



# Sparta High School Summer Reading Recommendations

2016

# Pick a Book!

Welcome to Sparta High School's Summer Reading Program. Select one of the books on the following slides. Read and enjoy it -- along with any other books you select -- over the summer. By **JUNE 15**, sign up for your chosen book using this link: <http://goo.gl/forms/BZ7tx1ixbZyARkZs2>

When school begins in September, you will join a book club discussion led by the teacher who recommended the book.

You should also be prepared to use the book for a writing assignment in your English class.

Happy Reading! Don't stop at just one!



# *She's Come Undone* by Wally Lamb

Genre: Fiction

*She's Come Undone* is a fictional account of Dolores, a woman facing obstacles and traumatic crises that make her a basket-case, self-shaming and self-conscious. Over the years, she survives a variety of abuse, self-hatred, mental illness, and alienation. She narrates her life story with bleak humor from her abusive, divorced childhood, through her current failing marriage. There are many challenging topics in this drama that are discussed in detail, but it is overall, a story of hope and triumph.

**Recommended by Book Chat leader Tina Johnson**



# *The Boys in the Boat* by Daniel James Brown

Genre: Nonfiction / Memoir

*The Boys in the Boat* is the true story of how a group of working-class boys from the Western U.S. were able to learn to row, and eventually to represent their country in the Berlin Olympics. Readers gain an appreciation not only for the type of hard work that very few of us perform today, but also for the state of the US economy and the grip that Hitler had on Germany prior to World War II.

**Recommended by Book Chat leader Dana Miller**



# ***Way of the Peaceful Warrior* (a book that changes lives) by Dan Millman**

Genre: Nonfiction

Olympic bound athletic Dan Millman has a future that is predicted to be nothing but success and wealth, with a life that would leave him wanting nothing. Dan finds himself asking, are these material things really what life is all about? To have a “certain” life, a life that he projected would be what others would expect of him. Once he achieves these expected milestones, he still finds himself feeling empty. He asks if everything is perfect, what am I missing? This is then when the universe provides him with a mentor/teacher on how to live that life feeling absolute bliss, happiness, joy and peace.

**Recommended by Book Chat Leader Lynn D’Amelio**



# 11/22/63 by Stephen King

Genre: Fiction

11/22/63 is a novel about a time traveler who attempts to prevent the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, which occurred on November 22, 1963. The novel required considerable research to accurately portray the late 1950s and early 1960s. King comments, "I'd like to tell a time-travel story where this guy finds a diner that connects to 1958... you always go back to the same day. So one day he goes back and just stays. Leaves his 2007 life behind. His goal? To get up to November 22, 1963, and stop Lee Harvey Oswald. He does, and he's convinced he's just FIXED THE WORLD. But when he goes back to '07, the world's a nuclear slag-heap. Not good to fool with Father Time. So then he has to go back again and stop himself..... only he's taken on a fatal dose of radiation, so it's a race against time."

**Recommended by Book Chat leaders Laura Lopez & Vicky Reed**



# *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa* by Eugene “Sledgehammer” Sledge

This is a classic book of combat in WWII in general, and the Pacific specifically. It's on the reading list for all Marines. Sledge's portrait is displayed in the National Museum of the Marine Corps.

**Recommended by Book Chat Leader Eric Hood and the USMC**



# *Coming of Age in Mississippi* by Anne Moody

Genre: Autobiography

This is a 1968 memoir by Anne Moody about growing up in rural Mississippi in the mid-20th century as an African-American woman. The book covers Moody's life from childhood, through her mid-twenties, including her involvement in the Civil Rights movement, which began when she was a student at a historically black Tougaloo College. Moody's autobiography details her struggles both against racism among white people and sexism among her fellow civil rights activists.

**Recommended by Book Chat leader Chris Sima**





# *Nightfall* (1941) by Isaac Asimov

Genre: Short story/SciFi

<https://www.uni.edu/morgans/astro/course/nightfall.pdf>

What if somebody would tell you the world you know is suddenly and completely going to change? Would you believe it?  
What if you never knew what darkness is? How would you react?

I read Asimov as a teenager (in French) and always liked the plots and universes he created. It took me some time to realize that his stories had more profound meaning than just the story itself. More recently when I discovered that “Nightfall” was voted best all time Sci/Fi short story in 1968 I was intrigued and not disappointed.

Not everybody may like the “End of the world” ending but “Nightfall” gives us lot of food for thought on our own perspective of the world.

