

Book Club Recommendations for July, August, September 2015

Painted Horses, by Malcolm Brooks 336 pages Tricia

Set in an American West of the 1950's but carrying vestiges of the nineteenth century, and with Indian artifacts and the ancestry of wild horses going back even earlier, much of this novel has a timeless feel. Catherine Lemay is a young archaeologist hired to explore a Montana canyon slated for damming and destruction, although she may have been hired specifically to find nothing, no evidence of why some of the local Crow Indians oppose construction of the dam. She is aided by Miriam, a young Crow woman (whose centenarian great-grandmother connects back to the Greasy Grass and Custer), and assisted (or not) by local horsemen and townspeople with a variety of interests in the land's future.

Prayers for Sale, by Sandra Davis 318 pages Tricia

Hennie Comfort is eighty-six and has lived in the mountains of Middle Swan, Colorado since before it was Colorado. Nit Spindle is just seventeen and newly married. She and her husband have just moved to the high country in search of work. It's 1936 and the depression has ravaged the country and Nit and her husband have suffered greatly. Hennie notices the young woman loitering near the old sign outside of her house that promises "Prayers For Sale". Hennie doesn't sell prayers, never has, but there's something about the young woman that she's drawn to. The harsh conditions of life that each have endured create an instant bond and an unlikely friendship is formed, one in which the deepest of hardships are shared and the darkest secrets are confessed.

The Children Act – Ian McEwan – fiction 221 pages Kathy

Fiona Maye is a leading High Court judge who presides over cases in the family court. She is renowned for her fierce intelligence, exactitude, and sensitivity. But her professional success belies private sorrow and domestic strife. There is the lingering regret of her childlessness, and now her marriage of thirty years is in crisis. At the same time, she is called on to try an urgent case: Adam, a beautiful seventeen-year-old boy, is refusing for religious reasons the medical treatment that could save his life, and his devout parents echo his wishes. Time is running out. Should the secular court overrule sincerely expressed faith? In the course of reaching a decision, Fiona visits Adam in the hospital—an encounter that stirs long-buried feelings in her and powerful new emotions in the boy. Her judgment has momentous consequences for them both.

The Girl on the Train by Paula Hawkins - 502 pages. Cricket and Pat

Rachel catches the same commuter train every morning. She knows it will wait at the same signal each time, overlooking a row of back gardens. She's even started to feel like she knows the people who live in one of the houses. 'Jess and Jason', she calls them. Their life - as she sees it - is perfect. If only Rachel could be that happy.

Leaving Before the Rains Come by Alexandra Fuller - 272 pages Cricket

After her painful divorce, Alexandra Fuller turns to her African past for clues to living life fully and without fear.

AMERICAN PASSAGE: THE HISTORY OF ELLIS ISLAND by Vincent J. Cannato 496 pages NF Ellen

The small island stands alongside Plymouth Rock in our nation's founding mythology as the place where many of our ancestors first touched American soil. Ellis Island's heyday from 1892 to 1924 coincided with one of the greatest mass movements of individuals the world has ever seen, with some twelve million immigrants inspected at its gates. In *American Passage*, Vincent J. Cannato masterfully illuminates the story of Ellis Island from the days when it hosted pirate hangings witnessed by thousands of New Yorkers in the nineteenth century to the turn of the twentieth century when massive migrations sparked fierce debate and hopeful new immigrants often encountered corruption, harsh conditions, and political scheming.

Necessary Lies, by Diane Chamberlain 368 pages Ellen

Bestselling author Diane Chamberlain delivers a breakout book about a small southern town fifty years ago, and the darkest – and most hopeful – places in the human heart. Set in rural Grace County, North Carolina in a time of state-mandated sterilizations and racial tension, *Necessary Lies* tells the story of these two young women, seemingly worlds apart, but both haunted by tragedy. Jane and Ivy are thrown together and must ask themselves: how can you know what you believe is right, when everyone is telling you it's wrong?

