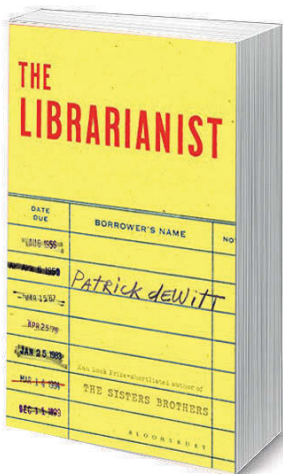


THE (EXTRA)ORDINARY LIFE OF A SOLITARY READER

THIS UNUSUAL BOOK GIVES A PEEK INTO THE DULL ORDINARY LIFE OF A RETIRED LIBRARIAN; IT SHOWS YOU HOW LIFE OFFERS SMALL JOYS TO ALL OF US



THE LIBRARIANIST
 Author: Patrick deWitt
 Publisher: Bloomsbury Publishing

NEIL PATE

Loneliness can be killing for many. But not for Bob Comet (71), a retired librarian. He prefers books over people. Perhaps because he sees the outside world through the characters in the books. Bob prefers to spend his solitary days amid books in his house in Portland, Oregon. "He had no friends, per se; his phone did not ring, and he had no family." Renowned best-selling author Patrick deWitt manages to tune in a melancholy rhythm to Bob's quiet and monotonous routine from the start.

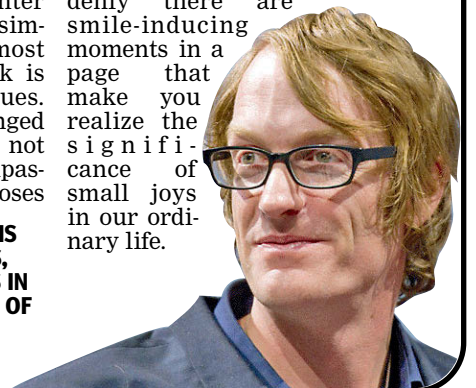
Bob steps out for his morning walks and does his weekly chores. However, a chance encounter with an elderly woman, who seems lost in a

supermarket changes his life forever. Dressed in a pink sweat-suit, the woman is looking longingly at some cold beverages in a 7-Eleven store but is unable to decide what she wants. When asked about her family and residence, she is clueless. She suffers from dementia. Bob learns that she stays at the nearby senior citizen's centre. He drops her there and before you know it, he is volunteering there. Reading stories, which many old folks are not even interested in listening to. There are funny conversations and memories of a lifetime. The novel scrolls back

THE NOVEL JUMPS BACK AND FORTH OVER HALF A CENTURY, WHICH IS JARRING AT TIMES. BUT THE DIFFERENT QUIRKY CHARACTERS - LINUS, ETHAN, CONNIE, AND HER CRAZY FATHER INDUCE LIGHTER MOMENTS IN THIS PLAIN AND SIMPLE BOOK. THOUGH THE MOST INCREDIBLE PART OF THIS BOOK IS DEWITT'S WITTY DIALOGUES.

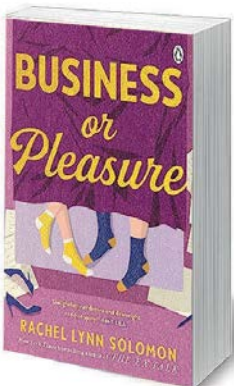
and forth when Bob was 11, the World War II days, the day he met his wife (Connie) and the day she left him for his best friend. The novel jumps back and forth over half a century, which is jarring at times. But the different quirky characters - Linus, Ethan, Connie, and her crazy father induce lighter moments in this plain and simple book. Though the most incredible part of this book is deWitt's witty dialogues. Although Bob has been wronged by his dear ones, he does not hold grudges. There is compassion, empathy, and copious doses

of humanity in this tale. Of course, laced with a dry sense of humour. You feel sorry for Bob, but you realize that he has no qualms about it and gets along with misfits. There are several pages where the writing seems verbose and does not strike an emotional chord. And then suddenly there are smile-inducing moments in a page that make you realize the significance of small joys in our ordinary life.



