

February 8, 2016 Book Club Recommendations

**Tell the Wolves I'm Home - Carol Rifka Brunt – 360 pages - Fiction**

In this striking literary debut, Carol Rifka Brunt unfolds a moving story of love, grief, and renewal as two lonely people become the unlikeliest of friends and find that sometimes you don't know you've lost someone until you've found them.

1987. There's only one person who has ever truly understood fourteen-year-old June Elbus, and that's her uncle, the renowned painter Finn Weiss. Shy at school and distant from her older sister, June can only be herself in Finn's company; he is her godfather, confidant, and best friend. So when he dies, far too young, of a mysterious illness her mother can barely speak about, June's world is turned upside down. But Finn's death brings a surprise acquaintance into June's life—someone who will help her to heal, and to question what she thinks she knows about Finn, her family, and even her own heart.

At Finn's funeral, June notices a strange man lingering just beyond the crowd. A few days later, she receives a package in the mail. Inside is a beautiful teapot she recognizes from Finn's apartment, and a note from Toby, the stranger, asking for an opportunity to meet. As the two begin to spend time together, June realizes she's not the only one who misses Finn, and if she can bring herself to trust this unexpected friend, he just might be the one she needs the most.

An emotionally charged coming-of-age novel, *Tell the Wolves I'm Home* is a tender story of love lost and found, an unforgettable portrait of the way compassion can make us whole again.

**Go Set a Watchman – Harper Lee – 278 pages – Fiction**

From Harper Lee comes a landmark new novel set two decades after her beloved Pulitzer Prize-winning masterpiece, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Maycomb, Alabama. Twenty-six-year-old Jean Louise Finch--"Scout"--returns home from New York City to visit her aging father, Atticus. Set against the backdrop of the civil rights tensions and political turmoil that were transforming the South, Jean Louise's homecoming turns bittersweet when she learns disturbing truths about her close-knit family, the town and the people dearest to her. Memories from her childhood flood back, and her values and assumptions are thrown into doubt. Featuring many of the iconic characters from *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Go Set a Watchman* perfectly captures a young

woman, and a world, in a painful yet necessary transition out of the illusions of the past--a journey that can be guided only by one's conscience.

### **My Name is Lucy Barton by Elizabeth Stout - fiction 208 pages**

In *My Name is Lucy Barton*, this extraordinary writer shows how a simple hospital visit becomes a portal to the most tender relationship of all – the one between mother and daughter.

Lucy Barton is recovering slowly from what should have been a simple operation. Her mother, to whom she hasn't spoken in many years, comes to see her. Gentle gossip about people from Lucy's childhood in Amgash, Illinois, seems to reconnect them, but just below the surface lie the tension and longing that have informed every aspect of Lucy's life: her escape from her troubled family, her desire to become a writer, her marriage, her love for her two daughters. Knitting this powerful narrative together is the brilliant storytelling voice of Lucy herself: keenly observant, deeply human, and truly unforgettable.

### **A Most Wanted Man by John Le Carre - Fiction 323 pages**

A half-starved young Russian man is smuggled into Hamburg in the dead of night with an improbable amount of cash secreted in a purse around his neck. He is a devout Muslim. Or is he? He says his name is Issa.

Annabel, an idealistic young German civil rights lawyer, determines to save Issa from deportation, even if the price is her career—and her safety. Searching for clues to his mysterious past, she confronts the incongruous sixty-year-old scion of a failing British bank—and a triangle of impossible loves is born.

Meanwhile, scenting a sure kill in the “War on Terror,” the rival spies of three nations converge upon the innocents.

Thrilling, compassionate, peopled with characters the reader never wants to let go, *A Most Wanted Man* is a work of deep humanity with uncommon relevance to our times.

### **The Girls of Atomic City: The Untold Story of the Women Who Helped Win World War II**

by Denise Kiernan 373 pages

The Tennessee town of Oak Ridge was created from scratch in 1942. One of the Manhattan Project's secret cities, it didn't appear on any maps until 1949, and yet at the height of World War II it was using more electricity than New York City and was home to more than 75,000 people, many of them young women recruited from small towns across the South. Their jobs were shrouded in mystery, but they were buoyed by a sense of shared purpose, close friendships—and a surplus of handsome scientists and Army men! But against this vibrant wartime backdrop, a darker story was unfolding. The penalty for talking about their work—even the most innocuous details—was job loss and eviction. One woman was recruited to spy on her coworkers. They all knew something big was happening at Oak Ridge, but few could piece together the true nature of their work until the bomb "Little Boy" was dropped over Hiroshima, Japan, and the secret was out. The shocking revelation: the residents of Oak Ridge were enriching uranium for the atomic bomb. Denise Kiernan traces the astonishing story of these unsung WWII workers through interviews with dozens of surviving women and other Oak Ridge residents.

