

# Book Talk ~ Summer 2018

## Recommendations from JTL Book Group

**AMY HARRIS**

***The Female Persuasion* by Meg Wolitzer**

Set from the 1960s to the present, reflects that generation; story of two women and how they influence each other. Multilayered novel about ambition, power, friendship, and mentorship, and the romantic ideals we all follow deep into adulthood.

**SALLY COREN**

***The Whistler* by John Grisham**

About a gangster who used a corrupt judge and a Florida Native American Tribe to build a casino. Anyone who stood in their way was disposed of. Each member of the tribe received a \$5,000/month stipend, so they didn't complain. The tribe was outside of local, state, and federal laws, so when there was a complaint about the local Florida judge who was enabling the tribe to take over private lands and build the casino, the only entity able to investigate was the agency vested with the authority to check out complaints against judges in Florida. An anonymous tip about the judge starts the unraveling.

**DIXIE HULING**

***The Punishment She Deserves* by Elizabeth George**

Latest installment in the Lynley/Havers series. Detective Sergeant Barbara Havers and Detective Inspector Thomas Lynley are forced to confront the past as they try to solve a crime that threatens to tear apart the very fabric of a quiet, historic medieval town in England.

**STEPHANIE OUELLETTE**

***Educated: A Memoir* by Tara Westover**

For readers of *The Glass Castle* and *Wild*, a stunning new memoir about family, loss, and the struggle for a better future. A young girl, kept out of school, leaves her survivalist family and goes on to earn a PhD from Cambridge University.

**BARBARA IVES**

***The Swamp Fox: How Francis Marion Saved the American Revolution* by John Oller**

In the darkest days of the American Revolution, Francis Marion and his band of militia freedom fighters kept hope alive for the patriot cause during the critical British "southern campaign."

***High Noon: The Hollywood Blacklist and the Making of an American Classic* by Glen Frankel**

Not sure who the audience is for this book, but it's an easier read than *The Swamp Fox*. I learned a lot about the 1950s "witch hunt" for communists. I had no idea of the extent of the restrictions on writers during that time period.

***A Brief History of Everyone Who Ever Lived* by Adam Rutherford (nonfiction)**

The title says it all. I have eighteen pages of notes on this book. I should have just bought a copy!

***West* by Carys Davies (fiction)**

Very short, 149 pages! An enjoyable read. It even has an evil librarian.

***Munich* by Robert Harris (fiction)**

Time period is 1938. Involves Hitler, British prime minister Neville Chamberlain, and some interesting fictional characters. A very good book.

**MARY BETH YARMAC**

***What It Means When a Man Falls from the Sky: Stories* by Lesley Nneka Arimah**

Accomplished debut collection that explores the ties that bind parents and children, husbands and wives, lovers and friends to one another and to the places they call home.

***The Beggar Maid: Stories of Flo and Rose* by Alice Munro**

In this series of interweaving stories, Munro re-creates the evolving bond between two women in the course of almost forty years.

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### ***There's a Mystery There: The Primal Vision of Maurice Sendak* by Jonathan Cott**

An extraordinary, path-breaking, and penetrating book on the life and work and creative inspirations of the great children's book genius, Maurice Sendak.

### ***Anything Is Possible* by Elizabeth Strout**

A 2017 novel of related stories by Elizabeth Strout. It returns to the fictional rural town of Amgash, Illinois, the protagonist's hometown in Strout's 2016 novel, *My Name Is Lucy Barton*.

### ***All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque**

Author was a German veteran of World War I. The book describes the German soldiers' extreme physical and mental stress during the war, and the detachment from civilian life felt by many of these soldiers upon returning home from the front.

**NOTE: This will be our book group's selection for September 2018!**

### ***Birdcage Walk* by Helen Dunmore**

A haunting depiction of domestic constraints set in Bristol at the time of the French Revolution.

### ***Salvage the Bones* by Jesmyn Ward**

Explores the plight of a working-class African-American family in Mississippi as they prepare for Hurricane Katrina and follows them through the aftermath of the storm.

