Next Read from Best Book Lists

Looking back on my reading list for the year, I realized that there is still time to add to my goodreads.com bookshelf. I began to search the best book lists for fiction titles. There were so many interesting books, but I narrowed it down to five since there are only a few weeks left. Next month, I plan on listing my best book list of 2015, with my top five books of the year. Here is the list of five titles, from various best book lists, your reading group may be interested in reading along with me:

**Imperium: a Fiction of the South Seas** by Christian Kracht
*Publishers Weekly’s Best Books of 2015*
A satirical indictment of extremism follows the exploits of a radical vegetarian and nudist from Nuremberg who voyages to 1902's Bismarck Archipelago to establish a colony based on the worship of the sun and coconuts.

**Orhan’s Inheritance** by Aline Ohanesian
*Amazon’s Best Book of April 2015*
Inheriting the family kilim rug dynasty when his eccentric grandfather is found dead, Orhan struggles with will stipulations that leave the family estate to a stranger who holds secrets from the final years of the Ottoman Empire.

**Beauty is a Wound** by Eka Kurniawan
*Publishers Weekly’s Best Books of 2015*
The epic novel *Beauty is a Wound* combines history, satire, family tragedy, legend, humor, and romance in a sweeping polyphony.

**Slade House** by David Mitchell
*Kirkus Nominee for Best Fiction 2015*
Follows the narrative of five different people who disappear through a mysterious door in an unassuming alleyway that leads to Slade House, owned by a peculiar brother and sister, and vanish completely from the outside world.

**Our Spoons Came from Woolworths** by Barbara Comyns
*Kirkus Nominee for Best Fiction 2015*
“I told Helen my story and she went home and cried.” So begins *Our Spoons Came from Woolworths*. But Barbara Comyns’ beguiling novel is far from tragic, despite the harrowing ordeals its heroine endures.

All summaries are from the publishers.  

— Jean Simpson, Readers’ Services Librarian

“What a miracle it is that out of these small, flat, rigid squares of paper unfolds world after world after world, worlds that sing to you, comfort and quiet or excite you. Books help us understand who we are and how we are to behave. They show us what community and friendship mean; they show us how to live and die.” — Anne Lamott
The American Library Association (ALA) recently announced its short list for the Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Fiction and Non-fiction. The Carnegie medal was established in 2012 to recognize the best fiction and non-fiction books for adult readers published in the United States the previous year. The two medal winners will be announced at the ALA Midwinter Meeting & Exhibits. Selection Committee Chair Nancy Pearl will name the winners at the Reference and User Services Association’s (RUSA) Book and Media Awards event on Sunday, January 10, 2016, in Boston. Each winner will receive $5,000 and two finalists in each category will receive $1,500.

The short list for fiction:

The Sympathizer by Viet Thanh Nguyen
The story of a South Vietnamese captain who was brought up by an absent French father and a poor Vietnamese mother and a man who went to university in America who returns to Vietnam to fight for the Communist cause.

The Book of Aron by Jim Shepard
Aron and a handful of boys and girls in the Warsaw Ghetto smuggle and trade things through the "quarantine walls" to keep their people alive until he is rescued by a Jewish-Polish doctor and advocate of children's rights who instills within him the importance of letting the world know the atrocities they have all suffered at the hands of the enemy.

A Little Life by Hanya Yanagihara
Moving to New York to pursue creative ambitions, four former classmates share decades marked by love, loss, addiction, and haunting elements from a brutal childhood. (This book was short listed for the Man Booker Prize and is a National Book Award finalist)

The short list for non-fiction:

H is for Hawk by Helen Macdonald
When Helen Macdonald's father died suddenly on a London street, she was devastated. An experienced falconer, Helen had been captivated by hawks since childhood, she'd never before been tempted to train one of the most vicious predators, the goshawk. But in her grief, she saw that the goshawk's fierce and feral temperament mirrored her own.

Hold Still: A Memoir with Photographs by Sally Mann
A renowned photographer tells her family's history in photos and words, after sorting through a box of old papers that revealed scandals, alcohol and domestic abuse, affairs, family land ownership, large amounts of money earned and lost and racial complications. (This book is also a National Book Award finalist)

The Invention of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt's New World by Andrea Wulf
The acclaimed author of The Brother Gardeners and Founding Gardeners reveals the forgotten life of the visionary German naturalist whose ideas continue to influence how we view ourselves and our relationship with the natural world today.

The 2015 Carnegie Medal winner for fiction was All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr and the winner for non-fiction was Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption by Bryan Stevenson. Good luck to all the nominees.

All book summaries are courtesy of the publisher.

-Lisa Jones, Readers' Services Librarian

New to Book Club in a Bag

Readers' Services has added the following book to our Book Club in a Bag collection:

Go Set a Watchman by Harper Lee

“An historic literary event: the publication of a newly discovered novel, the earliest known work from Harper Lee, the beloved, bestselling author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning classic, To Kill a Mockingbird. Originally written in the mid-1950s, Go Set a Watchman was the novel Harper Lee first submitted to her publishers before To Kill a Mockingbird. Assumed to have been lost, the manuscript was discovered in late 2014. Go Set a Watchman features many of the characters from To Kill a Mockingbird some twenty years later. Returning home to Maycomb to visit her father, Jean Louise Finch—Scout—struggles with issues both personal and political, involving Atticus, society, and the small Alabama town that shaped her. Exploring how the characters from To Kill a Mockingbird are adjusting to the turbulent events transforming mid-1950s America, Go Set a Watchman casts a fascinating new light on Harper Lee’s enduring classic. Moving, funny and compelling, it stands as a magnificent novel in its own right.”

(From the Publisher)

Let us provide everything you need for a successful book discussion. We can supply you with 10 copies of the book and a discussion binder. The binder contains discussion questions, biographical information and critical material. Please contact Readers’ Services, 921-7161, ext 239 to reserve a book for your Book Club

-Evelyn Hershkowitz, Readers’ Services Librarian