

2017-2018 Choices for Book of the Month Club

Summer:

1. ***When Breath Becomes Air* – by Paul Kalanithi – 256 pgs. - Memoir**

“At the age of thirty-six, on the verge of completing a decade’s worth of training as a neurosurgeon, Paul Kalanithi was diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer. One day he was a doctor treating the dying, and the next he was a patient struggling to live. And just like that, the future he and his wife had imagined evaporated. *When Breath Becomes Air* chronicles Kalanithi’s transformation from a naïve medical student “possessed,” as he wrote, “by the question of what, given that all organisms die, makes a virtuous and meaningful life” into a neurosurgeon at Stanford working in the brain, the most critical place for human identity, and finally into a patient and new father confronting his own mortality.”

2. ***Orphan X* – by Gregg Hurwitz-416 pgs. – Adult Thriller**

“Evan Smoak is a man with skills, resources, and a personal mission to help those with nowhere else to turn. He’s also a man with a dangerous past. Chosen as a child, he was raised and trained as an Orphan, an off-the-books black box program designed to create the perfect deniable intelligence asset: An assassin. Evan was Orphan X—until he broke with the program and used everything he learned to disappear. But now someone is on his tail. Someone with similar skills and training who will exploit Evan’s secret new identity as the Nowhere Man to eliminate him.”

3. ***Wild* – by Cheryl S –315 pgs. - Non-fiction travel**

“At twenty-two, Cheryl Strayed thought she had lost everything. In the wake of her mother’s death, her family scattered and her own marriage was soon destroyed. Four years later, with nothing more to lose, she made the most impulsive decision of her life. With no experience or training, driven only by blind will, she would hike more than a thousand miles of the Pacific Crest Trail from the Mojave Desert through California and Oregon to Washington State—and she would do it alone. Told with suspense and style, sparkling with warmth and humor, *Wild* powerfully captures the terrors and pleasures of one young woman forging ahead against all odds on a journey that maddened, strengthened, and ultimately healed her.”

Substitute/Additional Titles:

4. ***A Dog’s Purpose: a Novel for Humans* by James Cameron - Nonfiction**

“Like cats, dogs have multiple lives. At least, Bailey, the canine narrator of this first novel, has more than one. Bailey’s first life is spent as a feral puppy who learns to trust humans after living with a loving but slightly dotty woman who owns too many dogs to suit the county. Bailey is removed by animal control, and his next life brings him to young Ethan, the human Bailey will love and search for through all his subsequent lives, first as part of K-9 Search and Rescue and then as a dumped and mistreated mutt. Through all these lives, Bailey contemplates his purpose in a voice full of curiosity and humor. He ruminates on the usefulness of cats (“none”) and the strange natures of humans”

5. ***All the Missing Girls* by Megan Miranda– 400 pgs. - Thriller**

“Like the spellbinding psychological suspense in *The Girl on the Train* and *Luckiest Girl Alive*, Megan Miranda’s novel is a nail-biting, breathtaking story about the disappearances of two young women—a decade apart—told in reverse.”

6. ***Dark Matter* by Blake Crouch–368 pgs. – Science Fiction**

“Jason Dessen, a quantum physicist, once had a brilliant research career ahead of him. But after a girlfriend’s unexpected pregnancy and the birth of a son, this future was derailed. Now Jason is a professor at a small Chicago college, content with his warm and loving family life until he’s abducted into a world in which his quantum many-worlds theory has become a fully realized technology for inter-dimensional transfer. In this world, Jason didn’t marry his girlfriend and never had a son. Jason is determined to get back to his family and his own world, but nefarious powers in the alternate reality conspire to stop him from revealing the criminal lengths they have gone to create the world-hopping technology.”

2017-2018 School Year Picks

1. September – Meeting Date: Sept. 26, 2017 (*note: this is a 4th Tue. of the month)

***Bomb: The Race to Build...and Steal... The World's Most Dangerous Weapon* by Steve Sheinkin– 304 pgs. – Military non-fiction**

“... a gripping account of discovery, espionage, and revolutionary changes in both physics and the modern world. This fascinating tale, packed with a wide cast of characters, focuses mainly on three individuals: spy for the Soviets Harry Gold, leader of the Manhattan Project J. Robert Oppenheimer, and Knut Haukelid, who sabotaged German bomb efforts while working for the Norwegian resistance. Sheinkin skillfully combines lucid, conversational snapshots of the science behind the atomic bomb with a fast-paced narrative of the remarkable people who made it possible and attempted to steal it.”

2. October – Meeting Date: Oct. 24, 2017 (*note: this is a 4th Tue. of the month)

***All the Bright Places* by Jennifer Niven– 416 pgs. – YA Fiction**

“Violet Markey is on the ledge of her school's bell tower, six stories up, and frozen in terror. Theodore Finch, the Freak, stands on the ledge nearby. Before she can panic, he calms her down and gets her back on solid ground. He even lets everyone think she's the one who talked him out of jumping. Violet, until recently, was a popular cheerleader and Finch has a well-earned reputation for being manic, violent, and unpredictable. But Finch won't let their encounter rest. He's suddenly everywhere Violet goes and even signs her up as his partner on a "Wander the State" school project....”

