

NOVEMBER, 2015

Review of selected new Adult Books at the Pender Island Library

One of the most fascinating books we read this year was *The Dust that Falls from Dreams* the first (great news) of a planned trilogy written by prize winning author Louis de Bernieres. It's a book about the ageless clashes between love and loyalty, subjects which the author has dealt with in previous novels most famous of which is "Captain Corelli's Mandolin". His latest novel is a must read for all who are addicted to Downton Abbey. It's the story of neighbors, three families who live in the same street in Eltham, England with their collective five sons and four daughters who all become engulfed in the horrors of the First World War. How some of them survive and how their loved ones cope with the aftermath makes for unforgettable reading. There have been many books written about wars but this one brings the futility and hopelessness of it all full front and center and we found it an unforgettable reading experience.

We would like to introduce you to Kathryn Aalto, a landscape designer, historian, writer, and speaker who lives in Exeter, England. Her publishers tell us she has a master's degree in garden history and creative nonfiction with a particular interest in literary landscapes. Her passion is walking and natural history and she deals with these subjects in a special way in her newly published *The Natural World of Winnie-The-Pooh: a Walk through the Forest that Inspired the Hundred Acre Wood*. Who doesn't remember the joy of reading or having A.A. Milne's classic book about the famous little bear and his friends read to them? This beautifully produced book includes original illustrations by Milne's partner E.H. Shepherd. It is a delight and well worth your attention. After reading it we're sure you'll feel years younger. We certainly did.

Can you remember when you first read "The Day of the Jackal"? Readers who enjoy political thrillers will particularly appreciate Frederick Forsyth's biography *The Outsider: My Life in Intrigue*; We are told his own escapades became the basis for many of his stories. A Former RAF pilot and journalist for Reuters, "he spoke four languages, enjoyed his share of cigarettes and liquor, toyed with members of the East German Stasi, had a liaison with the mistress of a high-powered Communist official and covered a civil war in Nigeria all before the age of 30". His biography is a fast-paced account of his career from post-World War II Europe through the Cold War and on to the present and he is still going strong forty years after writing his first best seller. We're delighted to have him back on the shelves with this book joining an earlier nine. He has lived an amazing life, which is truly stranger than fiction but some reviewers have criticized his biography saying "reading it is like listening to a grandfather recount his exploits in front of the fireplace." Our view is that after living such an exciting life, he has earned his bragging rights. Readers who enjoy his political thrillers will particularly appreciate this book, as his own exploits became the basis for many of his stories.

We wouldn't usually draw attention to a book by Elly Griffiths because she is so well known and admired but perhaps to avoid disappointment we think you should know that her latest book *The Zig Zag Girl* is a departure from the adventures of popular forensic archeologist Ruth Galloway. Her new series the "Magic Men" is based in Post-war Brighton and its Theatre Royal "beautifully captured in all their seedy glory ... A colorful crowd of ventriloquists and sword-swallowers, are lovingly re-created in this lively and gripping work". It's described as an extremely well-written and well-researched novel which will come as no surprise to her followers.

Let's finish on a humorous note with *They laughed at Galileo: How the Great Inventors Proved their Critics Wrong* by Albert Jack. It's a book full of information you didn't know you didn't know, for example in 1915 General Douglas Haig said that the machine gun was a much overrated weapon and that two per battalion was more than sufficient and (our favorite) until 1916 Firefighters in America were advised to grow a long beard, soak it and then stuff it in their mouth before entering a burning room. It's "I thought it was a good idea at the time" book but this time it's those who didn't who have the last laugh. An old Scottish saying comes to mind "If I didn't laugh I'd cry" and I did both when browsing this book!

Until next time Jean MacDonald, Pender Island Public Library