

April 2021 Wayne Reader's Blog

The Woman in Cabin 10 By Ruth Ware (Suspense Fiction)

Goodnight, moon. Goodnight, spoon. Goodnight, dirty dishes cluttering the room.

Why, you ask? Because I couldn't put this book down!

I have been on a Ruth Ware reading streak and find her novels very satisfying, but this book had me guessing and on the edge of my seat throughout. Good read and thank you to our wonderful Librarian who made sure our Ruth Ware collection is complete!

Recommended by Chris Jones

The Children's Blizzard By Melanie Benjamin (Historical Fiction)

Take my favorite genre...historical fiction, plus one of my favorite authors...Melanie Benjamin, plus her new book, The Children's Blizzard...What more could you ask for? I was not disappointed.

The Children's Blizzard is set on the plains in the late 1800s and revolves around the deadly blizzard of January 1888. It was named the Children's Blizzard because this monster storm struck unexpectedly as students were leaving school for the day and heading home. Blinding snow, freezing temperatures and inadequate outerwear...well, you can only imagine the heartbreaking stories that emerge from this tragic event. Lives are lost and survivors' lives changed forever.

While I couldn't put this book down, I had trouble reading through the horrific accounts of the children and their young teachers as they struggled against Mother Nature's ferocious, seemingly endless, prairie storm. Heartbreaking.

Benjamin's other historical novels concentrate on a famous person...Anne Lindbergh in The Aviator's Wife...Mrs. Tom Thumb...The Swans of Fifth Avenue, Truman Capote...while this book's focus is the historical blizzard of 1888. The characters are a compilation of her research and oral histories; the newspaperman, whose writings lured many immigrant families to homestead in the undeveloped Dakota Territory, the hardworking, mostly European immigrant families of the plains, the one room schoolhouse teachers, who were not much older than their students, and the innocent children.

Reading this story during our Maine winter, especially on the chilly, high wind days, was a fitting background.

I highly recommend Melanie Benjamin's new book.

Recommended by Bev Petell

Dark Sky by CJ Box (Suspense)

Joe takes a Silicon Valley tech baron on an elk hunting trip and fights to save his life against guns, crossbows and wolverines. His daughter says "Dad, you need to quit getting shot!"
A nail biter!

Recommended by Steve Dodge

Deacon King Nong by James McBride (Contemporary Fiction)

James McBride's Deacon King Kong, is an unusual story about a group of southern blacks that move to New York for better fortunes. Their move is partially responsible for the departure of the Italians and the Irish that lived in the neighborhood. The cast of characters have odd nicknames and speak a southern country dialect. The lead character is Old Sportcoat and his best friend is Hot Sausage. The plot wanders from the shooting of a drug dealer in the main square to the unlikely relationships between an Irish police officer and a black sister of the Church of the Five Ends. The church's congregation protects the shooter, Old Sportcoat and a sub plot puts the Italian, Elephante in the Palm of the Lord's hand. If the characters, and their dialect and the twisted plot seems to lose you, stay tuned for the author's connections.

Recommended by Jim DiRenzo

Dearly By Margaret Atwood (Poetry)

It seems most of us have an ambivalent relationship with poetry. Margaret Atwood's "Dearly", collection of New Poems makes you want for more. These poems are fresh, alive and contemporary. This is not your grandmother's poetry. You will want to sit with these poems as you sip your morning coffee and savor them with your afternoon tea. Margaret Atwood's new collection of poetry does not disappoint.

Recommended by MT Clark

The Scorpion's Tail by Preston & Child (Thriller)

A mummified corpse in a New Mexico Ghost town with sixteenth century Spanish gold sparks FBI and archaeologists into old West shoutouts and treasure hunting. Preston & Childs keep it moving as always!

Recommended by Steve Dodge

Where the Lost Wander by Amy Harmon (Historical Fiction)

Excellent historical fiction about families and the culture moving west in Conestoga wagons, mules, horses and on foot in the 1850ties. My first ever read about the difficulty of the westward migration. The Shoshone nation is featured; Chief Washakie and his mother, Lost Woman, are two of the main characters. The May family (Naomi) another of the main characters, emigrated to Utah in the westward migration, and John Lowry, "Two Feet" was born in Missouri to a Pawnee woman and a white father. Chief Washakie, my hero, who predicted people would write books about him, will live in my heart forever. Cary has a copy of the book, published in 2020, in paperback. Very happy I picked it up to read without knowing anything about it.

