

# BOOKMARK



## *Fiction and Nonfiction News from Janet Litherland*

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### REVIEWS

#### Potpourri

Here in our South Georgia/North Florida area, “Hurricane Irma” occupied our thoughts and lived in our prayers during the first part of September. After seeing the destruction that “Harvey” caused on the Gulf coast of Texas, we were more than wary—we were scared! However, when it was all over, we were relieved to see just minimal damage, mostly downed trees/branches and power outages. We are thankful and blessed!

There are many wonderful things to savor in the area of South Georgia where I live. Imagine these opportunities within the space of one month: A live performance of *The Music Man* at the Opera House; a live performance of *The Fantastics* at our “little theater”; also, a program of 1970s music, and a program of chamber music both sponsored by the local university. Wow! Heaven on Earth!

Another good report: The Keenagers from my church went on a 5-day trip to the Smoky Mountains, which included visits to Lake Junaluska, Gatlinburg, Pigeon Forge, Dolly’s Factory Store, and the Great Smoky Mountain Train Ride—wonderful scenery!

Again, we are thankful and blessed!

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

Amazon.com  
and other online stores.

*“If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need.”*

*Marcus Tullius Cicero*

***Matchup*** (International Thriller Writers, 2017). This is an anthology “matching up” some of the world’s best writers and their popular characters to create 11 stories—all thrillers! Edited by Lee Child, among the mix are Lisa Scottoline & Nelson DeMille, Diana Gabaldon & Steve Berry, Kathy Reichs & Lee Child and others. Each story runs about 150 pages. I enjoyed them all, and the short length appealed to me.

***The Dolls*** (James Patterson with Kecia Bal, 2017). Now here’s a story I did NOT enjoy. It’s one of Patterson’s “Book Shots,” very small stand-alone books. The 132-page plot was weird, confusing, and ugly. I’ve enjoyed some of his other Book Shots, but I don’t recommend this one.

***Reader’s Digest*** (September 2017). What? She’s reviewing a MAGAZINE?? Yes, because this particular issue was a wonderful surprise! If you didn’t see it, try to find a copy, maybe at the library. It’s all about “Secrets to a Sharper Mind,” including word power, words and phrases, words from World War II, and “Confessions of a Word Nerd.” Being a word nerd myself, I really enjoyed it! (I bought the large-print edition—easier for these old eyes to read!)

***Spare Change*** (Robert B. Parker, 2007). This prolific author writes 3 series novels: The Spenser novels, the Jesse Stone novels, and the Sunny Randall novels, plus several stand-alones. In this one, Sunny Randall, a private detective, assists her father in tracking down a serial killer who has been hiding for 30 years. Phil Randall was the cop who headed the original task force. Now that the killer is at it again, he’s been dubbed “Spare Change,” because he always scatters loose coins beside his victims, as he did 30 years ago. This story kept my attention.

***A Gathering Place*** (Thomas Kinkade & Katherine Spencer, 2003). I was intrigued that Thomas Kinkade, the “painter of light” had written a novel, so I wanted to like it. But I didn’t. In the New England village of Cape Light, people are good to one another, are helpful and considerate. The story is about love—lots of it. The plot is confusing and there are too many characters. Can’t recommend it.

***Camino Island*** (John Grisham, 2017). The plot sounded intriguing—recovering F. Scott Fitzgerald manuscripts that were stolen from Princeton University. However, reading this novel was like wading through mud. Hard to believe that Grisham actually wrote it.

## Rules, Rules, Rules!

FICTION AND NONFICTION NEWS  
FROM JANET LITHERLAND



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readers!*

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Remember the old spelling rule, “*i* before *e* except after *c*, or when sounded as *a*, as in neighbor and weigh”? Turns out, this rule is REALLY old, first appearing in 1866 in *Manual of English Spelling* by James Stuart Laurie (Lesson 176). Of course, we know that the *a* part of the rule is not the only exception—our favorite morning drink contains *caffeine*. Here is an interesting collection of *i/e* words from Chris Brecheen’s “Writing About Writing” Facebook page:

“*I* before *e* except when your foreign neighbor,  
Keith, receives eight counterfeit beige sleighs  
from feisty caffeinated weightlifters. Weird.”

Remember this: a hyphen (-) joins; a dash (—) separates.

**Hyphens.** John Benbow in *Manuscript and Proof* (the stylebook of Oxford University Press) says, “If you take hyphens seriously, you will surely go mad.” No kidding! I go mad looking at different editions of Melville’s famous whale novel. Some title it *Moby Dick*; some title it *Moby-Dick*. Which is correct? Either? Both? Did you know that the name Moby Dick was inspired by Mocha Dick, a real whale who appears in Melville’s *White Jacket* (or *White-Jacket*, if you prefer)? Apparently, Melville’s brother, Allan, added the hyphen when he submitted the book to a British publisher. In America, the Northwestern-Newberry editors kept the hyphen, claiming that hyphenated titles were conventional in mid-nineteenth-century America. The conclusion: *Moby-Dick* refers to the book; *Moby Dick* to the whale. [from *Between You & Me, Confessions of a Comma Queen*, by Mary Norris] Hmmm....

## Language

Here are some of my pronunciation bugs:

In talking about computer DATA and other types of data, do you pronounce the A as in DAY? Or do you say the A as in DAD? Actually, the long A, as in DAY is preferred.

Now, let’s go to the theater. It’s a thea-ter. THEE-aay-ter is not even an option. Note: In the USA, it’s spelled theater. Theatre is British! The Brits also spell center (the middle of things) centre.

He plays the piano. He’s a pianist. Preferred pronunciation is: pe-AN-ist, not PE-a-nist. Surprised? That one has always made sense to me!

Forgive me if I mentioned this one in a previous newsletter, but here ’tis: Preventive is preferred over preventative. We don’t need that extra syllable in our preventive medicine!

**Read back issues of *Bookmark* online at: [www.janetlitherland.com/newsletter.htm](http://www.janetlitherland.com/newsletter.htm)**



**Bookmark**  
Janet’s Book News

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

*The Shadow of Your Smile* (Mary Higgins Clark, 2010) ★★★

*No Middle Name* (Lee Child, 2017) ★★★ (Short stories starring Jack Reacher)

*The Pecan Man* (Cassie Dandridge Selleck, 2012) ★★★★★

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](http://www.writechoiceservices.com).