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Best Books List: Winter 2021

Compiled and Suggested by Members of the MCQ Social Exchange Project

« Fill your house with stacks of books,
in all the crannies and all the nooks »
- Dr. Seuss

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- In January 2021, members of the MCQ Social Exchange project had a meeting to discuss their favourite books. Everyone contributed at least one title, and we had a great time discovering new authors and titles. We decided to put them all together in one list to share with others who might be wondering what to read next...

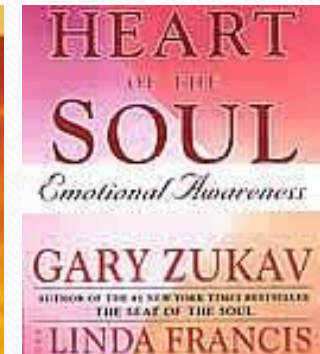
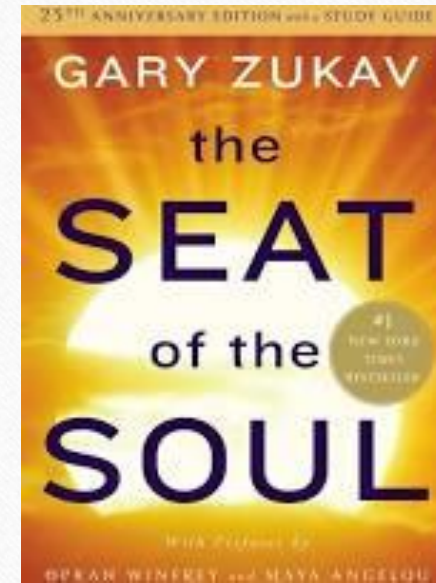


So here are our
suggestions,

In no particular order....

Joan's List: Books with Soul

- Love Anthony by Lisa Genova----A novel about autism. Highly recommended!
<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/13547381-love-anthony>
- The Seat of the Soul, by Gary Zukav. This about the birth of a new species-----and the explosion of human perception past the five senses.
- The Heart of the Soul, by Gary Zukav. The longest journey you will make in your life is from your head to your heart.



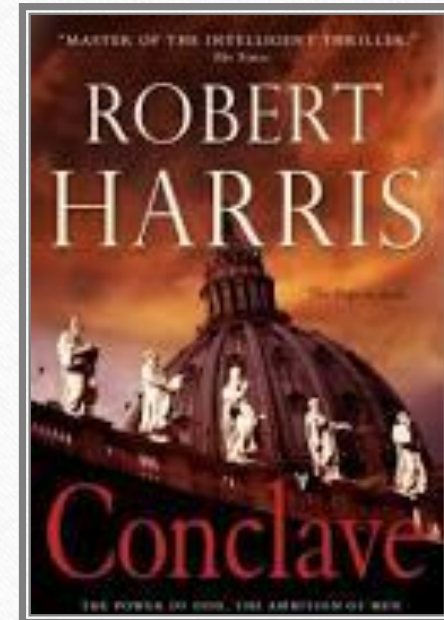
Conclave, suggested by Mary 007

- By Robert Harris

- "Behind the locked doors of the Sistine Chapel, one hundred and eighteen cardinals from all over the globe will cast their votes in the world's most secretive election. They are holy men. But they have ambition. And they have rivals.

Over the next seventy-two hours one of them will become the most powerful spiritual figure on earth. «

- <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/29397486-conclave>



Yvette's Choices:

My list includes:

Historical fiction writer, Dorothy Dunnett -- Lymond Chronical about a man looking for his parentage but coping with The Knights Templar, Nostradamus in the 16th century and Niccolo Series 15th century and the business of armies, importing and exporting of goods. Politics is a big theme in all her books.

Her other book is Macbeth, a wonderful story of the King that many of us are familiar with through Shakespeare.

Minette Walters, mystery writer, and her recent book, The Turn Of Midnight, about the bubonic (Black Death) plague in the 14th century.

Wally Lamb as an author



Another suggestion from Yvette



My Grandmother Asked Me To Tell You She's Sorry, by
Fredrik Backman

A grandmother tells her 8-year-old granddaughter a 'fairy tale' with characters that represent real people in the young girl's life.

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/23604559-my-grandmother-asked-me-to-tell-you-she-s-sorry>

Biography and Nonfiction Ideas from Susan M.

- *Extraordinary Canadians* by Peter Mansbridge, Simon & Schuster Canada, 2020

- Short stories about 17 unknown Canadians from diverse backgrounds and in a range of fields who have accomplished great and unusual things in their lives. Among my favourites are those about Jessica Grossman and Matt Devlin.

- *Arriving at your own Door, 108 Lessons in Mindfulness* by Jon Kabat-Zinn, Hyperion Books, 2007

- Sometimes books find me. This book caught my eye in a second-hand bookshop several years ago, but had stayed in my pile of books to read until very recently, when it said, *It's my turn now. You need this now...* Here is a quote:

Awareness is immanent, and infinitely available, but it is camouflaged, like a shy forest animal.

