



May 2019 Good Reads Book Club Reading Suggestions

For our May meeting we read *The Whiskey Rebels* by David Liss. This is a historical thriller set ten years after the American Revolution. Some of us liked the book, some of us disliked it (and found that it was too detailed for them). For next month we're reading *Ms. Bixby's Last Day*, which is a children's book - a nice change for those of us who thought *The Whiskey Rebels* was too bogged down with details.

Dottie read:

Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens. Dottie definitely recommends this. It's set in 1969 in the swamps of North Carolina, just a really good story.

Angie read:

Temper by Layne Fargo. This psychological thriller has been getting great buzz. Angie said it was a page-turner, but the ending was pretty disappointing so in the end she rated it "just ok."

That Kind of Mother by Rumaan Alam. He wrote this book from the perspective of a woman. It had a lot to do with race and status and was a little tediously involved. It was ok.

Virgil Wander by Leif Enger. If you loved *Plainsong* you will definitely love this one. The language, the symbolism, the descriptions of the characters -- it was so magnificent! (Note, Jo Ann said "I read this one and loved it too!")

Pat read:

Heads You Win by Jeffrey Archer. Starts out in Russia. A very interesting, different book.

Someone Knows by Lisa Scottoline. Didn't like it -- disturbing plot line.

Charity read:

Learning to See by Elise Hooper. This is historical fiction based on the life of Dorothea Lange, a photographer from Hoboken who took some very famous photos (including "Migrant Mother" during the Depression. An interesting read.

Evie Drake Starts Over by Linda Holmes. A newly widowed woman rents an apartment to a disgraced baseball player. A nice, relaxing read, with decent and likeable characters.

Margaret read:

Always Looking Up by Michael J. Fox. A very powerful read. Margaret enjoyed his positive attitude - he is grateful for what he does have.

Jo Ann read:

This Is How It Always Is by Laurie Frankel. A story about a family with a transgender boy.



The Tinderbox by Beverly Lewis. An Amish romance- just a nice read.

The Last Second by Catherine Coulter. The latest one in her series about the British dude and the female FBI agent.

White Elephant by Julie Langsdorf. Marianne read this last month and Jo Ann took the ARC home. It was not that good, and this month it ended up going home with Mary to be recycled.

Rachel read:

The Stranger by Harlan Coben. Enjoyed it!

I Know Where She Is by S. B. Cabes. It started strong but then didn't really keep the momentum going. It was only ok.

Ragged Edge of Night by Olivia Hawker. Historical fiction set in a small town in WWII Germany.

If Beale Street Could Talk by James Baldwin. It wasn't exactly a bad book, but it ended badly and leaves you totally hanging.

Rock Needs River by Vanessa McGrady. A memoir by a woman who has adopted a child.

The Guilty Wife by L. Croft. A thriller with a TERRIBLE ending.

Mary read:

The Library Book by Susan Orlean. This was a really neat book. You learned a lot about the history of the Los Angeles Public Library (and it's not as boring as that sounds). I enjoyed it.

Maybe You Should Talk To Someone: A Therapist, Her Therapist, and Our Lives Revealed by Lori Gottlieb. A very interesting book about the value of therapy and the goals of a therapist. The author talks about some of her patients, as well as what she noticed when she ended up going to a therapist after a bad breakup.



April 2019 Good Reads Book Club Reading Suggestions

For our next meeting, Wednesday May 1st, we'll be reading *The Whiskey Rebels* by David Liss. Set in the early United States about 10 years after the American Revolution, it's what I would call a "historical thriller." Things may seem a bit confusing at the beginning, all these characters to keep track of, but if you can stick with it till about the 3rd or 4th chapter, it all comes together and I really enjoyed it.

Since April is National Poetry Month, our assignment for the April 3rd meeting was to skim through a poetry anthology and find a poem that you would want to read out loud to everyone.

Angie read several of the poems in the anthology and was pleasantly surprised. She enjoyed the variety of different authors and styles. Angie read us "Driving Through Town Late To Mail A Letter" by Robert Bly because it evoked her feelings of loving snow and how it quiets things down.

