



2022 Adult Winter Reading Club

Book Reviews

(Alphabetical By Author's Last Name)

The Stranger in the Lifeboat by Mitch Albom (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

This book is about your belief in God. It really makes you think. I enjoyed this book.

The Dressmakers of Auschwitz by Lucy Adlington (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

I was drawn to this unusual title, *The Dressmakers of Auschwitz*, because my mother, shortly after WW11, worked as a "dress maker," "piece worker" in a NYC sweat shop and came home with "stories" from the women she worked with re the Nazi concentration camps. As an elementary school child of around 10 years old there was no discussion, reading or knowledge of the horrors of Nazi Germany. But my mother worked with women who were Nazi camp survivors "documented" by the tattoos on their arms. They talked about the conditions and horrors but until I read this book I had never seen or heard of these women documented in the literature. The book is a very well documented non-fiction which reads more like a novel about the prior, during and post WW11 lives of women who worked as dressmakers. During WW11 this skill "allowed" them to work in slightly better conditions than the hard labor details as dressmakers. They sewed largely for the wives of the Nazi commanders as well as work on uniforms for the Nazi commanders. Their lives were very hard. Most were Jewish and that was their "crime" while some were imprisoned for being anti-Nazi or for no known reason. They worked hard to stay alive and supported each other. There is some hope at the end as some survived to tell the "stories" in the courts to bring the Nazi criminals to justice. It is a true story of the heroism of women as I heard from my mother over 65 years ago.

Big Fat Lies Women Tell Themselves by Amy Ahlers (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

The title describes the book as it goes into detail about how to change your mindset. It is targeted for women but I think it really can be for both men and women. I learned a new perspective reading this book about being happily busy and not overwhelmed. Overall a good book and very positive!

The Butterfly Effect by Andy Andrews (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

Interesting topic. I enjoyed reading this because it's all true and fascinating. I wish it were longer and had more content.

Christmas Bliss by Mary Kay Andrews (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

2 best friends helping each other. 1 getting married and 1 pregnant. I recommend all her books.

The Santa Suit by Mary Kay Andrews (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

Ivy finds a Santa suit in her newly purchased house & several notes in the pockets. She tries to find the kids who wrote them (now grownups). I highly recommend.

My Darling Husband by Kimberly Belle (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

A restaurant owner's family is taken hostage. The man wants a specific amount of money or else. The wife thinks this is easy considering they're so successful. Little does she know they have no \$\$ now it's a race against time. Loved the back and forth and the suspense.

The Bishops Daughter by Wanda E. Brunstetter (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

An English man falls for an Amish woman. Final book in the series and I recommend reading all 3

Dear to Me by Wanda E. Brunstetter (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

2 people in love ready to marry have to work out some problems first
Quick read that I recommend

The Quilters Daughter by Wanda Brunstetter (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

Tragedy strikes a girl and then finds friendship where she didn't expect it. 2nd book in a trilogy so I recommend trying #1 first.

Find Me by Alafair Burke (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

This book is a thriller. It is about a woman who has amnesia and her figuring out what happened to her fifteen years ago.

The Art of Intuition by Sophy Burnham (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

Intriguing and very informative. This book was very insightful, and I enjoyed reading it very much. This is an interesting topic to me and I would recommend it to anyone with an interest of learning more about intuition.

River, Cross My Heart by Breena Clark (Format: Book)

Rating: 3

An Oprah pick from years ago, I stumbled across this book. A quick read, this book is rather episodic; there is no actual plot, which most of us are not used to. It traces the grief process which a young girl experiences after the tragic drowning of her sister in the Potomac River in Georgetown in the late 1920s.

The Last House on the Street by Diana Chamberlain (Format: Audiobook)

Rating: 5

Loved this book !!!! Half the book took place during 1965 when there was a big racial divide. One woman took a stand and it sparked a serious events. The other half is present day and a woman Kayla and Her journey in life and how it's effected by the racism.

When No One is Watching by Alyssa Cole (Format: Audiobook)

Rating: 4

I really liked this thriller! It was very quick to listen to and offered a lot of history and real world topics in the book.

Manhattan's Most Scandalous Reunion by Dani Collins (Format: ebook)

Rating: 3

A young woman is mistaken for a famous model and pursued by paparazzi. She ducks into a nearby building where a man she once knew lives and ends up being taken care of by him. There are many twists and turns in the story with too many coincidences to make the story believable. Interesting reading though.

