



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

TUESDAY, JANUARY 06, 2009

Teaser Tuesdays: What's Going On Here?



Teaser Tuesdays is hosted by MizB at [Should Be Reading](#).

This week, my teasers come from page 99 of *Drawers & Booths*, by Ara 13 (Covington Moore Publishing House, 2007). And I suppose I should include an ****adults only**** warning.

He'd pleaded with John that Granite was a perfect porn name, but John was obstinate about needing a stage name, so he settled on Marty Poundstone.

It was the third day of shooting for *Watch Your Tuchus, Too*, the second installment of light porn for adventuring middle-aged Jews.

I've just started reading the book, so I haven't quite reached this snippet yet. I can't imagine how it ties in with the bit I've read so far; there hasn't been any mention of porn movies yet. I'll undoubtedly have more to say about the book later, but for now I'll just say it's keeping me turning the pages.

POSTED BY JLSHALL AT 4:54 PM 3 COMMENTS

LABELS: BOOKS, MEMES, READING, TEASER TUESDAYS

Feeling Chunky: The Chunkster Challenge 2009

Someone should invent the "Have You Lost Your Tiny Mind?" reading challenge – I'd be perfect for it.



So, here's the sad news. I've found yet another really neat, really unavoidable challenge (will you people ***please*** stop coming up with these!). I know I've already signed up for just

about every reading challenge on the internet. But the [Chunkster Challenge](#), hosted by Dana of [So Many Books So Little Time](#) (so true!), looks like a cinch. It runs until November 15th, and requires as few as two books. *And* allows crossovers with other challenges. See what I mean? A cinch.

For the purposes of the challenge, a "chunkster" is defined as 450 pages or more of literature written for adults (so no children's or YA titles). Fiction or non- is allowed, but no audiobooks. There are several reading levels to choose from:

1. **The Chubby Chunkster** - this option is for the reader who has a large tome or two to read, but really doesn't want to commit to more than that. 2 books is all you need to finish this challenge.
2. **Do These Books Make My Butt Look Big?** - this option is for the slightly heavier reader who wants to commit to 3-5 Chunksters over the next ten months.
3. **Mor-book-ly Obese** - This is for the truly out of control chunkster. For this level of challenge you must commit to 6 or more chunksters OR three tomes of 750 pages or more. You know you want to.....go on and give in to your cravings.
4. And lastly, in an intriguing collaboration with the wildly popular Miz B of the TBR Challenge we have:
Too Big To Ignore Anymore - this option is for those chunksters on your TBR list. You may select any number of books over 450 pages but you must LIST THEM to complete the challenge and they must be on your TBR list as well

I would really love to go with Level 2, just because of the name; but I'm going to be a sensible Chubby Chunkster and stick with the first level. I've already got [several chunky choices](#) on my "possibles" list for this year's challenges, and I'm pretty sure I can get through at least two of them.

To read more about the challenge and sign up, please visit the official challenge blog, [Feelin' Chunky](#). Now I need to go look for my misplaced sanity – oh, and start reading those chunksters.

POSTED BY JLSHALL AT 2:55 PM 4 COMMENTS

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

Tuesday Thingers: Authors



For this week's [Tuesday Thingers topic](#), Wendi ([Wendi's Book Corner](#)) has some questions about LT authors:

Did you know that there are 1497 authors participating in LT Authors? If you haven't checked it out, head over for a moment and see if you can find out something new about an author! If you don't have time to go snooping, have you ever looked at the LT Author page before? Did you know that it is for authors and readers alike? Have you ever looked up a favorite or new author on LT to see what they read and if they have left any comments or reviews themselves? Have you ever told an author about LT Authors and encouraged them to check the site out?

I *have* actually looked at the LibraryThing Authors Page once or twice in the past. Probably when I was looking up something for another Tuesday Thingers post. I've never really found it all that interesting or useful. Yes, there are quite a few authors listed, aren't there? Didn't realize there were so many. I didn't read the entire list, but of the first couple of hundred "most popular," I only recognized three or four.

I looked up a few of my favorite contemporary authors, but didn't find any of them listed. Before today, I had never done that. I've also never told an author about the site or encouraged an author to check it out. Shame on me! But then, I don't really know any authors. Well, none aside from the odd academic – and, yes, some of *them* are *very* odd indeed (apologies to my hubby and his colleagues).

