



February 2019 Good Reads Book Club Reading Suggestions

The book we read for this month's meeting was *The Port Chicago 50: Disaster, Mutiny and the Fight for Civil Rights*. Written by Steve Sheinkin, this book was a nonfiction account of an incident that took place in the U. S. Navy in the 1940s, written for a teenage audience. A couple of us didn't read it, but most of those who did said they thought it was an interesting story (if depressing), that we learned a lot, it was well-written and we liked the layout of the book (it included relevant pictures alongside the text). According to Amazon, the author used to write textbooks and "is now making amends by writing history books that kids and teens actually want to read."

Our next book is *The Killing Kind* by Chris Holm, and we'll meet on Wednesday, March 6th to discuss it.

JoAnn read:

A Grown Up Kind of Pretty by Joshilyn Jackson. A quick, easy read about three generations of women.

Ambush by James Patterson - featuring Detective Michael Bennett

Target by James Patterson - featuring Alex Cross

Manhunt by James Patterson - also featuring Detective Michael Bennett

The Rule of Law by John Lescroart. This was an excellent story, the latest entry in the Dismas Hardy series. JoAnn could not say too much else about it because Becky is currently reading it.

Burning Ridge by Margaret Mitsushima. This was the 2nd in the series featuring Mattie Cobb and her K-9 search & rescue dog Robo.

The Fallen Architect by Charles Belfours. In the early 1900s an architect is imprisoned when the balcony of a building he designed suddenly collapses. But was he set up to take a fall? Why, and by whom? JoAnn said this was an excellent story. Michelle says she wants to read it too.

Small Fry by Lisa Brennan-Jobs. A memoir of growing up in the 70s written by Steve Jobs' daughter

Bent Road by Lisa Road. An American gothic story set in the woods -- a good, quick read.



Until She Comes Home by Lisa Roy. Set 1955, this is a story about what happens to the families of factory workers during the decline of factory work in Detroit.

Virgil Wander by Leif Enger. This is a beautifully written tale of life in a small community, and JoAnn loved it.

Nine Perfect Strangers by Liane Moriarty. "Holy SCHMOLY was this awful! The worst book I've read in a long time." (The rest of us who have read it, agreed.)

Judgment by Joseph Finder. A married female judge hooks up with someone at a law conference. Later, while hearing a corporate sexual harassment case, she learns that someone knows about this and is trying to blackmail her to rule on the case in a specific way. Things snowball from there. Oh, it was really, really a good book.

Pat read:

Stalker by Lars Kepler. The fourth in a series, hard to get through and hated the ending, even though she enjoyed the previous ones in the series. Becky concurred -- she didn't like it either.

Past Tense by Lee Child. Didn't like this one.

Working Shadows by Faye Kellerman. Featuring a retired detective in New England.

Paradox by Catherine Coulter. Another in the series featuring married FBI agents Savage & Sherlock.

Becky read:

Stalker by Lars Kepler. Thumbs down.

The Reckoning by John Grisham. A good read.

Pandemic by Robin Cook. Ehhhh, seems like now he's writing the same storyline over and over again.

The Boy by Tami Hoag. A standalone book, not part of a series. Set in Louisiana and written in Cajun dialect, which was hard to get used to.

Lost Roses by Martha Hall Kelly. A really good book, a "prequel" to *Lilac Girls*.



Marianne read:

Lost Children Archive by Valeria Lusielli. "This book was soooooo wretched...." Got to page 143 and could not go any further. Gave the ARC to Mary to be recycled. Yay for not finishing a book that was not worthy of being finished!!

The Air You Breathe by Frances Peebles. This book features 2 women in the '30s on a sugar plantation in Brazil. There's a lot in the book about the samba. It would make a great movie.

Notorious RBG by Irina Carmon. Marianne thought the book was pretty interesting, and came away feeling more respect and admiration for Ruth Bader Ginsberg than she expected. RBG is clearly very smart and has accomplished a lot.

Collector's Apprentice by B. A. Shapiro. Historical fiction based on the Barnes Museum in Philadelphia. An enjoyable read, and it's always interesting to consider how much of it is "real" and how much is not.

