

Book Talk ~ Summer 2021

Recommendations from JTL Book Group

***This Is Happiness* by Niall Williams**

An intricately observed portrait of a community, its idiosyncrasies and its traditions, its paradoxes and its inanities, its failures and its triumphs. It's about stories as the very stuff of life: the ways they make the texture and matter of our world, and the ways they write and rewrite us.

***This Time Next Year We'll Be Laughing* by Jacqueline Winspear**

After sixteen Maisie Dobbs novels, Jacqueline Winspear has turned to memoir, revealing the hardships and joys of her family history.

Vol. 3 of "My Day" Columns

My Day: The Best of Eleanor Roosevelt's Acclaimed Newspaper Columns, 1936–1962

ON LW'S TO BE READ LIST:

***Susan, Linda, Nina & Cokie: The Extraordinary Story of the Founding Mothers of NPR* by Lisa Napoli**

A group biography of four beloved women who fought sexism, covered decades of American news, and whose voices defined NPR.

***Here Is Your War: Story of G.I. Joe* by Ernie Pyle**

A wonderful and enduring tribute to American troops in the Second World War; Ernie Pyle tells how people from a cross-section of America—ranches, inner cities, small mountain farms, and college towns—learned to fight a war.

***The Real James Herriot: A Memoir of My Father* by James Wight**

In his warm and poignant biography, Jim Wight ventures beyond his father's life as a veterinarian to reveal the man behind the stories--the private individual who refused to allow fame and wealth to interfere with his practice or his family.

***Moby-Dick* by Herman Melville**

(Maybe!)

—LW

***Tears of Amber* by Sofia Segovia**

With war looming, Ilse's school days soon turn to lessons of survival. In the harshness of winter, her family must join the largest exodus in human history to survive.

***Once Upon a River* by Diane Setterfield**

On a dark midwinter's night in an ancient inn on the river Thames, an extraordinary event takes place. This novel reveals how we explain the world to ourselves, ourselves to others, and the meaning of our lives in a universe that remains impenetrably mysterious.

—CC

ON MJH'S TO BE READ LIST:

***The Great Circle* by Maggie Shipstead**

An unforgettable story of a daredevil female aviator determined to chart her own course in life: circumnavigating the globe by flying over the North and South Poles.

***Margreete's Harbor* by Eleanor Morse**

A literary novel set on the coast of Maine during the 1960s, tracing the life of a family and its matriarch as they negotiate sharing a home.

***The Plot* by Jean Hanff Korelitz**

Young writer dies before completing his novel; his teacher (a failed novelist), steals the plot.

—MJH

***The Four Winds* by Kristin Hannah**

One woman's survival during the Dust Bowl; powerful American epic about love and heroism and hope, set during the Great Depression, when millions were out of work and even the land seemed to have turned against them.

—JK

***Simon the Fiddler* by Paulette Jiles**

Author of *News of the World* returns to Texas in this story, set at the end of the Civil War, about an itinerant fiddle player, a ragtag band of musicians

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with whom he travels trying to make a living, and the charming young Irish lass who steals his heart.

—FD

***The Four Winds* by Kristin Hannah**

Also read and enjoyed this book.

***This Is How It Always Is* by Laurie Frankel**

A novel about revelations, transformations, fairy tales, and family. Change is always hard and miraculous, parenting is always a leap into the unknown, children grow but not always according to plan. And families with secrets don't get to keep them forever.

—SK

***Hamilton* by Ron Chernow**

Few figures in American history have been more debated or misunderstood; Chernow's biography gives Hamilton his due and sets the record straight, illustrating the strength of Hamilton's countless sacrifices to champion ideas disputed during his time.

—RK

***The Winemaker's Wife* by Kristin Harmel**

A moving story set amid the champagne vineyards of France during the darkest days of World War II, perfect for fans of Heather Morris's *The Tattooist of Auschwitz*.

***The Four Winds* by Kristin Hannah**

Also read and enjoyed this book.

***The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig**

Beyond the edge of the universe is a library that contains an infinite number of books, each the story of another reality. One tells the story of your life as it is, along with another book for the other life you could have lived if you had made a different choice at any point in your life. What if you had the chance to go to the library and see for yourself?

—JS

***Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World that Can't Stop Talking* by Susan Cain**

In *Quiet*, Susan Cain argues that we dramatically undervalue introverts and shows how much we lose in doing so.

***My Stroke of Insight* by Jill Bolte Taylor**

The astonishing *New York Times* bestseller that chronicles how a brain scientist's own stroke led to enlightenment.

