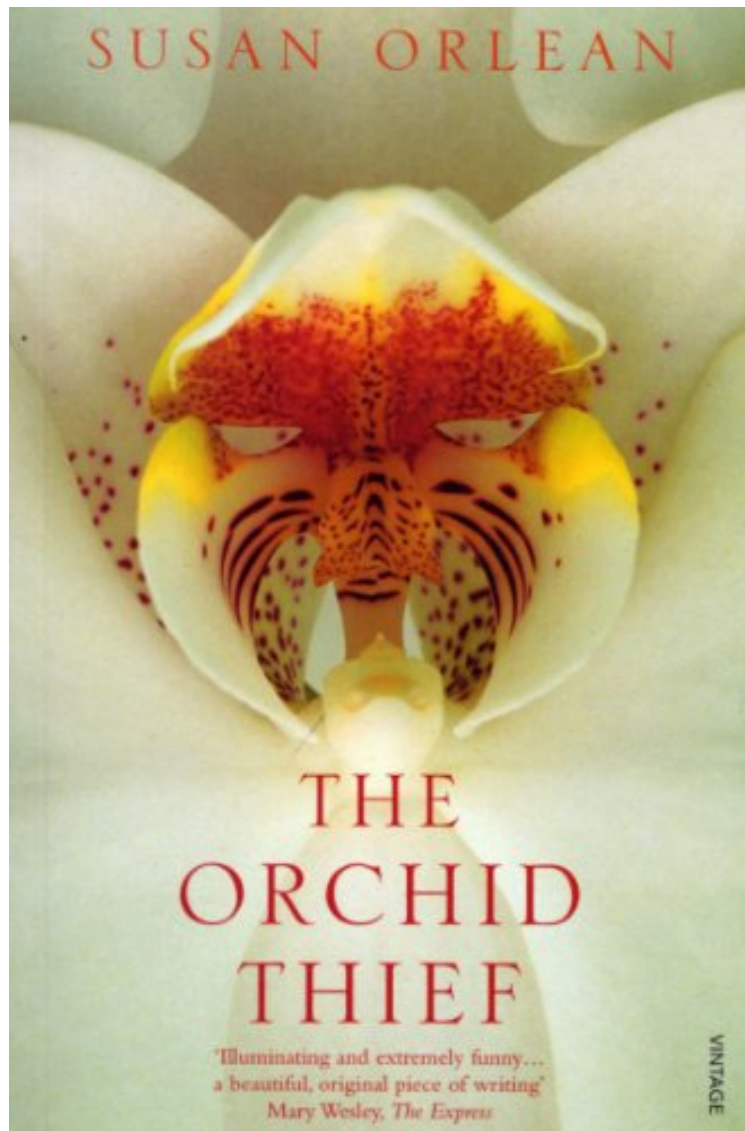


(Mobile library) The Orchid Thief: A True Story of Beauty and Obsession

## The Orchid Thief: A True Story of Beauty and Obsession

Von Susan Orlean

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**Von Susan Orlean : The Orchid Thief: A True Story of Beauty and Obsession** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Orchid Thief: A True Story of Beauty and Obsession:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. An engaging PEEK...Von D.First, a few caveats (it's always best to be up-front about ones biases and assumptions): 1) I haven't read Ms. Orlean's 'New Yorker' article, so I have no basis of comparison between it and this book. 2) I have

