A reader from Mashpee read *Never Turn Your Back on an Angus Cow* by Dr. Jan Pol: Author born in the Netherlands. Very funny and easy, enjoyable read.

A reader from Marblehead read *An Unlasting Home* by Mai Al-Nakib: This book was a little challenging to follow at first. It told the story of multiple people at different points of time that were related--from different generations. Despite the initial confusion of how they all fit together it was a good book overall and reflected the role/impact of Islam on a family whose family members lived (at times) in South Asia, the Middle East, and North America.

A reader from BEVERLY read *Different, Not Less* by Chloe Hayden: I loved Chloe’s book about living with AND thriving with autism. I wish she was American, as I don’t know much about the Australian education system concerning neurodiversity, but it is a fascinating look at how universal and international neurodiversity is.

A reader from Orleans read *the Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* by Muriel Spark: I was on Jeopardy, three day champion, and the question to the answer was Who is Miss Jean Brodie?

A reader from Worcester read *The Curious Incident of the dog in the night-time* by Mark Haddon: This book was recommended many times so I’m happy this challenge gave me a good motivator to pick it up from my night stand. Written by british author, Mark Haddon, this book
follows Christopher Francis a 15 y/o who is great with mathematics, physics, and just overall but struggles a bit with human emotion and intersections. It’s a great book full of plot twists and a fresh perspective as Christopher carries out some detective work to find out who murdered Mrs. Wellington’s dog during nighttime. Quick read. 100% recommend.

A reader from Ipswich read Trespasses by Louise Kennedy: Fantastic read. Great account of life in Northern Ireland during the troubles. Very powerful.

A reader from Spencer read Days at the Morisaki Bookshop by Satoshi Yagisawa: Translated by Eric Ozawa. Sweet, relaxing book about family moving through life's ups and downs. I will get the sequel.

A reader from Belchertown read Tokyo Ueno Station by Miri Yu: Miri Yu was born in Tsuchiura, Ibaraki Prefecture in Japan. Her novel, Tokyo Ueno Station, has been on my tbr for a long time and was the perfect match for July's prompt: a book by an author born outside of the United States. "To be homeless is to be ignored when people walk past while still being in full view of everyone." - an incredibly poignant quote from the novel. Beautiful and mournful, gentle yet angry. The novel is a deep and thoughtful meditation on poverty and loss and the psychological effects of both, as well as a moving reflection on the development of post-war Japan at the cost of the lower class. Cyclical, nonlinear storytelling that is very impactful! I really enjoyed it and gave it 4/5 stars.

A reader from Foxborough read The Hunter by Tana French: This is so much more than a mystery by a well known Irish author known for mysteries—it is a character study and a meditation on family, love and loyalty.

A reader from Hadley read Companion Piece by Ali Smith: Here we have a beautiful and bittersweet story that unfolds on parallel timelines where the dark days of the bubonic plague and COVID-19 pandemic meet and intermingle in unexpected ways. Ali Smith weaves the story around these lines with a minimalist virtuosity: “Curlew or curfew, you choose.” A brilliant novel on loneliness and human connection.

A reader from Gloucester read The Rooster House My Ukrainian Family Story, A Memoir by Victoria Belim: What a beautiful and painful book. Such a journey filled with rich beloved characters. The author was born in the Ukraine but moved when she was 8 just as Chernobyl exploded. So much strife in one country and I wonder about her family, some of whom still live in the Ukraine and her beloved Grandmother’s garden. I hope it isn’t destroyed. I highly recommend the book, there is so much history showing the lead up to current times.

A reader from Lincoln read Winners by Fredrik Backman: The last book in the series- and just as good as the others.

A reader from Somerville read Britt-Marie Was Here by Fredrik Backman: Britt-Marie leaves her marriage and moves to the desolate and depressed town of Borg to take a job as a caretaker for a recreation center that is slotted for demolition. Despite feeling like she's at a dead-end, she finds friendship and chosen family in the small town by bonding with a group of soccer-fanatic teens.
It is a heartwarming story of self-discovery and small town life that only Fredrik Backman can manage to capture with a great blend of humor and heart.

A reader from Belchertown read *The Wars of the Roses* by Dan Jones: Roses might suggest otherwise but tumultuous time in English history.

A reader from Amherst read *Persepolis 1 & 2* by Marjane Satrapi: A funny, dark, poignant and wise coming-of-age tale of a free woman living in oppressive times and oppressive societies, *Persepolis* is the memoir of French-Iranian artist Marjane Satrapi. From Theran to Vienna and back again, this story is heartbreaking, luminous and, at times, hilarious, like life itself.

A reader from Middleboro read *A Man Called Ove* by Fredrik Backman: Ove reminded me of my father. Ove always did the right thing in life. I haven't figured out why he didn't say that he did not take the money that he saw a co worker take it. I thought he would get rid of the cat but he did not. The right thing to do again since he did not know whose cat it was. The cat loved Ove. This book was a really good book to read. I would recommend it.

A reader from Northfield read *The Heart Goes Last* by Margaret Atwood: The Heart Goes Last is a novel about a married couple trying to survive after an economic and social collapse. After losing their house, Stan and Charmaine are forced to live in their car where they encounter violent roving gangs. This prompts their decision to participate in the Positron Protect requiring them to move to the town of Consilience where everyone is provided a job and housing every other month. Months not spent in a house are spent in jail. Once you move to the town of Consilience you can never leave. Margaret Atwood was born in Ontario Canada.

A reader from Attleboro read *The Perfect Passion Company* by Alexander McCall Smith: I have enjoyed McCall Smith's The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency books in the past. I thought that The Perfect Passion Company would be light and humorous, but it was as “serious” as the Detective novels. It was a romance novel, without the rampant sexuality in the novels written for women, I could actually enjoy.

A reader from Somerville read *Things You May Find Hidden in My Ear: Poems from Gaza* by Mosab Abu Toha: Heart-wrenching and beautiful.

A reader from NORTH ATTLEBORO read *Still Life* by Louise Penny: The first book in my favorite mystery series!

A reader from Beverly read *Time Shelter* by Georgi Gospodinov: I really loved some of the ideas and the concept of this book, but not really every moment of the book.

A reader from Yarmouth Port read *aednan* by Vogel Saskia: It's a poetic book about nature in Sweden. I thought I'd like it but, I didn't. I bought it so I read it through. Poetry not my favorite read.

A reader from Plympton read *The Fires: A Novel* by Sigriður Hagalín Björnsdóttir: I chose this book because of its content, a story of a female volcanologist and her efforts during a cataclysmic event in Iceland. I so wanted to like this book. I am a traveler, have been to this part of Iceland and know the area, and had taught middle school geology. This should have been a
clear winner. I understood the science, of which there is a lot, but the story line for me fell flat. The lead character was the main scientist studying the volcanic activity, but also had a loving family and was having an affair. I just never really connected with any of the characters, except perhaps the husband, as he was the innocent one here. The book was an easy read but left me wanting more...especially at the end. It was very timely due to the current eruptions in that same area near Grindavik, Iceland today. All the more reason I wanted to embrace this book.

