seduce with promises of high profits, with little or no risk. The security had been given a high rating by one of the major credit rating agencies, in exchange for huge fees, when such a rating was totally unjustified. Large numbers of borrowers start defaulting on their loans, because the local economy is in big trouble, and the bank is on the hook to pay off the security based on all that debt (not to mention being on the hook for the original debts). Unfortunately, the bank does not know the size of their obligation, because there is no public listing of derivative prices. They can't sell the security at any price, because the other banks are also in trouble.**

**Move that bank to Wall Street, and multiply the problem by trillions of dollars per day, and you get some idea of the size of the problem. Those who still worship the free market say that government intervention is the cause of all this. All that credit card debt, and all those homebuyers who defaulted on their mortgages, knowing that they could not afford them, are what drove the economy into the ditch, not Wall Street. Simply cut taxes on the rich, reduce or eliminate government regulations on business, and the market will take care of itself. Nonsense, the author says.**

**He advocates greater transparency in derivatives, including a publicly accessible list of prices, and keeping them on an institution's regular books, not "off the books." He also calls for salary limits, and a consumer watchdog agency with teeth.**

**Finally, someone explains how the economy almost collapsed (in plain English). This is an excellent and eye-opening book that is very much worth reading.**

**Tao of the Defiant Woman: Five Brazen Ways to Accept What You Must and Rebel Against the Rest  
CJ Golden  
Sourcebooks, Inc.  
P.O. Box 4410, Naperville, IL 60567-4410  
1402210183 \$8.95, [www.sourcebooks.com](http://www.sourcebooks.com)**

**Here is a book that explores how women can learn to accept the things that life puts in their path, but not let it get them down.**



**Nature changes throughout the seasons with cycles of birth and death. Trees grow leaves, lose them and grow more leaves. People are part of nature, so women should understand that their bodies are changing as they age. Learn to embrace your maturity and life experience. Much as you may wish it to be otherwise, you can't be twenty-five years old forever.**

**Just as your body is changing, so too are your friendships. People enter your life, and people leave your life. Not everyone is intended to be a lifelong companion. Learn to treasure those friendships for however long they are part of your life.**

**Think about creating a kind of support network of other women that you can laugh, and cry, with. When life gets difficult, as it will now and then, maybe one of them can help you to navigate the emotional rapids. Perhaps you can be the one to help someone else through a tough period. For instance, if you are going through a divorce, you may not be able to do anything about the end of the marriage, but you can do something about your attitude. Are you going to, figuratively, lay down and die, or are you going to pick yourself up, and move on with your life? No doubt, he has already moved on.**

**Positive role models can be found in the most unique places. Find one, and learn how to be one yourself. You don't have to do anything extraordinary, sometimes just being a kind and decent person is enough to qualify you as a role model. Don't give up on your desire to learn new things, or to realize when your life is moving in a new and different direction. You never know what could be just around the corner.**

**The Tao (The Way) is all about living in harmony with nature, about "going with the flow." This book does a very good job of pointing out the things women need to accept and the that they can change. It is recommended for women of all ages.**

**Home-Along America: The Hidden Toll of Day Care, Behavioral Drugs and Other Parent Substitutes**

**Mary Eberstadt**

**Sentinel Books**

**375 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014**

**1595230041 \$25.95 [www.penguin.com](http://www.penguin.com)**

**Many books have been written recently telling women that they can Have It All; motherhood and a career. Few, if any, books look at the child's point of view.**

**Even the best day care centers are little better than germ factories. If one child is sick, which happens frequently, it is nearly guaranteed that all of the other children, and the day care provider, will also get sick. There is also a large increase in aggressive and violent behavior among 3 and 4-year-olds. Pro-day care groups, who the author calls separationists, think that this is a good thing. Getting sick now means they will get fewer illnesses as they grow up, and being an aggressive bully means that they will grow up to be the sort of person not afraid to fight for what they want. (Really?)**

**A major reason for the epidemic in childhood obesity is the lack of parental involvement. There are no adults around to keep an eye on children as they play in the backyard, or the local playground, so children are told to stay inside and lock the door. Children also go right for the junk food, skipping the fruit, because there are no adults around to teach them otherwise.**

**Symptoms of conditions like Attention Deficit Disorder include fidgeting, losing things, interrupting, squirming and ignoring adults. These seem to be very close to normal childhood and adolescent behavior. No doubt, there are some children with an actual disability who are really helped by drugs like Prozac and Ritalin. For everyone else, is there some disease or mutation sweeping America causing the "wiring" in millions of adolescent brains to be faulty, requiring such psychotropic drugs?**

**The teen pregnancy rate in America is going down, which is a good thing, but the rate of sexually transmitted disease is way up. The use of contraceptives does not always equal safe sex. Where do they do "it"? At home, or their partner's home, because their parents aren't around.**

**What is to be done? Every adult must look at their own situation. Many parents work full time out of total necessity. For the others, can you be one of the adults to keep an eye on children allowing them to actually play outside? Can you coach an after-school sport or be a tutor? Can you simply be an adult figure for a child, like a Big Brother or Big Sister?**

**This is a gem of a book that should be read, and talked about, by parents across America. It is highly recommended.**

### **The Population Fix: Breaking America's Addiction to Population Growth**

**Edward C. Hartman**

**Think Population Press**

**P.O. Box 6366, Moraga, CA 94570-6366**

**0977612503 \$18.50 [www.thinkpopulation.org](http://www.thinkpopulation.org)**

**There are few problems in present-day America, from water shortages to traffic congestion to over-crowded schools, that are not exacerbated by America's addiction to population growth. This book aims to change that.**

**The author places much of the blame on a high rate of net migration (not just illegal immigrants) and a high fertility rate among some groups. There are many groups who benefit by high population growth, and like things just the way they are. Among them are builders and developers, farmers, the hospitality industry, food processors and middle class Americans. Supposedly, these would all collapse if it wasn't for cheap foreign labor unwilling to demand a decent wage and decent working conditions out of fear of being deported. Why are middle class Americans included as part of the problem? How many people hire someone to mow their lawn or take care of their pool, instead of doing it themselves?**

**What would happen if all 10 million (or so) illegal immigrants in America suddenly left? First of all, the world would not come to an end. Young people who spend their days on cellphones or playing computer games would get a taste of some honest hard work. Native-born Americans would be able to demand better wages and working conditions from farmers and builders who presently pay illegal immigrants as little as possible. Less money would be needed for infrastructure (like schools and road repair).**

**America's addiction to population growth also has many victims. For those just out of prison, the best way to stay out is with a job, even a menial one. Every illegal alien dishwasher, for example, means one more parolee who doesn't have a chance to better himself. What about illegal aliens who are killed or maimed on the job? Students are affected because rampant population growth forces school districts to build more schools or cram more and more students into each school.**

