

Book Group February - July 2019

1. February "The Secret of War" by Terrell T. Garren

This is about Civil War crime in N.C. It is based on the true-life experience of Delia Russell Youngblood, the great grandmother of the author. It captures what the Civil War was like in the mountains and throughout the south. It is the story of Joseph Youngblood and Delia Russell of Hoopers Creek in Henderson County, N.C.

2. March "Rules of Civility" by Amor Towles

On the last night of 1937, twenty-five-year-old Katey Kontent is in a second-rate Greenwich Village jazz bar with her boardinghouse roommate stretching three dollars as far as it will go when Tinker Grey, a handsome banker with royal blue eyes and a tempered smile, happens to sit at the neighboring table. This chance encounter and its startling consequences propel Katey on a yearlong journey from a Wall Street secretarial pool toward the upper echelons of New York society and the executive suites of Condé Nast--rarefied environs where she will have little to rely upon other than a bracing wit and her own brand of cool nerve.

3. April "Elinor Oliphant is Completely Fine" by Gail Honeyman

Meet Eleanor Oliphant: She struggles with appropriate social skills and tends to say exactly what she's thinking. Nothing is missing in her carefully timetabled life of avoiding social interactions, where weekends are punctuated by frozen pizza, vodka, and phone chats with Mummy.

But everything changes when Eleanor meets Raymond, the bumbling and deeply unhygienic IT guy from her office. When she and Raymond together

save Sammy, an elderly gentleman who has fallen on the sidewalk, the three become the kinds of friends who rescue one another from the lives of isolation they have each been living. And it is Raymond's big heart that will ultimately help Eleanor find the way to repair her own profoundly damaged one.

4. May "Cutting For Stone" by Abraham Verghese

An unforgettable journey into one man's remarkable life, and an epic story about the power, intimacy, and curious beauty of the work of healing others set in 1960s & 1970s Ethiopia and 1980s America.

Marion and Shiva Stone are twin brothers born of a secret union between a beautiful Indian nun and a brash British surgeon at a mission hospital in Addis Ababa. Orphaned by their mother's death in childbirth and their father's disappearance, bound together by a preternatural connection and a shared fascination with medicine, the twins come of age as Ethiopia hovers on the brink of revolution. Yet it will be love, not politics—their passion for the same woman—that will tear them apart and force Marion, fresh out of medical school, to flee his homeland. He makes his way to America, finding refuge in his work as an intern at an underfunded, overcrowded New York City hospital. When the past catches up to him—nearly destroying him—Marion must entrust his life to the two men he thought he trusted least in the world: the surgeon father who abandoned him and the brother who betrayed him.

5. June "The Truth According To Us" by Annie Barrows

In the summer of 1938, Layla Beck's father, a United States senator, cuts off her allowance and demands that she find employment on the Federal Writers' Project, a New Deal jobs program. Within days, Layla finds herself far from her accustomed social whirl, assigned to cover the history of the remote mill town of Macedonia, West Virginia, and destined, in her opinion, to go completely mad with boredom. But once she secures a room in the home of the unconventional

Romeyn family, she is drawn into their complex world and soon discovers that the truth of the town is entangled in the thorny past of the Romeyn dynasty.

At the Romeyn house, twelve-year-old Willa is desperate to learn everything in her quest to acquire her favorite virtues of ferocity and devotion—a search that leads her into a thicket of mysteries, including the questionable business that occupies her charismatic father and the reason her adored aunt Jottie remains unmarried. Layla’s arrival strikes a match to the family veneer, bringing to light buried secrets that will tell a new tale about the Romeyns. As Willa peels back the layers of her family’s past, and Layla delves deeper into town legend, everyone involved is transformed—and their personal histories completely rewritten.

6. July “Holy Rover” by Lori Erickson

Holy Rover is about the transformative power of travel. If you've ever been curious about the ancient spiritual practice of pilgrimage, come along with Lori Erickson as she explores a dozen holy sites around the world. Travel writer, Episcopal deacon, and author of the Holy Rover blog at Patheos, Erickson is an engaging guide for pilgrims eager to take a spiritual journey. Both irreverent and devout, Holy Rover describes travels that changed her life and can change yours, too.