

## Shhh, I'm listening

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A recent lightweight article in the NY Times raises the question of whether listening to a book qualifies as "reading" the book. My personal opinion is: who cares?

It did make me remember back to my grad school days when I took two semesters of intensive Shakespeare, and I found that if, while I read the plays, I listened simultaneously, I got more out of the experience. This pre-dated CD's or even tapes. I used to go to the university library...I seem to recall a glass-enclosed (probably soundproof?) room where I listened to actual recordings.

Now...I mean like RIGHT now...I listen to audio books in the car. Back and forth to Maine, 3 hours each way. Some people tell me they worry that it would distract them from their driving but I haven't found that to be the case for me. I listen to mindless but absorbing mysteries.....except for one recent high-brow trip, a four and a half hour drive - nine hours round trip - when I listened to "Collapse"...interesting, but after a the seventh or eighth hour I really did not want to know one more thing about deforestation. Back to Police Inspector Brunetti.

Anyway: all of those thoughts spring out of the fact that this morning I had a four and a half hour dental appointment. I SHOULD have taken my headphones and a book on my iPod because four and a half hours is a very long time to sit and listen only to the whine and screech of dental tools.

But it didn't occur to me. I did, though, because of an aching head and mouth, come home at the end of those hours and curl up with a book and some Tylenol. I rarely read during the day....it feels decadent. But I started today on "Peony in Love" by Lisa See and it pulled me right in. Now I can't wait to get back to it, though I am not yearning for more dental recovery time...just routine bedtime reading.

Now I'm feeling better and back at work. Houghton Mifflin notified me that my new book, THE WILLOUGHBY, for which I did the illustrations (as well as writing the book) was missing an illustration for Chapter 17. I don't know how that happened. But I just did a quick pen-and-ink sketch and emailed it off to them.

And now it is 5 PM and I have company coming for dinner.

Tags: Untagged