**What is to be done? First of all, decide for yourself, how many people is enough? How big should America get? If a politician talks about "smart growth" or easing immigration rules, don't be afraid to call them on it. If a magazine or newspaper seems to have a pro-growth bias, cancel your subscription, and tell them why. If you need to hire employees, even just someone to mow your lawn, make sure they can converse in English. If you find that you have unknowingly hired an illegal alien, fire them, but do it legally. Donate to groups involved in population, fertility or net migration.**

**This is a very interesting book that will really get the reader thinking in a different way. It's worth reading.**

**Zinn for Beginners**  
**David Cogswell**  
**For Beginners LLC**  
**155 Main Street, Suite 201, Danbury, CT 06810**  
**9781934389409 \$14.99 [www.forbeginnersbooks.com](http://www.forbeginnersbooks.com)**

**This is a short and very readable biography of Howard Zinn, historian and author of the classic A People's History of the United States.**

**He was born in 1922 in the Lower East Side of New York. His father, Eddie, worked a number of jobs, but could never escape poverty. From an early age, Zinn realized that the assertion that anyone could become successful with hard work, and that poor people were lazy, was nonsense. Zinn was a voracious reader, devouring writers like Charles Dickens, Jack London and Upton Sinclair.**

**In early 1940, he experienced his moment of radicalization. After seeing what predatory capitalism had done to America, causing a depression which made millions homeless, many people thought that communism was a humane alternative. Zinn was never a member of the Communist Party, but he marched in a peaceful demonstration that was suddenly, and violently, broken up by the police. Zinn was knocked unconscious by a policeman's baton. When he woke up, he realized that the police serve those in power, not protect the public. All that stuff about freedom of speech, and the right to peacefully assemble, could be ignored by the powerful at any time.**

**As a bombardier in World War II, he participated in a bombing raid on a French town called Royan, just before the end of the war. It was on the French coast, when the war was inside Germany, so it was of no military value. Several thousand German troops were there, waiting for the end of the war. Over one thousand planes dropped tons and tons of napalm on the town, and for what?**

**After the war, he got his education through the GI Bill, and his first full-time teaching job was at Spelman College, an all-black women's college in Atlanta. This was right in the middle of the early segregation struggle. For several years, Zinn was involved in the push for civil rights, until he was fired by Spelman College, even though he had tenure. He eventually landed at Boston University, where he became one of the school's most popular teachers. He continued to write, and get involved in opposition to the Vietnam War. Through out his teaching career, Zinn was not impressed with the quality of history textbooks. None gave the story of the common people, so, in 1980, A People's History of the United States came into existence. It has sold over 2 million copies, and is still in print.**

**This book contains a 60-page summary of some of the "highlights" of A People's History, for those who might be intimidated by its several hundred page length. This book is easy to read, it's an eye-opener, and it's a first-class piece of writing.**

**Paul Lappen, Reviewer**  
**<http://www.deadtreesreview.com>**

---

## **Peggy's Bookshelf**

**Malice**  
**Chris Wooding**  
**Illustrated by Dan Chernett**  
**Scholastic Press**

**557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012  
9780545160438 \$14.99**

**It began as an urban legend. Find a copy of the underground comic book, "Malice". Gather the necessary potion ingredients, set them on fire, and repeat six times, "Tall Jake, take me away!" Then the sinister comic book villain, Tall Jake will appear and abduct you into the realm of Malice.**

**Seth and Kady dismissed the legend until their friend Luke disappears. Their suspicions turn to horror when they find Luke in the pages of the comic book. Seth dives in to figure out what happened to his friend. He discovers a multi-layered underworld full of mechanical creatures and terrifying traps. He also finds lost kids wandering the levels of Malice, hiding in terror from the freakish critters. All of them are prisoners in a zone of danger, doom, and death. Meanwhile back in the so-called real world, Kady is pursued by a band of creepy characters that are somehow connected to Malice.**

**Chris Wooding has created a mind-bending adventure into a frightening fantasy world. This is Alice in Wonderland meets Dante's Inferno with a Marvel Comics flair where the deadliest scenes are played out in comic book panels. However Dan Chernet's black & white illustrations don't do justice to Wooding's description of the malevolent monsters. Nonetheless, "Malice" is a breath-taking, action-packed page turner that will leave readers wanting more long before the cliffhanger ending.**

### **Numbers**

**Rachel Ward**

**The Chicken House**

**557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012**

**9780545142991 \$17.99**

**When fifteen-year old Jem looks into a person's eyes she can "see" the date of his death. For that reason, she keeps her distance from people. Her ability is a burden as well as a curiosity for her. Are the numbers absolutely certain? Do they have something to do with her? Can fate be altered?**

**Out of the blue one day her schoolmate Spider strikes up a friendship with her. His antics match his nickname and he's constantly in trouble so Jem finds him annoying at first. But she can "see" that his number is up in a few weeks and this intrigues her. After they get expelled from school, Jem and Spider take off on a day trip into the city to ride the London Eye Ferris wheel. While waiting in line Jem can't help but notice everyone has the same number and it's that day. She believes something bad is about to happen. She begs Spider to run and the two of them are seen fleeing from the scene before a bomb explodes. From then on they are swept up by the hand of fate.**

**At first glance most of us wouldn't be caught dead with the likes of Gem and Spider. But Rachel Ward carefully lays bare their souls and it's easy to care about these two kids. You won't get your hands dirty reading "Numbers" but you will feel the grittiness of life as a throwaway kid.**

**Guess it if you can! Volume I: School Time!**

**Celina Penovi**

**Illustrated by Dario Salvi**

**AuthorHouse**

**1663 Liberty Drive, Bloomington, IN 47403**

**9781449027445 \$15.99**

**"Guess it if you can!" is an activity book that includes eight riddles in verse about things related to school. The colorful cartoon drawings also provide hints. Written in English and Spanish, this versatile book introduces Spanish to English speakers and vice versa. The last three pages contain a crossword puzzle and word find in English and Spanish, and a coloring page. Celina Penovi uses the familiar arena**

of school to engage children in word play. The answers to the riddles were scrambled making it more difficult to learn key vocabulary words. An English/Spanish keywords glossary would enhance the educational value of this book. However, the riddles and activities are fun for kids and challenging enough for adults seeking to learn English or Spanish. "Guess it if you can!" is an effective language learning tool for all ages.

