



BookMarks!

You've got to read this!

Volume 4, Issue 1

April 18, 2008

Quick Picks

BookMarks Check List

Books I want to read:

*The Bridge of San Luis Rey*****

*The Island of Dr. Moreau*****

*Mrs. Dalloway*****

*Jude the Obscure***

*Othello*****

*Taming of the Shrew*****

*Anthem****

*Sense and Sensibility****

*The Fountainhead****

*Pride and Prejudice*****

Ratings Scale

- * - I would rather dive head first into an empty pool.
- ** - The equivalent of having a bird poop on your head.
- *** - Just like the sweet smell of fresh spring flowers.
- **** - As good as having unlimited days to sit in your favorite place reading!

Celebrating the Classics

Who doesn't remember the torture of being assigned an excruciating work like *Heart of Darkness* or *Billy Budd* in high school or college? Maybe some bad memories go all the way back to junior high (or middle school or whatever it was called for you). But there were some books among those hated ones that you discovered you loved and now hold the honor of being among your favorites. Through "forced reading," I learned to love anything Shakespeare, *Jane Eyre*, and *Frankenstein*.

What do you love? In this issue of BookMarks, we are celebrating the often maligned and much hated classics. So sit back, relax, and read through some reviews of books people have come to love even when so many others hate them. And just to show we're fair, we may even spend some time discussing books that, no matter how hard you've tried, you still hate them. It's the joy of the classics. Join us for the adventure!- Gena Craig



**Books that stayed books—
could another title be Books
Hollywood Hates?**

BookMarks:

The "Classics" Event

Join us to share your love of reading at [CPC Libraries' BookMarks](#) event from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m., Friday, April 18, in LRC 404.

If you love books and are always in search of the next great read, you will want to attend. We will be sharing about our favorite (or not so favorite) classics from many genres.

BookMarks isn't a book club, but rather an easy and fun way to get lots of book recommendations from your fellow booklovers.

Enjoy an atmosphere of fun and get some great book reviews . Drinks and snacks will be provided. Sign up for BookMarks in LearnerWeb for professional development credit.

The Island of Doctor Moreau

by H.G. Wells

If animal experimentation burns you up, then this novel will certainly keep your anger stirring (or just creep you out). Doctor Moreau, who was kicked out of England for his questionable experimentations there, has now set up shop on a mysterious island located somewhere in some ocean. Edward Prendick, by fortune or misfortune, is saved from a shipwreck and ends up on Doctor Moreau's island. To his horror, he learns that Moreau's experiments involve turning animals into humans (or some blend of multiple animals and humans). As time progresses, Edward begins to remember stories of the infamous Moreau and learns more about his work on the island. To control these animal hybrids, Moreau has given them a series of prohibitions (no meat eating, no sucking up of drink, no walking on all fours, etc.) and he has placed in their minds a sense of himself as a deity. The "manimals," in their attempt at humanity, consider the prohibitions their law and Moreau their god. Does this all work to order? Of course not, and Moreau releases the more disappointing creations into the jungle to make do for themselves. Nothing good can come from that as Moreau has discovered early on that uncontrolled hybrids quickly revert to their animalistic behaviors. The rest of the novel deals with the breakdown of Moreau's world as the castoffs strive to find some form of society. Destruction and death follows. But whose death? Does Edward escape? Does Moreau? Find out for yourself. At around 150 pages (depending on the publisher and what extras are included), this is a quick and fascinating read.—*Gena Craig, Library Services*

Mrs. Dalloway

By Virginia Woolf

Often described as one of the classic "modern" novels, Mrs. Dalloway is possibly Virginia Woolf's most critically acclaimed work. The story focuses on Clarissa Dalloway's preparation for a party she is giving, beginning with one of the most famous opening lines in literature: "Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself." The everyday event of Mrs. Dalloway's party preparations, though, reveal much about herself and her life, juxtaposed as they are to the story of Septimus Warren Smith, a shell-shocked World War I veteran whose life and death collide in profound ways with Clarissa Dalloway's. Unlike James Joyce and some of her fellow modernists, Woolf's novel is entirely readable and, while slim, still packs quite a memorable punch. As E.M. Forster, one of Woolf's contemporaries and another of my favorites, famously said of her: "she pushed the light of the English language a little further against the darkness. If you enjoy Mrs. Dalloway, give to the Lighthouse a try - not quite as famous as Mrs. Dalloway, but perhaps my favorite Woolf novel.—*Jennifer Arnold, Library Services*