THE PRICELESS BOOK NOOK

You cannot afford to miss the steamy romance titles and grimdark thrillers of this month that will wash away your rainy-day blues, writes Neil Pate



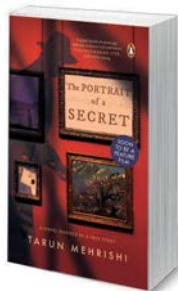
BUSINESS OR PLEASURE
 Author: Rachel Lynn Soloman
 Publisher: Penguin

Imagine a ghostwriter (Chandler Cohen) attending the book signing event of a memoir she has to write for actor-cum-author (Finn Walsh) with whom she had a one-night stand a long time ago. Worse still, he does not even recognize her. Bestselling author Rachel Lynn Soloman packs in all the fun, flirty-dirty, and steamy stuff in her latest YA romcom *Business or Pleasure*. From the very first chapter to the last, the reader is on a voyeuristic biz-cum-pleasure trip peeking into Chandler and Finn's daily lives. Things take an interesting turn when Chandler tells Finn blatantly that he was not great in bed. So, they strike a deal to work on the book during the day, and at night Chandler would teach him the art of satisfaction. The author has a gift of gab. This book is a sexy riot. Just read it nice and slow.



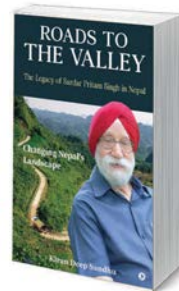
SONS OF DARKNESS Author: Gourav Mohanty Publisher: AdAstra Book

This grimdark fantasy story with a spin-off of mythology will keep you glued from the beginning till the end. Author Gourav Mohanty's gut-wrenching book, *Sons of Darkness* takes the reader to the darker side and leaves you wondering whether some of our epic heroes were mere pawns in this battle of good versus bad. Be it Mati, the pirate princess of Kalinga, who plans to mend her ways and become a good wife, or the disgruntled Karna who knows that there are no second chances in destiny. The author has created powerful characters that leave you spellbound even as war, revenge, lust, power games, and macabre spill on and off the pages in this re-imagined piece of epic literature. There are fresh viewpoints and arguments due to which the historic role models and heroes appear more real and human, keeping in mind today's times.



THE PORTRAIT OF A SECRET
 Author: Tarun Mehrishi
 Publisher: Penguin eBury Press

If you like books inspired by true events then Tarun Mehrishi's, *The Portrait of a Secret* will leave you on the edge of your seat. An art heist of two paintings worth Rs 400 to fund terror strikes, and the well-etched characters across different countries and timelines make for a riveting read. While senior IAS officer Kamal and the intelligence chief are on the job to recover the priceless paintings, the story is interwoven with historic events that dominated the world stage - Partition, the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the annexation of Kashmir, the Indian film industry et al. There is also the tussle between Indian intelligence and the ISI and CIA for control over the top secret. There are assassinations, political rivalry, sinister plans, nasty surprises, and priceless paintings that could save the world.



ROADS TO THE VALLEY: THE LEGACY OF SARDAR PRITAM SINGH IN NEPAL
 Author: Kiran Deep Sandhu
 Publisher: Notion Press

Publicity whether positive or negative is a blessing in disguise. Even before its release this month, Kiran Deep Sandhu's book, *Roads to the Valley: The Legacy of Sardar Pritam Singh in Nepal* has become the talk of the town. The book focuses on the commendable contributions made by businessman Sardar Pritam Singh, who is often referred to as the father of Nepal's transport system. He revolutionized Nepal's transport system. However, the recent comments by Nepal's Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda on Singh's 'efforts' to make him the PM have stirred up a storm in the Himalayan Nation. This biography chronicles Singh's arduous journey where nobody dared to venture. From crossing the treacherous Ganges with three trucks to driving in the dangerous mountains of Nepal, Sardar Pritam Singh's vision and efforts led to better connectivity in Nepal.



SINGLE DADS CLUB
 Author: Therese Beharrie
 Publisher: Montlake

It is not easy to be alone. Even tougher to raise a child single-handedly. In author Therese Beharrie's warm and tender novel, *Single Dads Club*, young dad Rowan Quinn is doing his level best to raise his son in a coastal village in South Africa. His one-night stand hookup dumps the kid on him and walks away without even giving him a second glance. He crosses paths with foot-loose and fancy-free waitress Delilah Huntington. She works in the Sugarbush Bay area. On seeing Rowan, she decides to connect him with other single dads in the town's support group. In the process, she develops a soft corner for introvert Rowan. Sparks fly between the couple but only time will tell if Delilah will be part of Rowan's perfect family photo frame.