

family from whom he will inherit neither title nor fortune and who comes to depend on the largess of his schoolboy friend and lover, Perry Sinclair, and of Perry's sister, Charlotte. Charlotte is a smallpox survivor whose fortunes are considerably diminished by her facial scarring and who is kept firmly under the thumb of her irascible brother until he marries her off to a mean and neglectful husband. These three characters find their lives converging in the boxing arena—Ruth, as a fighter and later as the supportive wife of an aspiring champion; Charlotte, with a developing fascination for the sport, both as a spectator and a would-be participant; and George, as a gambler hoping that a big win will secure his future. **VERDICT** This debut, a ripping fine yarn, will have particular appeal to fans of recent Austen-era hits such as Jo Baker's *Longbourn* and P.D. James's *Death Comes to Pemberley*. Thoroughly entertaining and highly recommended. [See Prepub Alert, 10/27/14.]—**Barbara Love**, formerly with Kingston Frontenac P.L., Ont.

**Galassi, Jonathan. *Muse*. Knopf. Jun. 2015. 272p. ISBN 9780385353342. \$24.95; ebk. ISBN 9780385353359. F**

Although the plot of this first novel focuses on the fraught relationship between two powerful men at the helm of independent publishing houses during the decades after World War II, it's essentially a "love story" celebrating the glory days of New York publishing written by one of its own. Galassi, the president and publisher of Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, is the author of three collections of poetry, an acclaimed translator of poetry, and a former Guggenheim Fellow. Clearly, he is writing about what he knows best—the politics and colorful personalities of the publishing community, competition among powerful independent book houses, and fiction and poetry. The author's affection for this world, for the people in it, and for great writers of literature is evident throughout this volume, as is his nostalgia for those intoxicating years in publishing (before the rise of the Internet) when, as Galassi's protagonist Paul says, "everything seemed possible." **VERDICT** Although engagingly written, the novel is rather long on retrospection and nostalgia and reads in many places more like a memoir than a novel. Nonetheless, readers who love books and have an interest in publishing will find much to enjoy here.—**Patrick Sullivan**, Manchester Community Coll., CT

**Gardam, Jane. *The Hollow Land*. Europa Editions. Jan. 2015. 176p. ISBN 9781609452469. pap. \$15; ebk. ISBN 9781609452568. F**  
Originally published in 1981 in the UK and

## REVIEWER OF THE YEAR 2014



**Jane Jorgenson** Madison Public Library, WI

Jane Jorgenson, my fiction pick, is employed at the Madison Public Library (MPL) in Madison, WI, where she is the new manager of the Hawthorne and Lakeview neighborhood libraries. Back in 1998 when she was working part time at MPL and part time at a mystery bookstore, she saw that *LJ* was looking for someone to review thrillers and applied for the job. In the

16 years since, Jane has been my go-to critic on a wide range of suspense fiction from creepy psychological thrillers such as Sophie Hannah's *The Orphan Choir* to historical espionage titles such as Francine Mathews's *Jack 1939*. But she is no one-trick pony. Because Jane also wrote reviews for the All About Romance website, she has gradually expanded her purview to include chick lit, digital-only romances, and most recently new adult fiction. She even penned *LJ*'s first Genre Spotlight feature on this rapidly growing genre, "A World of Firsts" (*LJ* 9/15/14, ow.ly/G7hmu). Despite her new managerial duties, Jane remains a readers' advisor at heart. She's the content manager (and a reviewer) for MPL's book reviews blog, MADreads ([madisonpubliclibrary.org/madreads](http://madisonpubliclibrary.org/madreads)), in which she might post about her latest sf or fantasy reads, and she has led the team for the library's MADmatches events.

For Jane, reviewing for *LJ* feels like one more way to connect readers to books, with library selectors acting as intermediaries. Getting the word out about a fresh, great read is always her goal.—**Wilda Williams**

winner of the Whitbread Children's Book Award, this is a charming story for all ages about a community in Cumbria in England where the oil crisis has forced the people to practice premechanical farming methods. A London family named the Batemans rents a farm for the summer holidays and returns year after year. Son Harry becomes fast friends with Bell Teasdale, a local farmer's son, and together they get into mischief on a regular basis. As the years pass, the Batemans become an accepted part of the community. Only when an outsider threatens to ruin their way of life do the families truly understand how close they have become. **VERDICT** The only author to have won two Whitbread prizes (her second was 1991's *The Queen of the Tambourine*), Gardam brings the Cumbrian countryside and its people alive, weaving in superstition, magic, ghosts and cosmic events while telling her story. Highly recommended for all readers of fiction.—**Joanna Burkhardt**, Univ. of Rhode Island Libs., Providence

★ **Goldhagen, Shari. *In Some Other World, Maybe*. St. Martin's. Jan. 2015. 272p. ISBN 9781250047991. \$25.99; ebk. ISBN 9781466848290. F**

It's 1992 and teenagers all over America are thronging to the theaters for the long-awaited movie version of *Eons & Empires*, the alternate world odyssey that's the obsession of comic book geeks everywhere. In Florida, it's Adam Zoellner's opportunity to hook up with his longtime crush. In Cincinnati, Sharon Gallaher ditches school to watch the film, an innocuous act with devastating consequences. In Chicago, *E&E*'s premiere

marks the first date of Phoebe Fisher and Oliver Ryan, whose romantic aspirations are foiled when Phoebe's kid brother Chase tails them to the movie. Goldhagen's (*Family and Other Accidents*) pitch-perfect narrative follows these characters over the next 20 years, across the globe and through a time punctuated by landmark events ranging from the 1996 crash of youngest-ever pilot Jessica Dubroff to the 9/11 attacks. **VERDICT** From New York to Macau, these braided histories are imparted via witty, engaging prose peppered with almost unbearable poignancy. Sure to resonate with fans of nonlinear storytelling in the vein of Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad* and Zadie Smith's *NW*, this title deserves a place on every library shelf. Superb. [See Prepub Alert, 7/28/14.]—**Jeanne Bogino**, New Lebanon Lib., NY

**Gortner, C.W. *Mademoiselle Chanel*. Morrow. Mar. 2015. 416p. ISBN 9780062356406. \$26.99; ebk. ISBN 9780062356444. F**

Gortner's (*The Tudor Vendetta*) Coco Chanel is an innocent, unimpeachable in her intentions. The truly evil (jackbooted Nazis), nauseatingly insipid (every female in her family), or anarchically catty (the bohemians of Paris) force Chanel to make imperfect decisions in response to their failings, not from any character defect of her own. Why have an affair with a German officer? Not to enjoy creature comforts in a time of deprivation, oh no—but because it is her only option. Why take an interest in her nephew's fate? Because he is her sister's child—not because he is, as is believed by many, her own son. This self-delusion torpedoes Gortner's whitewashing of Chanel. In failing to