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the dream

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Books by Simonetta Wenkert

Freedom.
Jonathan Franzen
Fourth Estate, 570pp

It's ten years since Jonathan Franzen published his epic family saga, *The Corrections*. At 570 pages long, his new novel, *Freedom*, is also set within the stifling confines of suburban Minnesotan family life; though this time it is the parents, rather than the children, whose lives occupy centre stage.

Freedom traces the story of Patty and Walter Berglund, encompassing the years of college, young parenthood and the challenges of the empty nest. As typical baby boomers, they wrestle with the freedoms implicit in the book's title – sexual, moral, political – which are seen to be the birthright of prosperous liberal America. The choices which the Berglunds and their children make take place in the kind of murky moral no man's land which, at the end of the day, is

the rightful habitat of all great literature. Franzen's speciality as a novelist is to place his already flawed characters in a series of ambiguous situations (such as the deeply principled ecologist, Walter, ending up by working for a mining company) and allowing them to ultimately find their own moral solutions.

Freedom hums with the sense of what it is to be alive in twenty first century America; the Bush Years, global warming, the sub prime mortgage crisis, yet the personal dramas which take place within the family are no less well depicted. Franzen has a spookily good ear for dialogue, and a deep comic vein runs throughout the novel. In an age of mass-information and woefully shortened attention spans, wallow in the luxury of this slow-moving, yet wonderfully observed, novel.



Island Sight @ Unique Home Stays

Hot dates

Where to go, when to go there and where to stay

▣ The Falmouth Spring Flower Show

The Falmouth Spring Flower Show has marked the start of spring in Falmouth for over a century. Admire all the usual classes and wonderful displays of spring flowers in this charming coastal town.

When? 26 to 27 March

Stay: Unique Home Stays have on their books a striking Methodist Chapel in Malpas, close to Truro. Built circa 1800 it has been meticulously converted to offer this sunny riverside holiday home stay with stunning views.

What else? Sleeping up to 2 guests, 3-nt weekends from £426.

www.riverchapel.uniquehomestays.com

▣ Wimbledon

The Lawn Tennis Association's (LTA) Wimbledon Championship 2011 is one of the world's most renowned tennis events in the sporting calendar. Experience the exciting championship atmosphere and witness world class tennis.

When? 20 June to 3 July

Stay: Eventful Stays has a number of places to stay in Wimbledon which are within easy commuting distance of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships.

What else? The majority of accommodation is self-catering, allowing you to come and go as you choose and watch as much tennis as you wish or until poor light stops play. Places to rent include self-catering London flats to comfortable private

houses for larger tennis parties. Book now to find the accommodation that matches your needs.
<http://eventfulstays.com/event/wimbledon-tennis-championships>

▣ Whitstable Oyster Festival

In recent years organisers have more than doubled the amount of events within the festival, broadening its appeal and enticing more people to the picturesque Kentish town. The entire festival is still structured around the traditional local customs of the oyster fishing industry but the event now includes family and arts entertainment, and food and drink alongside local heritage and history.

When? 23 to 29 July

Stay: The Whitstable Cottage Company have a good collection of holiday properties, from quaint fisherman's cottages, to panoramic sea view beach houses, and stylish apartments.
www.whitstablecottagecompany.com

▣ Goodwood revival

The most popular historic motor race meeting staged entirely in the nostalgic time capsule of the 1940s, 50s and 60s that relives the glory days of Goodwood Motor Circuit.

When? 16 to 18 September

Stay: At River Cottage. Steeped in history the property offers a charming riverside retreat perfectly located for Goodwood and its annual festivities.

What else? Sleeping up to 6 guests, 3-nt stays from £630 (couples rates available). Goodwood Revival, 3-nt weekend from £2005.

www.rivercottage.uniquehomestays.com

▣ St Minas Parade

Every November, the townspeople of Heraklion take to the streets to commemorate the city's patron saint. Enjoy some winter sun whilst experiencing the capital of Crete in celebratory mode.

When? November 2011

Stay: With enviable panoramic views over the Aegean Sea towards the mountains, Island Sight, Lassithi Crete provides the perfect viewing platform for breathtaking sundowners.

What else? Sleeping up to 10, 3-nt weekends from €1500.

www.islandsight.coastsreach.uniquehomestays.com

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- ✓ How to build self esteem and unleash your personal power
- ✓ How to stop pretending you are less than you know you are
- ✓ How to create the life you deserve in 2011



"Massive life changing impact. When I look back I can't believe how much has changed." Julie Tomlinson

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