



# BiblioFiles

By Ruth Freeman

Readers' Advisor @ the Rowayton Library

## May 2011

'The Crimean War' by Orlando Figes is a commitment but worth the investment. It's another reminder of how the problems of history tend to be circular and never get permanently resolved. The Russian concern over the Muslim influence on the states on their southern flank, Turkey and Greece clashing, France and England meddling – does this all sound a little familiar? Most of us know this war via Florence Nightingale and the Charge of the Light Brigade – this will fill in the blanks on a conflict that killed millions and sowed the seeds for the great wars of the ensuing centuries.

'Good Old Dog' is edited by Nicholas Dodman, and written by the faculty of the Tufts Veterinary School. It is a distillation of wisdom on the care of an older canine. Many pet owners have aging dogs and this book is a common sense guide to some of the care that makes life easier for an older dog. Diet, exercise, common medical conditions of an older dog and special sections on specific diseases make this a great resource.

'Chasing Aphrodite – The Hunt for Looted Antiquities at the World's Richest Museum' by Jason Felch and Ralph Frammolino is a fascinating expose of the collection building ethics at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles. It is the story of a market fed by looters responding to the demand by the world's great museums for irreplaceable antiquities – proper provenance often a detail. This reads like a thriller.

We have lots of terrific new cookbooks just in time for the opening of the farmers market:

'Sara Foster's Southern Kitchen' is another winner from the doyenne of Foster's Market. The recipes are straightforward without sacrificing any flavor. Try the white bean dip for a change from hummus.

'Maine Classics' by Marc Gaier and Clark Frasier features down east recipes. The crab fritters are outstanding and there are plenty of other mouthwatering dishes begging to be tried. The photos are beautiful.

'Tender' by Nigel Slater is the perfect gardener/cook compendium. The author is a well known British food journalist and wonderful writer. 'Tender' covers growing, harvesting and cooking an array of vegetables.



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'Ancient Grains for Modern Meals' by Maria Speck is my favorite for this month. The author showcases all those good for you but sometimes puzzling grains. There are cooking tips that will have you presenting delicious quinoa and barley dishes in no time.

And now for those afternoons in the hammock:

Joanna Trollope's 'Daughters in Law' is a perfect early beach read. This dependable author has set her book in Suffolk and London. It is the story of the three Brinkley brothers, their spouses, children and parents. The parents struggle to understand some of the dynamics that emerge with the wedding of their youngest son, whose more independent wife brings familial tensions to the surface. An absorbing, realistic and heartwarming read.

'The Troubled Man' by Henning Mankell is Inspector Wallander's swan song. It's a fitting conclusion to the series, referencing many of the previous books and including characters from prior cases. It's an elegy with a twist as it explores the legacy of the Cold War in Sweden. The Swedish Navy had its hands full defending its miles of coastline from foreign incursions and the 'troubled man' of the title is an admiral with many secrets. Wallander is drawn in to the situation via his daughter, who is living with the admiral's son. It's a book full of clever plot developments, and is a fine end to this great series.

'Doc' by Mary Doria Russell grabs you right away. This is historical fiction at its finest. You breathe the same Kansas dust as Doc Holliday, Wyatt Earp and his brothers, Bat Masterson and assorted whores and hangers on. The frontier never seemed so alive. The author did a tremendous amount of research into the lives of her main characters, who did so much more than participate in the shootout at the OK corral. It's very atmospheric and richly detailed.

'A Drop of the Hard Stuff' by Lawrence Sanders brings back Matt Scudder, former NYPD member, now quasi private eye. This is a well plotted tale of the intersection of Matt's newly sober life with the death of a long ago friend who took the opposite path as a young man and became a criminal. His death sparks an investigation that turns up plenty for Matt to think about and act on. Sanders is a thoughtful writer who develops complex characters.

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