### ***Sing, Unburied, Sing* by Jesmyn Ward**

An intimate portrait of a family and an epic tale of hope and struggle, *Sing, Unburied, Sing* examines the ugly truths at the heart of the American story and the power—and limitations—of family bonds.

### ***The Book of Dust* by Philip Pullman**

The Book of Dust is an as-yet-uncompleted trilogy of fantasy novels by Philip Pullman. Focuses on a battle for free speech and thought against a theocratic totalitarian organization.

### ***The BFG* by Roald Dahl**

Children's classic (1982) written by British novelist Roald Dahl.

### ***Not the End of the World* by Kate Atkinson**

Short story collection by British writer Kate Atkinson. Mostly set in Scotland, it's an experiment in magical realism.

### ***Benediction* by Kent Haruf**

A story of life and death, family and community, set on the high plains of Colorado.

### ***A Long, Long Way* by Sebastian Barry**

A novel by Irish author Sebastian Barry, set during the First World War.

### **EDNA PELTO**

#### ***Erotic Stories for Punjabi Widows***

##### **by Balli Kaur Jaswal**

A revelation of the immigrant experience and community set in Southall, London; very enjoyable.

### **JULIE CULP**

#### ***An American Marriage* by Tayari Jones**

This stirring love story is an insightful look into the hearts and minds of three people who are at once bound and separated by forces beyond their control.

### ***The Immortalists* by Chloe Benjamin**

Story of four teenage siblings who ask a fortuneteller to reveal the dates of their deaths. Poses intriguing questions about the value of longevity and whether we are victims, or perpetrators, of our own fate.

### ***Happiness* by Aminatta Forna**

Reminiscent at times of Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*, this novel is a meditation on grand themes: love and death, man and nature, cruelty and mercy.

### ***The Great Alone* by Kristin Hannah**

Ernt Allbright, a former POW, comes home from the Vietnam War a changed and volatile man. When he loses yet another job, he makes an impulsive decision: He will move his family north, to Alaska, where they will live off the grid in America's last true frontier.

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### ***The Story of Arthur Truluv* by Elizabeth Berg**

A beautiful, life-affirming novel about a remarkably loving man who creates for himself and others second chances at happiness.

### ***The Patchwork Bride* by Sandra Dallas**

The irrepressible story of a runaway bride.

### ***Quicksand: What It Means to Be a Human Being* by Henning Mankell**

A stunning and poignant autobiographical look at the myriad experiences that shape a meaningful life, by the best-selling author of the Kurt Wallander mysteries.

### ***The Other Einstein* by Marie Benedict**

In the tradition of *The Paris Wife* and *Mrs. Poe*, *The Other Einstein* offers us a window into Einstein's wife, a brilliant physicist in her own right, a brilliant, fascinating woman whose light was lost in Einstein's enormous shadow.

### **SUZANNE YEO**

#### ***After Anna* by Lisa Scottoline**

Riveting and disquieting, *After Anna* is a groundbreaking domestic thriller, as well as a novel of emotional justice and legal intrigue.

#### ***The Nightingale* by Kristin Hannah**

Against the epic panorama of World War II, illuminates an intimate part of history seldom seen: the women's war. Tells the stories of two sisters, separated by years and experience, each embarking on her own dangerous path toward survival, love, and freedom in German-occupied, war-torn France.

#### ***Lilac Girls* by Martha Hall Kelly**

For readers of *The Nightingale* and *Sarah's Key*, inspired by the life of a real World War II heroine, this remarkable debut novel reveals the power of unsung women to change history in their quest for love, freedom, and second chances.

#### **J. P. Beaumont series (Seattle homicide detective) by J. A. Jance**

### ***Camino Island* by John Grisham**

This crime fiction thriller is a departure from Grisham's main subject of legal thrillers, and focuses on stolen rare books.

### **PRISCILLA CLESOWICH**

#### ***Small Great Things* by Jodi Picoult**

When a newborn baby dies after a routine hospital procedure, there is no doubt about who will be held responsible: the nurse who had been banned from looking after him by his father. What the nurse, her lawyer, and the father of the child cannot know is how this death will irrevocably change all of their lives, in ways both expected and not.

