

2018 April

The Underground Railroad

By Colson Whitehead

The author has characters who are slaves and then each chapter goes back and forth from a slave and then a slave owner. It's not judgmental. He maintains his character developments throughout. He talks about some of the free states. The people who ran the railroad and what happened when they got caught. His writing is almost melodic in places.

Sharpe's Regiment

By Bernard Cornwell

This book takes place when the French are driven from Spain. Sharpe's regiment (he's a major now which is a huge feat since you had to buy your commission) lost a lot of men. He asked for recruits- they said he wouldn't get any that they would dissolve his regiment and absorb the men into other regiments. He got the suggestion to go to England to find out what was going on. No one seems to know anything and there are some politicians involved but no one would say what's going on.

The Sleepwalker

By Chris Bohjalian

Engaging. Not his best one but he's a very reliable storyteller and it keeps you interested. He goes into how actual sleepwalking works as well.

Snowblind

By Ragnar Jonasson

A thriller/ murder mystery set in a small town isolated from everything else in Iceland. The main character is Ari Thor, a rookie policeman on his first posting.

Death of Yesterday

By M.C. Beaton

Hamish mysteries are great you just inhale them. The main character is such a flawed guy his romantic life is his downfall. He makes mistake after mistake. He's a great policeman though, and I love reading about Scotland.

Where the God of Love Hangs Out

By Amy Bloom

Short stories of varying lengths. Marvelous stories of love, disaster in love, compassion and all kinds of good stuff. One hilariously funny one. Sort of a surprise her characters are just wild and believable. It hits all the high points. Love her breezy sense of humor. Recommend it highly.

Lilac Girls

By Martha Hall Kelly

About the Ravensbruck Rabbits. They were called that because a lot of the surgeries were on their legs so they had to hop around to get around. There are three main characters and two of them really existed. One mounted a campaign after WWII to bring the women to America to get medical treatment. Germany refused to recognize Poland as a country as it was under soviet control so they women didn't get reparations. The second main character was the surgeon. The third didn't exist but is an amalgamation of real Ravensbruck Rabbits. It's the author's first book and she was able to write from the doctor's perspective in a fairly convincing way. It was an amazing story.

Lords of the North

By Bernard Cornwell

His research is so incredible. Has to do with King Alfred in England and the Danes who were one of the forces trying to take over England at the time (800's). Uhtred is the main character who was raised by a Dane bridging the gap between Danes and English. There's a lot of Viking stuff in there. Battles and personal battles. I enjoy Cornwell a lot.

The Hero's Journey

By Joseph Campbell

Talks about the mythic hero and his journey to go out. Really goes back to the beginning of myth making. Campbell spent his whole life studying mythology. Knew Sanskrit and the old texts. He talks about how the myths we live by are Bronze Age myths.

Trace

By Archer Mayor

Not bad but not great. The central character is a detective named Joe Gunther who lives near Brattleboro Vermont. I love reading about this because it's very well described having lived in the area. This book the central character is the kind of character you usually want to know. He's gone off to help his mom so you get the same sort of cleverly designed criminal stuff but with the odd selection of helpers and not the main character. The characters are rather odd.

Uncommon Type

By Tom Hanks

Short story collections are like a record album. Some you really love, some aren't so great. All of the stories contain a typewriter. The first one was really great. About four friends who went to school together. Three guys and a woman. The woman decides to start an affair with one of the guys. Great story. The next one was about a WWII vet on Christmas Eve, and every year he gets a collect call from someone in his unit. But I kept thinking he got this from private Ryan. One is about a guy on a press junket for a movie. I ended up going through and comparing them all to movies. Some were very poignant. I'm just not sure.

Raspberry Danish Murder

By Joanna Fluke

Cozy mysteries set in Minnesota. This one is about a single woman with a crazy cat. It's light-not brutal murders. The books include recipes as well.