Looking Back on My 2015 Reading List

As I reflect on 2015, I find it interesting to look back on all the books I had the great pleasure of reading. Whether I read the book or listened to the audio version, I was thoroughly entertained this entire year. It was difficult to narrow the list to my top five favorites, but I was able to choose the books that left an indelible mark in some way. These books demonstrated that characters or people, in the case of the one non-fiction book, have within them the capacity for empathy, love, conviction, and strength. Here is the list of my top five picks for 2015 your group may be interested in reading for an upcoming discussion:

Dark Corners by Ruth Rendell
Carl Martin's life begins to unravel in ways he never could have imagined when a friend he sold homeopathic diet pills to turns up dead and his new tenant, Dermot McKinnon, begins to blackmail him.

Harriet Wolf’s Seventh Book of Wonders by Julianna Baggott
Years after the death of the family matriarch, a reclusive famous author who may have written a final manuscript, her daughter and two grown granddaughters share the secrets that have shaped their lives and loves.

Just Mercy: a Story of Justice and Redemption by Bryan Stevenson
The founder of the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Alabama recounts his experiences as a lawyer working to assist those desperately in need, reflecting on his pursuit of the ideal of compassion in American justice.

The Nightingale by Kristin Hannah
Reunited when the elder’s husband is sent to fight in World War II, French sisters Vianne and Isabelle find their bond as well as their respective beliefs tested by a world that changes in horrific ways.

Our Souls at Night by Kent Haruf
A senior-aged widow and widower forge a loving bond over shared loneliness and respective histories, provoking local gossip and the disapproval of their grown children in ways that are further complicated by an extended visit by a sad young grandchild.

All summaries from the publishers.  

—Jean Simpson, Readers’ Services Librarian

“You know you’ve read a good book when you turn the last page and feel a little as if you have lost a friend.” —Paul Sweeney

On Sunday, December 3, 2015 the New York Times Book Review published the 10 Best Books of 2015. These books were selected by the editors of the New York Times Book Review.

The fiction books are:
1. The Door by Magda Szabo
3. Outline by Rachel Cusk
4. The Sellout by Paul Beatty
5. The Story of the Lost Child by Elena Ferrante, translated by Ann Goldstein

The non-fiction books are:
1. Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates
2. Empire of Cotton: A Global History by Sven Beckert
3. H is for Hawk by Helen MacDonald
4. The Invention of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt’s New World by Andrea Wulf
5. One of Us: The Story of Anders Breivik and the Massacre in Norway by Asne Seierstad, translated by Sarah Death

This article can be found at the following web address:

There will be a Best Books of 2015 display on the main floor for the month of January. At Readers’ Services, we will be happy to help you find any of the above books. Happy New Year! - Evelyn Hershkowitz, Readers’ Service Librarian

In Memoriam 2015

The literary world lost some luminary greats in 2015. Each perfected the written word and gained a huge fan base in their respective genres. Most enjoyed long and prosperous careers as writers. Here are a few authors that left us in 2015:

Jackie Collins (Chances, Hollywood Wives)
E.L. Doctorow (Billy Bathgate, Homer and Langley & Ragtime)
Henning Mankell (The Kurt Wallander Mystery Series)
Colleen McCullough (The Thorn Birds, The Master of Rome Series)
Terry Pratchett (The Discworld Series)
Ruth Rendell (The Inspector Wexford Mystery Series)
Ann Rule (Mortal Danger: and Other True Cases)

These authors are gone but truly not forgotten as their memorable characters, well-crafted narratives and inner thoughts will remain with us forever. Do you have a favorite book from the above list of authors? If so, we would love to hear from you. Please send us an email at Readersservices@syossetlibrary.org.

Best wishes for a very happy, healthy New Year filled with great books!

- Lisa Jones, Readers’ Services Librarian