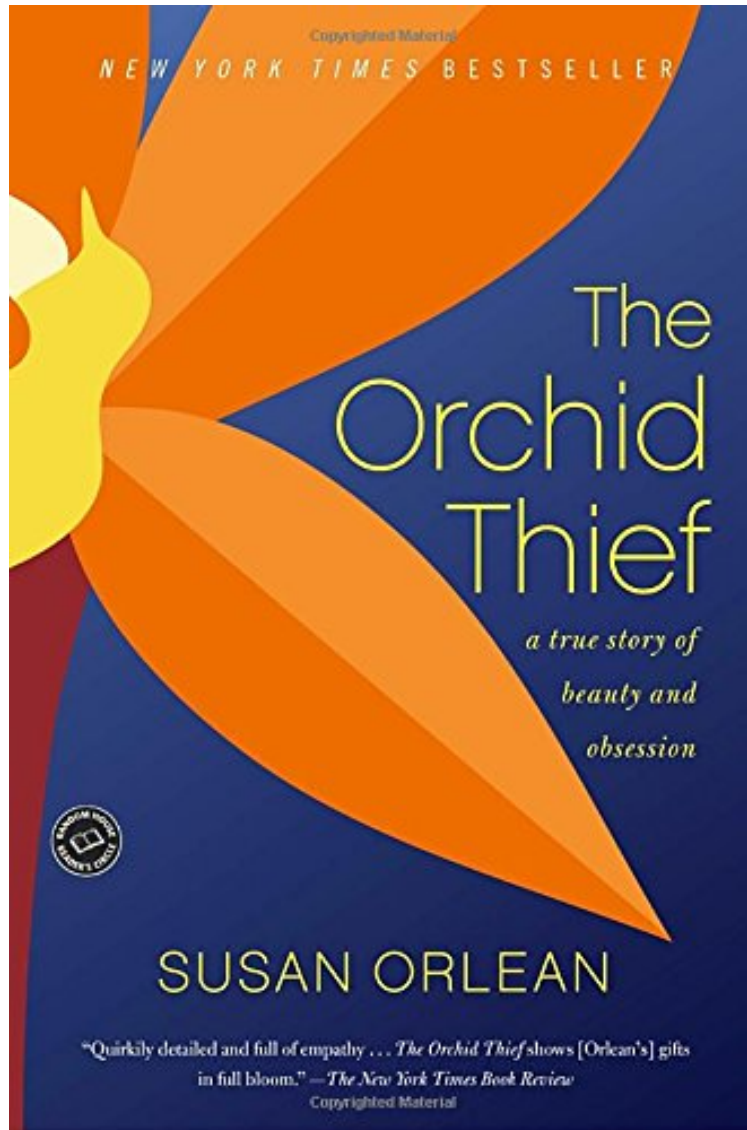


[Read now] The Orchid Thief: A True Story of Beauty and Obsession (Ballantine Reader's Circle)

The Orchid Thief: A True Story of Beauty and Obsession (Ballantine Reader's Circle)

Susan Orlean

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Susan Orlean : The Orchid Thief: A True Story of Beauty and Obsession (Ballantine Reader's Circle) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Orchid Thief: A True Story of Beauty and Obsession (Ballantine Reader's Circle):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Eccentric orchid collectorsBy DTTheres not much of a story here but many stories, history and information about orchids. I dont have a particular interest in orchids, yet the eccentric

characters that populate this world in Florida were fascinating, especially John Laroche, the orchid thief. I had no idea that there were orchid hunters and that this competitive culture of obsessive collectors existed. This book encompassed Orleans research and she has a unique way of describing a scene that I found compelling. I was always a bit confused by the movie Adaptation that was based on the book because the names of real people including the author, Susan Orlean were used. The screenwriter was also a character in the movie. Now I finally understand after watching the movie again that much of it was taken from the book but then it goes sideways into a fictitious story based on these real people. Confusing. But I liked the book. And the movie. I wish there had been some photos of orchids after reading Orleans descriptions. Heres one of my favorite lines in the book: I hate hiking with convicts carrying machetes. This book was a page turner for me.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Yet another window into the European Great White Hunter attitude of ruthless greed - which is ...By BSteeveThis is an interesting book. It doesn't have a gripping story line, the reader is not on the edge of his/her seat waiting to see what happens, but the history of orchid hunting is engagingly told - and a horrific story it is. The characters don't add a lot, but do provide a connective thread. Yet another window into the European Great White Hunter attitude of ruthless greed - which is unfortunately our environment's inheritance.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. fascinating bookBy CustomerI love Susan Orlean, and enjoyed the (non-fiction) story, real-life characters, and historic information about orchids and orchid collecting.

