



# BiblioFiles

By Ruth Freeman

Readers' Advisor @ the Rowayton Library

## January 2009

Long winter evenings are a great time to read. This January I read 'A Tale of Two Cities' by Charles Dickens. I was impressed and moved by the timeless themes of personal love and loss played out in the havoc of the French Revolution. It's also hard not to be swept up by some of the most famous opening and closing lines in literature. We currently have patrons at the Rowayton Library working their way through Ernest Hemingway, Willa Cather and Edith Wharton, so come join the fun and pick up a classic!

This is the time of year we moan about the cold weather so we're recommending books to put our shivering in perspective. 'Miracle in the Andes' by Nando Parrado, and 'We Die Alone' by David Howarth are about incredible feats of endurance by individuals battling injuries and severe cold. 'Miracle in the Andes' is a memoir by one of the Uruguayan rugby players whose charter plane crashed in the Andes Mountains in October 1972. After more than two months marooned on a glacier the decision was made to hike out for help. Miraculously the hike was successful and a rescue of the survivors followed. Nando Parrado was the leader of the expedition and his courageous story of faith and perseverance is inspirational.

'We Die Alone' is the tale of Jan Baalsrud, a Norwegian Resistance fighter marooned after his small group is betrayed before they can carry out their sabotage mission in German-occupied Norway. He is the sole survivor and must make his way to neutral Sweden across the frigid northern plateau of Norway. Assisted by villagers and Lapps, it is a tale of extraordinary effort as people risk their lives for a man they don't even know.

'Madonnas of Leningrad' by Deborah Dean is a novel about the siege of Leningrad, specifically how it impacted the curators at the Hermitage Museum. The author did a lot of research into the conditions of the siege, which makes the



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book's descriptions very powerful. The efforts of the employees to stay alive and protect the masterpieces in the museum are movingly described.

Moving away from snow and ice, 'Serena' by Ron Rash is a sprawling historical novel set in the 1930s. Although Serena is a not always totally believable as the increasingly malevolent wife of George Pemberton, the greedy timber baron in the making, the North Carolina setting and the large cast of characters make this yarn worth it.

There are several new thrillers that are very entertaining. Carol O'Connell has written a novel called 'Bone by Bone' about the denizens of the small town of Coventry, CA. The book covers their roles in the long ago disappearance and presumed murder of a teenage boy. The crime is resurrected when his brother returns home for the first time in 20 years. Everyone's a suspect in this one!

Thomas Perry has brought back Jane Littlefield in 'Runner', a fine romp through the world of those with a need to disappear. It's a page turning primer on how to stay unnoticed even with menacing bad guys breathing down your neck.

Stephen Booth's series takes place in the Peak District of Northern England – 'Scared to Live' is the new entrant. Detectives Fry and Cooper are the iconic police in this tense procedural that broods along with the low-hanging skies as the pair investigate arson and murder in a seemingly bucolic village setting.

'Nemesis' by Jo Nesbo features the return of Oslo Detective Harry Hole, who we first met in 'The Red Breast'. He is a wonderful character loaded with foibles who is a dog with a bone when it comes to chasing down a gang of sadistic bank robbers. It's very atmospheric and full of twists.



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‘The Piano Teacher’ by Janice Lee is a diverting historical novel. Lee is a first time author who captures the atmosphere of Hong Kong before the fall of the colony to the Japanese in 1942. In a separate story line taking place in 1952 an English piano teacher is the focal point around which various survivors of the Japanese invasion try and make their peace with their actions during the war. This is a good book but frankly does not compare to ‘A Town Like Alice’ by Neville Shute, one of the finest novels written about WWII and it’s aftermath in Singapore and Australia. Read them both and see what you think.

Come on over, scan the shelves for good reads and have a cup of tea with us.

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