The Tao of Willie, A Guide to Happiness in Your Heart by Willie Nelson, Gotham Books, 2006

- The back cover describes this as an ...*autobiographical collection of life advice, ... spiritual and practical lessons learned from decades of hard knocks and good bounces.* It also quotes LIFE magazine: *Folksy advice, colorful jokes, and anecdotes from the stage.* I read a stanza introducing one chapter in the book:

Still is still moving to me

It's hard to explain 'cause it won't go into words.

I can be moving or I can be still

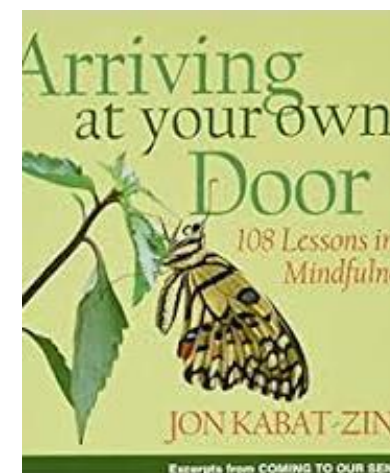
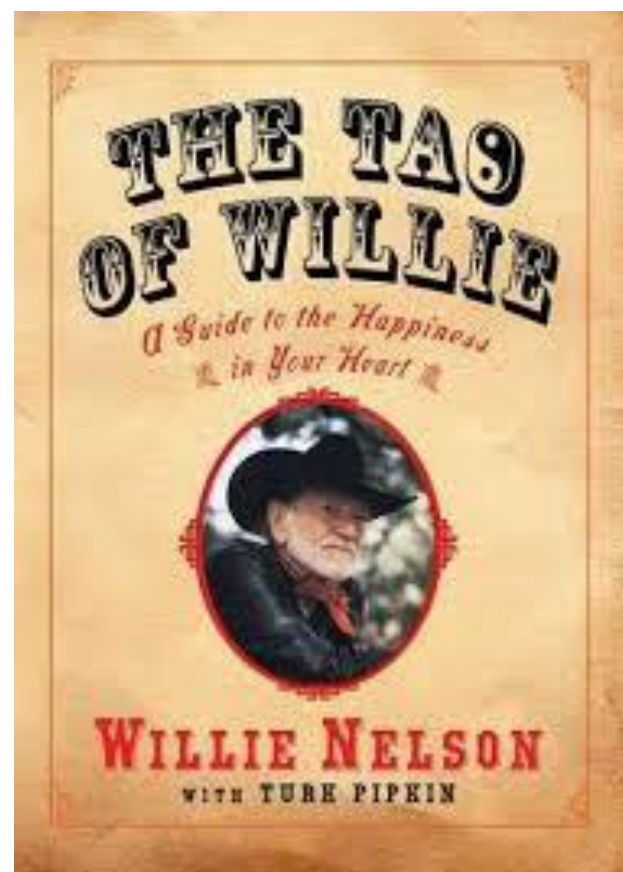
But still is still moving to me

which is from one of Willie's songs.

Dictionnaire des expressions imagées / images in words dictionary, by Gilberte Dubé & Eugénie Fortin, 1998, Les Éditions internationales, Alain Stanké

- I have always found it strange that expressions that mean the same thing often don't match the words in the other language Ex *.It's raining cats and dogs!* Around here, I hear *Il pleut des clous.* in this book, the French translation given is: *Il pleut à boire debout!*

Go figure!



Timeless Classics: Suggestions from Mary G.

- 1. **The Good Earth** Pearl Buck, 1931 (Pulitzer Prize 1932 and Nobel prize for Literature 1938)

Wang Lung and his family experience famine, hardship, and suffering in rural China. Wang Lung's goal is to make his family prosper.

Genre: Historical Fiction

- 2. **To Kill a Mockingbird** Harper Lee 1960

This story is told through the eyes of a young girl as her crusading lawyer father risks everything to defend a black man wrongly accused.