A reader from Hyannis read *A man called Ove* by Fredrik Backman: Great book.

A reader from Bolton read *the mystery guest* by nita Prose: Author born in Canada.

A reader from Groton read *Normal People* by Sally Rooney: I was new to this author so I chose the book for that reason. This story was very easy to read so I finished it quickly. I liked the fact that she concluded the story without the reader really knowing whether the couple would end up together. The book reminded me a bit of the movie when Harry Met Sally.

A reader from Pittsfield read *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini: I had read his other book, *The Kite Runner* and loved it, but I think I thought this was even more powerful and beautifully written. I absolutely loved how the relationship develops between Mariam and Laila and at the end when Laila goes to see where Mariam lived it was lovely. My favorite line and an excellent message was on pg. 411 "But Laila has decided that she will not be crippled by resentment. Mariam would not want it that way. What's the sense? she would say with a smile both innocent and wise." Such a good message to not let resentment take over your life and these women had reason to be resentful. I highly recommend this book and look forward to teaching it with my 10th graders this fall.

A reader from New bedford read *Allow Me To Introduce Myself* by Onyi Nwabineli: Really emotional and very current topic of using kids for online creator content. Love the different perspectives written and as reader feeling frustration that you can't just bring them all together.

A reader from Milton read *Girl Decoded* by Rana el Kaliouby with Carol Coleman: Rana el Kaliouby was born in Egypt and her early education was in Egypt. She became a computer scientist with a mission to bring emotional intelligence to artificial intelligence. She furthered her education in England and earned her PhD at Cambridge College in England. She worked at MIT, became an American Citizen, and started her own company. Her premise is how AI is blind to human emotion and numbs us. The Introduction is horrifyingly eye-opening. Through her work, the work of others who shared with her, and with those with whom she has shared her work, she hopes to bring humaneness to AI. She cites "many positive uses of Emotional AI, such as our work with the autistic community, in mental health, in creating new biomarkers for disease, in detecting distracted driving, in democratizing education, and in eliminating unconscious bias in hiring practices". She voices an awareness and promotes advocacy for maintaining ethics and privacy with AI. Through her work with emotional intelligence she also learned about her own emotions.

A reader from Amherst read *Smaller and Smaller Circles* by F.H. Batacan: Filipino author. Main character would make a good lead in a detective series.
A reader from Sharon read *Everyday is a Gift* by Tammy Duckworth: I enjoyed learning about her experiences growing up outside of the US with an American parent, as well as how her military service led to her political service.

A reader from Erving read *my grandmother asked me to tell you she’s sorry* by Fredrik Backman: Love this book. Listened to audio version. The characters are interesting and complex. The story comes together at the end in such a way that even though not all happy, is satisfying.

A reader from BREWSTER read *Normal Rules Don't Apply* by Kate Atkinson: Short stories that are creatively linked to create a fascinating story that made me think. Kate Atkinson does it again.

A reader from Mashpee read *Like Water for Chocolate* by Laura Esquirel: I am not sure what it was I expected in this book, but overall I thought it was ok.

A reader from Rochester read *Vesper Flights* by Helen Macdonald: Helen Macdonald sees wonder in the natural world, rejoicing “in the complexity of things” in 41 essays. I was enthralled by the audio version, read in her own voice, of a childhood in the British countryside. One strange tale tells of a British spy chief who tried to tame a cuckoo, and in a second career lead a bird watching movement with the same skills used to train spies. This is a book worth revisiting to slowly savor its prose and poetry urging us to reconsider our relationship with the natural world.


A reader from Peabody read *Four Major Plays* by Ibsen: He writes revealing the greed present in the middle-class of society, he was often critical of their behavior and motives.

A reader from Worcester read *The Stranger* by Albert Camus: Fully aware of how rich this text is, I was most taken aback by the trivial details and thoughts of Meursault. There's so much actually happening, and we continually call back to things like: not having anything more to say to his mother, the sun being in his eyes as his reasoning for shooting the man once then four more times, not feeling guilty about things society seems to require he feel guilty about, etc. I found myself, on more than one occasion, stunned that Meursault was up against the legal system and guaranteed execution and he was most preoccupied with very trivial, and at times, inconsequential things. Seeing the philosophical clash between Meursault and every other character play out over the course of the story was very interesting.

A reader from Worcester read *The Cat Who Saved Books* by Sosuke Natsukawa: A lovely and thought-provoking story. And one that is very deeply rooted in Japanese culture. There is a great deal of metaphor to plumb here, and I could absolutely envision it as an animated film adapted by Studio Ghibli or another similar studio.

A reader from Wilmington read *Stardust* by Neil Gaiman: The movie adaptation was about 80-85% true to the book, the major difference being the ending. Overall I enjoyed the book and
found it to be a quick and easy read. Definitely had me chuckling at bits. Neil Gaiman is a fantastic author who creates intriguing worlds. A good choice for those who want to dip their toes into a fantasy world without the heavy intricacies of Tolkien.

A reader from Plymouth read *Yellowface* by R. F. Kuang: A satire about the publishing industry and its efforts to promote diverse voices. All of the characters were unlikeable, yet I really wanted to keep reading.

A reader from Rochester read *The Wind Knows My Name* by Isabelle Allende: One child is separated from his parents during WWII. One child is separated from her mother at the US Southern Border. The author narrates the stories of these two individuals and masterfully weaves their lives together. The book highlights the hardships that families endure due to the prejudice and racism they face because of their cultural differences.

A reader from Agawam read *What you are looking for is in the library* by Michiko Aoyama: This book was translated from Japanese to English, and the translation absolutely conveys that melancholy, introspective, and still heartfelt feeling. Japanese contemporary fiction always feels so satisfying, and this book about a librarian who somehow always knows what book will lead her patrons to contentment is an inspiration to a librarian like me.

A reader from Brimfield read *The Fellowship of the Ring* by J.R.R. Tolkien: A book I’m happy to read over and over and over throughout my life!

A reader from Dracut read *None of This is True* by Lisa Jewell: My mind is still trying to sort out the twists and turns in this novel. I've finished the book but still want more.

A reader from Northboro read *Trust* by Hernan Diaz: I’ve seen this book everywhere and I was glad to finally pick it up. A very interested and clever story within a story.

A reader from Beverly read *Disarmed (Fence, #2)* by Sarah Rees Brennan: This is the second novelization of a comic book series. Not as good as the comic book series and not written by the same author. It follows the path of the story so it seems essential to read in order to keep up with the series as a whole.

A reader from Quincy read *Unmarriageable* by Soniah Kamal: I was excited to read this book as it is inspired by Pride and Prejudice (and I am a fan of Jane Austen), but set in 21st Century Pakistan. The descriptions of the homes, clothing, and foods were fantastic, and I like how the author kept elements of P&P but made it feel more modern. Unfortunately, I did not like Alys Binat (Elizabeth Bennet) at all. While Lizzie definitely spoke her mind and had modern opinions, Alys was mostly just annoying and self righteous. When Lizzie would scold her sisters or mother to act right, it was for their benefit and to protect their reputations. When Alys lectures her family, it is because they are not behaving/believing in the way that SHE thinks they should. Lizzie was stubborn but likeable. Alys was not likeable. I would not want to be friends with a woman like her. At the end, when she realized she had been prideful and prejudiced, she did apologize, but by this point, I didn't care about her redemption story.