### **Scrambled Breakfast**

**Celina Penovi**

**Illustrated by Dario Salvi**

**AuthorHouse**

**1663 Liberty Drive, Bloomington, IN 47403**

**9781449027438 \$14.99**

"Scrambled Breakfast" is the story told in verse of a breakfast table run amuck. Written in English and Spanish, this versatile book introduces Spanish to English speakers and vice versa. Celina Penovi uses humorous fantasy to teach everyday vocabulary in an ordinary setting. Dario Salvi's comical illustrations reinforce the author's repetition of common words. An English/Spanish keyword glossary would enhance its educational value. Reading aloud from "Scrambled Breakfast" can turn a tedious vocabulary lesson into amusing entertainment, which makes learning a new language easier for all ages.

### **The Clumsy Stork**

**Celina Penovi**

**Illustrated by Lucas Penovi Orjales**

**AuthorHouse**

**1663 Liberty Drive, Bloomington, IN 47403**

**9781449027469 \$17.50**

"The Clumsy Stork" is a story told in verse about an absent-minded stork that needs a little help to make his deliveries. Written in English and Spanish, this versatile book introduces Spanish to English speakers and vice versa. Celina Penovi has created an amiable character to familiarize readers with nouns about people, places, and time. Lucas Penovi Orjales' delightful illustrations embellish the story and complement the vocabulary lesson. An English/Spanish keywords glossary would enhance its educational value. Reading "The Clumsy Stork" is an excellent way to broaden English/Spanish vocabulary and begin to understand usage.

**Peggy Tibbetts, Reviewer**

**[www.peggytibbetts.net](http://www.peggytibbetts.net)**

---

## **Regis' Bookshelf**

### **Theo's Big Scare**

**Rebecca J. Irias**

**Comfort Publishing, LLC**

**9450 Moss Plantation Avenue N.W., Concord, NC 28027**

**1935361422 \$13.99**

As a tiny tot, I remember being more upset than scared that this grayish-black "thing" kept following me. It did everything I did. At the time, I was probably around four or five years old. I remember lifting my leg to notice that there was then a space between this "thing" and my foot on the ground. In a very

**real way, it was frightening. It seemed to be attached!**

**Theo's Big Scare by Rebecca J. Irias is just such a story about young Theo, a boy who thinks he sees a dark "something" move against the wall of his room when he climbs out of bed. He isn't sure. When he stoops down to pick up a treasured teddy bear he focuses his eyes on the bear. But as he walks over to his dresser for a shirt, out of the corner of his eye, the dark thing appears. It is definitely there. He turns and stares directly at it!**

**The dark figure has no face, no hair, no color. It is spooky. What's more, it is moving around. Theo panics. He runs out of his room only to see the big dark scary thing running along the wall with him - maybe even chasing him.**

**"Help, Mommy! Help!" he screams as he runs into the next room and jumps up in his mother's arms. Even more terrified now, Theo sees the dark thing has moved behind his mother. He can see it on the wall directly behind her and now it has two heads, not one. At first, his mother did not see anything to upset Theo. But the terrible look on his face when he points to the dark thing makes her catch on. Theo is afraid of his own shadow.**

**Theo's Big Scare is a wonderfully written and illustrated children's tale to help explain to a tiny child that there is nothing harmful about a shadow. As silly as it may seem to grownups, almost all children go through an experience like Theo until someone takes the time to explain what causes a shadow.**

**In this particular story, Theo's mother uses a lamp to show him that when something or someone blocks lights rays, this is what causes a shadow. Still a bit timid about it always following him around, Theo learns how to put his hands together in different ways to make imaginary animal figures on the wall. Once he understands, he is no longer afraid.**

**Theo's Big Scare with its clever illustrations on each page is a wonderful book for parents and caregivers to read to children. It is short story with just enough words on each page to hold a child's attention. The colorful drawings in the book need no interpretation. They are well drawn to explain precisely what is happening on each page. The huge eyes on Theo and his mother easily portray their feelings.**

**There are so many children's books in stores and libraries that are completely make-believe about forest friends, talking animals, colors, numbers, letters of the alphabet, and so on. Theo's Big Scare while fiction is real in this sense: It deals with an issue that can be a troubling experience for some tots. I would highly recommend reading this book again and again to children and/or grandchildren for the sheer enjoyment of its story and pictures. Hopefully, Rebecca Irias will create more book tales centered around Theo as he faces other perplexing childhood problems.**

**In The Land of Invisible Women: A Female Doctor's Journey in the Saudi Kingdom**

**Dr. Qanta Ahmed**

**Sourcebooks, Inc.**

**1935 Brookdale Rd, Suite 139, Naperville, IL 60563**

**1402210876 \$14.99**

**Doctor Qanta Ahmed dared to enter the land of Saudi Arabia. Although trained in the United States, her visa to remain had been denied. From Kennedy airport, she arrived in Riyadh, the capital city of Saudi Arabia. As a Muslim woman, she thought mostly of the privileges her status as a practicing doctor would provide - little of any trite annoyances caused by her Muslim religion. After all, she held multiple certifications: 1) internal medicine, 2) pulmonary disease, 3) critical-care medicine, 4) sleep-disorder medicine.**

To her dismay, shock might be a more appropriate word, Dr. Ahmed crashed head-on into a male dominated society where women were looked upon as embodied "flesh" - "objects." Every nook and cranny of society was controlled by men intending to keep women, thought to be inferior beings, in their place: the home.

As a Muslim, why had she not known of her collision course? Dr. Amed had migrated to America from England. Her parents had "transplanted there from a post-Partition India." With the promise of a nice salary and free accommodations, she had been lured by a hospital in Riyadh,

In Saudi Arabia, many Muslim women follow a fastidious veiling of their bodies that literally swallows up their entire person. It is required by Sharia - Islamic Law. Now, Dr. Ahmed must veil herself accordingly. Regardless of whether a woman covers her face, in "Saudi Arabia, no woman can go anywhere in public without wearing an abbayah that covers at least the body and head hair." The abbayah would be black, even during the intense summer heat. On the contrary, men wore white thobes (robes).

Dr. Ahmed offers that during her stay in Riyadh, she saw how ridiculously removed from any genuine understanding of Islam were the ludicrous mandates of Sharia Law: "women segregated from men, Saudis from non-Saudis, Muslims from non-Muslims." Even a woman who openly held an allegiance to another religious belief, she must follow the fanatically strict interpretation of Sharia dress code.

In the Land of Invisible Women, A Saudi female was not permitted to travel anywhere alone without a companion. Thus, Dr. Ahmed had to rely on the hospital's own car service for transportation. Inside the hospital itself, Ahmed states that "an insidiously advancing invisible status engulfed me." Male doctors simply ignored her. They thought little of her credentials - less of her opinion and rarely if ever asked for it.

Although Dr. Ahmed wore her white coat and trousers when making rounds, other practicing Saudi colleagues wore their traditional Abbayahs under their white coats, a suffocating layer of vestments even in cooler weather. How any doctor could study a patient's heart rate or lung condition with any kind of accuracy after inserting the earpieces of a stethoscope over cloth or polyester into the outer ear canal is questionable to this reviewer - a truly dangerous practice with a critically ill person.

