

January 2018

Fools and mortals

By Bernard Cornwell

Set in Elizabethan London - not a series. About Elizabethan theater and Shakespeare and his younger brother Richard. Due to some issues and problems with family he ends up in London with his brother who is now in charge of THE theatre. There was a crew of actors well known people. They ended up doing around 30 plays a year, and Shakespeare was one of the ones writing them. In this book he's written a wedding play - he wrote the absolutely perfect version of a midsummer nights dream. The brother has to try and figure out how to live in London with very little money so he became a bit of a thief. A lot of the book is describing what Victorian England was like. You get an extraordinarily accurate description of what the city looked like. The history is really really good.

The woman and the ape

By Peter Hoeg

Basically it's a love story between a woman and an ape. The characters are just marvelous. The story is so unexpected. It doesn't even seem unlikely after a while. Highly intelligent anthropoid ape undiscovered until now by the main characters husband. She decides to save the ape. Found myself hysterically laughing in places. Erasmus is quite a surprising character.

Life after life

By Kate Atkinson

It's a concept novel- it's really about how the little things in your life can change the whole course of your life. In England outside of this little village. This woman is giving birth in a snowstorm- the doctor and midwife can't make it and the baby dies after birth. The baby is named Ursula. It starts over again and she's born again but this time the doctor makes it and she lives. It starts over and over again each time the character potentially dies. She's such a brilliant writer it's wonderful. It takes the character through all these different things that happen to her. She starts to remember all the lives and her mother thinks she's nuts and sends her to a psychiatrist. There are all these little decisions that you are that change the course of your life.

Hillbilly Elegy

By J.D. Vance

Waited a long time to read it. I now understand why people have been reading it. It is a very easy read about a very complicated problem. He grew up in the rust belt his family came from Kentucky but moved to Ohio to improve their life. His mother battles substance abuse issues most of her life. Part of the hillbilly code is you protect your family a deal with things on your own. He fees his grandparents are the reason he made it. He eventually goes to Yale law and works for an investment firm. Fascinating book - talks about what maybe could be done to help this group of people but says there isn't solution so much as a way to help a bit.

The Fourth turning

Historians seeing cycles of generations over hundreds of years. The characteristics of the generations seem to repeat themselves according to their interpretation. They talk about archetypes that represent the different generations. Four generational archetypes will repeat.

The Lewis Man

By Peter May

Really great read if you don't mind stumbling over possible renunciation of names. It's a ruder yesteryear but it's way beyond that. There's a mummified body of a boy found in a peat bog They initially think it's a very old body till they spot an Elvis tattoo. This is the second book in the Lewis trilogy. Really great.