



Page Turners

Staff Favorites of 2021

**Titles selected by staff at the
Monroe Township Public Library**

December 2021

Allende, Isabel

The Soul of a Woman

The author describes her lifelong commitment to feminism in a meditation on what it means to be a woman, discussing progress within the movement in her lifetime, what remains to be done, and how to move forward in the future.

Benedict, Marie

The Other Einstein

In the tradition of Beatriz Williams and Paula McClain, Marie Benedict's *The Other Einstein* offers us a window into a brilliant, fascinating woman whose light was lost in Einstein's enormous shadow. This novel resurrects Einstein's wife, a brilliant physicist in her own right, whose contribution to the special theory of relativity is hotly debated. Was she simply Einstein's sounding board, an assistant performing complex mathematical equations? Or did she contribute something more?

Mitza Maric has always been a little different from other girls. Most twenty-year-olds are wives by now, not studying physics at an elite Zurich university with only male students trying to outdo her clever calculations. But Mitza is smart enough to know that, for her, math is an easier path than marriage. Then fellow student Albert Einstein takes an interest in her, and the world turns sideways. Theirs becomes a partnership of the mind and of the heart, but there might not be room for more than one genius in a marriage.

Benjamin, Melanie

The Children's Blizzard

The morning of January 12, 1888, was unusually mild, following a punishing cold spell. It was warm enough for the homesteaders of the Dakota territory to venture out again, and for their children to return to school without their heavy coats, leaving them unprepared when disaster struck. At just the hour when most prairie schools were letting out for the day, a terrifying, fast-moving blizzard blew in without warning. Schoolteachers as young as sixteen were suddenly faced with life and death decisions: keep the children inside, to risk freezing to death when fuel ran out, or send them home, praying they wouldn't get lost in the storm? Based on actual oral

histories of survivors, this gripping novel follows the stories of Raina and Gerda Olsen, two sisters, both schoolteachers, one who becomes a hero of the storm, and one who finds herself ostracized in the aftermath.

Collins, Olive

The Tide Between Us

In 1995 Evanston, Illinois, sixteen-year-old Anna's perfectly normal life is turned upside-down when she meets Bennett, whose ability to travel through space and time creates complications for them both.

Dinkelspiel, Frances

Tangled Vines: Greed, Murder Obsession and an Arsonist in the Vineyards of California

On October 12, 2005, a massive fire broke out in the Wines Central wine warehouse in Vallejo, California. Within hours, the flames had destroyed 4.5 million bottles of California's finest wine worth more than \$250 million, making it the largest destruction of wine in history. Among the priceless bottles destroyed were 175 bottles of Port and Angelica from one of the oldest vineyards in California made by Frances Dinkelspiel's great-great grandfather, Isaias Hellman, in 1875. The history of the California wine trade, dating back to the 19th Century, is a story of vineyards with dark and bloody pasts, tales of rich men, strangling monopolies, the brutal enslavement of vineyard workers and murder. In her new book, Frances Dinkelspiel looks beneath the casually elegant veneer of California's wine regions to find the obsession, greed and violence lying in wait. Few people sipping a fine California Cabernet can even guess at the Tangled Vines where its life began.

Doerr, Anthony

All the Light We Cannot See

A blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France both try to survive the devastation of World War II.

Donoghue, Emma

The Pull of the Stars

A novel set in 1918 Dublin offers a three-day look at a maternity ward during the height of the Great Flu pandemic.

Ford, Jamie

Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet

This is the story of Henry Lee and his Chinese family and Keiko Okabe, who Henry had a crush on, and her Japanese family in Seattle just prior to the forced internment of Japanese people in America. The novel begins with Henry as an older adult looking back on those events as they played out in his neighborhood and how it affected his life and those he loved.

Gabaldon, Diana

Outlander

Scottish Highlands, 1945. Claire Randall, a former British combat nurse, is just back from the war and reunited with her husband on a second honeymoon when she walks through a standing stone in one of the ancient circles that dot the British Isles. Suddenly she is a Sassenach--an "outlander"--in a Scotland torn by war and raiding clans in the year of Our Lord . . . 1743.

Claire is catapulted into the intrigues of a world that threatens her life, and may shatter her heart. Marooned amid danger, passion, and violence, Claire learns her only chance of safety lies in Jamie Fraser, a gallant young Scots warrior. What begins in compulsion becomes urgent need, and Claire finds herself torn between two very different men, in two irreconcilable lives.