After the intense mortification weeks of Ramadan, an Intensive Care Unit colleague of Dr. Ahmed's encouraged her to complete her first Hajj to solidify her Muslim beliefs; this meant a journey to Mecca, . Since Hajj was a religious undertaking and "it was every Muslim's duty" Dr. Ahmed's schedule at the hospital could not stop her from going. Given leave, Dr. Ahmed found information on the Internet explaining in exacting detail what was required of a person making her Hajj.

Journeying to Mecca, Ahmed followed Hajj procedures eventually reaching the Ka'aba, a large black cube thought to be the very embodiment of God. Here, long before Islam was revealed to the prophet Muhammad, Abraham built the Ka'aba to blueprints revealed to him by the Angel Gabriel. Already religious by nature, Dr. Ahmed felt an almost supernatural attraction to the Ka'aba. It was as though she felt Allah's magnetic all powerful presence just a few feet from her.

The Hajj experience changed Dr. Ahmed permanently. It helped her repair her battered female spirit. She found that a true Islamic faith had nothing to do with the insanity imposed by radical extremists whose irrational interpretation of Islamic law:

- 1) mummified the body of women by demanding full-body veiling
- 2) silenced women's rights by claiming them inferior beings subject to the whims of men
- 3) destroyed their very freedom to move about by making it illegal for women to drive

**In the Land of Invisible Women is a must read for everyone. Why? People must find out how Dr. Ahmed dared to cope with radical Islamic fundamentalism. Rather than misery and despair, her story is one of brightness and optimism for Saudi women. But equally vital, it is a tale of expectation, a hope that brave Saudi men, who dare read her story, might have a jolt of conscience over unjustified cowardly feelings they hold toward women.**

**Like the Ka'aba whose brilliant inner light healed her battered female spirit, the indomitable courage shown by Dr. Ahmed In the Land of Invisible Women can brighten the souls of others, particularly Muslims who face meaninglessness and emptiness in today's bizarre world of religious/political/armed conflict.**

**This book I would highly recommend to every American, particularly politicians who are trying to decipher how to deal with Saudi Arabia and countries holding similar belief systems. The Kingdom has been a world of intolerable but religiously "justified" discrimination and fractured human rights - resultant: a political enigma. But Dr. Ahmed claims that "the gender apartheid committed in the name of Islam is already dying, rasping its last, soured breaths." She guarantees that changes are surfacing from within from those who dare!**

**Regis Schilken, Reviewer  
www.youknowwhen.org**

## **Richard's Bookshelf**

**The Power of Passionate Intention: The Elisha Principle**

**Mark Chironna**

**Destiny Image Publishers, Inc.**

**P. O. Box 310, Shippensburg, PA 17257-0310**

**9780768431568 \$15.99**

**A Time of Historic Transition in Today's Church**

**Dr. Mark Chironna passionately appeals to the modern-day church to usher in an era of double-portion anointing which he calls the "Elisha Principle" in his book "The Power of Passionate Intention."**

**Chironna calls for the Christian to recognize that the world is in transition, amidst global shifts, changes in politics, finance, and international relations. These changes demand that a Christian establish a world view in light of the churches role in evangelism, meeting the needs of world crisis, and impacting the world with the Kingdom message.**

**I found the thought provoking "Points to Ponder" insightful, purpose driven filled with relevant action steps to set in motion my own personal potential for implementing practical life transforming activities to minister in these days of religious tumult in the church, in a climate of cultural bigotry in society, and in face of the economic uncertainty throughout the world.**

**Some very helpful suggestions I discovered in these powerful points included establishing a time to "sit at the feet of Jesus" to empower me to meet the world's distractions coming through "mass entertainment, the influence of the media, advancing technologies, and shifting social structures."**

**Chironna combines a balance of Kingdom Living, emotional feelings, and the intelligence throughout**



**the book. His writing is engaging, energizing, and enriching. Mark's impact as a certified life coach, public speaker, author, and pastor is recognized and highly endorsed by his peers, internationally known Christian leaders, pastors, profession counselors, and educationalist.**

### **21 Tests of Effective Leadership**

**Larry Kreider**

**Destiny Image Publishers, Inc.**

**P.O. Box 310, Shippensburg, PA 17257-0310**

**9780768430585 \$16.99**

### **Tips for Measuring Up to True and Effective Leadership**

**"21 Tests of Effective Leadership" is a unique compilation of relevant short sketches, anecdotes, and proven principles which validate each of the tests of leadership developed within the contents of this book. Larry Kreider internationally recognized and acclaimed Christian leader draws from his own leadership experiences and from those of successful leaders in both the church and in the secular marketplace. These leaders have faced these same tests effectively.**

**Throughout the book Kreider establishes standards of character, leadership skills, and step by step solutions to facing each of the 21 tests developed within the narrative. These will help the reader discover a personal call to leadership, establish priorities, empower others, demonstrate leadership through example, and handle conflicts successfully.**

**In addition to these standards Kreider also points out tests of character, such as humility, integrity, dependence on God and perseverance and demonstrates why these are important and crucial in the process of self evaluation by anyone honestly seeking to improve their effectiveness and growth as a leader.**

**The book's format includes questions for personal reflection. These are thought provoking and can be adapted for use in executive staff meetings or training sessions. The book should be on suggested reading lists for every level of staff leadership as well as for developing present and future leadership roles. Larry's research is detailed and well documented, providing hundreds of outstanding tools for further reference and study. His writing is expressive, well-timed, and stimulating.**

**"21 Tests of Effective Leadership" will help you, the reader, develop a positive attitude, strengthen your character, and broaden your talents as you face the opportunity to lead your family, your church, or your business effectively.**

### **The 166 Lifestyle**

**Marc Lawson**

**Destiny Image Publishers, Inc.**

**P.O. Box 310, Shippensburg, PA 17257-0310**

**9780768431582 \$16.99**

### **How to Implement a Supernatural Lifestyle - The New Norm for Christian Living**

**A two hour block of time is set aside each week on Sunday mornings when millions around the world attend church services. Motivation for this act of reverence in worship may vary from a genuine heartfelt desire to gather for a in the presence of God for fellowship other believers, or it may be out of a sense of duty, or out of respect for parents, or a sense of guilt, or for social networking. Marc Lawson expresses what a new normal Christian life should look like in his book "The 166 Lifestyle." With 168 hours available each week this number represents the remaining hours after the Sunday morning two hours spent in "worship."**