When Women Ruled the World, Six Queens of Egypt by Kara Cooney (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

Fascinating and interesting. I loved reading about women who ruled in ancient Egypt and learning more about that civilization. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in Egypt.

Autopsy by Patricia Cornwell (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

Dr. Kay Scarpetta, forensic pathologist has returned to Virginia and has again taken the job as chief medical examiner. She deals with two murders, a few months apart, and is called to the White House on a matter of national security. As usual Cornwell's book is riveting and easy reading.

The Middle Place by Kelly Corrigan (Format: Book)

Rating: 3

This book is a peek into the life of Kelly, her dad, and her family, as they go through many difficult challenges.

Vows, Vendettas, and a Little Black Dress Book by Kyra Davis (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

Sophie Katz, amateur detective is on full alert when Maryanne a good friend, announces her engagement. Dora best friend & bridesmaid is shot & may never walk again. The police aren't actively working on the case. This is a fun read (quite a good story).

An Impossible Promise by Jude Deveraux and Tara Sheets (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

Book 2 of Providence Falls Series. The main character, Liam, has been sent back to earth to right a wrong he did in 1844 in Ireland. He caused the squire's daughter, Cora, to fall in love with him and run away and leave her fiancé behind. The story shifts between 1844 and modern times where Cora and he are police officers in Providence Falls, North Carolina. Liam is being given a chance at salvation if he can get Cora to fall in love with the modern version of her fiancé, Finley Walsh. Two angels appear occasionally to keep Liam on the right path. The books ends with a cliffhanger, making sure the reader will continue with book 3 to find out the end of the story.

The Singles Table by Sara Desai (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

A multi-cultural rom com The Singles Table is a spin on the familiar trope of nice girl-bad boy romance. Zara Patel is loud, brassy, sexy, colorful entertainment lawyer who plans to find a match for veteran and now co-owner of a security firm, strait-laced, but very handsome and somewhat frustrating, Jay Dayal. One critique would be that I had to look up some of the Indian words mentioned in the book, but I learned about some Indian wedding traditions and clothing.

Meant to Be by Jude Deveraux (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

This book follows two families in Kansas over three generations with their loves and losses. One family has two sisters, the older wanting to follow her boyfriend in the Peace Corps, but who stays back to help her widowed mother and sister. The other sister is studying to be a veterinarian and expects to marry her childhood sweetheart and go into practice with his father, the local veterinarian. What eventually happens is entirely different from what they expect. Very enjoyable watching the course of events over the three generations.

Chance of a Lifetime by Jude Deveraux and Tara Sheets (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

This book is the first of a trilogy, the Providence Falls series. It's about a young man, Liam, from a poor family who steals to provide his brother and his family with food. One of his friends decides to rob the local squire's house while the squire is away. Usually they rob coaches. Liam feels it's too dangerous to rob the squire so he decides to break into the house and search for jewelry and then give it to his friends afterward. When he enters the house he meets Cora, the squire's daughter. They're attracted to each other and meet late at night on other occasions. The book begins in 1844 in Ireland and switches back and forth between then and modern times in the U.S. In the prologue Liam is called before 2 angels and told he must make up for the fact that he stole Cora from her fiancé. In modern times Cora is a policewoman and Liam works with her. The angels appear from time to time to remind Liam to get Cora to fall in love with the man she's supposed to be with, or he's destined to go to Hell. Since it's the first book of the trilogy, the situation is not settled by the end of the book. It continues in book 2.

I don't know whether I would recommend this book; some of her other books are better.

Upon a Midnight Clear by Jude Deveraux, Linda Howard, and Margaret Allison (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

This is a collection 5 stories by 5 different authors, all Christmas themed. In the first, The Teacher, an Irishwoman who ran away from her husband (real or not) with her young son to a rugged Colorado town. She was hired to teach a young out-of-control boy. An enjoyable tale.

In the second story , Christmas Magic, a young woman is contacted by her father's

cardiologist to inform her that her father had a serious heart attack. They have been estranged for years, but she travels to Michigan and end up falling for her father's heart surgeon. Another enjoyable read.