**Recommended by Book Chat leader Serge Wessels**



# *The Magic Strings of Frankie Presto* by Mitch Albom

Genre: Fiction

The Magic Strings of Frankie Presto is the story of a fictional character that becomes known as “the greatest guitarist to ever walk the earth.” This novel takes the reader on a journey of the life of Frankie Presto from his time as an orphaned boy learning to play guitar in Spain to a musician who travels the world and touches the lives of many. Through his journey, Frankie finds himself playing in shows alongside Wynton Marsalis, Hank Williams, Elvis, and KISS. This novel touches on historical highlights in the world of music and gives the reader a behind-the-scenes look at the struggles and triumphs of the life of Frankie Presto.

**Recommended by Book Chat leader Shanna Behrje**



# *The Omnivore's Dilemma* by Michael Pollan

Genre: Non-fiction by the author of the #1 New York Times Bestseller *In Defense of Food*

“With the skill of a professional detective, Michael Pollan explores the worlds of industrial farming, organic and sustainable agriculture, and even hunting and gathering to determine the links of food chains: how food gets from its sources in nature to our plates. The findings he reports in this this book are often unexpected, disturbing, even horrifying, but they are facts every eater should know. This is an engaging book, full of information that is most relevant to conscious living.”

Dr. Andrew Weil, author of *Spontaneous Healing* and *Healthy Aging*

**Recommended by Book Chat leader Adriana Toma**



# ***Shadow Divers: The True Adventure of Two Americans Who Risked Everything to Solve One of the Last Mysteries of World War II* by Robert Kurson**

Genre: Nonfiction/History

"Shadow Divers" by Robert Kurson tells the true story of a group of amateur deep sea divers who discover a German World War II era submarine, a U-boat, sunk in the waters off the coast of New Jersey. They soon found that there were no official records listing a sunken sub at that location and set out to determine the identity of the mystery U-boat.

**Recommended by Book Chat leader Dave De Crescenzi**



# ***The Art of Racing in the Rain* by Garth Stein**

**Genre: Fiction**

*The Art of Racing in the Rain* is on a very basic level, the life story of a dog named Enzo, told by Enzo himself! This very believable novel will have you laughing, crying, cringing in anger and appreciating your beloved pup more than you ever did before. Only a dog like Enzo can make us appreciate the small things in life and ultimately realize that we should never, ever give up.

**Recommended by Book Chat Leader Valerie Cole**



# ***The Miracle of St. Anthony* by Adrian Wojnarowski**

## **Genre: Biography**

*The Miracle of St. Anthony* is a biography that takes the readers into a season of the St. Anthony High School men's basketball team coached by the legendary Bob Hurley. It's an amazing story that takes place in Jersey City, New Jersey, about how this stubborn coach gets these high school boys to play at such a high level of basketball while maintaining good grade point averages as well as being positive role models in the community. It's not only about basketball but about the sacrifices these high school boys make to play basketball for Coach Hurley as well as the sacrifices Coach Hurley makes to keep the high school of St. Anthony from going under.

**Recommended by Book Chat Leader Derek Hall**



# ***Grieving Mindfully* by Sameet M. Kumar, Ph.D.**

## **Genre: Self-Improvement**

Grieving Mindfully is a book that takes you on a journey of growing through grief. Everyone experiences loss and loss is never the same for any two people. By walking mindfully through grief, you will discover how very capable you are of transforming and healing the grief you carry, and how resilient you are while moving through these challenging times.

**Recommended by Book Chat Leader Debbie Gianuzzi**



# *Room* by Emma Donoghue

*Genre: Novel Short- Fiction*

*\*Adult Content*

**Room** is the story of a five-year-old called Jack, who lives in a single room with his Ma and has never been outside. When he turns five, he starts to ask questions, and his mother reveals to him that there is a world beyond the walls. Told entirely in Jack's voice, this mystery super thriller bends and twists into an incredible journey that Jack takes. To five-year-old Jack, Room is the entire world. It is where he was born and grew up; it's where he lives with his Ma as they learn and read and eat and sleep and play. At night, his Ma shuts him safely in the wardrobe, where he is meant to be asleep when Old Nick visits.

Room became a movie directed by Lenny Abrahamson, winning multiple awards and nominations, including the Oscars.

