

# Capsule comments on book world

Here is a guide to some recently published books that might make perfect gifts for someone this Christmas.

Cora (Viking Press, \$10.95)  
Daphne Athas

Daphne Athas, despite her tendency to leave nothing unsuggested, leaves quite a bit unanswered in her sometimes terrifying, sometimes soothing novel *Cora*.

But you really can't blame Athas, whose last novel, *Entering Ephesus*, was picked by *Time* as one of the 10 best in 1971, for not providing many answers because she tackles most of the questions that have frustrated writers and readers for years.

Athas delicately dabbles with the loving side of man, but she also delves savagely into the dark, violent side. And along the way, she lets her characters probe the meaning of love, freedom, identity and life.

With the revolutionary political intrigues of modern Greece as a background, Don, a 24-year-old American GI on furlough, and Cora, a 47-year-old American widow on vacation, are drawn beautifully together by love and then are violently ripped apart by the Greek police.

The shifting point of view that Athas uses in the second half of the book is the novel's most appealing aspect. Especially effective is Cora's almost unconscious revelation of her struggle to gain freedom from her captor and from her old identity.

*Cora* is the perfect book for anyone willing to unravel the puzzle of life that Athas presents.

MARK SCANDLING

*The Carlos Contract* (Macmillan, \$8.95)  
David Atlee Phillips

His real name is Ilyich Rameriz Sanchez. His profession is terrorism. But he is better known to the world as Carlos, the elusive Venezuelan terrorist who has captured world attention on more than one occasion with his audacious, nightmarish plays.

David Atlee Phillips, a 25-year veteran of the Central Intelligence Agency, takes the

## books

real figure of Carlos and builds a fictional world around him. Phillips' CIA experience, however, makes *The Carlos Contract* very believable, as operations are carried out with carefully detailed professionalism.

Carlos is wanted dead—or put out of service—by major business concerns who are frightened by an outbreak of kidnappings of their employees. Mack "The Knife" McLendon, a retired CIA agent, agrees to take the contract and track down the elusive Carlos.

Phillips masterfully weaves a tale of suspense as McLendon and his colleagues chase Carlos around the world. Combined

with a truly surprise ending, it makes for some of the best spine-tingling, cloak-and-dagger reading around.

CHUCK ALSTON

*Some Do* (Macmillan, \$9.95)  
Jane DeLynn

*Some Do* is the story of seven women. That they happen to be gay, straight, poor, rich, shy, forthright, married to revolutionaries and nuclear scientists and happen to be living in Berkeley in the late 1960s and early 1970s is, of course, important. Very important. For the characteristics that set them apart are the very ones that thrust them together in search of new morality and meaning amidst turbulent times.

DeLynn's fiction swiftly changes from moving passages of tenderness to violent explorations of sex—both homosexual and heterosexual. Sex, marriage and friendship



Daphne Athas

serve as the social background against which DeLynn plays her themes, which range from commentaries on the self-righteousness of the New Left to the ambivalence of the sexual act.

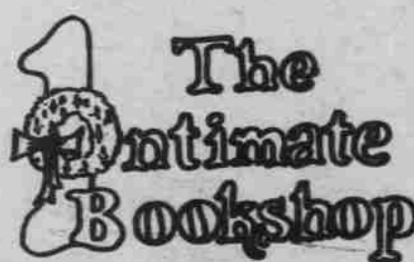
*Some Do* is Ms. DeLynn's first effort at a novel and merits high praise. She is a founding editor of *Fiction* magazine.

CHUCK ALSTON

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