

# 2020 -Noon Book Club Selections



## January 27th, 2020, *The Whip: Inspired by the Story of Charley Parkhurst.* Written by Karen Kondazian, MP, JR. Fiction-1. (HMPL-10)

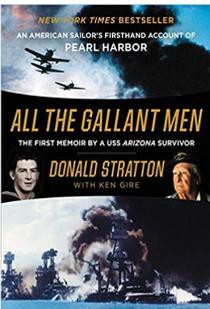
Best Western, 2013 International Book Awards  
2013 National Indie Excellence Awards winner, Western fiction category  
Award-Winner in the 'Fiction: Historical' category of The 2012 USA Best Book Awards  
Gold Prize in Historical Fiction & Best Western Fiction - 2013 Global Ebook Awards

THE WHIP is inspired by the true story of a woman, Charlotte "Charley" Parkhurst (1812-1879) who lived most of her extraordinary life as a man.

As a young woman in Rhode Island, she fell in love with a runaway slave and had his child. The destruction of her family drove her west to California, dressed as a man, to track the killer. Charley became a renowned stagecoach driver for Wells Fargo. She killed a famous outlaw, had a secret love affair, and lived with a housekeeper who, unaware of her true sex, fell in love with her. Charley was the first woman to vote in America (as a man). Her grave lies in Watsonville, California.

Rating: \_\_\_\_ Thoughts:

## February 24th, *All the Gallant Men: The First Memoir by a USS Arizona Survivor, Donald Stratton—2020 One Book, One Nebraska. KS. Non-Fiction-1. (NLC-17/January 17-March 2-HMPL-1.)*



**THE FIRST MEMOIR BY A USS ARIZONA SURVIVOR: Donald Stratton, one of the battleship's five living heroes, delivers an "epic,"\* "powerful,"\*\* and "intimate"\*\*\* eyewitness account of Pearl Harbor and his unforgettable return to the fight. A TOP-TEN NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER!**

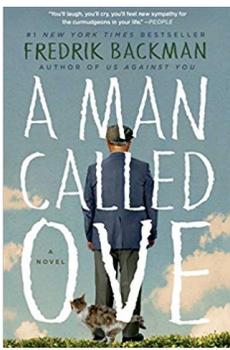
At 8:06 a.m. on December 7, 1941, Seaman First Class Donald Stratton was consumed by an inferno. A million pounds of explosives had detonated beneath his battle station aboard the *USS Arizona*, barely fifteen minutes into Japan's surprise attack on American forces at Pearl Harbor. Near death and burned across two thirds of his body, Don, a nineteen-year-old Nebraskan who had been steeled by the Great Depression and Dust Bowl, summoned the will to haul himself hand over hand across a rope tethered to a neighboring vessel. Forty-five feet below, the harbor's flaming, oil-slick water boiled with enemy bullets; all around him the world tore itself apart.

In this extraordinary never-before-told eyewitness account of the Pearl Harbor attack—the only memoir ever written by a survivor of the *USS Arizona*—ninety-four-year-old veteran Donald Stratton finally shares his unforgettable personal tale of bravery and survival on December 7, 1941, his harrowing recovery, and his inspiring determination to return to the fight.

Don and four other sailors made it safely across the same line that morning, a small miracle on a day that claimed the lives of 1,177 of their *Arizona* shipmates—approximately half the American fatalities at Pearl Harbor. Sent to military hospitals for a year, Don refused doctors' advice to amputate his limbs and battled to relearn how to walk. The U.S. Navy gave him a medical discharge, believing he would never again be fit for service, but Don had unfinished business. In June 1944, he sailed back into the teeth of the Pacific War on a destroyer, destined for combat in the crucial battles of Leyte Gulf, Luzon, and Okinawa, thus earning the distinction of having been present for the opening shots and the final major battle of America's Second World War.

As the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack approaches, Don, a great-grandfather of five and one of five living survivors of the *Arizona*, offers an unprecedentedly intimate reflection on the tragedy that drew America into the greatest armed conflict in history. *All the Gallant Men* is a book for the ages, one of the most remarkable—and remarkably inspiring—memoirs of any kind to appear in recent years.

Rating: \_\_\_\_ Thoughts:



**March 30th, A Man Called Ove, Fredrik Backman. MC. Fiction-2. (NLC-15/  
February 14-April 6, HMPL-1)**

Read the *New York Times* bestseller that has taken the world by storm!

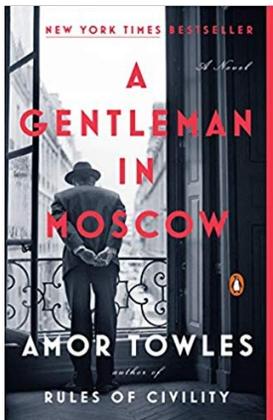
In this “charming debut” (*People*) from one of Sweden’s most successful authors, a grumpy yet loveable man finds his solitary world turned on its head when a boisterous young family moves in next door.

