

Between the Covers by Judy Smith

How to escape, where to escape to? It is November 9th, the day after one of the most contentious election periods in my memory. Whatever side you were on, there was enough nastiness to go around. No more talking heads for me right now. So I turned to books..

But I thought, what do I want to read? These are just my choices, your books for consolation might be very different. These work for me.

First, I browsed through Gulf of Maine bookstore and found a book by Rabbi Kushner titled *Nine Essential Lessons I've Learned About Life*. There are 10 chapters, each an essay on life. From the beginning, I found some soothing lessons, "Forgiveness is a favor you do yourself", "Religion is what you do, not what you believe", and the last lessons he learned in seminary. He says, "I was told to go out and teach, but I realized I needed to go out and learn." How many times in our lives do we realize how much we still have to learn. Thank goodness for books and Senior College.

OK, so that was the first book I picked up. The next was a gift at the right time. Alexander McCall Smith's latest book, *Precious and Grace, no. 17* in the series about a ladies detective agency in Botswana, Africa. The characters are some of the most delightful I have read. The descriptions of the desert and the mysteries they solve are wonderful. There are Mma Ramotswe and her husband, Mr. J.L.B Matekoni. Yes they call each other Mma and Mr. at all times. I am not really a mystery reader, but these have captivated me for a long time. Your choice may be Louise Penny or Agatha Christie, but they surely take us away.

For humor, not lessons and not mystery, I picked up from my bedside table, *Road to Little Dribbling, Adventures of An American in England* by Bill Bryson. Humor is hard to write, but there are laugh out loud moments in this book. Try it.

So as many of you know, I am also a BIG fan of children's books, so eventually, I turned to some favorites and a new one that post election week. *There Is A Bear in My Chair*, by Russ Collins is so delightful that a friend of mine has read it to her husband more than once. My husband is a very good listener as well. A polar bear is in the mouse's chair and he struggles to find a polite and politically correct way to get him out. "I know that bears are rare. I know they need the utmost care, but I still cannot stand this bear." Yum!

Jon Klassen has written a couple of books about two turtles and a hat. His latest, *We Found a Hat*, teaches us in a wondrous way a lesson in kindness. We can all use that right about now. Sometimes mice and turtles can teach us more than humans.