

## BCC Book Club Possible Selections for 2018-2019

**(1) *Nora Mae, A remarkable, Insignificant Person* by Alice Hein Scheil 272 pages.**

This is the inspiring, true story of a woman who lived 95 years. Walk with her as she encounters rejection, searches for God, picks cotton to help provide for her family, overcomes tragedy, receives miracles, rebukes the spirit of death, and abruptly transitions from busy life to life at a snail's pace. The book invigorates the reader with a sense that one can securely face all of life's challenges because, although we don't always know it, God is with us. Nora Mae transformed from a rejected child into a Sunday School teacher, and then into a community servant. Her life demonstrates how to survive financial depression, how to forgive others, how to admit your family needs help, how to cope with the death of loved ones, how to step forward with action, and how to grow old with optimism. Once she found her song she never let it die.

**(2) *Ordinary Grace: A Novel* by William Kent Krueger 336 pages**

*"That was it. That was all of it. A grace so ordinary there was no reason at all to remember it. Yet I have never across the forty years since it was spoken forgotten a single word."* 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.

**(3) *Loving Frank* by Nancy Horan 377 pages.**

*I have been standing on the side of life, watching it float by. I want to swim in the river. I want to feel the current.* So writes Mamah Borthwick Cheney in her diary as she struggles to justify her clandestine love affair with Frank Lloyd Wright. Four years earlier, in 1903, Mamah and her husband, Edwin, had commissioned the renowned architect to design a new home for them. During the construction of the house, a powerful attraction developed between Mamah and Frank, and in time the lovers, each married with children, embarked on a course that would shock Chicago society and forever change their lives.

**(4) *The Sea of Tranquility* by Katja Millay 450 pages**

Two and a half years after an unspeakable tragedy left her a shadow of the girl she once was, Nastya Kashnikov moves to a new town determined to keep her dark past hidden and hold everyone at a distance. But her plans only last so long before she finds herself inexplicably drawn to the one person as isolated as herself: Josh Bennett.

**(5) *Before We Were Yours* by Lisa Wingate 352 pages**

Memphis, 1939. Twelve-year-old Rill Foss and her four younger siblings live a magical life aboard their family's Mississippi River shantyboat. But when their father must rush their mother to the hospital one stormy night, Rill is left in charge—until strangers arrive in force. Wrenched from all that is familiar and thrown into a Tennessee Children's Home Society orphanage, the Foss children are assured that they will soon be returned to their parents—

but they quickly realize the dark truth. At the mercy of the facility's cruel director, Rill fights to keep her sisters and brother together in a world of danger and uncertainty.

**(6) *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi 322 pages**

The unforgettable *New York Times* best seller begins with the story of two half-sisters, separated by forces beyond their control: one sold into slavery, the other married to a British slaver. Written with tremendous sweep and power, *Homegoing* traces the generations of family who follow, as their destinies lead them through two continents and three hundred years of history, each life indelibly drawn, as the legacy of slavery is fully revealed in light of the present day.

**(7) *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History* by Elizabeth Kolbert 336 pages**

Over the last half a billion years, there have been five mass extinctions, when the diversity of life on earth suddenly and dramatically contracted. Scientists around the world are currently monitoring the sixth extinction, predicted to be the most devastating extinction event since the asteroid impact that wiped out the dinosaurs. This time around, the cataclysm is us. In *The Sixth Extinction*, two-time winner of the National Magazine Award and *New Yorker* writer Elizabeth Kolbert draws on the work of scores of researchers in half a dozen disciplines, accompanying many of them into the field: geologists who study deep ocean cores, botanists who follow the tree line as it climbs up the Andes, marine biologists who dive off the Great Barrier Reef. She introduces us to a dozen species, some already gone, others facing extinction. The sixth extinction is likely to be mankind's most lasting legacy; as Kolbert observes, it compels us to rethink the fundamental question of what it means to be human.

**(8) *Salvage the Bones* by Jesmyn Ward 272 pages**

A hurricane is building over the Gulf of Mexico, threatening the coastal town of Bois Sauvage, Mississippi, and Esch's father is growing concerned. A hard drinker, largely absent, he doesn't show concern for much else. Esch and her three brothers are stocking food, but there isn't much to save. Lately, Esch can't keep down what food she gets; she's fourteen and pregnant. Her brother Skeetah is sneaking scraps for his prized pitbull's new litter, dying one by one in the dirt. While brothers Randall and Junior try to stake their claim in a family long on child's play and short on parenting. As the twelve days that comprise the novel's framework yield to the final day and Hurricane Katrina, the unforgettable family at the novel's heart--motherless children sacrificing for each other as they can, protecting and nurturing where love is scarce--pulls itself up to struggle for another day. A wrenching look at the lonesome, brutal, and restrictive realities of rural poverty,

**(9) *Desert Queen* by Janet Wallach 524 pages**

Here is the story of Gertrude Bell, who explored, mapped, and excavated the Arab world throughout the early twentieth century. Recruited by British intelligence during World War I, she played a crucial role in obtaining the loyalty of Arab leaders, and her connections and information provided the brains to match T. E. Lawrence's brawn. After the war, she played a major role in creating the modern Middle East and was, at the time, considered the most powerful woman in the British Empire.

**(10) *A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles 468 pages**

In 1922, Count Alexander Rostov is deemed an unrepentant aristocrat by a Bolshevik tribunal, and is sentenced to house arrest in the Metropol, a grand hotel across the street from the Kremlin. Rostov, an indomitable man of erudition and wit, has never worked a day in his life, and must now live in an attic room while some of the most tumultuous decades in Russian history are unfolding outside the hotel's doors. Unexpectedly, his reduced circumstances provide him entry into a much larger world of emotional discovery.

