



Run

Ann Patchett

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Set over a period of twenty-four hours, *Run* shows us how worlds of privilege and poverty can coexist only blocks apart from each other, and how family can include people you've never even met.

Since their mother's death, Tip and Teddy Doyle have been raised by their loving, possessive, and ambitious father. As the former mayor of Boston, Bernard Doyle wants to see his sons in politics, a dream the boys have never shared. But when an argument in a blinding New England snowstorm inadvertently causes an accident that involves a stranger and her child, all Bernard Doyle cares about is his ability to keep his children—all his children—safe.

Run Details

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Fabian says

Yep, BEL CANTO is an incredibly difficult act to follow. (But you & I already knew that!) Case in point: this tepid helping of family drama, a tearjerker more reminiscent of Patchett's first novel THE PATRON ST OF LIARS (which, just like this, gets my overly-enthusiastic *** out of *****). Again, themes like the family structure, the familiarity between perfect strangers, even quasi-religious miracles are explored (there is a priest with curative powers in RUN, a magic healing spring in PATRON ST.); only BEL CANTO's brush with politics is found in this small but effective take on race and mixed domesticity in the 2000's. (I think that writers like Nella Larsen would approve of this: a white woman's take on the everlasting issue.)

A. Patchett is better than A. Tyler certainly. I think, because her plot lines always happen to be projected at a certain profound effect, strike a cord somewhere, giving us always that moment of the PATCHING UP of previously-frayed bonds, all the while the prose being just a wee bit unspectacular. Patchett is definitely a (speedy) reader's writer.

BEL CANTO is magical & way more creative; this work suffers from our previous (or are they just mine?) expectations of a modern producing author.

John says

As an admitted Anne Patchett fan, this is the third novel of hers that I have read. I had the good fortune to start her work with Bel Canto, which stands up respectably against some of my other all time favorites. Although this was still an enjoyable read, it did not leave me with the breathless appreciation of wonder that Bel Canto did.

Run, told in the third person from the perspective of several characters takes place during a 24 hour period of time on a stormy snowy Boston night. What Patchett did so magnificent a job of in Bel Canto was weaving the lives of disparate, diverse characters who otherwise would never have met, by means of a powerful and violent sudden event, is a formula attempted again in this novel to less success.

Although similar in theme, the characters in Run somehow fall short, to some degree sounding hollow and untrue. There is some attempt at using the whiteness of snow, along with other black-white imagery to highlight, and speak to racial tensions through its imagery, but apart from that there does not seem to be much deeper meaning to this novel. Despite these criticisms, the novel is still an enjoyable read, examining how tragedy can bring families together.

Kate says

One out of the park for me - a complete surprise. It was a book club read that others had finished before I started, foolishly I read some of the comments and what I read was not encouraging. I started reading, thinking it was likely to be similar to Bel Canto which I found okayish but not memorable - although I now see that I gave it four stars.

it serves me right for pre-empting things! Seriously wow!

I am considering another star but will wait and see what further reflection brings. Run resonated so deeply with me that I am left feeling a little breathless. One of the many things I love about books and reading is the way one person responds almost viscerally to a book yet another is left unmoved. I believe this is because it's a contextual thing, our reaction depends on where your head and heart are whilst reading. I suspect this book has had such an impact because I am currently looking at connection in relation to my work - real honest connection appears to be the cornerstone of authentic relationships. The connection theme is strong and interwoven through out this. It is about exploring what matters most, whilst there is lots of distraction around politics, race, religion, financial status and education it comes back to connection. All be it good thought provoking distractions but distraction all the same.

The nature vs nurture debate rages through out (a topic that always pulls me in) and whilst we know that genes reign supreme the intricacy with which Ann Patchett presents this, really is clever and there are a few fun twists. The dialogue from each of the characters thoughts is a beautiful thing, I especially enjoyed the son who feels abandoned and betrayed by life's events. In a short 24 hr period he figures a few things out, as does his uncle who has devoted his life to religion begins to wonder at 80 something if perhaps he had it all wrong. One more aspect I particularly liked was the linking of self to home and house.