3. November – Meeting Date: Nov. 21, 2017

***The Woman in Cabin 10* by Ruth Ware– 384 pgs. -Thriller**

“Lo Blacklock, a journalist who writes for a travel magazine, has just been given the assignment of a lifetime: a week on a luxury cruise with only a handful of cabins. ... But as the week wears on, frigid winds whip the deck, gray skies fall, and Lo witnesses what she can only describe as a dark and terrifying nightmare: a woman being thrown overboard. The problem? All passengers remain accounted for—“

4. December – Meeting Date: Dec. 19, 2017

***Challenger Deep* by Neal Shusterman – 320 pgs. – Mental Illness Fiction**

“Caden Bosch lives in two worlds. One is his real life with his family, his friends, and high school. There he is paranoid for no reason, thinks people are trying to kill him, and demonstrates obsessive compulsive behaviors. In his other world, he's part of the crew for a pirate captain on a voyage to the Challenger Deep, the ocean's deepest trench. There he's paranoid, wary of the mercurial captain and his mutinous parrot, and tries hard to interpret the mutterings of his fellow shipmates as they sail uncharted waters toward unknown dangers. Slowly, Caden's fantasy and paranoia begin to take over, until his parents have only one choice left...”

5. January– Meeting Date: Jan 23, 2018 (*note: this is a 4th Tue. of the month)

***The Inquisitor's Tale* by Adam Gitwitz– 384 pgs. –Medieval Adventure Fiction**

“1242. On a dark night, travelers from across France cross paths at an inn and begin to tell stories of three children. Their adventures take them on a chase through France: they are taken captive by knights, sit alongside a king, and save the land from a farting dragon. On the run to escape prejudice and persecution and save precious and holy texts from being burned, their quest drives them forward to a final showdown at Mont Saint-Michel, where all will come to question if these children can perform the miracles of saints.”

Or

Nimona by Noelle Stevenson – 272 pgs. – Medieval Graphic novel

“[A] celebrated webcomic, a mash-up of medieval culture with modern science and technology... Lord Ballister Blackheart, a knight, has assumed the role of a supervillain in order to expose the nefarious schemes of the kingdom's front organization, The Institute of Law Enforcement. The kingdom's champion is Lord Blackheart's nemesis and former best friend, Sir Ambrose Goldenloin. Blackheart's prickly relationship with Goldenloin further explores the limits of their friendship. Enter the title character, a brash young shapeshifter who doggedly follows Ballister until he agrees to take her on as a sidekick. Nimona's skills as a shapeshifter up the ante in the ongoing rivalry between Ambrose and Ballister. Despite her anger management issues, the teen becomes Ballister's invaluable ally and together they form an alliance of mutual trust and dependence.”

6. February– Meeting Date: Feb. 20, 2018

***Salt to the Sea* by Ruta Sepetys– 400 pgs.-Historical Fiction**

“World War II is drawing to a close in East Prussia and thousands of refugees are on a desperate trek toward freedom, many with something to hide. Among them are Joana, Emilia, and Florian, whose paths converge en route to the ship that promises salvation, the *Wilhelm Gustloff*. Forced by circumstance to unite, the three find their strength, courage, and trust in each other tested with each step closer to safety. Just when it seems freedom is within their grasp, tragedy strikes. Not country, nor culture, nor status matter as all ten thousand people—adults and children alike—aboard must fight for the same thing: survival.”

7. March– Meeting Date: March 20, 2018

***No Easy Day: The Firsthand Account of the Mission that Killed Osama Bin Laden* By Mark Owen– 336 pgs. –Nonfiction (*note: this is a 4th Tue. of the month)**

“From the streets of Iraq to the rescue of Captain Richard Phillips in the Indian Ocean, and from the mountaintops of Afghanistan to the third floor of Osama Bin Laden’s compound, operator Mark Owen of the U.S. Naval Special Warfare Development Group—known as SEAL Team Six—has been a part of some of the most memorable special operations in history, as well as countless missions that never made headlines. *No Easy Day* puts readers alongside Owen and his fellow SEAL team members as they train for the biggest mission of their lives. The blow-by-blow narrative of the assault, beginning with the helicopter crash that could have ended Owen’s life straight through to the radio call confirming Bin Laden’s death, is an essential piece of modern history.”

8. April– Meeting Date: April 25, 2018

***The Red Queen* by Victoria Aveyard – 416 pgs. – Fantasy thriller**

“Seventeen-year-old Mare Barrow lives in a world where one's lot in life is determined by the color of one's blood. She was born a Red and has to make a living by pickpocketing and trying to dodge "the conscription" and being sent off to fight an ongoing war. Mare's resigned herself to the fact that she'll always serve the Silver, a genetically gifted group of people with supernatural abilities. A chance encounter with the prince causes Mare to suddenly find herself at the royal palace as a servant, where she discovers in front of everyone that she also has a unique gift. She is Red and Silver, and could be just the spark the Reds need to rise up against the oppressive Silvers.”

9. May– Meeting Date: May 22, 2018 (*note: this is a 4th Tue. of the month)

***The Girl with Seven Names* by Hyeonseo Lee– 320 pgs. – Nonfiction Memoir**

“As a child growing up in North Korea, Hyeonseo Lee was one of millions trapped by a secretive and brutal communist regime. Her home on the border with China gave her some exposure to the world beyond the confines of the Hermit Kingdom and, as the famine of the 1990s struck, she began to wonder, question and to realise that she had been brainwashed her entire life. Given the repression, poverty and starvation she witnessed surely her country could not be, as she had been told “the best on the planet”? Aged seventeen, she decided to escape North Korea. She could not have imagined that it would be twelve years before she was reunited with her family.”