A reader from Basking Ridge read *Danger & Other Unknown Risks* by Ryan North.
A reader from Gloucester read *The Alice Network* by Kate Quinn: I did not see the movie. Totally enjoyed the book. I do like historical fiction. Very suspenseful, and a bit scary. I do want to know more about Louise de Bettignies, the real spy the book was based on. Highly recommend.

A reader from Newton Upper Falls read *The Three-Body Problem* by Cixin Liu: The first of a trilogy, "The Three-Body Problem" is also the basis of the recent Netflix series. Liu's book is heavy on the science and light on other traditional literary values, including character development. It's intriguing to see differences with the series, but otherwise I didn't really enjoy the book. The series adds the emotional attachment to the characters missing from the novel.

A reader from South Hadley read *Treason at Lisson Grove* by Anne Perry: Good plot, held my interest throughout.

A reader from Maynard read *London Rules* by Mick Herron: My favorite in the series so far. I really love these characters and their dialog.

A reader from Wilmington read *Weyward* by Emilia Hart: This book was a great concept and I certainly appreciate that. It’s hard for me to say that I love books that include so many hard themes though. There was lots of rape, domestic violence, abortion, and emotional abuse themes that made the book difficult to enjoy. I’m glad the women in the book were able to overcome all of these horrible men, but it still made for a tough read.

A reader from Plainville read *The First Emperor of China* by Jonathan Clements: Informative non fiction book on the history of the first emperor of China. It was a really helpful read for expanding my knowledge of his unification of China as well as his time as the first emperor.

A reader from Springfield read *Cuando Era Puertorriqueña* by Esmeralda Santiago: Biography of a young girl and finding her identity.

A reader from Burlington read *Rock Paper Scissors* by Alice Feeney: I was not super excited about reading a thriller but I wanted to read something that I normally would not pick up so I figured I would give it a go. I thought that the first two-thirds of the book were a bit slow and repetitive, but I was interested enough, and I wanted to find out what would happen next. I ended up really enjoying how it all finally tied together, but I was left hoping for just a little bit more of a conclusion.

A reader from Dartmouth read *What You are Looking for is in the Library* by Michiko Aoyama: This book looks at the lives of 5 disgruntled people ranging in ages from 21 to 65. Each due to circumstances in life are not happy with their situations, from unhappy work positions to personal relationships and retirement. Every one visits a community library for a different reason but all find contentment due to the efforts of a friendly library assistant and diligent reference librarian (who dispenses some rather bizarre titles and also a felted trinket). Through their experiences at this library, they find contentment with their issues and learn that “Readers make their own personal Connections to words, irrespective of the writer’s intentions and each gains something unique” (p.296). I may not have picked up this Title had it not been the month’s challenge but I learned a few things along the way also!
A reader from Quincy read *Klara and the Sun* by Ishiguro, Kazuo: A commentary on what makes us human, and how far is too far to go to ensure your child's success in society.

A reader from Salem read *Lady Helena Investigates* by Jane Steen: Sort of a Miss Marple-esque structure, I was surprised by the descriptions of violence within the genteel society. I very much enjoy well researched historical fiction, so I went ahead and bought the next book in the series.

A reader from Sunderland read *The Kamogawa Food Detectives* by Hisashi Kashiwai: This charming book will make your mouth water as it describes the different dishes made in this unusual restaurant in Kyoto, Japan. Father and daughter track down special dishes remembered by their clients/customers.

A reader from Foxborough read *An Elderly Lady is up to No Good* by Helen Trusten: Feels like little TV episodes of an "elderly lady's" life. Funny and surprising. Loved the book and the character.

A reader from Needham Heights read *Wives Like Us* by Plum Sykes: modern-day novel of manners in the English countryside.

A reader from South Hadley read *The Goodbye Cat* by Hiro Arikawa, Philip Gabriel (Translator): This was a short story collection that focused on families and the impression their cats have made on them. I enjoyed learning about the cultural aspects and how different families can operate.

A reader from Randolph read *The Silent Patient* by Alex Michaelides: A pleasant surprise. A mystery that kept me guessing. A new author for me that I plan to follow.

A reader from Springfield read *Sunshine Nails* by Mai Nguyen: Sunshine Nails was such a fun read written by a Canadian author. The dynamic of the siblings and culture make it so relatable. Traditions are important along with doing anything you can to save your family/business/ego.

A reader from Springfield read *The Night She Disappeared* by Lisa Jewell: It has been a while since I've read this author. I enjoyed this book. Some of it was quite dark and makes me realize how dark the world could be.

A reader from North Attleboro read *The Broken Circle* by Enjeela Ahmadi-Miller: This autobiographical book describes Ahmadi-Miller's family's escape from Afghanistan after the Russian invasion. It is told from her point of view as a 5 year-old beginning this years long trek across Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal & India before reuniting with the rest of her family and eventually emigrating to the US. This harrowing story about a little-known world event was well written, informative and very interesting.


A reader from Brockton read *Lies and Weddings* by Kevin Kwan: This was an entertaining read, very similar to Crazy Rich Asians.
A reader from Hudson read *The Perfect Nanny* by Leila Slimani: Chilling! Really well written.

A reader from Dudley read *All the light we cannot see* by Anthony Doerr: This was beautifully written. I found I had to pay attention a bit harder when they switched back between characters but the details for each person was wonderful. Doerr includes such background I learned more than I remember learning back in school regarding that time period in history during the war.


A reader from Holyoke read *They Do It With Mirrors* by Agatha Christie: This was not my absolute favorite Miss Marple, but it's certainly better than some that I've read lately. At least our favorite Nemesis actually appears in the majority of the story. The younger characters grate a bit, more than their characterization necessitates. But the interest of the mystery, and the familiar twinkle in Mis Marple's eye more than make up for that!

A reader from South Hadley read *The Luminaries* by Eleanor Catton: Set in New Zealand, during the 1860's gold rush, this novel is complicated and compelling with a long list of characters, but I finished it in less than a week- it was that good! The plot involves revenge, deceit, bribery, theft, smuggling, shipwrecks, opium, race relations (Chinese, indigenous people, Europeans) and the mixture of circumstances, fate and free will that affects humankind. And all of this action occurs within an intriguing structure which the author has set up based on the 12 signs of the Zodiac. There are 12 parts to the novel. Part 1- A Sphere within a Sphere- is 360 pages long ! And is broken down into 12 sections. Part 2 is 160 pages of 11 sections. And so forth spiraling down to the final part which has only 1 section and is barely 1 1/2 pages long. I discovered this book as I was reading "Once Upon a Prime-The Wondrous Connections Between Mathematics and Literature" by Sarah Hart. She goes into much detail explaining the geometry and math that suffuses 'The Luminaries.' You don't need to know any of this to enjoy a riveting story but it adds another dimension to the work and reveals the author's amazing talent.