Genre: Family Drama

3. **A Painted House** John Grisholm 2000

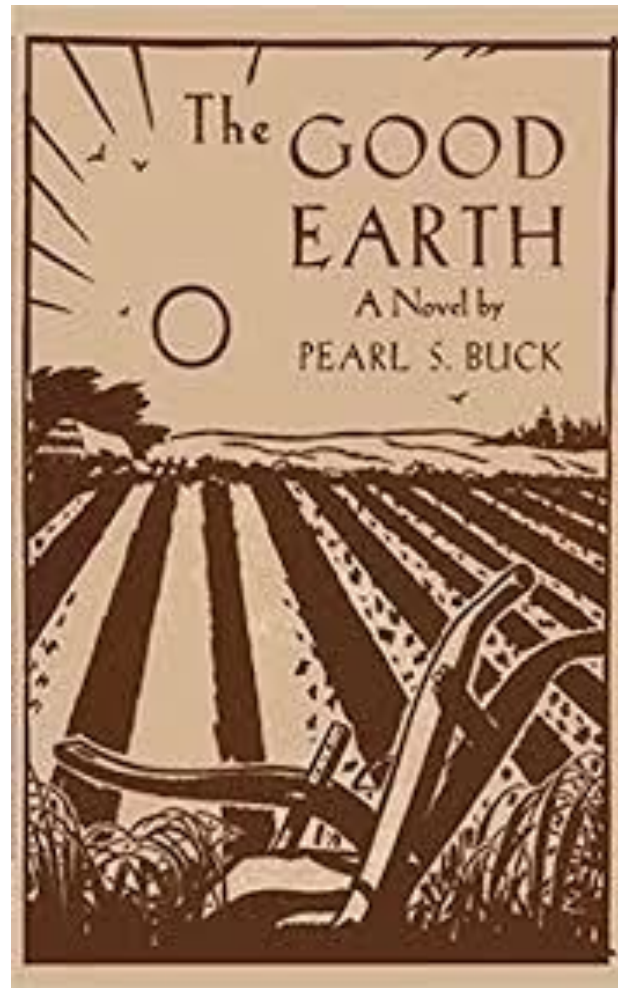
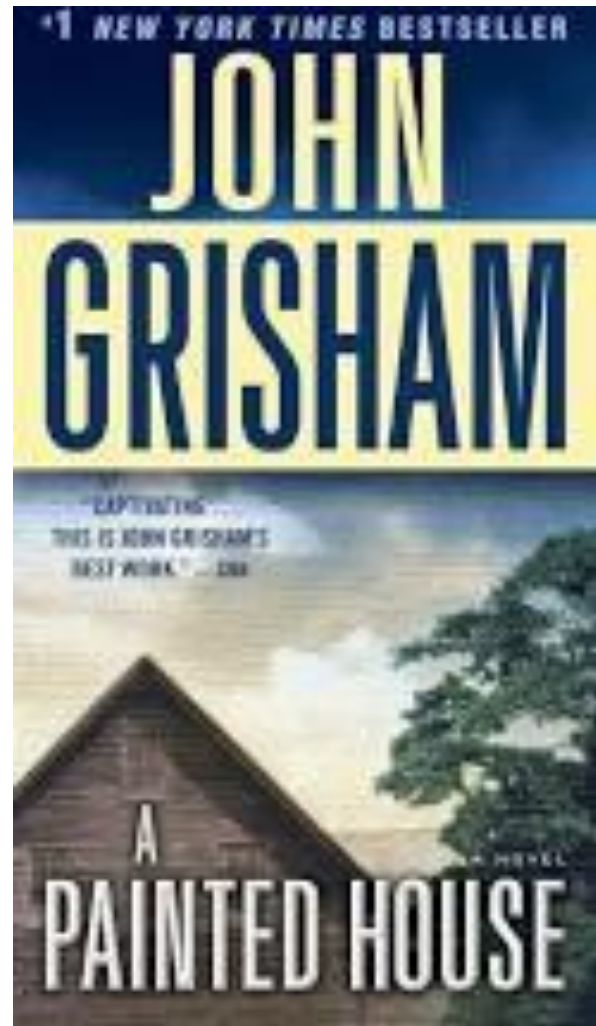
A 7 year old boy who has never told a lie or kept a secret tells the story of a summer of 1952 on his family's poor cotton farm in Arkansas.

Genre: Domestic Fiction/Thriller

4. **The Sneetches** Dr. Seuss 1961

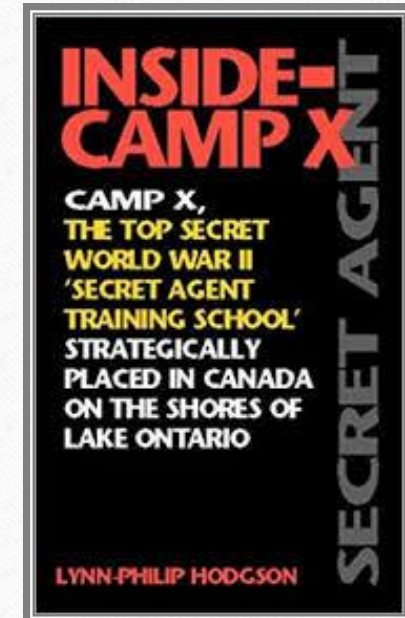
This Dr. Seuss rhyme teaches children and adults about the silliness of racism and discrimination. People should be kind and treat others fairly and equally.

Genre: Children's Literature



Camp X, Eleanor's choice

- I suggest the book "Camp "X". It is written by Lynn Philip Hodgson and is a true story of a training camp east of Oshawa on the St. Lawrence. Another good book is the historical novel, "The Pillars of the Earth," by Ken Follet.

