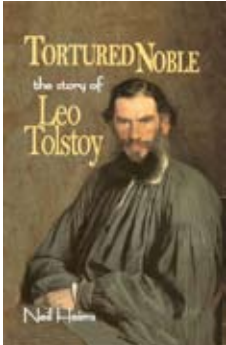


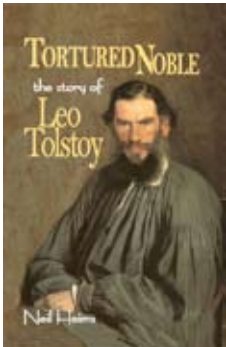
World Writers



School Library Journal September 2007

HEIMS, Neil. *Tortured Noble: The Story of Leo Tolstoy*. 144p. photos. reprints. bibliog. chron. index. notes. Web sites. CIP. Morgan Reynolds. 2007. PLB \$27.95. ISBN 978-1-59935-066-0. LC 2007011389.

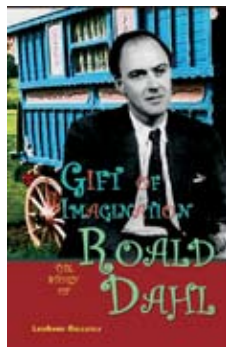
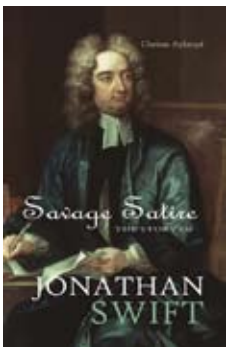
Gr 9 Up—Tolstoy's complex, fascinating life is presented succinctly in this readable biography. Using archival materials including diaries, photographs, and contemporary articles, Heims ties his subject's experiences directly to his writing. Tolstoy's lifelong struggle between his "sensual nature" and "spiritual hunger" is frankly presented, recounting bouts of dissolute behavior and ethical searching. The writer's early years as the orphan of wealthy, landed parents, his service in the Crimea, his travels, marriage, and political concerns are all touched upon. His contributions to education and nonviolent philosophy are also included. Painted on the canvas of turbulent times in Russia, this is a fine overview of the social and historical era that shaped the man. A welcome and attractive addition to most libraries.—*Kathryn Kosiorek, formerly at Cuyahoga County Public Library, Brooklyn, OH*



Booklist August 1, 2007

Heims, Neil. *Tortured Noble: The Story of Leo Tolstoy*. Aug 2007. 144 p. Morgan Reynolds, library edition, \$27.95. (1599350661). 891.73.

The opening scene of this serviceable, accessible biography depicts Tolstoy as a middle-aged aristocrat wishing to renounce his wealth. Dressed as a peasant, he left his disapproving family and set off on a religious pilgrimage, while behind him followed two minions carrying money and clean linens. After this ironic vignette, Heims begins a chronological account of Tolstoy's life: his privileged childhood, his troubled youth spent ricocheting from compulsive gambling and sexual exploits to self-hatred and penitence, and his maturity as a man drawn to extremes in ideology, self-image, and relationships. Focusing primarily on the man rather than his work, Heims mentions Tolstoy's writing mainly as it intersects with his life, noting the later emergence of overtly religious themes in his work, for instance, or mentioning characters and incidents inspired personal experiences. The many illustrations, most reproduced in color, include period photos and paintings. The book concludes with a time line, source notes, and lists of books and Internet sites. —*Carolyn Phelan*



The Horn Book Guide Fall 2007

Aykroyd, Clarissa **Savage Satire: The Story of Jonathan Swift**
160 pp. Morgan LE ISBN 1-59935-027-0 \$27.95

Gelletly, LeeAnne **Gift of Imagination: The Story of Roald Dahl**
160 pp. Morgan LE ISBN 1-59935-026-2 \$27.95

(4) YA World Writers series. Published fall 2006. Gelletly's volume, which focuses on Dahl's post-WWII career, is less engaging than Dahl's own autobiographical works; the book is illustrated with numerous photographs. Aykroyd's workaday biography of Swift presents the opinionated Anglo-Irish

minister and his razor-edged writing in the context of the complicated political times. Period illustrations provide welcome breaks from the informative, if not compelling, text. Timeline, websites. Bib., ind. CLS

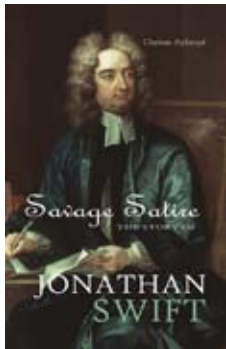


Booklist

February 1, 2007

Caravantes, Peggy. *Writing Is My Business: The Story of O. Henry.* 2006. 160p. illus. index. Morgan Reynolds, \$26.95 (1-59935-031-9). 813. Gr. 8–11.

