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REVIEW: The Story of Edgar Sawtelle

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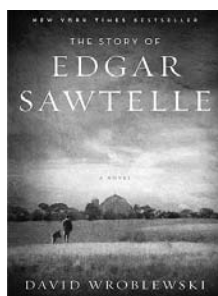
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FICTION

The Story of Edgar Sawtelle by David Wroblewski (Harper Collins, 2008; 9780061374227)

Wroblewski's debut into the literary world is a success. Rich in description and detail, the 566-page-turner will keep you enthralled. A beautifully written novel full of mystery, suspicion, and heart. The story, which is set on a farm in northern Wisconsin, could easily translate to any Georgia farm in any sleepy rural town. The characters are few, but well developed from beginning to end. Gar, Trudy, Edgar and Claude Sawtelle, along with Doctor and Glen Papineau and a host of other interesting actors complete the cast. The tale revolves around the protagonist – Edward Sawtelle. Born mute and the sole offspring of Gar and Trudy Sawtelle. The family has bred and raised dogs their whole life — the mysterious and infamous breed of Sawtelle Dogs. The tale is full of human emotion, heartache, turmoil and treachery. Simply the story is about the coming of age of a young man, facing our fears and life's intricate well-woven mysteries. As a librarian, I was impressed by the amount of cognizant research and study that went into the writing of this book. The chapters on dog training, the Sawtelle breed history, and the deep relationship between man and beast are rich in detail and depiction. The touching portrayal of Edgar, his best friend Almondine and faithful



compatriots (Finch, Pout, Essay, Tinder and Baboo) impressed me. Dog lovers and anyone who has ever loved and lost a pet will be able to relate to the moving narrative of Edgar Sawtelle. ►►

— Reviewed by **Kenneth M. Kozel**

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NONFICTION

The History of Public Library Access for African Americans in the South or, Leaving Behind the Plow by David M. Battles (Scarecrow Press, 2009; ISBN 978-0-8108-6247-0, \$40.00)

Battles provides a detailed chronological account of integration in American public libraries from the early 19th century through the mid-1960's, placed in its cultural and historical context as part of the larger struggle for Civil Rights. Battles explains why southern states maintained segregation longer than northern states, key legal cases that impacted equality for African Americans, and how the South gradually gave way to political and social forces calling for equality — including desegregation of public buildings. Personalities such as W. E. B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington are given their due, but Battles also highlights quotes or stories from