#### ***Born to Run: The Hidden Tribe, the Ultra-Runners, and the Greatest Race the World Has Never Seen* by Christopher McDougall**

Full of incredible characters, amazing athletic achievements, and cutting-edge science; reveals secrets of a tribe of the world's greatest distance runners.

### **PAM SHINE**

#### ***News of the World* by Paulette Jiles**

In the aftermath of the Civil War, an aging itinerant news reader agrees to transport a young captive of the Kiowa back to her people in this exquisitely rendered, morally complex, multilayered novel of historical fiction from the author of *Enemy Women* that explores the boundaries of family, responsibility, honor, and trust.

### **MISSY HAYES**

#### ***I Am, I Am, I Am* by Maggie O'Farrell**

Electric and shocking memoir of the near-death experiences that have punctuated this author's life. Gorgeous writing; powerful and memorable.

#### ***Rosie: Scenes from a Vanished Life* by Rose Tremain**

Author's first work of nonfiction looks at her early, and emotionally impoverished, years at home and in boarding school. Beautifully written and poignant.

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**MATT EARLS**

***The Killer Angels* by Michael Shaara**

Historical novel by Michael Shaara, awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1975. Tells the story of the four days of the Battle of Gettysburg in the American Civil War. The story is character-driven and told from the perspective of various protagonists.

**JOHN NICOL**

***How to Change Your Mind: What the New Science of Psychedelics Teaches Us about Consciousness, Dying, Addiction, Depression and Transcendence* by Michael Pollan**

From their 1960s heyday to the resulting countermovement and backlash. Covers recent resurgence in this field of research, as well as Pollan's own personal use of psychedelics. Pollan seeks to illuminate not only the mechanics of the drugs themselves, but also the inner workings of the human mind and consciousness.

**MICHAEL HARRIS**

***Peripheral* by William Gibson**

A 2014 science fiction "noir-ish" mystery-thriller novel set in multiple futures.

***By Gaslight* by Steven Price**

William Pinkerton is already famous, the son of the most notorious detective of all time, when he descends into the underworld of Victorian London in pursuit of a new lead on the fabled con Edward Shade. Moves from the diamond mines of South Africa to the battlefields of the Civil War, on a journey through grief, trust, and its breaking, where what we share can bind us even against our darker selves.

**RAY YARMAC**

***The Coroner's Lunch* (Dr. Siri Paiboun Mystery, #1 in series) by Colin Cotterill**

Laos, 1978: Dr. Siri Paiboun, a 72-year-old medical doctor, has unwillingly been appointed the national coroner of the new socialist Laos. His lab is underfunded, his boss is incompetent, and his support staff is quirky, to say the least. But Siri's sense of humor gets him through his often frustrating days.

**KEVIN CLESOWICH**

***Bucky F\*cking Dent: A Novel* by David Duchovny**

This book explores the bonds between fathers and sons and the age-old rivalry between Yankee fans and the Fenway faithful, and grapples with our urgent need to persevere—and risk everything—in the name of love.

***Uncommon Type: Stories* by Tom Hanks**

A collection of seventeen wonderful short stories showing that two-time Oscar winner Tom Hanks is as talented a writer as he is an actor.

**RICK KANE**

***The Immortal Irishman: The Irish Revolutionary Who Became an American Hero* by Timothy Egan**

The Irish-American story, with all its twists and triumphs, is told through the improbable life of one man. The epic story of one of the most fascinating and colorful Irishmen in nineteenth-century America.

**ART WALLACE**

***The Other Einstein Bride* by Marie Benedict**

(See earlier description, above.)

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

A Spanish war orphan born in a burning church and raised by a blind guitar teacher, Frankie Presto was gifted with extraordinary musical abilities that shape not only his life but the lives of those around him. With its *Forrest Gump*-like journey through the music world, *The Magic Strings of Frankie Presto* is a classic in the making.