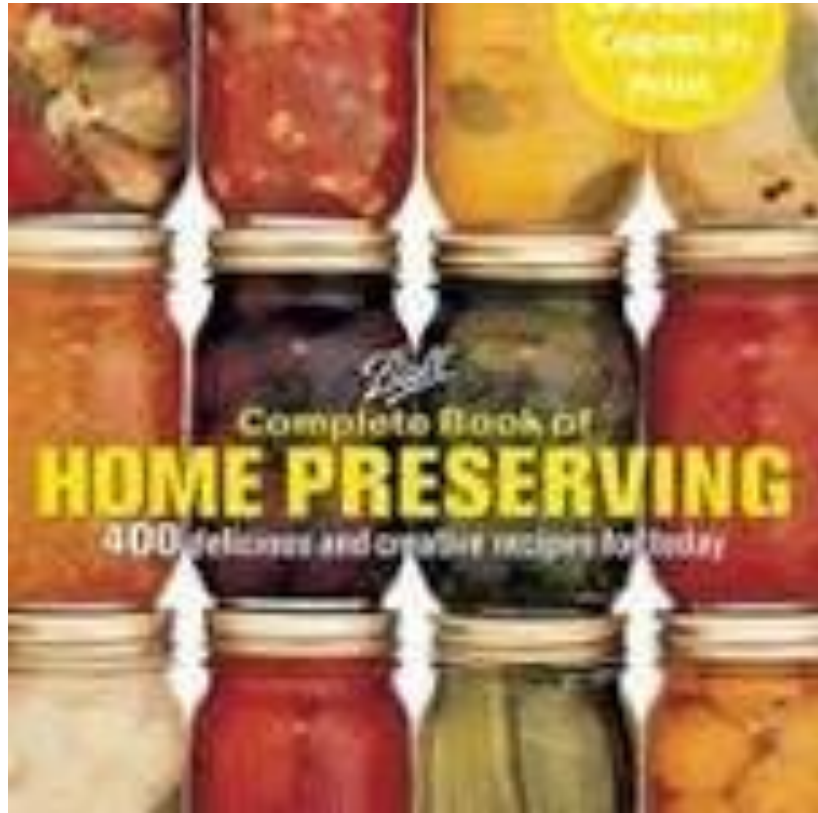


A Most Indispensible Book: Harrap's English-French Dictionary

- When I say that the *Harrap's English/ French Dictionary* is my favorite book, I mean the one that I consult most often; I like it because it is very useful in my work as a translator. . My reading is mostly newspapers and current events magazines. I read the *Journal de Montréal* because it is the only newspaper that delivers to my door. As for magazines, I like *Time*, *The New Yorker*, and *Road & Track*. --Len

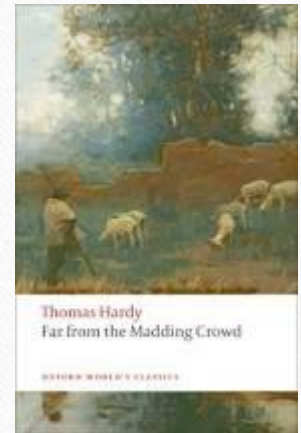
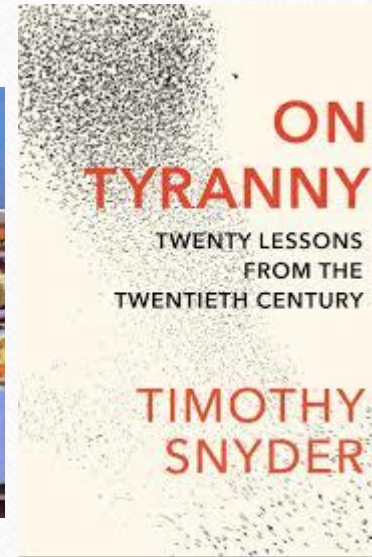
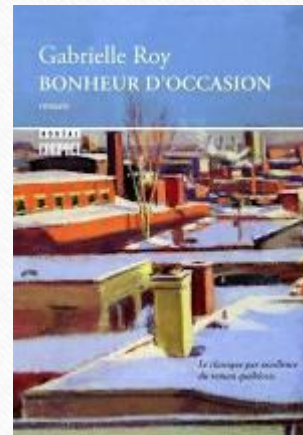
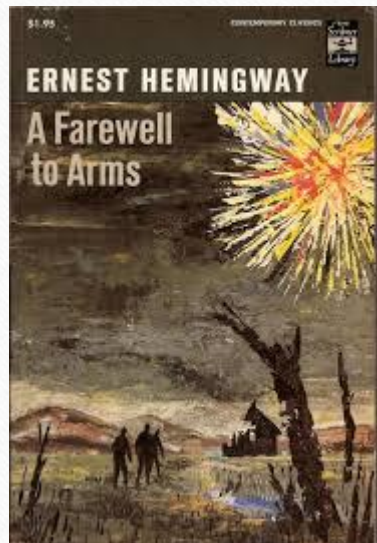
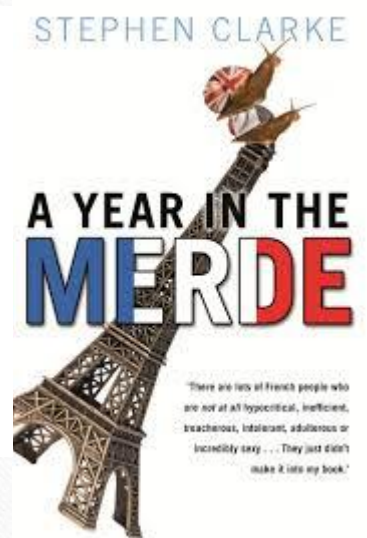
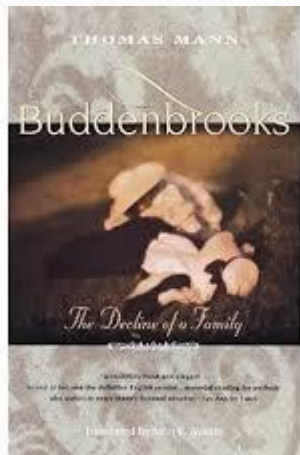
Diane's Faves: Cookbooks

