

Recommended Reading List by SWC Book Club Members

9/2/2021

Book Title	Author	Pub. Year	Description	Genre	Recommendation
<i>The Alice Network</i>	Kate Quinn	2017	Two women—a female spy recruited to the real-life Alice Network in France during World War I and an unconventional American socialite searching for her cousin in 1947—are brought together in a mesmerizing story of courage and redemption.	Historical Fiction	Gail Macneill
<i>Anxious People</i>	Fredrik Backman	2020	A charming, poignant novel about a crime that never took place, a would-be bank robber who disappears into thin air, and eight extremely anxious strangers who find they have more in common than they ever imagined.	Humorous Literary Fiction	Carolyn Derby
<i>Caste: The Origins of our Discontents</i>	Isabel Wilkerson	2020	Using narrative and stories about real people, the book explores how America today and throughout its history has been shaped by a hidden caste system and rigid hierarchy of human rankings	Non-Fiction	Helen Beedy
<i>A Drop of Midnight</i>	Jason Diakite	2020	Memoir of hip-hop artist Jason Diakite's search for self as a mulitracial American growing up in Sweden that branches across continents, ethnicities, classes, colors and eras	Memoir	Suzie Maxson
<i>The Forest of Vanishing Stars</i>	Kristin Narmel	2021	An evocative coming-of-age World War II story about a young woman who uses her knowledge of the wilderness to help Jewish refugees escape the Nazis--Until a secret from her past threatens everything	Historical Fiction	Mary Kirk

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<i>Fresh Water for Flowers</i>	Valerie Perrin	2020	A young woman hides out from life working as a cemetery guardian. In flashbacks, we learn why she has chosen this life until a grieving son upends her quiet routines and forces her to confront love	Contemporary Fiction	Mary Carol Stearns
<i>The Guest List</i>	Lucy Foley	2020	The bride--the groom---the plus one--the best man--the wedding planner--the bridesmaid--the body at a wedding on a remote island off Ireland that turns dark and deadly	Mystery Thriller	Carolyn Derby, Nan Healy
<i>The Huntress</i>	Kate Quinn	2019	A fascinating historical novel about a battle-haunted English journalist and a Russian female bomber pilot who join forces to track the Huntress, a Nazi war criminal gone to ground in America. In the aftermath of war, the hunter becomes the hunted...	Historical Fiction	Gail Macneill, Nan Healy
<i>I'll Be Seeing You</i>	Elizabeth Berg	2020	A sweet and tender memoir charting the passage of caring for parents from the anguish of loss to the understanding that even in the most fractious times, love can heal, transform and lead to graceful..and grateful...acceptance	Memoir	Nan Healy
<i>I'll Never Be French (No Matter What I Do): Living in a Small Village in Brittany</i>	Mark Greenside	2009	This memoir combines hilarious stories of Greenside's adventure in France with lovely observations about how life in a new country has changed him	Memoir	Mary Kirk

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<i>The Kitchen Front</i>	Jennifer Ryan	2021	A wartime cooking competition creates a chance for four women who enter a chance to better their lives. With so much at stake, will the contest that aims to bring the community together only serve to break it apart?	Historical Fiction	Nan Healy
<i>Klara and the Sun</i>	Kazuo Ishiguro	2021	A fable about the innocence of a robot created to befriend a young girl. The robot asks the big questions about love, loneliness, mortality and the purpose of existence	Metaphysical Fiction	Carolyn Derby, Nan Healy
<i>Luminaries</i>	Eleanor Catton	2013	Richly evoking a mid-nineteenth-century world of shipping, banking, and gold rush boom and bust, <i>The Luminaries</i> is at once a fiendishly clever ghost story, a gripping page-turner, and a thrilling novelistic achievement.	Literary Fiction	Ana Marie Balfour
<i>The Midnight Library</i>	Matt Haig	2020	There is a library that contains an infinite number of books that tell the story of another reality if Nora had made different choices. The novel asks what makes a truly fulfilling life and what makes it worth living in the first place	Fiction	Carolyn Derby, Nan Healy
<i>The Mother-in-Law</i>	Sally Hepworth	2019	Fractured relationships and deep family secrets grow more compelling with every page in this twisty, captivating novel	Mystery Thriller	Carolyn Derby