Number 3, Jolly Holly, is about a holly berry-picking contest in California in 1900. Not a great story.

Number 4, If Only in My Dreams, a young woman travels to her family home to spend the holidays with her family. Her visit brings back memories and a reunion with a former boyfriend. Very enjoyable.

The fifth, White Out, is about a woman alone in her family's cabin during a blizzard who offers shelter to a stranger. Another enjoyable read.

Since there are 5 stories, it's difficult to give only one rating. Number 3 was a 2, the rest were 4s. I am giving it 4, but not all the stories were great.

Mercy House by Alena Dillion (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

Mercy House takes place in 1960's when the Catholic Church was "evaluating" the mission of the orders of nuns in terms of their work and commitment in relation to the "doctrine" of the Vatican. The underlying message they, the orders, were too liberal in their mission to help all persons in need. The setting is a not for profit located in Bedford Stuyvesant run by three nuns of the St Joseph order whose mission was to house young female victims of domestic violence. Their "methods" seemed successful with this needy population yet determined by a priest sent by hierarchy as not in accordance with Church doctrine. The priest himself was a perpetrator having raped one of the nuns managing the program. Thus a story of domestic violence within many stories of domestic violence. I found this book well written, engaging, and easy to read despite the very seriousness on all levels of sexual abuse, abuse of power and hypocrisy. I recommend it but not for the faint hearted.

The Pull of the Stars by Emma Donoghue (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

What an amazing book. I would have read it in a single day, had I not had to go to work. Set in Ireland during the pandemic of 1918, it depicts the interconnected story of three different women whose lives intersect for three days in the "Maternity/Fever" makeshift ward of a hospital. In many ways, it reminded me of the TV show, Call the Midwife, but much more intense, and an earlier time

period. The drama is very high and emotional. The author's research is evident as she has brought to light some controversial medical procedures, some of which was still conducted as late as the 1980s in Ireland. She also brings to light some of the hypocrisy surrounding children born to mothers of lower socio-economic status. A powerful, emotional, eye-opening, and reflective novel. Highly recommend.

The Power of Premonitions by Larry Dossy (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

This is an excellent book about premonitions and includes cases and many studies about this subject. I loved how informative and interesting this book is. Very scientific and well written. May not be for everyone but I loved it.

Rickey Boys Secret by Beverly Driver Eddy (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

I had seen a PBS program on the Richey Boys thus was drawn to this book when I saw the title in the new book section of the library. The Richey Boys were over 15,000 men and women who during WW11 were specifically trained in specialties such as POW INTERGRATION, ESPIONAGE, SIGNAL INTELEIGNENCE, CLOSE COMABAT, ETC. Camp Richey was a resort prior to WW11, which was taken over by the armed services to house and train specialty troops, even prior to the war. The US government realized even before the war we were lacking in intelligence trained service men and women and went about training an elite group. Many of these trainees were immigrants or children of immigrants who spoke many languages of ' the enemy.' They were extremely knowledge about the various cultures and psychological factors to "engage" the enemy in POW camps and on the frontlines. This was the precursor to CIA. The methods they used to train were fascinating such as they built " Germany villages" on site, dressed "actors" as Germain soldiers and even interrogated real POW 's on Camp Richey grounds. It is well written, well footnoted and an easy read. I recommend it to WW11 buffs as well as others who want to understand the role of the immigrant solider in WW11.

Jacob's Oath by Martin Fletcher (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

Jacob and Sarah are refugees returning to Hidelburg after surviving the Holocaust. Jacob vows to kill his brother's killer, a concentration camp guard. At the same time, he realizes that he would be captured and what will happen to Sarah and their love for each other. Very well written.

Springs Renewal by Shelley Shepherd Gray (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

Beauty is inside not outside as a girl learns. 3 book series 1 more to go

Winter's Awakening by Shelley Shepherd Gray (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

About how Amish and English people are different yet the same. 3 book series and I do recommend this. Can't wait to start #2

The Wedding Date by Jasmine Guillory (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

In this contemporary romance, Alexa gets stuck in an elevator with Dr. Drew Nichols. They start up a conversation and he asks her to be his plus one for a wedding. A romance blossoms, but with some complications: she's the chief of staff for the mayor and Drew lives in the Bay Area. Both have to figure out how to juggle the "ups and downs" of their relationship. While the plot is a typical romance, what I enjoyed was that the main characters were not.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime by Mark Haddon (Format: Book)

Rating: 3

This book definitely gave me insight into how a person with autism thinks.