*It is a cold and snowy night. The main street is deserted.
The only things moving are swirls of snow.
As I lift the mailbox door, I feel its cold iron.
There is a privacy I love in this snowy night.
Driving around, I will waste more time.*

JoAnn didn't like this assignment at all, and took her grandson's advice ("*Look through the book and find the shortest one to read!*") She read us a poem called *Mother, In Love At Sixty* by Susanna Styve. As it happens, JoAnn has a friend who is going through this exact same thing, so she read it really well:

Reason number one it can't work: his name is Bill. For god's sake, he hunts. He has no pets, other than two doting daughters, and his ex-wife is still alive. He's simply not my type. Who wants to get married again, anyway? I'm too old. I go South at the first frost. Plus, he's messy. Men are messy. He could die. Then where would I be?

Marianne enjoyed reading the anthology and had so many poems bookmarked, she had a hard time choosing one. She read "The Lesson of The Moth" by Don Marquis (from the yellow anthology), which begins like this:

*i was talking to a moth
the other evening
he was trying to break into
an electric light bulb
and fry himself on the wires...*

Sheila mentioned that two of her favorite poets are Billy Collins ("very accessible!") and Ogden Nash, who wrote poems (among other things) in the '40s that are still very relevant and timely. She read "Reflection on the fallibility of nemesis" and "The Politician" (surprisingly, and sadly, all too relevant!)



Pat D. attempted to find some poetry by Rumi (a famous poet, known for his love poetry, from 13th-century Persia) online, but was unpleasantly surprised when she stumbled upon a site that popped up with a box stating "People from my country don't like people from your country."

Charity brought a book of poetry by William Carlos Williams, a poet who lived in Rutherford and also practiced as a physician. From 1964 until his death in 1963, he was Chief of Pediatrics at Passaic General Hospital (now known as St. Mary's General Hospital). What a coincidence -- Marianne took her colicky infant son to Dr. Williams! (At that time, she didn't know he was a poet.) Charity read his poem "Pastoral: When I Was Younger" to the group. It starts like this:

*When I was younger
it was plain to me
I must make something of myself
Older now
I walk back streets
admiring the houses
of the very poor...*

Irene read through the anthology and enjoyed a lot of the poems (some more than others). She read "Instrument of Choice" by Robert Phillips. It begins:

*She was a girl
no one ever chose
for teams of clubs,
dances or dates,
so she chose the **instrument**
no one else wanted:
the tuba...*

Margaret read a poem by Edna St. Vincent Millay called "The Courage that My Mother Had." It starts like this:

*The courage that my mother had
Went with her, and is with her still:
Rock from New England quarried;
Now granite in a granite hill....*

Dottie enjoyed skimming the anthology and found a poem by Naomi Lazard to read - which was so spot-on that I decided to include it in its entirety here:

*We are sorry to inform you
the item you ordered
is no longer being produced.
It has not gone out of style
nor have people lost interest in it.
In fact, it has become
one of our most desired products.
Its popularity is still growing.
Orders for it come in*



at an ever increasing rate.

*However, a top-level decision
has caused this product
to be discontinued forever.*

*Instead of the item you ordered
we are sending you something else.
It is not the same thing,
nor is it a reasonable facsimile.
It is what we have in stock,
the very best we can offer.*

*If you are not happy
with this substitution
let us know as soon as possible.
As you can imagine*

*we already have quite an accumulation
of letters such as the one
you may or may not write.
To be totally fair
We respond to these complaints
as they come in.
Yours will be filed accordingly,
answered in its turn.*

Marie enjoyed a lot of the poems in the anthology. She chose to read *The Goose* by Muriel Spark, which is short enough that I can include the whole thing here:

*Do you want to know why I am alive today?
I will tell you.
Early on, during the food-shortage,
Some of us were miraculously presented
Each with a goose that laid a golden egg.
Myself, I killed the cackling thing and I ate it.
Alas, many and many of the other recipients
Died of gold-dust poisoning.*

Now, on to your regularly-scheduled book reviews.

Angie read:

Where the Crawdads Sing - Delia Owens. A very good read, would recommend.

Dracul by Dacre Stoker (Bram Stoker's great-grandnephew). Historical fiction based on Bram Stoker's papers - the story of how Bram Stoker discovered Dracula. Very well-written, fast paced, and a page-turner.



JoAnn read:

Liar Liar by James Patterson. Didn't like this one much; the main character, Detective Harriet Blue, ended up being a bad cop and in jail.

Murder on the Left Bank by Cara Black. JoAnn had difficulty figuring out the geography in this book.

Wolf Pack by C. J. Box -- the latest in the Joe Pickett game warden series, really liked it -- one of his best.