1. La Cuisiniere -- Five Roses--I don't remember how it is called in English. This Five Roses book my Grandmother and Mother had in English. When I found mine, it was in French. I figured better in French than not at all.
2. Meals in Minutes -- Thrive Life recipes. Thrive Life is a company that creates freeze dried & dehydrated foods of all kinds. Meats, vegetables, fruits, dried eggs, dried milk, spices, etc; by Jodi Weiss, Tracy Taylor, Christina Riostirado.
3. The last but not least is Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving, Edited by Judi Kingry & Lauren Devine. I bought this book because it was recommended by everyone on the internet, to help you start canning the right way. When I started canning in spring 2020, I was not very brave. There are all kinds of tips and tricks to make canning life a little easier. I started with Jams and Jellies. Then I dared try fruits, Pineapple in apple juice. Yummy Then a put my brave heart to work and started to can meat chicken and beef. Now there is a kind of joke going around the house. What are you canning next?
 - Those are my main go to books. I really love them.



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- “Now there is a kind of joke going around the house. What are you canning next?” - Diane

Bruce's List: Classics and Beyond



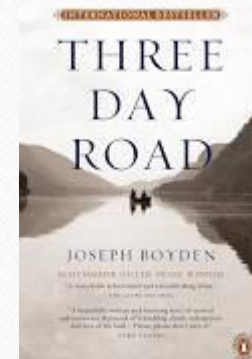
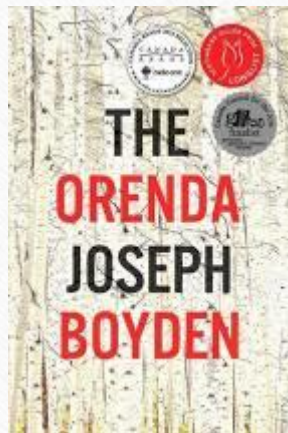
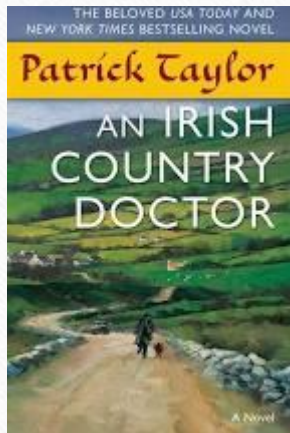
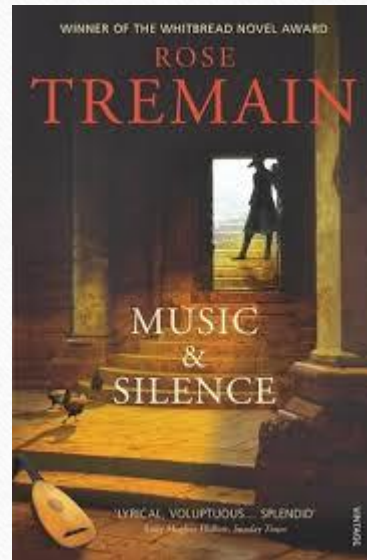
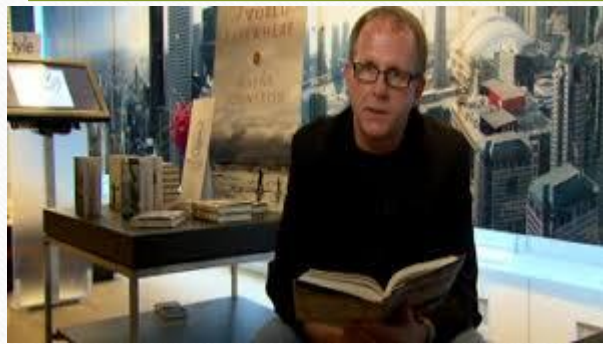
1. ***A Farewell to Arms*** (Ernest Hemingway - 1929); A novel set during the Italian campaign of World War 1 describing a love affair between an American lieutenant in the ambulance corps of the Italian army and an English nurse.
2. ***A Year in the Merde*** (Stephen Clarke - 2004 and 2006): A spicy, humorous sort of diary of an Englishman's year in France. It contrasts English and French cultural sensibilities through the author's reflections on and reactions to various events and situations. Its sequel is entitled ***Merde Actually***.
3. ***Bonheur d'occasion*** (Gabrielle Roy - 1945): A realistic portrait of the lives of inhabitants of St-Henri, a working class neighbourhood in Montreal. The English translation is entitled ***The Tin Flute***.

4. *Buddenbrooks: The Decline of a Family* (Thomas Mann - 1901, paperback translation 1994): The rise and fall of a rich merchant family in northern Germany around the middle of the 19th century.

5. *Far from the Madding Crowd* (Thomas Hardy - 1874): A story set in rural southwest England. It deals in themes of love, honour and betrayal against a backdrop of the seemingly idyllic, but often harsh, realities of a farming community in Victorian England.

6. *On Tyranny* (Timothy Snyder - 2017): This book bears the subtitle *Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century*. It is a call for action in the form of a guide to resistance against totalitarianism with invaluable ideas about how we can preserve our freedoms in the uncertain years to come.

When It's Impossible to Choose Just One or Two: Bonnie's List



“Music & Silence” by **Rose Tremain**. (historical novel based in Denmark 1620-1630)

— English lutenist Peter Claire plays in King Christian IV’s famous Court Orchestra; a wild ride for a variety of interesting characters.