At times I felt as if Ms Patchett resides in my head, her description of how it feels to gain focus around an event through exercise was superb. Already as I use this review to put my swirling thoughts into some semblance of sense I feel a five star rating coming.....and another read some other time.

JBradford says

My eldest and I had agreed to read some real books this summer—something pother than bodice rippers for her, something other than detective mysteries for me. But we didn't. We were also going to reread some books of old, such as A Tale of Two Cities. But we didn't. I dutifully downloaded it to my Nook reader, but I never opened the Nook all summer. Maybe all of that was behind my decision to take this book off the library shelf while I was looking for the next Sarah Paretsky novel. Or maybe I thought from the flyleaf description that it was going to be a mystery. I cannot know. I'm only glad I did.

The novel is set within a timeframe of 12 hours, except that the first chapter take place mostly 20 years before that and the last chapter pertains to an event that happened four years later. Within that tight 12-hour framework, however, Ann Patchett creates a fantastic unfolding of seven characters as they examine their own lives, so that we share their misunderstandings of what they see and do and what happens to them. I am happy to report that I did not cry while reading this book, but I must confess that my eyelids got damp a few times, easily made up for by the number of times I laughed aloud with the joy of remembering that this is how it was to be a member of a family and to grow up, of what it was like to examine new things form the framework of things known incorrectly in the past.

I started this book this morning, while chewing on my breakfast, and I found it so hard to put down that I finished it before making a belated supper. Oh, I managed to do other things during the day, as well--I practiced a Toastmasters speech, mowed the lawn, and sorted through a basketful of old documents and news clippings as part of the eternal process of clearing out my basement--but I kept coming back, until I finally realized that I had to finish it, even though I had many other things to do and not enough time in which to do them

I cannot tell much about the plot without spoiling the effect for the author's development, as she continually surprises the reader by revealing a new truth about the past, so that it's a bit like reading the Alexandrian Quartet in one novel. The story begins, actually, in Chapter 2, when Bernard Doyle, a former mayor of the City of Boston, drags his two youngest college-student sons, both adopted and of color, to a political rally for Jesse Jackson. At the end of the rally, just before they all go their separate ways in a snowstorm, the youngest son is struck by a car--except that a woman bystander pushes him mostly out of the way, only to be struck herself. The ambulance hauls the woman off to the hospital, leaving her 11-year-old daughter behind, so the Doyles take her with them when they hitch a ride to the hospital in a police car to get the son's broken ankle looked after, little knowing that they are riding into wholly changed futures for all of them, as well as for the older brother who comes home that night after several years of absence. It's an extraordinary tale, told by someone who has a knack for letting the reader see into the mind of her characters, as well as for revealing things one at a time so that the story unfolds until we know more than the characters themselves.

I'll be retuning to the library to look for other things written by Ann Patchett.

D.B. Woodling says

3.75 Stars

The biological father of only one of three sons, Bernard Doyle's parental toolbox includes cunningness, detachment, and deception. Yet no one is more surprised as is Doyle when the boys grow up to mimic by example.

If Charles Dickens is window dressing, Patchett is foundation. In a single fluid sentence, she testifies Doyle's grief after losing his wife Bernadette: "He was still expecting his wife to come down the stairs and ask him if he felt like splitting an orange."

Doyle's beautiful wife dead and buried, Bernard is determined his adopted sons, Teddy and Tip, follow the preordained path he'd chosen after Bernadette plucked the brothers from a Bostonian housing project; he has all but given up on Sullivan, the rightful heir.

Following a lecture Doyle has insisted the brothers attend, an SUV nearly careens over Tip during a blinding snowstorm. A mysterious woman pushes the boy clear and, as a result, she is severely injured. Who is Tennessee Moser and why is she always nearby? Who will care for her young daughter Kenya after she's whisked off to the hospital?