The Midnight Library by Matt Haig (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

This book is about reflecting on your life and how the choices you make affect the outcome. I would suggest this book because it makes you think.

Four Winds by Kristin Hannah (Format: Audiobook)

Rating: 5

A story of an amazing strong woman through the great depression. Her story of struggle and turmoil and fight during the Depression. You root for her in every single page and pray all ends well for her. Beautiful story and well written.

Loving Lefties by Jane M. Healey Ph.D (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

This book was so interesting. My son is 4 years old and I was looking for a better understanding of his lateral preference. I learned so much about lefthandedness reading this book and never realized how left handed people had to adapt in so many ways. I am happy I read it. I would recommend it to anyone that has an interest to learn more.

The Paper Palace by Miranda Crowley Heller (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

I enjoyed this book, despite some of the heavy subject matter. I do wish the ending was more solid.

Accidentally Engaged by Farah Heron (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

This is another sweet, playful romance and a fun, fast read. Reena has had some back luck with employment and men. She's passionate about baking fresh bread and has names for her sour dough starters. Her family introduces her to Nadim, hoping for a match. When she finds out about a TV reality cooking show, it sounds like the perfect opportunity to fulfill her heart. The caveat, it's supposed to be couples. She and Nadim pose as an engaged couple, but need to keep this a secret from their families.

I enjoyed this book very much, not only was the romance enjoyable, but the food descriptions make you hungry. I learned about Tanzanian-Indian culture. The author includes a few recipes at the end of the book.

The Happiest Life by Hugh Hewitt (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

This is an excellent book about living life with purpose and it is very clever and well written. The author is genuine and sincere. I loved reading this book and I will remember many aspects of this book.

Golden Girl by Elin Hilderbrand (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

Author Vivi Howes is killed in a hit and run accident. She leaves behind three children, 13 published books and a cheating husband. Martha, her assigned person allows her to watch for a summer what is happening on earth. She is allowed 3 nudges to be able to change the outcome of what is happening. Good book and good title.

Practical Magic by Alice Hoffman (Format: Audiobook)

Rating: 4

Unknowingly, it was an abridged book and I am waiting for the unabridged version now. This is the original book written and then she wrote 2 prequels and 1 after. I have been really enjoying the whole series and I recommend reading them chronological order and not the order in which they were written. Good history, good general knowledge of herbs, fun, and magical.

Ugly Love by Colleen Hoover (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

Tate and Miles meet. They have an instant attraction to each other. Miles sets the rules and they become friends with benefits. Tate is falling for Miles but he is sealed shut. He's gone through something, and Tate is determined to find out. Ugly love made me ugly cry!!

The Sun Down Motel by Simone St. James (Format: eBook)

Rating: 4

The Sun Down Motel is a thoroughly enjoyable mystery/thriller. I highly recommend it to anyone who likes to be a little scared. With supernatural elements, it's a fun (creepy) book to read.

Because I Said So by Kat Jennings (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

This book is about the truth behind myths, tales and warnings passed down from generations to their kids. It is interesting and humorous to read. I have heard many of these and somehow I will still chose to listen to my mom when it comes to a few of these regardless of the science behind it!

The Guilt Trip by Sandle Jones (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

Interesting Premise (Rachel, Jack, Paige + Noah) - Two Couples "best of friends" Jan + Ali, new finances of will (Jack's brother) head for a destination wedding in Portugal. The week away turns out to be filled with secrets as friendships, marriages, + a wedding threaten to unravel.

The Door to December by Dean Koontz (Format: Audiobook)

Rating: 4

The book is about a mom who gets her little girl back after being gone for 6 years, in this time the dad has been doing experiments on her. A good Dean Koontz book, a little creepy, scary, but always well written and very enjoyable.

Local Woman Missing by Mary Kubica (Format: Book)

Rating: 1

This book was ok. Started off really slow but it definitely has a lot of twists and turns. I didn't like this book as much as the other novels because I thought it was too slow and the story wasn't as interesting

By its Cover by Donna Leon (Format: eBook)

Rating: 5

This is number 23 in the Guido Brunetti series. It begins with Commissario Brunetti investigating the theft of rare books and pages from rare books from a library and continues with a murder connected with the thefts. As usual it is an enjoyable and interesting read, and I recommend it to anyone who enjoys a good mystery.

