

UUFL BOOK REVIEW SUNDAY

JULY 11, 2010

Below you will find a list of the books mentioned by members and friends during the Book Review Sunday program on July 11, 2010. I have included the title, author, and a synopsis of each work as found on www.amazon.com. As you now, www.amazon.com is a wonderful website for purchasing discounted new and used books. And I have also learned about another website, www.betterworldbooks.com, which looks very promising for finding used books on a wide variety of topics.

PRESENTED BY RUTH SEMRAU:

The Good German, by Joseph Kanon

The bestselling author of *Los Alamos* and *Alibi* returns to 1945. Hitler has been defeated and Berlin is divided into zones of occupation. Jake Geismar, an American correspondent who spent time in the city before the war, has returned to write about the Allied triumph while pursuing a more personal quest: his search for Lena, the married woman he left behind. *The Good German* is a story of espionage, love, and murder, an extraordinary re-creation of a city devastated by war, and a thriller that asks the most profound ethical questions in its exploration of the nature of justice and what we mean by good and evil in times of peace and of war.

The Love Song Of Monkey, by Michael S.A. Graziano

In a surreal exile on the floor of the Atlantic, a young man faces his own death and his wife's infidelity. *The Love Song of Monkey* is a meditation on the simple, inexplicable, and lasting power of love, cast in the metaphor of a journey to the depths of the ocean floor. Precise and beautifully crafted, this modern fable is rich with humor and deep thought.

The Great Train Robbery, by Michael Crichton

Lavish wealth and appalling poverty live side by side in Victorian London—and Edward Pierce easily navigates both worlds. Rich, handsome, and ingenious, he charms the city's most prominent citizens even as he plots the crime of his century, the daring theft of a fortune in gold. But even Pierce could not predict the consequences of an extraordinary robbery that targets the pride of England's industrial era: the mighty steam locomotive. Based on remarkable fact, and alive with the gripping suspense, surprise, and authenticity that are his trademarks, Michael Crichton's classic adventure is a breathtaking thrill-ride that races along tracks of steel at breakneck speed.

A Chance To See Egypt, by Sandra Scofield

When Tom Riley's wife dies, her passing leaves him "tilting, out of balance." He returns to Mexico, site of their honeymoon, paying tribute to the memory of their love. There he meets an American expatriate writer, a woman escaping her own painful past, who offers him curious but thought-provoking advice. His life is not over. He has a story inside, she tells him, suggesting that he "Change the plot. Introduce new characters." And so he does, meeting a Mexican woman called Consolata, the owner of a small cafe. Strong-willed, mystical and independent, she and her beautiful daughter Divina enchant Tom, drawing him into the warmth and simple magic of life in their little village. There, secrets and dreams long hidden are revealed, empty spaces in the heart are filled and the next chapter in Tom's life begins to be written.

The Photograph, by Penelope Lively

Booker Prize–winning novelist Penelope Lively’s latest masterpiece opens with a snapshot: Kath, before her death, at an unknown gathering, holding hands with a man who is not her husband. The photograph is in an envelope marked "DON'T OPEN— DESTROY." But Kath’s husband does not heed the warning, embarking on a journey of discovery that reveals a tight web of secrets—within marriages, between sisters, and at the heart of an affair. Kath, with her mesmerizing looks and casual ways, moves like a ghost through the memories of everyone who knew her— and a portrait emerges of a woman whose life cannot be understood without plumbing the emotional depths of the people she touched.

PRESENTED BY JOHN RILEY:

The Help, by Kathryn Stockett

Three ordinary women are about to take one extraordinary step. Twenty-two-year-old Skeeter has just returned home after graduating from Ole Miss. She may have a degree, but it is 1962, Mississippi, and her mother will not be happy till Skeeter has a ring on her finger. Skeeter would normally find solace with her beloved maid Constantine, the woman who raised her, but Constantine has disappeared and no one will tell Skeeter where she has gone. Aibileen is a black maid, a wise, regal woman raising her seventeenth white child. Something has shifted inside her after the loss of her own son, who died while his bosses looked the other way. She is devoted to the little girl she looks after, though she knows both their hearts may be broken. Minny, Aibileen’s best friend, is short, fat, and perhaps the sassiest woman in Mississippi. She can cook like nobody’s business, but she can’t mind her tongue, so she’s lost yet another job. Minny finally finds a position working for someone too new to town to know her reputation. But her new boss has secrets of her own. Seemingly as different from one another as can be, these women will nonetheless come together for a clandestine project that will put them all at risk. And why? Because they are suffocating within the lines that define their town and their times. And sometimes lines are made to be crossed. In pitch-perfect voices, Kathryn Stockett creates three extraordinary women whose determination to start a movement of their own forever changes a town, and the way women—mothers, daughters, caregivers, friends—view one another. A deeply moving novel filled with poignancy, humor, and hope, *The Help* is a timeless and universal story about the lines we abide by, and the ones we don’t.

