

Fiction News

The Ridgefield Library's Fiction Newsletter



May 2014

AUTHOR IN THE SPOTLIGHT

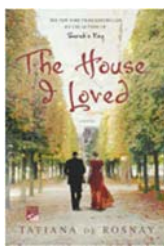
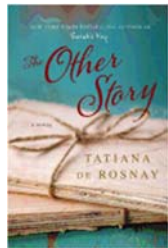
THE EDGAR AWARDS



Tatiana de Rosnay

Tatiana de Rosnay is a writer, journalist and screenwriter. Born to a French father and English mother, she has lived in France, the US and England. Her first novel was published in 1992, but her first English language novel, *Sarah's Key*, was not published until 2007. Rosnay's novels

vary in setting from the changing city streets of Paris to the idyllic American seaside, but they are consistent in their character-driven plots with a focus on personal relationships.



The Other Story (2014)

Hoping to put a generations-old secret behind him, Nicholas Duhamel becomes a successful writer and pens a novel that makes him famous before he is forced to reexamine his family's disturbing past.

The House I Loved (2012)

Determined to protect her historical family home from Emperor Napoleon's orders to renovate 1860s Paris, Rose Bazelet establishes a defense in the basement of her house on rue Childebert and records her experiences in letters to her late husband.

A Secret Kept (2010)

When traumatic memories about a disturbing event from a childhood summer holiday cause his sister to suffer a debilitating car accident, Antoine befriends a street-wise mortician who helps him to manage painful family truths.

Sarah's Key (2007)

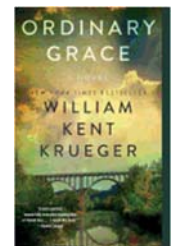
On the sixtieth anniversary of the 1942 roundup of Jews by the French police in the Vel d'Hiv section of Paris, American journalist Julia Jarmond is asked to write an article on this dark episode during World War II and embarks on investigation that leads her to long-hidden family secrets and to the ordeal of Sarah, a young girl caught up in the raid.



The Edgar Awards are given annually by the Mystery Writers of America to honor the best in mystery writing. Here are this year's winners and nominees for best novel:

Best Novel

Ordinary Grace by William Kent Krueger
Looking back at a tragic event that occurred during his 13th year, a man explores how a complicated web of secrets, adultery and betrayal shattered his Methodist family and their small 1961 Minnesota community.



Other finalists:

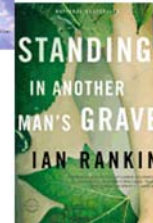
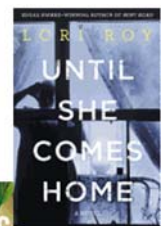
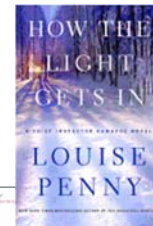
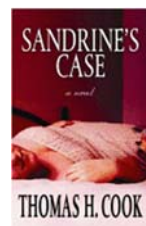
Sandrine's Case by Thomas H. Cook

The Humans by Matt Haig

How the Light Gets In by Louise Penny

Standing in Another Man's Grave by Ian Rankin

Until She Comes Home by Lori Roy



Best First Novel

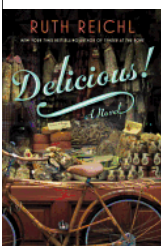
Red Sparrow by Jason Matthews

In today's Russia, a state intelligence officer begins a fatal double life, recruited by the CIA to ferret out a high-level traitor in Washington; hunt down a Russian illegal buried deep in the U.S. military and, against all odds, to return to Moscow as a spy.



NEW FICTION

(Annotations from BookLetters)



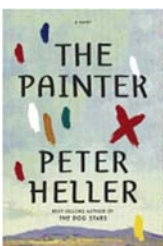
Delicious! Ruth Reichl.

Reichl's first novel—which comes after a career focused on nonfiction—is well worth the wait. *Delicious!* tells the story of Billie Breslin, a young woman who moves to New York to pursue a career in food writing and escape her sad life in California.

She lands a gig assisting the famous editor of *Delicious!*, a venerable food magazine on the brink of closing in the midst of the recession. Billie dives into the world of Manhattan cuisine, becoming fast friends with the magazine's flamboyant travel writer, Sammy, who persuades her to lose the thick glasses and frumpy clothes she's hidden behind for years.

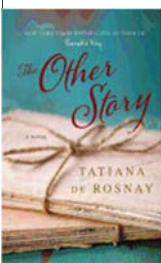
The Painter by Peter Heller.

