

BOOKMARK



Fiction and Nonfiction News from Janet Litherland

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REVIEWS

Potpourri

Did you know? F. Scott Fitzgerald failed algebra, history, French and physics during his second year at boarding school and dropped out of Princeton University in 1917. Yet he became a leading writer during the Roaring Twenties. He is best known for his novels, which include *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender Is the Night*.

My sister, Betty, recently sent me a sweet little book titled *My Sister, My Friend*. My sister truly IS my friend, actually my BEST friend! The illustrations are delightful, as are the “sayings” accompanying each one. Here is one of my favorites: “A sister smiles when one tells one’s stories—for she knows where the decoration has been added.” (Chris Montaigne) So true!

Speaking of “sayings,” I came across an oldie the other day, one that reminds us to think before we speak: “You can’t uncrack an egg!”

I don’t like swimming through a wonderful novel, only to be met by an unhappy ending. I’m thinking, “The story could have been so much better, if the author had gotten out of its way!” That’s why I gave up on an excellent, prolific writer several books ago. Can you guess who? Have you read *Message in a Bottle*?

**Janet Litherland’s books
are available at:**

Amazon.com
and other online stores.

“You can never get a cup of tea large enough or a book long enough to suit me.” —C.S. Lewis

One Foot in the Grape (Carlene O’Neil, 2015). This is one for all you wine lovers out there. The setting is a winery—actually two adjoining wineries—and the plot is a murder mystery. I enjoyed the story, the wine information, and the writing. The author is a certified wine specialist and a former television writer. This is her first novel, and she is planning a series of “wine” novels. I say, “Go for it.”

The Wedding Tree (Robin Wells, 2015). *Wedding Tree*, Louisiana, presents the essence of small-town living—friendly people who know everything that goes on within its borders. Hope Stevens arrives there to help her grandmother, Adelaide, sort through all of her “stuff” before moving to assisted living. Hope also plans to sort out her own life, correct past mistakes, and decide her next step. However, Adelaide’s belongings reveal a past full of terrible secrets. Can Hope help Adelaide uncover the truth before it’s too late? I don’t usually like a lot of detail in novels, but this time I was captivated! The characters are sympathetic and believable, and the plot is full of surprises. Two items jumped out at me: “Get rid of the dead weight that’s got you snagged—pack it in a suitcase and send it on its way.” And, “Love isn’t something you run out of—the more you give, the more you have to give.” Altogether, a lovely book.

Deadline (John Sandford, 2014). Want a thriller that will keep you up all night? Try this one. Along the Mississippi River, a local school board meets in closed session for personnel issues. Issues? They vote to authorize the killing of a local reporter! Nearby, Virgil Flowers, from the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, is checking out a dognapping—a team of “nappers” supplying dogs to medical labs—when he gets a call. A body has been found; the victim ... a local reporter. Okay, put it together, and enjoy it!

Private Vegas (James Patterson and Maxine Paetro, 2015). The latest in Patterson’s “Private” series (all written “with” a variety of other authors) did not hold my attention. I read 143 pages before finally giving up. There are too many plot lines flipping over one another, which made for confusion and, ultimately, boredom.

Taken (Dee Henderson, 2015). This author was new to me, though she’s written a bunch of novels. Published by Bethany House, the book is Christian fiction, but it is in no way “preachy,” just good, clean reading. There is a crime to be solved, and it will keep you guessing. Shannon Bliss is abducted at age 17, and 11 years later she escapes. Along with a private investigator, Shannon sets out to find her traveling abductors before they find her.

FICTION AND NONFICTION NEWS
FROM JANET LITHERLAND



I love to hear from my readers!

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Needing some inspiration, I recently re-read a very special memoir, which I first reviewed in the October 2006 issue of *Bookmark*. It's every bit as inspiring today as it was 10 years ago. Here is my original review with just a couple of updates:

My taste in music is as eclectic as my taste in books—from classical to country, from Elton John to Kenny G, and anything by the Irish Tenors—which brings me to a wonderful book, a memoir by Ronan Tynan, an amazing person who is one of the original Irish Tenors. *Halfway Home* is entertaining and inspiring. Each decade of Tynan's life represents a challenge, some forced upon him, some chosen. As a child born with deformed legs, he was determined to ride horses in competition. After his legs were amputated below the knees at age 20, he donned prostheses, running and jumping horses, winning 18 gold medals and setting 14 world records in the Paralympic Games. Meantime he graduated college and became a medical doctor specializing in orthopedic sports injuries. Though he always loved to sing, he didn't begin studying voice until age 32 (He's 56 now). His musical success in Europe was immediate and phenomenal. In this country, he is best known as one of the Irish Tenors trio, along with Anthony Kearns and Finbar Wright. From a small farm in an Irish village to award-winning disabled athlete, to medical doctor to world-renowned singer, Ronan Tynan's story is worth reading. He tells it simply and with humor. Photos included. The hidden message: **Don't ever give up!**

Language

One of my favorite weathermen has a favorite word—he uses it often—*albeit*. Can't say that I ever use it; maybe that's why it sticks out every time he says it. "The upward change in temperature is welcome, albeit still a little on the cold side." (I prefer *although*.)

Do you ever confuse these two words?

Empathize: To identify with another's feelings or situation—having been there.

Sympathize: To express compassion.

Ever hear of a flibbertigibbet? Yes? Ever *been* one? (I sure hope not.)

Last issue I asked if anyone knew a word that rhymes with purple. Well, a clever friend came up with this: "Not sure if it's a word, but it should be—Burple. Definition: When Barney the Dinosaur belches!" Here's another one to ponder. Orange. Can you "rhyme" it?

A good one from the AARP Bulletin: What's the difference between ignorance and apathy? I don't know and I don't care.

Read back issues of *Bookmark* online at: www.janetlitherland.com/newsletter.htm



Bookmark
Janet's Book News

Janet's Ratings: Scaled 1 - 5 ★=OK, ★★★★★=Fantastic!

The Escape (David Baldacci, 2014) ★★★★★

The Burning Room (Michael Connelly, 2014) ★★★★★

Wesley the Owl (Stacey O'Brien, 2009) ★★★★★

Janet Litherland, author of 10 nonfiction books and eight novels, also is editor emeritus and former owner of Write Choice Services, Inc., a book-development company that aspiring authors can find at: www.writechoiceservices.com.