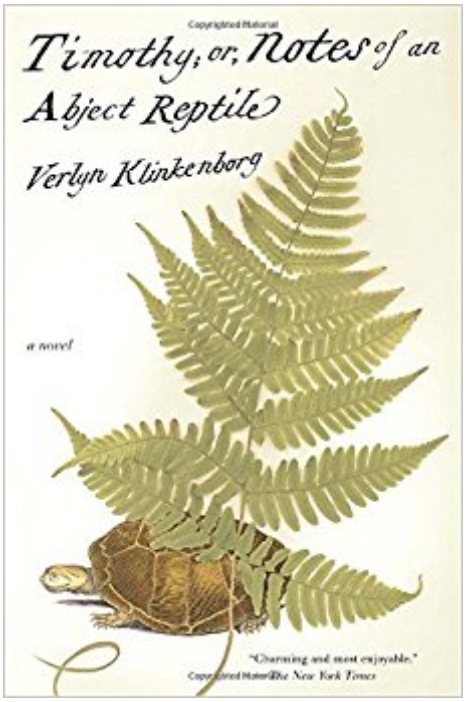
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Timothy; Or, Notes Of An Abject Reptile: A Novel



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Synopsis

Few writers have attempted to explore the natural history of a particular animal by adopting the animalÃ¢â ¬â„¢s own sensibility. But Verlyn Klinkenborg has done just that in Timothy: an insightful and utterly engaging story of the worldÃ¢â ¬â„¢s most famous tortoise, whose real life was observed by the eighteenth-century English curate and naturalist Gilbert White. For thirteen years, Timothy lived in WhiteÃ¢â ¬â„¢s garden. Here Klinkenborg gives the tortoise an unforgettable voice and keen powers of observation on both human and natural affairs. Wry and wise, unexpectedly moving and enchanting at everyÃ¢â ¬â œcarefulÃ¢â ¬â œturn, Timothy surprises and delights.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. In a gorgeous hybrid of naturalist observation, novelistic invention and philosophical meditation, Klinkenborg, a member of the New York Times editorial board and chronicler of the rural life (Making Hay), views the English countryside through the eyes of a tortoise and gives his human readers rich food for thought. For 13 years, Timothy the tortoise lived amid the bounty of 18th-century curate and amateur naturalist Gilbert White’s garden. White, author of A Natural History of Selbourne, had inherited the reptile from his aunt, who had kept her (Timothy was a female, "stolen from the [Mediterranean] ruins I was basking on" and brought to "cold, manicured" England) for thrice as long. Timothy, as Klinkenborg imagines her, is melancholic, wise, resigned; her patient narration reveals extraordinary powers of observation and empathy: "the Hampshire sky staggers me now with loveliness. Creeping fogs in the pastures. Gossamer on the stubbles. The

parish rings with light. Whole being of the world distilled into a moment." The only plot is the passage of time, and Timothy's scrutiny of life around her: humans are "great soft tottering beasts" who, blinded by their humanness, believe that "the language of the brute creation is no language at all." This "true story," as Klinkenborg describes it, offers studied, beautiful reflections on the present and memory, earth and weather, love and utility, human and beast. This is a wholly unexpected and astonishing book. (Feb.) Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Although Timothy technically lives on a shelf in London's Natural History Museum, in Klinkenborg's hands she's alive and kicking in White's garden. On the editorial board of the New York Times and author of "The Rural Life" column and three books, Klinkenborg (through Timothy's voice) turns small observations about nature into powerful ideas about beauty, nature, humanity, and our role in the natural world. In wise, opinionated, and truncated language, Timothy captures the vagaries and hypocrisies of humans while stressing his own, isolated life. Timothy, "a work of both speculative naturalism and speculative biography" (Los Angeles Times), is natural history at its best: thoughtful, meditative, and even magical.Copyright Ã Â© 2004 Phillips & Nelson Media, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Timothy is a tortoise. She understands and speaks English---albeit in incomplete sentences. She knows some geography. She knows the thoughts, the worries and beliefs of the inhabitants of 18th century Selborne, England. She knows what goes on in their churches and their homes, even though she has presumably never entered any. She knows what takes place in winters, even though she has hibernated through every one.Never mind!Suspend your disbelief. Accept that Timothy is omniscient. Enjoy her descriptions and commentary. It reads like poetry, with lots of witty bits and little jabs at the absurdity of humans. It had me laughing out loud at times.On Easter: " 'The lamb who was slain now liveth again,' he [Mr. Gilbert White] believes. And so he says aloud to his parishioners. Though on this earth, the lamb who is slain is supper."This book is a rare treat, so read it slowly. There's a glossary in the back to help with the names of local areas, the obsolete and botanical terms.BTW, The Natural History of Selborne by Gilbert White, which inspired this book, is available to download at Project Gutenberg [...]. A search for "tortoise" points to several letters that mention an unnamed, old Sussex tortoise.

I fell in love with this little book, so much so that I ordered another copy to loan to friends. Small and

slow, the story unfolds at a gentle pace. The observations of humans provides an interesting perspective and several thought-provoking observations.

This is the loveliest 'autobiography' of a turtle one could ever hope to read. Pure charm, sensitive.

this is a must read for biologists, tortoise lovers, and folks interested in history. It is quite exceptional and transcends the animal story niche mightily.

I'm sure the book is a pretty good read. Timothy is creative and thoughtful, very quotable. However, the CD sounds like it is slowly read by Diane Rehm with a cold. Terrible and grating. Buy the book.

good author. miss reading in the NYC Times.

Funny and full of deep thoughts by a garden turtle.

Delightful!

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