**Recommendation by Book Chat leader Christine Mase**



# ***Lab Girl*** by Hope Jahren

Genre: memoir

*Lab Girl* is a book about work, love, and the mountains that can be moved when those two things come together. It is told through Jahren's remarkable stories: about her childhood in rural Minnesota with an uncompromising mother and a father who encouraged hours of play in his classroom's labs; about how she found a sanctuary in science, and learned to perform lab work done "with both the heart and the hands"; and about the inevitable disappointments, but also the triumphs and exhilarating discoveries, of scientific work."

**Recommendation by Book Chat Leader Lisa Cummins**



# ***Missing Microbes- How the Overuse of Antibiotics is Fueling our Modern Plagues* by Dr. Martin Blaser**

Genre: Nonfiction

"Welcome to the wilds of the human microbiome, where for hundreds of thousands of years bacterial and human cells have existed in a peaceful symbiosis that is responsible for the equilibrium and health of our bodies. Now this invisible Eden is under assault from our over reliance on medical advances including antibiotics and Cesarian sections, threatening the extinction of our irreplaceable microbes and leading to severe health consequences. In *Missing Microbes*, Dr. Martin Blaser reaches back to the discovery of antibiotics, which ushered in a golden age of medicine, and then traces how our subsequent overuse of these seeming wonder drugs has left its mark on our systems, contributing to the rise of what Blaser calls our modern plagues: obesity, asthma, allergies, diabetes, and certain forms of cancer. Blaser's studies suggest antibiotic use during early childhood poses the greatest risk to long-term health, and, alarmingly, American children receive on average seventeen courses of antibiotics before they are twenty years old. At the same time, C-sections deprive babies of important contact with their mothers' microbiomes. Taking us into the lab to recount his groundbreaking studies, Blaser not only provides elegant support for his theory, he guides us to what we can do to avoid even more catastrophic health problems in the future."

**Recommended by Book Chat Leaders Ken Scognamiglio and Sarah Pisano**



# ***Me Before You* by Jojo Moyes**

**Genre: Fiction**

***Me Before You* is a novel about Louisa (Lou) Clark, an eccentric woman in her late twenties who has just lost her job and as one of the main supporters of her family, must find a new one immediately. Despite her lack of experience, she is hired to care for Will Traynor, a once vibrant man who is now, after an accident, a quadriplegic. Lou is in charge of keeping Will company, preparing and feeding him his meals, and completing other small household chores. Soon Lou learns why she was really hired to sit with Will and she begins a mission to make his life happier and show him that life is worth living. Through this process she learns about herself and Will helps her find direction in her own life. This novel is full topics that go much deeper than someone caring for another. Topics such as love, loss, euthanasia, risk, the effects of decisions, etc. will be discussed in this novel.**

**\*Note\* - This novel is being made into a movie that will be released in June. If you choose this novel, it would be great to read the book first and then see the movie. We can compare the two during our discussion!**

**Recommended by Book Chat Leader Mrs. Kopp**



# ***Inheritance Cycle Tetralogy* (all 4 books: *Eragon*, *Eldest*, *Brisingr*, *Inheritance*) by Christopher Paolini**

Genre: Fantasy

The **Inheritance Cycle** is a series of four fantasy novels written by American author Christopher Paolini. Set in the fictional world of Alagaësia, the novels focus on the adventures of a teenage boy named Eragon and his dragon Saphira as they struggle to overthrow the evil king Galbatorix.

**Recommended by Book Chat Leader Mr. Brown**



# *For One More Day* By Mitch Albom

Genre: Fiction

In Albom's second novel, retired baseball player Charley "Chick" Benetto—facing the pain of unfulfilled ambitions, alcohol abuse, divorce, and estrangement from a grown daughter—returns to his abandoned childhood home and attempts suicide in a bungling fit of rage. He encounters the spirit of his deceased mother, Pauline "Posey" Benetto, who Chick thoughtlessly took for granted during both his formative years as cocky athlete and his booze-soaked adulthood. Miraculously, Chick can now apologize to Posey for his ingratitude concerning the sacrifices she made as a single, working mother. Albom narrates with finesse, particularly in Chick's wistful litany of his mother's pearls of wisdom, "A child embarrassed by his mother is just a child who hasn't lived long enough." If Posey's truisms may not necessarily break new literary ground, Albom deserves credit for giving her depth and complexity that transcend familiar pop culture notions of motherhood in '50s America. The gentle strumming of musical accompaniment befits Albom's brand of writing. This "ghost story" provides an affirming tale of moral instruction and emotional catharsis.

As a fan of Mitch Albom, I thoroughly enjoyed the read and the opportunity to reflect on my past, my ambitions, my parents, and ultimately who/what has driven me to do the things I have done.