**Marc talks about how the influence of secularism, humanism, and Islam are distracting Christians from pursuing holiness, supernatural power, and fruitfulness in their churches. He illustrates with clear biblical instruction action steps that reveal to the reader things that can be done to find "who we are" in the church and how we as Christians we should listen and respond to injustice, sickness, bondage, and addictions. We must keep Jesus and his Kingdom the main focus of our lives.**

**Lawson points out how to implement lifestyle changes consistent with following Christ. We must allow the spirit of Christ to do his complete makeover in our lives. Marc goes on to explain how a transformed life will help the reader use their time, talents, and finances to influence change in the world today. He challenges the reader to join with the new reformation taking place in churches today. He calls for replacing criticism and judgment with intercession and love.**

### **Mind Your Own Wellness**

**Alex Ong**

**OCL Publishing, Inc.**

**P.O. Box 5618, Villa Park, IL 60181**

**978098155662 \$14.95**

### **Healthy Living - Improved Health, Increased Energy, and Greater Confidence**

**"Mind Your Own Wellness" is packed with keys to discovering a healthier life-style. Tired of nicknames like "Fatty Boy" or simply "Fatty" Alex Ong shares the story of how he dramatically improved his health, increased his energy level, and attained greater confidence.**

**Today Alex is a professional speaker and natural health coach. He is a specialist in handling stress, weight loss, and wellness. He promotes good nutrition, physical exercise, and adequate rest as the natural steps to healthy living. He is highly recognized for his work and is endorsed by medical practitioners, holistic health, nutritionist counselors, and well known fitness advocates.**

**The format of book reflects Ong's unique background in the martial arts. He introduces the reader to helpful ideas and practical tips to a discipline of avoiding harmful food additives, overeating, and the indulgence of junk foods.**

**Ong's writing is authoritative, highly readable, compact, and designed to begin a life changing approach to attaining a healthy body and a positive attitude.**

**His research and quotations from a variety of source books are well documented. The diverse material recommended for additional reading provide the reader with a wealth of material for future study and for building a well balanced "Wellness Library."**

**"Mind Your Own Wellness" is an excellent introduction to nutrition and a good reminder to the more advanced health care advocate. The book is ideal for stimulating "Breakfast Table" conversations for creating a healthy menu and exercise plan for the day, as a motivational guidebook which results in "turning thoughts into reality" and is a ready-reference to healthy living, confidence, and happiness.**

### **Giving Up Is Not an Option: The Purpose for Pain**

**Sharon L. Grant**

**Destiny Image Publishers, Inc.**

**P.O. Box 310, Shippensburg, PA 17257 0310**

**97807684731537 \$16.99**

### **The Power of God's Word in the Face of Pain**

**"Giving Up is Not an Option" is the powerful story of Sharon Grant's spiritual journey. It is a testimony of how she found the power of possibility in the midst of her pain. Grant tells of her suffering through the grieving process after her husband's death. It is her account of rising above adversity.**

**Sharon talks of the anger, of the sense of aloneness, and of the isolation that followed Terry's death. She faced the challenge and responsibility of handling the financial affairs, providing the needs of her family, and of the uncertainties that comes with starting over.**

**Throughout the stirring narrative Sharon relates how she discovered purpose behind tragedy, meaning through commitment to God, and of intentionally choosing to live by His higher principles. She talks about how self-discovery aided her in discovering the importance of making choices that enabled her to develop her spiritual gifts and God given potential.**

**Sharon's writing is heartwarming and filled with empathetic feeling, a balance of Biblical teaching, practical counseling, and personal testimony. She revealed an intimacy in her relationship with God. Her candidness and boldness resonate with passion and add to the intensity of her dramatic story deeply moved me and spoke to my heart.**

**"Giving Up is Not an Option" is written for anyone facing hardships, disappointments, and trials. It comes as an encouragement to individuals hungry for God seeking a sense of eternal significance. Sharon reaches out, comes alongside, a "fellow traveler" on a spiritual journey, offering encouragement to the reader.**

#### **Prayers that Break Curses**

**John Eckhardt**

**Charisma House**

**600 Rinehart Road, Lake Mary, Florida 32746**

**9781599799445 \$9.99**

#### **Powerful Prayer Weapons Available to Fight Satan's Attacks and Curses**

**"Prayers That Break Curses" explores Biblical teaching on generational curses. It is an important guide which presents a plan for using a combination of prayer, confession, and scripture to meet the opposition of these demonic influences over your life. The reader is given step by step instructions on how to be empowered to exchange the failure and frustration of living under the curse of evil influences to the experience of a new life of fullness in the power of Christ.**

**This is a handbook for standing up to demonic influences, ruling spirits of evil, a spirit of idolatry, addictions, and the seducing spirit of bondage. Eckhardt also explains how to be delivered from the continuing cycle of generational curses, alcohol and drunkenness, sexual abuses, rebellion, pride and witchcraft.**

**Modern theologians have wide-ranging opinions and understanding on the doctrine of demons, satanic curses, and exorcism, Eckhardt boldly presents a viable interpretation of the doctrine of deliverance. He provides the reader with a reminder that as believers we have been redeemed from the curse and power of sin. Christ has provided forgiveness and the power for deliverance.**

**Eckardt's concluding challenge calls for a commitment, on the part of the reader, to meditate daily for a month on parallel promises for the righteous with the punishments ahead for the wicked adapted from the tenth chapter of the book of Proverbs.**

**"Prayers that Break Curses" is written in layman's terms. Eckardt's writing is clear, convincing, and**

**well thought-out.**

**Richard R. Blake**  
**Reviewer**

---

## **Sandra's Bookshelf**

**The Paper Bag Christmas**  
**Kevin Alan Milne**  
**Center Street Hachette Book Group USA**  
**237 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10017**  
**1599950731 \$14.99**

As a book reviewer I am very seldom at a loss for words. I bought this book because I love Christmas, and after reading a review, I decided to buy it and give myself a present . I am having a hard time finding the words to do justice to this book. It is a beautiful story of two brothers named Aaron and Molar who discover, "The best gift they never wanted for Christmas." This book has made me smile and then cry at times. I can't recommend this book enough. All that I can say is buy this book as you will not be disappointed. I wish all parents today would do what the parents in this book have done. Teach their children it is better to give than receive. Then their children will say, "The best gift I never wanted for Christmas." I would like to say to the author, "What a wonderful gift you have for writing".

**The Sound of Sleigh Bells**  
**Cindy Woodsmall**  
**WaterBrook Press**  
**12265 Oracle Boulevard, Suite 80921, Colo Springs, Colo. 80921**  
**9780307446534 \$14.99**

I love reading books about the Amish and Mennonite people, and the life they live. Once again New York Times best selling author Cindy Woodsmall, has written a captivating story about a young Amish woman named Beth, who can't move forward because she is trapped in her past.