“Wicked Autumn” by **G.M. Malliet** (1st of 4 novels, each connected to one of seasons)

—Max Tudor, former MI5 spy turned Anglican Priest & DCI Cotton work together to solve mysteries in the English village of Nether Monkslip.

“The Colony of Unrequited Dreams” & « The Divine Ryans » by **Wayne Johnston**

— 2 bittersweet, humorous novels about maritimers (e.g., Joey Smallwood in « The Colony »)

« Three Day Road », « Through Black Spruce » & « The Orenda » 3 amazing, award-winning novels by **Joseph Boyden** inviting us into the world of Canada’s first peoples.

« Accused » & « Damaged » 2 of **Lisa Scottoline's** mystery thrillers, these involving a feisty all-female law firm, Rosato & DiNunzio. (Scottoline is herself a lawyer.)

« The nature of the Beast » & all the other books by **Louise Penny** a Townshipper.

— imaginary town Three Pines has fascinating characters, not least of these is Chief Inspector Armand Gamache who, aided by special villagers, solves local murders.

« An Irish Country Doctor » by **Patrick Taylor** is the 1st of a series of very amusing novels about Dr. Fingal Flahertie O'Reilly & his young assistant, Dr. Barry Laverty who live & work in the imaginary Northern Ireland village of Ballybucklebo. Added to the great stories, at the end of each book there are recipes for food that O'Reilly's housekeeper Kinky Kincaid feeds the doctors. (Patrick Taylor is himself a medical doctor so we get lots of real medical information.)

« Outlander » the 1st of a series of 8 great historical novels by **Diana Gabaldon**. We follow characters who time-travel between the 1700s & the 1900s, spending time in parts of Scotland, England, France, & various parts of the Americas. There is simply one exciting adventure after another for the characters who inhabit these novels.

Just the Tip of the Iceberg: a Few of Karine's Faves

- **The Great Alone** by Kristin Hannah

Ernt Allbright, a former POW, comes home from the Vietnam war a changed and volatile man. When he loses yet another job, he makes an impulsive decision: he will move his family north, to Alaska, where they will live off the grid in America's last true frontier. I have read many of her novels and pretty much loved all of them.

- **The Nightingale** by Kristin Hannah

The Nightingale tells the stories of two sisters, separated by years and experience, by ideals, passion and circumstance, each embarking on her own dangerous path toward survival, love, and freedom in German-occupied, war-torn France—a heartbreakingly beautiful novel that celebrates the resilience of the human spirit and the durability of women. It is a novel for everyone, a novel for a lifetime.



19 Minutes, by Jodi Picoult

The story takes place in Sterling, New Hampshire, a 17-year-old high school student commits an act of violence that will forever change the lives of many people. In this novel you see the point of view of the young man, his family, his previous best friend and others. It is a book that makes you think, question yourself and see many different sides of a moment that lasted 19 minutes. I have read many of her novels and love her style....as I have mentioned previously...you can't read too many of her books at once. They are heavy and thought provoking.



Karine's French-language Choices

- **Les Soeurs Deblois** de Louise Tremblay d'Éssiambre
- This is a French series of 4 books. I just feel in love with the characters and storyline. *Cette nouvelle saga, qui s'amorce dans les années vingt, a pour cadre une famille québécoise dont la mère hypocondriaque, sombre dans l'alcoolisme et la dépression aux côtés d'un mari qui se refuse de voir la vérité.*
- **Au Bord de la Rivière** de Michel David
- I hadn't read a French novel since being in my teens and a family friend lent me the first one in this 4-book series. I could NOT put it down. It was like I was learning and enjoying myself at the same time. It got me into reading Quebecois novels. *En 1870, au bord de la rivière Nicolet, une région agricole s'affirme et veut devenir une paroisse autonome. Des cultivateurs francophones et anglophones s'affrontent : les Canadiens contre les Irlandais, les Beauchemin contre les Ellis, les Rouges contre les Bleus, le rang Saint-Jean contre le rang Sainte-Ursule. Seules une mission et une religion communes les forcent à cohabiter.*



Julie's List: CanLit and World Cultures

"The Ch'i-Lin Purse: A Collection of Ancient Chinese Stories," retold by Linda Fang, 1995 (fiction)

-Amusing, captivating, and unique stories which open a door onto Chinese culture. For all ages; can be read to children 7 years and up, but can be equally enjoyed by adults. A book of little gems that makes for relaxing reading.

"The Scalpel and the Silver Bear: The First Navajo Woman Surgeon Combines Western Medicine and Traditional Healing," by Lori Arviso Alvord, M.D., and Elizabeth Cohen Van Pelt, 1999: non-fiction, healing arts.

-Dr. Arviso Alvord writes about growing up on a Navajo reserve and leaving to study, eventually graduating as the first female Navajo surgeon from Stanford University. She describes many traditional Navajo beliefs, such as the philosophy of "Walking in Beauty"; an informative and interesting book about what different cultures can contribute to healing.