Albom is the author of *Tuesdays with Morrie* and *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*.

**Recommended by Book Chat leader Andrew Lowery**



# ***The Casual Vacancy* by J.K. Rowling**

Genre: Fiction, tragicomedy

“When Barry Fairbrother dies in his early forties, the town of Pagford is left in shock. Pagford is, seemingly, an English idyll, with a cobbled market square and an ancient abbey, but what lies behind the pretty façade is a town at war. Rich at war with poor, teenagers at war with their parents, wives at war with their husbands, teachers at war with their pupils...Pagford is not what it first seems. And the empty seat left by Barry on the parish council soon becomes the catalyst for the biggest war the town has yet seen. Who will triumph in an election fraught with passion, duplicity, and unexpected revelations? A big novel about a small town, *The Casual Vacancy* is J.K. Rowling's first novel for adults. It is the work of a storyteller like no other.”

\*Disclaimer: has mature content\*

**Recommended by Book Chat Leader Amber Mauriello**



# ***The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams**

Genre: Sci-Fi/Satire

Join me as we dive into Douglas Adams's satirical romp through life, the universe, and everything! This science-fiction adventure begins with a man named Arthur Dent, a seemingly unlikely candidate as the last surviving human in the universe. After narrowly avoiding the destruction of Earth, Dent encounters aliens, robots, and other wacky characters that feel like the literary progenitors to those found on shows like *Futurama*. The author masks the cutting satire in a playful adventure by effectively balancing sophisticated philosophical questions and delightfully pleasant childlike silliness. What *is* the meaning of life? Are dolphins *smarter* than humans? Why is a *towel* the most important tool for interspace travel? Answers to these questions and more in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*!

Also, the movie is terrible (despite its excellent cast). Avoid it at all costs.

**Recommended by Book Chat Leader Brent Rivers**



# ***Man's Search for Meaning*** by Viktor Frankl, 1946

Genre: Non-Fiction/Memoir

Viktor Frankl recounts his time spent in Auschwitz concentration camp during World War 2. As a professional psychiatrist, Frankl is able to analyze the mental state of prisoners. To Frankl every inmate goes through three stages: shock, apathy, and disillusionment. The way a prisoner perceived his future often affected his day to day routines and his will to continue. Man cannot avoid suffering in life but he can choose how to cope with it. Frankl concludes that the meaning to life is found in every moment of life. He creates logotherapy, his professional theory that Man is constantly searching for his meaning in life and that drives his actions and perceptions of the world.

- Contains some graphic descriptions of violence.

**Recommended by Book Chat Leader Troy Fetherman**





# ***Don't Stop the Carnival* by Herman Wouk, 1965**

Genre: Fiction

This is the story of Norman Paperman, a Public Relations (PR) expert from New York City who finds himself deep within a mid-life crisis and runs away to the Caribbean to try to escape the rat-race of everyday life. Norman is first swept into the realization of his mid-life crisis when his exuberant friend Lester Atlas presents him with a fait accompli---money to become an island innkeeper, supervising one of the most charming money-makers on the fictional island of Amerigo.

Can Norman forget his successful PR career in the city and make the transition to a change in latitude and attitude? Will the warm Caribbean beaches be able to erase the bitter cold of New York winters and the thousand indignities a PR man must suffer? Will Norman's penchant for extra-marital affairs be his undoing? Will a long-ago girlfriend's dark secret shock him? You will have to read to find out...can one ever truly really escape the life they have created for another?

**Recommended by Book Chat Leader Dan Johnson**



# *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*

By Sherman Alexie, 2007

*“Arnold Spirit, a goofy-looking dork with a decent jumpshot, spends his time lamenting life on the "poor-ass" Spokane Indian reservation, drawing cartoons (which accompany, and often provide more insight than, the narrative), and, along with his aptly named pal Rowdy, laughing those laughs over anything and nothing that affix best friends so intricately together. When a teacher pleads with Arnold to want more, to escape the hopelessness of the rez, Arnold switches to a rich white school and immediately becomes as much an outcast in his own community as he is a curiosity in his new one. He weathers the typical teenage indignations and triumphs like a champ but soon faces far more trying ordeals as his home life begins to crumble and decay amidst the suffocating mire of alcoholism on the reservation. Alexie's humor and prose are easygoing and well suited to his young audience, and he doesn't pull many punches as he levels his eye at stereotypes both warranted and inapt. A few of the plotlines fade to gray by the end, but this ultimately affirms the incredible power of best friends to hurt and heal in equal measure. Younger teens looking for the strength to lift themselves out of rough situations would do well to start here.”* -

Review by Ian Chipman as featured in Booklist.