Earthly Remains by Donna Leon (Format: eBook)

Rating: 5

This book begins with Commissario Brunetti taking a 2-week leave from work for health reasons. He goes to a villa owned by his wife's aunt on an island near Venice and becomes friends with the father of the caretaker. After a heavy storm the man turns up dead. Brunetti has to find out whether it was suicide, an accident caused by the storm or something else. A gripping story, very enjoyable.

Falling in Love by Donna Leon (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

Another in the Commissario Guido Brunetti mystery series. In this book Flavia Petrelli, Italy's finest soprano, is being stalked by someone unknown. She first appeared in Donna Leon's first novel, *Death at La Fenice*. Brunetti and his wife attend her performance and afterward wait to speak to her. They invite her to dinner at Brunetti's in-laws' palazzo, and she tells them of her growing sense of unease. Brunetti assures Flavia that he will investigate. Another very enjoyable book.

The Jewels of Paradise by Donna Leon (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

This is a stand-alone novel by the author of the Commissario Brunetti series. The main character, Caterina, is a musicologist with a doctorate in Baroque opera. She accepts a position to investigate the contents of two trunks that belonged to the Italian Baroque composer Steffani. Two cousins, descendants of Steffani, are both claiming to be the true heir of the composer. There is a great deal of background information about the time when Steffani lived, and you get a picture of the time when he lived. It was interesting reading but perhaps not everyone's taste. It's quite a change from her Brunetti mysteries.

Trace Elements by Donna Leon (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

29th book in the Brunetti series. A woman's dying words in a Venetian hospice lead Commissario to uncover an environmental threat. Prior to the woman's dying, her husband was killed in a motorcycle accident. As usual Brunetti solves

the mystery of the accident as well as finding the meaning of the woman's last words. As usual a very enjoyable book.

Transient Desires by Donna Leon (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

Another Commissario Brunetti novel. This novel begins with two injured American girls found at the entrance to the hospital. Brunetti has to discover how they arrived there and what led up to their being left there. In the course of the investigation they meet the two young men who left the girls there and in investigating are led to other cases being looked into by various agencies. As usual a book I couldn't stop reading. The author always paints a picture of Venice, including mentioning landmarks and inserting phrases in Italian, that make it possible to picture what she is describing. I await her next book coming out this year.

Unto Us a Son is Given by Donna Leon (Format: eBook)

Rating: 4

Another in the Guido Brunetti series. In this book Brunetti is asked by his father-in-law to help stop his best friend from adopting an adult man as his son. After Brunetti speaks to the friend, the friend dies of natural causes. His friends plan a memorial service for him, and one of the friends is killed. Brunetti investigates and as usual solves the mystery. Not as enjoyable as some of the other in the series but still worth reading.

The Waters of Eternal Youth by Donna Leon (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

Another in the Guido Brunetti mystery series. This book starts with a fund-raising dinner at Brunetti's in-laws. One of the people attending, a contessa, asks Brunetti to call on her, and when he does, she asks him to investigate an incident concerning her granddaughter which happened 15 years earlier. Even though it's a cold case, he undertakes the investigation and is able to discover what happened 15 years before. As usual Leon has written a great story.

Severance by Ling Ma (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

Thought provoking, powerful, suspenseful, reflective, *Severance* by Ling Ma is a work that can't be pigeonholed into one specific genre. The chapters alternate between past and present. A plague which leaves its victims "fevered" connotes the zombie motif — but Ma's work is deeper than apocalyptic fiction, it's secondary angle is a scathing satiric attempt to explore consumerism and contemporary American values.

The Plague theme echoes the Pandemic of today; interestingly, the book was published in 2019, really hits home.

I highly recommend this book which is work that I never would have chosen to read. It's a very fast read, a definite page turner.

Between Heaven and Mirth by James Martin (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

This book is very funny as it incorporates being lighthearted when it comes to religious beliefs of Christians. I loved reading this book and I have already recommended it. I laughed out loud and I hope other people will as well.

