



BiblioFiles

By Ruth Freeman

Readers' Advisor @ the Rowayton Library

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'The Chalk Girl' is the new Carol O'Connell novel featuring Mallory, the enigmatic NYPD detective who has anchored this series. It's been five years since we last read about Mallory, and she continues to draw us in as she uses her prodigious brain and computer skills to solve a bizarre series of crimes. Her partners are there to humanize her rather robotic approach. O'Connell is on the razors edge of making Mallory almost too extreme, let's hope she draws back a bit before her heroine seems like a cartoon.

'The Leopard' by Jo Nesbo continues the saga of Harry Hole, the now very weary Oslo detective who has chased down his share of macabre serial killers and is exhausted, physically and spiritually. He will have no rest in this book either as an increasingly gruesome series of murders bedevils the small squad he has been convinced to join. The writing is the draw here; Nesbo is a brilliant wordsmith. A strong sense of place makes the Oslo setting a star.

The new Michael Robotham mystery is called 'Bleed Me'. A murdered detective, a blood covered daughter, and the possibility of an arch villain preying on young girls makes for a lively read. There is not a new plot twist but lots of edgy dialogue and a real understanding of the parent/child dynamic make this book different. O'Loughlin is the psychologist afflicted with Parkinsons Disease who is called on to try and determine where the truth lies.

'The Journal of Best Practices' by David Finch is potentially enlightening for all of us trying to communicate within relationships, not just those diagnosed with Aspergers like the author. His marriage failing, he begins the challenging process of course correction. As he and his wife grow to understand the limitations of Aspergers they work to strengthen personality traits that are positive. This is a brave book, with lots of good humor throughout as well.

'The Girl in the Blue Beret' by Bobbie Ann Mason is a fantastic book. She has based the plot on the actual escape of her WWII pilot father in law, who was shot down in France and taken to safety by the resistance chain that operated through Belgium, France and Spain. Marshall Stone is the pilot in the novel, newly retired from a commercial flying career and trying to find the people who saved his life decades earlier. He is a fully realized, imperfect character struggling to understand the past in an effort to create a way forward now that he is no longer a pilot.



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'A Train in Winter' by Caroline Moorehead is the true story of a group of women in the French Resistance. Their ring is betrayed and they are shipped off to Dancy, then Auschwitz. As many books as you may have read about the concentration camps it is always amazing to rediscover the heroism of the inmates and the tragic circumstances of their captivity. These intrepid women help each other through the endless deprivations and torture. It's very inspiring to hear their stories.

The new Penelope Lively book 'How it all Began' starts with the tantalizing premise of the ripple effect of a single event, in this case the mugging of Charlotte. Lively is a very fine writer and such a pleasure to read. The book does not strain for coincidences, and the underlying humor makes this a joy to read. Full of insightful commentary on reading, aging, and thoughtful reflections on our connections, or lack thereof, this is a highly recommended read.

'Elizabeth the Queen' by Sally Bledell Smith is one of a number of biographies out in time for the Queen's jubilee celebration. It's an overview of the sixty year British monarchy. Elizabeth never planned to play out her entire adult life as a reigning monarch but the early death of her father catapulted the young bride onto the throne. Without sensationalizing, Bledell does a good job of covering the ups and downs of her reign.

We have lots of good books for 'Downton Abbey' fans who have gotten interested in WWI. 'The World in Winter' by Carol Lee, 'Birdsong' by Sebastian Faulks, 'In Pale Battalions' by Robert Goddard, and of course 'All Quiet on the Western Front' by Erich Remarque all increase a reader's understanding of the war, while providing very involving reads. Charles Todd has written a new Inspector Rutledge mystery called 'The Confession' which is guaranteed to cement his place as a chronicler of the war's aftermath. The Maisie Dobbs series by Jacqueline Winspeare is another window into post war life in the UK.

It's always fun to review local talent and 'Caseus', the cookbook from the New Haven fromagerie and bistro of that name is certainly deserving of the attention. The photographs are mouth watering and the authors' cheese expertise is a nice addition to the wonderful recipes. The lamb kabobs with lemon quinoa and goat cheese tzatziki is a staff favorite here! We guarantee you will find something to make within these pages.