**Recommended by Book Chat Leader Lara Lovett**



# ***Go Set a Watchman* by Harper Lee**

**Genre: Fiction**

For those students who enjoyed reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*, this novel provides a new perspective of Maycomb, Alabama. Using a third person point of view, this novel reflects a grown-up Scout's perception of her not so perfect father. It tells of Scout's return to Maycomb, after living in New York City, as she comes to the harsh realization that her father may not have been the man she thought he was.

Let's discuss this novel independently and in conjunction with TKAM, examining lessons about perception and the challenges of growing up in a changing world.

**Recommended by Book Chat Leader Jenna Valleau**



# *The Island at the Center of the World* by Russell Shorto

Genre: Nonfiction

For students who are interested in reading about the history of New York (prior to the English), this is the epic story of Dutch Manhattan, the forgotten colony that shaped America. When the British wrested New Amsterdam from the Dutch in 1664, the truth about its thriving, polyglot society began to disappear into myths about an island purchased for 24 dollars and a cartoonish peg-legged governor. But the story of the Dutch colony of New Netherland was merely lost, not destroyed: 12,000 pages of its records—recently declared a national treasure—are now being translated. Drawing on this remarkable archive, Russell Shorto has created a gripping narrative—a story of global sweep centered on a wilderness called Manhattan—that transforms our understanding of early America.

**Recommended by Book Chat Leader Mark Rehm**



# ***Siddhartha* by Herman Hesse**

Genre: Fiction

Taking place in India, *Siddhartha* is a riveting novella (short novel) about one's journey to self-discovery. Siddhartha is on a journey to find enlightenment, or his purpose.

Though his many struggles seem obsolete on their own, their combination help him to find that spiritual purpose he was looking for. Through reading this novel you will not only understand more about finding yourself, but you will also learn more about the Indian, Buddhist, and Hindu cultures.

**Recommended by Book Chat Leader Corinne Healy**



# ***In the Unlikely Event- By Judy Blume***

## ***GENRE- FICTION***

Judy Blume takes us back to the 1950s and introduces us to the town of Elizabeth, New Jersey, where she herself grew up. Here she imagines and weaves together a vivid portrait of three generations of families, friends, and strangers, whose lives are profoundly changed during one winter. At the center of an extraordinary cast of characters are fifteen-year-old Miri Ammerman and her spirited single mother, Rusty. Their warm and resonant stories are set against the backdrop of a real-life tragedy that struck the town when a series of airplanes fell from the sky, leaving the community reeling. Gripping, authentic, and unforgettable, *In the Unlikely Event* has all the hallmarks of this renowned author's deft narrative magic (Amazon).

**Recommended by Book Chat Leader Angela De Luccia**



# *The Killer Angels* by Michael Shaara

Genre: Historical Fiction

In the four most bloody and courageous days of our nation's history, two armies fought for two dreams. One dreamed of freedom, the other of a way of life. Far more than rifles and bullets were carried into battle. There were memories. There were promises. There was love. And far more than men fell on those Pennsylvania fields. Shattered futures, forgotten innocence, and crippled beauty were also the casualties of war. *The Killer Angels* is unique, sweeping, unforgettable—a dramatic re-creation of the battleground for America's destiny.

[https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/682804.The\\_Killer\\_Angels](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/682804.The_Killer_Angels)

**Recommended by Book Chat Leader Mr. Merrill**



# ***Rebecca* By Daphne du Maurier**

**Genre: Fiction (romance/suspense)**

**Story of a young woman who marries a fascinating widower only to find out that she must live in the shadow of his former wife, Rebecca, who died mysteriously several years earlier. The young wife must come to grips with the terrible secret of her handsome, cold husband, Max De Winter. She must also deal with the jealous, obsessed Mrs. Danvers, the housekeeper who will not accept her as the mistress of the house.**

**Recommended by Book Chat leader Marisa Wilson**





# ***Inside Rikers: Stories from the World's Largest Penal Colony* by Jennifer Wynn**

**Genre: Nonfiction**

**Jennifer Wynn has written an insightful and moving account of the immense daily struggles faced by inmates passing through the New York City jail system. Their stories, failures, and all-too-rare successes put a human face on a population that has been largely ignored or demonized by politicians. It is an important book and a significant contribution to the literature on prisons and prisoners.**