A reader from Yarmouth Port read *You Are Here* by David Nicholls: Beautifully written walk along the English countryside introducing us to two lonely people who come out of their solitude as they walk and talk.

A reader from Spencer read *The Bravest Voices* by Ida Cook: This book was so good.. The author's ability to tell a story and keep you interested all the way through is great. I was amazed at how I could feel the positive emotions as I was reading such difficult stories. I was left wanting more. I find myself wanting to read one of her romance novels. I would give this book a 5 star rating and highly recommend it for everyone.

A reader from Danvers read *Look Again* by Tali Sharot: Worth a "look".

A reader from Spencer read *Time Is a Mother* by Ocean Vuong: Vuong's use of time as a lens to process grief led me to reexamine some of my own past losses and periods of mourning.
A reader from North Dighton read *The Memory Police* by Yoko Ogawa: I found this book to be fascinating and incredibly hard to put down. I am a fan of the dystopian genre but this book came with a feeling of horror and also deep emotion. Definitely recommend!

A reader from Berkley read *The One* by John Marrs: It was a good read and thought provoking.

A reader from Medford read *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini: I've been wanting to read this monumental work for years and was glad that this challenge compelled me to finally begin. Hosseini does an amazing job, bringing his characters to life and helping us understand the challenges that Afghanistan has faced over the years. Wow! This novel is going to stay with me for quite a while.

A reader from SOUTH HADLEY read *The Thursday Murder Club* by Richard Osman: Ha I enjoyed this book. It is not your typical murder mystery. It's far more whimsical. It does remind me a bit of only murders in the building for this reason but it's unique and neither seems like a rip off. The actual murder mystery takes a bit of a detour, perhaps too long of a detour, but it gets back to the point and the story ties up well. I really enjoyed this weekend read.

A reader from Ayer read *yellowface* by R.F. Kuang: Really enjoyed this.

A reader from HOPKINTON read *Before the Coffee Gets Cold* by Toshikazu Kawaguchi: A short and at times sweet novel about traveling through time to address issues.

A reader from Chicopee read *Until August* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez: A married woman visits an island once a year to visit her mother's grave....but she has an affair each year she goes! True talk from a woman who feels loved, but not passionately in her own marriage.

A reader from Scituate read *Anger is an Energy* by John Lydon: Great auto - biography of John Lydon born in North London England. John Lydon is also known as Johny Rotten lead singer of the Sex Pistols.

A reader from Woburn read *The Reappearance of Rachel Price* by Holly Jackson: This book had me on the edge of my seat. I loved that was able to make connections and put the clues together but it wasn't blatantly obvious what was happening.

A reader from Charlton read *What feasts at night* by T. Kingfisher: T. Kingfisher was born in Japan, I have read several of her books and loved them all. I loved this story and it’s characters.

A reader from Chester read *Fearless* by M C Craven: Wonderul action book. I had never read this author before.

A reader from Attleboro read *Hotel Silence* by Audur Ava Olafsdottir: Audur Ava Olafsdottir Is an Icelandic author who was awarded the Nordic Council's Literature Prize in 2018 for this literary fiction. A 49 year old handyman journeys to an unnamed war-torn country and begins to find new purpose for his life. A quiet, beautifully written story.

A reader from Beverly read *Life in the Garden* by Penelope Lively: Penelope Lively was born in 1933 in Cairo, Egypt. When she was a teenager her family moved to Britain and she has lived there for most of her life. She has visited and gardened in many spots. She writes of these
gardens eloquently and lyrically. She touts the beauty and the benefits of gardens. The world is indeed a magnificent place in Penelope Lively’s gardens!

A reader from Wilmington read *Here We Are: Notes for Living on Planet Earth* by Oliver Jeffers: I liked how there are a lot of facts in it.

A reader from Burlington read *Termush* by Sven Holm: Maybe I've read too many apocalyptic stories for older ones to hit right, but this was oddly boring and slow for such a short book. It read like a not-great JG Ballard book.

A reader from Spencer read *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens: Always encouraging to read about a young person overcoming abuse and neglect, to make a good life, and navigating life's challenges.


A reader from Natick read *Heidi* by Johanna Spyri: Such a sweet story! I'm so glad I finally read this! Also the first book I've ever read by a Swiss author.

A reader from Quincy read *What You Are Looking for is in the Library* by Michiko Aoyama: An enigmatic librarian provides recommendations for what readers need for both their personal and professional lives. A wonderfully thought-provoking read that will give you pause in your own life.

A reader from Quincy read *She Who Became the Sun* by Shelley Parker-Chan: What are you prepared to do to get what you want??? A "worthless" yet daring Chinese girl stands in for her lauded brother who has died of fright at the first sign of the enemy. She becomes a monk in his place and has to repeatedly choose between a monk's vows and her drive for the sun. A exciting read!

A reader from North Easton read *Remainders of the Day: More Diaries from rhe Bookshop, Wigtown (the diary if a bookseller #3)* by Shaun Bythell: What an interesting book! It happened to be out on a shelf at the library and looked interesting so I grabbed it. How I would love to visit this bookstore in Scotland. Love learning about the friends, relatives and all the fun things they do in their small town. A very good read if you like reading about the daily happenings of a bookstore. So enjoyed it! And the epilogue was great as business is busier and to hear about his personal life. I’ll have to read the others now. The author was born in Wigtown, United Kingdom

A reader from LOWELL read *Alls Well* by Mona Awad: Not quite what I'd expected but quite a journey. Awad is funnier in strange and subtle ways. The seriousness pays off.

A reader from Boston read *Convenience Store Woman* by Sayaka Murata: This was a book that was translated from Japanese. It was a quick read.

A reader from North Attleboro read *The disappearance of Astrid Bricard* by Natasha Lester: The author of this book is from Australia. It's a historical fiction about the fashion industry that takes place in three different times. The parts about the fashion industry were very interesting and the
exploration of romantic relationships as well as mother daughter relationships was very well done. I hadn't read this author before but I definitely will in the future!

A reader from Ipswich read LA Weather by Maria Ampano Escandon: This author was born in Mexico City. Interesting family saga set in Los Angeles, California.

A reader from Beverly read The Heron's Cry by Ann Cleeves: Love the PBS shows Vera and Shetland. Enjoyed meeting Detective Matthew Venn in this book - a complex and nuanced character. Lots of twists and turns kept me guessing until the killer was revealed. Love reading books set in the UK.

A reader from Foxboro read The Stranger by Albert Camus: This book was a suggestion from my partner, as he enjoys philosophy books. I was shocked at how blunt the thoughts of the main character were, but later on I came to understand the book was to help the reader (the stranger) understand the feeling of absurdism. Definitely an interesting read.

A reader from MASHPEE read LONG ISLAND by Colm Tóibín: Don’t read this book UNLESS you read BROOKLYN by the same Irish author first! It’s a sequel AND I loved it. It continues the story of an Irish immigrant, Ellis, who had married and made her life with her family on Long Island, NY. Ellis returns to Ireland and read it to find out!

