

2023 SHERMAN LIBRARY BOOK GROUP SELECTIONS

March 2023

Beautiful Ruins, by Jess Walter

(2013, 337 pages)

Hailed by critics and loved by readers of literary and historical fiction, *Beautiful Ruins* is the story of an almost-love affair that begins on the Italian coast in 1962 and resurfaces fifty years later in Hollywood. From the lavish set of Cleopatra to the shabby revelry of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival to the back lots of contemporary Hollywood, this is a dazzling, yet deeply human roller coaster of a novel.

Led by Pat Corrigan

April 2023

Klara and the Sun, by Kazuo Ishiguro

(2021, 307 pages)

Klara and the Sun is the eighth novel by the Nobel Prize-winning British writer Kazuo Ishiguro; it is a dystopian science fiction story. Set in the U.S. in an unspecified future, the book is told from the point of view of Klara, a solar-powered AF (Artificial Friend), who is chosen by Josie, a sickly child, to be her companion. Kazuo Ishiguro looks at our rapidly changing modern world through the eyes of an unforgettable narrator to explore a fundamental question: what does it mean to love?

Led by Christine Keenan

May 2023

The Giver of Stars, by Jojo Moyes

(2019, 400 pages)

English bride Alice Wright volunteers for Eleanor Roosevelt's new traveling library in small-town Kentucky, joining a group of independent women whose commitment to their job transforms the community and their relationships. A *New York Times* bestseller *The Giver of Stars* is based on a true story rooted in America's past.

Led by Denise Schlesinger

June 2023

The Boat by Nam Le

(2009, 272 pages)

The seven stories in Nam Le's masterful collection take us across the globe, guiding us to the heart of what it means to be human. From the slums of Colombia to Iowa City and from the streets of Tehran to a foundering vessel in the South China Sea, here are thrilling versatile tales that herald[ed] the arrival of a remarkable new writer. Author Nam Le won the Dylan Thomas Prize for *The Boat*.

Led by Mariya Hurwitz

July 2023

Crying in H Mart, by Michelle Zauner

(2021, 256 pages)

A memoir about growing up Korean American, losing her mother, and forging her own identity. Michelle Zauner tells of growing up one of the few Asian American kids at her school in Eugene, Oregon; of struggling with her mother's particular, high expectations of her; of a painful adolescence; of treasured months spent in her grandmother's tiny apartment in Seoul, where she and her mother would bond, late at night, over heaping plates of food. Zauner's story of family, food, grief, love and endurance spent over a year on *The New York Times* bestseller list.

Led by Ashleigh Blake

August 2023

Amsterdam, by Ian McEwan

(1999, 194 pages)

Two old friends meet outside a London crematorium to pay last respects to Molly Lane. Both had been Molly's lovers before they reached their current eminence: one is Britain's most successful modern composer, the other an editor of a magazine called *The Judge*. They will make a pact with consequences that neither could have foreseen. Each will make a disastrous moral decision and their friendship will be tested to its limits. A sharp contemporary morality tale cleverly disguised as a comic novel. Winner of the 1998 Booker Prize.

Led by Suzanne Ashley

September 2023

Lincoln Highway, by Amor Towles

(2021, 592 pages)

In June of 1954, 18-year-old Emmett Watson, released after serving 15 months for involuntary manslaughter, discovers that two friends from the work farm have hidden themselves in the trunk of the warden's car and have hatched a different plan for Emmett's future. Spanning just ten days and told from multiple points of view, Towles's third novel will satisfy fans of his multi-layered literary styling while providing them with an array of new and richly imagined settings, characters, and themes.

Led by Bob Gamper

October 2023

I Raise My Eyes to Say Yes, by Ruth Sienkiewicz-Mercer and Stephen Kaplan

(1996, 233 pages)

Ruth Sienkiewicz-Mercer was born in 1950. She had never spoken a word; never walked, never fed herself, never combed her own hair. Trapped in a body that was functionally useless, her mind worked perfectly. This is her story. Absorbing and heartbreaking, it was written with the collaboration of Ruth's friend, Stephen Kaplan. Without any self pity Ruth recounts her early childhood with a loving family and some happy years at a rehabilitation center, then virtual incarceration at the notorious Belchertown State School in Massachusetts.

Led by Bernie Kaplan

November 2023

Hidden Valley Road, by Robert Kolker

(2020, 400 pages)

Hidden Valley Road tells the remarkable story of the Galvin family of 12 children, half of whom were diagnosed with schizophrenia. Remarkably, the Galvins went on to become one of our best hopes for understanding the biological nature of this often misunderstood mental illness. With clarity and compassion, bestselling and award-winning author Robert Kolker uncovers one family's unforgettable legacy of suffering, love, and hope.

Led by Marge Josephson

December 2023

Women Talking, by Miriam Toews

(2020, 240 pages)

In the upper room of a Mennonite barn, eight women—chosen to represent all the women in their community—struggle to make a momentous decision. After years of being drugged and sexually assaulted by the men, they've resolved to remain and fight, or leave. The choice is a cruel one. If they stay, they'll continue to lead lives of virtual slavery. If they leave, they'll be poor, illiterate, and on their own for the very first time in their lives. Author Miriam Toews was raised in a Mennonite community; she based *Women Talking* on actual events. Her characters' struggle to break away from an abusive patriarchy—the only world they know—is brilliant, raw, and utterly convincing.

Led by Stephanie Spinner

January 2024

Pachinko, by Min Jee Lee

(2016, 500 pages)

In the early 1900s, teenager Sunja, the adored daughter of a crippled fisherman, falls for a wealthy stranger at the seashore near her home in Korea. He promises her the world, but when she discovers she is pregnant--and that her lover is married--she refuses to be bought. Instead, she accepts an offer of marriage from a gentle, sickly minister passing through on his way to Japan. But her decision to abandon her home, and to reject her son's powerful father, sets off a dramatic saga that will echo down through the generations. Richly told and profoundly moving, *Pachinko* is a story of love, sacrifice, ambition, and loyalty.

Led by Pat Corrigan

February 2024

The Night Watchman, by Louise Erdrich

(2020, 464 pages)

Based on the extraordinary life of National Book Award-winning author Louise Erdrich's grandfather who worked as a night watchman and carried the fight against Native dispossession from rural North Dakota all the way to Washington, D.C., this powerful novel explores themes of love and death with lightness and gravity and unfolds with the elegant prose, sly humor, and depth of feeling of a master craftsman.

Led by Elaine Litwack