### **The Boys in the Boat by Daniel James Brown - non-fiction 391 pages**

For readers of *Unbroken*, out of the depths of the Depression comes an irresistible story about beating the odds and finding hope in the most desperate of times—the improbable, intimate account of how nine working-class boys from the American West showed the world at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin what true grit really meant.

It was an unlikely quest from the start. With a team composed of the sons of loggers, shipyard workers, and farmers, the University of Washington's eight-oar crew team was never expected to defeat the elite teams of the East Coast and Great Britain, yet they did, going on to shock the world by defeating the German team rowing for Adolf Hitler. The emotional heart of the tale lies with Joe Rantz, a teenager without family or prospects, who rows not only to regain his shattered self-regard but also to find a real place for himself in the world. Drawing on the boys' own journals and vivid memories of a once-in-a-lifetime shared dream, Brown has created an unforgettable portrait of an era, a celebration of a remarkable achievement, and a chronicle of one extraordinary young man's personal quest.

### **Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World that Can't Stop Talking by Susan Cain 352 Pages**

The book that started the Quiet Revolution

At least one-third of the people we know are introverts. They are the ones who prefer listening to speaking; who innovate and create but dislike self-promotion; who favor working on their own over working in teams. It is to introverts—Rosa Parks, Chopin, Dr. Seuss, Steve Wozniak—that we owe many of the great contributions to society.

In *Quiet*, Susan Cain argues that we dramatically undervalue introverts and shows how much we lose in doing so. She charts the rise of the Extrovert Ideal throughout the twentieth century and explores how deeply it has come to permeate our culture. She also introduces us to successful introverts—from a witty, high-octane public speaker who recharges in solitude after his talks, to a record-breaking salesman who quietly taps into the power of questions. Passionately argued, superbly researched, and filled with indelible stories of real people, *Quiet* has the power to permanently change how we see introverts and, equally important, how they see themselves.

### **Z A Novel of Zelda Fitzgerald by Therese Anne Fowler 384 pages**

When beautiful, reckless Southern belle Zelda Sayre meets F. Scott Fitzgerald at a country club dance in 1918, she is seventeen years old and he is a young army lieutenant stationed in Alabama. Before long, the "ungettable" Zelda has fallen for him despite his unsuitability: Scott isn't wealthy or prominent or even a Southerner, and keeps insisting, absurdly, that his writing will bring him both fortune and fame. Her father is deeply unimpressed. But after Scott sells his first novel, *This Side of Paradise*, to Scribner's, Zelda optimistically boards a train north, to marry him in the vestry of St. Patrick's Cathedral and take the rest as it comes.

What comes, here at the dawn of the Jazz Age, is unimagined attention and success and celebrity that will make Scott and Zelda legends in their own time. Everyone wants to meet the dashing young author of the scandalous novel—and his witty, perhaps even more scandalous wife. Zelda bobs her hair, adopts daring new fashions, and revels in this wild new world. Each place they go becomes a playground: New York City, Long Island, Hollywood, Paris, and the French Riviera—where they join the endless party of the glamorous, sometimes doomed Lost Generation that includes Ernest Hemingway, Sara and Gerald Murphy, and Gertrude Stein.

Everything seems new and possible. Troubles, at first, seem to fade like morning mist. But not even Jay Gatsby's parties go on forever. Who *is* Zelda, other than the wife of a famous—sometimes infamous—husband? How can she forge her own identity while fighting her demons and Scott's, too? With brilliant insight and imagination, Therese Anne Fowler brings us Zelda's irresistible story as she herself might have told it.

**The Life We Bury**  
**by Allen Eskens (303 pp)**

When college-student Joe Talbert's writing assignment introduces him to a convicted murderer, he has no idea that it will send him tumbling into the heart of a 30-year old mystery that will threaten to end his life. This is an evocative and twisting mystery, and yet it is a book with a heart. When Joe ran away from home to go to college, he left behind a alcoholic mother and autistic younger brother. As he throws himself into unraveling the mystery, he is haunted by his decision to leave his bother in the care of his dangerously dysfunctional mother and her abusive boyfriend. Joe must put things right with his brother as he struggles to uncover the truth about the decades-old murder.

Winner of the Rosebud Award for Best First Mystery Novel, and named a finalist for five additional awards including the prestigious Edgar® Award for Best First Novel. It was chosen by *Suspense Magazine* and *MysteryPeople* as one of the best books of 2014, and called a "masterful debut" in a starred review by *Publishers Weekly*.