

Heathlake Book Club

Books for Consideration

<p>The Reading List by Sara Noah Adams</p>	<p>Widower Mukesh lives a quiet life in Wembley, in West London after losing his beloved wife. He shops every Wednesday, goes to Temple, and worries about his granddaughter, Priya, who hides in her room reading while he spends his evenings watching nature documentaries. Aleisha is a bright but anxious teenager working at the local library for the summer when she discovers a crumpled-up piece of paper in the back of To Kill a Mockingbird a list of novels that she never heard of before. Intrigued, and a little bored with her slow job at the checkout desk, she impulsively decides to read every book on the list, one after the other. As each story gives up its magic, the books transport Aleisha from the painful realities she's facing at home. When Mukesh arrives at the library, desperate to forge a connection with his bookworm granddaughter, Aleisha passes along the reading list hoping that it will be a lifeline for him too. Slowly, the shared books create a connection between two lonely souls, as fiction helps them escape their grief and everyday troubles and find joy again.</p>
<p>The Maid by Nita Prose</p>	<p>Molly Gray is not like everyone else. She struggles with social skills and misreads the intentions of others. Her gran used to interpret the world for her, codifying it into simple rules that Molly could live by. Since Gran died a few months ago, twenty-five-year-old Molly has been navigating life's complexities all by herself. No matter--she throws herself with gusto into her work as a hotel maid. Her unique character, along with her obsessive love of cleaning and proper etiquette, make her an ideal fit for the job. She delights in donning her crisp uniform each morning, stocking her cart with miniature soaps and bottles, and returning guest rooms at the Regency Grand Hotel to a state of perfection. But Molly's orderly life is upended the day she enters the suite of the infamous and wealthy Charles Black, only to find it in a state of disarray and Mr. Black himself dead in his bed. Before she knows what's happening, Molly's unusual demeanor has the police targeting her as their lead suspect. She quickly finds herself caught in a web of deception, one she has no idea how to untangle. Fortunately for Molly, friends she never knew she had unite with her in a search for clues to what really happened to Mr. Black--but will they be able to find the real killer before it's too late?</p>
<p>The Lincoln Highway by Amos Towles</p>	<p>. This is a novel set in 1950s America. In June, 1954, eighteen-year-old Emmett Watson is driven home to Nebraska by the warden of the juvenile work farm where he has just served fifteen months for involuntary manslaughter. His mother long gone, his father recently deceased, and the family farm foreclosed upon by the bank, Emmett's intention is to pick up his eight-year-old brother, Billy, and head to California where they can start their lives anew. But when the warden drives away, Emmett discovers that two friends from the work farm have</p>

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	<p>hidden themselves in the trunk of the warden's car. Together, they have hatched an altogether different plan for Emmett's future, one that will take them all on a fateful journey in the opposite direction--to the City of New York.</p>
<p>Reckless Girls by Rachel Hawkins</p>	<p>Beautiful, wild, and strange--Meroe Island is a desolate spot in the middle of the Pacific Ocean with a mysterious history of shipwrecks, cannibalism, and even rumors of murder. It's the perfect destination for the most adventurous traveler to escape everything... except the truth. Six stunning twentysomethings are about to embark on a blissful, free-spirited journey--one filled with sun-drenched days and intoxicating nights. But as it becomes clear that the group is even more cut off from civilization than they initially thought, it starts to feel like the island itself is closing in, sending them on a dangerous spiral of discovery. When one person goes missing and another turns up dead, the remaining friends wonder what dark currents lie beneath this impenetrable paradise--and who else will be swept under its secluded chaos. With its island gothic sensibility, sexy suspense, and spine-tingling reimagining of an Agatha Christie classic, <i>Reckless Girls</i> will wreck you.</p>
<p>The Final Case by David Guterson</p>	<p>A girl dies one late, rainy night a few feet from the back door of her home. The girl, Abeba, was born in Ethiopia. Her adoptive parents, Delvin and Betsy Harvey--conservative, white fundamentalist Christians--are charged with her murder. Royal, a Seattle criminal attorney in the last days of his long career, takes Betsy Harvey's case. An octogenarian without a driver's license, he leans on his son--the novel's narrator--as he prepares for trial. So begins <i>The Final Case</i>, a bracing, astute, and deeply affecting examination of justice and injustice--and familial love.</p>
<p>Bear Town by Fredrik Backman</p>	<p>People say Beartown is finished. A tiny community nestled deep in the forest, it is slowly losing ground to the ever-encroaching trees. But down by the lake stands an old ice rink, built generations ago by the working men who founded this town. And in that ice rink is the reason people in Beartown believe tomorrow will be better than today. Their junior ice hockey team is about to compete in the national semi-finals, and they actually have a shot at winning. All the hopes and dreams of this place now rest on the shoulders of a handful of teenage boys. Being responsible for the hopes of an entire town is a heavy burden, and the semi-final match is the catalyst for a violent act that will leave a young girl traumatized and a town in turmoil. Accusations are made and, like ripples on a pond, they travel through all of Beartown, leaving no resident unaffected.</p>