Charity read:

Born a Crime by Trevor Noah. Memoir by comedian and Daily Show host who grew up very poor in South Africa. A really interesting read. He had a very unusual, difficult upbringing.

Atlas of Reds and Blues by Devi Laskar. Fiction, but based on events that happened to the author. Short sentences -- a bit difficult to get used to the writing.

Angie read:

This is How It Always Is by Lori Frankel. The story of a family who is raising five boys and the youngest identifies as transsexual. A very thought provoking read, a good book.

The Dinner List by Rebecca Searle. Read this for another book group and it really stirred some good discussion. If you could choose five people, living or dead, to invite to your birthday party - who would you choose and why?

Once Upon a River by Diane Setterfeld. A wonderful storyteller, a mystical and compelling story.

Thirteenth Tale by Diane Setterfeld. Gothic, mystical, very interesting.

Lights Over London by Julia Kelly. It was a good read, not great -- lightweight.



Lethal White by Robert Galbraith. Fourth in the Cormoran Strike series. A long book, but an enjoyable read.

Marie read:

The Only Woman in the Room by Marie Benedict. Historical fiction based on the life of Hedy Lamarr. An interesting book.

Money in the Morgue by Ngaio Marsh & Stella Duffy. It takes place in New Zealand during World War II and features Inspector Alleyn. A good, old-fashioned mystery.

The Alice Network by Kate Quinn. Historical fiction based on women who secretly spied for the Allies in France while it was occupied.

Michelle read:

Little Girl Blue: The Life of Karen Carpenter by Randy Schmidt. A very interesting, very sad look at the story of her life.

The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas. A very honest teen book about the aftermath of a police shooting. Very well done. Becky said she saw the movie based on this book and it was also good.

Michelle also requested that we recommend some “dark” reads - featuring serial killers or a lot of crime. She likes listening to podcasts and watching documentaries about dark and scary stuff, so she thought she might like that kind of fiction as well. We recommended *The Hypnotist* by Lars Kepler and *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* by Stieg Larssen to get her started. If you have any other suggestions, she’s open to trying more!

Mary read:

The Calculating Stars and *The Fated Sky* by Mary Robinette Kowal. Set in an alternate universe where a giant meteor smashes into the East Coast in the mid 1950s, forcing the people of Earth to figure out how to safely get to other planets before the effects of the meteor result in Earth becoming uninhabitable. Because this event happens in the 50s, prior to the development of computers, women who do the calculations for trajectories and stuff like that are greatly needed, and they are the protagonists of these books. These books are kind of like *Hidden Figures* on steroids.



The Mansion by Ezekiel Boone. A megalomaniac, billionaire tech dude decides to install a sophisticated artificial intelligence into the house where several people have been murdered. What could possibly go wrong? Creepy and eerie.

The Bear and the Nightingale by Katherine Arden. The first in a fantasy trilogy loosely based on Russian folklore and fairytales. Very enjoyable.

The Gathering by Kelley Armstrong. First in a trilogy of teen books about a group of teenagers who find out they are not who they thought they were. I had a hard time putting this one down.



January 2019 Good Reads Book Club Reading Suggestions

For the January meeting we read *Girl in Translation* by Jean Kwok. Most of us liked the book. For our February meeting, which will be Wed Feb 6th, we'll read *The Port Chicago 50* by Steve Sheinkin. It's a nonfiction account of a little-known incident that happened in the Navy during World War II. Hopefully you'll find it interesting, like I did.

Now for the good part.

Rachel read:

Stalking Ground by Margaret Mizushima. This is the second in the series (we read the first one for our December meeting). It was fine, but a very similar plot to the first one, so Rachel probably won't bother to read any more in the series.

JoAnn read:

The Reckoning by John Grisham. Liked the book, though parts were difficult to read because it goes into what the character experienced while he was fighting in World War II.

Past Tense by Lee Child. Reacher visits New Hampshire. A disappointing read, not up to par for the series. (FYI, Becky's parents also read the book and warned her away from reading it.)

Once Upon A River by Diane Setterfield. Set in the late 1800s in a small village along a river in England, this book was a little different. Some supernatural aspects. How people tell stories, and how stories change and affect us.