**Recommended by Book Chat leader Renee Dalia**



# ***The Poisoner's Handbook* by Deborah Blum**

Genre: Nonfiction/History/Science

In the early 20th century, the average American medicine cabinet was a would-be poisoner's treasure chest, with radioactive radium, thallium, and morphine in everyday products. The pace of industrial innovation increased, but the scientific knowledge to detect and prevent crimes committed with these materials lagged behind until 1918. New York City's first scientifically trained medical examiner, Charles Norris, and his chief toxicologist, Alexander Gettler, turned forensic chemistry into a formidable science and set the standards for the rest of the country.

**Recommended by Book Chat Leaders Ashley Markovic & Angela Trzcinski**

# *Feed* by Mira Grant (Book 1 of Newsflesh Trilogy)

Shaun and Georgia are orphans of the Rising, the cataclysmic event which left the world reeling in the aftermath of the zombie uprising. Adopted by the Masons and raised in the strange world of the post-Rising media, they've spent their lives chasing the next big story, the one that will allow them to break into the big leagues once and for all. Now, in Senator Peter Ryman's run for the Presidency of the United States, they've finally found it - the story of the dark political conspiracy behind the infected.

In a world filled with the constant threat of both the living and the living dead, it will be all that Shaun and Georgia can do to keep themselves in one piece. Accompanied by the rest of their blogging team, Senator Ryman's staff, and a whole lot of caffeine, they might succeed...or they might finally answer the big question of their post-Rising world: When will you rise?

*Feed* is a dystopian political zombie thriller set against the backdrop a national political campaign.

**Recommended by Book Chat Leader Kandace Pollison**



# ***The Club Dumas* by Arturo Perez-Reverte**

**Genre: Novel; Subgenre: Mystery/Thriller**

*The Club Dumas* by Arturo Perez-Reverte is a book about books. So who would guess that such a story would be filled from start to finish with murder and mayhem, death and deception, and even supernatural swashbuckling? The story follows the investigative efforts of Lucas Corso, a chain-smoking, gin-swilling book detective. His attempts at authenticating the manuscript of a recently discovered “lost chapter” from the Dumas classic *The Three Musketeers*, takes him on an international journey across the continent of Europe. Along the way he encounters an intriguing array of characters: well-heeled businessmen of questionable ethics and uncertain motive; obsessed antique book-sellers, willing to go to any lengths to acquire the object of their desire, including murder; and most memorable of them all, an extremely sultry ingénue, who may not be what she appears to be. Perez-Reverte’s thriller is the work of a master craftsman as he manages to weave together all manner of inter-textual reference, from the very obvious to the most intellectually arcane. He can easily be considered the thinking man’s Dan Brown. But make no mistake: For all its Miltonic allusiveness, the narrative unraveling of Dumas’ code proves just as page-turning as that of da Vinci’s.

N.B. Roman Polanski’s *The Ninth Gate*, starring Johnny Depp as our itinerant protagonist, is only a loose adaptation but well worth the viewing.

**Recommended by Book Chat Leader John Hier**



# ***How to Peel an Esoteric Orange*** by Michael Tyger

## **Genre: Fiction**

Bailey Knight seems to be the only one concerned about a catastrophe that is looming. She sets out alone on a risky journey to find answers to life's difficult questions. In an amazing, eye-opening twist, she confronts painful truths with surprising grit. You will wonder at her determination as she inspires Alex, a young man who is also mired down in the agony of a shattered world. You will cheer at this uplifting story as Bailey faces her own mistakes and insecurities. A triumphant story about setting on the right path and finding hope in the face of tragedy!

**Recommended by Book Chat Leader Mrs. Frankie Schuman**



# ***The Lost City of Z: A Tale of Deadly Obsession in the Amazon* by David Grann**

Genre: Nonfiction/History/Adventure

*The Lost City of Z* retraces the steps of the last true Victorian explorer, Percy Fawcett. In the 1920s, Fawcett and his son went into the Amazon to discover an ancient advanced civilization that had only been mentioned in fables and folklore. They disappeared, never to be heard from again. Fascinated with the Amazonian legend, many Fawcett fans have tried to uncover the mystery, frequently meeting the same fate as Fawcett and his son. Grann explores this fascinating tale, using gruesome descriptions, authentic photographs, and historical documents to hook the reader right from the beginning. Grann, consumed by the Fawcett frenzy, attempts to finally expose to truth behind what happened to Fawcett and his crew in the depths of the Amazonian jungle.

