

# BOOKMARK



*Fiction and Nonfiction News from Janet Litherland*

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## Potpourri

Yes, we had a winner in last quarter's "Name the Structure" contest! Wynn Datillio of Tallahassee, FL, received a signed copy of *Vanished*. I should have told you there could be two possible winners—one each, e-mail and US Post Office (by postmark). As it was, all responses came via e-mail and Ms. Datillio was first. The correct answer: **London Bridge**, shipped from England and reconstructed piece by piece **at Lake Havasu, Arizona**, from 1968 to 1971. Originally built in 1831, the bridge, by the early 1960s, was gradually sinking into the River Thames. It was rescued at auction by Robert McCulloch for \$2,460,000.

We had some interesting "guesses":

Arlington Memorial Bridge, Wash. DC  
Bridge of Lions, St. Augustine, FL  
Westminster Bridge, London  
Pakenham Bridge, Ontario, Canada  
and, "over the Mississippi River somewhere in Minnesota"!

Now try your luck with the structure below. Remember, there can be *two* winners (e-mail and US Post Office). First to respond correctly will receive a signed copy of one of my books, my choice.



**All of Janet's books  
are available at:**

Amazon.com  
BarnesAndNoble.com  
BooksAMillion.com

## Reviews

**L.A. Outlaws** (T. Jefferson Parker, 2008). This author comes up with quirky plots, something I enjoy. I've only read two of his 15 books—this one about a female elementary schoolteacher who has another life as an infamous car thief and robber (she poses, masked, for photos and videos), and *Silent Joe* (2003) about a quiet sheriff's deputy with a disfigured face, a man with determination and skill for uncovering political secrets. The characters in both books are complex and compelling. I'll be reading more of Parker's work.

**The Last Valentine** (James Michael Pratt, 1998). Written 10 years ago, this love story (fiction) will be a Hallmark Hall of Fame special and CBS Movie-of-the-Week in February 2009. It's reminiscent of Robert James Waller's *The Bridges of Madison County* and Nicholas Sparks' *The Notebook*, though not as compelling. I can't say I was enthralled with it all the way through, but I *can* say that I shed real tears at the end.

**The First Victim** (Ridley Pearson, 1999). I found this one at a used-book sale and bought it because I had read four other Pearson books, which I liked very much: *The Angel Maker* (1993), *No Witnesses* (1994), *The Pied Piper* (1999), and *Parallel Lies* (2001). *The First Victim* was not a keeper. I stayed with it because I like Pearson's work, but I confess to skim-reading most of this one.

**The Genius** (Jesse Kellerman, 2008). This author is the son of Jonathan Kellerman, who writes psychological thrillers I really like, and Faye Kellerman, who writes novels I really don't like. *The Genius* is young Kellerman's third novel and the first of his I've read. It's *very* chatty, often confusing, sometimes boring. The premise (paintings that depict real, cold-case crimes surface unexpectedly) is exciting—if you can wait until page 60 for the excitement to start.

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Well, I said I wouldn't read it, but then I did anyway—'*Tis*, the second installment in Frank McCourt's trilogy of memoirs. I loved his Pulitzer Prize-winning *Angela's Ashes* and said the story ought to end there; I still think so. '*Tis* is both interesting and tedious. Interesting to learn how an immigrant boy who never finished high school became a respected high school teacher; tedious because of the repetitious rambling. However, I do recommend this book (and probably the third installment, *Teacher Man*) to teachers, because McCourt offers them much to ponder. I, personally, won't be reading *Teacher Man*. I mean it this time. I think.

Someone asked me if I really read all of the books I review in *Bookmark*. Unless otherwise stated (as I'm about to do in the next sentence), absolutely! Two *Bookmark* readers have highly recommended the following books, which I have not yet had time to read: **The Manhunt** by James L. Swanson (a novel based on the hunt for John Wilkes Booth, Lincoln's assassin) and **Loving Frank** by Nancy Horan (a novel about the love life of architect Frank Lloyd Wright). Will you read them before I do?

