

# BOOKMARKS

March 2010 Newsletter ~ The Bookloft ~ Home of Books for the Omnivorous Reader ~ Enterprise, Oregon

## Book Reviews

I couldn't decide whether to call this newsletter late winter or early spring. I guess I'm still waiting for winter, so I'm afraid to think spring. Of course, whatever we call this odd season, I say it's always reading time! So whether you're planning your garden or still thinking about escaping to a warmer locale, we have some good books to keep you informed and amused.



I just finished reading **THE FORGOTTEN GARDEN** by Kate Mortenson

When was the last time you read just a good old-fashioned story? This novel fills the bill and more. Set in Australia and England and alternately in the early 1900s, 1975 and 2005, it is a family saga complete with mysteries and secrets, an estate in Cornwall and a charmingly romantic cottage on the cliffs above the sea. The tale starts with a little girl on a boat heading from England to Australia. Told to wait quietly in a hidden spot on the boat, she finds herself abandoned by the woman who brought her on board. Upon her arrival she is discovered by a man working at the port who takes her home when no one claims her. Thus her life completely changes and a new identity begins. Her prior life fades over time. She becomes a mother and then a grandmother. Finally, obtaining a clue about her origins, she travels to England to try to solve the mystery of her past. Her journey leads her to an old estate on the coast of Cornwall. She buys a small cottage and decides to move to this area of her birth. But when she returns to Australia to tie up her affairs, circumstances occur that cause her to abandon her plans and remain in Australia. It is not until after her death that her granddaughter returns to England to pursue the mystery of her grandmother's origins. With interesting twists and turns in the story and interesting settings, complete with hidden gardens and a beautiful, isolated cove on the Cornish coast, this novel was a great read and kept the pages turning with surprises till the very end. 15.00 paperback (Simon & Schuster)



**ORDINARY WOLVES** by Seth Kantner

Cutuk Hawcly lives with his father and two siblings out in the wilderness of Alaska. It is a two day sled-dog ride to the nearest small village. His father, Abe, escaped from Chicago years ago with his wife, who then abandoned the family when Cutuk was small. They live a life close to the land and follow the survival skills of the native Inupiaq people. As Cutuk grows, he watches the many changes occur to the traditional life in the village. Pretty soon, he and his family are looked upon as odd for clinging to the old ways instead of embracing snowgos, blue jeans, synthetic materials, and TV. Abe tries to instill in his children his distaste for money-driven needs, exhorting them not to become "everything-wanters". Blond-haired and blue-eyed, Cutuk constantly has to fight to be seen as one of the locals and not just a white outsider. He stays true to the old ways even as his native friends abandon them. As he reaches late teens and moves into the village to attend school, he falls prey to the desire of most teens to blend in. Kantner shows us the struggles between cultures and the difficulty of trying to find one's place when one's experience of the world has been so limited. With beautifully written descriptions of the land and with keen insight into the hard path of character building, we watch Cutak learn what is important in his life and how to be true to himself. 14.95 Milkweed



**THE SWAN THIEVES** by Elizabeth Kostova

This new book by the author of *The Historian*, explores art, artists and the compulsions that drive them. Robert Oliver, a well-regarded artist and teacher has recently been arrested while attempting to damage a painting in the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC. Admitted to a private mental hospital, he is seen by psychiatrist Andrew Marlow who is also an artist although only a recreational one. At their first meeting Oliver speaks briefly to Marlow, offering a few morsels of information about himself and his actions. He then refuses to speak at all for the course of the next year. During this time, Dr. Marlow seeks out people who have been close to Oliver to try to discover the depth of his mental problems and potential reasons for his actions. In doing so, Marlow finds out about his patient's obsession with the 19<sup>th</sup> century Impressionist art movement and in particular the life of an obscure woman painter of the time. As she did in her previous book, the author blends her narrative in the present and the past and unravels stories within the main story. She captures the feel of those different times and of the dilemmas experienced by her characters. She presents the world as seen through the artist's eye and shows the difficulty artists experience in attempting to bring their vision of the world around them to the canvas. It is a mystery, an exploration of the human psyche and a beautifully written novel of love and passion. 26.99 Little Brown

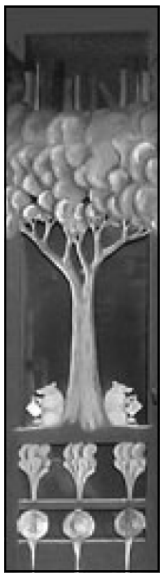


I've also been reading some young adult books lately and have noticed a trend toward quantum thinking -- alternate realities and parallel universes. For those who are tiring of everything vampire, it makes a nice and thought-provoking change.

**INCARCERON** by Catherine Fisher explores worlds within worlds. Incarceron is a living prison designed to be a perfectly controlled environment for those considered criminal or just unwanted in the "real" world. But things have deteriorated over time both inside Incarceron and outside where a family has established dominance over the world and has engineered a fake world of courts and royalty mimicking the 18<sup>th</sup> century. When a girl on the outside establishes communication with a boy on the inside the worlds collide. 17.99 Dial



**THE 13<sup>TH</sup> REALITY** by James Dasher features a geeky boy who teams up with a snotty, but precocious Italian girl and a defensive and moody Japanese boy to save the world from forces from another reality. 7.99 Aladdin



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## Mary's Top 10 Favorite Books from 2009

THE YIDDISH POLICEMAN'S UNION by Michael Chabon 15.95 Harper  
THE LEGEND OF COLTON H. BRYANT by Alexandra Fuller 15.00 Penguin  
SONATA FOR MIRIAM by Linda Olsson 15.00 Penguin  
DREAMERS OF THE DAY by Mary Doria Russell 14.00 Ballantine  
MY STROKE OF INSIGHT by Jill Bolte Taylor 15.00 Plume  
THE ELEGANCE OF THE HEDGEHOG by Muriel Barbery 15.00 Europa  
THE MAGICIAN'S ELEPHANT by Kate DiCamillo 16.99 Candlewick  
THE LACUNA by Barbara Kingsolver 26.99 Harper  
ORDINARY WOLVES by Seth Kantner 14.95 Milkweed  
EX LIBRIS by Ross King 15.00 Penguin

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