The Last Letter by Rebecca Yarros. This was one that Marianne recommended, and JoAnn really loved it. A great story about two lost souls. You fall in love with the characters.

Blood Oath by Linda Fairstein. It was okay, nothing to write home about.

Dark Tribute by Iris Johansen. The latest Eve Duncan novel. The plot was kind of outlandish.

Marianne read:

Lights All Night Long by Lydia Fitzpatrick. Featured in Book Page magazine. A woman on the airplane near Marianne was reading it and didn't want to get off the plane because she was almost done. She described it as "unputdownable."

Glory Over Everything by Kathleen Grissom. An absolutely fabulous read (a selection of the Montville book club), this picks up where *The Kitchen House* left off and is a story about the Underground Railroad.

White Elephant by Julie Langsdorf. Another book featured in BookPage about a community of people who live in Sears kit houses - "who's jumping in bed with whom, etc."

The Stationery Shop by Marjan Kamali. A really feel-good read. Compare to *The Kite Runner*.

The Broken Girls by Simon St. James. In the 1950s, four girls in a school for troubled teens form a strong bond.

The Age of Light by Whitney Scharer. Historical fiction about photography and Dorothea Lange. Very good.

Sheila read:

Forever and a Day by Anthony Horowitz -- a very good read, sort of a "prequel" - the story of how James Bond became "James Bond."

Lethal White by Robert Galbraith. Really enjoyed it -- a great back story along with the mystery.

The Last Cruise by Kate Kristensen. Not recommended. "I yelled at the book at the end."



The Kennedy Debutante by Kerri Maher. Historical fiction about Kathleen Kennedy. It was well-done, and Sheila liked it more than she expected.

The Fallen Architect by Charles Balfour. A recommendation from someone else in book club - enjoyable!

Summer Wives by Beatriz Williams. A good read set on Fisher's Island, the tensions between the locals vs. the summer people.

Pat read:

The Girl in the Glass Box by James Grippando. JoAnn had read this last month and recommended it. Pat really liked it. The latest in the Jack Swytek series.

Temper by Leiann Fargo. This was an Advanced Reader Copy. Didn't like it at all.

A Measure of Darkness by Jesse & Jonathan Kellerman. This is the second book in a series featuring deputy coroner Clay Edison. Didn't like it.

Irene read:

Holy Ghost by John Sandford. Not a favorite -- she slogged through til the end.

The Great Alone by Kristin Hannah.

Target: Alex Cross by James Patterson

The Orphan's Tale by Pam Jenoff -- very interesting.

Elevation by Stephen King. Liked it a lot - a good story. (Charity also enjoyed this one when she read it a few months ago.)

Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens. Really liked it.

Margaret read:

The Lucky Ones by Nicholas Sparks, a very good read.

How to Walk Away by Katharine Center -- a good read.

Charity had a busy month so she didn't have a book to report. Hopefully next month!

Dottie read:

The Silent Corner by Dean Koontz. The first in a thriller series featuring rogue FBI agent Jane Hawk, who is pitted against a shadowy government force. A good story.

Educated by Tara Westover. Very good, but pretty disturbing about what she went through. Her family was a splinter group of Mormons and she had a really hardscrabble, abusive childhood.



Marie read:

My Brilliant Friend by Elena Ferrante. At last, she finished the book! It was hard to get into and hard to keep the characters straight.

The Dutch Shoe Mystery by Ellery Queen. A fun, old-fashioned mystery

In the House of Lies by Ian Rankin. Inspector Rebus is now retired, but still involved in solving mysteries. These characters are like old friends.

The Colors of All the Cattle by Alexander McCall Smith - the latest in the # 1 Ladies Detective Agency. These are nice gentle stories that make you want to be a better person.

Becky read (note: Becky was not there but she gave me her list --Mary)

The Girl in the Glass Box - James Grippando - I enjoyed it, I like the Jack Swyteck series. It was rather timely as it was about immigration.

Our Kind of Cruelty - Araminta Hall - I really liked this one - lots of creepy twists and turns.

The Woman Inside - E.G. Scott - This was also a thriller with lots of twists, it was good and kept me interested. Definitely shows why you should not have an affair! :)

The Perfect Girlfriend - Karen Hamilton - This is one you thought I would like and you were right! It was very captivating and again had some unexpected surprises along the way. The things people will do for revenge!