“The Innocents,” by Michael Crummey, 2019 (Canadian literature)

I have read everything that Newfoundlander Michael Crummey has written. His characters, breathtakingly human, are masterpieces of creative fiction; his plots are multi-layered and gripping. His novels are never a light read: I shed tears at least once in each of his books; some of his characters and their situations are unforgettable. His wonderful writing almost defies description. “The Innocents” is about Ada and Evered who become orphaned one winter in a lonely and isolated cove, and struggle to survive by themselves, defying the odds and growing into adulthood. Voted a best book of the year by CBC, Toronto Star, Maclean’s.

“Island: The Collected Stories,” by Alistair MacLeod, 2000 (Canadian Literature)

This is a most beautiful collection of stories, written in a direct and honest narrative style that is deceptively simple, touching on themes of family, isolation, connection, and human dilemmas set mostly on Cape Breton Island, and MacLeod evokes the sense of place masterfully.



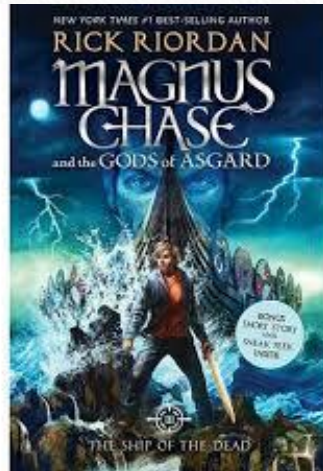
A P.S. from Joan

The Secret

by Rhonda Byrne:

A good book for the night
table in your spare room.

A P.S from Julie: A Suggested Author for All Ages

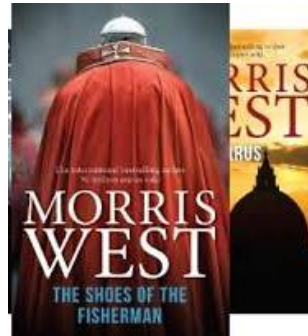
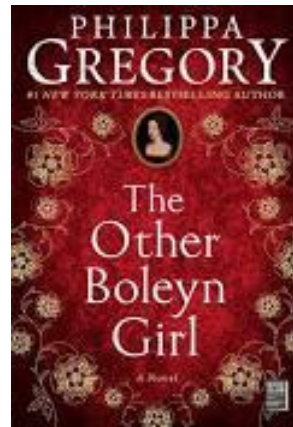


- All children's and young adult fiction by the incomparable **Rick Riordan** are a great read. I've read every single one, and so have both my kids, now 22 and 19. We read the first one when they were 11 and 9. We've read them out loud; we read them silently to ourselves. I've even read them as an adult, for myself. From *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* to *Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard*, these are amazing books that bring the mythology of Greece, Egypt, and Scandinavia to life, depending on the series.

Last, But not Least: For the Love of Reading - Jocelyn's Lists

- Jocelyn has drawn up an extensive and wide-ranging list of books, which is really a list of lists, organized by genre, mood, outlook, and even author. There is insufficient space to include the full comments here, but these are all suggestions you can trust. What follows is just a sampling; you should not lack for reading material for months!

1. Prophetic – Intercultural – Pleasurable



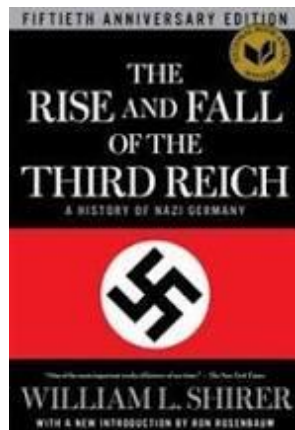
- Books I reread now and then because I find them prophetic: **The Vatican Trilogy, by Morris West** – “The Shoes of the Fisherman” – “The Clowns of God” – “Lazarus”

- Books I reread to try to understand another culture or group: **African Trilogy, by Chinua Achebe:** “Things Fall Apart” – “No Longer At Ease” – “Arrow of God”

- Books I read for pure pleasure: almost any and all historical fiction especially by **Philippa Gregory,** such as the **Tudor Court Series**

- “The Boleyn Inheritance” “The Other Boleyn Girl” “The Other Queen” “The Constant Princess” “The Virgins Lover” “The Queens Fool”

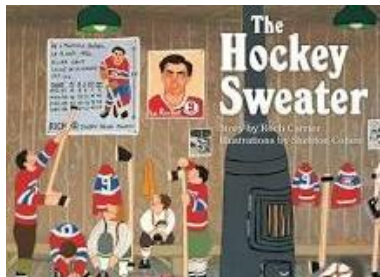
2. History – Politics – Ideas – and a few Thrillers



- **“Rise and Fall of the Third Reich”** by William Shirer
- **“Vindication of the Rights of Women”** by Mary Wollstone Craft in 1792
- **“Utopia”** by Thomas More. Written in 1516

Books I read for the thrill:

- **“The Odessa File”** by Frederick Forsythe and anything else by him especially series
- **“Game, Set and Match”** by Len Deighton” and his other series
- **“Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy”** by John LeCarré and his George Smiley thrillers