The Sun and Other Stars, by Brigid Paszulka Fiction 327 pages Ellen

In the seaside village of San Benedetto, a resort town on the Italian Riviera, twenty-two year-old Etto finds himself adrift. Within the past year, Etto has not only lost both his twin brother and his mother, but in his grief has become estranged from his father, the local butcher. But then a Ukrainian soccer star, the great Yuri Fil. Sweeps into San Benedetto, taking refuge himself from an international scandal. Soon Yuri and his captivating tomboy sister Zhuki invite Etto into their world of sport, celebrity, loyalty, and humor. Under their influence, Etto begins to reconstruct his relationship with his father and, slowly, open himself back up to the world. Who knows: perhaps the game of soccer isn't just a waste of time, and perhaps San Benedetto, his father, love, and life itself might have more to offer him than he ever believed possible.

Empty Mansions: The Mysterious Life of Huguette Clark and the Spending of a Great American Fortune By Bill Dedman and Paul Clark Newell, Jr. Pub. 2013, 496 pp, NF Julie

Empty Mansions is a rich mystery of wealth and loss, connecting the Gilded Age opulence of the nineteenth century with a twenty-first-century battle over a \$300 million inheritance. At its heart is a reclusive heiress named Huguette Clark, a woman so secretive that, at the time of her death at age 104, no new photograph of her had been seen in decades. We meet her extravagant father, her publicity-shy mother, her star-crossed sister, her French boyfriend, her nurse who received more than \$30 million in gifts, and the relatives fighting to inherit Huguette's copper fortune. Richly illustrated with more than seventy photographs, *Empty Mansions* is an enthralling story of an eccentric of the highest order, a last jewel of the Gilded Age who lived life on her own terms.

The Nightingale by Kristen Hannah 448 pages Historical fiction Nancy

With courage, grace and powerful insight, bestselling author Kristin Hannah captures the epic panorama of WWII and illuminates an intimate part of history seldom seen: the women's war. *The Nightingale* tells the stories of two sisters, separated by years and experience, by ideals, passion and circumstance, each embarking on her own dangerous path toward survival, love, and freedom in German-occupied, war-torn France--a heartbreakingly beautiful novel that celebrates the resilience of the human spirit and the durability of women. It is a novel for everyone, a novel for a lifetime.

The Paying Guests by Sarah Waters 576 pages Fiction Nancy

From the bestselling author of *The Little Stranger* and *Fingersmith*, an enthralling novel about a widow and her daughter who take a young couple into their home in 1920s London. With the arrival of Lilian and Leonard Barber, a modern young couple of the "clerk class," the routines of the house will be shaken up in unexpected ways. Little do the Wrays know just how profoundly their new tenants will alter the course of Frances's life—or, as passions mount and frustration gathers, how far-reaching, and how devastating, the disturbances will be. A love story, a tension-filled crime story, and a beautifully atmospheric portrait of a fascinating time and place, *The Paying Guests* is Sarah Waters's finest achievement yet.

The Invisible Thread by Laura Schroff, Alex Tresniowski 272 pages NF Nancy

An Invisible Thread tells of the life-long friendship between a busy sales executive and a disadvantaged young boy, and how both of their lives were changed by what began as one small gesture of kindness. She was a successful ad sales rep in Manhattan. He was a homeless, eleven-year-old panhandler on the street. He asked for spare change; she kept walking. But then something stopped her in her tracks, and she went back. And she continued to go back, again and again. They met up nearly every week for years and built an unexpected, life-changing friendship that has today spanned almost three decades.

Go Set A Watchman by Harper Lee 288 Pages Classic Literature Fiction Gail

Will be available July 14, 2015.

An historic literary event: the publication of a newly discovered novel, originally written in the mid-1950s, the earliest known work from Harper Lee, the beloved, bestselling author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning classic, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. *Go Set a Watchman* features many of the characters from *To Kill a Mockingbird* some twenty years later. Returning home to Maycomb to visit her father, Jean Louise Finch—Scout—struggles with issues both personal and political, involving Atticus, society, and the small Alabama town that shaped her. Exploring how the characters from *To Kill a Mockingbird* are adjusting to the turbulent events transforming mid-1950s America, *Go Set a Watchman* casts a fascinating new light on Harper Lee's enduring classic.