Come on Over by Jeff Mauro (Format: Book)

Rating: 3

This is cookbook, with stories and recipes. I liked about 1/4 of the recipes.

Count the Ways by Joyce Maynard (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

This book is about a family. It follows them through the years with all the ups and downs of life. The characters are very real and relatable. I would suggest this book.

Dirty, Sexy, Politics by Megan McCain (Format: Book)

Rating: 2

I thought it might be interesting to learn about the inside of a presidential campaign. Boy, was I led astray. I'm not a Megan McCain fan or hater. This book is a complaint-fest of cheap hotel rooms, a diet of fast food, weight gain, limited wardrobes, staff who questioned her image, uncomfortable transportation, grueling schedules and so on. It just seemed like there were more negatives than

positives. I tried to keep in mind that the Megan was around 23 and was immature, in her appearance and this is the voice that permeates this memoir.

Powerful Thinking by Joyce Meyer (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

This book is amazing! It really strategizes how to shift your thinking and actions into being the best version of yourself. It is religious and very encouraging. I loved it and I would strongly recommend it to others, especially anyone experiencing any bad feelings or having a hard time.

The Arrangement by Kiersten Modglin (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

This book was great a lot of twists and turns. It was about a couple that decided to date other people to try and see if their marriage would last. Things turned for the worse when one of their hookups showed up at the house. Excellent reads. Absolute page turner.

The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates by Wes Moore (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

I saw Wes Moore on Oprah years ago and his story stayed with me. Now, that I read the book, I gained more insight into the question: how do we become the people we are? Certainly, a debatable question with no right or wrong answer. I think it's about what YOU feel and believe.

The Christmas Sisters by Sarah Morgan (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

Nice story about 3 sisters and sharing their lives. I do recommend it.

Miracle on 5th Avenue by Sarah Morgan (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

Excellent love story at Christmas time. I highly recommend this book and this author.

The Giver of Stars by Jo Jo Moyes (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

Extremely interesting, well written book. Alice an Englishwoman marries American Bennett, a good looking businessman. She thinks she is moving to Lexington KY, but instead finds herself living in a small rural area in what turns out to be a loveless marriage. The WPA, under Eleanor Roosevelt, institutes a lending traveling library staffed with women changes her life completely.

Falling by T.J. Newman Format: Book)

Rating: 5

A plane is boarded with 143 passengers who are unaware that the pilots family is kidnapped. Well written, fast paced book that keeps you wondering which group (family in passengers) will live.

Sinatra and Me: In the Small Wee Hours of the Morning by Toni Oppedisano (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

I have never been interested in reading a biography about Frank Sinatra but this one came recommended by a local book club so I took on the task. The author, Tony "o" was a longtime confidant and member of Frank Sinatra's management team in his later years of life and career. Tony O tries to clear up some of the negative "myths" about Sinatra re his relationship with the Mafia, President Kennedy and family, his family. music and love relationships. It seems Tony O and Sinatra had an incredible close relationship fueled by Jack Daniels and Sinatra's need to for a confidant he could trust. Tony O was even there holding his hand when he died and left to dispose of some of his treasured belongings to family members years after his estate was settle. The facts may be colored by the deep commitment Tony O had to Sinatra. It does give a good history of the times both in terms of music world and social context re segregation. Easy read and worth the time.

The Power of Positive Thinking by Norman Vincent Peale (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

Excellent book and really the way everyone should think. I highly recommend this book I absolutely loved it, enjoyed reading it and I even took notes!

Handbags...What Every Woman Should Know by Stephanie Pedersen (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

Such an interesting book filled with the history of handbags and some fashion tips as well. Included are many photos of handbags throughout the centuries. I highly recommend this book to anyone who loves history and handbags!

Expect the Unexpected by Bill Phillips (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

This book is about a psychic medium with such a genuine good-hearted nature set out to help bring people peace and comfort. I enjoyed his writing; the book was sincere and humorous at times. An enjoyable book to read; I would recommend this book to anyone with an interest in this subject.

Transform Your Life with Color by Charles Phillips (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

This book is about how color affects different areas of your life and personality traits based on colors you prefer. I enjoyed learning about this topic and it includes gardening as well. I thought it was very interesting. I would recommend it.