The Rabbit Hunter - Lars Kepler - definitely liked this one more than the last one, but not as much as the first ones in the series. Very dark - as usual.

Mary read (note: it was getting late so I didn't talk about any of these during the book club.)

Gray Day: My Undercover Mission to Expose America's First Cyber Spy by Eric O'Neill. A nonfiction account of how FBI agent Eric O'Neill helped to trap and expose Robert Hanssen, a rogue FBI agent who'd been selling secrets to the Russians for years, in the early 2000s. Interesting.

Daisy Jones and the Six by Taylor Reid Jenkins. Sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll -- the story of the making and unmaking of a fictitious rock band in the 70s. It was like reading an episode of *Behind the Music*. I liked it.

The Lost Man by Jane Harper. She wrote *The Dry* and *Force of Nature*, both featuring Australian policeman Aaron Falk. This new book is not part of that series but I thought it was riveting and really good. Also set in the outback of Australia, which is so remote and inhospitable that it's almost like a character in itself. I highly recommend it.



Diary of a Dead Man on Leave by David Downing. This was an advanced reader's copy and I really enjoyed it. It's set in Germany just before the start of World War II, and the main character is a Bolshevik spy who's been sent to suss out the situation in the railyards in a small German town. (The title of the book comes from the fact that he's a spy. Apparently Communist spies used to refer to themselves as "dead men on leave" because they knew how likely it was that they would be caught and killed.) Such an interesting read. I gave it to JoAnn and I hope she enjoys it as much as I did.



March 2019 Good Reads Book Club Reading Suggestions

The book we read for this month was *The Killing Kind* by Chris Holm. The main character was a hit man who only kills other hitmen... and suddenly he realizes someone else has put out a hit on him. It was pretty violent and some of us had to skip some of the gorier parts, but on the whole the group enjoyed it. The main character isn't necessarily a bad guy, but he is killing people, and he's good at it, because he learned how to do it when he served in the military. It brought up interesting questions -- can you ever separate yourself from your past? How do you go forward and live your life after having been asked to kill for your country?

Rachel read:

The Burning Girl by Claire Messud. 2 young girls who were close friends as kids find themselves growing apart in adolescence and then the friendship really falls apart as adults.

Red Right Hand by Chris Holm. The sequel to the book we read this month, *The Killing Kind*. FBI agent Charlie Thompson asks the hitman's hitman Michael Hendricks for help protecting a guy whose cover in witness protection was blown, and now the Mafia's after him. Not quite as good as *The Killing Kind*, but still pretty good.

Everybody's Son by Thrity Umrigar. A really good book, very powerful. The title of the book is just perfect. There's a lot in it about race, and privilege, and what power can do to the people who wield it.

The Date by Louise Jensen. A divorcee goes on a date and wakes up in her own bed, covered in blood. What happened? A psychological thriller, a lot of twists and turns.

Jo Ann read:

Out of the Dark by Gregg Hurwitz. This is the 4th novel in the Orphan X series and was a great story. Becky chimed in and said it's her favorite so far.

The Wedding Guest by Jonathan Kellerman. Featured LAPD Lieutenant Milo Sturgis and Dr Alex Delaware. JoAnn didn't like it, thought it was slow-paced and dragged out. It surprised her - this author is usually pretty reliable, but this was a "nope."

The Girl in the Glass Box by James Grippando. A refugee flees to the US to protect herself and her daughter, and Jack Swytek takes the case when ICE tries to deport her. Jo Ann liked it a lot, it was very thought-provoking (not to mention a good thriller).

How to Walk Away by Katherine Center. A young woman suffers devastating injuries after a plane crash. The book talks about her recovery process and the emotional struggles she goes through as she tries to adjust to what her life will now be. Many others in the book club also read and enjoyed this one. (Red cover.)

House Arrest by Mike Lawson. Political fixer Joe DeMarco is framed for a political assassination and thrown in jail. He calls on his friend Emma, a former spy, to figure out what is going on and try to find out who the real killer is.



Fugitive Red by Jason Starr. A fun read, but the main character was really sleazy. He goes on a dating site for married people who want to have affairs, and mayhem and murder ensue.

Marianne read:

Manhattan Beach by Jennifer Egan. A story about the first female diver in the Brooklyn Navy Yards. An interesting read, though it dragged a bit in parts.