War, by Sebastian Junger

In his breakout bestseller, *The Perfect Storm*, Sebastian Junger created "a wild ride that brilliantly captures the awesome power of the raging sea and the often futile attempts of humans to withstand it" (*Los Angeles Times Book Review*). Now, Junger turns his brilliant and empathetic eye to the reality of combat - the fear, the honor, and the trust among men in an extreme situation whose survival depends on their absolute commitment to one another. His on-the-ground account follows a single platoon through a 15-month tour of duty in the most dangerous outpost in Afghanistan's Korengal Valley. Through the experiences of these young men at war, he shows what it means to fight, to serve, and to face down mortal danger on a daily basis.

The Fight For Jerusalem, by Dore Gold

Radical Islam has long desired to seize Jerusalem and cut it off to Christian and Jewish believers. In his revealing new book, *The Fight for Jerusalem*, bestselling author and former Israeli ambassador to the United Nations Dore Gold explains why the battle for Jerusalem is intensifying today. Gold shows why only Israel can preserve its holy places for Christians, Jews, and even Muslims, and why uncovering Jerusalem's past-and the truth of biblical history-can be the key to saving its future.

Atlas Shrugged, by Ayn Rand

With this acclaimed work and its immortal query, "Who is John Galt?", Ayn Rand found the perfect artistic form to express her vision of existence. *Atlas Shrugged* is the astounding story of a man who said that he would stop the motor of the world--and did. Tremendous in scope, breathtaking in its suspense, *Atlas Shrugged* stretches the boundaries further than any book you have ever read. It is a mystery, not about the murder of a man's body, but about the murder - and rebirth - of man's spirit.

PRESENTED BY JESSICA NOBLE:

The Whistling Season, by Ivan Doig

"Can't cook but doesn't bite." So begins the ad offering the services of an "A-1 housekeeper" that draws the attention of widower Oliver Milliron in the fall of 1909. And so also begins the unforgettable season that deposits the noncooking, nonbiting, ever-whistling Rose Llewellyn and her font-of-knowledge brother, Morris Morgan, in Marias Coulee, Montana. When the schoolmarm runs off with an itinerant preacher, Morris is pressed into service, setting the stage for the "several kinds of education"—none of them of the textbook variety—Morris and Rose will bring to Oliver, his three sons, and the rambunctious students in the region's one-room schoolhouse.

PRESENTED BY JAY NOBLE:

Wolf Hall, by Hilary Mantel

England in the 1520s is a heartbeat from disaster. If the king dies without a male heir, the country could be destroyed by civil war. Henry VIII wants to annul his marriage of twenty years, and marry Anne Boleyn. The pope and most of Europe opposes him. The quest for the king's freedom destroys his adviser, the brilliant Cardinal Wolsey, and leaves a power vacuum. Into this impasse steps Thomas Cromwell. Cromwell is a wholly original man, a charmer and a bully, both idealist and opportunist, astute in reading people and a demon of energy: he is also a consummate politician, hardened by his personal losses, implacable in his ambition. But Henry is volatile: one day tender, one day murderous. Cromwell helps him break the opposition, but what will be the price of his triumph? In inimitable style, Hilary Mantel presents a picture of a half-made society on the cusp of change, where individuals fight or embrace their fate with passion and courage. With a vast array of characters, overflowing with incident, the novel re-creates an era when the personal and political are separated by a hairbreadth, where success brings unlimited power but a single failure means death.

PRESENTED BY AMANDA KOEPKE:

Hello Cruel World: 101 Alternatives To Suicide For Teens, Freaks, and Outlaws, by Kate Bornstein

Celebrated transsexual trailblazer Kate Bornstein has, with more humor and spunk than any other, ushered us into a world of limitless possibility through a daring re-envisionment of the gender system as we know it. Here, Kate bravely and wittily shares personal and unorthodox methods of survival for navigating an often cruel world. A one-of-a-kind guide to staying alive outside the box, *Hello, Cruel World* is a much-needed unconventional approach to teenage suicide prevention for marginalized youth who want to stay on the edge, but alive. *Hello, Cruel World* features a catalog of 101 Alternatives to Suicide that range from the playful (Moisturize), to the irreverent (Disbelieve the Binary), to the highly controversial (Get Laid. Please). Designed to encourage readers to give themselves permission to unleash their hearts' harmless desires, the book has only one directive: "Don't be mean." It is this guiding principle that brings its reader on a self-validating journey, which forges wholly new paths toward a resounding decision to choose life. Tenderly intimate and unapologetically edgy, Kate is the radical role model, the affectionate best friend, and the guiding mentor all in one kind and spirited package.

