

Five Distinctly Canadian Must-Reads

Canadians have a rich literary past and continue to be nurtured by contemporary literature that defines who we are. For the benefit of DFAIT's thousands of employees, both Canadian and non-Canadian, we would like to suggest a small sampling of our country's rich literary heritage. The following five reads have been recommended by several of our colleagues. (For recommendations in French, please see the French version of this issue.)

Owls in the Family

Farley Mowat

In Farley Mowat's exciting children's story, a young boy's collection of pets grows out of control with the addition of two cantankerous great horned owls. The story of how Wol and Weeps turn the whole town upside down is warm, funny and bursting with adventure and suspense. Perfect for youth and the young at heart! *Recommended by Marcelo Lince.*

Jack, the Giant-Killer

Charles de Lint

In this popular fantasy novel, we meet an ordinary girl named Jacky Rowan who has been marked for destruction in a world that she doesn't even know exists. Behind the familiar facade of her hometown, Ottawa, lies the world of Faerie, where a number of evil entities set out to stop Jacky before she realizes that she is the key to a brewing war. In brilliant fashion, de Lint weaves fantasy and reality together for a truly amazing read! *Recommended by Emily Haji.*

This Cake Is for the Party

Sarah Selecky

Set in contemporary Canada, this collection of short stories brilliantly evokes the fine details of life that on their own may seem insignificant, but that gathered together make up a rich and textured portrait of life in our country. The stories describe a Canada that is real and approachable, filled with everyday people in ordinary settings (modest homes, the mall, the cottage, endless highways). The beauty and the depth of emotion presented in these stories is extraordinary. *Recommended by Anna McAlear.*

Nationalism Without Walls: The Unbearable Lightness of Being Canadian

Richard Gwyn

Essential reading for anyone trying to come to terms with Canadian identity. Gwyn, one of our leading political commentators, presents some interesting perspectives: multiculturalism is a force of division; the North American Free Trade Agreement is a sovereignty-association pact; the UN's ranking of Canada as the number one country for quality of life stems from the values of English Canada. Extremely thought-provoking. *Recommended by Campbell Morrison.*

Beauty Tips from Moose Jaw: Travels in Search of Canada

Will Ferguson

A fast and fun account of Ferguson's many travels in his native land. He starts out in Victoria (with its "England as it never really existed" veneer) and ends up at L'Anse aux Meadows, offering a meditative tribute to Canada. In the title piece, Ferguson checks out a health spa in Moose Jaw and also explores the city's slightly suspect history as a hub for the liquor trade during Prohibition in the United States. Other jaunts lead him to polar-bear country, a pancake restaurant in Thunder Bay and an iron ship built by a hard-luck 1930s Finnish immigrant desperate to return to his native land. *Recommended by Curtis Field.*

