



JOY'S BLOG

A MOSTLY BOOKISH BLOG BY JLS HALL

All that mankind has done, thought, gained or been: it is lying as in magic preservation in the pages of books. --
Thomas Carlyle

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2008

Short Story Reading Challenge Completed



[The Short Story Reading Challenge](#), hosted by Kate at [Kate's Book Blog](#), is coming to an end this month, so I thought I should post my wrap-up. I didn't do as well with this challenge as I'd hoped. Even though I chose the "custom option" and didn't really have any set number of books to read, I had intended to get through at least three volumes of stories, but only managed two.

I concentrated on ghost stories, and read *The Penguin Complete Ghost Stories of M.R. James* [[see review](#)], and *My Fantoms*, by Theophile Gautier [[see review](#)]. The M.R. James book was one I'd had on my TBR list for many years, and the Gautier collection was an ARC I received through the LibraryThing Early Reviewer program. I enjoyed both of them – well, I've always loved a good ghost story. Or even a bad ghost story, for that matter.

And while I wasn't as successful as I'd like to have been, it was one of my favorite challenges of the year. Thanks to Kate for hosting, and to all the other participants for their great [reviews and recommendations](#).

POSTED BY JLSHALL AT 12:45 PM 1 COMMENTS

LABELS: BOOKS, READING, READING CHALLENGES, SHORT STORY CHALLENGE

The Winter Reading Challenge

[The Winter Reading Challenge](#) sounds like it should be painlessly doable. Hosted by Robin of [My Two Blessings](#), it started December 21st

ABOUT ME



JOY HALL

Aging flower child

[VIEW MY COMPLETE PROFILE](#)

LIBRARY THING

MY OTHER BLOGS AND PAGES

[Joy's Doll Talk](#)

[Joysweb](#)

[List of Reading Challenges](#)

[List of Series Books](#)

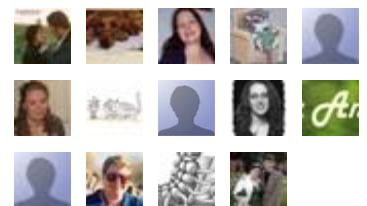
[My WordPress Blog: Just Reviews](#)

[Reading List by Year](#)

[Reading the '90s Personal Challenge](#)

WELCOME. IF YOU'RE READING THIS, WHY NOT LET ME KNOW? (14)

FOLLOW THIS BLOG



14 FOLLOWERS [VIEW ALL](#)



(so I'm a little late arriving), and runs until March 20, 2009. Books can be fiction or non-, and e-books and audiobooks are allowed. Overlaps with other challenges are OK, too, which means I can read some of the books I'd

be reading anyway.

Participants can choose any number of books they think they can read during the run of the challenge. In the 2007-2008 Winter Reading Challenge, I read five books – so that's what I'm aiming for this time. But I'm adding a second list, just in case I manage to push myself a little farther. Together, they represent quite an eclectic mix.

My Primary List:

Santa Clawed, by Rita Mae Brown
Crewel Yule, by Monica Ferris
Daughter of the Stars, by Phyllis A. Whitney
Cover Her Face, by P.D. James
Drawers and Booths, by Ara 13 (an ARC)

My Secondary List:

The Master, by Colm Toibin
The Wench is Dead, by Colin Dexter
The Great Victorian Collection, by Brian Moore
The Double, by Jose Saramago
Three Junes, by Julia Glass

POSTED BY JLSHALL AT 1:34 AM 3 COMMENTS

LABELS: BOOKS, READING, READING CHALLENGES, WINTER READING CHALLENGE 2009

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2008

The 2009 TBR (Lite) Challenge

Well, now that the Christmas madness is pretty much over (except for all the after-Christmas sales shopping, of course), it's time to get back to thinking about next year's reading, and next year's reading challenges. I know it looks like I'm throwing caution to the wind and signing up for every challenge that comes my way. But

BLOG ARCHIVE

▼ 2008 (248)

▼ December (25)

Short Story Reading
 Challenge Completed
 The Winter Reading
 Challenge
 The 2009 TBR (Lite)
 Challenge
 Booking Through
 Thursday: Wintery
 Books
 Happy Holidays!
 Tuesday Thinkers:
 Holiday Gift-Giving
 Musing Mondays:
 Christmas Book
 Buying
 The Sunday Salon:
 Christmas Dry Spell
 Booking Through
 Thursday: Treat &
 Generosity
 Tuesday Thinkers: LT
 Home Page
 20 in 2009 Challenge
 2nds Challenge, 2009
 Musing Mondays:
 Reading on the Go
 Review: Wish You Were
 Here
 Review: Eva Moves the
 Furniture
 Booking Through
 Thursday: Time Is of
 the Essence
 Teaser Tuesdays: Out on
 a Lem
 Tuesday Thinkers:
 Review Process



in reality, I'm trying to be pretty careful in choosing – I'm looking mainly for challenges that will allow me to read some of the books I've already got planned for 2009. Along with a few that will encourage me to step outside my usual comfort zone a little, of course.