never lived in South Florida, and have only visited Miami Beach twice, so my ability to say what is "true" about Florida's history and culture is somewhat limited and I won't even bother to attempt to verify any of Ms. Orlean's assertions. Fact - or slightly modified fact - I don't know...That being said, this book is a very enjoyable, engaging read. No, it does not have a particularly suspenseful or intriguing STORYline, especially if what you're looking for is an amazing-but-true mystery with high drama and a surprise ending. The author says, from the beginning, that she can only deal in the facts of the case - if she wants to keep this a non-fiction book, she's limited by real events. What she does, very successfully, however, is reveal the fascinating world of obsession and collecting - in this case, for a particular form of plant. And she does this with amazing ease and grace. Like her guides in the swamps, Ms. Orlean takes us through lessons in history, evolution, geology and botany - subjects which could be incredibly dry in someone else's hands - and connects them neatly with her incredible descriptions of current orchid mania - the characters, the controversies, and the competition. Her ability to make those connections allows the reader to take a step further, and make their own, outside of what she has written. I constantly found myself saying, "Oh my, that's the (explorer/patron/flower) that (did this/went there/made that)." Personally, I love that - the making of connections, between what the author shows and the reader already knows. That's when you get grabbed by what you're reading. And, again, the author's style is very engaging. Sure, she may repeat a fact once in a while, but that's only to reinforce the information she's given you about a set of fairly complex subjects - at least for the average reader (me). She takes you through her history lessons and personal experiences with arch wit and subtle humor (quote - somewhat bastardized: "I hate being in a swamp with machete-wielding convicts.") Some prefer anonymous journalism; Ms. Orlean injects her own experiences and thoughts into the story with a complete rejection of false objectivity; she's there, she's experiencing this, and the story is as much about her own voyage as anyone else's. Bottom-line? A very enjoyable book. Take it for what it is - I don't think the author has served it to us with any pretenses, so we shouldn't take it that way. 1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. BEAUTIFUL DESCRIPTIONS, BUT WHERE'S THE STORY? Von terry holzman I read Susan Orlean's excerpt in the NEW YORKER and rushed out to buy the book as I wanted to find out more about John Larouche "the orchid thief". I soon found out that all the "meat" of the story was in the NEW YORKER article and the book was nothing more than "bun". I wanted/hoped THE ORCHID THIEF to be a "juicy" tale of intrigue and adventure, but there's only a little of that in the book. Mostly we follow Ms. Orlean around Florida looking at orchids and talking to strange orchid growers. Many of her descriptions are breathtakingly beautiful and vivid, but as a STORY it really falls short. I was disappointed. (No wonder the writer who is adapting this for the screen struggled to adapt this work. I read he finally had to make up a story that really has nothing to do with the book because there isn't one within these pages.) 1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. The controversy swirls on...still a good read Von Dee Susan Orlean has really done it this time. She has written a book about, "passion itself, and the amazing lengths to which people will go to gratify it." Is it any wonder that her readers feel so passionately about this book. Many orchid experts find fault with the book's facts and criticize the lack of passion for orchids from Ms. Orlean while lovers of a good story and that crazy world known as south Florida rave about it. For my part, I enjoyed reading the Orchid Thief. It reads like a novel, so while I did notice a horticultural error or two myself, I was not reading it as a reference book, but for entertainment. I didn't find it to be quite the page turner I was expecting, but the characters are memorable, the stories are interesting and Ms. Orlean's writing is a pleasure. I am an .com associate.

Kurzbeschreibung Susan Orlean first met John Laroche when visiting Florida to write for the New Yorker about his arrest for stealing rare ghost orchids from a nature reserve. Fascinated both by Laroche and the world she uncovered of orchid collectors and growers, she stayed on, to write this magical exploration of obsession and the strange world both of the orchid obsessives and of Florida, that haunting and weird 'debatable land' of swamps and condos, retirement communities and real-estate scams. The world of the orchid hunters, breeders and showmen, their rivalries, vendettas and crimes, smuggling, thefts and worse provide the backdrop to a fascinating exploration of one of the byways of human nature, the obsessive world of the collector, and the haunting beauty of the flowers themselves..de Orchidelirium is the name the Victorians gave to the flower madness that is for botanical collectors the equivalent of gold fever. Wealthy orchid fanatics of that era sent explorers (heavily armed, more to protect themselves against other orchid seekers than against hostile natives or wild animals) to unmapped territories in search of new varieties of *Cattleya* and *Paphiopedilum*. As knowledge of the family *Orchidaceae* grew to encompass the currently more than 60,000 species and over 100,000 hybrids, orchidelirium might have been expected to go the way of Dutch tulip mania. Yet, as journalist Susan Orlean found out, there still exists a vein of orchid madness strong enough to inspire larceny among collectors. The *Orchid Thief* centers on south Florida and John Laroche, a quixotic, charismatic schemer once convicted of attempting to take endangered orchids from the Fakahatchee swamp, a state preserve. Laroche, a horticultural consultant who once ran an extensive nursery for the Seminole tribe, dreams of making a fortune for the Seminoles and himself by cloning the rare ghost orchid *Polyparrhiza lindenii*. Laroche sums up the

obsession that drives him and so many others: I really have to watch myself, especially around plants. Even now, just being here, I still get that collector feeling. You know what I mean. I'll see something and then suddenly I get that feeling. It's like I can't just have something--I have to have it and learn about it and grow it and sell it and master it and have a million of it. Even Orlean--so leery of orchid fever that she immediately gives away any plant that's pressed upon her by the growers in Laroche's circle--develops a desire to see a ghost orchid blooming and makes several ultimately unsuccessful treks into the Fakahatchee. Filled with Palm Beach socialites, Native Americans, English peers, smugglers, and naturalists as improbably colorful as the tropical blossoms that inspire them, this is a lyrical, funny, addictively entertaining read. --Barrie Trinkle.co.uk

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