**(11) *The Dry Grass of August* by Anna Jean Mayhew 352 pages.**

In this beautifully written debut, Anna Jean Mayhew offers a riveting depiction of Southern life in the throes of segregation, what it will mean for a young girl on her way to adulthood--and for the woman who means the world to her.

**(12) *The Secret Wife* by Gill Paul 417 pages**

1914 - Russia is on the brink of collapse, and the Romanov family faces a terrifyingly uncertain future. Grand Duchess Tatiana has fallen in love with cavalry officer Dmitri, but events take a catastrophic turn, placing their romance – and their lives – in danger.

2016 - Kitty Fisher escapes to her great-grandfather's remote cabin in America, after a devastating revelation makes her flee London. There, on the shores of Lake Akanabee, she discovers the spectacular jewelled pendant that will lead her to a long-buried family secret . . .

**(13) *The Letter* by Kathryn Hughes 394 pages**

Tina Craig longs to escape her violent husband. She works all the hours God sends to save up enough money to leave him, also volunteering in a charity shop to avoid her unhappy home. Whilst going through the pockets of a second-hand suit, she comes across an old letter, the envelope firmly sealed and unfranked. Tina opens the letter and reads it - a decision that will alter the course of her life for ever...

**(14) *A Wilder Rose: A Novel* by Susan Wittig Albert 302 pages**

The Little House books chronicled the pioneer adventures of Laura Ingalls Wilder. Lesser known is the secret, concealed for decades, of how they came to be. Now, bestselling author Susan Wittig Albert reimagines the fascinating story of Laura's daughter, Rose Wilder Lane, an intrepid world traveler and writer who returned to her parents' Ozark farm, Rocky Ridge, in 1928. There she began a collaboration with her mother on the pioneer stories that would captivate generations of readers around the world.

**(15) *The Hundred Year Old Man Who climbed Out A Window and Disappeared* by Jonas Joansson 396 pages**

After a long and eventful life, Allan Karlsson ends up in a nursing home, believing it to be his last stop. The only problem is that he's still in good health, and in one day, he turns 100. A big celebration is in the works, but Allan really isn't interested (and he'd like a bit more control over his vodka consumption). So he decides to escape. He climbs out the window in his slippers and embarks on a hilarious and entirely unexpected journey, involving, among other surprises, a suitcase stuffed with cash, some unpleasant criminals, a friendly hot-dog stand operator, and an

**(16) *Red Notice* by Bill Browder**

This is a story about an accidental activist. Bill Browder started out his adult life as the Wall Street maverick whose instincts led him to Russia just after the breakup of the Soviet Union, where he made his fortune. A financial caper, a crime thriller, and a political crusade, *Red Notice* is the story of one man taking on overpowering odds to change the world, and also the story of how, without intending to, he found meaning in his life.

**(17) *Devotion: An Epic Story of Friendship, Heroism, and Sacrifice* by Adam Makos** 464 pages

Devotion tells the inspirational story of the US Navy's most famous aviator duo, Lieutenant Tom Hudner and Ensign Jesse Brown, and the marines they fought to defend. A white New Englander from the country-club scene, Tom passed up Harvard to fly fighters for his country. An African American sharecropper's son from Mississippi, Jesse became the navy's first black carrier pilot, defending a nation that wouldn't even serve him in a bar.

**(18) *The Hamilton Affair* by Elizabeth Cobbs** 433 pages

Set against the dramatic backdrop of the American Revolution, and featuring a cast of legendary characters, *The Hamilton Affair* tells the sweeping, tumultuous, true story of Alexander Hamilton and Elizabeth Schuyler, from passionate and tender beginnings of their romance to his fateful duel on the banks of the Hudson River.

**(19) *The Mountain Between Us* by Charles Martin** 336 pages

When a blizzard strands them in Salt Lake City, two strangers agree to charter a plane together, hoping to return home; Ben Payne is a gifted surgeon returning from a conference, and Ashley Knox, a magazine writer, is en route to her wedding. But when unthinkable tragedy strikes, the pair find themselves stranded in Utah's most remote wilderness in the dead of winter, badly injured and miles from civilization. Without food or shelter, and only Ben's mountain climbing gear to protect themselves, Ashley and Ben's chances for survival look bleak, but their reliance on each other sparks an immediate connection, which soon evolves into something more. Days in the mountains become weeks, as their hope for rescue dwindles. How will they make it out of the wilderness and if they do, how will this experience change them forever?

**(20) *Little Fires Everywhere* by Celeste Ng** 352 pages

In Shaker Heights, a placid, progressive suburb of Cleveland, everything is planned – from the layout of the winding roads, to the colors of the houses, to the successful lives its residents will go on to lead. And no one embodies this spirit more than Elena Richardson, whose guiding principle is playing by the rules. Enter Mia Warren – an enigmatic artist and single mother – who arrives in this idyllic bubble with her teenaged daughter Pearl, and rents a house from the Richardsons. Soon Mia and Pearl become more than tenants: all four Richardson children are drawn to the mother-daughter pair. But Mia carries with her a mysterious past and a disregard for the status quo that threatens to upend this carefully ordered community. When old family friends of the Richardsons attempt to adopt a Chinese-American baby, a custody battle erupts that dramatically divides the town--and puts Mia and Elena on opposing sides. Suspicious of Mia and her motives, Elena is determined to uncover the secrets in Mia's past. But her obsession will come at unexpected and devastating costs.