

## Information, Answers & Reviews

# Lt. Robin Crusoe U.S.N.



[view in catalog](#)

There are times when I just want to laugh. I don't really care if the movie is a great movie. I don't really care if the acting is great and I don't care if the plot makes sense. I just want to laugh and enjoy wasting my time for a little while. *Lt. Robin Crusoe U.S.N.* starring Dick Van Dyke serves this purpose perfectly for me. The movie is housed in the Juvenile collection even though to really understand all of the jokes it is helpful to at least be familiar with Daniel Defoe's story of Robinson Crusoe.

As one might guess from the title the film tells the story of a castaway on a deserted island. Lt. Crusoe is forced to abandon his navy jet when the engine fails. [Read more](#)

Posted by Keith C. on September 1, 2015

[Lt. Robin Crusoe U.S.N \[videorecording\]](#)

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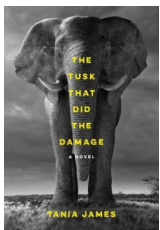
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# The Tusk That Did the Damage



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This timely novel set in South India tells the story of contemporary ivory poaching from three perspectives a documentary filmmaker, a poacher, and from an elephant named Gravedigger. A calf who watched his mother and other members of the elephant clan die brutally, Gravedigger grows up in captivity until he breaks his chains and slips into the forest. There he seldom shows mercy for humans.

Tania James succeeds in showing each of these beings as having complex needs. Even the poachers, two brother, named Jayan and Manu, aren't presented as evil even though Jayan is

jailed for killing 56 elephants, including a mother who waited and grieved for two days after her son died.

But this book is not all doom and gloom. The author describes the setting beautifully and captures the pressures and love shared by Jayan's family. His wife, Leela, an ex-prostitute is one of the strongest and most interesting characters. After one elephant death, she asks her husband, "Why did you kill a god?" [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on August 31, 2015

[The Tusk That Did the Damage](#)

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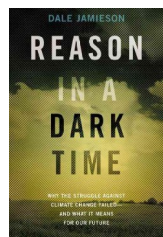
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## Reason in a Dark Time: Why the Struggle Against Climate Change Failed--And What It Means for our Future



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After reading just the first chapter of this book, I was stunned at how long the heat storage properties of carbon dioxide have been on the world's radar. What would you guess? Twenty? Forty? Fifty years? How about 150 plus.

Back in 1863, John Tyndall, an Irish scientist measured the absorption of infrared radiation by carbon dioxide and showed that slight changes in the atmosphere's composition can affect our planet's temperature.

Guy Callendar discovered in the 1930s that carbon dioxide levels were rising and causing an increase in temperatures. He said that there had already been a 10% increase in carbon dioxide levels. Other scientists mocked him. But even then he predicted a 2-4 C temperature raise in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In this wide-ranging book, Dale Jamieson, a philosopher, presents a richly detailed account of many issues connected to climate change. He covers various ramifications from the moral and ethical to the economic, political and scientific. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on August 28, 2015

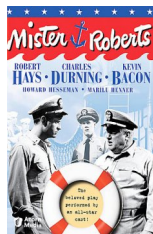
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# Mister Roberts - Teleplay



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In 1984 NBC broadcast a full-length production of *Mister Roberts*. Along with a great many others before it aired, I felt the 1955 movie (about which I've [posted previously](#)) was definitive; I certainly didn't feel that there was a need for another version of this classic film. What I didn't realize was that this was not a remake of the movie—it was a play, filmed before a live audience.

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Posted by Keith C. on August 25, 2015

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# Refund: Stories



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Although she has written three novels, this is Karen Bender's first collection of stories. Wow can the woman write.

Two of her short stories have won Pushcart Prizes and several others have been included in Best American collections, both for short stories and for mystery stories.

The pieces are irreverent, funny and sad at the same time, and rich with the absurdities and bizarreness of modern American life. For instance, 'The Sea Turtle Hospital' vividly describes a lockdown at a grade school. Bender's writing is non-judgmental but rich in detail.

The narrator in this story gets the job of locking the door and pulling down the shades (what protection would thin shades provide?), while the other teacher hustles the children into a closet. They proceed to eventually rolling the children up in a stinky rug after shots ring out. All the while anxious parents text the narrator.

One of the weirdest stories is 'The Cat' where a mother adopts a kitten. Bender is a whizz at

getting children down--both their conversations and behavior.

But the story is really about the mother in this story, six years out from breastfeeding, but the kitten's mews cause a let-down reflex and her milk to return. This leads to consultations with a breast surgeon who has a pet iguana. "Cold," the mother says. You'll have to read it to find out what happens.

Bender seems drawn to non-politically correct topics. In "A Chick from My Dream Life" she describes two teenage sisters whose parents offer them little attention. Their father is very depressed but the girls don't know why he spends all day on the living room couch not wanting them near.

The younger sister, Betsey, has an arm that ends in a point like "the tailed end of whipped cream." As the older sister, Sally, takes it upon herself to hide it in tube tops or paint it in vivid colors. When their dad starts ignoring them, they wander to the beach where Betsey sneaks away to kiss boys, telling them that her name was Sally.

"Theft" describes an older woman's vacation on a cruise ship to Alaska after a life of crime. She meets a young woman, Darlene, who has a broken heart. The two women bond. Ginger tries to toughen Darlene up, tells her what to say to get her boyfriend back, while revealing some of her own backstory and how her parents and sister abandoned her. That's what spurned her to become a first-class swindler.

Many of the stories etch out feelings of loneliness or loss, but with a quirky, off-kilter humor that makes everything bearable. Her narrators are smart, observant, and fallible--very much like us. Bender's writing recalls that of the wonderful short story writer Flannery O'Connor. Try Flannery's *Complete Stories*.

Posted by Dory L. on August 21, 2015

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## Gellhorn: A Twentieth-Century Life

**GELLHORN**  
A TWENTIETH-CENTURY LIFE



[view in catalog](#)

"I was never deeply interested in being a child." Twentieth-century war correspondent and novelist, Gellhorn always said these words would open her autobiography if she ever wrote one. Unfortunately, she never did but Moorehead's deeply researched biography of the writer is so rich with Gellhorn's work, family life, love affairs, and travels that probably not even Gellhorn could have gotten it down with such precision. Also, Moorehead provides a rich tapestry of historical and cultural information for the nine decades of Martha's life.

During WW 11, the military refused to give her a pass to Normandy for the German invasion, so Martha sneaked aboard a troop ship and hid in the bathroom until they were well at sea. Her father, an ex-German doctor settled in St. Louis and married Edna, an intelligent member of the local upper class. Both parents were half Jewish. One of the fascinating things in this book is to discover the lifelong extremely close connection between mother and daughter. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on August 5, 2015

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