A reader from Whitinsville read Every Gift a Curse by Caroline O’Donoghue: A wonderful occult urban fantasy set in Ireland

A reader from Somerville read Fullmetal Alchemist Volumes 7, 8, 9 by Hiromu Arakawa: This is my favorite anime and I'm so excited to finally be reading the manga version! This book was 3 volumes in one so it covers a large portion of the overall story. I love the art and it's cool to see how it inspired the anime.

A reader from Melrose read The Bordeaux Book Club by Gillian Harvey: I enjoyed it and found this to be a lighter read appropriate for the summer. I liked the characters and how they grew in the book.

A reader from Wrentham read The Alchemist by Paul Coelho: This book was ok, but it seemed to be trying too hard to be deeply insightful. I liked the adventure story parts, and the main character was likable... but the supporting characters were annoying (the king, the alchemist...).

A reader from Franklin read Beartown by Fredrik Backman: I've read a couple of Fredrik Backman books and enjoyed them. This was much darker but also probably his best. While the town of Beartown is similar to many sports-obsessed communities in the US (Odessa, TX in Friday Night Lights comes to mind), the secluded nature of the Swedish town and the different ways success is measured was unique.

A reader from Gill read The Disaster Tourist by Yun Ko-eun: Translated from Korean by Lizzie Buehler. Spare and unsettling, sometimes funny, sometimes poetic. Employee of a company that exploits catastrophe must confront her lack of control over her own life and yet her responsibility for her choices' contributions to manufacturing disaster.
A reader from Tewksbury read *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind: Creating Currents of Electricity and Hope* by William Kamkwamba & Bryan Mealer: Very inspiring memoir by a young man in Mali who overcame starvation and lack of education by his brilliance and dedication to his family and his village by building a windmill. So glad he was "discovered" by the media and has done TED talks and has received mentoring and scholarships and donations.

A reader from Edgartown read *The Lion Women of Tehran* by Marjan Kamali: Marjan was born in Turkey to Iranian parents. Book tells story of two young girls living in Iran beginning in 1950 up into the late 1980’s and their friendship over those years. Their experiences often contrasted with poverty, incarceration and successes in their lives.

A reader from Oxford read *Whereabouts* by Jhumpa Lahiri: I enjoy Lahiri's word choices, both what the includes and what she leaves out.

A reader from Chelmsford read *fragments of light* by Michele Phoenix: Beautiful book about cancer patient and D-day.

A reader from Maynard read *The Summer Before the War* by Helen Simonson: Beatrice Nash arrives in Rye England to become the town’s first female Latin teacher. Mourning the death of her father, she vows to never marry and then she meets Hugh. WWI is about to start and all the local men are signing up for duty. As a Doctor, Hugh is close to the front and is able to save some of the other characters in the story. Upon returning these men home, Beatrice & Hugh marry.

A reader from Northampton read *Pachinko* by Min Jin Lee: This wonderful book about several generations of a Korean family living in Japan has really stayed with me. I could have read more volumes about this family! Really good and gave me a window into a culture and time period I did not know a lot about and now want to learn more.

A reader from Sandwich read *Growth of the Soil* by Knut Hamsun: The story is set in rural Norway with a cast of characters from heroic (Isak and Axel), to scheming (Geissler) and gossipy (Oline), and many others who added to the colorfulness of the tale. The story included the trials of two women who were accused of infanticide. Dialogue was in the vernacular, translated from Norwegian to English.

A reader from Attleboro read *the five sorrowful mysteries of andy africa* by Stephen Buro: Lots to think about with this one.

A reader from Santa Cruz read *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri: This is a great collection of stories. I loved each one. Ms Lahiri captures the challenging lives of immigrants and first generation Americans of Indian descent. She’s an amazing story teller.

A reader from Rindge read *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka: I actually had to read this novel for a literacy theory class. I know it’s considered a prolific piece of literature that comments on the stress that one can place on a person but I found that it was weird and boring to read.

A reader from Leominster read *The House on Garibaldi Street* by Isser Harel: An amazing account of the apprehension of Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann. The meticulous planning that
went into not only his capture but also bringing him back to Israel to stand trial there made for a thought-provoking and compelling read.

A reader from Stoneham read *The Sympathizer* by Viet Thanh Nguyen: A heartbreaking story told in an interesting way. This was from a perspective I had never seen before. Interesting to see the wars fought by America from the eyes of the people living in the war zones and the aftermath of everything.

A reader from Amherst read *Somebody's Daughter* by Zara H. Phillips: Somebody's Daughter - a moving journey of discovery, recovery and adoption by Zara H. Phillips is a good fit for readers who are drawn to inspiring true stories of resilience, self-discovery, and the complexities of adoption, and are looking for a heartfelt and intriguing memoir that explores the human search for identity and belonging.

A reader from Dartmouth read *Meet Me at the Museum* by Anne Youngson: This is a delightful heartwarming book. The author is British. I also did it for a book club and it was universally enjoyed.

A reader from Boston read *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho: Felt like a book I should read but it didn’t really impress.

A reader from Reading read *Clear* by Carys Davies: The author is from Wales, and the book takes place on a fictional island near Shetland. Historical fiction at its best.

A reader from Plainville read *Finding My Voice* by Rachel Stevens: This author is a singer from S Club 7 and this was her biography. She was born in England. I was hoping for more details of her being in the band. She lightly glossed over it.

A reader from Newport read *Five Survive* by Holly Jackson: A great YA thriller that I’m excited to recommend to my 8th grade students.

A reader from Mattapoisett read *Last Ones Left Alive* by Sarah Davis-Goff: The author was born and lives in Dublin, Ireland. A post-apocalyptic story about Orpen, a teen living on an island off the coast of Ireland with her mother and Maeve, her mother’s partner. Zombies have taken over the world, and, her mother dead and Maeve dying, Orpen tries to find Phoenix City, thinking it might be a sanctuary. Interesting enough but not as good as it could have been.

A reader from Needham read *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* by J.K. Rowling: The book was a great conclusion to the Harry Potter series. And the end of the novel was surprising.

A reader from Blandford read *On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous* by Ocean Vuong: A stunning novel written as a letter from a son to his mother. They are Vietnamese immigrants and he details the daily struggle of being different. Very moving story. Reads like a classic but is actually a debut novel. This one may be around for a long time.

A reader from Northfield read *Welcome to the Hyunam-Dong Bookshop* by Hwang Bo-Reum: I struggled with this book. The characters were depressing and the dialog was stilted. On a good note, the bookshop was interesting and I had a picture of it in my mind.
A reader from Chelmsford read *Murder Your Employer* by Rupert Holmes: For "a book by an author born outside of the US." Rupert Holmes was born in the UK. This book was so much fun!

A reader from Woods Hole read *Roman Stories* by Jhumpa Lahiri: A great introduction of the author for me. I will definitely be reading more of her books.

A reader from Sandwich read *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* by John Boyne: Chilling.

