



BookMarks!

You've got to read this!

Volume 2, Issue 3

October 27, 2006

Quick Picks

BookMarks Check List

Books I want to read:

The Ruins ****

The Road ***

An Ordinary Man ****

A Student of Living Things ***

Nighttime is My Time ***

Strange Piece of Paradise ****

Angel Falls ***

Tiger Force: A True Story of Man and War ***

Saving Fish from Drowning ***

Ratings Scale

* - Please, not the thumbscrews!

** - The pain is bearable.

*** - The monster isn't too creepy and I am armed.

**** - I am out running the slow-moving, homicidal maniac and haven't even tripped!

Bloodcurdling, Mind-numbing Fear

As Mel Brooks said in his humor masterpiece *History of the World Part I*, "It's good to be the king." He's right - it IS good to be the king (or queen, of course) of anything and each area, whether film, fiction writing, or horror, has it's own ruler. No one will dispute that Buffy is Queen of all Vampire Slayers. And it's true that Stephen Hawking is a King of AstroPhysics. I will argue that Stephen King is not only a literal King, but is also THE King of Horror for the modern age. I will allow that there are classic works from earlier kings of horror, but Stephen is it for the modern era. He changed the whole genre and his influence can be felt in film and television as well. Even other masters of modern horror list King as an influence whose level of skill/creepiness/gore they desire to achieve. Stevie King writes stories that make you scared to keep reading. I love that and so do millions of his fans. Who is your King or Queen of Horror? Maybe it's Stephen King, too. What about a ruler of creepiness or spine-tingling mystery? Who is it that really knows how to scare you or just make you really nervous and anxious? Maybe you will find a new author or book today that will give you those scary thrills and chills. Keep reading to see what new fright you may discover! - Gena Craig



It's good to be the King, baby!

Image accessed at www.fantasticfiction.co.uk/images/0/1609.jpg on 10/19/06.



BookMarks: The Scary Edition

Join us for scary stories and treats at [CPCCLibraries' BookMarks](#) event from 12:30 - 1:30 p.m., Friday, October 27, in LRC 404.

If you love books and are always in search of the next great read, you will want to attend this gathering. BookMarks isn't a book club, but rather an easy and fun way to get lots of book recommendations from your fellow booklovers.

Come and hear scary tells of mystery and horror and delight in some great book reviews . Drinks and desserts will be provided. Sign up for BookMarks in LearnerWeb for professional development credit.

The Ruins



by Scott Smith

Fair warning: This is the book that scared the "bejabbers" out of Stephen King. It's been 13 years since Scott Smith's first novel, *A Simple Plan* (you might remember the film version; his screenplay earned an Oscar nod) hit the shelves, and, for fans of suspense, *The Ruins* is well worth the wait. Smith's tense, tightly-woven story features four college friends, Jeff and Amy, Stacy and Eric, who befriend Matthias, a German tourist, and a young Greek vacationer known only as Pablo, during their post-college Cancun vacation. The four Americans and Pablo join Matthias on a trip into the Mexican jungle to find his missing brother, who has run off to the site of some Mayan ruins after meeting a beautiful archaeologist. They find the ruins and the missing brother, but nothing at the site is how they hoped or what it first seems. Slowly, Smith begins to reveal the horrifying truth about the ruins and the seemingly innocuous vine that dominates the landscape. As the friends begin to realize the danger that they are in and the true nature of the menace that surrounds them, a terrifying reality begins to set in, and relationships begin to break down as mere adventure turns into a struggle to simply survive. With no chapter breaks, *The Ruins* has been called "one long, screaming close-up of horror." It also means that you just can't put this book down. You'll keep turning the pages to see how the vine evolves (seriously, this is one creepy, creepy plant) and if there's any hope at all for the characters' survival. King also wrote that "*The Ruins* is going to be America's literary shock-show this summer, doing for vacations in Mexico what *Jaws* did for beach weekends on Long Island." Consider yourself warned.

—Jennifer Arnold

Strange Piece of Paradise

Angel Falls

by Terri Jentz

This book is true - 542 pages of sheer captivation. Jentz, a Yale college student, and her roommate are cycling out west in the summer of 1977. Their trip is cut short when a truck runs over their tent as they lie sleeping. The driver begins attacking them with an axe. The girls survive but the attacker is never found. Fifteen years later, Jentz sets out to find who did this. The book chronicles eight years of her trips to Oregon and countless interviews. Called a "memoir, detective story, travelogue, time capsule and horror movie come to life" by author James Wolcott, this book is highly recommended.

—Carolyn Pence

by Nora Roberts

According to the book jacket, Nora Roberts has written over 150 novels. I think this is one of her best in recent times. Reece Gilmore, the only survivor of a mass murder in Boston, ventures cross-country to try to come to terms with her past, and stops temporarily in Angel's Fist, Wyoming. She finds a job and a place to stay, and begins to settle into the small town life of the Fist. If you're from a small town, you'll recognize the people in this book. Everyone knows everybody else's business, but they are a caring community and take Reece in as one of them. Life is beginning to be easier. Her nightmares are fewer, her paranoia lessened, and her life is becoming more normal until one day, when she decides to hike one of the near-by mountain trails. While resting on a promontory overlooking the Snake River, she sees a man and woman arguing down below her, on the other side of the river. Then the man is on top of the woman and strangling her until she stops moving. However, no body is found. The only person who seems unequivocally to believe she has witnessed a murder is a surly loner named Brody, who is a novelist and somewhat of an odd-ball himself, as far as the natives are concerned. There is romance, intrigue, and mystery throughout the 439 pages of this book. Don't let the length daunt you; I couldn't put it down, and finished in three days. You'll like all the characters, and will be cheering for Reece and Brody as they realize, even if no one else does, that someone wants Reece gone from Angel's Fist. I did guess the murderer, but only at the very end, just before it was revealed. That didn't take away from the satisfaction of a really good read.

