



BOOKMARK



Fiction and Nonfiction News from Janet Litherland

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Nonfiction Reviews

Potpourri

Last month I was invited to speak to an adult reading group at the Moultrie-Colquitt County Library in Moultrie, Georgia. The occasion was their summer reading program, “Novel Destinations,” which is more about settings and locations than plots. I discussed my travels and their influence on my novels, particularly visits to England (four of the novels), Wales (*Song of the Heart*) and, of course, Ireland (*Chain of Deception* and *The Long Road Home*). The organizers of the event did a great job, the attendees were delightful, and I had a wonderful time!

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This month (July 9) I’ll be taking part in a Book Fair at The Bookshelf in downtown Thomasville, Georgia. There will be several authors, lots of books, and plenty of good reading for all who attend. If you’re in the neighborhood, please join us!

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Janet Litherland’s books are available at:

Amazon.com
and other online stores.

This Life is in Your Hands: One Dream, Sixty Acres, and a Family Undone (Melissa Coleman, 2011). The title of this compelling memoir truly defines this family’s doomed journey. And it took less than 10 years. Two educated, married people who desperately wanted to be self-sustaining, chose 60 acres of isolated farmland in Maine to “go back to the land.” For a while it worked well. They lived like pioneers—no electricity, no plumbing, just hard physical labor. The author was their first-born child. But this was the late 1960s; and, within a short time like-minded folks were seeking them out and staying, eventually turning their peaceful farm into a hippie compound that ripped the family apart. In my opinion, it took courage, love and forgiveness for Coleman to write this account of her very difficult childhood, providing insight into the mind-set so prevalent during that period in our history.

Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived (Rob Bell, 2011). This is a book I will read again and again! It is truly an “Ode to Joy,” posing many questions and offering scripture-based answers that hold surprises, especially for those who think they know everything there is to know about the Bible. In the Preface, Bell says, “Much blood has been spilled in church splits...over issues that are, in the end, not that essential. Sometimes what we are witnessing is simply a massive exercise in missing the point.” You can’t possibly miss the points (plural) presented. I believe you’ll find this book enlightening and uplifting. I certainly did. *Love Wins* is a winner! Beautifully written, highly recommended.

The Man in the Rockefeller Suit (Mark Seal, 2011). This is the true story of Christian Gerhartsreiter, a German native who came to America at age 17 with questionable documents, posing as a foreign exchange student. Brilliant, and quick to learn languages and mimic accents, he easily changed identities, eventually “becoming” Clark Rockefeller, scion of a great American family. He married a wealthy, successful American woman and had a child—and no one knew who he really was! His deception lasted for 30 years, until the summer of 2008. If you pick up this book, you’ll find it nearly impossible to put down!

My Ireland

After four trips to Ireland, I have favorite places to recommend. Best of all is the unspoiled Dingle Peninsula (featured in my novel, *The Long Road Home*). There you’ll find beehive huts once inhabited by monks, and Gallarus Oratory, a tiny, one-room stone chapel built around 700 A.D. The island of Inis Mór (Inishmore) teems with history, good people, and good pubs. Don’t miss the picturesque village of Kinvarra with its ancient Dunguarie Castle, where you can have a fine medieval-style dinner with entertainment. Also see the Rock of Cashel, originally the palace of the kings of the province of Munster. When the 5th-century king was converted by St. Patrick, he turned his palace over to the church. Now it’s a well-tended, imposing, and interesting ruin. And, for pure enjoyment, visit the towns of Kenmare, Kinsale, and Killarney!

Fiction Reviews

FICTION AND NONFICTION NEWS FROM
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Room (Emma Donoghue, 2010). This novel was probably inspired by the true story of Josef Fritzl of Austria who imprisoned his daughter in a basement for 24 years, fathering 7 children with her. More recently in our country, Jaycee Dugard was kidnapped at age 11 and held captive for 18 years, bearing her captor three children. In **Room**, A fictitious 5-year-old boy lives in the backyard shed where he was born. He has never been outside. His mother was kidnapped at age 19 and has been locked in The Room for 7 years at the mercy of her captor/rapist. Because this story is told entirely by the child—with his limited knowledge and language skill—its horror recedes, and it becomes an endearing account of love, survival, escape, and learning to live on The Outside.

Now You See Her (Joy Fielding, 2011). I'm a huge fan of Joy Fielding's spooky books, but this one disappointed me, chiefly because of the way it's constructed. Rather than using the standard *italics* for "thoughts," and quotation marks for words spoken aloud, Fielding mixed them back and forth, leaving confusion in the wake of words. It was so distracting that I lost interest in the plot, though I did finish reading the book. Finally.

Ice Cold (Tess Gerritsen, 2010). This is my 10th Tess Gerritsen novel, though she has written more. Gerritsen is a physician-author, and her medical thrillers are topnotch! So good, that they've become a television crime series titled "Rizzoli and Isles." This one finds Isles, a forensic pathologist, marooned and presumed dead, in the snow-bound mountains of Wyoming; and her friend, Jane Rizzoli, a Boston police detective, is determined to prove that Isles is still alive. Exciting book, unexpected (excellent) ending!

Language: What's Bugging You?

The word *iconic* is beginning to annoy a friend in Pennsylvania. "It's everywhere!" she reports. Here are some recent sightings: Iconic look (clothing), iconic over-stuffed vehicle, Iconic moments, iconic career (describing a "rapper"). On the cover of *Budget Travel: Iconic America—45 Epic Destinations and How to Game Them*. (Game them?) CMT-TV claims that The Castle Recording Studio in Franklin, TN, is iconic. From The Today Show: "[Princess] Diana's dress is nothing short of iconic." During a televised golf tournament, a commentator called attention to "an iconic playing point." Huh? And, according to *People* magazine, 90210 is an iconic zip code!

I'm not fond of the word, *goodly*, as in "a goodly amount." There's nothing wrong with it. Just sounds creepy to me. Here's a new word for you, an excellent word: *Patronymic*. Look it up!

I like the word *topnotch*. Yes, that's the way it's spelled. Not top-notch; not top notch. Just funny-looking topnotch!

Want to translate a word or phrase either *to* or *from* another language? An excellent, easy-to-use website is:

www.Systranet.com/translate

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Bookmark
Janet's Book News

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

Turning Angel (Greg Iles, 2005) ★★★

Worth Dying For (Lee Child, 2010) ★★★★★

Stone Cold (David Baldacci, 2009) ★★★★★

Janet Litherland, author of 10 nonfiction books and five 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.