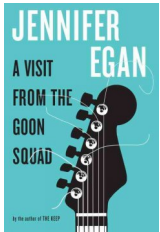


True grit

New to Me Only 3(+) Years Later!



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I try to stay familiar with new books coming out, but also keep a list (on goodreads.com) so I don't miss anything great either. I recently read two great books that either were published in 2010 or enjoyed a resurgence in 2010. These two books don't have too much in common, but I missed them then, maybe you did too!

A Visit From the Goon Squad by Jennifer Egan is a complicated contemporary novel that follows many different characters, but centers around Bennie and Sasha, who work in the music industry. We meet both of them at different points in their lives, from teenagers to older parents and the novel stretches from the Bay Area, to NYC, to Africa and Naples. Each chapter focuses on a particular character at a specific time and place with no real instruction to the reader on the how and why. Through the strength of Egan, this doesn't break down the narrative. I really enjoyed all of the voices, varied narrative structures, and cried during a chapter told as a powerpoint told by a 14 year old character previously un-introduced. This book is risky, edgy, intellectual, unafraid of emotion, and requires a lot from the reader. With all that said, it was also highly enjoyable!

Originally published in 1968, *True Grit* by Charles Portis was republished recently after the 2010 Coen Brothers film adaptation. This short novel is narrated by Mattie Ross, a 14 year old who hires a notorious US Marshall, Rooster Cogburn, to track the man who shot and killed her father in Indian Territory in the 1870s. They are joined by LaBoeuf, a Texas Ranger who is looking for the same man for a different crime. Not enough can be said about the excellence of the narration. It pulls you in right from the start and the deadpan humor and wry observations make for a really fun read. Even though you know the outcome of the climax, the tone and pacing of the action at the end was perfect. Westerns usually aren't my thing, but these three memorable characters really will stay with you.

Posted by sbowman on February 28, 2013

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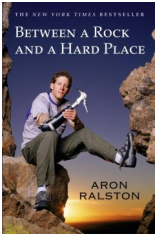
[Westerns](#)

Reviews Titles:

[True grit](#)

[A Visit from the Goon Squad](#)

From Book to Movie to Award Nomination



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Where does Hollywood get many of their ideas? Comic books? Yes. TV shows from the 1970s? *Sigh* - yes. But also from books! Real books! This year's Academy Award nominations were announced this week, including 5 films for Best Adapted Screen Play - 4 of which are based on books. The fifth film, Toy Story 3 is based on a original treatment of the first movie (or something).

If you liked these movies - you might try the original too! I know I am adding several of these to my to-read list.

Between a Rock and a Hard Place by Aron Ralston

This memoir is the basis for Danny Boyle's film 127 Hours and tells the amazing true story of a hiker who had to make a terrible decision after being trapped and injured alone in the desert for over five days. As a sometimes solo hiker, I am intrigued by this story. Both movie and book are on my list.

The Accidental Billionaires by Ben Mezrich

Writer Aaron Skorkin transformed this "juicy, fast-paced, unputdownable" book (as quoted by Kevin Spacey) into The Social Network - a movie with dialogue that flew fast and furious. Mezrich's account may or may not be entirely true (same goes for the movie), but he is nothing if not a storyteller.

Winter's Bone by Daniel Woodrell

From billionaires to the poverty stricken Ozarks we go. Ree, 16, has learned that her father has put their house up as bond for his meth-related arrest and as the court date appears, is nowhere to be found. Despite caring for her younger brothers and ill mother, Rees tries to find her father even though it means encountering unhelpful and often dangerous family members. The novel portrays the bleakness of rural poverty and the harshness of a meth community, but is also filled with hope and promise.

True Grit by Charles Portis

I have seen both the 1969 version with John Wayne and the new Coen Brother's versions of this film, and it might be high time to put this western on my list too. With reviews like these, it would be a crime not to:

"An instant classic... Read it and have the most fun you've had reading a novel in years, maybe decades."--*Newsday*

"Skillfully constructed, a comic tour de force."--*The New York Times Book Review*

"Charles Portis details the savagery of the 1870s frontier through an astonishing narrative voice: that of the 14-year-old Mattie Ross, a flinty, skeptical, Bible-thumping scourge"--*Wall Street Journal*

So while many people are watching new movies before the Academy Awards in the spring, reading a few seems like a good idea too.

Posted by sbowman on January 27, 2011

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Information, Answers & Reviews

Reviews Subjects:

Award Winner

Reviews Titles:

Between a Rock and a Hard Place

The accidental billionaires : the founding of Facebook, a tale of sex, money, genius and betrayal

Winter's bone : a novel

True grit