Reminiscent of swordplay, Patchett thrusts monumental subjects such as interracial adoption, familial devotion and contention, as well as poverty and wealth with a fainthearted passé. While the writing is often brilliant, sadly the dialogue and the characters of *Run* frequently fail to shine.

Johnny says

This was so bad. (Sorry Janet!) I really don't understand how the same person who wrote Bel Canto wrote this. Oh man it was the definition of trite. As an adoptive parent, I probably took greater offense at the tired old storyline that biological parents are out there just yearning and searching for the children they gave up so many years before, but here it just bordered on completely idiotic. Patchett so clearly wanted to write this book about the great racial divide but it just comes across so insincere and heavy handed. The story is set in Boston and I wonder how much she actually "researched" the city; it seemed like she threw in random street names and T lines just to add some local color without any basis in reality. It is like she took a stock list of requisite "Bostonians": under-privileged blacks (check), Catholic priest (check), uber-liberal white politician who understands the black plight far better than they do themselves (check). Thank god it was a short quick read!

Molly Jones says

In the early stages of reading Ann Patchett's *Run*, I wondered how the novel had become a best-seller, and if, perhaps, its popularity stemmed solely from the author's previous success with her 2002 novel, *Bel Canto*, which sold over one million copies, won the PEN/Faulkner Award and was named the Book Sense Book of the Year. The eight main characters (Bernadette, Bernard, Sullivan, Sullivan Sr., Teddy, Tip, Tennessee, and Kenya) are introduced hastily enough that one almost needs a guide to make sense of which is which, especially considering how the voices of the characters overlap and how similar the names themselves are. Initially, there is very little to like about any of these characters and not enough individuality on the page to hold one's interest about them, regardless. In fact, when one of the characters dies within the first thirty pages, the distance Patchett has created between reader and character is so great, that the death is affectless. So, it came as an absolute surprise to me when, some one-hundred pages later, I suddenly found myself caring about the fates of these characters. I actually looked up from my book and asked aloud, "when did that happen" and then, "how did she do that?" Some writers continue to be best-sellers because of their reputations from previous books or because a pop icon hails their latest work; some are best-sellers because their writing is simply that good. Ann Patchett is the later.

Run covers two wintery Boston days, during which the lives of two families collide, literally, and forever change. Tip and Teddy Doyle, the African-American, twenty-something, adopted sons of the Anglo former-mayor, Bernard Doyle, find themselves being dragged, once again, to a political speech. Bernard hopes the speech will inspire his sons to pursue careers in politics -- that is, the two sons who might be viable candidates, not the biological one, Sullivan Jr., whose long-ago "accident" still haunts him. Teddy, who plans to become a priest like his uncle, Sullivan Sr., has no problem placating Bernard by attending such a rally. Tip, however, finds Bernard's constant coaxing offensive and leaves the speech ranting at his father. In his blind anger, Tip doesn't see the car headed for him.

Had it not been for the courageous shove of one woman, Tip would have been hit by the car and, most likely, died. Consequently, the brave, African-American Tennessee Moser is severely injured, unconscious and hospitalized, leaving her young daughter, Kenya, temporarily orphaned. The Doyles deliberate about what to do with this stranger's child and worry about the legal implications of bringing Kenya home with them. That's when Kenya, who's been instructed since birth to keep a secret, informs the Doyles that she isn't truly a stranger to them.

Not once in this novel is Ann Patchett heavy-handed and yet she manages to evoke complicated questions about race and identity. She allows the story to speak for itself rather than use her characters as talking heads. The plot, one might assume, is predictable. Based entirely on the summary above, one might guess the

relationship between Kenya and the Doyles. This novel, however, doesn't play into simple stereotypes and it is anything but predictable. Patchett delivers the kind of plot twists that not only heighten the suspense and propel the story forward, but, unlike red herrings, also deepen the meaning of her work. The way in which she intricately weaves together the lives of her characters causes the reader to ask, "what does this mean for Tip/Bernard/Teddy/Kenya?" and to be genuinely concerned about the answer to that question. More importantly though, long after the last sentence has been read, one will ponder the implications of his or her subverted expectations and the broader meaning of this important book.

