

GREAT READS



2022

Presented by the staff of the Oshkosh Public Library

HIGHLIGHTED BOOKS

Tracy Flick Can't Win by Tom Perrotta

The Woman in the Library by Sulari Gentill

Remarkably Bright Creatures by Shelby Van Pelt

Sally Ann McFidgetbottom by Howard Pearlstein &

Renate Vermeulen-Potter

I Must Betray You by Ruta Sepetys

Lifetime Passes by Teri Blas & Claudia Aguierre

The Many Daughters of Afong Moy by Jamie Ford

Willowdeen by Katherine Applegate

The Daughter of Doctor Moreau by Silvia Moreno-

Garcia

Calling for a Blanket Dance by Oscar Hokeah

This Time Tomorrow by Emma Straub

The Diamond Eye by Kate Quinn

54 Things Wrong with Gwendolyn Rogers

by Caela Carter

The Silence that Binds Us by Joanna Ho

A Forgery of Roses by Jessica S. Olson

MORE GREAT READS OF 2022

FICTION

Anywhere You Run by Wanda M. Morris

Set against the backdrop of the notorious 1964 murder of three civil rights activists in Mississippi, this stunning novel about the relationship between two Black sisters in the Jim Crow South explores racism, family, and small-town sensibilities. Meticulous research into the period, along with finely sculpted characters and crisp dialogue, help make this a standout.

Bad Actors by Mick Herron

In London's MI5 headquarters a scandal is brewing that could disgrace the entire intelligence community. The Downing Street superforecaster has disappeared without a trace. Claude Whelan, who was once head of MI5, has been tasked with tracking her down. There are bad actors everywhere, and in politics cheating and backstabbing are the norm, sometimes the good guys can find themselves outgunned.

The Book Eaters by Sunyi Dean

Part of The Family, a secret line of people for whom books are food, Devon, raised on a carefully curated diet of fairytales and cautionary stories, discovers that real life doesn't always come with happy endings when her son is born with an insatiable hunger for human minds.

The Candy House by Jennifer Egan

Told through lives of multiple characters, this electrifying, deeply moving novel, spanning 10 years, follows “Own Your Unconscious,” a new technology that allows access to every memory you’ve ever had, and to share every memory in exchange for access to the memories of others.

The Circus Train by Amita Parikh

1938. Lena Papadopoulos has never quite found her place within the circus, even as the daughter of the extraordinary headlining illusionist, Theo. Brilliant and curious, Lena—who uses a wheelchair after a childhood bout with polio—yearns for the real-world magic of science and medicine, her mind stronger than the limitations placed on her by society. Then her unconventional life takes an exciting turn when she rescues Alexandre, an orphan with his own secrets and a mysterious past.

The Dead Romantics by Ashley Poston

Poston’s adorable adult debut—the romance between a ghostwriter and her (literal) ghost editor—gleefully subverts rom-com tropes to deliver a supernaturally inflected love story that unites a refreshing irreverence with a core belief in the power of love. The result will win over even the most cynical of readers.

Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver

The hero of Kingsolver’s teeming and masterly social realist epic, an update of Dickens’ David Copperfield, shuttles through foster care as a preteen in rural Virginia before slipping into his own opioid addiction after a high school football injury. The author makes every sentence count and tackles bulky social issues, all while delivering a spectacular story.

Forbidden City by Vanessa Hua

Seizing an opportunity to escape her impoverished village, a young Chinese teen is recruited to dance with Communist Party elites at a soiree at the Chairman's estate, where she becomes his protégé, lover and a heroine of the Cultural Revolution.

Grace Under Fire by Julie Garwood

Grace Isabel MacKenna stumbles on a wounded man and, in self-defense, kills the attacker. After Isabel endures an interrogation by police, she is free to go, thanks to former Navy SEAL and now lawyer Michael Buchanan. She's stuck with him despite their constant bickering and sizzling attraction. Mysterious threats against Isabel surface, and before they can deal with their growing feelings for each other, Michael and Isabel must first survive.

Horse by Geraldine Brooks

A scientist from Australia and a Nigerian-American art historian become connected by their shared interest in a 19th century race horse, one studying its remains, the other uncovering the history of the Black horsemen who were critical to its success.

How High We Go in the Dark by Sequoia Nagamatsu

Beginning in 2030, a grieving archeologist arrives in the Arctic Circle to continue the work of his recently deceased daughter at the Batagaika crater, where researchers are studying long-buried secrets now revealed in melting permafrost, including the perfectly preserved remains of a girl who appears to have died of an ancient virus. Once unleashed, the Arctic Plague will reshape life on earth for generations to come, quickly traversing the globe, forcing humanity to devise a myriad of moving and inventive ways to embrace possibility in the face of tragedy.

Lesser Known Monsters of the 21st Century: Stories by Kim Fu

In these twelve unforgettable tales a girl grows wings on her legs, a bug-infested house becomes a nightmare, a group of children steal a haunted doll, a runaway bride meets a sea monster, and a vendor sells toy boxes that seem to control the passage of time.

