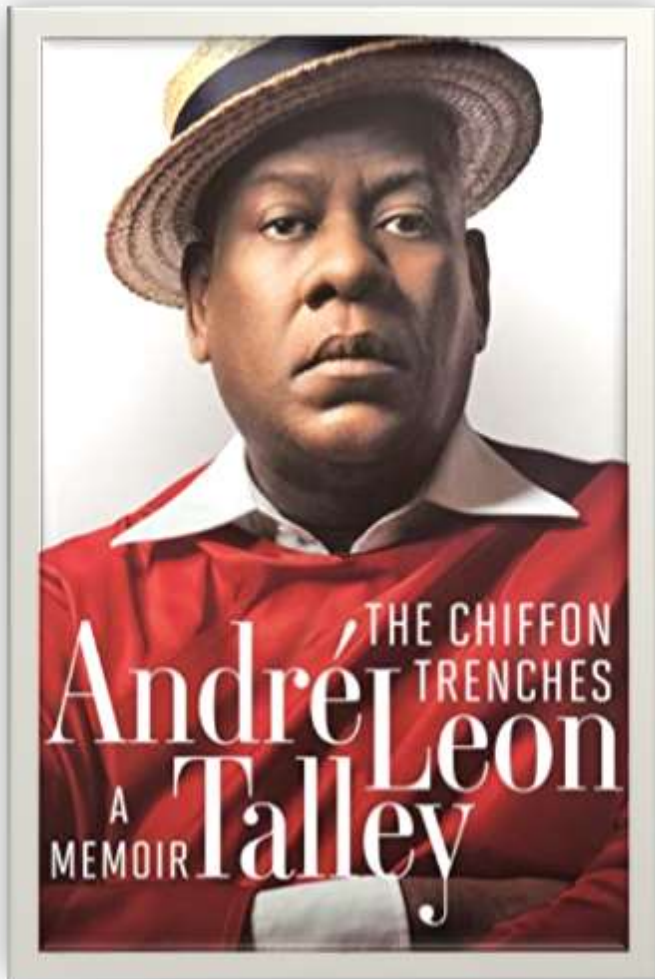


Allison's Book Corner September 2020

The Chiffon Trenches: A Memoir by André Leon Talley
(Ballantine Books 2020)



I love a good memoir. There is nothing like reading about another person's life and learning from his or her experiences. What a delicious read this book is; I wanted to eat it with a spoon. It was just so wonderful. I almost finished it in one sitting.

This special memoir is for all of you fashionistas or artsy types. If you have ever watched a red carpet show before or after the Oscars or Emmys, this book is for you. Or, if you have ever wanted to own a pair of the famous red-soled Louboutin shoes, ah yes, you will love this book.

André Leon Talley is the 6'6" African American man you saw for years walking beside Anna

Wintour, Vogue's editor-in-chief for all eternity (well, really 32 years -- but she embodies Vogue; she *is* Vogue). Hello, *The Devil Wears Prada*. André takes us behind the scenes of the fashion world. He has traveled the world to all of the top fashion shows and befriended some of the top designers: Givenchy, Ralph Lauren, Yves St. Laurent and Karl Lagerfeld, to name just a few. André was there during the Studio 54 days, and was friends with Andy Warhol.

André serves up the dish - or the tea, as young folks would say - in this book. We find out what really goes on before and after the runway. Readers learn that his humble, Southern, God-fearing roots really helped André succeed and shine in the fashion world as one of the first African American creative directors. He also takes amazing photographs. One thing André has a hard time with is his weight. He is very honest about his struggle to take off the pounds while indulging in his favorite Southern cuisine. He also gives us insight into how his faith in God helped him to stay above the fray during the wild cocaine scene of the 70s art world. I will not give everything away. He is honest about his sexuality and the role it plays in his life. This man is at all of the big events. He shares great details about when he attended the first inauguration of former President Barack Obama.

Surprisingly, one of André's best friends was Lee Radziwill, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis's sister. He shares details of their friendship that centered around fashion and interior decorating. Radziwill was a very private person and Talley was an honored guest at her funeral service.

André Leon Talley has led an amazing life. I recommend reading this memoir while André is still with us on this earth, living his best, most fashionable life. And when you finish reading the last page, you do feel like taking a look in the mirror and saying "yes, darling, I am gorgeous!"