

Missouri ESO Newsletter-August 2022

**The Girl in His Shadow** by Audrey Blake. Sent by Cindy McEvoy.

A great story of an orphan, Nora, who grows up in the are of the doctor who saved her life. Because of this circumstance she becomes proficient in the medical field, such as it is in the Victorian years in 1840’s London. But it’s a real struggle and challenge to step into her preferred area of expertise in an era where women are barred from medicine. There’s a love story here to boot. Really enjoyed this book.

**A Summer to Remember** by Erika Montgomery. Sent by Carol Duke.

Debut novel for this author. It had always been just Frankie and her mother Maeve. Frankie has always wondered about her father. Frankie and her mother share a love for movies and run a movie memorabilia store. When Maeve was killed in a car accident, Frankie begins to rethink her life. Then she is sent some sealed letters that appear to have been written by film great Glory Cartwright. Frankie researched the legend and finds that her son is still living on the east coast. She emails him to return the letters and is rebuffed. She finally decides to make a trip to Cape Cod and deliver the letters in person. What she finds there changes her life forever.

**Where Do We Go From Here?** By Dr. David Jeremiah. Sent by Bethel DeSpain.

This book addresses what is going on in our world today. The author talks about ten critical themes. He discusses what our role is in our changing world. Excellent.

**The One and Only Ivan** by Katherine Applegate. Sent by Rev. Linda Wansing.

Ivan, a silver back gorilla, is part of a circus. He watches other animals who are taken captive in the circus. This story is one of friendship and love as some of the animals bond together. A very well written book which would make for a good book discussion. It is based on a real story and made into a film in 2020.

**Facing the Mountain** by Daniel Brown. Sent by Mary Ridge.

A respected ESO member reported on this book by the author of *Boys in the Boat*, which was terrific. I tried it and found it to be as well researched and written as its predecessor. Brown and his wife detail the experiences of several Nisei (American born citizens of Japanese ancestry) and their Nessei parents before and during their internment in WWII retention centers in the U.S. which were much like concentration camps without the goal of total extermination.

**Madam Secretary** by Madeline Albright. Sent by Rosemary Douglas.

This is the memoir of Madeline Albright’s life growing up and through her years as Secretary of State during the Clinton administration. It was fascinating not only to relearn the details of what happened during the world events, but to have the insider story and to understand what Ms. Albright experienced when performing the duties of her role. I enjoyed how candid she was with remembering life events, and expression of her emotions.

**Mrs. Pollifax and the Golden Triangle** by Dorothy Gilman. Sent by Barbara Phillips.

Mrs. Pollifax and her husband are going on a trip to Thailand and her boss at the CIA asks her to just pick up something from a man in Thailand. It sounded simple but it was anything but. Mrs. Pollifax has another adventure with lots of danger. I like the Mrs. Pollifax stories and it is nice to read about an older person having adventures.

**The Unlikely Spy** by Daniel Silva. Sent by Kathy Baylor.

Catherine Blake is a deep-cover Nazi spy trying to find out details about D-Day. Peter Jordan is an American civil engineer who is hired by Allied forces to construct an artificial harbor in England which will be moved to France on D-Day. It’s a race against time for Germans to learn where the Allies might invade, and for Great Britain to do all it can to keep the secret plans safe. The story is based on fact and takes the reader through complicated plots with critical characters to reveal quite a tale of war and deception. Good book.

**Eat Cake** by Jeanne Ray. Sent by Debbie Barber.

Everything starts going wrong. Ruth is surprised when her husband loses his job and is interested in buying a boat. They are growing farther and farther apart, and her marriage could be in trouble. Her mother is living with them, now her father has been hurt and needs to stay with her until he heals. Of course, her parents don’t get along at all. Ruth loves to bake and that is what she does when she feels stressed. The problem is no one really wants to eat it. Really good.

**The Maid** by Nita Prose. Sent by Alicia Thomas.

Molly Gray’s an upscale hotel maid that struggles with social skills. Her grandmother who raised her has always helped with her short comings, but after her death, Molly is left to figure out things on her own. She loves her job at the hotel but her life is turned upside down when she finds the wealthy Charles Black dead in his room. She is soon the police’s number one suspect. It is then she finds out who her true friends really are. It’s a light mystery that touched me and brought me to tears in parts. I loved it. A fun twist at the end.

**Blood & Thunder** by Hampton Sides. Sent by Marilyn Stone.

What a fascinating non-fiction account of the “Army of the West’s” expansion to the Western territories occupied by Mexico. The battles with the Mexicans and the numerous Indian tribes lasted for decades and Kit Carson was at the forefront. The biographical information about him was so interesting and showed him to be a different “hero” then depicted in those frontier novels. The command of language the author has is so very impressive. Well worth the read.