## More About Words and Language

FICTION AND NONFICTION NEWS FROM  
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I love to hear from my readers!

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One of the best (and funniest!) books about punctuation is *Eats Shoots & Leaves* by Lynne Truss (2003). Even the title is a play on words: There's a bear on the cover. Does he eat (swallow) "shoots" (new plant growth) and leaves (from the tree)? Or is it that he eats (something), shoots (someone) and leaves (the premises)? This book will teach you the rules and keep you laughing while learning. However, there is a caution: Truss is British and the book was first published in Great Britain. Therefore, her spellings (such as *authorisation*) and placement of commas outside quotation marks reflect the British style. Enjoy, but remember where you live.

A couple of years ago I saw this humorous list of language-usage "rules" on the Internet, author unknown. (Parentheses are mine.)

- ◇ Verbs HAS to agree with their subjects!
- ◇ Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
- ◇ And don't start a sentence with a conjunction. (But I often do!)
- ◇ Be more or less specific.
- ◇ It is wrong to ever split an infinitive.
- ◇ Kill all exclamation points!!!!
- ◇ No sentence fragments. (Except for dramatic emphasis!)
- ◇ Use the apostrophe in it's proper place.
- ◇ Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement.

More pet peeves from readers of *Bookmark*: Orientated (should be oriented); irregardless (regardless); preventative (preventive); and two mispronunciations: mischeevicious for mischievicious, and formidable for formidable. And may I remind you of another one: It's nuclear, not nucular!

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### Author/Book/Movie: Anne Perry

Anne Perry is one of my favorite authors. I own 40 of her books—the Thomas & Charlotte Pitt series and the William Monk series, all Victorian murder mysteries. She also recently began a WWI series, but that doesn't interest me. She is prolific. To illustrate—she and I both began writing/publishing 30 years ago; I have 13 books in print; she has 60. (To be fair to me, I raised a family during those years and she never married.) In her latest "Pitt" book, *Buckingham Palace Gardens* (2008), the mutilated body of a prostitute is found among the queen's sheets in a palace linen closet. To solve the crime and keep it quiet (while maintaining the Victorian sense of propriety) takes all of the skill and patience the Pitts can muster. *Heavenly Creatures* (1994) is a movie based on a true-life crime, and Anne Perry (born Juliet Hulme) is one of the criminals; the other is Pauline Parker. Last month I saw the film for the first time and was both appalled and fascinated. It is the story of two intelligent teenage girls who create a fantasy world together and can't separate it from reality. After two years, their families forbid them to see each other and take steps to keep them apart. To prevent separation, the girls murder Pauline's mother. Juliet and Pauline were tried and convicted in 1954. As 15-year-olds, too young for the death penalty under New Zealand law at that time, they were "detained at Her Majesty's pleasure" and released separately five years later with the condition that they never meet or contact each other again. The movie focuses on the girls, rather than on the murder and trial. Says director Peter Jackson (*Lord of the Rings*), "It was our intention to make a film about a friendship that went terribly wrong." After the movie was released, a journalist tracked down Juliet Hulme and found her living in Scotland as novelist Anne Perry. Pauline Parker was discovered in 1997, living quietly on a farm in England. According to Anne Perry, in a 2002 interview with Ian Rankin for UK TV, the girls never saw each other after the trial.



**Bookmark**  
Janet's Book News

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

*Island of Lost Girls* (Jennifer McMahon, 2008) ★★

*Invitation to Provence* (Elizabeth Adler, 2004) ★★★

*Miss Julia Speaks Her Mind* (Ann B. Ross, 1999) ★★★★★

**Janet Litherland**, author of 10 nonfiction books and three novels, also is editor emeritus and former owner of Write-Choice Services, Inc., a book-development company that aspiring authors can find at: [www.write-choiceservices.com](http://www.write-choiceservices.com).