

books '15
Book Talk
AMPA Lunch
October 28, 2015



Sandy Mack

Circling the Sun

Paula McLain

(Fiction)

The author of the critically acclaimed bestseller *The Paris Wife* returns with this story set in colonial British East Africa in the 1920s. It introduces the reader to an alluring historical character whose unconventional life in Kenya is filled with fearless adventure, intrigue and romance.

The Invention of Wings

Sue Monk Kidd

(Fiction)

Based on the real life story of Sarah Grimke and her sister Nina who became fierce abolitionists and spoke for the rights of slaves and women, Kidd tells an extraordinary story of the sisters, interwoven with the story of two of the family slaves, Charlotte and her daughter Handful. All struggle to find their voice and their rightful place in life. Their journeys are intense.

The Girl on the Train

Paula Hawkins

(Fiction)

Hawkins' first work of fiction is a gripping thriller which attempts to solve the whereabouts of one of the female characters. Told from the points of view of three women narrators, the story weaves back and forth in time, revealing details for the reader to piece together. The fact that the main narrator is an alcoholic with fuzzy recall and memories that cannot be trusted merely adds to the suspense.

All the Light We Cannot See

Anthony Doerr

(Fiction)

Beautifully crafted, Doerr's novel won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2015. The novel interweaves the stories of two characters, a blind French girl and a young German boy who becomes a highly specialized tracker of the Resistance Movement in World War II. Their lives and stories will intersect in St. Malo, France.

The Wright Brothers

David McCullough

(Non-Fiction)

Pulitzer Prize winning biographer, Mc Cullough tells the story of two brothers whose sheer genius and inventiveness kept them finely focused on creating a "flying machine". Their successful flight at Kitty Hawk in 1903 changed the course of history.



Carl Silva

My Brilliant Friend

Elena Ferrante

Fiction

A good friend has vanished from her small Neapolitan town- a town that has been transformed as we learn from a narrator as we go back in time to the 1950's. Is this a mystery? Not quite. It is the beautiful story of Elena and Lila growing up as best friends, making their way through an ever-changing world. This is Book 1 of four and shares their lives as they grow from young girls into young women. One will marry and the other will observe her brilliant friend changing in ways both beautiful and troubling.

A God in Ruins

Kate Atkinson

Fiction

So you just finish writing a stunning novel (*Life after Life*). What do you do next? Well, Kate Atkinson takes the daring approach of not creating a sequel but offering a companion novel that returns to the charming Todd family, focusing on Teddy, a RAF fighter who will go on to live a life semi-surrounded by his children. The novel moves us between Teddy as a fighter and the later years of his life. This gentle balance carries none of the jolting time jumps found in *Life after Life*, and there is no need to read *Life after Life* to fall in love with this novel. The interplay of being high up in the sky and being brought down to earth works on a variety of levels as we see Teddy return from war-torn Europe to raise his family.

How to be Both

Ali Smith

Fiction

Where to begin? Seriously. I really do mean where will you begin? Ali Smith's novel is composed of Part 1 and Part 2, and you can select where you will start your journey. Part 1 starts with a snake line of words that are the utterances of Francesca, a Renaissance artist who is spectred into the 21st century to observe Georgia and her mother-a mother fascinated by a painting done by Francesca in the 15th century. Told from Francesca's point of view, we learn about a most remarkable painting and its creation while Franseca tries to figure out exactly why her spirit is in the modern era. Part 2 is the story of Georgia and her mother and the secrets learned upon her mother's passing. No matter which part you read first, there are series of aha moments as you slowly see how the two novels intertwine and reveal the power of art.

Here

Richard McGuire

Fiction

A remarkable graphic novel that contemplates the passage of time with a simple idea- a single room is explored through decades and centuries and beyond. The pages in a non-chronological order bounce us through times as we see families, children, and couples grow up. The novel even moves back in time to when the building was simply forest and forward to a future yet determined. The end effect is an understanding of time and transformation. I can't think of anything I've read that achieves what this work visually contemplates.

The Quartet

Joseph Ellis

Non-Fiction

They signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776, but that was only the beginning. I'm not sure why I thought everybody got along after that. Well, it seems the colonies did not get along. In fact, they had no sense of a national identity and something needed to be done. *The Quartet* tells the remarkable story of four men who understood that another document was sorely needed if these new fledgling states were to survive. And what document was needed? Well, this is the story of the Constitution and it is very compelling.