This achingly beautiful, wildly suspenseful second novel about an artist trying to outrun his past. Jim Stegner has seen his share of violence and loss. Years ago he shot a man in a bar. His marriage disintegrated. He grieved the one thing he loved. In the wake of tragedy, Jim, a well-known expressionist painter, abandoned the art scene of Santa Fe to start fresh in the valleys of rural Colorado. Now he spends his days painting and fly-fishing, trying to find a way to live with the dark impulses that sometimes overtake him.



The Other Story by Tatiana de Rosnay.

With this story of a self-absorbed, newly wealthy writer struggling with his identity and coming to terms with the shocking secrets of his family's past, de Rosnay (*Sarah's Key*; *A Secret Kept*) continues her literary trend of combining international locations and complex characters.



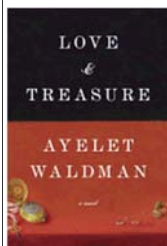
The Snow Queen by Michael Cunningham.

Michael Cunningham's luminous novel begins with a vision. It's November 2004. Barrett Meeks, having lost love yet again, is walking through Central Park when he is inspired to look up at the sky; there he sees a pale, translucent light that seems to regard him in a distinctly godlike way. Barrett doesn't believe in visions--or in God--but he can't deny what he's seen. *The Snow Queen*, beautiful and heartbreaking, comic and tragic, proves again that Cunningham is one of the great novelists of his generation



Love and Treasure by Ayelet Waldman.

A spellbinding new novel of contraband masterpieces, tragic love, and the unexpected legacies of forgotten crimes, Ayelet Waldman's *Love and Treasure* weaves a tale around the fascinating, true history of the Hungarian Gold Train in the Second World War.



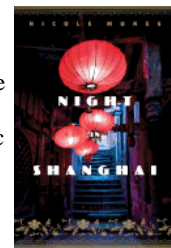
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STAFF PICKS

Elise's Picks

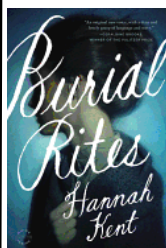
Night in Shanghai by Nicole Mones

They called it Ye Shanghai, the golden age of Shanghai nightlife when jazz was king and the city was a refuge for sophisticated émigrés. But all that changed when the Japanese invaded in 1936 and Hitler demanded that Shanghai turn over its Jewish refugees. NPR book critic Alan Cheuse called Nicole Mones' latest novel "historical fiction at its best," praising both its forceful insights into the characters and the depiction of what it must have felt like to live in such a dangerous period, when the Nationalists and Communists were fighting to lead China, the Japanese to conquer it, and brave diplomats to protect the persecuted Jews. Caught in the maelstrom are two clandestine lovers, an African-American band leader and the beautiful translator for Shanghai's most powerful ganglord.



Burial Rites by Hannah Kent.

In 1829, the last public execution in Iceland took place after two women and a man were convicted of murdering their employer. Because there were no rural prisons, one of the women, Agnes Magnúsdóttir, was sent to work on a family farm until Danish authorities ratified the verdict. Based on rigorous research, this impressive debut novel is a moving and humane re-imagining of Agnes' final days. The farm family, being forced to accept the "murderess", initially is terrified of her, but living closely together in a communal "badstofa", they can't help but overhear the heartbreaking life story that Agnes slowly reveals to the young cleric appointed as her confessor. Lyrically narrated and "gorgeously atmospheric" (*The New Yorker*), *Burial Rites* is an independent bookstore favorite.



Dorothy's Picks

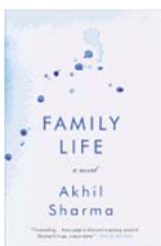
All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr.

This haunting novel covers the years surrounding World War II through the parallel stories of two young people whose lives intersect in the German-occupied town of Saint-Malo. Blind since age six, Marie-Laure's world revolves around the Museum of Natural History in Paris where her father works and from which the two flee during the German Occupation. Orphaned as a young boy, Werner is accepted into an elite school for Hitler youth due to his mechanical abilities, which are manifested in his ability to build radio equipment. As teenagers both find themselves coming-of-age while trying to survive and maintain their own humanity. Doerr's poetic language and his portrayal of the horrors of war through the eyes of young people robbed of their innocence make this an exceptional read.



Family Life by Akhil Sharma.

The older of two brothers, Birju Mishra is the pride of his immigrant family when he is accepted into the prestigious Bronx High School of Science. Then a tragic diving accident leaves him unable to speak or move and totally dependent on others for his care. This novel is told from the perspective of Birju's younger brother Ajay, as tries to reconcile his loyalty to his family's customs and sense of duty with the often conflicting desires for his own life.



By turns funny and tragic, *Family Life* is "a loving portrait, both painful and honest." (*Publishers Weekly*)