A reader from Webster read *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman: Gail Honeyman is a Scottish author whose debut was this very book. I was drawn toward this read because I saw a simple review that stated "If you thought Fredrik Backman's Ove was a charming curmudgeon, you'll instantly fall for Eleanor." and this definitely turned out to be the case! While the extremeness of Eleanor's childhood isn't immediately relatable for everyone, I found that much of her feelings about early adulthood certainly were in big and small ways. I loved watching her interactions with Sammy, Sammy's family, Raymond, and even outlying characters (such as Mr. Dewan from the corner shop near Eleanor's home) progress throughout the novel. This novel delivered everything that most novels promise (but fall slightly short for) -- at times it made me laugh... truly laugh... at times it made me cry, and times it left me feeling numb and speechless. Eleanor and her story have the reader rooting for her every step of the way. I became so invested in her as a character that I started to fear at one point that we'd never find out exactly what happened to her when she was 10 years old and whether she could pull herself through the worst of her trauma, but the ending didn't disappoint. Gail Honeyman did a wonderful job with this debut novel and really made this American realize that such troubles are not solely from the dysfunctional citizens of the USA... it's a small world, after all.

A reader from Hanson read *Welcome to the Hyunam-Dong Bookshop* by Hwang Bo-Reum: A lovely story about healing through books and bookstores and the communities created around them. This takes place in a small neighborhood in a Korean city and deals with grief, guilt and confusion. And how coming together with others can make them all easier to handle.

A reader from Waltham read *The Science of Cleaning* by Dario Bressanini: More of a chemistry text than a reference book on household cleaning tips, but I learned some things.

A reader from South Weymouth read *Mexican Gothic* by Silvia Moreno-Garcia: This was such a captivating read.

A reader from Wakefield read *Apples Never Fall* by Liane Moriarty: I like everything I've read by this author. All the characters were interesting and enjoyable. I am recommending it to friends.

A reader from Northampton read *Whereabouts* by Jhumpa Lahiri: I love Jhumpa Lahiri. This was not my favorite of her books, but it was still good. I need to do some research about it because it says she wrote it in Italian, which I'm curious about.

A reader from Rockland read *Mr Friend Anne Frank* by Hannah Pick-Goslar: Hannah told the story of how her life intersected with Anne Frank, as friends in school and later at Bergen-Belsen. Since she survived the Holocaust, she was able to describe her life at work camps and on
transports. I learned about things I hadn’t known before, like her family was at a “better” area of Bergen-Belsen because they were slated to be traded for German POWs and sent to Israel.

A reader from Orleans read *Horse* by Geraldine Brooks: Wonderful story with different threads woven together.

A reader from Essex read *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri: Beautifully written, moving short stories.

A reader from Dracut read *Roman Stories* by Jhumpa Lahiri: I have enjoyed her other books and this one again, did not disappoint.

A reader from Norton read *The Last Murder at the End of the World* by Stuart Turton: Interesting genre blend of sci-fi and mystery.

A reader from North Oxford read *Lee and Andrew Child* by No Plan B: Hard to comprehend how British born Child, who has never lived in the US, can capture the country so well. I have always enjoyed the adventures of Reacher. It's fun how the new series is showcasing Child's creation as well.

A reader from Chicopee read *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens: Oliver Twist navigates a life of instability and hardship as he tries to survive and make a life for his own in London.

A reader from Chicopee read *Beartown* by Frederik Backman: Author born in Sweden. This is a story about a small community that depends on a kids hockey franchise to keep it alive.

A reader from Greenfield read *What My Bones Know* by Stephanie Foo: Powerful, heavy stuff. Vivid descriptions of both trauma and the healing process. This story isn't wrapped up neatly with a little bow, in the way that you'd expect from a movie. It's messy and real, and definitely worth the read.

A reader from Hopedale read *The Lighthouse Sisters* by Gill Thompson: Made me want to visit Jersey, Channel Islands!

A reader from Amherst read *The Loveliest Chocolate Shop in Paris* by Jenny Colgan: This was a beautiful story of love and second chances. It’s told in flashbacks and current day events of two women finding themselves in Paris. The parts about chocolate were an added bonus and there are even recipes in the back! I really liked this one and now hope to eat chocolate in Paris some day.

A reader from Hull read *Liliana’s Invincible Summer: A Sister’s Search for Justice* by Cristina Rivera Garza: This Pulitzer Prize winning book is so deeply sad and beautiful all at the same time. The author documents the once vibrant life of a young woman (her sister) using her handwritten notes, poems and interviews. The author/sister creates an archive of her life to ensure her sister is not reduced to a number, as often is done with the murders of women, especially those taken through domestic violence. Her grief is palpable in every page but so is her resolve to keep her sister’s name alive. This book is certainly about loss but also about undying love. Reading this truly feels like a privilege that the author and her loved ones have offered us.
A reader from Ipswich read *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf: Long overdue to read some Virginia Woolf. I really liked the stream of consciousness of her narrators. Glad I finally read To the Lighthouse.

A reader from Plainville read *The Hazelbourne Ladies Motorcycle and Flying Club* by Helen Simonson: Really enjoyed this book and learned a lot about the post World War I era in England.

A reader from Lowell read *American Mother* by Colum McCann, Diane Foley: Heartrending!

A reader from Berkley read *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe: I really enjoyed this book. Its story was very impactful and gave insight into life in a Nigerian village prior to colonialism and then showed the impacts of the subsequent beginnings of colonialism.

A reader from Weymouth read *The Rosie Project* by Graeme Simsion: I’ve had this on my TBR shelf for quite some time and thanks to this challenge, finally read it! Cute story, quick read. Perfect read for a summer vacation!

A reader from Braintree read *The Berry Pickers* by Amanda Petets: A wonderfully written story of the heartache and destruction when a child is kidnapped...and the lifelong quest of that child to "fit in."

A reader from Salem read *The Motorcycle Diaries* by Ernesto Che Guevara: Insightful.

A reader from East Otis read *Little Me: My Life From A-Z* by Matt Lucas: I'm obsessed with Little Britain and think Matt is hilarious in most everything he has a hand in. This book was a terrific look at the man behind the genius.

A reader from Salem read *maeve in america* by Maeve Higgins: Loved!

A reader from Attleboro read *The Milk Lady of Bangalore* by Shoba Narayan: Fun read and I learned some interesting things about cows and Indian culture.

A reader from Northampton read *The Husbands* by Holly Gramazio: A quirky book that dragged in places, but was well thought out with the modern "swipe culture" mentality.


A reader from Northampton read *On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous* by Ocean Vuong: Writing so beautiful that it makes you stop mid sentence and gasp. An immigrant story showing our country’s good and bad and that made me wonder what I did not know about my grandparents. “The truth is we can survive our lives, but not our skin.” (page 182) And to his mother – “reading is a privilege you made possible for me with what you lost” (page 240)

A reader from Middleboro read *Geek Girl* by Holly Smale: I read this because I wanted to binge the Netflix show and it didn't disappoint - YA with a lot of heart!

A reader from Shrewsbury read *The Covenant of Water* by Abraham Verghese: I was interested in this book as I had previously enjoyed Cutting for Stone by the same author. I was not disappointed. I learned about South India and the hardships, customs, and connections of 3
generations. The author’s medical notes interested me, too. A combination of book/audible helped me with the length.