American Pop by Snowden Wright. A family saga, historical fiction based on the lives of several generations of a soda-making family. (Loosely based on the families behind Pepsi and Coca-Cola.)

We Were The Lucky Ones by Georgia Hunter. This is a true story written by a woman whose Polish grandparents were lucky enough to survive the Holocaust by emigrating to the United States. Marianne's going to visit Poland this spring so her daughter-in-law gave her this book. A very moving book.

Lost Roses by Martha Kelly. This was billed as a "prequel" to *Lilac Girls*. Marianne didn't think it was as good as *Lilac Girls* but it was still good.

Finding Dorothy by Elizabeth Letts. Historical fiction featuring the woman who was married to L. Frank Baum (creator of the Wizard of Oz) and the actress who played Dorothy, Judy Garland. It was good.

Cape May by Chip Cheek. The blurb said it was "erotic and moving" but really it was pornographic and debauched. Save yourself, don't read it.

The Last Letter by Rebecca Yarros. A military guy asks his sister to be pen pals with his buddy. When the brother dies, he asks his friend to go look after his sister and her kids. It's a tearjerker but satisfying, and Marianne would recommend it.

Summer Wives by Beatriz Williams. A family saga set on Winthrop Island. There were so many characters that Marianne had to make a chart to keep track of all the people who were messing around with each other. It was like "Who's screwing whom in the bushes," but at least (dubious honor) it was not as bad as *Cape May*.

Becky read:

Out of the Dark by Gregg Hurwitz. Liked this the best so far out of the Orphan X series.

Rule of Law by John Lescroart. The latest in the Dismas Hardy series. Liked it a lot.

Judgment by Joseph Finder. Jo Ann read this book last month, it's the thriller about the judge who has a fling at a conference and then someone tries to blackmail her into ruling a certain way on a case. Both Jo Ann and Becky really enjoyed this.

I Owe You One by Sophie Kinsella. A cute book and a fun read.

Pat read:

Dark Sacred Night by Michael Connelly. The latest Bosch novel. It was good.



Save Me From Dangerous Men by S. A. Lelchuk. Nikki Griffin is a female PI whose office is over a bookstore. She takes jobs to protect women from the men who abuse them. It was an okay read, not the greatest.

Silent Corner by Dean Koontz. The first one in the Jane Hawk series. Liked it -- Koontz is one of her favorite authors.

Broken Ground by Val McDermid. A pretty good read.

Margaret read:

Becoming by Michelle Obama. Loved this, a great read.

Glitter and Glue by Kelly Corrigan. A memoir written by a woman about her relationship to her father.

Charity read:

Sisters in Law by Linda Hirschman. A nonfiction "group biography" of Supreme Court justices Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg -- discusses their lives and backgrounds, and what it was like to be the first women on the Supreme Court. A very interesting read.

Dottie read:

Once Upon a River by Diane Setterfeld.

The Alice Network by Kate Quinn. A good story.

Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine by Gail Honeyman. Dottie thought it was a great read, and other members of the book club said they'd enjoyed it as well.

Mary read:

The Bear and the Nightingale, *The Girl in the Tower* and *The Winter of the Witch* -- a trilogy of fantasy novels based on Russian folklore and fairy tales, by Katherine Arden. I really enjoyed this trilogy.

Omens, Visions, Deceptions, Betrayals, Rituals by Kelley Armstrong -- the entire Cainsville series. A bit supernatural. Angie had recommended them to me a while back and I finally got around to reading them. LOVED them.

The Crime Writer by Gregg Hurwitz. One of his earlier thrillers, a stand-alone. I got bored halfway through because it was one of those books where you know someone is messing with the main character, and there are only three other well-developed characters in the book, so who is the least likely to be the bad guy? (...flips to the end to check...) Yep, that guy.

Then We Came To The End by Joshua Ferris. This book won prizes when it came out in 2000. I've been meaning to read it ever since. Imagine my horror when I realized that was nineteen years ago. It's about a group of vaguely unhappy people working in cubicles in a big company. I enjoyed it, but mostly I felt relieved that I'd finally gotten around to reading it.



Light from Other Stars by Erika Swyler. I enjoyed this book quite a lot, but I can't really figure out the best way to describe it, so I'll steal the description from Amazon. "From the author of national bestseller *The Book of Speculation*, a poignant, fantastical novel about the electric combination of ambition and wonder that keeps us reaching toward the heavens."



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.).



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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.