This addition to the World Writers series features William Porter, better known to readers as O. Henry. Born in 1862 and raised in North Carolina, Porter married and started a family in Texas, where he worked at a bank and began writing and publishing a weekly paper. Shortly after his wife's death, Porter was convicted of embezzling and served three years for the crime, which many argue that he did not commit. He then moved to New York City, where he devoted himself to observing people and writing their stories, real and imagined. Porter's mastery of the short story and his sympathy for the human condition ensured him a popular following during his day and inclusion in anthologies for years to come. Well illustrated, this very readable biography concludes with a time line, an annotated bibliography, source notes, and a list of Internet sites. —*Carolyn Phelan*



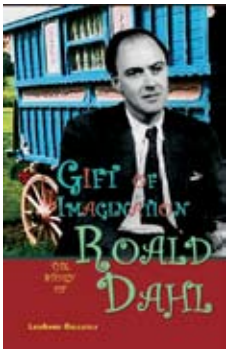
School Library Journal

January 2007

AYKROYD, Clarissa. *Savage Satire: The Story of Jonathan Swift.* 160p. maps. reprints. bibliog. chron. index. notes. Web sites. CIP. Morgan Reynolds. 2006. PLB \$26.95. ISBN 1-59935-027-0. LC 2006018142.

Gr 7-10—This well-researched work introduces the oft-frustrated clergyman who never quite achieved the high position he desired, and who channeled his strong opinions about the religious and governmental upheavals of 18th-century Europe into satirical writing. Commentary is included on *Gulliver's Travels* as well as on Swift's other works, such as the satirical essay "A Modest Proposal," wherein the author unabashedly recommended that poverty in Ireland could be ended if parents cannibalized their children. Unfortunately, the book frequently reverts to a less-than-dynamic recounting of events, and access is problematic. The text runs together visually; bold words, section breaks, and headings are noticeably absent, as are a glossary and a more intuitively

arranged index (one must search under "Swift, Jonathan, works" to find *Gulliver's Travels*). Still, this title stands alone as a biography of the author for young adults, and it is an adequate research tool.—*Jill Heritage Maza, Greenwich High School, CT*

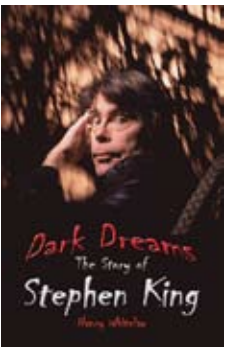


Booklist

November 1, 2006

Gelletly, LeeAnne. *Gift of Imagination: The Story of Roald Dahl.* 2006. 160p. Morgan Reynolds, lib. ed., \$26.95 (1-59935-026-4). 823. Gr. 7–10.

Recommended for a somewhat older audience than Michelle Houle's recent *Roald Dahl: Author of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2006), this biography presents a more detailed account of the writer's life. The first two chapters, concerning Dahl's childhood and his RAF days (ending in 1941) are named after Dahl's autobiographical books *Boy* (1984) and *Flying Solo* (1986), which provided the source material. Both books are accessible to the same audience as this biography and offer more vivid, fuller accounts of the same events, but Gelletly follows up with six more chapters tracing Dahl's personal life, his family, and his career from 1941 to his death in 1990. Colorfully illustrated with many photos as well as some prints, the book concludes with a time line, bibliographies of Dahl's published works, source notes for the many quotes, a source bibliography, and a list of recommended Web sites. A succinct, informative, and quite readable resource. — *Carolyn Phelan*



VOYA

February 2006

Whitelaw, Nancy. *Dark Dreams: The Story of Stephen King.* Morgan Reynolds, 2006. 128p. PLB \$26.95. 1-931-798-77-X. Index. Photos. Maps. Biblio. Source Notes. Further Reading. Chronology.

