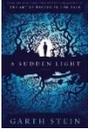


Cynthia Swanson's Book Club Picks

I often get asked by book clubs for recommendations. Here are a few books that generated great discussions in my own book club – and others that I simply found to be thought-provoking reads.

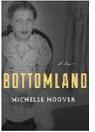
Fiction



A Sudden Light by Garth Stein: A wonderful “ghost story,” complete with a spooky old mansion, family secrets, and an endearing young narrator.



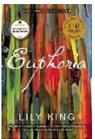
Bel Canto by Ann Patchett: I love books that pull together a group of strangers and force them to cope in a traumatic situation. Not every author can pull it off, but Patchett does it with ease.



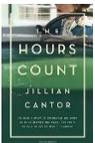
Bottomland by Michelle Hoover: Mystery, family, and culture collide in the post-World War I American heartland.



Contribution by Maura Weiler: Who does art belong to? This is the central question raised by this story of twins separated at birth and reunited as adults – at which time, theirs proves to be an unlikely pairing.



Euphoria by Lily King: A fictional take (complete with a love triangle!) on Margaret Mead's experiences in Papua New Guinea.

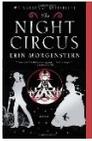


The Hours Count by Jillian Cantor: A “what if?” story about a fictional neighbor of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg. Would *you* have taken in Ethel's children when she was arrested?



The Impossible Lives of Greta Wells by Andrew Sean Greer: A time-travel, alternate world story. Three versions of Greta are transported among life in three completely different eras. Where does Greta truly belong?

(continued on back)



The Night Circus by Erin Morgenstern: Not only a visual paradise in words, but also an unlikely and unforgettable love story.

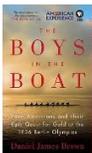


The Red Tent by Anita Diamant: The first book my book club ever read together. Still often mentioned as one of our favorites, this is a story of sisterhood and biblical culture.

Nonfiction



Boxing for Cuba by Guillermo Vicente Vidal: A haunting account by the former mayor/deputy mayor of Denver, of a family pulled apart by political revolution.



The Boys in the Boat by Daniel James Brown: An amazingly well-researched story of resilience and teamwork.



The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot: A fascinating account of science, ethics, and race relations.



Tender at the Bone by Ruth Reichl: A wonderfully entertaining, bohemian memoir – complete with recipes.



Wild by Cheryl Strayed: Has there ever been a twenty-something who didn't want to escape day-to-day life and head out to find herself? Strayed does just that on the Pacific Coast Trail.

Cynthia Swanson, author of *The Bookseller: A Novel* (Harper, 2015)

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