\*This contains graphic imagery\*

**Recommended by book chat leader Kate LeBlanc**



# *Still Me by Christopher Reeve*

**Genre: Biography/Memoir**

“When the first **Superman** movie came out I was frequently asked ‘What is a hero?’ I remember the glib response I repeated so many times. My answer was that a hero is someone who commits a courageous action without considering the consequences—a soldier who crawls out of a foxhole to drag an injured buddy to safety. And I also meant individuals who are slightly larger than life: Houdini and Lindbergh, John Wayne, JFK, and Joe DiMaggio. Now my definition is completely different. I think a hero is an ordinary individual who finds strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles: a fifteen-year-old boy who landed on his head while wrestling with his brother, leaving him barely able to swallow or speak; Travis Roy, paralyzed in the first thirty seconds of a hockey game in his freshman year at college. These are real heroes, and so are the families and friends who have stood by them.”

This is the determined, passionate story of one man, a gifted actor and star, and how he and his family came to grips with the kind of devastating, unexplainable shock that fate can bring to any of us.

**Recommended by Book Chat Leader: Mrs. Dee Talty**



# ***The Girl on The Train* by Paula Hawkins**

Genre: Psychological Thriller

*The Girl on the Train* is a fictional account of the lives of three very complicated, genuinely unlikeable women, each dark and layered, and how their worlds wind together along a twisted and horrible track. Rachel, a desperate alcoholic obsessed with her ex husband Tom, Megan, a beautiful, unfulfilled artist running from her past, and Anna, Tom's new wife, determined to protect her family, are all unapologetically sinister, providing readers with a taste of what unbridled jealousy, desire, and obsession can do to a person when gone unchecked. The story is told from the point of view of three very untrustworthy perspectives, and will keep you on the edge of your seat from line one!

**Recommended by Book Chat Leader Kate Brennan**





# *Positive* by Paige Rawl

Genre: Memoir

Paige Rawl was an ordinary student. She played soccer, she was a cheerleader, and she was an honor roll student. Paige was also born HIV positive. When she revealed this to a trusted friend, the bullying began. Everyone at school teased her. She felt like nobody would listen to her. Feeling alone and scared, Paige faced the decision to either make this the end of her story or the beginning. Luckily, Paige found comfort in a community of other kids who were touched by HIV. This remarkable young woman tells the incredible story of how she overcame relentless bullying and decided to become *Positive*.

Recommended by Book Chat Leader Michele Leibowitz



# *A Streetcar Named Desire* By Tennessee Williams

Genre: Play

Take a look at the values of the Old South and how they fade into obscurity in this earthy play by Tennessee Williams. Blanche Dubois, an aging Southern belle, clings to sanity as she confronts the reality of life in the French Quarter of New Orleans. Blanche has no money and no alternative but to move in with her sister, Stella. Tormented by her sister's husband, Stanley Kowalski, Blanche is unable to face the harsh realities of her condition.

The play was written in 1947 and received the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1948.

Recommended by book chat leader Barbara Maneri



# 1776 by David McCullough

## Genre: Non-Fiction

In this masterful book, David McCullough tells the intensely human story of those who marched with General George Washington in the year of the Declaration of Independence—when the whole American cause was riding on their success, without which all hope for independence would have been dashed and the noble ideals of the Declaration would have amounted to little more than words on paper.

Based on extensive research in both American and British archives, *1776* is a powerful drama written with extraordinary narrative vitality. It is the story of Americans in the ranks, men of every shape, size, and color, farmers, schoolteachers, shoemakers, no-accounts, and mere boys turned soldiers. And it is the story of the King's men, the British commander, William Howe, and his highly disciplined redcoats who looked on their rebel foes with contempt and fought with a valor too little known.

Recommended by book chat leader Ryan Lollgen



# ***Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance* by Angela Duckworth**

Genre: Nonfiction/self help

**This book examines the idea that grit is essential to success. Duckworth looks at the relationship between perseverance and lifelong achievement. Her idea that “Effort Counts Twice” is explored through stories and personal interviews she has learned from high achievers. This book has been touted as a must read for athletes, coaches, parents, and teachers.**

**Recommended by book chat leader Janet Ferraro**



# ***Quiet Strength: The Principles, Practices, & Priorities of a Winning Life* by Tony Dungy with Nathan Whitaker**

Genre: Memoir

Through this incredible, upbeat, inspirational memoir, Tony Dungy is able to share his insight on what it takes to be a strong leader, mentor, coach, father, friend, and colleague in life. He talks about the challenges he faced on and off the field in building a beaten down NFL team, Tampa Bay Buccaneers, to a championship team in the Indianapolis Colts. His upbeat positive attitude is contagious and inspirational. This book speaks to young athletes, students, coaches at any level, and adults in high level demanding positions. I would recommend this book to anyone who is looking to better themselves as a person and looks to be a positive contributor to society.

