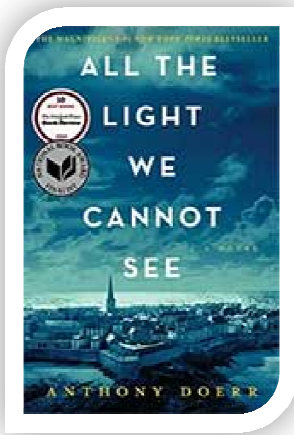


## Readin' & Writin' with Lauraine- April 2015



Last month I reviewed the *Maisie Dobbs* books set during World War I, and this month I read *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr, about World War II. Here I am again, thanking my Bookies Reading Group for coercing me—well not quite, but you know what I mean—to read a book I would not normally have picked up.

*All the Light We Cannot See* is one of those books I had to force myself to continue reading, but am grateful that I read. I know that doesn't make a lot of sense, but some things in life are that way. And yes, in spite of all that, I am recommending it for others to read.

I call it a worthy read because the writing is excellent, the plot and characters are well crafted, and I am still thinking about the characters and the story a month after I read the last page. The discussion at my meeting left us all feeling pretty much the same way.

There are two main characters in *All the Light We Cannot See*, a twelve-year old blind girl, and a boy of about the same age. She lives with her father who works at a museum in France. The near genius boy lives in an orphanage with his younger sister.

Anthony Doerr creates intricate lives for them and you are delighted with both, until Hitler sets out to take over the world. The father is entrusted to help save a one-of-a-kind diamond, and he and his family are forced to flee their home in Paris. The boy, who is a genius with all things mathematical, including building radios, is sent to a German boy's

school, leaving his sister behind. The secondary characters and plots are equally finely defined, including a German officer, who searches for the diamond, and the young boy's hunt for radio transmitters.

Reading this book was a challenge, but a memorable one. I imagine it will be made into a movie where it will be interesting to see what they choose to omit and leave in.

It's strange how lately I have been exposed to more books, movies, etc. regarding both World Wars than average. I usually stay away from war movies, war books, and war news because of the violence of it all, the horror, and the nightmares it engenders. So often books and movies glorify the brutality of men and I abhor that.

But I also believe that if we don't learn history, we are doomed to repeat it. We must learn from not only our own mistakes, but those of others. (Sorry, I did not aim to make this a political column.)

In between my reading of this book and the *Maisie Dobbs* books, I watched a movie called *The Courageous Heart of Irena Sendler*, also set during World War II. The movie is based on a true story about a woman who smuggled 2500 children out of the Jewish ghettos in Poland. She was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize, and from my perspective should have won it.

Extra reading time is one of the gifts of winter, as are handiwork and sewing, but now that warmth and sunny skies have come to California, I am bitten by the gardening bug. I am a confessed fair weather gardener, so I know I will find less time for reading on these bright spring days.

I hope you take time to enjoy the sunshine, do some reading, gardening, or writing this month. At least write a few of your family's stories down for your own benefit and that of your family.

Until next time,

*Happy readin' & writin' from Lauraine*