

January 2023 Cary Memorial Library Readers' Blog

## **Non-Fiction**

### **Open Season: True Stories of the Maine Warden Service by Daren Worcester (Memoir/Maine)**

Open Season: True Stories of the Maine Warden Service by Daren Worcester is a series of 20 typical cases related to the Warden Service. They include search and rescue and poaching stories and the open case of the murder of Ludger Belanger. These short accounts would not rank as great literature but are good reading for the occasional Maine visitor.

Reviewed by Jim DiRenzo

### **Why We Can't Wait by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (American History/Civil Rights)**

This 1964 book by Martin Luther King is a must read for anyone interested in the history of the civil rights movement and of the African American contributions to our way of life. He is as inspiring a writer as he was an orator and many of the phrases, we know from his speeches are embedded in the original context here. The Library has an updated edition with an introduction by Dorothy Cotton.

Reviewed by Cathy McCue

## **Fiction**

### **Remarkably Bright Creatures by Shelby Van Pelt (Fiction)**

Did you know that an Octopus has three hearts? Each heart has a specific job to do. They are also shape-shifters who can ooze through the smallest openings. The most outstanding attribute of an Octopus, however, is its intelligence. You will grow to love Marcellus.

Reviewed by Chris Jones

### **Our Missing Hearts by Celeste Ng (Fiction)**

The dystopian world of big city America is a cruel place for Chinese Americans. What subversion can a small quiet woman poet create? Enough to undermine the status quo? And librarians are major heroes. What could be better. Celeste Ng is a talented creative author we should be proud to add to our lists.

Reviewed by MJ Cowing

### **Billy Summers by Stephen King (Fiction/Maine Author)**

Billy is a 44-year-old killer-for-hire who is an ex-army sniper who is ready to retire from his trade. He only kills “really bad” people which allows the reader to sympathize with and cheer for him. He wants this to be his last job and it requires him to move to an unspecified southern town and blend in with the community. He does so successfully by making friends in the neighborhood where he needs to stay waiting for the right time to fulfill his contract. Mid-way through the book, a character is introduced which broadens the story and adds to the interest. If you like King’s writing, but not his fantasy slant, this is the book for you. One review indicates it is King’s best work in years. I thoroughly enjoyed this book, which is over 500 pages long and also comes in a Large Print version. It was published in 2021.

Reviewed by Connie Locashio  
Granite Hill Estates, Augusta

### **Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmus (Fiction)**

Lessons in Chemistry is showing up on many of the “Best of” lists for 2022. It made me mad, it made me laugh and it made me want this author to keep writing. The protagonist is a chemist by training, but after years of having her work disparaged in the sexist work environment of a 1960’s lab, she lands her own cooking show on tv. Women’s work? Not for this chemist. At turns hilarious, poignant, charming, maddening, with an ultimately hopeful conclusion. The quirky Elizabeth Zott is a force to be reckoned with.

Reviewed by Janet Adelberg

### **The Black-Out Book Club by Amy Lynn Green (Historical Fiction / Maine)**

Set in a coastal town in Maine during WWII, this is a wonderful story of a library book club that brings a diverse group of quirky characters together. Their common goal is to save each other, their library and the town from German U-boats. Long held secrets figure into the plot.

Reviewed by Stephen Dodge

### **Death in the Off-Season: A Merry Folger Nantucket Mystery by Francine Mathews (Mystery)**

It's always fun to discover a new mystery series but I did not discover this one. It was recommended to me by Janet, our helpful librarian.

I enjoyed the book. It kept me interested. I liked the main characters and I wanted to find out who did it. Ms. Mathews wrote this first in a series in 1992 mostly because her husband challenged her to write a book. At the time she was under 30, childless and working for the CIA as an analyst. She didn't expect the book to be published. It was! She left the CIA and soon wrote 3 more Nantucket mysteries, the fourth one published in 1998. Then no more of the series for almost 20 years. In 2015 Soho Press decided to re-release the series so she wrote 3 more. A new one was just published in December, Death on a Winter Stroll.

Reviewed by Cynthia Pelliccia

### **Horse by Geraldine Brooks (Historical Fiction)**

A wonderful fascinating novel that jumps between time periods and characters all connected to a single thread. The root of the thread is based on the true story of Lexington, a famous race horse in the 1850s who ended up siring many more race horses. Interwoven are stories about enslavement, painting, science and friendship. Highly recommended.

Reviewed by Judy Danielson

### **xxxThe Second Life of Mireille West by Amanda Skenandore (Historical Fiction)**

This story describes the Carville Leprosy Hospital in the 1920's. The main character has a comfortable Los Angeles life until a small, seemingly benign skin discoloration results in her imprisonment and separation from her family. Life at the Leprosy Hospital is well researched and richly detailed. I enjoyed the sub-plots and the character development of our heroine as she regains control of her life.

Reviewed by Chris Jones

### **xxxHunting Time by Jeffrey Deaver (Suspense)**

Colter Shaw, an expert tracker, is hired to find and protect Alison, a brilliant nuclear engineer from her ex-husband Jon. Newly released from prison for assaulting his wife, the former police detective is uniquely qualified for the hunt. Some die, some disappear, and as usual Deaver's story has more twists than a road race. A must read.

Reviewed by Stephen Dodge

### **xxxThe Lamorna Wink and 24 other books by Martha Grimes (Mystery)**

Over the decades of reading hundreds maybe thousands of mysteries I had read a few of Martha Grimes' Richard Jury books not in any order. Early in 2022 I decided to read all of them in the order they were written starting with "The Man With a Load of Mischief." I am now on number 16 "The Lamorna Wink." The titles of her books are the names of English pubs; The Case has Altered, The Horse You Rode In On, The Stargazey, Help the Poor Struggler, etc. (At least some of them, maybe not all are real English Pubs.)

Martha Grimes is an American born in Pennsylvania; she is best known for her Richard Jury books which are set in England. She has been compared to the best of the English women mystery writers. The mysteries, the details, the connections, the descriptions are amazing.

I really like Richard Jury, Melrose Plant, Marshall Trueblood and the rest of the characters. I even have a grudging admiration for Aunt Agatha, horrid "old" thing that she is. I wish I could join them at the Jack and Hammer in Long Piddleton for a pint. The Cary Library has them all.

Reviewed by Cynthia Pelliccia

**xxxThe Nurse's Secret: A Thrilling Historical Novel of the Dark Side of Gilded Age New York City by Amanda Skenandore (Historical Fiction)**

The same author noted above, herself a Registered Nurse, penned this novel. I was expecting graphic medical descriptions and lurid details of an inner-city hospital, but this was not to be. (Well, maybe a few details.) The setting is Bellevue Hospital in the 1800's and the start of the first nursing school. An unlikely student is a young woman grifter who is hiding out from the long arm of the law. There are a series of murders that she is swept up in solving. Predictably there is the handsome young doctor love interest, the harsh disciplinary rules she struggles with and the growth of abiding friendships. But - plenty of suspense to keep you reading on.

Reviewed by Chris Jones

**The Twist of a Knife by Anthony Horowitz (Mystery)**

Horowitz writes very enjoyable light, wry British mysteries. The Twist of a Knife was published in 2022. If you're looking for something fun, with an Agatha Christie type twist, and modern sensibilities, try these. Others at the library are Magpie Murders and A Line to Kill.

Reviewed by Judy Danielson