Gowda, Shilpi Somaya

The Golden Son

The tale of two childhood friends, Anil and Leena. Anil is the first in his family to not only go to college, but medical school in Texas. Through Anil we learn the hardships of being an intern and the target of racial bigotry. Meanwhile, Leena leaves her home and beloved parents to live in the home of her new husband through an arranged marriage. Leena is also treated as an outsider and as someone worthless. It is very interesting to get of view of East Indian and American culture side-by-side as this story unfolds.

Hannah, Kristin

The Four Winds

Set during the Great Depression, this is a powerful American epic about love and heroism and hope. A time when the country was in crisis and at war with itself, when millions were out of work and even the land seemed to have turned against them.

Harper, Jane

The Survivors

Kieran Elliott's life changed forever on the day a reckless mistake led to devastating consequences. The guilt that still haunts him resurfaces during a visit with his young family to the small coastal community he once called home. Kieran's parents are struggling in a town where fortunes are forged by the sea. Between them all is his absent brother, Finn. When a body is discovered on the beach, long-held secrets threaten to emerge. A sunken wreck, a missing girl, and questions that have never washed away...

Hilderbrand, Elin

28 Summers

When Mallory Blessing's son, Link, receives deathbed instructions from his mother to call a number on a slip of paper in her desk drawer, he's not sure what to expect. But he certainly

does not expect Jake McCloud to answer. It's the late spring of 2020 and Jake's wife, Ursula DeGournsey, is the frontrunner in the upcoming Presidential election.

There must be a mistake, Link thinks. How do Mallory and Jake know each other?

Flash back to the sweet summer of 1993: Mallory has just inherited a beachfront cottage on Nantucket from her aunt, and she agrees to host her brother's bachelor party. Cooper's friend from college, Jake McCloud, attends, and Jake and Mallory form a bond that will persevere—through marriage, children, and Ursula's stratospheric political rise—until Mallory learns she's dying.

Based on the classic film *Same Time Next Year* (which Mallory and Jake watch every summer), *28 Summers* explores the agony and romance of a one-weekend-per-year affair and the dramatic ways this relationship complicates and enriches their lives, and the lives of the people they love.

Hirahara, Naomi

Clark and Division

Based on real life events. The Ito family lived in California until they were sent to the internment camp Manzanar. Aki's beloved older sister Rose had been released first from the camp to Chicago where the family was being relocated. Just days after the Ito family is reunited in Chicago, Rose is killed by a subway train. The police claim it was suicide, but Aki doesn't believe it and will do whatever it takes to find the truth.

Ishiguro, Kazuo

Klara and the Sun

Here is the story of Klara, an Artificial Friend with outstanding observational qualities, who, from her place in the store, watches carefully the behavior of those who come in to browse, and of those who pass on the street outside. She remains hopeful that a customer will soon choose her. *Klara and the Sun* is a thrilling book that offers a look at our changing world through the eyes of an unforgettable narrator, and one that explores the fundamental question: what does it mean to love?

Jaswal, Balli Kaur

The Unlikely Adventures of the Shergill Sisters

The British-born Punjabi Shergill sisters--Rajni, Jezmeen, and Shirina--were never close and barely got along growing up, and now as adults, have grown even further apart.

On her deathbed, their mother voices one last wish: that her daughters will make a pilgrimage together to the Golden Temple in Amritsar to carry out her final rites. After a trip to India with her mother long ago, Rajni vowed never to return. But she's always been a dutiful daughter, and cannot, even now, refuse her mother's request. Jezmeen has just been publicly fired from her television job, so the trip to India is a welcome break to help her pick up the pieces of her broken career. Shirina's in-laws are pushing her to make a pivotal decision about her married life; time away will help her decide whether to meekly obey, or to bravely stand up for herself for the first time.

Arriving in India, these sisters will make unexpected discoveries about themselves, their mother, and their lives--and learn the real story behind the trip Rajni took with their Mother long ago--a momentous journey that resulted in Mum never being able to return to India again.