She blames herself for the death of her abusive fiance. She is afraid to tell anyone about her relationship with him as she fears the rejection that may come. Beth has decided she will never marry. That it is better to live alone for the rest of her life.

Then she meets a young Amish wood carver named Jonah and life begins to change. Can he break through the barriers she has built? Will she be brave enough to take another chance on love?

This book will keep you guessing and is interesting from the first page to the last. Make sure you have the time to read the whole book, as you won't be able to put it down until you are finished. Then you will wish the story never ends.

**Jack & Walter: The Films Of Lemmon & Matthau**  
**Ben Costello**  
**Five Star Pulications, Inc.**  
**P.O. Box 6698, Chandler, AZ 85246**  
**9781589851504 \$31.95**

As a "Baby Boomer," I have grown up loving Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau movies. While they

each had many good solo movies, together they were a team, a match made in heaven. This book not only talks about each actor, but also tells us about each movie they made together, and the relationship they had with each other.

They were good friends from their first movie. In time they grew to love each other and enjoyed working together. They were so in-tuned to each other that at times the directors just let them run with or without the script. I have really enjoyed seeing the pictures in this book and the dialogue that goes with it. I have laughed and felt the sadness also.

A high point is the fact that their movie's transcends all ages. My children who are now grown and have children of their own, still want to see the movies I have of Jack and Walter when they come to visit. I feel director John Davis summed it up best—"I will tell you why these guys were so perfect...they're Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau. Their chemistry is so great that it doesn't matter what they're playing. It could be brain surgeons or Yiddish surfboard salesmen. It's the simple fact that they are Jack and Walter, and nobody can do it like they can." Or as Jack Lemmon would always say before a scene, "its magic time."

If it had not been for the outstanding work by the author Ben Costello; most of us would never of had a chance to know the real Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau. I can only imagine the many hours of research and interviews he did to create this fascinating book. For those of you who will buy this book, I leave you with these words--from the first page to the last "Its magic time."

White Christmas Pie  
Wanda Brunstetter  
Barbour Publishing, Inc  
P.O. Box 719, Uhrichsville, OH 44683  
978160753049 \$TBA

I love books written about Amish people and their lives. What makes this work of fiction different is that the central character is a male. Will Henderson is abandoned by his Pop at the age of six. He is raised by an Amish couple he learns to love. Will embraces the Amish life and becomes a member of the community.

Will is engaged to a special young woman named Karen Yoder. One day he read a newspaper article about a child who was abandoned, and it brought back all the deep seeded anger and bitterness he feels towards his Pop.

Will meeting his Pop again after so long, be a new beginning, or the end of a chapter in his life?

Call Me Kate: Meeting the Molly Maguires  
Molly Roe  
Tribute Books  
P.O. Box 95, Archbald, PA 18403  
9780981461939 \$12.95

This is an amazing book that is part of our country's rich history. While reading this book I learned things, I had never known before.

While the book is a work of fiction, it is backed by historical fact. That is what makes "Call Me Kate" so fascinating.

I can honesty say, and suggest, that this book should be in all schools in the USA. It is a story of Irish immigrants and the struggles they faced in North Eastern Pennsylvania. Jobs were hard to come by

during the 1860s. Coal Mining was about the only way to support your family. But that came at a high price. The rich mine owners did not worry about the safety of the miners, they were just a throw away commodity.

The main character Katie McCafferty, is out to save her Irish friends and family from what would be a major battle that would cost many men there lives. You will grow to love her braveness, strength, and just plain old grit. Here are a few questions to ask yourself to see if this book is for you.

1. Have you ever hear of the "Know Nothing Party?"
2. Have you ever wondered where the "rich man's war, poor man's fight was first heard in the states?"
3. Do you know what or who the "Molly Mcguires" were? Or the " Ancient Hibernians?"

I wish I could tell you more, but I don't want to spoil the book for others. For all who enjoy reading the history of this country then this is a book you must own.

The author is a knowledgeable, and gifted writer. She makes the words she writes come alive. You are taken back in time with her and given a history lesson you never knew before.

I have really enjoyed this book so much.

Sandra Heptinstall  
Reviewer

---

## Theodore's Bookshelf

U is for Undertow  
Sue Grafton  
Putnam/Marian Wood  
375 Hudson St., NY, NY 10014  
9780399155970 \$27.95 800-847-5515 [us.penguin.com](http://us.penguin.com)

Nearing the end of the alphabet, "U" is the 21st novel in the Kinsey Millhone series, in which Sue Grafton develops the plot utilizing the past and present, alternating between events during 1967 and her current investigation in 1988. It begins when a young man enters her office and tells Kinsey of something he thinks he witnessed when he was six years old. What prompts his hazy memory is a newspaper story recounting the abduction of a young girl in July, 1967, when he remembers seeing two men burying something in a wooded area. The girl was never returned despite receipt of a ransom note nor was her body ever found.

Her client's credibility is taken to task when the police dig up the remains of a dog at the site. But Kinsey can't let go, and follows leads until she reaches a dead end. Meanwhile, we are treated to a look at the hippy days of the 1960's, as well as Kinsey's own ambivalence toward her recently-discovered family.

With five letters left in the alphabet, the author has further room to move her protagonist forward, both as a PI as well as a person. The remaining novels should be quite interesting, as Ms. Grafton entertains more elaborate themes and plots.

Recommended.

**Hollywood Moon****Joseph Wambaugh****Little, Brown****237 Park Ave., NY, NY 10017****9780316045186 \$26.99 800-759-0190 HachetteBookGroup.com**

The title of this novel is derived from what The Oracle, the legendary supervisory sergeant of the Hollywood Division (now "Station") of the LAPD, called each New Moon, when the crazies emerged all over the City of Angels. In tribute to The Oracle, the present day sergeant offers the team that gets the weirdest "catch" a super-sized pizza with the works.

What works in a Wambaugh novel is a fast-moving, gripping crime story or stories, combined with accompanying anecdotes about the cops and their lives and the situations in which they find themselves. "Hollywood Moon" is no exception. There are two running plotlines: a young frustrated and unsuccessful but would-be rapist, and an identity scam, the principals of which come together for a rousing finish. At the same time, the reader is treated to the accustomed chuckles derived from old friends such as the surfers, Flotsam and Jetsam, Hollywood Nate, et al, from the Hollywood Station.

Written with the author's customary smoothness (and glibness), the novel gives an insight into the many ways identity theft can bilk unwary persons. At the same time, we are treated to glimpses of the lives and tribulations of a patrol officer. Highly recommended.