A reader from Arlington read *The Invisible Library* by Genevieve Cogman: Set in a fun world in which Librarians are assigned to retrieve books from alternate realities, Irene is sent to get a book of fairy tales from a dangerous world of chaos, vampires, and airships. And she is not the only one who wants the book.

A reader from Lowell read *Her Name Was Rose* by Claire Allen: Great book! Very engaging!

A reader from Canton read *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood: Was interesting and different than most of the books I read.

A reader from Worcester read *Mrs. Quinn’s Rise to Fame* by Olivia Ford: This book caught my eye because of the baking content, and captivated me with the narrative arc about Jenny’s long-buried secret. Would highly recommend!

A reader from Lowell read *The Guest List* by Lucy Foley: Intriguing plot, made better by the multi-perspective format of the chapters. Had me guessing til the end!

A reader from Charlton read *Amerika* by Franz Kafka: An unfinished novel from Kafka, this book is lighter than most and cheerful in spots. I liked it and fewer nightmares than his other works.

A reader from Arlington read *The Strange Case of Peter the Lett* by Georges Simenon: A classic detective novel featuring the case of doppelgängers that introduces the world to Inspector Maigret. The author of this was from Belgium and was originally written in French.

A reader from Hopkinton read *The Silent Patient* by Alex Michaelides: This was a page turner, yet I didn't love. One could figure out the premise early on. The time frame was all over the place. And other possible story lines besides the "she killed her husband" were not so subtly introduced. At best a summer read.

A reader from Pepperell read *The Book of Doors* by Gareth Brown: I chose this book at the recommendation of my boss. She enjoyed it but knows the Fantasy genre is not my thing. As soon as I see the book involves dragons and made up universes I'm out! But she thought I may like this one. And since the author is Scottish born it fit this month's theme! It was "interesting" for someone not into this genre. Had to let go of reality and go with the flow of the whole time travel thing and magic books. But I did enjoy the characters and idea of the books doing good. The chapters with Cassie being able to visit her deceased grandfather were sweet.

A reader from Webster read *Nora Webster* by Colm Toibin: This book by an Irish writer about a woman who becomes a widow while still raising four children is at once beautiful and heart wrenching. The author's descriptions of the small Irish village of Enniscorthy where the book takes places can transport you there with a few paragraphs. Skilled writing in that the author can also make the characters' emotions known by using very few words. Add this book to the remarkable work done by Colm Toibin.
A reader from Boylston read *Yellowface* by R.F. Kuang: Interesting take on what it means to plagiarise and culturally appropriate.

A reader from Somerville read *The Cook* by Kerangal, Maylis de: This short book by a French author follows young Mauro on his journey to be a chef. An unnamed female narrator shares glimpses into Mauro's life as he moves from job to job, starts his own restaurant, sells it, and moves on to other projects. It's rather unusual and I liked it, but mostly I suddenly want to watch the new season of *The Bear*.

A reader from Erving read *The fellowship of the rings book one* by J.R.R. Tolkien: Wow! So much more than the movie - the details are so explained that sometimes it’s hard to concentrate on following it, or you sort of forget what book you’re actually reading. Unlike the movie, there’s this new magic type being that helps guide Frodo. It just explains so much more, I can’t wait to read the rest of them and would highly recommend these to anyone!

A reader from East Longmeadow read *Childhood's End* by Arthur C. Clarke: A sobering look at the end of humanity, *Childhood's End* is arguably the author's finest work in science fiction. Born in the UK and spending his last decades in Sri Lanka, Clarke weaves a tale of a supposedly benign invasion by a group of superbeings known as The Overlords. They transform the Earth, eliminating war, poverty, hunger, disease, and other negative factors facing the human race. After a few generations humans are not creative or productive: their collective soul has been removed. Then comes the interesting climax, which I will not reveal here, but let me say it was not what I expected, but still quite provocative. Try it!

A reader from Woburn read *The House At Pooh Corner* by A. A. Milne: I wasted a lot of time in my life never reading this book. It was delightfully snarky at times, as well as deeply heartwarming.

A reader from Wakefield read *Conversations with Friends* by Sally Rooney: This was okay. I thought it was confusing that there were no quotation marks when a character was speaking. I also didn’t like the ending!

A reader from Quincy read *The Lion Women of Tehran* by Marjan Kamali: This was a beautifully written book. I enjoyed reading about two women from very different economic backgrounds as they try to handle the every day challenges of adolescence while also adjusting to the changing political climate of Iran in the 50s and 60s. Highly recommend this one.

A reader from Fairhaven read *What you are looking for is in the library* by Aoyama, Michiko: This book was a delight! Fun, fanciful, imaginative, sad... all the feels in this one! Each chapter was a story unto itself, but the characters are interwoven throughout. I'm not usually a fan of translated novels, as they feel a little clunky to me, but this one was very well done and the story flowed perfectly!

A reader from Paxton read *Solito* by Javier Zamora: Wow! What an amazing journey Javier had coming to the US. Beautifully written.
A reader from Cambridge read Someday, Maybe by Onyi Nwabinelli: Someday, Maybe follows Even in the months after she loses her husband by suicide and struggles to grapple with the questions his death left her. This book is raw unflinching portrayal of grief and how we are not guaranteed the closure we crave, but sometimes must find it ourselves. The author is Nigerian and was raised in Britain and wrote a spectacular supporting cast in Eve's loving Nigerian family. As much as it's a story about grief, Eve's family ensure this is also a story about love.

A reader from Wakefield read The Daughter of Doctor Moreau by Silvia Moreno-Garcia: I really enjoyed this book. My favorite things about it were the characters and the themes around patriarchy, female rage, and settler colonialism. I also appreciated the message that the real "monsters" were men, not the doctor's hybrids. This message was predictable but well written.

A reader from Attleboro read Harry Potter Harry Potter a L'ecole Des Sorciers by JK Rowling, translated by Jean-François Ménard: Harry Potter is always an enjoyable read. I did find it interesting in reading this book that many of the characters names were changed in the translation, most likely to carry the same connotations that they have in English. There's just something special about this story of a boy who discovers he is a famous wizard when he is 10 after living in a bad home situation. It is a great escape into fantasy, but also has many lessons about friendships, courage, and persistence amongst other things.

A reader from Chelmsford read The Heart in Winter by Kevin Barry: Barry has set his newest, humorous, adventurous love story in Butte, Montana in 1891. This setting and time period are departures for Barry, but his colorful, expressive storytelling is evident throughout. Barry is adding his name to the list of the new generation of talented Irish authors.

A reader from Harvard read Knife by Salman Rushdie: I had never read a book by Salman Rushdie, and this is probably not the one by which to be introduced to his works, but I grew up near and have attended events at Chautauqua Institution, so I was interested in reading more about the awful attack that occurred on these peaceful grounds. Rushdie definitely has a way with words, and he explores a wide range of topics while he reflects on the attack that nearly killed him. His imagined conversation with his attacker, whom he refuses to name and instead refers to as "A," is an interesting glimpse into his way of processing everything that happened. The final chapter, appropriately named "Closure?", is beautifully written and offers perhaps the best insight into who Salman Rushdie is at his most vulnerable.


