

## 2013 Quarter 3 Book Suggestions

## Read Between the Wines

**Maine** by J. Courtney Sullivan

Fiction 528 pages

For the Kelleher's, Maine is a place where children run in packs, showers are taken outdoors, and old Irish songs are sung around a piano. As 3 generations of women arrive at the family's beach house, each brings her own hopes and fears. Maggie is 32 and pregnant, waiting for the perfect moment to tell her imperfect boyfriend the news; Ann Marie, a Kelleher by marriage, is channeling her domestic frustration into a dollhouse obsession and an ill-advised crush; Kathleen, the black sheep, never wanted to set foot in the cottage again; and Alice, the matriarch at the center of it all, would trade every floorboard for a chance to undo the events of one night, long ago.

**An Available Man** by Hilma Wolitzer

Fiction 304 pages

A story of the unpredictable fallout of suddenly becoming single later in life, and the chaos and joys of falling in love the 2nd time around. When Edward, a bookish 62-year-old teacher, is widowed, he finds himself ambushed by female attention. There are plenty of unattached women, but a healthy, handsome, available man is a rare and desirable creature. Edward receives phone calls from widows seeking love, or at least lunch, while friends try to set him up at dinner parties. Edward doesn't *feel* available. He's still mourning his beloved wife and prefers solitude and familiar routine. But then his stepchildren place a personal ad on his behalf. Soon the letters flood in, and Edward is torn between his loyalty to Bee's memory and his longing for connection.

**The Handmaid's Tale** by Margaret Atwood

Fiction 311 pages

Offred is a Handmaid in the Republic of Gilead, serving in the household of the enigmatic Commander and his bitter wife. She may go out once a day to markets whose signs are now pictures because women are not allowed to read. She must pray that the Commander makes her pregnant, for in a time of declining birthrates her value lies in her fertility, and failure means exile to the dangerously polluted Colonies. Offred can remember a time when she lived with her husband and daughter and had a job, before she lost even her own name. Now she navigates the intimate secrets of those who control her every move, risking her life in breaking the rules.

**The Dressmaker** by Kate Alcott

Historical Fiction 384 pages

Tess, an aspiring seamstress, thinks she's had an incredibly lucky break when she is hired by a famous designer to be her personal maid on the *Titanic*. Once on board, Tess catches the eye of 2 men who offer differing views of what lies ahead for her in America. But on the 4th night, disaster strikes, and amidst the chaos, Tess is one of the last people allowed on a lifeboat. The survivors are rescued, but when rumors begin to circulate about the choices they made, Tess is forced to confront a serious question. Did Lady Gordon save herself at the expense of others? Torn between loyalty and her growing suspicion that the media's charges might be true, Tess must decide whether to stay quiet and keep her mentor's good will or face what might be true and forever change her future.

**The Leopard** by Jo Nesbo

Mystery 688 pages

In this new addition to an internationally acclaimed series, Harry Hole must confront the darkest demons in his city—and in himself. Inspector Harry Hole has retreated to Hong Kong, escaping the trauma of his last case in squalid opium dens, when two young women are found dead in Oslo, both drowned in their own blood. Media coverage quickly reaches a fever pitch. There are no clues, the police investigation is stalled, and Harry can't be found. After he returns to Oslo, the killer strikes again, Harry's instincts take over, and nothing can keep him from the investigation, though there is little to go on. Worse, he will soon come to understand that he is dealing with a psychopath who will put him to the test, professionally and personally, as never before.

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### **The Razor's Edge** by W. Somerset Maugham

Classic 320 pages

The Great War changed everything and the years following it were tumultuous—most of all for those who lived the war first-hand. Maugham himself is a character in this novel of self-discovery and search for meaning, but the protagonist is a character named Larry. Battered physically and spiritually by the war, Larry's physical wounds heal, but his spirit is changed almost beyond recognition. He leaves his betrothed, the beautiful and devoted Isabel. He studies philosophy and religion in Paris. He lives as a monk. He witnesses the exotic hardships of Spanish life. All of life that he can find—from an Indian Ashrama to labor in a coal mine—becomes Larry's spiritual experiment as he spurns the comfort and privilege of the Roaring '20s.

### **To Kill a Mockingbird** by Harper Lee

Classic 336 pages

"Shoot all the bluejays you want, if you can hit 'em, but remember it's a sin to kill a mockingbird." A lawyer's advice to his children as he defends the real mockingbird - a black man charged with the rape of a white girl. Through the young eyes of Scout and Jem Finch, Harper Lee explores with rich humor and unswerving honesty the irrationality of adult attitudes toward race and class in the Deep South of the 1930s. The conscience of a town steeped in prejudice, violence, and hypocrisy is pricked by the stamina and quiet heroism of one man's struggle for justice—but the weight of history will only tolerate so much.

### **Great Fortune** by Daniel Okrent

Non-Fiction 528 pages

Rockefeller Center, a complex of buildings in Manhattan built over an 8-10 year period during the Great Depression, was the result of a philanthropic gesture by John D. Rockefeller Jr. that took on a life of its own. It took a coterie of legal firms, bankers, architects, and real estate moguls, not to mention thousands of laborers, to create the most ambitious construction project since the pyramids. With more office space than the much taller Empire State Building, this architectural marvel was produced to make optimal use of light and air flow before the advent of fluorescent lighting and air-conditioning. The individual characters and their stories form the backbone of this feat, including the famous episode of the controversial Diego Rivera wall mural that was never seen by the public.