

books '17 Book Talk
AMPA Lunch
October 25, 2017



Sandy Mack

Commonwealth

Ann Patchett
(Fiction)

When Bert Cousins, a lawyer with a wife, three children and a baby on the way, shows up uninvited at a christening party for Beverly and Fix Keating's second child, he is instantly taken with how beautiful Beverly is. After consuming a great deal of gin, a stolen kiss in the kitchen sets into motion events that will shatter two families and blend the lives of six children.

The Round House

Louise Erdrich
(Fiction)

Winner of the National Book Award for fiction, Erdrich once again paints a vivid picture of Native-American life on a reservation when the wife of a tribal lawyer is brutally raped. Because her attacker is white, and the exact location of the crime is not clear (tribal land or federal land) seeking justice is not easy.

What She Knew

Gilly Macmillan
(Fiction)

This debut novel is fast-paced and keeps you guessing. It is a haunting story of a parent's worst nightmare----the disappearance of a child. Rachel has been divorced from her ex-husband, a surgeon, for almost a year. He has since remarried. Benjamin, their 8 year old son, is Rachel's pride and joy. One day, while walking in the park to Ben's favorite playground, he asks to run ahead on the path. Rachel relents and tells him she will be there shortly, but when she arrives, she finds an empty swing and her life becomes a nightmare.

The Refugees

Viet Thanh Nguyen

(Fiction)

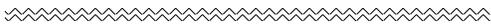
The author won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction last year and he has said that these stories had been mulling in his mind for years. Nguyen, a refugee himself whose family fled Vietnam, arrived in America when he was ten years old. The family spoke no English and did not know American customs. His stories reflect the pain, the success, the difficulties and the joys of the immigrant experience—as those who come to our land seek to assimilate and forge new lives.

Midnight in Broad Daylight

Pamela Rotner Sakamoto

(Non-Fiction)

The author is a historian/academic who lived and worked in Kyoto and Tokyo for many years. While there, she met Harry Fukuhara, a colonel in the US Army who was a decorated soldier serving in the Intelligence Corps during World War II. This is the story of a family separated by war, half living in the US and the rest in Hiroshima. The struggles they all went through before they could be reunited make for a riveting read.



Carl Silva

Nutshell

Ian McEwan

Fiction

Something is rotten in...not Denmark...but England. McEwan twists the story of *Hamlet*, for Hamlet is a fetus awaiting birth and privy to the machinations of his mother in cahoots with his uncle who seem to be planning the death of his father. Yes, from the womb he can hear the muffled conversations of things not right. And what of this brilliant baby to be? What can he do from his tiny room? Can he intervene? Can he stop what is to happen? McEwan certainly has fun taking us into this impossible world creating a novel that is both comic and suspenseful.

Homegoing

Yaa Gyasi

Fiction

A remarkable family saga covering three-hundred years and seven generations, two Fante sisters, Effia and Esi, will never meet, yet the stories of their lives and families will be intertwined. Effia will be forced to marry a British officer, and her story will reveal the thirst for power and greed of the Gold Coast slave trade and the impact upon Ghanaian history. Esi will be sold as a slave and delivered to America, struggling to remember her origin. As each one builds a family and their children beget children, we come to understand their quest for freedom and a way to hold the past and move toward the future. It is a remarkable feat of storytelling that begins with fire and ends with water.

Another Brooklyn

Jacqueline Woodson

Fiction

This beautiful coming-of-age story follows August, a young African-American girl, growing up in Brooklyn during the 1970's. In those universal moments where children grow and sometimes stumble into becoming adults, August and her three friends make their way through the streets of Brooklyn as they learn about love, friendship, and the meaning of trust. The impetus for the story is when August returns to her neighborhood as an adult. The neighborhood has changed but her memories of the past have not.

A Gentleman in Moscow

Amor Towles

Fiction

Count Alexander Ilyich Rostov has been placed under a rather odd house arrest. The Russian gentleman has been confined to the Metropol Hotel in Moscow in 1922. And you, as the reader, will join the Count as we explore his life over the next thirty years. You might be asking, how exactly can that work as a novel? Let me tell you...you will never want the book to end. This is one of the most delightful, funny, goodhearted books I've read in a long time. From the hotel managers to the staff to the restaurant waiters and head chef and guests, Towles creates a remarkable world that moves us through history and the well-mannered, witty, and urbane lifestyle of the ever-lovable Count Rostov.

iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy--and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood

Jean M. Twenge Ph.D.

Non-Fiction

Twenge returns with this remarkable book examining the generation born between 1995 and today. This group she calls iGen has exhibited some of the most significant shifts in behavior compared to any other generation. This compelling book is a must read exploring the influences and changes happening within our culture and children.