Marianne read:

Young Jane Young by Gabrielle Zevin. This was a recent choice of the Montville evening book club. An interesting read about a young woman who gets involved in a scandal with a politician, who is blamed for the scandal and has to try to pick up the pieces of her life. (By the author of *The Storied Life of A. J. Fikry*)

Virgil Wander by Leif Enger. An enjoyable read about life in a small town, where everybody knows everyone else's business. Similar to books by Richard Russo, another chronicler of life in small towns.

The Light over London by Julia Kelly. It was a good read, and Marianne would recommend it.

Charity read:

Looker by Laura Sims. A very short, creepy good read. A woman whose own marriage is in trouble becomes a little too obsessed with her neighbor (who is a TV star).

Origin by Dan Brown. It was OK.

Elevation by Steven King. A very short read (under 200 pages) that takes place in Castle Rock, Maine (where many of his other books are set). Amazon says: "a riveting, extraordinarily eerie, and moving story about a man whose mysterious affliction brings a small town together—a timely, upbeat tale about finding common ground despite deep-rooted differences."



Interpreter of Maladies by Jhumpa Lahiri. This was a book of short stories about families and relationships. The author won the Pulitzer Prize for this book, and Charity definitely recommends it.

Becky read:

We Begin Our Ascent by Joe Mungo Reed. This debut novel was on several “best of 2018” lists. A very interesting book, so different, featuring a professional cyclist who becomes involved in doping while riding in the Tour de France. Becky would recommend it.

Our House by Louise Candlish. It’s very twisty and entertaining. Highly recommended.

Under My Skin by Lisa Unger. A horrible read. Usually Becky likes this author, but definitely give this a miss.

Nine Perfect Strangers by Liane Moriarty. Liked it, but not as much as Liane Moriarty’s previous books.

Unclaimed Baggage by Jen Doll. A sad teen book about all these teenagers working in a warehouse where unclaimed baggage goes to be sold if no one picks it up.

Believe Me by J. P. Delaney. Becky read it so long ago that she can’t remember what it’s about, but remembers enough to know she liked it!

Pat read:

Nine Perfect Strangers by Liane Moriarty. Still can’t figure out if she liked it. (Mary read it too, and agreed that it was not as good as the author’s previous books.)

Feared by Lisa Scottoline. It was good.

Holy Ghost by John Sandford. Virgil Flowers (always enjoyable) and the Minnesota police.

Long Road to Mercy by David Baldacci. Featuring a female FBI agent. Thought it was really good.

Irene read:

To Capture What We Cannot Keep (recommended by Marianne). Irene didn’t think she’d like it but she ended up enjoying it very much!

Lethal White by Robert Galbraith. Fourth in the Cormoran Strike series, and a whopping 647 pages long. A cabinet minister is being blackmailed and wants Cormoran to find some dirt on the person who is blackmailing him. Irene really enjoyed it.

Dottie read:

Everybody’s Son by Thrity Umrigar, which Marianne had recommended. It’s about power, obsession, parental love... loved the book. Definitely worth a read.

Mary read:

The Monkey’s Raincoat by Robert Crais. This is the first in the Elvis Cole/Joe Pike series set in Los Angeles. It was a fun read. Style is very similar to the Spenser novels (wisecracking P.I.).



Apparently the title comes from a famous Haiku by Matsuo Basho, which is quoted at the beginning of the book: "Winter downpour, even the monkey needs a raincoat."

Shell Game by Sara Paretsky. This is the newest in the V. I. Warshawski series. If you haven't read any of the earlier ones, V. I. is a very kick-ass PI living in Chicago. She usually gets beaten up a couple of times in each book, but she always comes out swinging. Great writing, I always enjoy her books even though they can be kind of grim.

A Redbird Christmas by Fannie Flagg. This enjoyable short novel features a lonely, ailing, alcoholic Chicago guy who's told he needs to find a warmer climate if he wants to get better. So he decides to get out of the city and rents a room in a small, tight-knit quirky Southern community, where the residents take an interest in him and he slowly comes out of his shell. A really nice read, I enjoyed it.