Meet Ove. He’s a curmudgeon—the kind of man who points at people he dislikes as if they were burglars caught outside his bedroom window. He has staunch principles, strict routines, and a short fuse. People call him “the bitter neighbor from hell.” But must Ove be bitter just because he doesn’t walk around with a smile plastered to his face all the time?

Behind the cranky exterior there is a story and a sadness. So when one November morning a chatty young couple with two chatty young daughters move in next door and accidentally flatten Ove’s mailbox, it is the lead-in to a comical and heartwarming tale of unkempt cats, unexpected friendship, and the ancient art of backing up a U-Haul. All of which will change one cranky old man and a local residents’ association to their very foundations.

A feel-good story in the spirit of *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* and *Major Pettigrew’s Last Stand*, Fredrik Backman’s novel about the angry old man next door is a thoughtful exploration of the profound impact one life has on countless others. “If there was an award for ‘Most Charming Book of the Year,’ this first novel by a Swedish blogger-turned-overnight-sensation would win hands down” (*Booklist*, starred review)

Rating: \_\_\_\_ Thoughts:



**April 27th, A Gentleman in Moscow, Amor Towles. JR, AW. Fiction-3.  
(NLC-13/March 23rd-May 4th, HMPL-1)**

The mega-bestseller with more than 1.5 million readers that is soon to be a major television series

One of five Summer 2019 reading picks by Bill Gates

"The novel buzzes with the energy of numerous adventures, love affairs, [and] twists of fate." —*The Wall Street Journal*

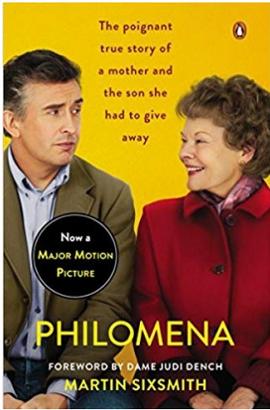
*He can't leave his hotel. You won't want to.*

From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Rules of Civility*—a transporting novel about a man who is ordered to spend the rest of his life inside a luxury hotel.

In 1922, Count Alexander Rostov is deemed an unrepentant aristocrat by a Bolshevik tribunal, and is sentenced to house arrest in the Metropol, a grand hotel across the street from the Kremlin. Rostov, an indomitable man of erudition and wit, has never worked a day in his life, and must now live in an attic room while some of the most tumultuous decades in Russian history are unfolding outside the hotel’s doors. Unexpectedly, his reduced circumstances provide him entry into a much larger world of emotional discovery.

Brimming with humor, a glittering cast of characters, and one beautifully rendered scene after another, this singular novel casts a spell as it relates the count’s endeavor to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to be a man of purpose.

Rating: \_\_\_\_ Thoughts:



May 25th, Philomena, Martin Sixsmith. MC. Non-Fiction-2. (HMPL- 12)

*New York Times* Bestseller

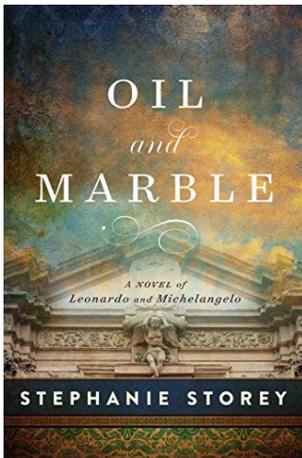
Now a major motion picture starring Judi Dench and Steve Coogan and nominated for four Academy Awards: the heartbreaking true story of an Irishwoman and the secret she kept for 50 years

When she became pregnant as a teenager in Ireland in 1952, Philomena Lee was sent to a convent to be looked after as a “fallen woman.” Then the nuns took her baby from her and sold him, like thousands of others, to America for adoption. Fifty years later, Philomena decided to find him.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic, Philomena’s son was trying to find her. Renamed Michael Hess, he had become a leading lawyer in the first Bush administration, and he struggled to hide secrets that would jeopardize his career in the Republican Party and endanger his quest to find his mother.

A gripping exposé told with novelistic intrigue, *Philomena* pulls back the curtain on the role of the Catholic Church in forced adoptions and on the love between a mother and son who endured a lifelong separation.

Rating:\_\_\_ Thoughts:



June 29th, Oil and Marble, Stephanie Storey. AW. Fiction-4. (HMPL-\_\_\_)

In her brilliant debut, Storey brings early 16th-century Florence alive, entering with extraordinary empathy into the minds and souls of two Renaissance masters, creating a stunning art history thriller. From 1501 to 1505, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo Buonarroti both lived and worked in Florence. Leonardo was a charming, handsome fifty year-old at the peak of his career. Michelangelo was a temperamental sculptor in his mid-twenties, desperate to make a name for himself.