Recommended by Jill Howes

The Narrowboat Summer by Anne Youngson (Contemporary Fiction)

This is Anne Youngson's first novel and I hope not her last. She's got the "charming escape reading" genre nailed. Set in England, two women leave their regular lives behind in what I'd call mid-life crises, happen to meet and end up connecting with the eccentric owner of a narrowboat. The boat must be moved for repairs and the owner must leave to have surgery. So the two women take on the canal adventure, of course encountering an entertaining cast of characters and navigational and other predicaments. Charming and fresh. (And now I want a narrowboat trip....)

Recommended by Janet Adelberg

The Breaker by Nick Petrie (Suspense/Legal Thriller)

Former Marine Peter Ash needs action to calm his head static. Stopping a gunman with an AK-74 in a crowded mall starts a lethal thriller with dangerous enemies and technology. Not a mystery for the faint of heart.

Recommended by Steve Dodge

The Dutch House by Ann Patchett (Contemporary Fiction)

Published in 2019 The Dutch House tells the story over five decades of a brother and sister who are thrown out of their family's stately mansion by their stepmother after their father dies. The Dutch House, purchased by their father for their mother, who abandons them, is a separate character on its own in this novel. The novel was a finalist for the 2020 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.

Recommended by Patti Lawson

Never Far Away by Michael Koryta (Suspense)

What a mother will do to protect her children. A thriller in the Allagash Wilderness is cover to cover action. Don't miss this!

Recommended by Steve Dodge

This is Happiness by Niall Williams (Fiction)

I loved the writing in this book - long flowing sentences that tell a story, and challenge your perception of what is. The author's musings about life and love and what's real, and grief and growing take precedence. And all told in classic Irish self-deprecating humor with a great sense of irony and the 'tragi-comedy' of being alive and somehow muddling through. The plot may center on a small remote Irish village in the 50s finally getting electricity, but the real plot centers around the human dilemma and the decisions we all make and how they impact our lives going forward.

Recommended by Judy Danielson

The Patron Saint of Dogs, by Nick Trout (Fiction)

Taking a break from my usual 'noir' mysteries I tend to read in the winter, I picked up this book after reading a review that stated there are no sad canine endings in this book. What a serendipity this book was!

The narrative describes a prodigal son returning to his home state of Vermont after his veterinarian father passes away, leaving behind a country vet practice on its last legs. Of course, the son is escaping some problems of his own down south. Nevertheless, he becomes pulled in to trying to save the practice despite his hatred of harsh New England winters.

The author is a veterinarian at the prestigious Angell Memorial Hospital in Boston. What I liked most about this book is his description of pet maladies and the human responses to them. The author is very factual and does not 'talk down' to his readers; the medical situations are

realistically described. The main character, Doctor Mills, has a self-deprecating humor that made me laugh out loud several times. So, I had to pick up the sequel.

AND

Dog Gone, Back Soon by Nick Trout (Fiction)

Doc Mills would describe himself as the class nerd in high school who has remained socially inept. As he becomes involved in small town life there arises a business clash, a dog rescue mystery, and a budding love interest. The doc's life is a series of unintended consequences as he bumbles around while learning a lot about himself in the process. I closed this book with a smile, my heart warm and fuzzy. Can't wait for more from Dr. Trout!

Both Recommended by Chris Jones

A Promised Land by Barack Obama (Autobiography)

I checked out this one on an unabridged audiobook. It is packed with information -- the personal journey of the former president and his years in the White House. A Promised Land is partly the story of a man's personality shaped by family and the sum of their values, brief travels into our country's history and a portrayal of the full weight of a presidency in our present polarized society. Look for some good humor especially when Obama details his own human frailties. I really enjoyed the audio version of the book (there a few to get through!) keeping me company on my car rides.

Recommended by Barb Rothe

Maine Bicentennial Community Cookbook, 200 Recipes Celebrating Maine's Culinary Past, Present, and Future. Compiled and edited by Margaret Hathaway and Karl Schatz (Cookbook)

This is a fun spin through the state; fingers skimming across time and place. Now most cookbooks show off the completed dish, however, this large size book presents the writer, location, or memories of the dish for the visual. What better way to highlight the glories of Maine. Formally Ed's Chicken, Wedding Mac and Cheese, Hermits, Ginger Carrot Soup and so much more. I've even tried a few.

Recommended by Mary Jean Cowing