The Lioness by Chris Bohjalian

In 1964, Hollywood royalty Katie Barstow and her new husband, along with her glittering entourage, arrive for their luxury African safari, but are instead taken hostage by Russian mercenaries, in this blistering story of fame, race, love, and death set in a world on the cusp of great change.

The Maid: a Novel by Nita Prose

A Clue-like, locked-room mystery and a heartwarming journey of the spirit, *The Maid* explores what it means to be the same as everyone else and yet entirely different—and reveals that all mysteries can be solved through connection to the human heart.

The Marriage Portrait by Maggie O'Farrell

Florence, the 1550s. Lucrezia, third daughter of the grand duke, is thrust into the lime light by the unexpected death of her older sister. Having barely left girlhood behind, Lucrezia must now enter an unfamiliar court whose customs are opaque and where her arrival is not universally welcomed. Perhaps most mystifying of all is her new husband himself, Alfonso. Is he the playful sophisticate he appeared to be before their wedding, the aesthete happiest in the company of artists and musicians, or the ruthless politician before whom even his formidable sisters seem to tremble?

Mouth to Mouth by Antoine Wilson

In a first-class lounge at JFK airport, our narrator listens as Jeff Cook, a former classmate he only vaguely remembers, shares the uncanny story of his adult life—a life that changed course years before, the moment he resuscitated a drowning man.

Our Missing Hearts by Celeste Ng

Bird Gardner lives a quiet existence with his loving but broken father. His mother Margaret, a Chinese American poet, left the family when he was nine years old without a trace. For a decade, his family's life has been governed by laws written to preserve “American culture.” To keep the peace and restore prosperity, the authorities are now allowed to relocate children of dissidents, especially those of Asian origin, and libraries have been forced to remove books seen as unpatriotic. But when he receives a mysterious letter containing only a cryptic drawing, he is pulled into a quest to find her.

The Paris Apartment by Lucy Foley

Jess needs a fresh start. Her half-brother Ben didn't sound thrilled when she asked if she could crash with him for a bit in Paris. Only when she shows up, he's not there. The longer Ben stays missing, the more Jess starts to dig into her brother's situation, and the more questions she has. Jess may have come to Paris to escape her past, but it's starting to look like it's Ben's future that's in question.

Portrait of a Thief by Grace D. Li

Across the Western world, museums display the spoils of war, of conquest, of colonialism: priceless pieces of art looted from other countries, kept even now. Will Chen plans to steal them back. If his crew succeeds? They earn fifty million dollars—and a chance to make history by taking back what colonialism has stolen.

Reckless Girls by Rachel Hawkins

Six stunning twentysomethings are about to embark on a blissful, free-spirited journey—one filled with sun-drenched days and intoxicating nights. But as it becomes clear that the group is even more cut off from civilization than they initially thought, it starts to feel like the island itself is closing in, sending them on a dangerous spiral of discovery. When one person goes missing and another turns up dead, the remaining friends wonder what dark currents lie beneath this impenetrable paradise.

The School for Good Mothers by Jessamine Chan

After one moment of poor judgment involving her daughter Harriet, Frida Liu falls victim to a host of government officials who will determine if she is a candidate for a Big Brother-like institution that measures the success or failure of a mother's devotion.

Sea of Tranquility by Emily St. John Mandel

In order to investigate an anomaly in the North American wilderness, a detective travels hundreds of years in the past and meets a young Englishman exiled to Canada in 1912 and a famous writer who lives on a moon colony but is on a book tour on Earth in 2203. A virtuoso performance that is as human and tender as it is intellectually playful, *Sea of Tranquility* is a novel of time travel and metaphysics that precisely captures the reality of our current moment.

The Swimmers by Julie Otsuka

When a pool beloved by lap swimmers must close after a crack is discovered in it, the stage is set for a transcendent meditation on the nature of habit, community, and memory. And after one of the swimmers gets dementia and moves into a nursing home, Otsuka delivers an account of life's final phase that will touch even the stoniest reader.

Upgrade by Blake Crouch

When his DNA is rewritten with a genetic-engineering breakthrough beyond anything the world has seen, Logan Ramsey finds his transformation threatening everything around him as he is forced to take sides in a fight to save humankind.

We Are the Light by Mathew Quick

After the death of his wife, whom he insists visits him every night in the form of an angel, Lucas Goodgame forms an unlikely alliance with a young man, ostracized by their community, who begins camping out in his backyard, bringing with him hope and the power to heal.

What Happened to the Bennetts by Lisa Scottoline

Jason Bennett is a suburban dad who owns a court-reporting business, but one night he is driving his family home when a pickup truck begins tailgating them. Two members of a dangerous drug-trafficking organization jump from the pickup. A horrific flash of violence changes his life forever. The Bennetts enter the witness protection program. Taken from all they know, trapped in an unfamiliar life, the Bennetts begin to fall apart at the seams. Then Jason learns a shocking truth and realizes that he has to take matters into his own hands.