The Bridge of San Luis Rey

by Thornton Wilder

The Bridge of San Luis Rey is a small book that creates a large impact. If you want to read a classic without picking up a book too heavy to carry around, this might be it. The Perennial Classics edition is just 133 pages. The premise surrounds one of those seemingly random events-like the tree that fell recently on East Blvd-in this case the collapse of a bridge. Five people die. But, was it random? What was it about these five people that caused them to be the victims? The reader follows a monk, Brother Juniper, to try to determine was it the will of God? Generates great discussion, if you need a pick for a book club.—*Elaine Kushmaul, Library Services*



Pride and Prejudice

by Jane Austen

This is my second time reading this book, and I enjoyed it much, much more this time around. I just love Elizabeth Bennet. She's a wonderfully written heroine, and she holds up remarkably well, even 200 years later. Every young woman would love to be as spunky, thoughtful, self-possessed and romantic as Elizabeth. She and Darcy are a classic case of two characters perfect for each other, if only they could get out of their own way! And Austen makes their obstacles to getting together reasonable, relatable, and understandable. Who hasn't made snap judgments of another person's character, only to be proved wrong? Who hasn't been misunderstood because they are anxious in social settings, or when meeting new people? I'm not sure how much my enjoyment of this novel is influenced by my love of the various *Pride and Prejudice* films, but I found it just charming. And Austen is surprisingly funny—I'm looking forward to the rest of her novels! - *Erin Payton, Library Services*

JUDE THE OBSCURE

by Thomas Hardy



Does anyone really care about Jude? I was forced to read this book in college and hated it. It's not because I was forced, either. I was forced to read Jane Eyre and I loved it. Hardy's novel about a stonemason, Jude, who longs to be a scholar and attend college started out okay, but he has a series of

"problems" that alter his course. Supposedly, he's tricked into marrying the superficial Arabella which ends in divorce and then later he falls in love with his cousin Sue and they have some kids. All of this, of course, sidetracks him and things become mopey and difficult. I kept wanting to shake him hard and tell him to snap out of it. If he had had a little discipline and made better choices, he might have had the life he wanted. When he finds out that he has a son from his first marriage, he takes him in, too, and the boy does a tragic thing that breaks up the family. So you'd think that Jude would say, "I will recover and use this opportunity to change my life." Not Jude! He goes right back to Arabella. Talk about a glutton for punishment. I had no connection with these characters and got really tired of their sad-sack lives. At around 340 pages, this is a miserable, depressing novel that seems even longer than it is. You will think that the end will never come.—**Gena Craig, Library Services**

Taming of the Shrew

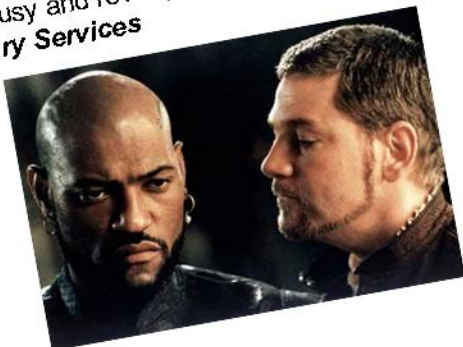
By William Shakespeare

I know as a quiet feminist I shouldn't admit this but Taming of the Shrew is my favorite comedy by Shakespeare. Petruchio is a male chauvinist pig of vast proportions. Katherina does have some anger issues. But they are honest about who they are and how they present themselves to the world. Lucentio really doesn't have a clue what he is getting himself into. Bianca gives the impression of the ideal humble maid of beauty and sweetness, but that isn't the real deal. She presented a picture in order to lure someone into marriage. Petruchio and Katherina will continue to have bumps along the road but theirs is a true marriage.—**Anne Egger, Library Services**