A Practical Guide To Racism, by C. H. Dalton

Meet "C. H. Dalton," a professor of racist studies and a leading authority on inferior people of all ethnicities, genders, religions, and sexual preferences. In the grand tradition of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and *Birth of a Nation*, he is on a mission to clarify the truth about self-supremacy, drawing on eminent scholarship to enlighten a new generation of hate-mongers. Presenting evidence that everyone should be hated (even white people), *A Practical Guide to Racism* contains sparkling bits of wisdom on such subjects as:

- The good life enjoyed by blacks, who shuffle through life unhindered by the white man's burdens, such as reverse racism and white slavery, to become accomplished athletes, rhymesmiths, and dominoes champions.
- The sad story of the industrious, intelligent Jews, whose entire reputation is sullied by their unfortunate taste for the blood of Christian babies.
- A close look at the bizarre, sweet-smelling race known as "women," who are not good at anything— especially ruling the free world.
- A crucial manual to Arabs, a people so sensitive they are liable to blow up at any time.
- A country-by-country breakdown of the "Yellow Peril," with pointers for telling apart a race of people who all look the same.

Also included is a comprehensive glossary of timeless epithets, with hundreds of pejorative words for everyone from Phoenicians to Jews. *A Practical Guide to Racism* is sure to spark honest, instructive discourse.

Hope For Animals And Their World: How Endangered Species Are Being Rescued From The Brink, by Jane Goodall, Gail Hudson, and Thane Maynard

At a time when animal species are becoming extinct on every continent and we are confronted with bad news about the environment nearly every day, Jane Goodall, one of the world's most renowned scientists, brings us inspiring news about the future of the animal kingdom. With the insatiable curiosity and conversational prose that have made her a bestselling author, Goodall—along with Cincinnati Zoo Director Thane Maynard—shares fascinating survival stories about the American Crocodile, the California Condor, the Black-Footed Ferret, and more; all formerly endangered species and species once on the verge of extinction whose populations are now being regenerated. Interweaving her own first-hand experiences in the field with the compelling research of premier scientists, Goodall illuminates the heroic efforts of dedicated environmentalists and the truly critical need to protect the habitats of these beloved species. At once a celebration of the animal kingdom and a passionate call to arms, this work presents an uplifting, hopeful message for the future of animal-human coexistence.

PRESENTED BY SKY MITCHELL:

Tinkers, by Paul Harding

An old man lies dying. As time collapses into memory, he travels deep into his past where he is reunited with his father and relives the wonder and pain of his impoverished New England youth. At once heartbreaking and life affirming, *Tinkers* is an elegiac meditation on love, loss, and the fierce beauty of nature.

Ecological Intelligence, by Daniel Goleman

The bestselling author of *Emotional Intelligence* and *Primal Leadership* now brings us *Ecological Intelligence*—revealing the hidden environmental consequences of what we make and buy, and how with that knowledge we can drive the essential changes we all must make to save our planet and ourselves.

We buy “herbal” shampoos that contain industrial chemicals that can threaten our health or contaminate the environment. We dive down to see coral reefs, not realizing that an ingredient in our sunscreen feeds a virus that kills the reef. We wear organic cotton t-shirts, but don’t know that its dyes may put factory workers at risk for leukemia. In *Ecological Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman reveals why so many of the products that are labeled green are a “mirage,” and illuminates our wild inconsistencies in response to the ecological crisis.

Drawing on cutting-edge research, Goleman explains why we as shoppers are in the dark over the hidden impacts of the goods and services we make and consume, victims of a blackout of information about the detrimental effects of producing, shipping, packaging, distributing, and discarding the goods we buy.

But the balance of power is about to shift from seller to buyer, as a new generation of technologies informs us of the ecological facts about products at the point of purchase. This “radical transparency” will enable consumers to make smarter purchasing decisions, and will drive companies to rethink and reform their businesses, ushering in, Goleman claims, a new age of competitive advantage.

The Tale Of Peter Rabbit, by Beatrix Potter

The quintessential cautionary tale, *Peter Rabbit* warns naughty children about the grave consequences of misbehaving. When Mrs. Rabbit beseeches her four furry children not to go into Mr. McGregor's garden, the impish Peter naturally takes this as an open invitation to create mischief. He quickly gets in over his head, when he is spotted by farmer McGregor himself. Any child with a spark of sass will find Peter's adventures remarkably familiar. And they'll see in Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cotton-tail that bane of their existence: the "good" sibling who always does the right thing. One earns bread and milk and blackberries for supper, while the obstinate folly of the other warrants medicine and an early bedtime.

Storey's Guide To Raising Chickens, by Gail Damerow

Storey's Guide to Raising Chickens includes all the information farmers need — from choosing breeds and hatching chicks to building coops and keeping the birds healthy and safe from predators — to keep chickens or run an egg business.

Additionally, Sky has provided the following links to websites on the topic of *Ecological Intelligence*.

www.danielgoleman.com (Daniel Goleman's blog)

www.morethansound.net (for the audio series "Dialogues on Ecological Awareness" with Daniel Goleman)

www.goodguide.com (for evaluations of health, environmental, and social impacts of consumer products)

www.earthster.org (for ecological supply chain innovations and life-cycle evaluations)

www.environmentalhealthnews.org (for daily updates of scientific findings on health and the environment)

www.cosmeticsdatabase.com (for Skin Deep, the database of ingredients in cosmetic and personal care)