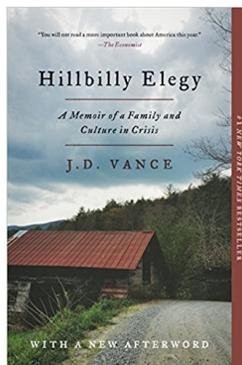
Michelangelo is a virtual unknown when he returns to Florence and wins the commission to carve what will become one of the most famous sculptures of all time: David. Even though his impoverished family shuns him for being an artist, he is desperate to support them. Living at the foot of his misshapen block of marble, Michelangelo struggles until the stone finally begins to speak. Working against an impossible deadline, he begins his feverish carving.

Meanwhile, Leonardo's life is falling apart: he loses the hoped-for David commission; he can't seem to finish any project; he is obsessed with his ungainly flying machine; he almost dies in war; his engineering designs disastrously fail; and he is haunted by a woman he has seen in the market--a merchant's wife, whom he is finally commissioned to paint. Her name is Lisa, and she becomes his muse.

Leonardo despises Michelangelo for his youth and lack of sophistication. Michelangelo both loathes and worships Leonardo's genius.

*Oil and Marble* is the story of their nearly forgotten rivalry.

Rating:\_\_\_ Thoughts:



**July 27th, 2020, Hillbilly Elegy, J.D. Vance. JR, AW. Non-Fiction-3. (NLC-6 June 22 to August 3, HPML-1 + Audio, Other Library-\_\_\_\_.)**

**NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER, NAMED BY THE *TIMES* AS ONE OF "6 BOOKS TO HELP UNDERSTAND TRUMP'S WIN" AND SOON TO BE A MAJOR-MOTION PICTURE DIRECTED BY RON HOWARD**

**"You will not read a more important book about America this year."—*The Economist***

**"A riveting book."—*The Wall Street Journal***

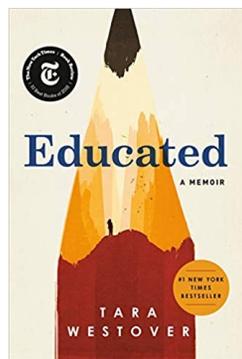
**"Essential reading."—David Brooks, *New York Times***

*Hillbilly Elegy* is a passionate and personal analysis of a culture in crisis—that of white working-class Americans. The disintegration of this group, a process that has been slowly occurring now for more than forty years, has been reported with growing frequency and alarm, but has never before been written about as searingly from the inside. J. D. Vance tells the true story of what a social, regional, and class decline feels like when you were born with it hung around your neck.

The Vance family story begins hopefully in postwar America. J. D.'s grandparents were "dirt poor and in love," and moved north from Kentucky's Appalachia region to Ohio in the hopes of escaping the dreadful poverty around them. They raised a middle-class family, and eventually one of their grandchildren would graduate from Yale Law School, a conventional marker of success in achieving generational upward mobility. But as the family saga of *Hillbilly Elegy* plays out, we learn that J.D.'s grandparents, aunt, uncle, sister, and, most of all, his mother struggled profoundly with the demands of their new middle-class life, never fully escaping the legacy of abuse, alcoholism, poverty, and trauma so characteristic of their part of America. With piercing honesty, Vance shows how he himself still carries around the demons of his chaotic family history.

A deeply moving memoir, with its share of humor and vividly colorful figures, *Hillbilly Elegy* is the story of how upward mobility really feels. And it is an urgent and troubling meditation on the loss of the American dream for a large segment of this country.

Rating:\_\_\_ Thoughts:



**August 24th, Educated, Tara Westover. JR. Non-Fiction-4. (NLC-4, HMPL-1, Other Library\_\_\_)**

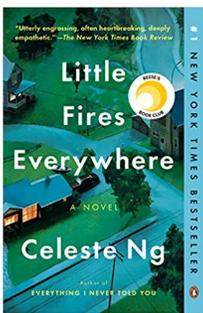
**#1 NEW YORK TIMES, WALL STREET JOURNAL, AND BOSTON GLOBE BESTSELLER • NAMED ONE OF THE TEN BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW • ONE OF PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA'S FAVORITE BOOKS OF THE YEAR • BILL GATES'S HOLIDAY READING LIST • FINALIST FOR THE NATIONAL BOOK CRITICS CIRCLE'S AWARD IN AUTOBIOGRAPHY • FINALIST FOR THE NATIONAL BOOK CRITICS CIRCLE'S JOHN LEONARD PRIZE FOR BEST FIRST BOOK • FINALIST FOR THE PEN/JEAN STEIN BOOK AWARD • FINALIST FOR THE LOS ANGELES BOOK PRIZE**

**NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY *The Washington Post* • *O: The Oprah Magazine* • *Time* • NPR • *Good Morning America* • *San Francisco Chronicle* • *The Guardian* • *The Economist* • *Financial Times* • *Newsday* • *New York Post* • *theSkimm* • *Refinery29* • *Bloomberg* • *Self* • *Real Simple* • *Town & Country* • *Bustle* • *Paste* • *Publishers Weekly* • *Library Journal* • *LibraryReads* • *BookRiot* • Pamela Paul, KQED • New York Public Library**

**An unforgettable memoir about a young girl who, kept out of school, leaves her survivalist family and goes on to earn a PhD from Cambridge University**

Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, Tara Westover was seventeen the first time she set foot in a classroom. Her family was so isolated from mainstream society that there was no one to ensure the children received an education, and no one to intervene when one of Tara's older brothers became violent. When another brother got himself into college, Tara decided to try a new kind of life. Her quest for knowledge transformed her, taking her over oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge University. Only then would she wonder if she'd traveled too far, if there was still a way home.

Rating:\_\_\_ Thoughts:



## September 28th, Little Fires Everywhere, Celeste Ng. AW Fiction-5. (NLC-10, August 17th to October 5, 2020 , HMPL-1 )

The #1 *New York Times* bestseller! Soon to be a Hulu limited series starring Reese Witherspoon and Kerry Washington.

Named a Best Book of the Year by:

*People, The Washington Post, Bustle, Esquire, Southern Living, The Daily Beast, GQ, Entertainment Weekly, NPR, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, iBooks, Audible, Goodreads, Library Reads, Book of the*

*Month, Paste, Kirkus Reviews, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, and many more...*

From the bestselling author of *Everything I Never Told You*, a riveting novel that traces the intertwined fates of the picture-perfect Richardson family and the enigmatic mother and daughter who upend their lives.

In Shaker Heights, a placid, progressive suburb of Cleveland, everything is planned—from the layout of the winding roads, to the colors of the houses, to the successful lives its residents will go on to lead. And no one embodies this spirit more than Elena Richardson, whose guiding principle is playing by the rules.

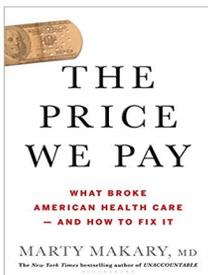
Enter Mia Warren—an enigmatic artist and single mother—who arrives in this idyllic bubble with her teenaged daughter Pearl, and rents a house from the Richardsons. Soon Mia and Pearl become more than tenants: all four Richardson children are drawn to the mother-daughter pair. But Mia carries with her a mysterious past and a disregard for the status quo that threatens to upend this carefully ordered community.

When old family friends of the Richardsons attempt to adopt a Chinese-American baby, a custody battle erupts that dramatically divides the town—and puts Mia and Elena on opposing sides. Suspicious of Mia and her motives, Elena is determined to uncover the secrets in Mia's past. But her obsession will come at unexpected and devastating costs.

*Little Fires Everywhere* explores the weight of secrets, the nature of art and identity, and the ferocious pull of motherhood—and the danger of believing that following the rules can avert disaster.

Rating:\_\_\_ Thoughts:

## October 26, The Price We Pay, Marty Makary, MD. JW Non-Fiction-5. HMPL\_\_\_ (Bring your wrapped book for the November club!)



From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Unaccountable* comes an eye-opening, urgent look at America's broken health care system--and the people who are saving it.

"A must-read for every American." --Steve Forbes, editor-in-chief, *FORBES*

One in five Americans now has medical debt in collections and rising health care costs today threaten every small business in America. Dr. Makary, one of the nation's leading health care experts, travels across America and details why health care has become a bubble. Drawing from on-the-ground stories, his research, and his own experience, *The Price We Pay* paints a vivid picture of price-gouging, middlemen, and a series of elusive money games in need of a serious shake-up. Dr. Makary shows how so much of health care spending goes to things that have nothing to do with health and what you can do about it. Dr. Makary challenges the medical establishment to remember medicine's noble heritage of caring for people when they are vulnerable.

*The Price We Pay* offers a roadmap for everyday Americans and business leaders to get a better deal on their health care, and profiles the disruptors who are innovating medical care. The movement to restore medicine to its mission, Makary argues, is alive and well--a mission that can rebuild the public trust and save our country from the crushing cost of health care.

Rating:\_\_\_ Thoughts:

## November 30th, Blind Date with a Book. Wrap up a copy of your favorite book to share with one of the other

Book Club members. Bring it to the October Book Club meeting and we will discuss your "blind date" in November.

