



BiblioFiles

By Ruth Freeman

Readers' Advisor @ the Rowayton Library

September 2008

This month's favorites are new books that I have enjoyed and have caught the attention of Rowayton Library patrons. We're always interested in your opinion so come on in and tell us what we shouldn't miss!

The really great news for fans of literate mysteries is the arrival of 'When Will There Be Good News', Kate Atkinson's third book to feature Private Investigator Jackson Brodie. Her phenomenal talent for weaving multiple plot lines is on display in this Edinburgh based novel. The central characters, in addition to ex-cop Brodie, are Dr. Joanna Hunter, the bereaved survivor of the brutal murder of her family when she was a young child, her intrepid mother's helper Reggie Chase, and Detective Louise Monroe. Their lives intersect as a result of the workings of fate and coincidence, but never to the point where the circumstances strain credulity. Past transgressions play a large role in the present, with unexpected twists and catastrophes providing suspense. This book is the definition of a page turner, with humorous observations to lighten the sad undercurrent of lives that have had more than their share of tragedy and loneliness. Jackson Brodie is a bit of a philosopher and an everyman whose observations shine a bright light on the human need for connection.

Another terrific read from across the ocean is 'The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society', by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows. Don't be put off by the odd title (it's clarified quickly); this is a charming, funny book. It is cleverly structured as a series of letters from the residents of the channel island of Guernsey to a potential author of the story of their occupation by the Germans in World War II. The pluckiness of the islanders in the face of the rigors of a foreign occupation is showcased by their establishment of a literary society. The selections and the comments from the various characters are the source of some laugh out loud moments. Once the author visits the islanders and falls in love with the place romantic complications add some additional spice to the storyline. Beautifully written and delightfully different, our patrons agree this one is a keeper.

Richard Montanari has written a creepy, original spin on serial killers in his book 'Badlands'. The world of magic tricks figures prominently in the killer's unusual methods, challenging Philadelphia Detectives Kevin Byrne and Jessica Balzano to come up with answers before another victim is found. The killer has a voice as well which ratchets up the tension as he stays one evil step ahead. The atmosphere is shivery and spooky, you root for the cops as they crawl



BiblioFiles

By Ruth Freeman

Readers' Advisor @ the Rowayton Library

through literally haunted houses and feel their frustration as the killer slips ahead of them. This is recommended for fans of this genre.

'Fresh Kills' by Bill Loehfelm is ultimately a story of redemption. The father of John and Julia Sanders has been murdered and they return to their childhood home on Staten Island to face the aftermath of the crime. John Jr. is particularly bitter about the brutal treatment they suffered at the hands of their father and blames the current state of his life on his past. He is reckless, impatient, and quick to use his fists. As he independently investigates his father's murder he slowly begins to realize the value of true friends and the chance to change the trajectory of his life. The vivid, moody descriptions of Staten Island and the looming landfill are excellent; they almost act as characters in their own right.

'Cost' by Roxanna Robinson is the story of the dysfunctional Lambert family and how they are affected by their youngest son Jack's heroin addiction. Robinson is a well known chronicler of family life and she gets the details right. It is a difficult book to read as the microscopic details of the physical side of withdrawal and addiction are spelled out. All the characters present their point of view, which allows the far reaching damage from Jack's addiction to be examined from multiple perspectives. It is a compassionate book about a family searching for answers they cannot find, at the same time they try and support each other in the clumsy ways they know how. The three generations of extended family play out the drama at the summer cabin in Maine which provides contrasting scenery to the chaos of their attempted intervention in Jack's downward spiral. A tough book to read but fascinating.

###