Whitelaw chronicles Stephen King's life, a true rags-to-riches tale, in a very candid, intriguing, and entertaining manner, beginning with his childhood hardships when he lived with his brother and his single mother, who struggled to put food on the table. She explains how he started writing and discusses what he liked as a boy—comic books, adventure and science fiction stories, and movies. Later these things would strongly influence King's writing style and genre. After touching on the important parts of his adolescence, Whitelaw moves the book quickly into his college years, when things changed dramatically for the world and thus for King. The bulk of the book discusses the

creation process of his stories and the difficulties of becoming a horror writer. Whitelaw touches on King's alcohol and drug use as well as his struggles with censorship, how he handles the fame, what types of career choices he made, and how he wanted to be close to his family. This well-written book tackles a number of issues and presents them candidly and refreshingly. Not only does the author convey the occupation of Stephen King, but she also captures the identity of the man. Teens interested in Stephen King, in writing, and in horror will love this book about the man who changed the genre.—Jennifer Rummel.



Booklist

November 15, 2005

Whitelaw, Nancy. *Dark Dreams: The Story of Stephen King*. Dec. 2005. 128p. illus. index. Morgan Reynolds, \$26.95 (1-931798-77-X).

Gr. 7-10. Stephen King is no stranger to Americans. Even if one has never read his books or seen the movies based on them, there is no ignoring his formidable thumbprint on literature in general and the horror genre in particular. But how did the youngest son of a struggling single mother become a household name? Part of the World Writers series, this well-documented look at King's life introduces the man who has become a legend for reinventing and legitimizing horror. Whitelaw has put together a seamless synthesis of interviews, biographies, and King's own writing, pared down for younger readers and illustrated with plenty of full-color photographs. She has a knack for sharing unusual details (relying often on King's candid words on critics, politics, pop culture, and his own writings) and for showing how important historical events did their part in shaping King's work.

A time line, a list of major works and awards, a list of sources, a bibliography, and a list of Web sites conclude.—Krista Hutley



Tri State Young Adult Book Review Committee

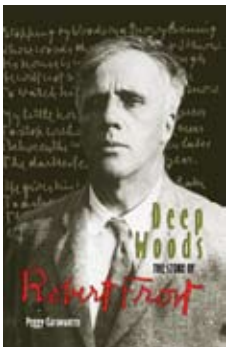
March 2006

Whitelaw, Nancy. *Dark Dreams: The Story of Stephen King*. Morgan Reynolds, 2006.

128p. PLB \$26.95. 1-931-798-77-X. Index. Photos. Maps. Biblio. Source Notes. Further Reading. Chronology.

With color photographs and maps of locations mentioned in King's fiction, this book will appeal to the casual browser, the ardent fan of Stephen King, or the student doing research on King. Stephen King grew up in a single parent household with his adopted brother. Moving many times made the brothers dependent upon each other for entertainment and sometimes their own safety. Reading was a very important activity in the King household. The use of imagination and telling stories provided cheap entertainment. King's mother modeled hard work and perseverance. King stuck to his childhood desire to write stories. He favored reading science fiction, horror fiction and watched horror movies. He would often write adaptations of these movies in his early years. Punishments

in the Bible affected him as a child and his avid reading of science fiction and horror as a child often sparked ideas to incorporate in his short stories and novels. Whitelaw discusses the literary influences on King's life, King's early publication attempts while still in high school and his literary life while attending college. King has fought censorship of his and others' writings and is active in many charities, especially those associated with homeless people. The human side of King is discussed as well as the literary side. With timelines, a list of the author's writings and awards, footnote, further reading including website and an index, this book is a great springboard for the student researcher just beginning to research the life and literature of Stephen King. This biographical criticism of King shows how King made the writing of horror fiction an acceptable craft.



School Library Journal

September 2006

CARAVANTES, Peggy. *Deep Woods: The Story of Robert Frost*. 176p. photos. reprints.

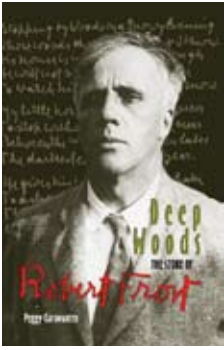
bibliog. chron. index. notes. Web sites. CIP. Morgan Reynolds. June 2006. PLB \$26.95.

ISBN 1-931798-92-3. LC 2005037514.