One challenge that I'm definitely joining is the [2009 TBR Challenge *Lite*](#) ("For those who love the original TBR Challenge, but need a little less 'pressure' on their reading"). It starts January 1 and runs through December 31, 2009. There are three different levels of participation:

OPTION A: read 6 books in 12 months ~ your list of books CANNOT be changed, but you are allowed to have an "Alternates" list to choose from (like in the Original TBR Challenge).

OPTION B: read 6 books in 12 months ~ you CAN change your reading list throughout the year.

OPTION C: make up a list of however many books you think you could get read in 12 months, as long as they are from your TBR stack/list, and then read them between January 1st and December 31st. You must have at least 3 books on your list.

And the other general guidelines are these:

- You are allowed to overlap with other challenges
- Audiobooks are allowed
- e-Books are allowed, but must still be books that you've wanted to read for at least 3, or more, months
- You should still have a list of books posted somewhere for others to see
- You don't have to read your books in the order you put them on your list

I'm choosing Option B (6 books in 12 months) – I think that's the safest choice for me. I'm sure I'll be reading at least six books next year, and with Option B, I can make changes if I need to. Here's my list (at least for now):

1. **Cover Her Face**. P.D. James
2. **Mortal Love**. Elizabeth Hand

[Existentialism Is Alive and Well and Living in K-M...](#)

[A Little Closure, a Little Planning Ahead](#)

[Herding Cats: Challenge Wrap-Up](#)

[Booking Through Thursday: 5 For Favorites](#)

[Teaser Tuesdays: Mrs. Murphy Digs Up a Murder](#)

[Tuesday Thinkers: Most Popular](#)

[Review: The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nig...](#)

- ▶ [November \(17\)](#)
- ▶ [October \(9\)](#)
- ▶ [September \(26\)](#)
- ▶ [August \(23\)](#)
- ▶ [July \(19\)](#)
- ▶ [June \(26\)](#)
- ▶ [May \(27\)](#)
- ▶ [April \(26\)](#)
- ▶ [March \(24\)](#)
- ▶ [February \(16\)](#)
- ▶ [January \(10\)](#)
- ▶ [2007 \(17\)](#)
- ▶ [2006 \(2\)](#)

3. ***Our Kind***. Kate Walbert
4. ***The Art of Mending***. Elizabeth Berg
5. ***The Inn at Lake Devine***. Elinor Lipman
6. ***The Time Traveler's Wife***. Audrey Niffenegger

There's also a Yahoo Group for this challenge. To sign up, visit the challenge announcement page [here](#), and leave a comment.

POSTED BY JLSHALL AT 12:00 AM 3 COMMENTS

LABELS: 2009 TBR CHALLENGE LITE, BOOKS, READING, READING CHALLENGES

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2008

Booking Through Thursday: Wintery Books

This week's [BTT](#) topic:

... what are the most "wintery" books you can think of? The ones that almost embody Winter?

Actually, the books that first come to mind are mostly children's books for some reason. I suppose ***The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*** is the obvious choice – what with its snow-covered land of Narnia and its White Witch. But the two books that I thought of immediately were ***The Bobbsey Twins***, and ***The Happy Hollisters and the Ice Carnival Mystery***.

I think I must have read just about all the Bobbsey Twins books at one time or another when I was growing up. And the twins were always going to ski resorts and snowy camps and having snowball fights and building snow forts. Most of my books were passed down to me by my older cousins, so the illustrations of Nan, Bert, Flossie and Freddie all done up in their snowsuits and stocking caps were very reminiscent of the opening scenes in "It's a Wonderful Life."

I discovered *The Happy Hollisters* fairly late in my youth – I think I was already ten or eleven by the time I read the first book. But I loved it, and went on to read several others. I was an only child, so the idea of a family of five kids intrigued me. Also, I've always loved mystery novels, and each of the Hollister books involved a mystery of some sort. And I think ***The Ice Carnival Mystery*** stuck with me mainly because of the cover – two of the Hollisters sitting on giant ice sculptures. For a kid growing up in south Texas, that was tremendously exotic.

