



The Orchid Thief: A True Story of Beauty and Obsession (Ballantine Reader's Circle)

Susan Orlean

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NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • A NEW YORK TIMES NOTABLE BOOK

A modern classic of personal journalism, *The Orchid Thief* is Susan Orlean's wickedly funny, elegant, and captivating tale of an amazing obsession. Determined to clone an endangered flower—the rare ghost orchid *Polyrrhiza lindenii*—a deeply eccentric and oddly attractive man named John Laroche leads Orlean on an unforgettable tour of America's strange flower-selling subculture, through Florida's swamps and beyond, along with the Seminoles who help him and the forces of justice who fight him. In the end, Orlean—and the reader—will have more respect for underdog determination and a powerful new definition of passion.

In this new edition, coming fifteen years after its initial publication and twenty years after she first met the “orchid thief,” Orlean revisits this unforgettable world, and the route by which it was brought to the screen in the film *Adaptation*, in a new retrospective essay.

Look for special features inside. Join the Random House Reader's Circle for author chats and more.

Praise for *The Orchid Thief*

“Stylishly written, whimsical yet sophisticated, quirkily detailed and full of empathy . . . *The Orchid Thief* shows [Orlean's] gifts in full bloom.”—*The New York Times Book Review*

“Fascinating . . . an engrossing journey [full] of theft, hatred, greed, jealousy, madness, and backstabbing.”—*Los Angeles Times*

“Orlean's snapshot-vivid, pitch-perfect prose . . . is fast becoming one of our national treasures.”—*The Washington Post Book World*

“Orlean's gifts [are] her ear for the self-skewing dialogue, her eye for the incongruous, convincing detail, and her Didion-like deftness in description.”—*Boston Sunday Globe*

“A swashbuckling piece of reporting that celebrates some virtues that made America great.”—*The Wall Street Journal*

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