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER A NEW YORK TIMES NOTABLE BOOK A modern classic of personal journalism, *The Orchid Thief* is Susan Orleans wickedly funny, elegant, and captivating tale of an amazing obsession. Determined to clone an endangered flowerthe rare ghost orchid *Polyprrhiza lindenii* deeply eccentric and oddly attractive man named John Laroche leads Orlean on an unforgettable tour of Americas strange flower-selling subculture, through Floridas swamps and beyond, along with the Seminoles who help him and the forces of justice who fight him. In the end, Orleanand the readerwill have more respect for underdog determination and a powerful new definition of passion. In this new edition, coming fifteen years after its initial publication and twenty years after she first met the orchid thief, Orlean revisits this unforgettable world, and the route by which it was brought to the screen in the film *Adaptation*, in a new retrospective essay.Look for special features inside. Join the Random House Readers Circle for author chats and more. Praise for *The Orchid Thief* Stylishly written, whimsical yet sophisticated, quirkily detailed and full of empathy . . . *The Orchid Thief* shows [Orleans] gifts in full bloom.The New York Times Book Review Fascinating . . . an engrossing journey [full] of theft, hatred, greed, jealousy, madness, and backstabbing.Los Angeles Times Orleans snapshot-vivid, pitch-perfect prose . . . is fast becoming one of our national treasures.The Washington Post Book World Orleans gifts [are] her ear for the self-skewing dialogue, her eye for the incongruous, convincing detail, and her Didion-like deftness in description.Boston Sunday Globe A swashbuckling piece of reporting that celebrates some virtues that made America great.The Wall Street Journal

.com Orchidelirium is the name the Victorians gave to the flower madness that is for botanical collectors the equivalent of gold fever. Wealthy orchid fanatics of that era sent explorers (heavily armed, more to protect themselves against other orchid seekers than against hostile natives or wild animals) to unmapped territories in search of new varieties of *Cattleya* and *Paphiopedilum*. As knowledge of the family *Orchidaceae* grew to encompass the currently more than 60,000 species and over 100,000 hybrids, orchidelirium might have been expected to go the way of Dutch tulip mania. Yet, as journalist Susan Orlean found out, there still exists a vein of orchid madness strong enough to inspire larceny among collectors. *The Orchid Thief* centers on south Florida and John Laroche, a quixotic, charismatic schemer once convicted of attempting to take endangered orchids from the Fakahatchee swamp, a state preserve. Laroche, a horticultural consultant who once ran an extensive nursery for the Seminole tribe, dreams of making a fortune for the Seminoles and himself by cloning the rare ghost orchid *Polyprrhiza lindenii*. Laroche sums up the obsession that drives him and so many others: I really have to watch myself, especially around plants. Even now, just being here, I still get that collector feeling. You know what I mean. I'll see something and then suddenly I get that feeling. It's like I can't just have something--I have to have it and learn about it and grow it and sell it and master it and have a million of it. Even Orlean--so leery of orchid fever that she immediately gives away any plant that's pressed upon her by the growers in Laroche's circle--develops a desire to see a ghost orchid blooming and makes several ultimately unsuccessful treks into the Fakahatchee. Filled with Palm Beach socialites, Native Americans, English peers, smugglers, and naturalists as improbably colorful as the tropical blossoms that inspire them, this is a lyrical, funny, addictively entertaining read. --Barrie TrinkleFrom Publishers WeeklyFor listeners seeking to learn something new, Orlean offers a whimsical look at the sexy, mysterious world of orchids. Perfect for anyone who wants to know a little bit about a lot of things, this quirky, quintessential New Yorker story pulls back the curtain on a community of people who are driven by a passion to collect and cultivate some very exotic plants. New York journalist Orlean first learned about orchid "thief" John Laroche by reading a story about him in a local Florida newspaper. He (along with his henchmen, three Seminole Indians) had been taken to court for removing an endangered species of orchid from the state's Fakahatchee Swamp. Orlean hightailed it down to the Sunshine State to investigate and wound up immersing

herself in the wacky world of orchid maniacs, intrigued more by their passion than by the orchids themselves. Myers's reading vacillates between the inspiring and the pedagogical. When reading passages about the over-the-top nature of some eccentric orchid collectors, her tone borders on the affected. But during the book's more introspective moments, as when Orlean wishes she could be as passionate about something as her subjects are about orchids, Myers turns quiet and pensive. Overall, Myers's enthusiastic performance is a perfect complement to Orlean's book and the new motion picture loosely based on it, *Adaptation*. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Library Journal* The thief in question and offbeat genesis for New Yorker writer Orlean's book is ever-quotable eccentric John Laroche, whose craving for the rare orchid eventually lands him and three Indian accomplices in a Florida courtroom--and allows Orlean to write her appreciative and lyrically funny profile of obsession and Florida. (LJ 1/99) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.