MY CLASSIC DAMES TEST
RESULT: MYRNA LOY



Score: 21% grit, 29% wit, 29% flair, and 38% class!

RECENT REVIEWS

[Ackroyd: Chatterton](#)

[Barry: The Lace Reader](#)

[Bellairs: House with a Clock in Its Walls](#)

[Clark: Mr. White's Confession](#)

[Cooper: Greenwich](#)

[Cooper: Over Sea, Under Stone](#)

[Cooper: The Dark Is Rising](#)

[Cooper: The Grey King](#)

[Davidson: The Gargoyle](#)

[Ferris: Crewel World](#)

[Hickman: The Aviary Gate](#)

[Hoffman: Practical Magic](#)

[Holt: Mrs Malory and Death By Water](#)

[James: Complete Ghost Stories](#)

[Kurzweil: The Grand Complication](#)

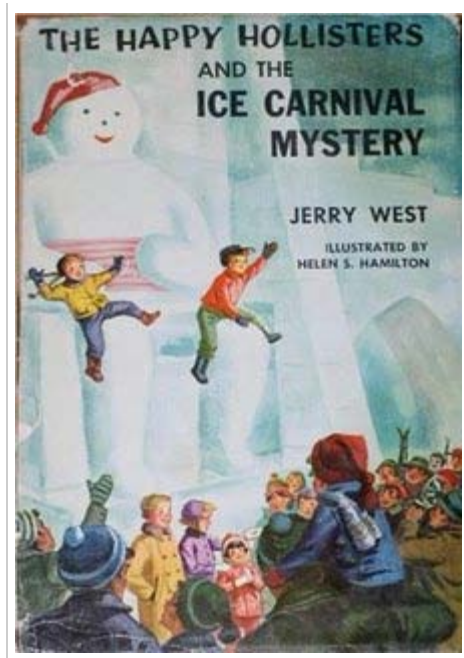
[Lovelace: Betsy-Tacy](#)

[Perez-Reverte: The Flanders Panel](#)

[Pym: Civil To Strangers](#)

[Schwarz: So Long at the Fair](#)

[Shaffer & Barrows: The Guernsey...Literary Society](#)



[Siegel: Love and the Incredibly Old Man](#)
[Sittenfeld: American Wife](#)
[Wolitzer: Summer Reading](#)

LIBRARY THING BOOK BLOGGERS

[BermudaOnion's Weblog](#)
[Boston Bibliophile](#)
[In the Shadow of Mt. TBR](#)
[Jules Jones](#)
[LeesyKnits](#)
[Literary Feline](#)
[Literate Housewife Review](#)
[My Journey Through Reading](#)
[Rebecca Reads](#)
[She Reads Books](#)

As to wintry books for grownups, I'm sure I've read some, but nothing really jumps out at me. Maybe because now that I'm all grown up and living in a place where we really do have a winter, I prefer to read about less snowy climes. I've probably blocked out all memory of wintry books. Have to wait for the spring thaw, when my brain warms up – then maybe something will come to me.

POSTED BY JLSHALL AT 10:09 AM 9 COMMENTS

LABELS: [BOOKING THROUGH THURSDAY](#), [BOOKS](#), [CHILDREN'S LIT](#), [MEMES](#), [WINTER](#)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2008

Happy Holidays!



MORE BLOGS I LIKE

[A Garden Carried in the Pocket](#)
[A Novel Challenge](#)
[Blogging Cat](#)
[Books Please](#)
[Boyett-Brinkley](#)
[Bri Wilcox](#)
[Brinkley's Place](#)
[Just a \(Reading\) Fool](#)
[Late B\(l\)oomer](#)
[Michael's Blog](#)
[Pages Turned](#)
[Smiling Sally](#)
[Stainless Steel Droppings](#)
[Table Talk](#)

OTHER LINKS OF INTEREST

POSTED BY JLSHALL AT 8:44 AM 6 COMMENTS
LABELS: CHRISTMAS

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2008

Tuesday Thinkers: Holiday Gift-Giving



So this might or might not be the last gathering of the [Tuesday Thinkers](#) – well, it *has* been a little like a weekly gathering, hasn't it? And I know we're all grateful to Marie for hosting it all this time – she's managed to keep it going much, much longer than I

thought it would at first. It's been fun, but a lot of work, I know. And I'm not really sure how many more changes can be rung on the theme of Library Thing features. It seems to me we've covered just about everything!

