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Summer Reads

Summer Reading

Paperbacks Packed with Mirth, Mystery, Tears and Triumph

THE EDITORS OF *POINTS NORTH* scoured towers of bookshelves for heart-wrenching dramas and amusing tales that will fan the imagination while bathing in the warm sun. Whether you are transported to war-torn Kabul or wandering through the Forbidden City or even traipsing around town with the hilarious girl in a white, pouffy dress, these books will take you far away from summer's smoldering heat. Read, laugh, cry and enjoy. Just don't forget to turn so that you don't burn.

Fiction

"Where the River Runs"

By Patti Callahan Henry

Penguin Books, 2005

For a Southern author, being compared to Pat Conroy is like winning the lifetime achievement award at the Oscars. You're vindicated as a colorful storyteller with a lyrical voice and tenacious wit. Patti Callahan Henry deemed herself unworthy of such a comparison, even though the name Conroy kept popping up in review after review of her first novel "Losing the Moon" in 2004.

The two writers share a profound passion for the mystical healings of the Lowcountry off the coasts of South Carolina and Georgia, as well as a deep-rooted respect for Southern teachings. And they both inspire the reader to scribble down passages and post them on the fridge for daily inspiration. Henry's second work "Where the River Runs," published this past May, garnered the Norcross wife and mother of three another two-book contract and a lasting reputation as a force to reckon with in women's contemporary fiction.

Her heroine Meridy Dresden is your typical suburban housewife with a successful loving husband and a son away at college. Meridy has tea with her best friend, browses the racks at Neiman Marcus, attends board meetings at the local private school, and accompanies her husband Beau to pretentious business dinners at the club. Like so many other well-to-do women, especially in the South, she's caught up in playing the role of a perfect wife and mother, Henry said in a face-to-face interview. And yet, that's all it really is, a convoluted act.

As a child growing up in Seaboro along the sands of South Carolina, Meridy was a spirited, stubborn soul. She rebelled against her rigid mother and became one with the untamed waves. "The Lowcountry and city settings are metaphors for Meridy's two separate lives, with the river dividing them; one life lush, wild and sacred; the other sterile, disconnected and restricted," writes Henry in the novel's supplementary conversation guide. The setting is really just as much of a character as the individuals themselves, she added. Henry herself has vacationed there for the past 18 years, and her husband picked it as the perfect spot to propose.

For Meridy, life as a teenager was blessedly carefree, although she was often made to feel ashamed of such happiness. "The framed portraits of my relatives along the wall stared at me with their cold, disapproving glares," Meridy observed on the night of her high school graduation. "God, why didn't any of them smile back? Someone had once told me it was because everyone had bad teeth in those days. I believed they didn't smile because they'd all been taught that having fun led to a life of foolishness. First the smile, then eternal damnation."

This young, lighthearted girl had hoped to escape such a dismal future. That is until a tragic fire on the beach killed her first love Danny. The young couple's dreams of everlasting love burned right along with



the Lighthouse Keeper's Cottage. In hopes of starting afresh, Meridy's parents whisked her away, still grieving for what could have been. Eventually, she would move on and start a new life with a new love, never to speak of her unfulfilled destiny or nagging guilt again.

Still, no matter how hard you try to leave behind the past and all its pain, it has a sneaky way of rearing its ugly head at the most inopportune time. In Meridy's case, her mother reports that Tim, a childhood best friend still living in Seaboro, is being blamed for the destruction of the Keeper's Cottage more than 20 years later and will be forced to pay for the restoration.

In an effort to clear his name, she returns home and delves into her resilient roots. Meridy is ready to patch up some of the strained relationships from her past and begins to question her purpose. But will it be at the cost of her structured life? Will she risk her family's name and a happy marriage to make amends for an accident that transpired so long ago? And is the sacrifice worth discovering who she's really meant to be?

Log onto www.patticallahanhenry.com for an in-depth look at Henry, the pen behind the poetic prose. Her next book, slated for May 2006, tells the tale of an older Irish woman recounting her life story to a young lady just recently engaged to be married.

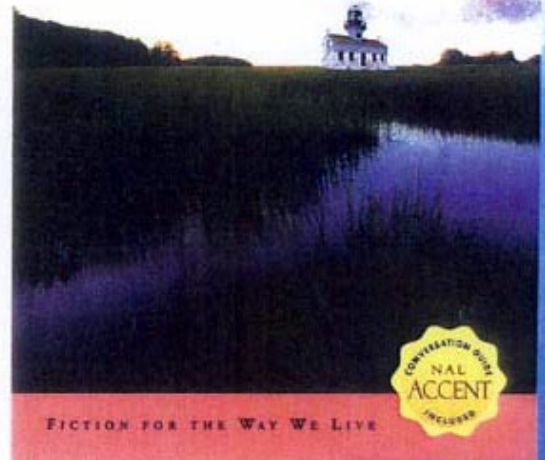
— Review by Suzanne Kayes

"Brilliant. Powerful. Magical. Do not miss this book."—Haywood Smith,
New York Times Bestselling Author of *The Red Hatz Aler Again*

Where *the* River Runs

PATTI CALLAHAN HENRY

Author of *Loving the Moon*



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