Can a novel be both entertaining and thought provoking? With *Run*, Ann Patchett answers, "yes."

Sara says

My response to Ann Patchett's writing is very mixed. *Bel Canto* is one of my all-time favorite books; *The Magician's Assistant* is one of the worst books I've ever read. I'd have to classify *Run* as somewhere in between. I was interested enough in the story line to finish reading it in a couple of days--I wanted to see where she was going with it, and how it would end up. I must say there were several good plot twists, and at least one as it unfolded was completely unexpected. Unfortunately, the characters of the two adopted black children proved problematic for me. I struggled with how free they were of any conflict with regard to race and their place in being adopted by a white family. It just seemed completely unrealistic for a contemporary setting--more like the possible future. I'm not sure I could whole-heartedly recommend the book.

D'Anne says

Let me start off by saying I don't usually "do" books on tape (or, in this case, CD). "Do" being the audio book listener's lingo for "read." But I have a long commute these days and figure I might as well spend it catching up on reading I would be doing if I wasn't behind the wheel.

Let me next say that I am a huge fan of Ann Patchett. I have read all of her books and when I learned that *Run* was coming out I wanted to "run" right out and get it. With school and teaching I haven't had a lot of time for reading novels, so I waited and eventually picked it up on CD at the library. My wife was the first to listen to it. She didn't even get past the first disc. She promptly pronounced it "boring." Thinking she must not have given it a chance (after all, how could a book by Ann Patchett be boring?) I decided to listen to it anyway. I wanted so badly to like it. And yet, I did not.

Maybe it was the voice of the guy reading it. Maybe it was the cheesy smooth jazz music that opened and closed each disc. Maybe if I would have had the book in book form everything would have been different.

But I doubt it. The real problem was deeper than that. Not one of the characters in *Run* felt real to me. Unlike the characters in all of her other books, people I grew to love or at least care about, *Run* boasts a long list of essential characters, all of whom have interesting things happening to them, but none of whom I felt I really got to know. The book was like listening to overly precious narration of a stranger's family photo album.

If you have never read any of Patchett's work before, please don't start with *Run*. Her other books are really wonderful and you'd be cheating yourself if you let *Run* keep you away from them.

Paul Allor says

I had a little trouble deciding whether to give this book three stars or four, but then I realized I was letting my expectations interfere. This book was good -- really good -- and if it had been written by an unknown author there'd be no question of giving it four stars. But instead it was written by the exquisite Ann Patchett, and was her first book after *Bel Canto*, an absolute masterpiece. So, of course it suffers in comparison. I imagine this is a common problem in art. Answer quick: What was Michael Jackson's next album after *Thriller*? Picasso's next painting after *Guernica*?

Anyway, *Run* is a fantastic read, and has a lot to say about the families we're given versus the families we build. Particularly wonderful is an opening section that tells a tale that took place in Ireland and has been handed down through the generations. Patchett's novels often feel like modern-day fables, and this one is no exception.

Erin says

I just finished reading "*Run*" last week. I loved "*Bel Canto*", so I was excited about the new book. I even bought it new in hardcover and everything. I started reading it, despite being in the middle of "*Musicophilia*" by Oliver Sacks. I tore through the book. All I wanted to do was go home and read.

It is one of those books that reveals the sadness that lies right underneath happiness. It makes me think something about how rich and beautiful life can be although our lives may not be lives we would have chosen. The characters, including a white ex-politician father and his adopted African-American sons, are all... what's the opposite of stereotypical? They are unique, individual, flawed, detailed - without being self-consciously "quirky" characters. They feel real.

Ann Patchett seems to have a thing about running. One day last week, I was telling my honey about my favorite part of "*Bel Canto*", which is this gorgeous scene where these people who have been hostages and trapped inside get to go outside. One man starts running circles around the building and others join him. This obviously doesn't describe what was gorgeous about the scene, but I will just say that it took my breath away and that it captures something about the freedom in running. The day after I was talking about this scene, I read a stunning scene about running in "*Run*". It's a bit of a theme, I guess. But anyway, it's beautiful and puts into words a primal joy of being alive.

