

MesquiteLocal NEWS

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Monday, November 14, 2011

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COLUMNS

Gift Guide 2011

Posting Date: 11-13-2011

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

You had your eyes wide open.

Still, it happened: the holidays snuck up on you, just like they do every year. One day, it was September and you were drinking something iced. The next minute, you had a long gift list in your hand and you were standing, baffled, in the middle of a crowded store, wondering how you ever got to this point and wishing for that iced drink.

Allow me to make your life easier. Here's a gift guide to make fulfilling that list a snap and your holidays smoother by giving books...

Okay, now the important stuff: release dates are approximate. You might have to order what you want to give, so allow plenty of time. If all else fails, buy yourself the book and give a gift certificate. Heck, buy yourself the book anyhow because you've worked hard this year. And if you've got questions, nicely ask your favorite bookseller because she's made it her job to put books in your hands.

Season's Readings !

Gift Guide 2011

FICTION

Your giftee might be someone's wife. She might be his second wife. But imagine being someone's fourth wife – and the other three are still married to hubby! In "The Secret Lives of the Four Wives" by Lola Shoneyin, a woman becomes a fourth bride and quickly becomes the favorite. But what will it do to the family? I'm not telling. Wrap it up and ask your giftee later...

If your giftee has read all the Twilight books and is eager to move onto something with a little more bite, then wrap up "Tattoo" by Kirsten Imani Kasai. This fantasy book is about human-animal mutations that can switch genders at will. That's not always a good thing... especially when the Tattoo draws both alter-egos into danger. Wrap it up with "Darker Still" by Leanna Renee Hieber, a story of a painting of a dead man.... or is he really dead? Umm hmm: guaranteed holiday hauntings. Also look for "Touch of Frost" by Jennifer Estep, a Harry-Potter-meets-romance kind of book with a touch of chaos and mystery.

Speaking of holiday hauntings, you might want to include "Ghosts by

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YelloWeb

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Gaslight," edited by Jack Dann and Nick Gevers. This collection of all-new stories by seventeen writers will keep your giftee right on the edge of his (or her!) seat right through the New Year.

If there's a traveler on your list, he or she might like "Touch and Go" by Thad Nodine. This "road novel" tells the story of a recovering addict who journeys with his sponsors from coast to coast to make an important delivery to a dying man. It's not, in any way, an easy trip, of course. Can you possibly resist wrapping a gift like this in an old map? Can you resist also giving "Tales of the New World", ten short stories by Sabina Murray, each with a travelers-and-explorers theme? I wouldn't be able to....

So you've got a knitter on your gift list and you hate giving yarn – again. Why not give her "Sunrise on Cedar Key" by Terri Dulong instead? This novel is about knitting together dreams and hopes, and a new life borne from the ashes of an old one. Another book that will appeal to someone who loves books about loss and rising from the ashes is "Silver Girl" by Elin Hilderbrand, the story of a woman who loses everything and escapes her problems with her best friend – only to step into different problems.

Has your giftee ever dreamed of chucking it all and running away? Then here's a great book to give: "The Double Life of Alfred Buber" by David Schmahmann. Alfie Buber is known and loved by everybody in town but he lives a secret life. Can he meld the two existences into one happy life?

If your giftee loves a good bodice-ripper with faith-based characters, then look for "Highland Sanctuary" by Jennifer Hudson Taylor. Set in ancient times, this book tells the story of a "comely lass" who captures a chieftain's heart after he discovers a secret village of outcasts. There's adventure and battle in this book, but God's word is in here, too. Also look for "Yours, Unexpectedly" by Susan Fox, a book about a wedding postponed and the romance that springs from it.

If your giftee relishes a good sweeping, many-layered epic novel, you can't go wrong by wrapping up "Conquistadora" by Esmerelda Santiago. Set in the mid-1800s in varying locales around the world, this novel tells the story of a young woman who leaves Spain to travel to Cuba and faces dangers and challenges she never knew she'd see.

Who doesn't love a good mystery? For sure, you've got someone on your gift list who does, which is why you'll want to look for "Defensive Wounds" by Lisa Black. When forensic investigator Theresa MacLean is handed a case where everybody involved is a suspect with a motive and several influential lawyers are found dead, she knows that she has to gather good evidence – even though the crime scene is a mess. And for an even better gift, pair it up with "Motor City Shakedown" by D. E. Johnson, the story of revenge in Detroit, gangsters, unions, and a deadly mob war.

Want more for the mystery maven? Look for "Ghost Hero" by S. J. Rozan, the story of a P.I. who's been hired to find the latest star in the art world. Ghost Hero Chau is making a huge splash with his amazing paintings. The problem is, he's been dead for two decades... Pair it up with "Swift Edge" by Laura DiSilverio, a book about a missing figure