

Books Worth Revisiting: Three by Anya Seton

There is nothing like a really well written historical novel to sink one's teeth into. One of the best historical novelists ever to take up pen was Anya Seton (c.1904-1990). Born in New England, she wrote a total of ten historical novels for adults, as well as three juvenile novels. After serving as a nurse in World War I, she finished her education in England, before returning to reside in her native New England. Over the years, she spent much time in Great Britain, researching the novels that she produced. In some cases, she spent as long as five years researching one novel. Two of her novels, *Dragonwyck* (1944) **RC 68205, LB 01645, BARD download** and *Foxfire* (1950) **RC 67140** have been made into movies. Here are three more novels worth revisiting.

Katherine RC 67486; BARD download. Published in 1954, *Katherine* is one of the finest historical novels ever written. In 2003, it was voted as one of Great Britain's 100 best-loved novels in the British Broadcasting Company's "The Big Read" survey. The novel is the true story of beautiful Katherine de Roet, younger daughter of a Breton herald. Raised in an English convent, Katherine comes to the court of King Edward III as a naïve and coltish teenager and meets her future brother-in-law, Geoffrey Chaucer. She also catches the attention of two men whose desire for her will seal her fate. Married off to the brutish Sir Hugh Swynford, Katherine bears her life as lady of a rundown manor by worshipping from afar her husband's overlord, John of Gaunt, the powerful Duke of Lancaster and a younger son of the king. At first, Lancaster does not give her much attention as he is married to the much-admired Blanche, but after Blanche dies in an outbreak of the Black Death, the duke finds himself helplessly drawn to Katherine. The two are star-crossed lovers, whose passion never wanes. Among their descendants are the Tudor kings and queens of England. This book is suitable for young adult and adult readers. To order this book, call 1-800-252-9605 and ask for **RC 67486 or download it from the BARD site.**

The Winthrop Woman RC 64846; LB 03115; BARD download. Seton took another real woman and spun a fascinating story based on her life in this 1958 novel. Elizabeth Fones is the elder daughter of a London apothecary and the niece of John Winthrop, future governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Elizabeth, always rebellious and free-spirited, has a difficult relationship with her stern uncle, who as head of

the family dominates everyone in the Winthrop clan. In love with her cousin Jack Winthrop, she finally winds up married to his brother Harry, much to the chagrin of her uncle. After Harry's untimely death on the voyage to Massachusetts, Elizabeth next finds herself married off to a goldsmith named Robert Feake, who has a murky past and suffers from fits of disturbed behavior. Elizabeth tries to settle down and be a model wife and citizen, but her nature is too questioning, and she scandalizes the community with her sympathies for the local Indians and her interest in the teachings of the controversial Anne Hutchinson. Accusations of witchcraft, the beauty and danger of the colonial countryside, family travails, and the hardships that all women faced, assail Elizabeth's spirit. After many trials and tribulations, she finally realizes some happiness with her third husband, Will Hallett. Some readers may find the stark portrayal of colonial life difficult to read, but the book is suitable for young adult and adult readers. To order this book, call 1-800-252-9605 and ask for **RC 64846 / LB 03115** or download it from the **BARD** site.

Green Darkness RC 64611; BR 02480; BARD download. Unlike *Katherine* and *The Winthrop Woman*, *Green Darkness* (1972) is not based on a real person's life. The story opens in modern times and focuses on reincarnation as its theme. The Marsdons--Englishman Richard and American Celia--seem to be the perfect couple: young, rich, and very much in love. Dark forces begin to tear them apart, however, after Richard brings his bride to his ancestral home, and Celia begins hearing voices and having fainting fits. Dr. Akananda, a charismatic Indian doctor and friend of Celia's mother, surmises that Richard and Celia, as well as other guests at a country weekend party, are re-enacting a tragic personal history from the distant past; this is confirmed by the Marsdon family chronicles that Dr. Akananda discovers in the house library. As he struggles to save a comatose Celia and a suicidal Richard, he must pull all of them back through the tragedy that overtook Brother Stephen Marsdon and penniless Celia de Bohun in Tudor England. Some descriptions of sexual situations. Suitable for adult and mature young adult readers. To order this book, call 1-800-252-9605 and ask for **RC 64611 / BR 02480** or download it from the **BARD** site.