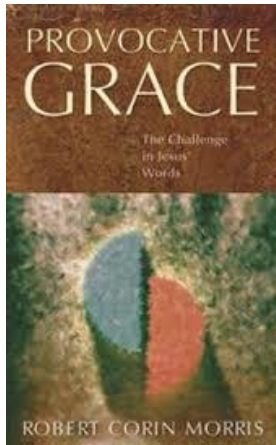


APRIL BOOK REVIEWS - WHAT'S NEW

Exploring Faith and Spirituality

PROVOCATIVE GRACE - THE CHALLENGE IN JESUS' WORDS

By Robert Carin Morris

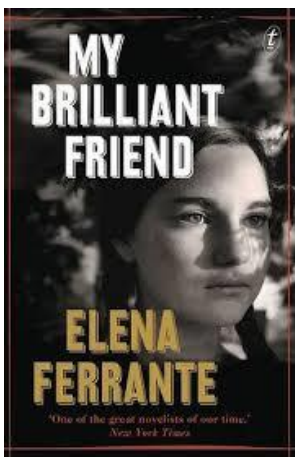


A restless search is on. Cover stories about the "real" Jesus are on the increase in news magazines, best sellers based on alternative Gospels, and documentaries. Whether you're a devout Christian, an inquiring seeker or a rank skeptic, this book is for you if you wish to explore the teaching of Jesus.... Provocative Grace focuses on the words of Jesus, not as rules to live by but as challenges to precipitate growth into greater maturity. Morris asks us to enlarge our existing concepts and to stretch our beliefs about Jesus beyond the borders of formal Christianity and what we learned in Sunday school. "The Jesus of the Gospels, in all his modes of encountering people — as prophet, healer, wisdom teacher, mystic, social critic, and nonviolent revolutionary — is a disturber of our immaturities, one who challenges us to find and use our strengths," writes Morris. "Jesus was neither a rule maker or idealist but a provocateur. Rather than impossible ideals imposed upon us, his sayings are prodding's to grow step-by-step, by trial-and-error learning, into the best possibilities of our nature." Listen to Jesus' words not with an attitude of uncritical acceptance or blind faith but rather with an openness to hear the message in a fresh way. Provocative Grace dares us to wrestle with Jesus' sayings and to experience a vivid revelation of God's love and grace. Each chapter helpfully arranges the book so that it may be an aid to personal reflection, journaling, or discussion.

Fiction

MY BRILLIANT FRIEND

By Elena Ferrante



This book is the first in a series of four, called the Neapolitan series. Despite being recognised on an international scale, Ferrante is a pseudonym, and she has kept her identity secret since the publication of her first novel. It tells the story of two girls – Elena and Lila, who grew up together in the 1950's in a poor neighbourhood of Naples. The relationship between the girls is intense and complex, and this first part is told over the years of their shared childhood experiences, up until the age of 16. The life they face in their neighbourhood is one of poverty and violence, full of the expectations of the social mores in the lives of girls and women, boys and men. The story is told in Elena's voice – she is academically gifted, but her identity is shaped and warped by her idea of her unusual friend, Lila.

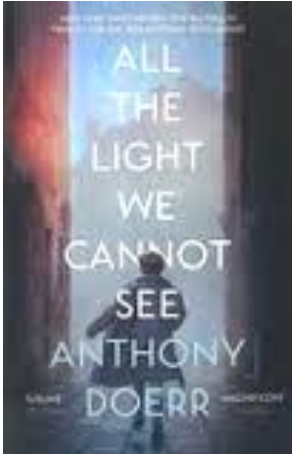
If you enjoy this read, you will want to go on to read the following books, which cover a span of 60 years.

Reviewed by Jill Kerr

Fiction

ALL THE LIGHT WE CANNOT SEE

By Anthony Doerr



Did you read 'The Light Between the Oceans'? Did you love it like I did? This book is beautiful in the same sense. It talks about the beauty of light or rather what happens when you cannot see the light.

'Open your eyes and see what you can with them before they close forever.'

For Marie-Laure, blind since the age of six, the world is full of mazes. One maze was a miniature plan of a Paris neighbourhood, which her father made for her, in order to teach her how to find her way home. Another was the microscopic layers within the invaluable diamond that her father guarded in the Museum of Natural History.

Enter the world of Marie-Laure's mazes and be enchanted by a bittersweet and moving novel that lingers in the mind.

Reviewed by Lorraine Powers