

BOOKMARKS

Fall 2015 Newsletter ~ The Bookloft ~ Your hometown source for books and more ~ Enterprise, Oregon

What Mary has been reading:

SECRETS OF A CHARMED LIFE by Susan Meissner

I enjoy historic fiction set around the two world wars. In this novel, a young scholar, Kendra, is doing research on the blitz in London during World War II and its impact on survivors. She travels to the Cotswolds to interview an elderly woman, Isabel, who is now a famous artist. Unbeknownst to Kendra, Isabel has decided to tell her real life story and reveal secrets she has held since the war. As the narrative moves from the present to the 1940s, we discover how events of the time prompted Isabel to recreate herself amidst the chaos of the bombing. The choices she made at the time and their lasting effect have altered her life in ways she could not have imagined. In the present, as Kendra listens to Isabel's story unfold, she gradually realizes Isabel is teaching her about choices. “...when you make a choice, even if it's a bad one, you've played your hand. You cannot live your life as though you still held all your cards.” I enjoyed this book for the interesting history and its twisting plot. Having a life lesson or two thrown in was a bonus. 15.00

EVERYTHING I NEVER TOLD YOU by Celeste Ng

This novel starts off on a grim note: “Lydia is dead. But they don't know this yet”. Lydia is the teenaged daughter of a Chinese-American family living in Ohio in the 1970s. As the story of her disappearance unfolds, we get a good look at her family's life together. In particular the book explores all of the many things we do not tell those closest to us – parents, siblings, neighbors, school mates. But it also looks at the many assumptions we make about others because we never know their whole story. From daily experiences, to deep feelings, these unknown and presumed aspects of others' lives have unforeseen repercussions. Though dealing with family tragedy, this novel is beautifully written and tells the story in a thoughtful and gently subtle way. 16.00

THE SPARROW SISTERS by Ellen Herrick

Three sisters, Sorrel, Nettie, and Patience live in a small town in New England. Their family has deep roots in the area and they have created a niche of providing almost magically healthy and beautiful nursery plants. Their ability to grow and artfully arrange flowers, help create new gardens and even provide herbal remedies to the folks in the community has grown over the years. For various reasons, none of them are married and they live together pretty happily, the two older women taking care of their younger sister. Things start to change when a young doctor moves to town. He has been serving in the military and had been wounded in a combat area. He has moved to Granite Falls to try to find peace and healing in this small community. When a tragedy occurs, he challenges the sister who has been providing the healing remedies. Of course, he is simultaneously attracted to her and has to resolve his conflicted feelings. As the townspeople take sides, unusual and unfortunate changes start occurring in the overall health and happiness of the town, its residents, and even its gardens. As events escalate, everyone must decide how to balance fear against belief in the good intentions of the sisters. The novel was reminiscent of Alice Hoffman's early books, containing a bit of magic in the interplay of people, relationships, and the natural world. It is a nice combination of sisterly love, gardening, a little romance, and real life choices that must be made within a small town community where everyone's lives are tied together. 14.99

Reading and Book Signing by local author **Mary Emerick**

Wednesday, December 2, 7PM

Mary Emerick is the author of the new novel **A GEOGRAPHY OF WATER**.

It's always exciting when a local author has a book published. As a hometown bookstore, it is part of my job to support the work of local authors. But when the book is as good as this one, that job becomes a joy.



Her novel is set in southeast Alaska amid the towering peaks and constantly moving waters. The story involves just a few characters which reflects the isolation in which many Alaskans live. It is told in the voice of Winnie, a young girl named Winchester after the gun. Winnie and her mother and father live in Never Summer Bay where her parents make a living running a hunting lodge. Winnie and her mother are extremely close, but they both live in fear of her father's anger. When she reaches her teens, she finally leaves home and its hostile environment. But she doesn't go far, just five miles away to another isolated bay where two Viet Nam vets live. Their place, Floathouse Bay, has served as a stopping place for others in her position: fleeing one situation, but not sure where to go next.

Unexpectedly, she settles in with them, enjoying the relative tranquility of their lifestyle. But when things start to go wrong at Never Summer, she returns home to see what has happened. It is then that she has to reconcile her past and face her future.

Emerick's writing is beautiful. So much so, that as I was nearing the end of the book, I put it down till the next day to prolong the reading experience. Her descriptions of the landscape made me feel as if I were there with the characters, walking across the muskeg, watching the movement of the tides, observing the bears, whales and birds. *The Geography of Water* is not only a beautiful read, but also an intimate look at life in this region. Her portrayal of Winnie and her coming of age will stay with me. 16.95



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A few new books for young readers . . .

THE TOYMAKER'S APPRENTICE by Sherri L. Smith

A seven-headed mouse, a mad queen, a cursed princess, toymakers and a secret guild of clockmakers. These are but some of the players in this wonderful young adult novel loosely based on The Nutcracker. Stefan Drosselmeyer has just lost his mother and is planning to run away from his father and the expectations of following in his father's footsteps as a toymaker. But suddenly, an unknown cousin appears and Stefan is swept up in an adventure to find an obscure nut and save the world from a takeover by mice. With lots of unusual characters and a fast-paced plot, Sherri Smith has created a thrilling fantasy. 16.99

SERAFINA AND THE BLACK CLOAK by Robert Beatty

I'll admit I'm a bit of a wienie when it comes to scary books. But it's been a while since I was scared by a young adult book. I was not too bothered by the recent spate of dystopian future books, but when it comes to mad killers stalking victims in and around huge Victorian mansions, I start looking over my shoulder. This book had me turning pages and wondering who was going to disappear next. But not so our heroine, Serafina, who is a self-proclaimed creature of the night. She is, after all, the CRC of the huge Vanderbilt mansion, Biltmore, near Asheville, North Carolina, where she lives in the basement with her pa. CRC being Chief Rat Catcher. Since she and her father are living secretly in the mansion, she has become a master of sneaking about silently and finding hiding spots throughout the house. When she comes upon a man in a black cloak preying on one of the Vanderbilt's guests, she tries unsuccessfully to intervene. After that, the disappearance of guests and residents around Biltmore starts to occur nightly and Serafina feels called upon to figure out who The Black Cloak is. She becomes friends with a young nephew of the Vanderbilts, Braeden, another loner like herself. Together, they try to figure out what is happening and what to do about it. Between heart-pounding encounters with The Black Cloak, becoming lost at night in the deep, dark woods, stumbling into bizarre graveyards, and being attacked by wild animals, Serafina has lots to learn and quickly. The ending had several surprising twists and a satisfying conclusion. But I did keep the lights on while I read it. 16.99