**The Art of Happiness: A Handbook for Living** by the Dalai Lama and Howard C. Cutler, M.D. Sent by Mary Ridge.

Dr. Cutler interviewed the Dalai Lama over several years and adds his scientific perspective, but this updated version of The Art of Happiness is primarily from the Dalai Lama’s own words. He encourages all humans to work on being compassionate, kind, and tolerant. Buddhist philosophy is explored and exercises shared to develop these traits. Realizing the suffering all humans face and trying to avoid negative thinking are worthy suggestions toward being happier.

**Behind Close Doors** by B.A. Paris. Sent by Debbie Barber.

Grace finally meets mister right. It’s love at first sight and he also loves her sister Millie who has Down’s syndrome. Everyone else has ran away. After the wedding, her friend Esther can’t believe Jack is as perfect as Grace says. Grace can’t believe what he’s like behind closed doors. I loved this book. One of the best suspenseful thriller novels I’ve read.

**The Growing Season: How I Built a New Life—and Saved an American Farm** by Sarah Frey. Sent by Alicia Thomas.

Sarah Frey has a connection to my home town of Kennett. Frey Farms has a distribution warehouse here, so I was interested in her story. The youngest of her parents 21 children, she grew up dirt poor on a family farm in Southern Illinois. Her and 4 of her older brothers grew up growing, catching, or hunting for their own dinner. She moved out on her own at age 15 and started her own fresh produce delivery business with nothing but an old pick up truck. Two years later, she bought the family farm, saving it from foreclosure, and created her own produce company. Today her family operates Frey Farms, which has become one of America’s largest fresh produce growers and shippers with farmland across seven states. It is a very inspiring story of hard work and determination that paid off.

**The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo** by Taylor Jenkins Reid. Sent by Connie Robley.

The story is about Evelyn Hugo who is an aging Hollywood actress who is wanting to tell her life story to a journalist. Monique Grant is the journalist who Evelyn selects to tell her story to. It will of course give all the details of her marriages to seven men. The book is to be published upon Evelyn’s death. Monique is a struggling writer and does not understand why she was selected. As the story unfolds, Monique begins to admire Evelyn and her life, which was not always glamorous. At the end of the interview with Evelyn, does Monique understand why she was chosen to tell the story? The book was very entertaining with a great twist at the end.

**A Place Called Winter** by Patrick Gale. Sent by Barbara Phillips.

This novel is based on the author’s great grandfather, Henry Cane, but is very much fictionalized. He lived in England, but moved to Canada without his wife and daughter. That much is true and from there it is fiction though the author tries to convey what it was like for the homesteaders in the early 20th century. He also includes the Spanish Flu and WWI and it’s impact on settlements. But more than the issues of taking on settled land and turning into a producing farm, it deals with homosexuality and the treatment of Native American (in Canada) children and Native American concept of “two souls”. It was well written.

**The Shadow of Your Smile** by Mary Higgins Clark. Sent by Bethel DeSpain.

Dr. Monica Farrell wants to find her birth parents. Olivia knows who they are, but she’s murdered before she can tell Monica. Monica stands to inherit a fortune and her life becomes endangered.

**Flea Market Fields** with Matthew Mead. Sent by Rev. Linda Wansing.

I like the shows on TV about flipping flea market finds. I found this book to be just as interesting. It inspires you to look at cheap flea market finds and add hints of color to bring them alive again. The book gave many ideas of how to turn vintage into useful items today.

**We Are Not Like Them** by Christine Pride. Sent by Cathy Judy.

This is a book about friendship and race relations. A journalist is covering the story of her best friend’s husband who is a police officer. While on duty he killed a young black man and this tests their friendship and how to deal with a tragic incident, relationships, and how our views are molded from different perspectives. Highly recommend.

**Children’s Books** reviewed by Amy Boone:

1. Dance By the Light of the Moon by Joanne Ryder. Buffalo Flo invites her friends to a dance. Goose, Cat, and Pig get all dressed up for a wonderful surprise. The illustrations in this board book are excellent.
2. Owl Moon by Jane Yolen. A story about a child and father walking quietly through a winter night in search of an owl. Illustrations are lovely watercolors.
3. One and Only Sparkella by Channing Tatum. Ella is ready for the first day of school. She is glittering and sparkly with accessories. When she gets to school, the other students don’t want to accept her. She goes home and tells her dad she wants to be dull so she’ll blend in. He helps her realize it is ok to be different.

**Reckoning** by Catherine Coulter. Sent by Zona Burk.

FBI Agents Sherlock and Savich are racing to solve and arrest the kingpins in two different long-term crimes. The first case involves the abduction of a young piano prodigy…twice. The second crime is being pursued by a young prosecutor whose parents were murdered at home by a drug cartel. Then Agent Savich is abducted with a friend and stashed somewhere. The clock is ticking.

**The Good Neighbor** by Maxwell King. Sent by Rosemary Douglas.

Loved learning about Fred Rogers, the man that taught us so much on Mr. Rogers Neighborhood. This book helped me understand the “why” behind how the show was produced. I feel like I need to rewatch every episode of “The Neighborhood”.

Happy reading! I hope you find a book in the newsletter to add to your “must read” list!

Lisa Cook

GFWC MO ESO chair 2022-2024