Gr 7-10

This excellent introduction to Frost's life and work begins with the culmination of his career: an invitation from John F. Kennedy to deliver the poem "The Gift Outright" at Kennedy's inauguration. That moment marked a career that garnered the poet four Pulitzer Prizes and numerous honorary degrees. Caravantes shows vividly "the miles" Frost trod before he slept, at age 88, having experienced both the light and dark sides of human existence, and how he captured them in his

work. The book has numerous sepia and color photos, including a picture of "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" handwritten by Frost, and a time line. This is an exceptional, easy-to-follow examination of a flawed, brilliant human being who created art of the highest caliber.—Tracy Karbel, Glenside Public Library District, Glendale Heights, IL



Booklist

September 15, 2006

Caravantes, Peggy. *Deep Woods: The Story of Robert Frost*. 2006. 176p. illus. Morgan Reynolds, lib. ed., \$26.95 (1-931798-92-3). 811. Gr. 7-10.

This accessible entry in the World Writers series introduces poet Robert Frost. After an opening scene featuring Frost at President Kennedy's inauguration, the book offers a straightforward narrative, beginning with his parents' lives before his birth. Caravantes goes on to discuss Frost's childhood hardships, family responsibilities, many teaching positions, and fairly late-in-coming but highly successful career as a poet. Throughout the story, issues of emotional instability and depression surface affecting a succession of family members as well as Frost himself. Though focused on the man, Caravantes' presentation includes a few short selections from Frost's verse and, in sidebars, a bit of information about poetic forms. A detailed time line, source notes for quotes, a bibliography, and an annotated list of Internet sites conclude. Well organized and clearly written, the book offers a

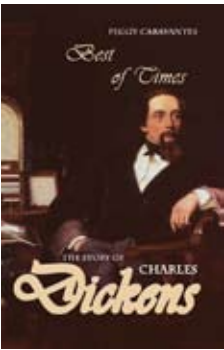
very readable account of Frost's often troubled life as an individual, a family man, a poet, and a public figure.—Carolyn Phelan

The Horn Book Guide

Fall 2006

Caravantes, Peggy. *Deep Woods: The Story of Robert Frost*. 176 pp. Morgan Reynolds. LE ISBN 1-931798-92-3 \$26.95. World Writers Series.

While reflecting the acclaim that Robert Frost received for his poetry, the portrait here of Frost as a person is unlikely to win him much admiration in modern young adult eyes. Author Caravantes generally portrays Frost negatively, but she documents it well, with good notes, a bibliography, and websites for further information. Ind. SDL



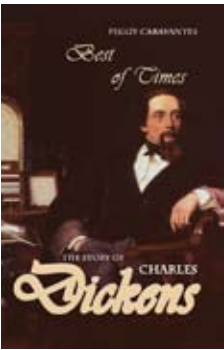
Booklist

August 1, 2005

Caravantes, Peggy. *Best of Times: The Story of Charles Dickens*. Aug. 2005. 160p. illus. index. Morgan Reynolds, lib. ed., \$24.95 (1-931798-68-0). 823.

Gr. 7-10. Beginning with Dickens' childhood trauma (his father was put in debtors' prison, and Charles, 12, had to work in a blacking factory), this highly readable entry in the **World Writers** series relates the extraordinary writer's stories to his life and times. From *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield* to *Great Expectations*, Caravantes shows how Dickens drew on his own experience to write powerfully about the suffering of the poor through the eyes of a child, even as he used wry humor. In addition to writing about Dickens' success, she discusses various difficulties during his life; she's very honest, for example, about his strained relationships with his wife and children. With clear, spacious type, and many interesting quotes, color prints, and photos, this will attract readers who know one or more of the novels; and chapter notes and references will lead them on if they want

to know more. —Hazel Rochman



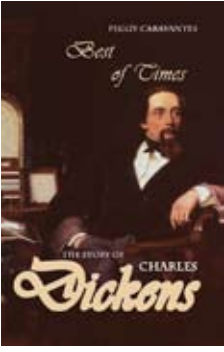
School Library Journal

December 2005

CARAVANTES, Peggy. *Best of Times: The Story of Charles Dickens*. illus. by author. 160p. reprints. bibliog. chron. index. notes. Web sites. CIP. Morgan Reynolds. 2005. Tr \$24.95. ISBN 1-931798-68-0. LC 2005008405.