Anyway, time for this week's topic: *Holiday gift-giving. Do you give books for the holidays? Did you participate in LT's SantaThing, either this year or last, or in other blogging gift exchanges? Were you happy with what you received?*

I suppose my answer to the first question would be a qualified yes. I do give books as gifts. I love to receive them and I love to give them, too. But in recent years, for one reason or another, we've started giving mostly gift cards. And some of those are usually bookstore gift cards. But not all – as I've said a couple of times lately, I do believe in matching the gift to the receiver, so if my giftee is not a reader, I'll probably look around for something else he'd like.

About the LT SantaThing. Actually, I didn't even know about the SantaThing until it was nearly over. If I'd found out about it sooner, I might have participated – I love choosing books, and checking out the libraries of other LTers, and getting books in the mail (well, who doesn't love that?), so it sounds like it might have been just my cuppa tea. (Ah, the things that might have been!) It's a cute idea, and I hope LT does it again next year.

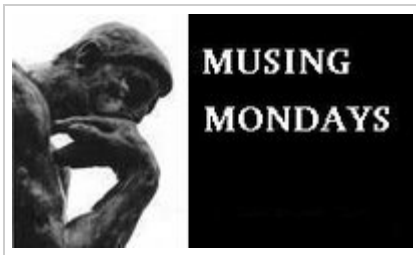
So, that's that. One more thank you to Marie for all her hard work all these months. And a Merry Christmas to all. And Happy Reading in 2009!

POSTED BY JLSHALL AT 9:28 AM 4 COMMENTS
LABELS: BOOKS, CHRISTMAS, LIBRARYTHING, MEMES, READING, TUESDAY THINKERS

MONDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2008

Musing Mondays: Christmas Book Buying

[Alexandria VA Public Library](#)
[Arts & Letters Daily](#)
[Bartleby Books Online](#)
[Bibliomania](#)
[Blogtations](#)
[Booking Through Thursday](#)
[Bookplate Junkie](#)
[Corcoran Gallery](#)
[Cozy Mystery List](#)
[Edsitement \(NEH\)](#)
[Google News](#)
[Handbook of Texas](#)
[Here Be Reviews](#)
[Literary Resources - Rutgers University](#)
[Merriam Webster Online](#)
[Michael & Joy's Doll Page](#)
[National Book Foundation](#)
[National Building Museum](#)
[National Gallery of Art](#)
[NEA's Big Read Blog](#)
[NY Times Book Blog](#)
[Phillips Collection](#)
[Project Gutenberg](#)
[Publisher's Weekly](#)
[Resources for History of Books & Printing](#)
[Shelf Awareness](#)
[The Sunday Salon](#)
[U-VA Rare Book School](#)



The [MM](#) topic for this week is, appropriately enough, about giving and receiving books at Christmas:

In these last few days before Christmas, I'm sure there are plenty of us scrambling to get our last minute shopping done. Are you buying any books for friends or family (or even yourself)? Do you expect to receive any bookish gifts from others - books, or book-related?

Just answered a similar question for [Booking Through Thursday last week](#), so this might be a little repetitious. In the past, I've frequently given books as Christmas gifts – especially to our nieces and nephews and little cousins. I think it's important for kids to receive books at Christmas, and isn't that exactly what aunts and uncles are for?

But we live far away from most of our family now. And long-distance gift-giving was making me so frazzled every year, I finally made the switch to gift cards last Christmas. Yes, I know – that's the coward's way out, but it saved what's left of my sanity, so I think it's probably the way of the future around here. And, actually, most of the gifts we *receive* from friends and family this year will probably be in the form of gift cards, too – which allows me to feel a little less humbuggy.

POSTED BY JLSHALL AT 11:19 AM 5 COMMENTS

LABELS: [BOOKS](#), [CHRISTMAS](#), [MEMES](#), [MUSING MONDAYS](#), [READING](#)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2008

The Sunday Salon: Christmas Dry Spell



I haven't put in an appearance here in the Sunday Salon for several weeks now. And I really don't have any business taking up everybody's time today, since my reading has been confined to the Book World section of the Washington Post (very nice [review by Michael Dirda](#), of small presses that publish fantasy, mystery, and horror books). And a lot of blogs, of course.

