



BiblioFiles

By Ruth Freeman

Readers' Advisor @ the Rowayton Library

February 2010

So many good books, so little time!

'Daring Young Men' by Richard Reeves is about the June 1948 to May 1949 Berlin Air Lift. There is so much historical detail I was not aware of, and I had not really thought about the 360 degree switch between vanquishing Germans and then immediately turning around and saving the West Berliners from starvation. The individual stories of bravery and the awesome amount of material that was moved during the constant flights makes you really appreciate the sacrifice of the people who made the airlift work.

'Snow Angels' by James Thompson introduces Inspector Vaara, hailing from a small village in Northern Finland. It has a pitch perfect sense of place and thrilling atmosphere. A gruesome murder kicks off the hunt for the murderer while multiple suspects, possible involvement of Vaara's family and the intriguing background make this an unusual whodunit. I found the asides about the lifestyle of northern Finland and the difficulties his American wife has adjusting to a foreign culture particularly interesting.

Anne Boleyn's final four months are meticulously portrayed in 'The Lady in the Tower: The Fall of Anne Boleyn' by Alison Weir. Weir is a well known historian who is able to shine a light on the treacherous doings throughout Henry VIII's court that doomed Anne's rule as his queen. She debunks some myths about Anne and Henry and shines a light on Thomas Cromwell's deadly machinations. This is great popular history.

'The First Rule' by Robert Crais is the new novel featuring Joe Pike, the enigmatic side kick to PI Elvis Cole. Pike is wrapped up in Serbian gang violence in Los Angeles, where betrayals are the rule and the past is never really in the past. Crackerjack action and a great ending are just a few of the reasons to read this book. Pike can be inaccessible to a fault but the tough guy persona rings true; Crais is a deserved favorite among readers.

'Noah's Compass' by Anne Tyler is the story of Liam Pennywell's adjustment to his rapidly shrinking life. Downsized from his job as a 5th grade teacher, he moves into a small garden apartment where he is mugged on his first night. His recovery involves reconnecting with his children, ex-wife and new friends in a way he clearly never has before. As always, Anne



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Tyler's character studies bring us fresh insight into the ways we keep ourselves closed off from people, and the tentative steps that signal a willingness to risk more in relationships.

'The Red Door' by Charles Todd brings back beleaguered Scotland Yard Inspector Ian Rutledge and his ghostly sidekick Hamish. It's a somewhat convoluted plot but the murder at its heart is a sad and lonely beginning to a tale of jealousy and rage. Todd, a mother/son writing team, understands the post WWI landscape well and uses it to good effect in this atmospheric series.

'Ordinary Thunderstorms' by William Boyd is a well written but difficult book. It asks for a certain suspension of disbelief on the part of the reader, as the premise of the story is the main character's complete loss of identity due to a series of misfortunes. Giving away the specific circumstances introduces too many spoilers. Suffice it to say it is a thriller that takes place in present day London that involves a malevolent pharmaceutical company. There is a large supporting cast of characters that are very interesting and keep the various subplots in motion. It's not Boyd's best book but will keep your attention and make you think about what it would be like to forge a completely new life and identity under duress.

Kate Braestrup, author of the wonderful memoir 'Here if You Need Me' has followed that book up with 'Marriage and Other Acts of Charity'. She is a Unitarian minister, mother of four, a widow now remarried, and an insightful commentator on the human condition. This book takes a close look at love and marriage in all its forms through stories of real struggles and triumphs. She is a Maine resident and her voice is no nonsense, full of her sense of humor and strong faith. She isn't shy about writing about her personal life, and she is certainly well positioned to understand how demanding and wonderful love and commitment can be.

Courtesy of the CT Humanities Council we have twenty copies of the charming novel 'The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society' by Mary Ann Shaffer. It would be a perfect book group book selection.

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