Rob McMonigal says

Just stay as far away from this book as possible. It's terrible, from start to finish. I cannot even begin to imagine why there are so many people who want to read this thing.

Imagine if you will the the following. A man adopts two black children in what has to be roughly the late 70s or early 80s and goes on to be Mayor of Boston. He wants to be governor but his son--the biological one--screws things up for him ala Kennedy, in a terribly written passage told for "the first time" without any reluctance to a perfect stranger. Now he lives for one of his sons to carry on the political legacy but they

have no desire to do so. Suddenly a woman saves a life in our upper class family, and everyone's perspective changes as her ties to the family become known. What happens when a poor girl with a strong resemblance to the adopted boys is thrust into their lives?

This gets worse.

The two kids grow up with no desire at all to know who their biological mother was and all three children are drifting about--one steals drugs in Africa, one studies fish, and the other thinks he might want to be a priest. As the story progresses, switching from viewpoint to viewpoint so the author can tell us things we have to know about everyone, we add more characters than a Shakespeare history play--each of which gets to play narrator, jarring the reader all over the place.

As the story goes on it gets less and less believable--how could a man with the power of the mayor's office not know where the biological mother was? Just how bad are Boston hospitals that people can zip in and out of intensive care? How does a poor person afford going to concerts, political speeches, and other things that are barely affordable by a middle class person?

The book just gets progressively worse in terms of writing style. When a shocking--well, not to me because by this point I'm just reading to finish the book--secret about the girl's mother is revealed through a dream sequence, I lost any hope I had for this book to even claim to be mediocre.

The king of all "you've got to be kidding me" moments is saved for the end, when as a result of all this, and told several years into the future, when all of a sudden the father who wanted everything to work perfectly for his family--GETS EVERYTHING WE WERE TOLD HE WANTED.

Yes, 287 or so pages later, this book forces us into a happy ending for the one character in the book who up to that point had no compelling reason to be the one we give a shit about.

There's so much wrong with this book that I could go on for pages about it. Even without using spoilers, there's so much I can describe as being wrong. Let's start with the fact that people jump in and out of this book without comment--there are lots of white relatives at the start of the book who dislike the idea of the family having black relatives. Guess who we never see again after the opening pages? Of the characters we do have, they drop in and out seemingly at random. Sullivan the screw up son has no purpose at all, and his namesake uncle is about as needed as a third shoe.

Then there's the practical part of all this. Our patriarch is a former mayor, right? Has security guards, at least while being mayor, right? Yet he's had a stalker--there's no polite way to describe what happens in this book but stalking--for ALMOST 20 YEARS. Umm, either the security team hated him or they're more incompetent than the keystone cops. That's if you can believe that a powerful political figure wouldn't use his influence to find--and keep at bay--the mother of the boys if he were so worried about her, as well as the other problems I mentioned above. I could add more but that would require looking over the text again and I'd really prefer not to.

This book reads like a Hallmark movie, and if that's your thing, go for it. However, the only way to enjoy this one is to take the concept of suspension of disbelief and toss it off the side of the Empire State Building. I can do that in a comic book, but not in a real book. I'm willing to overlook some things in fiction, but this is like trying to ignore DNA, fingerprints, and a confession all in front of your face. Combined with the poor writing style that tells instead of shows for much of the novel, it leaves me as cold as the fish Tip should still be studying.

If you want a book that has believable characters, a plot that makes sense, and characters that logically progress from the book's beginning to the book's end, well, this one isn't it. (Library, 03/08)

Frank says

This claptrap pile of PC bullshit was built for Oprah's Book Snub. Sainted mothers come in black and white; issues of race and grief receive a sponge-over paint job that would make Bob Ross' happy little tree's wilt and die. Matchstick characters are globbed together with gooey dialogue that spills from their cardboard souls.