Jonasson, Ragnar

The Hidden Iceland Series

- ***The Darkness*** - Spanning the icy streets of Reykjavik, the Icelandic highlands and cold, isolated fjords, *The Darkness* is an atmospheric thriller from Ragnar Jonasson, one of the most exciting names in Nordic Noir. The body of a young Russian woman washes up on an Icelandic shore. After a cursory investigation, the death is declared a suicide and the case is quietly closed. Over a year later Detective Inspector Hulda Hermannsdóttir of the Reykjavík police is forced into early retirement at 64. But before she leaves she is given two weeks to solve a single cold case of her choice. She knows which one: the Russian woman whose hope for asylum ended on the dark, cold shore of an unfamiliar country. Soon Hulda discovers that another young woman vanished at the same time, and that no one is telling her the whole story.
- ***The Island*** - A small group of friends go for a weekend in an old hunting lodge on the isolated island Ellidaey to reconnect in a beautiful place that's completely cut off from the outside world. But one of them isn't going to make it out alive. And detective Inspector Hulda Hermannsdóttir of the Reykjavik police department is at the peak of her career and determined to find out the truth. Could this death have links to the murder of a young woman ten years previously out on the Westfjords? Is there a killer stalking these barren outposts?
- ***The Mist*** - The final nail-biting installment in Ragnar Jonasson's critically-acclaimed Hidden Iceland series. 1987. An isolated farm house in the east of Iceland. The snowstorm should have shut everybody out. But it didn't. The couple should never have let him in. But they did. An unexpected guest, a liar, a killer. Not all will survive the night. And Detective Hulda will be haunted forever.

Joshi, Alka

The Henna Artist

Escaping from an abusive marriage, seventeen-year-old Lakshmi makes her way alone to the vibrant 1950s pink city of Jaipur. There she becomes the most highly requested henna artist--and confidante--to the wealthy women of the upper class. But trusted with the secrets of the wealthy, she can never reveal her own. Known for her original designs and sage advice, Lakshmi must tread carefully to avoid the jealous gossips who could ruin her reputation and her livelihood. As she pursues her dream of an independent life, she is startled one day when she is confronted by her husband, who has tracked her down these many years later with a high-spirited young girl in tow--a sister Lakshmi never knew she had. Suddenly the caution that she has carefully cultivated as protection is threatened. Still she perseveres, applying her talents and lifting up those that surround her as she does.

Kelly, Martha Hall

The Sunflower Sisters

Georgeanne 'Georgey' Woolsey isn't meant for the world of lavish parties and demure attitudes of women of her stature. So when the war ignites the nation, Georgey follows her passion for nursing during a time when doctors considered women a bother on the battlefield. In proving them wrong, she and her sister Eliza venture from New York to Washington, D.C., to Gettysburg and witness the unparalleled horrors of slavery as they become involved in the war effort. In the South, Jemma is enslaved on the Peeler Plantation in Maryland, where she lives with her mother and father. Her sister, Patience, is enslaved on the plantation next door and both live in fear of LeBaron, an abusive overseer who tracks their every move. When Jemma is sold by the cruel plantation mistress Anne-May at the same time the Union army comes through, she sees a chance to finally escape but only by abandoning the family she loves.

Krueger, William Kent

Ordinary Grace

New Bremen, Minnesota, 1961. The Twins were playing their debut season, ice-cold root beers were selling out at the soda counter of Halderson's Drugstore, and Hot Stuff comic books were a mainstay on every barbershop magazine rack. It was a time of innocence and hope for a country with a new, young president. But for thirteen-year-old Frank Drum it was a grim summer in which death visited frequently and assumed many forms. Accident. Nature. Suicide. Murder.

Told from Frank's perspective forty years after that fateful summer, *Ordinary Grace* is a brilliantly moving account of a boy standing at the door of his young manhood, trying to understand a world that seems to be falling apart around him. It is an unforgettable novel about discovering the terrible price of wisdom and the enduring grace of God.

Lee, Harper

To Kill a Mockingbird

The explosion of racial hate and violence in a small Alabama town is viewed by a young girl whose father defends a black man accused of rape.

Mandel, Emily St. John

Station Eleven

Kirsten Raymonde will never forget the night Arthur Leander, the famous Hollywood actor, had a heart attack on stage during a production of *King Lear*. That was the night when a devastating flu pandemic arrived in the city, and within weeks, civilization as we know it came to an end.

Twenty years later, Kirsten moves between the settlements of the altered world with a small troupe of actors and musicians. They call themselves The Traveling Symphony, and they have dedicated themselves to keeping the remnants of art and humanity alive. But when they arrive in St. Deborah by the Water, they encounter a violent prophet who will threaten the tiny band's

existence. And as the story takes off, moving back and forth in time, and vividly depicting life before and after the pandemic, the strange twist of fate that connects them all will be revealed.

Moore, Kate

The Woman They Could Not Silence: One Woman, Her Incredible Fight for Freedom, and the Men Who Tried to Make Her Disappear

1860: As the clash between the states rolls slowly to a boil, Elizabeth Packard, housewife and mother of six, is facing her own battle. Her husband, Theophilus, feels increasingly threatened - by Elizabeth's intellect, independence, and unwillingness to stifle her own thoughts and plans to have her committed to an insane asylum. The conditions inside the Illinois Insane Asylum give Elizabeth the courage to fight for better treatment for the women wrongly committed and vows to change the laws of marriage.