POSTED BY JLSHALL AT 7:47 AM 6 COMMENTS

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

MONDAY, JANUARY 05, 2009

Musing Mondays: Library Books

It's been a while since I visited Musing Mondays. [This week's topic](#) is about libraries:

Do you have a system for borrowing out books from the library? Do you know what



*you're going to borrow before you get there?
How often do you borrow out books?*

I love libraries. I love just hanging out in them. I love that feeling of bringing home an armful of "new" books to sample. And even though I usually do go looking for something specific, I almost always come away with three or four volumes I just happened upon, once I started browsing the shelves.

Unfortunately, until very recently our local public library hasn't been one of the best I've encountered. So in recent years, I've sort of gotten out of the habit of borrowing books from the library, and started buying more of my own.

But the local library branch is improving, and I've been thinking that I really need to get back in the habit of paying it a regular visit. Especially since this year I'm planning to read quite a few titles I don't actually have in my personal collection, and I really don't want to buy that many *new* books. Well, actually I *do*. But we've only got so much room for books in this apartment if two humans are going to go on living here – and I don't want to have to ask the hubby to move out and get his own place!

POSTED BY JLSHALL AT 6:01 PM 3 COMMENTS

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

THURSDAY, JANUARY 01, 2009

Booking Through Thursday: New Year's Resolutions

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

So ... any Reading Resolutions? Say, specific books you plan to read? A plan to read more _____? Anything at all?

Name me at least ONE thing you're looking forward to reading this year!

Think I'll start with the second part of this topic: books I'm looking forward to reading in 2009. And there are a lot of them, so I'll just list a couple. One that I'm really itching to get my hands on is the new novel by Carlos Ruiz Zafon (***The Angel's Game***). I read his ***Shadow of the Wind*** a couple of years ago and loved it, so I'm really eager to see this new one. The English translation is due out sometime this spring. And I'm also looking forward to reading the new Adam

Dalglish novel by P.D. James, *The Private Patient*. I've got my copy - now I just need to sit myself down and *read* it.

I suppose the only real reading resolution I have this year is the same as the one I had at the beginning of 2008 – read *more* books than I read during the previous year. I have quite a few specific books that I intend to read – I've got myself involved in [fifteen challenges](#), so some of my reading agenda is already set. But most of that schedule is pretty flexible, and there are really only a few books that are must reads – I've left myself a lot of wiggle room in case interesting new books (or interesting new challenges) appear on the horizon.

In 2008 I read about forty-three books – I haven't done my wrap-up for the year, but I think that's right. I know that's not a lot by most standards, but it's more than twice as many as the nineteen I read in 2007. So I'm doing better, but there's definitely lots of room for improvement!

I'm relying heavily on the reading challenges I've joined. I know I wouldn't have gotten through all those books this year without the incentive provided by challenges, and the recommendations and reviews by other challenge participants. And LibraryThing's 50 Book Challenge discussion group has helped, too – I'm hoping in 2009 I can graduate to the 75 Book Challenge group!

So that's my resolution – **read more!** Not a bad goal – good for you and fun, too! Happy New (Reading) Year, everyone!

POSTED BY JLSHALL AT 11:01 AM 12 COMMENTS

LABELS: [BOOKING THROUGH THURSDAY](#), [BOOKS](#), [MEMES](#), [READING](#), [READING CHALLENGES](#)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2008

The Victorian Challenge



[The Victorian Challenge](#) (hosted by Alex) runs from January 1 to June 30, 2009. There are four reading levels to choose from, and you can select books *written during* the Victorian period, or books *set in that period*, or even books *about that period* (including biographies).

I'm going with the second reading level ("*a walk in Hyde Park*") and choosing four books with the Victorian Era as their setting.

Here's my list:

1. ***Angels & Insects***, by A.S. Byatt
2. ***The Master***, by Colm Toibin
3. ***Mistress of Mellyn***, by Victoria Holt
4. ***Mortal Love***, by Elizabeth Hand

And a few alternate titles, in case I get really ambitious:

1. ***The Moonstone***, by Wilkie Collins
2. ***The Woman In White***, by Wilkie Collins
3. ***Affinity***, by Sarah Waters
4. ***The 19th Wife***, by David Ebershoff
5. ***The Dante Club***, by Matthew Pearl
6. ***The Warden***, by Anthony Trollope

You can sign up by visiting the challenge announcement page here [here](#).