**Recommended by Book Chat Leader Frank Battaglia**



# *Down The Great Unknown* by: Edward Dolnick

Genre: Historical Non-Fiction

In 1869, Civil War veteran, John Wesley Powell, embarked on an epic journey through the Grand Canyon on the uncharted and untamed Colorado River. His crew was nine willing, rowdy and inexperienced ex-soldiers and trappers. They had little knowledge of what was ahead of them. Their intentions were simple - to make their fortune by navigating the fierce and unknown waters through the vast and lengthy Grand Canyon. This novel chronicles a remarkable true story of courage, sacrifice, bravery and pride.

**Recommended by Book Chat Leader Brendian Moriarty**



# ***The Beak of the Finch: A Story of Evolution in Our Time*** **by Jonathan Weiner**

**Genre: Nonfiction/Science/Evolutionary Biology**

On a desert island in the heart of the Galapagos archipelago, where Darwin received his first inklings of the theory of evolution, two scientists, Peter and Rosemary Grant, have spent twenty years proving that Darwin did not know the strength of his own theory. For among the finches of Daphne Major, natural selection is neither rare nor slow: it is taking place by the hour, and we can watch.

In this dramatic story of groundbreaking scientific research, Jonathan Weiner follows these scientists as they watch Darwin's finches and come up with a new understanding of life itself. *The Beak of the Finch* is an elegantly written and compelling masterpiece of theory and explication in the tradition of Stephen Jay Gould.

**Recommended by book chat leader Tom DiNunzio**



# *The Bean Trees* by Barbara Kingsolver

Genre: Fiction

This novel follows the journey of Taylor Greer, who grew up poor in rural Kentucky. She always dreamed of getting away to avoid the typical life that awaited her in her home town, which included becoming pregnant and trapped in a life that she did not want. Ironically, as she travels west she acquires a three-year-old Native American girl whom she names Turtle. As she struggles to find a balance in this new unexpected life, she shares her story of “love and friendship, abandonment and belonging, and the discovery of surprising resources in apparently empty places” (goodreads.com).

[https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/30868.The Bean Trees](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/30868.The_Bean_Trees)

Recommended by Book Chat Leader: Lauren Gomez





# 19 Minutes by Jodi Picoult

Genre: Fiction

“Sterling is an ordinary New Hampshire town where nothing ever happens--until the day its complacency is shattered by an act of violence. Josie Cormier, the daughter of the judge sitting on the case, should be the state's best witness, but she can't remember what happened before her very own eyes--or can she? As the trial progresses, fault lines between the high school and the adult community begin to show--destroying the closest of friendships and families.

Nineteen Minutes asks what it means to be different in our society, who has the right to judge someone else, and whether anyone is ever really who they seem to be.” (goodreads.com)

[www.goodreads.com/book/show/14866.Nineteen\\_Minutes?from\\_search=true&search\\_version=service](http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/14866.Nineteen_Minutes?from_search=true&search_version=service)

Recommended by Book Chat Leaders Mrs. Kacey Konwiser Dalton and Ms. Danielle Colte

# ***A Is for Alibi*** by Sue Grafton

Genre: Fiction/Mystery

Do you like mysteries? Sue Grafton has written almost a full alphabet's worth around the adventures of her protagonist, Kinsey Millhone, a 32-year old private investigator in the fictional town of Santa Theresa, California. In this first book, Kinsey is hired by a woman who was convicted of and served a prison sentence for killing her husband and who now wants to find the real killer. Kinsey discovers that there were actually a number of people with a motive to kill Laurence Fife, formerly a prominent and ruthless divorce attorney, and the case becomes more complex when a woman with connections to Fife is murdered in the same manner - poisoning by oleander capsules which had been substituted for allergy pills. There is action, danger, and intrigue in each story, and the series continues to develop an array of characters with each successive book.

Recommended by Book Chat Leader Mrs. Deb Allshouse

