

Booklover's Cafe
March 2019

The Devil's Punchbowl
by Greg Iles

Set in southern Mississippi the town to Natchez, right on the river. An Extraordinary book. Focused on the behavior of people who have a giant casino on a barge. The people who run it are criminal types. They love to have dog fights, or human fights. The central character is the mayor of Natchez. His father is a Doctor, who's admired in the town. There are probably 4 or 5 different plots going on.

Blood Memory
by Greg Iles

Still set in Natchez. The central character is a woman who's an expert in teeth marks. She gets involved in a murder case. It turns out to be nothing you would have expected.

Flowers for Algernon.
by Daniel Keyes

Read the Russian translation- the translator was very good. The book is about a man named Charlie with low IQ who participates in an experiment to raise his IQ. Algernon is a mouse who was the initial test subject. The experiment is a success but Algernon begins to regress and Charlie tries to figure out what is happening before the same thing happens to him. It's an amazing story.

Giotto's Hand
by Iain Pears

Fabulous writing. Some of the most clear, graceful writing I've ever read. It's about an art thief squad leader and a string of major thefts. Someone has stolen more than two dozen paintings, ones that would be hard to identify. It really flows.

February House
by Sherill Tibbins

About a group of artists living in a house together. The author heard about the story while delivering meals on wheels. The idea was to provide a creative environment for creative people to create. The house was a wreck, and they try to get it fixed up. The guy who was supposed to fix the furnace and his wife had a baby so all the housemates went to celebrate with them. W. H. Auden starts to run things to create the rules. It takes place in the 40's, right around Pearl Harbor. Two musicians staying there can't stand listening to each other compose. The most interesting person was Gypsy Rosalie. She got the furnace fixed and brought her cook with her. She had a very good work ethic. It's interesting to see all these eccentric personalities rubbing up against each other. It's a fascinating look at people

The Enchanted Hour: The Miraculous Power of Reading Aloud in the Age of Distraction

by Megan Cox Gurdon

The author originally wrote an essay but then expanded it into the book. She has 5 children and read aloud with all of them. She talked about people reading to babies in neonatal intensive care units. Babies heartbeats remained more stable when recordings of their parents reading were played, but another voice didn't have the same effect. Talks about a program in England where people with memory loss are being read about to. This is a way to help build up connections and attention spans.

A Path to Peace

by George Mitchell

"George Mitchell knows how to bring peace to troubled regions. He was the primary architect of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement for peace in Northern Ireland. But when he served as US Special Envoy for Middle East Peace from 2009 to 2011—working to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—diplomacy did not prevail. Now, for the first time, Mitchell offers his insider account of how the Israelis and the Palestinians have progressed (and regressed) in their negotiations through the years and outlines the specific concessions each side must make to finally achieve lasting peace."

Through Darkest Europe

by Harry Turtledove

An alternate history where Islam is the dominant religion, and Europeans have been dragged back to the middle ages in their own theology. It's a fascinating book. So much of it rings true. It's an exaggeration, but only a slight exaggeration.