—JJ

***Chronicles of a Radical Hag* by Lorna Landvik**

A bittersweet, seriously funny novel of a life, a small town, and a key to our troubled times traced through a newspaper columnist's half-century of taking in, and taking on, the world.

***Angry Housewives Eating Bon Bons* by Lorna Landvik**

The women of Freesia Court are convinced that there is nothing coffee, desserts, and a strong shoulder can't fix. Laughter is the glue that holds their book group together, an unofficial "club" that becomes a lifeline.

***Christmas Bells* by Jennifer Chiaverini**

Chiaverini celebrates Christmas, past and present, with a wondrous novel inspired by the classic poem "Christmas Bells," by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

—SY

***A Catalog of Birds* by Laura Harrington**

This novel of a wounded Vietnam veteran's homecoming is both "a searing war story and a page-turning thriller."

***Alice Bliss* by Laura Harrington**

At once universal and very personal, *Alice Bliss* is a profoundly moving story about those who are left at home during wartime and a small-town teenage girl bravely facing the future.

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

An emotionally powerful novel about three people who each lose the one they love most, only to find second chances where they least expect them.

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***The Color of Lightning* by Paulette Jiles**

This stirring novel set on the untamed Texas frontier in the aftermath of the Civil War chronicles the journey of former Kentucky slave Britt Johnson as he ventures west into unknown territory with his wife, Mary, and their three children.

***The Beekeeper of Aleppo* by Christy Lefteri**

This unforgettable novel puts human faces on the Syrian war with the immigrant story of a beekeeper, his wife, and the triumph of spirit when the world becomes unrecognizable.

—LM

***Jane Whitefield Mystery Series* by Thomas Perry**

This crime and mystery novel series features Jane Whitefield, a Native American who has made a career out of helping people disappear. The series is usually narrated in third-person perspective.

***The Secret Diary of Hendrik Groen, 83 ¼ Years Old* by Hendrik Groen**

In the vein of Fredrik Backman's *A Man Called Ove*, this is a funny and tender tale about Hendrik Groen; he may be elderly, but this feisty, indomitable curmudgeon has no plans to go out quietly.

***The Paris Library* by Janet Skeslien Charles**

Based on the true World War II story of the American Library in Paris, an unforgettable novel about the power of books and the bonds of friendship—and the ordinary heroes who can be found in the most perilous times and the quietest places.

***The Premonition* by Michael Lewis**

Michael Lewis's taut and brilliant nonfiction thriller pits a band of medical visionaries against the wall of ignorance that was the official response of the Trump administration to the outbreak of COVID-19.

***Disappearing Earth* by Julia Phillips**

One August afternoon, on the shoreline of the Kamchatka peninsula at the northeastern edge of Russia, two girls—sisters, eight and eleven—go missing. In the ensuing weeks, then months, the police investigation turns up nothing. This powerful

novel brings us to a new understanding of the intricate bonds of family and community, in a Russia unlike any we have seen before.

—JC

***The All Girl Filling Station's Last Reunion* by Fannie Flagg**

The one and only Fannie Flagg, beloved author of *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe*, *Can't Wait to Get to Heaven*, and *I Still Dream About You*, is at her hilarious and superb best in this new comic mystery novel about two women who are forced to reimagine who they are.

***The Kitchen Front* by Jennifer Ryan**

An unforgettable novel of a BBC-sponsored wartime cooking competition and the four women who enter for a chance to better their lives.

***The Clock Dance* by Anne Tyler**

A bittersweet novel of hope and regret, fulfillment and renewal, *Clock Dance* brings us the everyday life of a woman who decides it's never too late to change direction, and choose your own path.

***The Hello Girls: America's First Women Soldiers* by Elizabeth Cobbs**

In 1918 the US Army Signal Corps sent 223 women to France to help win World War I. This novel reveals the challenges these patriotic young women faced in a war zone where male soldiers resented, wooed, mocked, saluted, and ultimately celebrated them.

—LLW

~ TIE-INS to *The Hello Girls* ~

***Code Girls* by Liza Mundy** (recommended by JK)

***The Enigma Game* by Elizabeth Wein**
(recommended by LM)

**OUR BOOK GROUP SELECTION FOR
CLASSICS MONTH, SEPTEMBER 2021:**

***The Good Earth* by Pearl S. Buck**

Join us if you can on **August 17, 2021, 2:00 p.m.**, under the tent (weather permitting; we'll move inside if not) for **Book Group planning meeting**, to select books for the rest of the 2021–22 year!