Gr 7 Up –Caravantes discusses the writer's early influences that resulted in his interest in exploring social ills in his work. Through his flair for drama, his tendency to exaggerate, and his heartfelt emotions about the causes about which he wrote, Dickens not only provided entertainment to his audiences, but also awakened them to the plight of the poor. He is glowingly portrayed throughout most of this chronological account. Negative incidents tend to be glossed over or made to seem as though the subject were a victim of circumstance or simply of fate. His devotion to other women seemed to be due to his wife's frail health, and to emotional, as well as geographical, distance. Many photos, drawings, and reproductions in color and in black and white enhance the text. In spite

of the author's bias, the book is interesting reading and well documented. It will not only provide material for reports, but will also be enjoyed by biography buffs. –Marilyn Fairbanks, Azure IRC, Brockton High School, MA



**Young Adult Reviewers of Southern California
Jan.-Feb. 2006**

Caravantes, Peggy. **Best of Times: the Story of Charles Dickens**. Morgan Reynolds. 2005. 160p. 1-931798-68-0. \$26.95.

This is an excellent biography of Charles Dickens. In 7 chapters, the life of Dickens is detailed by the major events surrounding him. It focuses primarily on his works and family. Timeline, sources, bibliography and websites are included in the back. Illustrations and portraits are spread throughout the book. The index needs improvement. Dora Ho, LAPL



**School Library Journal
February 2006**

LOCKE, Juliane. **England's Jane: The Story of Jane Austen**. 144p. reprods. bibliog. chron. index. notes. Web sites. CIP. Morgan Reynolds. 2005. PLB \$26.95. ISBN 1-931798-82-6. LC 2005026279.

Gr 7 Up—Drawing on letters, biographical works, archival pictures, and Austen's novels, Locke offers a readable biography for students who can't manage a larger work. The language is uncomplicated and the topics are aimed at helping readers better understand *Pride and Prejudice*, *Emma*, and Austen's other writings. Some of the topics discussed include childhood, family, village and social life, manners, customs, entertainment, historical background, career, and writing style. The numerous illustrations, many in color, include reproductions, drawings, portraits, maps, sketches, engravings, silhouettes, and facsimiles of Austen's letters and writings. Students will be able to learn from

both the pictures and the text what Austen and her characters looked like, how they lived, what they wore, what the English countryside and houses looked like, and what they did with their time. A useful, attractive book. —Pat Bender, The ShipleySchool, Bryn Mawr, PA



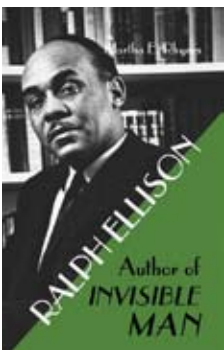
**Tri State Young Adult Book Review Committee
England's Jane: The Story of Jane Austen by Juliane Locke
ISBN 1-931798-82-6. 2006. 144p
Quality: VG-BNS (Outstanding)**

As part of Morgan Reynolds World Writers series, *England's Jane* explores the life and times of Jane Austen, perhaps one of the most beloved of England's romance writers. Born in to the British gentry in 1775, Jane was raised in rural Hampshire, England, in the small village of Stevenson. Her love of language and literature began early and unlike most young ladies of her period and within her social class, she was encouraged by her parents in her educational and intellectual pursuits. Jane never married and was therefore considered a spinster. Nurtured by a close and loving family, her first book was published in 1811 when she was 35. *England's Jane* not only explores Jane's most prolific period, between 1812 and 1816, but is a wonderful reference for anyone wanting to know

the customs and characters of pre-industrial England. It was a time of formality and rivalry, but also of romance and chivalry, themes which are repeated again and again in Austen's books.

Wonderfully illustrated, the book contains examples of her works, excerpts from her letters to family and friends, details of her travels and possible friends and relatives who may have inspired the characters in her novels. The book also contains a family tree, a timeline, source notes, web sites, a bibliography and an index.

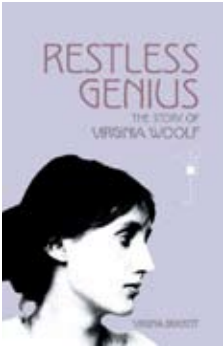
Recommendation: *This title would make a great addition to a high school library's collection for research and casual reading and would be desirable for students who want to learn more about this wonderful author.*—Charleen Forba-Mayer



**The Horn Book Guide
Fall 2006**

Rhynes, Martha E. **Ralph Ellison: Author of Invisible Man**. 160 pp. Morgan LE ISBN 978-1-931798-69-3. World Writers series.

This thorough illustrated biography follows Ellison from his Oklahoma childhood through later fame as writer, critic, and author of the acclaimed *Invisible Man*. Rhynes weaves information about political, musical, and cultural movements into her narrative but often gets lost in the complexities. Timeline, websites. Bib., ind.



