

Good morning! This is Sue Mauger.

You're listening to "Reading between the Lines" brought to you by the Friends of the Homer Public Library.

With the recent move to phase out the food pyramid - a concept to educate us about how much of each food group we should eat, I've been thinking about my reading consumption in the same way. I read some books because they're good for me- the vegetable-like classics. There are books I read because they make me happy - the comfort food of literature. And some books weigh me down like a slab of beef. And then there are the spicy, exotic books that I read less frequently, that make me feel deeply satisfied. That's how I felt when I read "Disgrace" by J. M. Coetzee.

*Disgrace* is a novel set in post-apartheid South Africa. Professor David Lurie is a twice divorced, mediocre professor of communications at Cape Technical University. His career hasn't amounted to much with a string of scholarly books read by few and classrooms full of uninspired students. And his ability to connect with his peers, even his weekly-visited high caliber prostitute, is just barely satisfactory. Yet, Lurie is content as the master of his world. But life begins to fall apart when David discovers himself smitten with a young student and they become lovers. When the confused student reports the indiscretion, David,

refusing to apologize for his behavior---he was merely answering the call of Eros--  
- is forced to resign.

In his disgrace, he heads for his daughter's small farm, where Lucy kennels dogs, sells the flowers and vegetables she grows, and helps her African handyman become a property owner. When Lucy convinces him to help out at the local animal clinic, David, no great animal lover, finds himself face to face with the suffering of innocents---too many dogs born into a world that neither wants them nor has the means to support them. Then, he and Lucy are attacked by three Africans, and he is helpless to prevent her being raped. As the father recovers from his injuries and the daughter deals with her shame, author Coetzee brings the disgrace of our individual and societal failings into focus. Coetzee won the 1999 Booker Prize for this novel, and although the story is rather bleak, the book follows the beginnings of a man's rise from disgrace, his growing understanding about human and animal suffering, and the new world for white society in the post-apartheid era. Redemption is not complete, but the novel takes us to a place that implies a slight hope for David and for South Africa. With dark themes, a vaguely sympathetic main character, and painful history, this is not my typical read, but the exotic flavors and foreign perspectives make me feel like I have participated in a worldly feast.

So why did I consume this book? Well, this was the first week of the Summer Reading Program and this week's theme was Africa. So with that power of suggestion, I did a little searching through the library's catalog, and decided to dig into *Disgrace*. It's not too late for you to sign up – go to [friendshomerlibrary.org](http://friendshomerlibrary.org) to find out more. All ages are welcome and encouraged. And this week we're going to Asia! Yum!

The Library hours are

Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

and Tuesday and Thursday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Tune in next Sunday morning at this same time for “Reading between the Lines” right here on KBBI 890, Homer!