

[BOOK TALK]

Drawn into the Garden

by Helen Stewart



Helen's Eden is a Garden

Welcome to a life's journey into gardens of enchantment filled with the glory of Mother Earth and the exquisite drawings and life teachings of remarkable artist and writer Helen Stewart. (Maude Barlow, writer and activist, founder of The Council of Canadians, co-founder of the Blue Planet Project)

Helen's latest book, *Drawn into the Garden*, is a plea for the celebration of gardens and the wonders and wisdom of nature. A spiritual and artistic meditation describing the creation of a garden, its seasons in a time of changing climate, and the importance of life-giving soil and water. Helen speaks of favoured individual plants (from dandelions to roses), of children's literature, of farm gardens to white gardens, and her grandfather's ancient and magical garden. Lush and detailed paintings depict flowers, plants, and trees, as well as the various creatures living in the garden – bees, butterflies, birds, and Helen's beloved bearded collie.

The book concludes with practical and optimistic solutions that will help to protect our land. Composting, layering, and encouraging the growth of my-

celium are essential to this effort. Mycelium is so important. Its delicate threads grow from the spores of mushrooms, forming an underground web of life, connecting and nourishing all plants and trees. This fascinating field of study will be part of Helen's next illustrated book, now in the making.

Her message is simple yet profound: working in our gardens will organically return health to the soil and breathe new life into a fragile world. Allowing ourselves to be drawn into the garden enables us to take part in the natural rhythms of the earth and the ancient mysteries of life as well as to regenerate our own bodies, spirits and our souls.

Helen's imagination is a magical garden where all plants and creatures find their Eden. Her stories, detailed images, and colours reveal a hidden depth, a reflection of a timeless soul, rich with experience, empathy, love and generosity.

- Paul Destrooper, Artistic Director, Ballet Victoria.

For further information on Helen's book and to see her short documentary movie, please visit www.hestewart.com



BOOK TALK | By Andree Bizier
(Windowseat Books)

The Duke and I (Bridgerton, Book I) by Julia Quinn

Oh boy! Have you been watching *Bridgerton* on Netflix? If so, and because of Valentine's Day, I recommend *The Duke and I* by Julia Quinn, the first book of the *Bridgerton* series. Harlequin romance is not for everyone. However, nothing beats a good old 19th-century Regency London romance novel, and Julia Quinn is the best in the business. The *Bridgerton* series follows a family of siblings each named in order of the alphabet, starting with A and ending with H. So if you enjoy *The Duke and I*, there will be an abundance of other stories to follow. *The Duke and I* follows Daphne, the eldest daughter, in her coming-out season. Having been named the belle of the season, it is up to her to make an admirable match in order to provide for her sisters' futures, but she is determined to find a love match and not let her family decide her fate. What follows is a fake courtship, lies and misunderstandings, dislike that turns into love, gossip galore...all the things that will make you yell at the characters in your head to "stop being so childish and just TALK TO EACH OTHER"! Enjoy the drama!



BOOK TALK | By Theresa Silk

Here's looking at you kids: Michael Curtiz and his hidden families by Ilona Ryder



Who hasn't heard of the classic movie *Casablanca*? This is a book about the director's tumultuous personal life written by the granddaughter he never met. Ilona Ryder writes respectfully and informatively about his many relationships, a cumulative effort of 20 years of travel and discovery. The letters, photos and research materials dispel the myths surrounding the iconic director and focus on Curtiz's known and hidden families, the subject of this intriguing read. References to the challenges of his film career that spanned decades, amid world events in both Europe and America, add a satisfying historical context.

Her unique perspective on his many movies and his many loves and the children and grandchildren the world would never know, make this a captivating read for anyone who enjoys old Hollywood tales and shares a curiosity about the man behind the scenes of classic movies like *White Christmas*, *Robin Hood*, and *King Creole*.

As a half sister to the author, she has encouraged me and others to explore their roots and family ties, and to write their own stories during this season of introspection and uncertainty. Her own journey to discover the kind of man her famous grandfather was, has her believing that he was a man who loved his children and family. And convinced her those hidden passions helped him to achieve the kinds of film scenes that still move us today.

Now available on Amazon. Also circulating in our local library.