Owens, Delia

Where the Crawdads Sing

Where the Crawdads Sing is at once an exquisite ode to the natural world, a heartbreaking coming-of-age story, and a surprising tale of possible murder. Owens reminds us that we are forever shaped by the children we once were, and that we are all subject to the beautiful and violent secrets that nature keeps.

Reid, Taylor Jenkins

Daisy Jones and The Six

Everyone knows DAISY JONES & THE SIX, but nobody knows the reason behind their split at the absolute height of their popularity . . . until now.

Daisy is a girl coming of age in L.A. in the late sixties, sneaking into clubs on the Sunset Strip, sleeping with rock stars, and dreaming of singing at the Whisky a Go Go. By the time she's twenty, her voice is getting noticed, and she has the kind of heedless beauty that makes people do crazy things.

Also getting noticed is The Six, a band led by the brooding Billy Dunne. On the eve of their first tour, his girlfriend Camila finds out she's pregnant, and with the pressure of impending fatherhood and fame, Billy goes a little wild on the road.

Daisy and Billy cross paths when a producer realizes that the key to supercharged success is to put the two together. What happens next will become the stuff of legend.

The making of that legend is chronicled in this riveting and unforgettable novel, written as an oral history of one of the biggest bands of the seventies.

Scottoline, Lisa

Eternal

A sweeping and shattering epic of historical fiction fueled by shocking true events, the tale of a love triangle that unfolds in the heart of Rome...in the creeping shadow of fascism.

Silva, Daniel

The Cellist

Explores one of the preeminent threats facing the West today—the corrupting influence of dirty money wielded by a revanchist and reckless Russia. It is at once a novel of hope and a stark warning about the fragile state of democracy.

Sparks, Nicholas

The Wish

More than two decades ago Maggie was sixteen years old and pregnant. She fell in love while waiting to give her baby up for adoption. Now, if she had one wish it would be to find her baby.

Tevis, Walter

The Queen's Gambit

Eight year-old orphan Beth Harmon is quiet, sullen, and by all appearances unremarkable. That is, until she plays her first game of chess. Her senses grow sharper, her thinking clearer, and for the first time in her life she feels herself fully in control. By the age of sixteen, she's competing for the U.S. Open championship. But as Beth hones her skills on the professional circuit, the stakes get higher, her isolation grows more frightening, and the thought of escape becomes all the more tempting.

Thomas, Angie

Concrete Rose

International phenomenon Angie Thomas revisits Garden Heights seventeen years before the events of *The Hate U Give* in this searing and poignant exploration of Black boyhood and manhood.

If there's one thing seventeen-year-old Maverick Carter knows, it's that a real man takes care of his family. As the son of a former gang legend, Mav does that the only way he knows how: dealing for the King Lords. With this money he can help his mom, who works two jobs while his dad's in prison. Life's not perfect, but with a fly girlfriend and a cousin who always has his back, Mav's got everything under control. Until, that is, Maverick finds out he's a father. Suddenly he has a baby, Seven, who depends on him for everything. But it's not so easy to sling dope, finish school, *and* raise a child. So when he's offered the chance to go straight, he takes it. In a world where he's expected to amount to nothing, maybe Mav can prove he's different.

When King Lord blood runs through your veins, though, you can't just walk away. Loyalty, revenge, and responsibility threaten to tear Mav apart, especially after the brutal murder of a loved one. He'll have to figure out for himself what it really means to be a man.

Todd, Charles

An Irish Hostage

British World War I nurse Bess Crawford travels to Ireland for her best friend's wedding and unravels a dark, deceptive plot when the bridegroom goes missing.

Trenow, Liz

The Last Telegram

After an unexpected event, Lily Verner is forced to remember a disastrous decision she made decades earlier on the 1940s British countryside.

Ware, Ruth

One by One

When an offsite company retreat is upended by an avalanche that strands them in a remote mountain chalet, eight coworkers are forced to set aside their corporate rankings and mutual distrust in order to survive.

Winspear, Jacqueline

Maisie Dobbs

Young, feisty Maisie Dobbs has recently set herself up as a private detective. Such a move may not seem especially startling. But this is 1929, and Maisie is exceptional in many ways. Having started as a maid to the London aristocracy, studied her way to Cambridge and served as a nurse in the Great War, Maisie has wisdom, experience and understanding beyond her years. Little does she realize the extent to which this strength of character is soon to be tested. For her first case forces her to uncover secrets long buried, and to confront ghosts from her own past.