Bet You Missed It--What Do Yeats and The Citadel Have in Common?

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ENDURING QUOTABILITY
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

In 1919, Yeats wrote his chilling poem “The Second Coming.” And yes, you know it because someone is constantly quoting from it. “And what rought beast, its hour come round at last, Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?” “The centre cannot hold.” “Things fall apart.” “The best lack conviction while the worst are full of passionate intensity.”

Territor attacks, press freedom in South Africa, income inequality in Nigeria, the Brexit vote — whatever. In 2016, Yeats has been tweeted and retweeted ad infinitum.


BOOK DEFICIT GUILT
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Of course no one’s actually read Ulysses. It just sits on the shelf. But you feel bad about it. What to do?

Curtis Sittenfeld wrote the 2016 best-selling Eligible — a retelling of Austen’s Pride and Prejudice. People sheepishly ask if they should read Austen first. She gives them a school-marmish mix of forgiveness and tough love.

Elda Rotor, VP of Penguin Classics suggests small bites without obsessing on finishing. Middlemarch is 800 pages after all. I personally always swore by Classics Comics.


CAMBRIDGE SPIES — PRIVILEGE & TREACHERY
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Let’s read about Cambridge spies. (1) Cyril Connolly, The Missing Diplomats (1952); (2) Tom Driberg, Gay Burgess (1956) (while Burgess and Maclean waited for the night boat to defect, they read Jane Austen.); (3) Goronwy Rees, A Chapter of Accidents (1972) (Rees was recruited but broke from the Reds after the Hitler-Stalin pact. Out of fear of exposure, Burgess considered killing him.); (4) Andrew Boyle, The Climate of Treason (1979); (5) Tim Milne, Kim Philby (2014) (nephew of A.A. Milne) In M16 with Philby who accused him of being a double agent to deflect attention from himself.)

And there’s a Citadel element in the story. Burgess was working at the embassy in DC when he was warned by Philby he was about to be interrogated by MI5. He had to get sent home so he could defect.

As chance would have it, he was sent to the Citadel to participate in an international relations conference. There was no I-95. He blew through small towns collecting speeding tickets and talking down to hick cops in a plummy voice, insisting he had diplomatic immunity.

At the Citadel he got blind drunk and passed out at the banquet. Next day had to bum money off cadets to pay his bill at the Ft. Sumter. Blew back through small towns collecting more tickets.

And was sent home.


SILK ROAD CUISINE
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Cook books that are also travelogues.

(1) Carolyn Phillips, All Under Heaven — Recipes from the 35 Cuisines of China; (2) Caroline Eden and Eleanor Ford, Samar- kand — Recipes & Stories from Central Asia & the Caucasus; (3) Naomi Duguid, Taste of Persia — A Cook’s Travels Through Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, and Kurdistan.