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<i>Murder in Chianti</i>	Camilla Trinchieri	2020	Set in Tuscany, this mystery introduces Nico Doyle, a former NYPD homicide detective who's just looking for space to grieve when he finds himself pulled into a local murder investigation	Mystery	Mary Kirk
<i>My Dear Hamilton: A Novel of Eliza Schuyler Hamilton</i>	Stephanie Dray, Laura Kamole	2018	The epic story of Eliza Schuyler Hamilton—a revolutionary woman who, like her new nation, struggled to define herself in the wake of war, betrayal, and tragedy.	Biographical Historical Fiction	Suzie Maxson
<i>A Nearly Normal Family</i>	M.T. Edvardsson	2019	A gripping legal thriller that forces the reader to consider: How far would you go to protect the ones you love? This twisted narrative of a horrific crime makes a seemingly normal family question everything they thought they knew about their life and one another	Myster Thriller	Nan Healy
<i>The Nickel Boys</i>	Colson Whitehead	2019	When Elwood Curtis, a black boy growing up in 1960s Tallahassee, is unfairly sentenced to a juvenile reformatory called the Nickel Academy, he finds himself trapped in a grotesque chamber of horrors.	Historical Fiction	Carolyn Derby
<i>Night Came With Many Stars</i>	Simon Van Booy	2021	In Kentucky in 1933, Carol's daddy lost his 13-year old daughter in a game of cards. This novel spans decades of the story of Carol and the people in her life. Incidents intersect and lives unexpectedly change course in this story of chance and choice that lead home again to a night blessed with light	Literary Fiction	Nan Healy

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<i>The Night Watchman</i>	Louise Erdich	2020	Based on the author's grandfather who worked as a night watchman and carried the fight against Native American dispossession from rural North Dakota to Washington, D.C	Historical Fiction	Anne Morgan
<i>The Only Woman in the Room</i>	Marie Benedict	2019	Based on the true story of glamour icon, Hedy Lamaar, the novel traces her history with the Nazis and marriage to an Austrian arms dealer as well as her little known role as a scientist	Biographical Historical Fiction	Mary Carol Stearns, Carolyn Derby, Carol Morgan
<i>Ordinary Grace</i>	William Kent Krueger	2013	A coming-of-age novel in a small town in Minnesota during the summer of 1961. This book holds a mystery when one of the five deaths is murder, but it also speaks of wisdom, secrets, forgiveness, the love of family, faith and miracles	Historical Fiction	Mary Kirk
<i>The Personal Librarian</i>	Marie Benedict, Victoria Murray	2021	A remarkable novel about J. P. Morgan's personal librarian, Belle da Costa Greene, the Black American woman who was forced to hide her true identity and pass as white in order to leave a lasting legacy that enriched our nation	Historical Fiction	Barbara Maletz
<i>The Pioneers: The Heroic Story of the Settlers who Brought the American Ideal West</i>	David McCullough	2019	The story of the settling of the Northwest Territory by dauntless pioneers who overcame incredible hardships to build a community based on the ideals that would come to define our country. Told through the story of five men and their families	Non-Fiction	Betsy Dykstra

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<i>Project Hail Mary</i>	Andy Weir	2021	Ryland Grace is the sole survivor on a desperate, last-chance mission—and if he fails, humanity and the earth itself will perish in an epic story of redemption and discovery.	Science Fiction	Nan Healy, Mary Kirk
<i>Redhead by the Side of the Road</i>	Anne Tyler	2020	An intimate look into the heart and mind of a man who finds those around him just out of reach, and a funny, joyful, deeply compassionate story about seeing the world through new eyes,	Fiction	Betsy Dykstra
<i>The Rose Code</i>	Kate Quinn	2021	The heart-stopping World War II story of three female code breakers at Bletchley Park and the spy they must root out after the war is over.	Historical Fiction	Anne Morgan, Ana Marie Balfour
<i>The School of Essential Ingredients</i>	Erica Bauermeister	2009	A respected chef holds cooking classes as her students handle painful transitions and difficult choices as the reader experiences the pleasures and particulars of sophisticated food	Women's Fiction	Suzie Maxson
<i>Second First Impressions</i>	Sally Thorne	2021	Extreme opposites are drawn together in the most unlikely of circumstances in this sweet, humorous rom-com with a quirky supporting cast of crazy rich old people	Women's Fiction	Nan Healy

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<i>Silver Sparrow</i>	Tayari Jones	2012	Set in a middle-class neighborhood in Atlanta in the 1980s, the novel revolves around James Witherspoon's two families—the public one and the secret one. When the daughters from each family meet and form a friendship, only one of them knows they are sisters. It is a relationship destined to explode	Literature	Ana Marie Balfour
<i>The Social Graces</i>	Renee Rosen	2021	This novel throws back the curtain on one of the most remarkable feuds in history: Alva Vanderbilt and Caroline Astor's notorious battle for control of New York society during the Gilded Age.	Historical Fiction	Thayre Dennis
<i>Sold on a Monday</i>	Kristina McMorris	2018	A struggling reporter finds a sign--2 children for sale--that sets off a series of consequences that are more devastating than he ever imagined in this Depression era story inspired by an actual newspaper photograph	Literary Fiction	Suzie Maxson, Nan Healy
<i>The Song of Achilles</i>	Madeline Miller	2012	The imagined mythological story of the bond between the strong, beautiful Achilles and the shamed Patroclus as they endure the tests the Fates bestow on them	Classic Literature	Anne Morgan
<i>The Space Between Us</i>	Thrity Umrigar	2006	A poignant novel of a wealthy woman and her downtrodden servant in modern day Bombay who discover an emotional rapport as they struggle against the confines of a rigid caste system	Literary Fiction	Barbara Maletz, Marycarol Stearns