You Made a Fool of Death with Your Beauty by Akwaeke Emezi

Learning how to feel joy while healing from loss, Feyi Adegola starts dating the perfect guy, but discovers she has feelings for someone else who is off limits and must decide just how far she is willing to go for a second chance at love.

Nonfiction

Ancestor Trouble: A Reckoning and a Reconciliation by Maud Newton

An acclaimed writer goes searching for the truth about her wildly unconventional Southern family--and finds that our obsession with ancestors opens up new ways of seeing ourselves--in this brilliant mix of personal memoir and cultural observation.

Bittersweet: How Sorrow and Longing Make Us Whole by Susan Cain

Cain shows how a bittersweet state of mind is the quiet force that helps us transcend our personal and collective pain, whether from a death or breakup, addiction or illness. If we don't acknowledge our own heartache, she says, we can end up inflicting it on others via abuse, domination, or neglect. But if we realize that all humans know--or will know--loss and suffering, we can turn toward one another.

Cinema Speculation by Quentin Tarantino

Quentin Tarantino is possibly the most joyously infectious movie lover alive. For years he has touted in interviews his eventual turn to writing books about films. Organized around key American films from the 1970s, all of which he first saw as a young moviegoer at the time, this book is as intellectually rigorous and insightful as it is rollicking and entertaining.

Comedy Comedy Comedy Drama: A Memoir by Bob Odenkirk

Bob Odenkirk's career is inexplicable. And yet he will try like hell to explicate it for you. Charting a "Homeric" decades-long "odyssey" from his origins in the seedy comedy clubs of Chicago to a dramatic career full of award nominations--with a side-trip into the action-man world that is baffling to all who know him--it's almost like there are many Bob Odenkirks! But there is just one and one is plenty.

Finding Me by Viola Davis

It's clear from the first page that Davis is going to serve a more intimate, unpolished account than is typical of the average (often ghost-written) celebrity memoir; *Finding Me* reads like Davis is sitting you down for a one-on-one conversation about her life, warts and all.

Half American: The Epic Story of African Americans Fighting World War II at Home and Abroad by Matthew F. Delmont

Over one million Black men and women served in World War II. Black troops were at Normandy, Iwo Jima, and the Battle of the Bulge, serving in segregated units and performing unheralded but vital support jobs, only to be denied housing and educational opportunities on their return home. Without their crucial contributions to the war effort, the United States could not have won the war. And yet the stories of these Black veterans have long been ignored, cast aside in favor of the myth of the "Good War" fought by the "Greatest Generation."

In Love: A Memoir of Love and Loss by Amy Bloom

In this heartbreaking and surprising memoir, Bloom sheds light on a part of life we so often shy away from discussing--its ending. Written in Bloom's captivating, insightful voice and with her trademark wit and candor, *In Love* is an unforgettable portrait of a beautiful marriage, and a boundary-defying love.

Inciting Joy: Essays by Ross Gay

In essays that are lyrical, pensive, and surprising, poet Gay sheds light on all the places joy can lurk: it's there for him in strangers, in skateboarding, and can be found amid sorrow. Gay's a remarkable writer, and the collection makes for a spellbinding meditation on the ways joy deepens and grows in the company of grief, fear, and loss.

The Invisible Kingdom: Reimagining Chronic Illness by Meghan O'Rourke

A silent epidemic of chronic illnesses afflicts tens of millions of Americans: these are diseases that are poorly understood, frequently marginalized, and can go undiagnosed and unrecognized altogether. Renowned writer Meghan O'Rourke delivers a revelatory investigation into this elusive category of "invisible" illness that encompasses autoimmune diseases, post-treatment Lyme disease syndrome, and now long COVID, synthesizing the personal and the universal to help all of us through this new frontier.

Lost and Found: A Memoir by Kathryn Schulz

This memoir by the Pulitzer-winning New Yorker writer considers the emotional whiplash of a two-year span when her father died and she met the woman who would become her wife.

The Naked Don't Fear the Water: An Underground Journey with Afghan Refugees by Matthieu Aikins

In this extraordinary book, an acclaimed young war reporter chronicles a dangerous journey on the smuggler's road to Europe, accompanying his friend, an Afghan refugee, in search of a better future.

The Nineties: A Book by Chuck Klosterman

It was long ago, but not as long as it seems: The Berlin Wall fell and the Twin Towers collapsed. The 90s brought about a revolution in the human condition we're still groping to understand. Klosterman makes a home in all of it: the film, the music, the sports, the TV, the politics, the changes regarding race and class and sexuality, the yin/yang of Oprah and Alan Greenspan.

What My Bones Know: A Memoir of Healing from Complex Trauma by Stephanie Foo

By age thirty, Stephanie Foo was successful on paper: She had her dream job as an award-winning radio producer at This American Life and a loving boyfriend. But behind her office door, she was having panic attacks and sobbing at her desk every morning. After years of questioning what was wrong with herself, she was diagnosed with complex PTSD--a condition that occurs when trauma happens continuously, over the course of years. This brave narrative reckons with the hold of the past over the present, the mind over the body--and examines one woman's ability to reclaim agency from her trauma.