

Book Chat, July 2019

Book recommendations:

Quite a Year for Plums by Bailey White. She introduces us to the peculiar yet lovable people who inhabit a small town in south Georgia. Heartbreakingly tender, often hilarious, Quite a Year for Plums is a delectable treat from a writer who has been called a national treasure.

Bonfire of the Vanities by Tom Wolfe. A **1987 satirical novel**. The story is a drama about ambition, racism, social class, politics, and greed in 1980s New York City and centers on three main characters: WASP bond trader Sherman McCoy, Jewish assistant district attorney Larry Kramer, and British expatriate journalist Peter Fallow.

Dead of Winter by Annelise Ryan. Forensic investigator set in Wisconsin. Deals with human trafficking but not too detailed. There are three more books in the series.

Every Last Cuckoo by Kate Maloy is about a woman and her changing phases of life. After her husband dies, she takes in boarders and creates new relationships.

The Goose Girl by Shannon Hale is a retelling of the "Goose Girl" fairytale. It is part of a trilogy and nicely done.

The Shipping News by Annie Proulx. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, Annie Proulx's *The Shipping News* is a vigorous, darkly comic, and at times magical portrait of the contemporary North American family.

Not a Sound by Heather Gudenkauf. Story about a nurse who loses her hearing and becomes involved in a deadly conspiracy. Fast, action-packed read. Gudenkauf is a Dubuque, Iowa author who is herself hearing impaired.

The Other Einstein by Marie Benedict tells the "possible" story of Albert Einstein's long-suffering and brilliant wife. You will gain an entirely new perspective on Einstein from this novel. Benedict has also written *Carnegie's Maid* and *The Other Woman in the Room*. The last title is the story of Hedy Lamar who was beautiful and brilliant. A powerful novel based on the incredible true story of the glamour icon and scientist whose groundbreaking invention revolutionized modern communication.

The Fifth Risk by Michael Lewis is about federal government agencies and their role in managing risks for all of us. Short and fascinating. You won't believe all that the Department of Agriculture does.

Mac Street by Orson Scott Card. This is the first time Card has written about an African American character. The novel is about a magical baby that grows up with the ability to visit

other people's dreams. Often the dreams of his neighbors are twisted and he tries to change them to help people. Humorous characters. Card is well known for his Ender's Game series as well many other series.

The Weed that Changed the Hangman's Bag by Alan Bradley. A precocious young girl is fascinated with poisons and the book combines mystery, murder and history. The first book in the series is *Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie*.

All the Ugly and Wonderful Things by Bryn Greenwood. This novel is like coming upon a car wreck on the highway. You shouldn't look but you do. The story of Wavy; the daughter of a drug dealer and a meth head who at 11 falls in love with a 32 year-old biker. This book is very explicit and violent, but I couldn't stop reading. I wanted to know what happened. Very provocative.

How to be a Patient by Sana Goldberg. From registered nurse and public health advocate Sana Goldberg, RN, a timely, accessible, and comprehensive handbook to navigating common medical situations. From the routine to the unexpected, *How to Be a Patient* is your ultimate guide to better healthcare.

The Island of Sea Women by Lisa See. The setting is the Korean Island of Jeju beginning in the 1930s and through many decades. A classic Lisa See story—one of women's friendships and the larger forces that shape them—*The Island of Sea Women* introduces readers to the fierce and unforgettable female divers and the dramatic history that shaped their lives.

The Great Successor by Anna Fifield. The behind-the-scenes story of the rise and reign of the world's strangest and most elusive tyrant, Kim Jong Un, by the journalist with the best connections and insights into the bizarrely dangerous world of North Korea.

And They Marched Into Sunlight by David Maraniss. In a seamless narrative, Maraniss weaves together the stories of three very different worlds: the death and heroism of soldiers in Vietnam, the anger and anxiety of antiwar students back home, and the confusion and obfuscating behavior of officials in Washington. The focus is the war and what was happening in Madison.

We had quite a variety. Thanks for all your recommendations. See you in October.

Dawn