The Secret Life of Church Ladies by Deesha Philyaw (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

A collection of nine stories voiced by women who are sharing their inner true selves, often in conflict with societal expectations or within their families. Some of the ones which stayed with me are, "Peach Cobbler," "Jael," and "Instructions for Married Christian Husbands."

Lately, I've been trying to choose books which are by writers who are not mainstream, subject matter/sub-genres which are not "MY" usual go-to selections in order to grow myself.

This book revealed that as humans, we share struggles and conflicts; now we can ask ourselves, how do we reveal these secrets so that we can find peace and acceptance.

Picture Perfect by Jodi Picoult (Format: Audiobook)

Rating: 3

To the outside world, Cassie Barrett and Alex Rivers seem to have the perfect marriage. But, could it be as perfect as it seems? This book is ok, but I wouldn't consider it one of the author's best.

Wish You Were Here by Jodi Picoult (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

In *Wish You Were Here*, a novel that Jodi Picoult wrote during the pandemic, the characters face the same awful realities that the world faced over the past two years as a result of COVID-19. The novel beautifully tells the story of Diana O'Toole, a young woman who has her life planned out meticulously, and spans from New York City to the Galapagos Islands. This novel illuminates the themes of humanity, love, trauma, forgiveness, and resilience. I believe it would resonate deeply with many readers and recommend it highly.

Wish You Were Here by Jodi Picoult (Format: Book)

Rating: 3

Very unrealistic and I was disappointed in it as I like her books. I won't recommend

Wish You Were Here by Jodi Picoult (Format: Book)

Rating: 3

This book was ok. This book also referenced the COVID 19 pandemic a lot. The story line was ok but if I knew prior how much COVID-19 pandemic was mentioned and talked about, I wouldn't have read this. I, like the rest of the world am sick of COVID and I try to read to get away from it. This book wasn't her best.

Wish You Were Here by Jodi Picoult (Format: Audiobook)

Rating: 3

I wanted to love this book but since it's based on current affairs It was too new and still in the media. Great story and writing just too soon for me.

Curious Behavior by Robert R. Provine (Format: Audiobook)

Rating: 3

This book is about yawns, coughs, sneezes and other bodily functions. I thought some of it was interesting and some disturbing as well. It describes experiments and tests conducted by the author. Probably not a book I would recommend as it did not meet my expectations on the subject.

An Observant Wife by Naomi Ragen (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

I enjoyed this book. This book is about an observant Jewish family and the struggles they go through. The characters are very relatable.

Malibu Rising by Taylor Jenkins Reid (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

It's a book about 4 children growing up in the 1980s and leads up to the beginning of one of the California wildfires. They are abandoned by their famous father and their mother dies, so they must fend for themselves

Malibu Rising by Taylor Jenkins Reid (Format: Audiobook)

Rating: 4

I loved how this book took place over the course of 40 years. How the family started, what happened in those years and where they are now. Every family has their issues. Such a great listen. The reader was fab and made me very engrossed.

Green Eyes by Karen Robards (Format: Book)

Rating: 3

Detailed sex scenes (leaving nothing in the imagination) between Anna Traverne, widow of Paul + Julian chase, where birthright is in question which is the plot in

this romance story. Reminded me of magazine called the confession, which were secretly read in Bish school.

What Makes You Happy? by Fiona Robards (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

This is an excellent book about making small changes in your life leading to big improvements in all aspects. I loved the ideas, exercises and encouragement throughout this book. Everyone would benefit from these ideas and suggestions. Everyone should read this book!

The Perfect Marriage by Jeneva Rose (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

A husband cheats on his wife. The mistress ends up dead. His wife is the best defense attorney in the state, so she takes his case. The mistress has a lot of skeletons in her closet. This book kept me guessing until the last 10 pages. Such a page turner. Loved every minute of it.

The Dinner List by Rebecca Serle (Format: Audiobook)

Rating: 5

Its about a dinner party with 5 random Guests. I loved the premise of this book, the question of "If you could invite 5 people to a dinner party living or dead, who would they be". And what would this dinner party be like. So interesting, I really enjoyed it and listed to it in 2 days.

In Five Years by Rebecca Serle (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

Where do you see yourself in 5 years? That is the question, Fast read & it was recommended to me

In Five Years by Rebecca Serle (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

In Five Years, by Rebecca Serle, is a beautifully written book. It is a quick and emotional read with just a touch of magical realism. Following the main character, Dannie Kohan, it tells a story of love and friendship. I enjoyed it very much.