POSTED BY JLSHALL AT 4:11 PM 2 COMMENTS

LABELS: BOOKS, READING, READING CHALLENGES, VICTORIAN CHALLENGE

The Romance Reading Challenge 2009



Naida (from [The Bookworm](#)) is hosting the [Romance Reading Challenge 2009](#) which runs from January 1 to December 31. Basically, the idea is to read five novels that fall within the broad spectrum of romance literature. You can read all the guidelines and sign up by visiting the challenge announcement page ([here](#)).

For this challenge, I'm going to be reading five Gothic romance novels – mostly 20th Century, but I think I'll start with Jane Austen. Here's my list (subject to change, of course):

- Northanger Abbey***, by Jane Austen
- Daughter of the Stars***, by Phyllis A. Whitney
- Mistress of Mellyn***, by Victoria Holt
- The Stormy Petrel***, by Mary Stewart

One more – possibly another Victoria Holt, or something by Barbara Michaels.

Or, if I get really ambitious, maybe I'll branch out and try one of the classic Gothics. I've never read *The Castle of Otranto*, or *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, or *The Monk*, or even Wilkie Collins. So I've got a lot of literature to choose from.

POSTED BY JLSHALL AT 3:27 PM 3 COMMENTS

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

The MysteryReaderCafe Reading Challenge 2009



This challenge is actually part of the Mystery Reader Cafe Group at Yahoo.com, but you don't have to be a member of the group to join. Just visit the [challenge announcement post](#) by Kari at Another Book On The Stack, to sign up. The challenge runs all year long, and the guidelines are these:

1. Read a mystery with the word "murder" in the title.
2. Read a mystery set in your region.
3. Read a mystery that has been on your shelf for at least a year.
4. Read a mystery from a "new to you" author.

And here's my list (subject to change, of course):

1. ***Murder, She Meowed: A Mrs. Murphy Mystery***, by Rita Mae Brown
2. ***Santa Clawed: A Mrs. Murphy Mystery***, by Rita Mae Brown
3. ***A Stitch in Time: A Needlecraft Mystery***, by Monica Ferris
4. ***Index to Murder: A Miss Zukas Mystery***, by Jo Dereske

POSTED BY JLSHALL AT 3:00 PM 2 COMMENTS

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

Challenged Again

Well, after much mulling over, and hemming and



hawing, and telling myself it's time to face reality and stop this madness – I'm just gonna break down and do it, already! Yes, folks, I'm signing up for three more reading challenges.

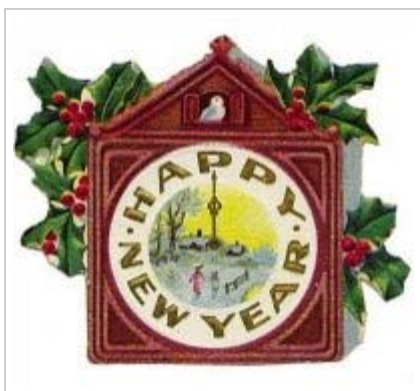
No, but see – here's the deal. These three should be pieces of cake because they allow crossovers with other challenges, and they don't require the reading of huge masses of books; and yet they all three allow me to read more of the kinds of literature I really like to read, and/or nudge me into reading books I would not have looked at otherwise (she said to herself, with a rationalizing and slightly hysterical giggle).

This will bring my total to fifteen challenges, counting my personal "Reading the '90s" challenge. Now while that may seem like a lot (no, no – not at all – it sounds like a perfectly reasonable number), I know there are those of you who are signed up for thirty or more (oh, yes – you know who you are) which makes my fifteen look like a pitiful showing.

So I'll be taking on [The Romance Reading Challenge 2009](#), [The Victorian Challenge](#), and the [2009 Mystery Reader Cafe Reading Challenge](#). I'll do separate posts about each of them as soon as I get my book lists together. Now you guys have just *got* to stop coming up with these enticing new challenges! And I really, *really* mean that!

POSTED BY JLSHALL AT 11:53 AM 1 COMMENTS
LABELS: BOOKS, READING, READING CHALLENGES

New Year's Message



Happy New Year to all!

And I just want to say a brief thank you to everyone who's visited my blog (make that blogs) during the year – especially you wonderful people who've left comments and book recommendations. I've met so many great bloggers during this past year – the experience has been much more rewarding than I ever could have predicted when I started out. You

guys are amazing!

Best wishes to all of you and your families – I hope 2009 brings peace, prosperity, and lots of good times (and good books) your way.