Everybody's so goddamned pious, righteous and waxen that you pray for an axe-wielding murderer to crop up and start hacking the shit out of these uber-annoying stick figures and their politically correct lives. To call these things characters would imply that they had some.

Aside from Truth and Beauty, I would stay away from anything written by Ann Patchett. She's more catholic than Tom Clancy if that's possible... and so out of tune with her own sexuality that it's painful to read her desperate attempts at inking passion or love... beyond some over-simplified, idealized tripe weighted with lazy Christian morality and a despicable PC'ness that permeates your being like a sniff of ammonia and feels as natural as a hospital corner bed sheet cramping your big toe.

Fie on this book, I say. Fie

Becky says

I liked this book just fine, did I love, no, but I liked it & I am glad I read it.
Ann has such a gentle way of writing, I love the flow of her words.

This is a story of family, & race & fate & running-as in actual running & running from something. (or to something)

Several characters come together due to an accident during a snow storm. & we piece together how these people all connect with one another.

There was a pretty major twist in the story that I never saw coming.....

Like i said- I liked the book just fine. More of a 3.5 stars but I rounded up

Gregory Baird says

Ann Patchett's "Run" explores the concepts of race, religion, class and, most importantly, family through the eyes of a pair of families over a twenty-four hour period. First are the Doyles: Bernard, the patriarch and former mayor of Boston; his biological son, Sullivan, whose grief over his deceased mother has caused him to descend into perpetual screw-up status; Teddy, the black son that he adopted after his now departed wife was unable to have any more children; and Tip, Teddy's biological older brother who was unexpectedly included in the adoption agreement after his biological mother decided to give him up too. Despite their

mixed race status the Doyles are a pretty typical family. Bernard loves his sons, but his efforts to push Teddy and Tip into political careers are dangerously toeing the line of becoming overbearing. This festering disgruntlement leads to a near-accident for one of his sons, who gets saved from walking in front of a car at the last second by a Good Samaritan who ends up taking the hit instead. But this good Samaritan turns out to be no stranger to Tip and Teddy, bringing us to family number two: the Mosers; led by Tennessee, who is the impoverished biological mother who gave Tip and Teddy up but has been following their lives closely while raising her daughter, Kenya in the projects a few blocks away. She has been watching them grow up, but they have never noticed her. Over the next twenty-four hours, while Tennessee lies in a hospital bed and the Doyles are forced to temporarily assume custody of Kenya, questions regarding family, loyalty, sacrifice and forgiveness will have to be answered.

Having never read her incredibly well-received novel “Bel Canto,” this was my first experience with Ann Patchett. While she certainly has a sweet tone and a sentimental eye, I must admit that I don’t really see what the fuss is about. The truth is that while her characters are fairly developed they never really become more than mere character types to me (the loving but overbearing father, screw-up son, affable twin, strict twin, etc.). They don’t seem like real people, and the set-ups feel forced and contrived. Characters go on expeditions into the winter air or stay awake and then go off to sleep at set intervals in order for Patchett to give each of them a turn at being alone with each other to share a moment. It feels like a play, where at least one character has to be onstage at every moment regardless of the time of night, and the others are waiting in the wings for their cue to enter. This is a novel of plot-related conveniences, right down to the fact that a pair of adopted brothers apparently never once thought about finding their biological mother, so that when she unexpectedly surfaces it comes as a complete shock to them. Come on, even after their adopted mother passed away they never succumbed to curiosity? And while Patchett’s descriptive style is warm and welcoming it is also prone to some wild continuity gaffes. Lying in her hospital bed, Tennessee notes that all of the nurses taking care of her are very skinny, prompting her to wonder if the hospital had hired “starving refugees” – but in the next sentence a nurse is un-ironically described as “fat and sickly pale”. Later on, a character suffers a fall so fast that he didn’t even have time to throw his hands out to protect himself, resulting in a cut on his head from where it hit the ground. But describing how he appeared after the fall, Patchett remarks that one arm is pinned underneath his head – “both above his head and behind it.” That was very surprising to me. Most surprising of all to me, however, was that despite the novel’s seemingly liberal leanings it comes off as very insulting to the poor. Patchett unwittingly argues that a poor person, no matter how loving or well intentioned, is not fit for parenthood. I don’t think she meant for it to come off that way, but that’s what I got from her story.

