

Missouri ESO Newsletter-January 2023

**Walking Shadows** by Faye Kellerman. Sent by Debbie Barber.

Detective Pete Decker finds a body, but the clues lead him into the next town. Those clues lead him into the investigation of a case where the convicted perpetrator is in prison. Someone wants him to stop digging. Could it be the Hamilton police chief? Who can you trust in an investigation you should not be investigating? Very good mystery novel.

**The Christmas Spirit** by Debbie Macomber. Sent by Bethel DeSpain.

Hank and Pete are good friends. At one of their times together both discuss how difficult their jobs can be. Pete is a pastor and Hank runs a bar. They decide that the only way they can understand how difficult the others job is would be to change places for a week. Pete seems to do okay until a biker group comes into the bar. Hank has to content with Pete’s sister who is the secretary at the church. She makes it obvious she does not like Hank. Lots of fun to read.

**How Y’All Doing?** By Leslie Jordan. Sent by Rev. Linda Wansing.

In true Leslie Jordan style, this book offers a great deal of laughter as he unfolds many different areas of his life. As he shares stories of his life from a young man through the pandemic you will find yourself laughing at the way he presents his life.

**Seed to Dust** by Marc Hamer. Sent by Marilyn Stone.

This is a quiet, poetically written book about an elderly Welsh gardener who was contest with his life working with nature and living a quiet life with his wife. He is well read and well-schooled in the use of language and his analogies to nature and life are beautifully compared. Those interested in gardening will identify with the many descriptions of the plants and seasons; those not familiar will identify with the need to take time to learn what nature has to teach us.

**Theodore Boone, The Abduction** by John Grisham. Sent by Amy Boone.

Theo Boone thinks his life is returning to normal. Then, one of his friends appears to be kidnapped. He begins the search to find out the truth about what happened. He continues to give advice to school friends and teachers. This set of books is excellent for a young reader just discovering mystery and suspense. This is the second book in a set of 6 books.

**Rock, Paper, Scissors** by Alice Feeney. Sent by Alicia Thomas.

Adam and Amelia win a weekend away to Scotland. Adam is a screenwriter who has lived with face blindness his whole life. He can’t recognize friends or family, or even his own wife. Every anniversary they exchange traditional gifts and his wife writes him a letter that she never lets him read. The marriage is on the rocks and they are hoping this trip will help fix it. They didn’t randomly win this trip to a secluded old chapel in the woods. One of them is lying and someone doesn’t want them to live happily ever after. A great thriller that kept me guessing until the end.

**Far From the Tree** by Andrew Solomon. Sent by Rev. Linda Wansing.

Wow is an understatement for this book. It’s a very difficult book to read in terms of the contents it hits upon. Mr. Solomon set out to write a book on the way people look at people who are different. Each chapter is like a book itself. The entire book is over 900 pages. It deals with chapters such as being deaf, dwarfs, down syndrome, autism, crime, rape, and transgender. The author is a gay man, and the beginning chapter touches in depth in how he and other people suffer. It took me a long time to read this book as I could only read sections and had to take breaks to process the profound sadness I felt that the world treats others with these issues they way they do.

**Rebel With A Cause** by Ellen Novin. Sent by Mary Ridge.

The author set up a table in public places, stacked up with grammar books, and advertised with a sign that said GRAMMAR TABLE. The setup worked so well in Manhattan that Novin and her husband travelled across the US answering questions and discussing grammar. Her husband filmed the interactions, and this book details many of the encounters in chapters emphasizing various problems in using our English language. The book is witty, useful, and engaging. It could be a helpful book to have handy for anyone interested in being careful using English.

**Christmas in the South** by David Barnette. Sent by Pam Carr.

This is a cute and entertaining book, noted as the Official Guide to Christmas in the South, or, if you can’t fry it, spray paint it Gold. Filled with humorous ideas on how to deck the halls Southern style. Revealing all the finer and unspoken details of Dixie etiquette. Made me giggle because I’m from the south and understand exactly what the author is writing about! Cute! Cute!

**The Santa Suit** by Mary Kay Andrews. Sent by Amy Boone.

Mary Kay is one of my favorite southern authors. Ivy Perkins is newly divorced. She buys a farmhouse with all the furnishings. It is going to take her forever to sort all the items in the house. Then, she finds a Santa suit with a note. This starts her on a journey to see if the little girl got a wish. A new town makes her realize she can start her life over with new friendships.

**The Glory Was I Had Such Friends** by Amy Silverstein. Sent by Rosemary Douglas.

Friends are so important. This is the story of Amy Silverstein, who had a heart transplant in her mid-twenties. In her 50’s, the replacement heart was no longer working, and she needed another transplant. Amy tells her story of the suffering, pain, and anguish she has been through over the years dealing with her heart issues. She tells of her struggle to know if she could undergo another transplant and the issues associated with waiting for and receiving another heart. Throughout the book she sings praises of her friends who were very dedicated and with her all the way. We should all be so blessed to have such friends……….many of us know that we do!

 **The Christmas Wedding Guest** by Susan Mallery. Sent by Carol Duke.

Reggie and Dena Sommerville are not happy with their lives. Reggie is recovering from the shortest engagement in history and Dena, tired of not finding the perfect man, is now pregnant, but unmarried. Their parents are celebrating their 35th wedding anniversary by throwing a huge party. Reggie has come home to help and Dena is doing what she can while suffering from “morning sickness”. Old friends and new friends are the answer to each of their happiness.

**Righteous Prey** by John Sandford. Sent by Zona Burk.

“The Five” issue a national press release stating they will be “killing people who need to be murdered”. And so begins a spree. When they strike in Minnesota, Lucas Davenport and Virgil Flowers are assigned to assist the FBI. The case leads them across the U.S. as they race to identify and prevent the next murder.