The entire month of December has been almost bookless for me. In fact, I don't think I've finished a single book this month – although I've got several going at the moment. And this remarkable dry spell has mostly been caused by the fact that I've been doing so much Christmasing, I just haven't been able to settle down long enough to get a lot of reading done. With all these [Christmas movies](#) to watch on

the tube, and several Christmas jigsaw puzzles to put together, the printed page has been getting short shrift around here lately.

But as soon as all the holiday turmoil subsides, I fully intend to get back to reading up a storm. And to spur me along, I've been joining reading challenges right and left. In fact, if there's a competition for getting oneself involved in the most challenges, I could probably compete. I'm already signed up for [nine or ten of them](#), and there are at least three or four more that look really tempting.

Didn't I say something about cutting back on reading challenges in 2009? Hmmmm. No, that obviously must have been some other, much more sensible blogger.

So, I'll let everybody get back to their real reading, and I'll get back to my Christmas flicks. Still haven't watched *Prancer* or *The Man Who Came to Dinner* or *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* yet.

But I've got Rita Mae Brown's new Mrs. Murphy mystery, ***Santa Clawed***, coming from Amazon probably tomorrow, and I'm eagerly awaiting it. So I might still get in some reading before the holidays are gone. Just in time to end that dry spell.

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to Sunday Saloners everywhere!

POSTED BY JLSHALL AT 4:07 PM 5 COMMENTS
LABELS: [BOOKS](#), [READING](#), [SUNDAY SALON](#)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2008

Booking Through Thursday: Treat & Generosity

Today there are two [BTT](#) topics.

What is the best book you ever bought for yourself? And, why? What made it the best? What made it so special?

Do you give books as gifts? To everyone? Or only to select people? How do you feel about receiving books as gifts?

Of course I give books as gifts. Well, to be honest, these days I'm more likely to give bookstore gift cards rather than actual books. But I consider that the same thing – and, yes, I know a lot of people wouldn't agree with me there. But in the past, before the appearance of gift cards, I've given many books as gifts. Especially to our nieces and nephews. In fact, one of our grand-nephews only really knows us as the aunt and uncle who gave him that great dragon book that one year. We really

need to see our kinfolk more often.

Personally, I love to receive books as gifts – whether it's a book I know I'm going to be interested in, or something unfamiliar that the giver chooses for me. But would I give books to everyone? Probably not. I always try to match the gift to the "giftee" – if I know someone isn't a reader, I don't think I'd be likely to buy him/her a book. I believe gift-giving should make both the giver *and* the recipient feel good about the experience.

The second set of questions is harder for me to answer. I've been buying books for myself for a *long* time. Trying to single out any *one* book as the *best* one, for whatever reason, is pretty much impossible. I suppose the *first* book I ever bought for myself would be the most special book, since it started me off on a lifelong book-buying habit that has inexpressibly enriched my life. Unfortunately, my memory of that first title has receded into the ancient mists, and I have no idea what it might have been. But whatever it was, it was definitely the best book I ever bought for myself.

POSTED BY JLSHALL AT 11:14 AM 4 COMMENTS

LABELS: BOOKING THROUGH THURSDAY, BOOKS, MEMES, READING

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2008

Tuesday Thingers: LT Home Page



First of all, I want to say a big thank you to Marie for coming up with Tuesday Thingers and hosting it all this time – I never have been able to see how she does it. Who would have thought LibraryThing could have inspired so many interesting topics to mull over? I can

understand the burnout issue, and I'm not surprised she needs a rest. Great job, Marie!

Now, to today's questions:

The LT Home Page feature. How are you liking it? Or not? Do you go here when you log into LT or do you use your profile page more?

Actually, I don't look at my LT home page very much at all. I use the profile page almost exclusively as my interface – that's where I go when I log into LT. I just never have found the home page very useful. Now and then I'll check out the "From the Blogs" feature to see if there are any updates there. And occasionally I'll look at the "On This Day" column. Which is how I found out today is Jane Austen's birthday, hence the photo. Happy birthday to Jane!



POSTED BY JLSHALL AT 7:31 AM 7 COMMENTS

LABELS: [BOOKS](#), [LIBRARYTHING](#), [MEMES](#), [READING](#), [TUESDAY THINGERS](#)

[Older Posts](#)

Subscribe to: [Posts \(Atom\)](#)

JLS HALL © 2008 *ALL RIGHTS RESERVED*
ALL BOOK COVERS ARE UNDER COPYRIGHT OF THEIR INDIVIDUAL PUBLISHERS.