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<p>The Wedding Pearls by Carolyn Brown</p>	<p>Tessa Wilson's life is all over the map. She may be clumsy, but this time she's stumbled into a pickle by choice, not by accident. She's agreed to take a month-long trip around Texas jammed into a '59 Cadillac with a drama-loving teenager, two elderly spitfires, and her biological mama, who gave her away at birth. And the ride gets even crazier when hot-as-sin cowboy Branch Thomas crosses into her lane. They don't call him the sexiest man in the Lone Star State for nothin'. As the miles pass and sparks fly between Tessa and Branch, her grandmother starts dropping hints about family wedding traditions. And as Tessa discovers the power of her budding friendships and the unbreakable strength of her newfound family of strong Texas women, she wonders if she's also on the road to the biggest adventure of all: true love.</p>
<p>Lean Fall Stand by Jon McGregor</p>	<p>A storm, a stroke, a death—this Antarctic expedition leaves a traumatic aftermath. Robert “Doc” Wright, a 33-year veteran of Antarctic expeditions, couldn’t have picked a worse time and place to have a stroke. McGregor has shown himself less interested in the immediate participants of tragedy than in the ripples that tragedies sew across the communities in which they transpire. Here, though McGregor relates much of the gripping event in question, he ultimately leaves Antarctica behind, turning his attention to Doc’s wife, Anna, a climate change researcher who has long since tired of her husband’s passion for the Antarctic and the annual absences that come with it. With Robert incapacitated by his stroke, Anna is suddenly thrust into the role of reluctant caregiver, helping him stand up, helping him dress himself, and ultimately trying to help him tell the story—to himself and to her—of what exactly happened down there, in Antarctica, in the blowing snow.</p>
<p>Forest of Vanishing Stars by Kristin Harme</p>	<p>The Book of Lost Names returns with an evocative coming-of-age World War II story about a young woman who uses her knowledge of the wilderness to help Jewish refugees escape the Nazis&;until a secret from her past threatens everything. After being stolen from her wealthy German parents and raised in the unforgiving wilderness of eastern Europe, a young woman finds herself alone in 1941 after her kidnapper dies. Her solitary existence is interrupted, however, when she happens upon a group of Jews fleeing the Nazi terror. Stunned to learn what&;s happening in the outside world, she vows to teach the group all she can about surviving in the forest&;and in turn, they teach her some surprising lessons about opening her heart after years of isolation. But when she is betrayed and escapes into a German-occupied village, her past and present come together in a shocking collision that could change everything.</p>
<p>The School for Good Mothers by Jessamine Chan</p>	<p>Frida Liu is struggling. She doesn't have a career worthy of her Chinese immigrant parents' sacrifices. She can't persuade her husband, Gust, to give up his wellness-obsessed younger mistress. Only with Harriet, their cherubic daughter, does Frida finally attain the perfection</p>