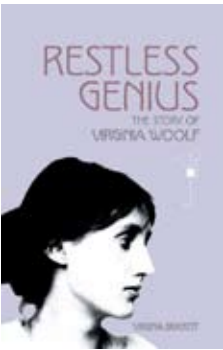
Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

November 2004

BRACKETT, Virginia. *Restless Genius: The Story of Virginia Woolf*. 144p. (World Writers Series). photos. reprints. bibliog. chron. index. notes. CIP. Morgan Reynolds. 2004. PLB \$21.95. ISBN 1-931798-37-0. LC 2003025043.

This highly readable literary biography of Virginia Woolf moves dexterously among the many relationships and ideas that influenced the troubled writer. Brackett employs a straightforward journalistic style, but Woolf's life was so rich and complicated that little embellishment is needed to make for fascinating reading. Brackett is forthright about the more controversial aspects of Woolf's life and the lives of those around her, including their complicated sexualities and marital structures, their personal and professional passions and jealousies, and Woolf's recurrent problems with depression, hallucinations, and suicidal impulses. That said, the book tends to give Woolf's relationship with Vita Sackville-West short shrift; she mentions that it was influential in her writing

and continued until Woolf's death, but she doesn't tell us anything about the nature of a love affair that was obviously quite important in her subject's life. Instead, she focuses on the strong but often fractious relationship Woolf enjoyed with her sister Vanessa, and the literally life-sustaining love and support of Leonard, Woolf's husband and business partner. Throughout, the work offers interpretive readings of Woolf's novels, showing how and why her experimental prose continues to be influential. Brackett traces out thematic continuities that occasionally disrupt the chronology of events, but it's a forgivable sin in light of Woolf's formidably active intellectual life that kept her juggling multiple projects at any given time. Pictures and portraits of important figures in the Woolfs' lives appear throughout the text; the layout is unfortunately somewhat stodgy, and the photographs reproduced in subdued pale grays. A chronology is included, as is a bibliography and an index. The work relies on endnotes without in-text citations, making this an accessible read for students new to the conventions of scholarly writing; advanced students who have read Woolf's fiction and nonfiction prose will welcome this intimate portrait of a very important artist.



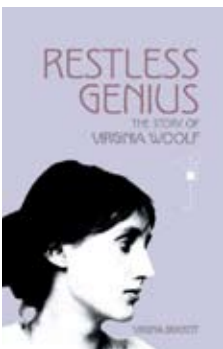
School Library Journal

November 2004

BRACKETT, Virginia. *Restless Genius: The Story of Virginia Woolf*. 144p. (World Writers Series). photos. reprints. bibliog. chron. index. notes. CIP. Morgan Reynolds. 2004. PLB \$21.95. ISBN 1-931798-37-0. LC 2003025043.

Gr 8 Up –This book provides solid background with enough detail to be interesting but not overwhelming. Starting with Julia and Leslie Stephen, Woolf's parents, it provides insight into the early life and family relationships that influenced the writer and her work. Woolf's intellectual growth is well documented, starting with her parents' influence and moving on to her involvement with the Bloomsbury Group. Brackett paints a vivid picture of the bohemian lifestyle that Woolf embraced and the changing culture and intellectual thought of the era. She discusses her subject's mental breakdowns and relationship with her devoted husband, Leonard. The writer's literary works are not discussed in detail. Rather, the focus is on how they affected her mental state and how their

publication introduced the world to a new method of writing fiction. The time line helps put everything in perspective. This accessible, engaging biography is a quick read and a good resource for reports.–Lori Matthews, Loyola School, New York City



Booklist

September 2004

BRACKETT, Virginia. *Restless Genius: The Story of Virginia Woolf*. 144p. (World Writers Series). photos. reprints. bibliog. chron. index. notes. CIP. Morgan Reynolds. 2004. ISBN 978-1-931798-37-2. LC 2003025043.

This short, well-organized biography in the World Writers series begins with the people, events, and dynamics of Woolf's childhood, then quickly progresses to her adult life. Throughout, Brackett discusses in some detail the writer's relationship with her father, sister, husband, and, to a lesser extent, other relatives and members of the Bloomsbury Group while focusing increasingly on her writings and her mental health. She weaves these separate but related strands into an involving story of an unusual woman who took fiction in a new direction at a time when women writers were uncommon and sometimes unwelcome in the world of letters.