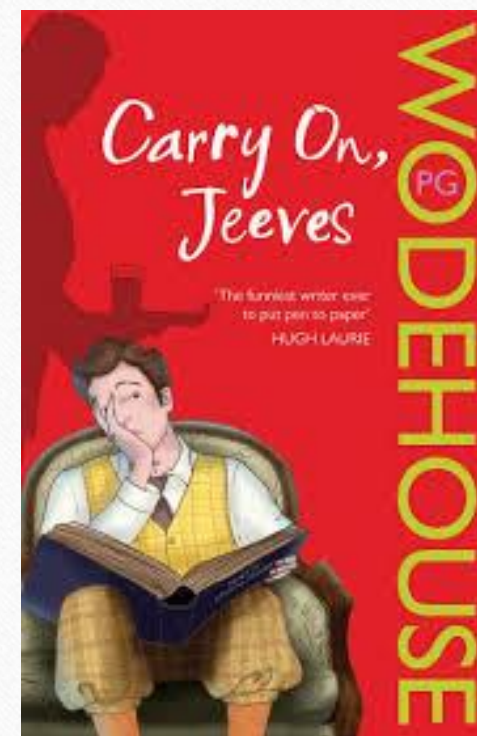
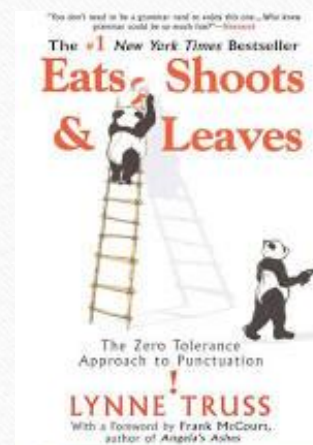
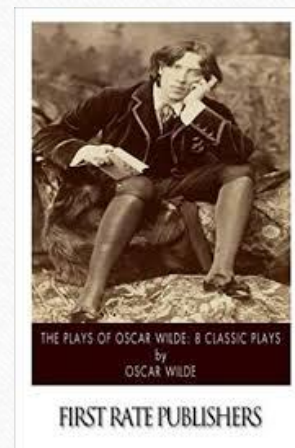


3. Books to Read Your Children or Grandchildren + Canadiana

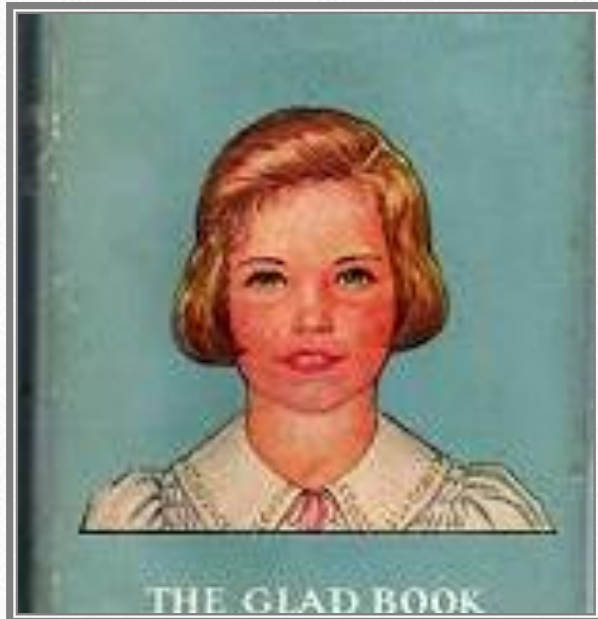
- Books for children: **“Charlotte’s Web”** by E.B. White; **“Love You Forever”** by Robert Munsch; **“The Little Engine that Could”** by Watty Piper; **“The Hockey Sweater”** by Roch Carrier (translation by Sheila Fischman)
- Canadiana: **“The Pull of the Stars,”** by Emma Donoghue almost scary because it deals about the flu in Ireland in 1918 where the nurse works in an understaffed hospital. It was also wartime. Written just last year and a must read; **“In the Skin of the Lion,”** by Michael Ondaatje; author **Louise Penny**

4. Great Writing Makes for Great Reading

- Books I read for the sheer pleasure of reading the English writing: **“The Plays of Oscar Wilde”** -- **“Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation”** by Lynn Truss -- **“Jeeves”** series by P.G. Wodehouse
- Plus: anything written by Graham Greene, Frederick Forsythe, John Ralston Saul, Sue Grafton, Ann Patchett, Pablo Neruda, Dorothy L. Sayers, Maya Angelou, Leonard Cohen, Bob Woodward



5. Books That Changed my Outlook on Life



- Series of at least 11 “**Pollyanna, the Glad Girl**” books by authors: Eleanor H. Porter, Harriet Lummis Smith, Elizabeth Bortman. Due to the first book’s (written in 1913), “Pollyanna” has become a byword for someone who like the title character has an unfailingly optimistic outlook; a subconscious bias towards the positive is often described as the Pollyanna principle. Despite the current common use of the term to mean 'excessively cheerful' and is frequently used pejoratively, Pollyanna and her father played the glad game as a method of coping with the real difficulties and sorrows that, along with luck and joy, shape every life. I received the first book when I was about 10 and eventually received the whole collection.

This brings us to the end of the
« BEST BOOKS » List
Winter 2021

But here's one last quote for you that pretty
much sums it all up:

“Ah, how good it is to be among people who are reading.”

– Rainer Maria Rilke

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d'expression anglaise*

Québec 



**CENTRE FOR ACCESS TO
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SERVICES EN ANGLAIS**



*Enhancing Regional
Community Capacity
Renforcer la capacité
communautaire régionale*