Patchett seems like a capable enough writer, but I don’t believe that “Run” is her finest hour. It’s sweet but unintentionally rude, intelligent but hopelessly flawed. I’m sure that many readers will enjoy this book for its complicated family drama (book clubs in particular might have some good discussions about it), so I would probably recommend it to fans of Jodi Picoult. Otherwise, I’m tempted to tell you to skip it.

Grade: C-

Lyn Elliott says

I wouldn't have picked up a book on the themes of this book left to my own devices, but this was the January book for my wonderful book club and I read all the way through, no skipping.

We had a deep and fascinating discussion about the long term emotional effects of adoption on relinquishing mothers and on children who had been given up for adoption; patterns of preference within families - which

parent favoured which attributes of children; different ways parents exercise control over children and the ways that children respond.

Patchett has said that she likes to put groups of people together in a particular situation and then see what happens. Working this story out took her six years and it still felt contrived.

Each individual has a story 'pod' linked to the main storyline, but the joins are far from smooth.

A couple of my friends disliked it so much they didn't finish it. Many of us were not convinced by any of the characters, feeling they had been created to represent polarities of characteristics, positions or viewpoints.

I liked it well enough to read it all. We all agreed it was nowhere near as good as *Bel Canto* which we read several years ago.

Yulia says

how can i put this? this was a horrendous book, painfully targeted to the oprah book club readers of the world and oh so politically-correct, with one-sided characters that can be summed up with one adjective (tip was the serious one, teddy the sweet one) and who are allowed to express contrary thoughts only once to show there may be more to them than is shown by patchett ("shut the fuck up about the coffee," as kenya thinks out of the blue, to show she is a human after all). after reading "bel canto" slowly and being brought to tears by the ending, i was left after "run" by thinking of patchett's endings as mere devices used to explain the sacrifice we make for the people we love. if only we could understand this love for the mother-saint figure in the first place and the cost of the sacrifice (teddy's passion for ichthyology was far from convincingly evoked). where's the victory in choosing one unsubstantiated passion for another unsubstantiated one? reading patchett, you'd think it impossible to portray real individuals with dark thoughts, who don't always want to do as their parents teach them. the only real character in this novel, sullivan, is dismissed as a killer, thief, and all-around loser. is that how patchett views the real people in her life?

Camie says

Not my favorite Patchett but still read worthy. A fairly quiet story about Doyle a former Mayor of Boston, whose wife Bernadette has passed and left him to oversee their grown sons, who include free spirited Sullivan who was twelve years old when Tip and Teddy, two young black boys given up by their mother were adopted. Doyle is the kind of father who has high hopes for his sons and tends to be a bit pushy about what their life goals should be. But one night there is a tragic accident and a life changing family mystery is brought to light. Not the best review but any more will spoil it and I know others are reading this -for Feb KUYH 3.5 stars

Karen says

I have to preface this review by saying that I loved Ann Patchett's *Bel Canto* so I may just be a big fan of her particular style of writing. With that said, I loved this book. The characters were interesting and the story was developed and complicated (but not annoyingly so). I really enjoyed that most of the book takes place in a period of 24 hours; it really increases the urgency and drama of the plot. I also respected that I couldn't predict all of the events that happened, not all of them good, but it made me want to know what was going to

happen next. A fantastic read!

Phrynne says

This may not be Ann Patchett's best book but it was certainly very readable and engaging. I found the ease with which the two black brothers grew up in a white household a little unlikely but at the same time it was nice not to have to be concerned for once with that issue. The neatness of the ending also did not reflect real life but then I thought so what? This is a story, a piece of fiction and it is very enjoyable to read. I even stayed up late to finish it! Four stars for giving me pleasure and for keeping me involved from the first to the last page.
