



BiblioFiles

By Ruth Freeman

Readers' Advisor @ the Rowayton Library

November 2011

Just in time for the holidays we have Martha Stewart's revised edition of "Entertaining". Lavishly illustrated with her trademark gorgeous photos, it is a round the calendar collection of parties and festivals. As is true with all Martha's books there are impractical suggestions based on her fleet of helpers and acres of gardens, as well as truly useful hints for imaginative and stress free cooking and entertaining. The book is well designed so paging through it to find inspiration is a pleasure.

'Food 52' is one of the great websites for cooks and the title of their first cookbook. The contributions are from talented home cooks, who do the recipe testing and commenting. Edited by Amanda Hesser, this is a mouthwatering collection of the best recipes from the past year.

As an antidote to all the special occasion feasting that goes on this time of year we recommend 'Food Rules, An Eaters Manual' by Michael Pollan. More a handbook than a serious tome, it is filled with gorgeous illustrations by Maira Kalman. The rules are simple and witty.

"The Impossible Dead" by Ian Rankin is the second in the series featuring the Complaints, the Internal Affairs group for the Scottish Police. Called into the town of Kirkcaldy to investigate a rogue cop, the team headed by Malcolm Fox is immediately challenged to connect past crimes with current malfeasance. There is an interesting back story involving the Scottish Nationalist Party, comical interchanges among the teammates and Rankin's trademark sardonic view of corrupt politicians and upper management – all of which liven up the proceedings. We are delighted this series is continuing.

'The House of Silk' by Anthony Horowitz features Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson back on the job. It's a romp for Holmes' fans, chock full of the deductive logic and ghastly goings on that characterized the original stories. Horowitz was chosen by the Arthur Conan Doyle estate to write a sanctioned continuation of the series and he has nailed the Victorian setting and sensibilities. The story involves gangs from Boston, nefarious dealings in the art world and well drawn characters who continually surprise the reader. This is a very enjoyable return for Holmes and Watson fans, and for those meeting them for the first time.



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'The Gentleman's Hour' by Don Winslow is the sequel to 'Dawn Patrol'. Boone Daniels' surfing posse is alive and well but San Diego is suffering from an outbreak of drug induced gang violence that is disturbing the laid back surfer vibe the "older generation" want to preserve. The book digs into the downside of the California Dream and exposes Boone to a lot of heat from both friends and foe. This is a great thriller.

'Steve Jobs' is the fascinating subject of Walter Isaacson's biography. It's a long book but worth the time as it is beautifully written and very insightful. He had full access to Jobs, and while you know there are areas of the subject's life that will always be secret this is as close as you are going to get to understanding the creative genius of this difficult man.

'The Perfectly Imperfect Home' by Deborah Needleman is a primer on "how to decorate and live well". I am generally suspicious of decorating books, finding them impractical and over the top most of the time. This book is full of very useful tips on everything from lighting to furniture placement. There is plenty of good, free advice, and wonderful color wash drawings. Take it home and see if you don't find something you can change that will improve life at your house.

'The Strangers Child' by Alan Hollinghurst is a richly textured novel about the last 100 years of English history and literary life. The book starts in 1913 with Cecil Valance's arrival at the Sawle's house where he is a guest of their son George, whose sister Daphne is immediately fascinated by Cecil. This is a multigenerational family saga enmeshed in the currents of history. There are myths punctured over the years, secrets kept and English poetic and literary tradition providing both background music and some major plot points. Hollinghurst is a very talented writer; reading his work is a pleasure.

'Death Comes to Pemberley' by P.D. James will bring a smile to Austen and mystery fans alike. James has borrowed Elizabeth and Darcy and set a murder mystery in their backyard. Although Austen herself preferred not to write about "odious" subjects, I think she would approve of this elegantly written book.

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