—Sallie Jenkins

Nighttime is My Time

by Mary Higgins Clark

Nighttime Is My Time revolves around the presents and pasts of ten old classmates and friends. Each has a claim to fame; successful business people, Hollywood starlets gone wrong, and some are curiously wealthy. All are quirky and unpredictable except the main character who acts like Tabitha Stevens in 'Murder She Wrote,' lurking around and suspecting this and that. However, several people act very suspicious and, with several murders and no assailant, everyone is beginning to look like the antagonist, "The Owl." "The Owl" is, without a doubt, someone from the reunion class, but no one knows who or why he/she keeps murdering former classmates. All the murders happen at night, because as "The Owl" says, "Nighttime Is My Time."—**Julie Chandler**

A Student of Living Things

by Susan Richard Shreve

Claire, the student of the title, has been entranced with biology since an early age. Hence a bedroom filled with items such as a kitten in formaldehyde, a dead bat, and various skewered insects as well as live mice and a snake. That's a creepy place to sleep. Her world changes when her brother is fatally shot on the steps of the university library. The family unravels, and Claire must stop studying bugs to become a student of humans. Some of them are creepy too. It's a mystery and a sort of love story; *Library Journal* calls it "a dark and fog-shrouded tale." The novel has a post 9/11 setting, but that is only tangential to the plot. At only 256 pages, it is a quick read. I just kept thinking Claire should have studied people a little earlier in her life; her naivety is dangerous.

—**Elaine Kushmaul**

Saving Fish From Drowning

by Amy Tan

I have resisted reading Amy Tan for a long time because the titles of her previous books struck me as Chinatown English, intentionally "cute" to appeal to the western palate. Recently, a friend with a reliable taste in reading made me a gift of Tan's newest book, so I read it. How wrong I have been! Tan is a wonderful writer: skillful, delightful, humorous, with the observant eye of a good novelist. This is a comic novel about a group of American tourists kidnapped by Karen tribesmen in the jungles of Burma, with close-ups of tourist behaviors or misbehaviors (fascinating how clueless they can be of the dangers they put themselves into in a foreign country!) But there is also a sobering undercurrent of the horrors of a military dictatorship, and the tragic situation of "lost" tribes in a modern society. This is fast and enjoyable reading, and for me, definitely a lead to more readings of her books.—**Vicky Tsai**

An Ordinary Man

by Paul Rusesabagina

An Ordinary Man is a horror story. It is a tale of the slashings and hackings and murders of ordinary people by their neighbors, friends, bosses and colleagues. What prompts such atrocities? Could it happen to you? Paul Rusesabagina tells us that it can because he saw it happen to his family and neighbors and friends in Rwanda in 1994. This riveting audio book covers about 7 hours of listening, good for a long road trip. You will be profoundly affected by the passion of both the story and the storyteller and more disturbed by the mindless inhumanity than all the Jason Voorhees and Freddy Kruger movies combined.

- **Margie Orell**



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The Road

by Cormac McCarthy

Cormac McCarthy, best known for his Border Trilogy (you'll remember the film version of *All the Pretty Horses*), has written what critics are calling perhaps the definitive post-apocalyptic novel. *The Road* chronicles the desperate journey of a father and son as they move south through an (apparently) nuclear-ravaged United States (the apocalypse is described as a "long shear of light and then a series of low concussions" - it's the constant ash, dead trees and animals, burnt cities, and lack of sunlight that lead the reader to the nuclear conclusion). The father is determined to do whatever it takes to keep his son (born after the disaster) alive. Forced to scavenge for food and fight off dangerous cults of cannibalistic survivors, the unnamed father struggles not only to survive, but to keep his son convinced that they are the "good guys." It's the father's love for his son and his desire to keep a sense of goodness and humanity alive in the young boy that make this novel so compelling. *The Road* is written rather sparsely and mostly in short sentences and paragraphs, and I admit it was a bit hard to get into at the beginning, but it's worth sticking through, particularly for the end. As author Dennis Lehane said in his review, "the final affirmation of hope in the novel's closing pages is all the more shocking and maybe all the more enduring as the boy takes all of his father's (and McCarthy's) rage at the hopeless folly of man and lays it down, lifting up, in its place, the oddest of all things: faith."

- Jennifer Arnold

Tiger Force: A True Story of Men and War

By Michael Salleh and Mitch Weiss

No army is on a mission of mercy. An army goes into the field to destroy. That's what it does. But some Americans are surprised to learn that American soldiers can turn into cold-blooded, heartless killers. Authors Michael Salleh and Mitch Weiss show how adversity and poor leadership can turn good soldiers into savage murderers. It happened in Vietnam; it's happening now in Iraq. I started reading *Tiger Force* at Chapter 20, where the criminal investigation begins. I recommend doing that. Chapter 20 is where Gustav Apsey, an Austrian-born U.S. Army officer, is assigned to investigate what the Army calls the "Coy Allegation." Apsey doggedly pursues the case. The detective story is fascinating. When you've read to the end, then start on the Introduction and Chapter 1. This is one book that will never become a major motion picture. It's about the brutality and horror of war, about American soldiers murdering hundreds of Vietnamese civilians. It's a very disturbing book that evokes shame and disgust. Still, you ought to read it. —**Bill Perkins**