**Speckled Beauty** by Rick Bragg. Sent by Marilyn Stone.

The author narrates his own story about his dog—a neglected, abused stray that refuses to follow any commands or rules of his new found masters but is a mutt that Rick is 100% devoted to. Humorous, sad, real…a good story about the dog rescuing Rick at a time when he was depressed over his cancer treatments and Rick rescuing the dog by loving him unconditionally.

**Orphan Train** by Christina Baker Kline. Sent by Debbie Barber.

In the early 1900’s orphan trains would take children from the east coast to the Midwest. Their fate was decided by the family that took them in. Mostly the family was looking for some form of labor. This book is a fictional account of one such train and the life of Niamh Power, a nine year old girl who has lost her whole family. The struggles she faced and what was expected of her at such a young age is hard to read. This was an excellent book. I loved it.

**Faith Still Moves Mountains** by Harris Faulkner. Sent by Bethel DeSpain.

This book is about the power of prayer. Two teenagers went for a swim in the sea and the current would not let them swim back to shore. They were saved by a vessel named Amen. Lost people were found, a survivor of Covid-19, a daughter who prays for her mother to beat addiction, and many more stories.

**Stoner** by John Williams. Sent by Mary Ridge.

The book is a character study of a fictitious poor farm boy from Boonville in the early nineteenth century who is encouraged to go to MU to study agriculture. Staying with and working for relatives in Columbia, he takes a literature class at the university that changes the direction of his life. He immerses himself in his studies, eventually earns his doctorate, and becomes a tenured professor. The book follows William Stoner as he makes friends, meets and marries complicated Edith, pursues his studies, teaches classes and seminars, crosses the path of a crippled colleague named Hollis, tries to raise his daughter Grace, etc. We are allowed into his thoughts, demeanor, and passions. The writer is good at making his characters seem real.

**Killers of a Certain Age** by Deanna Raybourn. Sent by Lisa Cook.

Billie, Mary Alice, Helen, and Natalie spent their careers working as assassins for an international organization called the Museum. They retire after 40 years and embark on a cruise. On the ship, they recognize an assassin from the organization that they find out is there to eliminate them. They embark on quite the adventure to assure their safety and survival.

**Unveiled Truth** by Gail Goolsby. Sent by Bethel DeSpain.

Gail writes about her seven years in Afghanistan. She served as principal of the International School of Kabul. She talks about the staff and the children as well as the parents. Excellent book.

Our GFWC International Chairman has introduced the 12 Challenge. It is 12 months to read 12 books recommended by 12 friends. The book suggestions are listed. **The Day The World Came to Town** has been on my “I want to read that list” for some time. Maybe I’ll get it read this year!!

 

From our GFWC International Chairman: What fun it was to receive all the book recommendations for the 12 Challenge! Lifelong learning is so important and one of the greatest benefits of belonging to GFWC.

After identifying “the twelve” I put together a little graphic for inspiration — and to keep me straight! And then I began building the stack! I ordered from Thrift Books, Amazon, used my monthly Audible selection for one — and My Sister’s Grave is “included with membership” through January 31st, and one of the books was on my bookshelf from a previous TBR stack! There’s just a couple that I haven’t found yet, but I will check with my library later in the year, and I’ll keep my eye out for treasures on the book exchange/giveaway table at the Piggly Wiggly!

Now I’m not promising that I can stay in order — as a matter of fact I took advantage of the “included” and My Sister’s Grave was moved to the front of the line! So good! These Audible (and hoopla— free through my library) allow me to maximize my reading! Got to take advantage of free reading and commute time, right?

Thanks again for all the suggestions!

**Don’t Give the Enemy A Seat at Your Table** by Louie Giglio. Sent by Kelsey Fitzgerald.

Giglio starts out focusing on the truths in Psalm 23 and encourages readers to not give the devil a seat at the table God has prepared for you. He gives readers encouragement and advice to help overcome temptations and obstacles. There is so much I could say about this book, but I just encourage everyone to pick it up and read it. Highly recommend.

**Wolves Can’t Fly** by Dan Meers. Sent by Connie Robley.

Dan Meers is the mascot for the Kansas City Chiefs. This book was a very interesting read on how he became a professional mascot. He writes about his experiences throughout the last 25 plus years. He has traveled the world entertaining audiences both in and outside his costume. He is a motivational speaker who is proud of his Christian beliefs and is not afraid to share them. Very good read.

**The Chicken Sisters** by KJ Dell’Antonia. Sent by Carolyn Dye.

In the small town of Merinac, Kansas, two chicken restaurants (Chicken Mimi’s and Chicken Frannies), for a century competed to serve the best chicken. A feud developed between the Moore’s and the Pocgociello’s even though the two original women were sisters. The latest participants in the feud are sisters Amanda and Mae. Amanda worked for her mom at Mimi’s until she married into the family of Frannies and went to work there. After her husband and father-in-law died in an accident, tired of the feud, she applied to a reality TV series of restaurant competition to settle the issue of who had the best chicken. Meanwhile Amanda’s sister Mae left the family feud behind when she went to college, married, and became an author. When she learned about the competition between the chicken places, the last thing she wanted was to go home. Plans changed when she was let go from her job. As the story unfolds you see play out difficulties in communication, assumptions made based on past assumptions, secrets by multiple people, refusal to deal with issues, and the weaknesses and strengths of family and resilience.

I hope that you all had a wonderful holiday season. I’d like to welcome our newest GFWC MO ESO pledge, Carol Hoagland. Carol is a member of the GFWC Achievers Club of Appleton City, 5th district. The 12 Challenge from our International Chairman might be fun to challenge yourself to try to read those selections this year. Thanks to all of you who have been sending in reviews.

Happy Reading!!

Lisa Cook

GFWC MO ESO chair