**London Boulevard****Ken Bruen****Minotaur Brooks****175 Fifth Ave., NY, NY 10010****9780312561687 \$24.99 646-307-5151, stmartins.com**

Ken Bruen has written numerous hard core noir novels full of sparkling prose and humor, but none have been as offbeat as London Boulevard. It is based on the old movie, Sunset Boulevard, the story of an aging actress and a young screenwriter. Substitute for Desmond a just-released-from-prison Mitchell and a bunch of gangsters and you have the makings of a very different story, full of sex and action.

When he's released, Mitchell is surrounded by his past criminal associates, who attempt to enlist him in their pursuits. To escape them (and the possibility of eventually ending up back to the joint) Mitchell takes a day job as a handyman at the estate of Lillian Palmer, an attractive but has-been actress. Of course, they quickly have a torrid affair. Soon, the butler and Mitchell join forces to thwart threats to Mitchell and his sister, as well as the actress' security.

It's all good fun, macabre, and full of violence and witty dialogue. The author attempts to give Mitchell, who really is little more than a thug, some style by having him quote various books he supposedly read and citing their authors, and by making reference to numerous songs and the artists who performed them. Is it likely a gangster and murderer really is conversant with Pelecanos, Elroy, Leonard, Willeford, Sallis, Harvey, et al? Oh well, it was fun to read anyway, and is recommended.

**Winter of Secrets****Vicki Delany****Poisoned Pen Press****6962 E. 1st Av., Scottsdale, AZ 85251****9781590586761 \$24.95 800-421-3976, poisonedpenpress.com**

Sex permeates this latest Molly Smith mystery. Several young university students from eastern Canada

visit a B&B in Trafalgar, BC, during the Christmas Holidays for a skiing vacation. One couple spends a lot of time in bed, while two men root around the small town in chase of local girls to bed. When a car carrying the two crashes into the ice cold Kootenay River, an interesting case arises.

The driver has obviously drowned, but the passenger apparently had been dead for up to 24 hours when the crash occurred. The question, of course, is how and when he died and under what circumstances. It befalls Sgt. John Winters, with the assistance of now Constable Molly Smith (her probationary period has concluded), to unravel the mystery.

As with the two predecessors in the series, *Secrets* is a charming tale of a small resort town, with interesting characters. The descriptions of skiing on the slopes are detailed and authentic. While not necessarily a detailed police procedural, the story line moves forward logically and with interest, written with clarity and an eye to keeping the reader involved, and is recommended.

### **Trial by Fire**

**J.A. Jance**

**Touchstone Books**

c/o Simon & Schuster, 1230 Sixth Ave., NY, NY 10020

9781416563808 \$25.99 800-223-2336, [simonsays.com](http://simonsays.com)

Now at loose ends, Ali Reynolds is enticed to take on a job with the Yavapai Sheriff's office as a media relations consultant after the man filling that job is placed on administrative leave following a scandal. No sooner does she embark on the temporary assignment than her crime-solving skills are put to the test, although that was not supposed to be her function.

A woman is found with burns over more than half her body at the site of two burning buildings. Unidentified and unable to talk, she is flown to the burn unit of a hospital in Phoenix. The hospital is inundated with reporters and Ali is sent there to remove them from the crowded lobby, and then remains to see what she can learn about the victim. She is befriended by a nun caring for the woman, leading her to becoming further involved in the investigation, which is being headed by Federal officials, since there is a suspected terrorism link.

All kinds of twists and complications ensue, as the plot unfolds. Murder and theft threaten the lives of the principals in this story. The fast-paced tale once again features Ali Reynolds applying her strong sense of justice, solving more than just a murder case, but the moral problems extant in the Sheriff's office.

**Recommended.**

### **Murder in the Latin Quarter**

**Cara Black**

**Soho Press**

853 Broadway, NY, NY 10003

9781569476215 \$14.00 917-816-0781 [sohopress.com](http://sohopress.com)

This series always provides an interesting mystery involving Paris. Aimee Leduc is surprised one day when she is visited by a pretty Haitian mulatto, Mirielle, claiming to be her half-sister. This leads Aimee into a wild series of events involving Haitian politics and at least three murders. Mirielle disappears, and Aimee is determined to find her and discover the truth of their relationship.

Despite warnings by both her partner and her godfather police official, Aimee plods on, seeking Mirielle and investigating the murders, placing herself, as usual, in all kinds of danger. These efforts give the author the opportunity to give wonderful descriptions of the Latin Quarter and its various



**institutions.**

Written with interesting historical descriptions, and deep character portrayals, the novel is the ninth in the series. A tenth, *Murder in the Palais Royal*, has a March, 2010 publication date, something to which we can look forward. Recommended.

**The Bone Chamber**

**Robin Burcell**

**Harper**

10 E. 53rd St., NY, NY 10022

9780061122293 \$7.99 212-207-7000/800-242-7737, harpercollins.com

What's a girl to do? Slated to leave on a two-week vacation for a Thanksgiving vacation in San Francisco with her family, FBI forensic artist Sydney ("Sid") Fitzpatrick once again becomes involved in an operation in which she doesn't belong. Asked by her friend Tasha to undertake a portrait to identify a murder victim, instead of leaving, she finds herself in the midst of a black op by a secret government agency after learning of her friend's death in a "hit-and-run" accident.

Determined to find her friend's murderer, Syd finds herself flying to Rome, where she becomes involved in the operation. The initial victim was the daughter of the U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See. And subsequent events indicate a centuries-old conspiracy involving the Vatican, Knights Templar and Freemasons, as well as international hit men seeking an ancient map supposedly leading to either a hidden treasure or even the Biblical plagues brought forth upon Egypt by Moses. International bankers and government officials are also part of the conspiracy to dominate the world.

Written with a broad brush, Syd's travels take her to the catacombs of Milan in an effort to prevent the bad guys from obtaining the secret map to the Templar treasure. The fact that she is an FBI-trained forensic artist herself enables the author to provide authentic descriptions of the forensic aspects of the tale, and also permits her to chronicle the case with a high degree of realism. As the story progresses, the suspense builds exponentially.

**Recommended.**

**Desert Lost**

**Betty Webb**

**Poisoned Pen Press**

6962 E. First Ave., Scottsdale, AZ 85251

9781590586815 \$24.95 www.poisonedpenpress.com 800-421-3976

If one man has ten wives, what happens to nine other men? Apparently, they will have none. That, of course, is a major problem with polygamous societies. And that is a major theme in this latest Betty Webb novel on the subject, along with marital abuse, including a murder Lena Jones finds one night while on a stakeout on another case.

Along the way, Lena has a surprise visit from her favorite foster mother, Madeline (she had about nine foster homes growing up), opening hazy memories of her past. Also, on a different personal level, Lena has to face her relationship with her latest lover, whose ex-wife, Angel, is a client. Angel also gives Lena a problem to solve, as she is being threatened by a supposed stalker.