The Stars Are Fire by Anita Shreve (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

The largest fire in Maine's history is the best background of this terrific book . Grace Holland, 24 years old, left alone (husband is a firefighter) needs to protect her young children. Life changes completely as now she is homeless and penniless with a spouse not to be found in complete solo charge of taking care of her family.

The Stars Are Fire by Anita Shreve (Format: Book)

Rating: 2

The Stars are Fire is a novel which takes place in 1950's in Maine about a young family. This is loveless marriage which is not explained why in the first couple of hundred pages. It seems dreary for the young mother except for a few healthy relationships with her young children, her mom and good friend. All is doomed by drought and then fire. She loses all, her house, her possessions and her mother's house, as well as her husband who disappears fighting the fire. She takes over her deceased mother-in-law's house since somehow that one is still standing. Life picks up with her independence, her getting a driver's license and a job as well as using her mother-in-law resources and jewelry' to live on.

Her husband "returns" and life becomes unbearable.

I did not find the plot too complex nor the characters fully believable. Also there were some "side" issues, which are not an added value to the story. Not sure why they were included.

I would not go out of my way to read this or recommend it to anyone.

Just Friends by Robyn Sisman (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

A predictable read, but amazing anyway. Frey & Jack have been "just friends" for over 10 years. Obviously, they have differences, but in general like each other. The dynamics change when Jack accompanies Freya to her step sister's wedding in England

The Brooklyn Reader by Ed: Andrea Wyatt Sexton & Alice Leccese Powers

(Format: Book)

Rating: 5

An anthology of writings about Brooklyn, this book has a varied collection of poetry, essays, short stories and book excerpts. Some of my favorite selections are: an excerpt from A Tree Grows in Brooklyn which ever-so-slightly alludes to Francie Nolan's love of the written word and the repository of knowledge, her local library, Whitman's multi-sensory treatise, "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry, an excerpt from Pete Hamill, The Gift, which is set where I grew up, in Park Slope, and a message of pride and determination from Shirley Chisholm's "Back to Brooklyn," from her autobiography, Unbought and Unbossed.

In the Shadow of Alabama by Judy Reese Singer (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

This book is about a woman (Rachel) with a dysfunctional family who has a difficult relationship with her father. When her father dies a woman unknown by the family gives the family a music album and an apology from her father to Rachel's father. During the course of the book Rachel discovers why her father was the way she was and learned to change the way she looked at things. Rachel is Jewish and her father oversaw an all-black platoon in Montgomery, Alabama, during the 2nd World War. The book shows how southerners treated black people at the time, and the corporal over Rachel's father had similar views of Jews. A very interesting story based loosely on the life of the author.

The Woman's Guide to How Men Think by Shawn T. Smith (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

Informative about a man and how they generally think. I liked that this book was written by a man and did have some humor. The author is genuinely trying to help women understand how a man thinks and gives ways to avoid conflicts with one another and underlying reasons as well for some of the conflicts.

Every Night Josephine by Jacqueline Susann (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

Adorable book about a poodle. I enjoyed reading this book because it was funny and I would recommend it to anyone who loves animals.

Let it Snow by Nancy Thayer (Format: Book)

Rating: 4

The perfect holiday love story to read anytime. Yes check it out.

Last Girl Ghosted by Lisa Unger (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

This book is about an online dating match that turns into a thriller. I liked this book. It keeps you guessing. The characters were very well written.

The Quotable Gemini by Mary Valby (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

Fun and interesting to read. I love reading about my horoscope sign and learning new things. I was amazed at all the famous talented people I had no idea were a Gemini like myself. I think everyone would benefit from reading about their own astrological sign to learn more about themselves. I enjoyed reading all the quotes.

The Hidden Brain by Shankar Vedantam (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

This book is about our unconscious minds and includes historic events and studies. I thought it was very interesting and I would recommend it. It amazed me to read some of the facts in this book because it brings to light some things I wouldn't consciously think of.

In Her Shoes by Jennifer Weiner (Format: Book)

Rating: 5

Two sisters with nothing in common share the same shoe size. Very enjoyable and a quick read. A feel-good book.