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	<p>expected of her. Harriet may be all she has, but she is just enough. Until Frida has a very bad day. The state has its eyes on mothers like Frida. The ones who check their phones, letting their children get injured on the playground; who let their children walk home alone. Because of one moment of poor judgment, a host of government officials will now determine if Frida is a candidate for a Big Brother-like institution that measures the success or failure of a mother's devotion. Faced with the possibility of losing Harriet, Frida must prove that a bad mother can be redeemed. That she can learn to be good.</p>
<p>The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie by Alan Bradley</p>	<p>It is the summer of 1950-and at the once-grand mansion of Buckshaw, young Flavia de Luce, an aspiring chemist with a passion for poison, is intrigued by a series of inexplicable events: A dead bird is found on the doorstep, a postage stamp bizarrely pinned to its beak. Then, hours later, Flavia finds a man lying in the cucumber patch and watches him as he takes his dying breath. For Flavia, who is both appalled and delighted, life begins in earnest when murder comes to Buckshaw. "I wish I could say I was afraid, but I wasn't. Quite the contrary. This was by far the most interesting thing that had ever happened to me in my entire life."</p>
<p>A Fall of Marigolds by Susan Meissner</p>	<p><i>September 1911.</i> On Ellis Island in New York Harbor, nurse Clara Wood cannot face returning to Manhattan, where the man she loved fell to his death in the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire. Then, while caring for a fevered immigrant whose own loss mirrors hers, she becomes intrigued by a name embroidered onto the scarf he carries...and finds herself caught in a dilemma that compels her to confront the truth about the assumptions she's made. What she learns could devastate her--or free her. <i>September 2011.</i> On Manhattan's Upper West Side, widow Taryn Michaels has convinced herself that she is living fully, working in a charming specialty fabric store and raising her daughter alone. Then a long-lost photograph appears in a national magazine, and she is forced to relive the terrible day her husband died in the collapse of the World Trade Towers...the same day a stranger reached out and saved her. But a chance reconnection and a century-old scarf may open Taryn's eyes to the larger forces at work in her life.</p>
<p>The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo by Taylor Jenkins Reid</p>	<p>Aging and reclusive Hollywood movie icon Evelyn Hugo is finally ready to tell the truth about her glamorous and scandalous life. But when she chooses unknown magazine reporter Monique Grant for the job, no one is more astounded than Monique herself. Why her? Why now? Monique is not exactly on top of the world. Her husband has left her, and her professional life is going nowhere. Regardless of why Evelyn has selected her to write her biography, Monique is determined to use this opportunity to jumpstart her career. Summoned to Evelyn's luxurious apartment, Monique listens in fascination as the actress tells her story. From making her way to</p>

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	<p>Los Angeles in the 1950s to her decision to leave show business in the '80s, and, of course, the seven husbands along the way, Evelyn unspools a tale of ruthless ambition, unexpected friendship, and a great forbidden love. Monique begins to feel a very real connection to the legendary star, but as Evelyn's story near its conclusion, it becomes clear that her life intersects with Monique's own in tragic and irreversible ways.</p>
<p>The Overstory by Richard Powers</p>	<p>Set primarily on the West Coast, the story revolves around nine characters, separated by age and geography, whose "lives have long been connected, deep underground." Among these are a wheelchair-bound computer game designer; a scientist who uncovers the forest's hidden communication systems; a psychologist studying the personality types of environmental activists; and a young woman who, after being electrocuted, hears voices urging her to save old-growth forests from logging. All are seduced by the majesty of trees and express their arboreal love in different ways: through scholarship, activism, art, and even violent resistance. Some of the prose soars, as when a redwood trunk shoots upward in a "russet, leathery apotheosis," while some lands with a thud: "We're cashing in a billion years of planetary savings bonds and blowing it on assorted bling."</p>
<p>Anthem by Noah Hawley</p>	<p>The wheels are coming off in America. Opioid addictions accelerate unstoppably. Environmental collapse can be read in every weather report. Vigilante bands take over streets at night, wearing clownface makeup. The very idea of government, of citizenship, is challenged daily. And something is happening to teenagers across the country, spreading through memes only they know. At the Float Anxiety Abatement Center, in a suburb of Chicago, Simon Oliver is trying to recover from his sister's tragic passing. He breaks out to join a woman named Louise and a man called The Prophet on a quest as urgent as it is enigmatic. Who lies at the end of the road? A man known as The Wizard, whose past encounter with Louise sparked her own collapse. Their quest becomes a rescue mission when they join up with a man whose sister is being held captive by the Wizard, impregnated and imprisoned in a tower.</p>
<p>My Bondage, My Freedom by Frederick Douglas</p>	<p>Ex-slave Frederick Douglass's second autobiography-written after ten years of reflection following his legal emancipation in 1846 and his break with his mentor William Lloyd Garrison-catapulted Douglas into the international spotlight as the foremost spokesman for American blacks, both free and slave. Written during his celebrated career as speaker and newspaper editor, My Bondage and My Freedom reveals the author of the Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (1845) grown nature, forceful, analytical, and complex with a deepened commitment to the fight for equal rights and liberties.</p>