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<i>The Splendid and the Vile</i>	Erik Larsen	2020	An intimate chronicle of Winston Churchill and London during the Blitz—an inspiring portrait of courage and leadership in a time of unprecedented crisis	Biography	Betsy Dykstra
<i>The Spy and the Traitor: The Greatest Espionage Story of the Cold War</i>	Ben Macintyre	2018	A swift-moving tale of true espionage in the most desperate years of the Cold War... The closing pages of Macintyre's fluent yarn find Gordievsky attempting to escape captivity and flee to the West in a scenario worthy of John le Carré...a first-rate study of the mechanics and psychology of espionage.	Biography	Nan Healy
<i>The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry</i>	Gabrielle Zevin	2014	A. J. Fikry's life is not at all what he expected it to be. He lives alone, his bookstore is experiencing the worst sales in its history, and now his prized possession, a rare collection of Poe poems, has been stolen. But when a mysterious package appears at the bookstore, its unexpected arrival gives Fikry the chance to make his life over--and see everything anew.	Humorous Literary Fiction	Gail Macneill
<i>The Storyteller's Secret</i>	Sejal Badani	2018	A heartbroken New York journalist decides to go to India to uncover answers to her family's past. Her grandmother's former servant reveals the resilience, struggles, secret love and tragic fall of the pioneering grandmother during the British occupation	Historical Literary Fiction	Mary Carol Stearns
<i>Surviving Savannah</i>	Patti Callahan	2021	The luxury steamship, Pulaski, sank in 1838 with Savannah's elite on board. These aristocratic women were part of Savannah's society, but when the ship exploded, each was faced with difficult and heartbreaking decisions. This is a moving and powerful exploration of what women will do to endure in the face of tragedy, the role fate plays, and the myriad ways we survive the	Historical Fiction	Barbara Maletz

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<i>This is the Story of a Happy Marriage</i>	Ann Patchett	2013	Blending literature and memoir, Ann Patchett, examines her deepest commitments—to writing, family, friends, dogs, books, and her husband—creating a resonant portrait of a life As she shares stories of the people, places, ideals, and art to which she has remained indelibly committed, Ann Patchett brings into focus the large experiences and small moments that have shaped her as a daughter, wife, and writer.	Memoir	Jane Walsh
<i>This Tender Land</i>	William Kent Krueger	2019	In the summer of 1932, on the banks of Minnesota’s Gilead River, Odie O’Banion is an orphan confined to the Lincoln Indian Training School, a pitiless place where his lively nature earns him the superintendent’s wrath. Forced to flee after committing a terrible crime, he and his brother, Albert, their best friend, Mose, and a brokenhearted little girl named Emmy steal away in a canoe, heading for the mighty Mississippi and a place to call their own.	Native American Literature	Mary Kirk
<i>Unsheltered</i>	Barbara Kingsolver	2018	A story of two families, in two centuries, navigating what seems to be the end of the world as they know it. With history as their tantalizing canvas, these characters paint a startlingly relevant portrait of life in precarious times, when the foundations of the past have failed to prepare us for the future.	Literary Fiction	Ana Marie Balfour
<i>The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration</i>	Isabel Wilkerson	2010	A chronicle of the decades-long migration of black citizens who fled the South for northern and western cities in search of a better life. Wilkerson tells this story through the lives of three unique individuals	History	Helen Beedy

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<i>West with Giraffes</i>	Lynda Rutledge	2021	A coming-of-age story about a young boy who escapes his life in the dustbowl during the Depression by following two giraffes who are being transported from NYC to the San Diego Zoo. The story explores what it means to be changed by the grace of animals, the kindness of strangers, the passing of time and a story told before it's too late.	Historical Literary Fiction	Carolyn Derby, Anne Morgan, MaryCarol Stearns
<i>What Will We Become: A Mother, a Son and a Journey of Transformation</i>	Mimi Lemay	2019	A mother's memoir of her transgender child's odyssey and her own journey outside the boundaries of the faith and culture that shaped her .Dual narratives of faith and motherhood weave together to form a heartfelt portrait of an unforgettable family	Memoir	Anne Morgan
<i>The Wrong Family</i>	Tarryn Fisher	2020	A twisted psychological thriller about a retired therapist, who after a grim diagnosis, simply wants a place to live out the rest of her days in peace. But that peace is shattered the day she overhears a chilling conversation between a husband and wife	Mystery Thriller	Nan Healy