

Fiction News



The Ridgefield Library's Fiction Newsletter

April 2010

HISTORICAL NOVELISTS AND THEIR WORKS

This month we'll be featuring a display of historical novels in the Fiction Room. In order to assist fans of this genre in finding reading recommendations, our staff has compiled an **Historical Fiction** brochure that features the most prominent writers of historical novels with a list of their works. Since readers are often looking for fiction about a specific historical era, we've also included the time period that is the focus of each title or series.

While the flier doesn't include every author who writes historical novels, we've tried to make this a comprehensive enough list to serve as a starting point for an exploration of this genre.

We also have many other tools to help in a search for fiction relating to a particular historical period, event, or figure. Our librarians are always happy to provide

recommendations or to show you the variety of resources available to help you in selecting historical fiction that matches your interests.

Among the reference resources, you might want to explore next time you visit the Fiction Room are *World Historical Fiction: An Annotated Guide to Novels for Adults and Young Adults* and *American Historical Fiction: An Annotated Guide to Novels for Adults and Young Adults*.

The online resources **NoveList** and **What Do I Read Next?** are also helpful tools. They can be accessed both in the Library and from our website.

And if you've read an historical novel you've enjoyed, please let us know, so we can share your recommendation with others.



NATIONAL BOOK CRITICS CIRCLE AWARD AND THE PEN FAULKNER AWARD

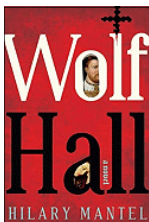
While the Academy Awards may get more coverage, this time of year also marks the bestowing of two of literature's most prestigious awards. Here is a list of the fiction winners and nominees.

The National Book Critics Circle Award

Wolf Hall by Hilary Mantel

Other nominees:

American Salvage by Bonnie Jo Campbell
The Book of Night Women by Marlon James
Blame by Michelle Huneven
Lark and Termite by Jayne Anne Phillips



The Pen Faulkner Award

War Dances by Alexie Sherman

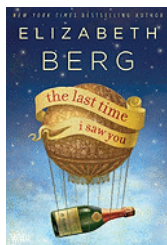
Other nominees:

The Lacuna by Barbara Kingsolver
A Gate at the Stairs by Lorrie Moore
Sag Harbor by Colson Whitehead



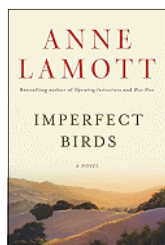
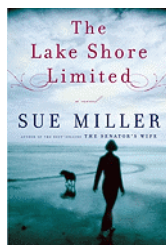
NEW FICTION

(Annotations from BookLetters)



The Last Time I Saw You by Elizabeth Berg. From the beloved bestselling author of *Home Safe* and *The Year of Pleasures*, comes a wonderful new novel about women and men reconnecting with one another--and themselves--at their fortieth high school reunion.

The Lake Shore Limited by Sue Miller. Four unforgettable characters beckon you into this spellbinding new novel from the author of last year's explosive *New York Times* bestseller *The Senator's Wife*.



Imperfect Birds by Anne Lamott. A powerful and redemptive novel of love and family, from the author of the bestselling *Blue Shoe, Grace (Eventually)*, and *Operating Instructions*.

Solar by Ian McEwan. Can a man who has made a mess of his life clean up the messes of humanity? A complex novel that brilliantly traces the arc of one man's ambitions and deceptions, *Solar* is a startling, witty new work from the author of *On Chesil Beach* and *Atonement*.



The Black Cat by Martha Grimes. Written with Martha Grimes's trademark insight and grace, *The Black Cat* signals the thrilling return of her greatest character. The superintendent is a man possessed of prodigious analytical gifts and charm, yet vulnerable in the most perplexing ways.

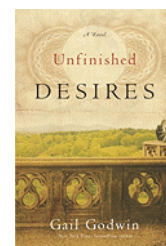
Matterhorn by Karl Marlantes. Thirty years in the making, Marlantes's epic debut is a dense, vivid narrative spanning many months in the lives of American troops in Vietnam as they trudge across enemy lines, encountering danger from opposing forces as well as on their home turf.



For a more extensive list of new fiction, mystery, and science fiction and fantasy titles visit our website at www.ridgfieldlibrary.org

Elise's Picks

Unfinished Desires by Gail Godwin. While dictating her school's memoirs, the former headmistress of a private Catholic girls academy is unable to get past the tragic events that ruined the Class of 51's freshman year. The ninth graders in that "poisonous year" were a tumultuous mix of high aspirations, intense friendships and generational grievances, and their teachers were equally complex. Some of the nuns were nurturing, some were controlling, but they were all dedicated. Gail Godwin is a gifted southern storyteller with a real fondness for her fallible characters, and *Unfinished Desires* is a good old-fashioned, totally captivating novel.



Nothing Right by Antonia Nelson. These are eleven beautifully-crafted short stories some of which have appeared in *The New Yorker*. Filled with wonderful descriptions, wry humor and surprising insights, Antonia Nelson's "family mini-sagas" (*Kirkus Reviews*) are a delight to read ... and to reread.

Chris' Pick

Wench by Dolen Perkins-Vadez. This novel takes place just in advance of the Civil War and is the story of four slaves who are the mistresses of the master of the plantations where they live. Their interactions primarily take place in Ohio where these couples "vacation" on a yearly basis. *Wench* is an interesting look at the psychological dynamic between slave and master. The tensions increase as the Civil War grows closer, and each of these wenches wrestles with a personal decision whether to escape being a slave or not.



Dorothy's Picks



Major Pettigrew's Last Stand by Helen Simonson. Set in the Sussex countryside, this charming novel centers around the burgeoning relationship between Major Pettigrew, a retired British widower, and Jasmina Ali, a widowed Pakistani immigrant. This comedy of manners also addresses the larger issues of cultural and generational clashes, and racial and religious intolerance. If you enjoyed Mary Ann Shaffer's *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*, give this book a try.

Bloodroot by Amy Greene. This accomplished debut is told as the alternating first person narratives of three generations of a rural family from Eastern Tennessee. For Brydie Lamb and her descendants the mystical is part of everyday life, and family dysfunction and the specter of violence are a part of their heritage. Yet despite the characters' hardships, their voices are infused with a resilience and a love for their native Appalachia that makes this a haunting, compelling and ultimately life-affirming read.