OTHELLO

by William Shakespeare

My mother and I have the same argument about once a year. She loves Hamlet and I love Othello. She believes Hamlet is Shakespeare's best tragedy. I disagree. I think Hamlet is a spoiled whiney brat and I don't care what happens to him. Othello to my mind is a true tragic figure like Creon in Antigone. I also feel Othello holds up better. The ideas of jealousy and revenge are universal themes.—**Anne Egger, Library Services**



Anthem

by Ayn Rand

Ayn Rand's classical touch on American literature has not failed to satisfy the appetite of modern-day society. In Rand's *Anthem*, an allegorical story resembling the governing ideas of communism and socialism, she portrays the life of a man in a community where everything and everyone is the SAME. Through the usage of simple words and phrases, Ayn Rand helps the reader envision what "true" equality means. In this short book, Rand's main character Equality embarks on a thrilling adventure to identify his inner-self. In order to do so, Equality must first realize what is preventing him from optimizing his personal growth and what has caused this hindrance. A deep and adventurous tale, *Anthem* is a must read. If the lack of difficult vocabulary does not attract you, then the critical and analytical organization of the book definitely will.—**Gary Li, Myers Park High School**



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Sense & Sensibility

by Jane Austen

When Ang Lee's version of the movie came out, which Emma Thompson wrote the screenplay for, I read that she said it was the most difficult Austen book to adapt. And I can see why. It was Austen's first novel, and it's quite densely written. There's not a lot of dialogue, so screenwriters had to make it up as they went along. The plot should be familiar to most: two sisters, both incredibly different in temperament, are forced to move to a small cottage when their father dies because he has left them with next to nothing. Austen clearly illustrates how women's lives (and men's to some extent) were dictated by money. What seems cold or calculating in Austen's world of matchmaking is simply upper society Brits trying to get by on what they are given financially. Family and society can take away what has been promised to someone basically at any time—which is a pretty scary thought in today's independent age. Overall I liked it, but some of the plot points seemed a little trite and unbelievable. However, Austen really knows how to paint her characters, and the "evil" ones, like Lucy Steele and the entire Ferrars family, save Edward, are so awesomely repulsive that it makes up for some of the plodding dialogue. When Austen hates her characters (and there are many in this story she can barely tolerate), she REALLY hates them—it's fantastic! *Pride and Prejudice*, her second novel, was definitely an improvement, but you can see the budding talents of Austen in this story.—Erin Payton, *Library Services*

The Fountainhead

by Ayn Rand

Rand is famous, or infamous, depending on your point of view for developing a philosophy called Objectivism, which has been used by some to defend capitalism in its most extreme forms. *The Fountainhead* was obviously written to help promote this philosophy and sometimes I had to wade through some pretty hokey ethical speeches, but overall I really enjoyed this story. Rand hints at a conspiracy early on and keeps the reader interested by revealing each of her character's motives slowly and methodically.

The novel is about how people define themselves and how each individual seeks his or her sense of self-worth. The two main characters are New York architects, Howard Roark and Peter Keating, who take completely different approaches to architecture and life. Roark is confident in his abilities and doesn't rely on others to assure him of his worth to the world, while Keating is constantly seeking reassurances from the world at large. Despite Keating's lack of talent, he's heralded as a great architect by a prominent critic and quickly rises to the top of the profession. People love Peter Keating and yet he is never happy with himself. He constantly compromises or abandons his personal goals in order to boost his standing with others. He pursues architecture, instead of painting, for his controlling mother. He leaves the love of his life to marry for prestige. Meanwhile, Roark can barely land a contract, but he never lets on that it bothers him. Roark doesn't seem fazed by anything life throws at him. He lives to design and create, but only if it's on his terms. He doesn't let clients give input on his designs. He asks their needs and requests that they let him handle the rest. He's pretty full of himself, but talented. From very early in the novel it seems that something sinister is afoot -- that the world is out to get Roark.

Will Keating continue his meteoric rise to the top despite his lack of talent? Will Roark get some respect, despite his lack of people skills? Whose architecture will reign philosophically supreme!?! I guess you'll have to read it to find out.—Steve Osler, *Library Services*