Lost is the sixth in the Lena Jones series, which is planned to have at least three more. So far, Lena has solved other people's problems, but not her own identity. But then there are more novels awaiting us, and a good thing, because these are not only well-written mysteries, but informative on the subject as well, and recommended.

**Predators****Frederick J. Ramsay****Poisoned Pen Press****6962 E. 1st Ave., Scottsdale, AZ 85251, 800-421-3976,****9781590586846 \$24.95 poisonedpenpress.com**

**This is not an easy novel to review because it is difficult to determine or simplify its various themes. At first blush, it is a tale of corporate intrigue. But added to that thread is the development of character in some of the participants, a paean to Botswana, a murder mystery, a 'green' promise, and an insight into the wildlife of Africa. It is nonetheless a well-constructed and -written tale.**

**Leo Painter, CEO of Earth Global, a large natural resources company, and various of his executives fly to Botswana in an attempt to make a deal for various mining deposits. Leo also has other ideas: to develop a high-end resort-casino. Meanwhile some of his underlings are scheming to force him out. Also part of the entourage: Leo's stepson and the latter's sexy wife, who provide some comic relief and contribute to the complications.**

**Throughout the novel, we follow a sickly lion suffering from old age, tuberculosis and a form of AIDS, who is followed by hyenas anticipating his death. Of course, the hyenas symbolize the title of the book, as well as various corporate raiders.**

**Recommended.****The First Rule****Robert Crais****Putnam, 375 Hudson St., NY, NY 10014****9780399156137 \$26.95 800-847-5515 us.penguin.com**

**Joe Pike again plays a leading role in this thriller, while Elvis Cole, who usually is in the forefront, is relegated to a supporting but vital function. It all starts when one of Pike's former contract mercenaries, Frank, who retired 11 years before when Pike headed such a group, and raised a family peacefully while building a successful business importing clothing and selling nationally, is found murdered along with his wife, two children and a nanny. [The titular rule: "Families don't matter."]**

**Pike, an obsessive perfectionist [his men called him Yoda behind his back], always assumed complete responsibility for his men. As he continues to do after learning of the murder of 'Frank the Tank.' As a result, Pike, assisted by Cole and a couple of others who served with Frank, takes on a Serbian gang and its leader, who is at war with a rival boss. At the same time, the ATF is interested in the Serb, who is believed to have imported 3,000 automatic rifles for sale to a Los Angeles gang.**

**The two themes come together in an exciting finish. Macho Pike is always thinking and moving, while Cole uses his expertise to ease the way. A whirlwind of action doesn't hide a new, softer side of Pike. A gratifying and recommended read.**

**Doors Open****Ian Rankin****Reagan Arthur Books/Little, Brown****237 Park Ave., NY, NY 10017****9780316024785 \$24.99 800-759-0190, HachetteBookGroup.com**

**Inspector John Rebus, Ian Rankin's usual protagonist, plays no part in his latest crime novel, but Edinburgh remains a vital part in this very unusual tale, plotted and written with the dexterity of a**

**master of exciting and stimulating fiction. Three friends meet one day and hatch a plan to steal valuable artwork from the National Gallery by substituting clever forgeries.**

**The idea is planted by a professor of art, and it appeals to Mike Mackenzie, a rich but bored man who has sold his software company for the proverbial pot of gold. The third person is a banker friend of Mike's. The caper becomes complicated by other factors, including a gangster brought into the plot by Mike.**

**It would do the reader no service to further describe the story other than to suggest acquisition of the book itself, which would be its own reward. Highly recommended.**

**Theodore Feit  
Reviewer**

---

## **Victoria's Bookshelf**

**The Perfect Formula Diet: How to Lose Weight and Get Healthy Now with Six Kinds of Whole Foods  
Janice Stanger, Ph.D.  
Perfect Planet Solutions  
5589 La Jolla Blvd., #459, La Jolla, CA 92037  
9780984106738 \$18.95**

**The author started out with a weight problem and after her two daughters went vegan, she started researching and put together a diet that worked for her. Now the author wants to share her experience and her knowledge in helping others lose weight and transition to a healthy diet.**

**Her diet plan is vegan and instead of counting calories one balances nutrients—twenty five percent of grains, twenty five percent of veggies and so on. It's a diet that she says won't leave you hungry and is easy on the wallet.**

**The author tells us that vegetables provide all the protein we need and how eating whole foods can improve our health and lives. The diet's based on vegetables, grains, legumes, potatoes and fruit with no animal products allowed.**

**There's information on chronic inflammation, how certain foods can cause it, how it affects our bodies and causes disease.**

**According to the author, if you follow the diet, you'll lose those excess pounds you're carrying, reach your ideal weight and stay there. She challenges the reader to try the diet for a month and go from there. "The Perfect Formula Diet becomes easier and easier the longer you stay on it."**

**The diet is simple and uncomplicated, but can be challenging to follow at times. It's a great guide for those wishing to improve their health. Because of the vast amount of information in its pages, I think it would be a good book for everyone to read. I've been a vegetarian for years, but haven't always made healthy choices when it comes to eating. I plan to use the book to guide me in sticking to a more healthful diet. For more information go to: <http://perfectformuladiet.com>**

**Frame Up  
John F. Dobbyn  
Oceanview Publishing**

**61 Paradise Road, Ipswich, MA 01938  
9781933515632, \$25.95**

**Young attorney Michael Knight's wounded in a car bomb that kills his best friend and fellow lawyer, John McKedrick. It seems that McKedrick's involvement with defending members of the Mafia has led to his early death. John also had something important he wanted to tell Michael the day of his murder.**

**The local mafia don hires Knight and his law partner to defend his son, Peter. Peter's up on charges with the police for murdering John McKedrick. It turns out the Mafia don, one Dominic Santangelo, is an old friend of Michael's partner Lex Devlin.**

**Michael soon discovers what his old friend was up to that got him killed and before long he finds himself in over his head with the mob and a scam involving a stolen painting. Michael's cleverness or sometimes the lack of it leads to several close calls. Every scheme he comes up with looks like it will be his last. Frame Up is an amusing and well written story that kept me laughing all the way through. More information may be found at: <http://www.johndobbyn.com/aboutthebook>**

**Victoria Kennedy  
Reviewer**

---

*James A. Cox*  
*Editor-in-Chief*  
Midwest Book Review  
278 Orchard Drive  
Oregon, WI 53575-1129  
phone: 1-608-835-7937  
e-mail: [mbr@execpc.com](mailto:mbr@execpc.com)  
e-mail: [mwbookrevw@aol.com](mailto:mwbookrevw@aol.com)  
<http://www.midwestbookreview.com>

**This page last updated: 03/01/2010  
[Copyright](#) ©2001**

Site design by [Williams Writing, Editing & Design](#)