A reader from Wakefield read Everything I Know About Love by Dolly Alderton: This memoir by a British author and journalist was a relatable reflection on the roller coaster of adolescence and young adulthood.

A reader from Somerville read Felix Ever After by Kacen Callender: There was so much trans joy in this book and that was lovely!

A reader from Andover read Bradley, Kaliane by The Ministry of Time: Absolutely loved it!
A reader from Manchester read *Lies and Weddings* by Kevin Kwan: Fun beach read!

A reader from Worcester County read *Stolen* by Ann-Helen Laestadius: The author, born in Sweden, is Sami, and also of Tornedalian descent--two indigenous ethnic groups in Sweden. The novel begins with a young girl who finds her dear reindeer calf killed--and the killer threatens her to stay silent. Elsa grows up committed to exposing the villains who attack reindeer herds in sadistic ways, and she courageously challenges the village police force that turns a blind eye on these crimes. You learn a lot about the culture and traditions of the Sami people, and the modern pressures on traditional reindeer herding.

A reader from No. Chelmsford, read *The Girl You Left Behind* by Jojo Moyes: Well written plot, w/subject of stolen art by the Germans in WWI and a painting of Sophie, by her husband, that is "lost" for decades. The present owner, Liv, cannot part w/ this painting, as it is a gift from her husband, who is deceased. The descendants of the original owner discover its worth, think it has been stolen and want the court to award them the return of the painting. The outcome of the story is amazing how the writer was able to justify Liv being the rightful owner w/all the technical and research of this particular subject. A wonderful read!

A reader from Woburn read *Paddington Helps Out* by Michael Bond: This was a pretty funny book, which was a pleasant surprise. It would have been rated higher for me though if it didn't have several comments about "darkest Peru."

A reader from Newton read *the Husbands* by Holly Gramazio: Honestly not my favorite read! I had high expectations and the character development didn’t live up to my expectations. Oh well!

A reader from Easton read *Real Americans* by Rachel Khong: This was the authors second book. It was so interesting I know I now want to read her first book.

A reader from Melrose read *Essex Dogs* by Dan Jones: A fabulous story set during The Hundred Years' War. A must read for lovers of historical fiction!

A reader from HOPKINTON read *The Curious Charms of Arthur Pepper* by Phaedra Patrick: Quick and thoughtful read.

A reader from Seekonk read *The Couple in the Photo* by Helen Cooper: Great mystery book with expected twists - great beach read.

A reader from Parkland read *The Storm We Made* by Vanessa Chan: Excellent debut novel by Vanessa Chan! I never knew about the Japanese-occupied Malaya during WWII, and the characters of Cecily Altamara and General Fujiwara made it painfully clear in this powerful story of people surviving a brutal occupation. Absolutely beautifully written, with gripping details of the impact on children and families in what is now Malaysia. The author was born and raised in Malaysia and I applaud her for bringing this story to the world! FIVE STARS! Quick note from Cecily on page 70 when she tries to understand the relationships between men and women: "Women do not worship gods; they yearn for broken toys they can mold and imprint on. It was so stupid, and she hated herself for it. Yet perhaps this was what a woman's idealism is: not the
reach for a utopia - everyone had lived long enough to know perfection was beyond reach - but
the need to transform one thing into something better.

A reader from east longmeadow read *kitchen* by Banana Yoshimoto: what a fun read!! ^^

A reader from Melrose read *Conversations with Friends* by Sally Rooney: This book told the
story of two young friends living in Dublin after finishing school. The girls are trying to establish
their reputations as authors. The storyline seemed disconnected to me and the characters jumped
from one scenario to another. It is the 1st book that i have not enjoyed in the challenge.

A reader from Indian Orchard read *Beyond The Wand* by Tom Felton: I have not kept up with the
author since he was in the Harry Potter movies so this was a nostalgic read because it brought me
back to seeing the movies for the first time and how amazing that was. This was an enjoyable
read and I liked learning more about the authors life before and after his role in the Harry Potter
movies.

A reader from Pepperell read *We Meaure The Earth With Our Bodies* by Tsering Yangzom Lama:
This was very enlightening about the challenges of being from Tibet as well as the culture. I
enjoyed learning about the culture and family relationships.

A reader from Springfield read *The Guest Cat* by Takashi Hiraide: It took me quite a while to
pick up this book from my bookshelf and it's small size ended up being the deciding factor as I
could fit it easily in my skirt pockets. I enjoyed the interactions of the wife and cat, though some
of the musings of the author are confusing.

A reader from Wilmington read *The Turtle* by Cynthia Rylant: It was interesting, but I did not
love this book. I found it kind of boring. I liked the family of the dog, cat, and three mice.

A reader from Brewster read *The Raging Storm* by Ann Cleeves: I always enjoy reading books
by Ann Cleeves.

A reader from Dedham read *The Haunting* by Natasha Preston: Natasha Preston is an author
from the United Kingdom. I have never given a book a one-star rating on Goodreads until this
book. The story was ok, the main character annoyed me, but the supporting cast was decent and
the mystery of who was murdering the teens kept me guessing until the end. The first real
problem was that the theme of the book didn't match with the title at all. I don't know where the
author came up with this title when the book's theme has nothing to do with the title. Not
important, just a pet peeve of mine. It was the ending that made it a one-star book. Novels have a
Crisis, Climax, and Resolution, but what happens when a novel’s story ends at the climax with
no resolution? You get this book and a very unsatisfied reader.

A reader from Melrose read *Hija de la fortuna/Daughter of Fortune* by Isabelle Allende: Great
writing, as you'd expect for Allende, but the ending wasn't as strong as the beginning of the book.

A reader from Dracut read *Fatty O’Leary’s Dinner Party* by Alexander McCall Smith: Another
Alexander McCall Smith enjoyable read!!
A reader from Boston read *I'm Thinking Of Ending Things* by Iain Reid: I had theories for what was happening and all of them were wrong. Whole time I was yelling at the main character, telling her to get out of there, gobsmacked at her lack of self-preservation. Only to find that, throughout the entire book, she was acting as the only barrier between him and oblivion.

A reader from Spencer read *The Librarianist* by Patrick deWitt: This slow moving book still held my interest.

A reader from Montague read *The Unlikely Adventures of the Shergill sisters and Erotic Stories for Punjabi widows* by Balli Kaur Jaswal: Balli Kaur Jaswal has written two novels that describe the cultural conflicts of families from India who move to London and their attempts to live with both cultures' norms and values. These novels deal with second generation adults who are trying to honor their mother or mother in law's wishes.. The treatment and status of women in India horrifies the characters who have been educated and grown up in the more liberal western culture...and they try to resolve the dilemma of honoring traditions and customs which seem immoral, unacceptable and wrong.

A reader from Framingham read *American Dirt* by Jeanine Cummins: This book was very moving and I learned a lot about the migrant experience. Very good book.

A reader from Granby read *Yang* by Susie: I can't really say I enjoyed this book. Yang wrote it well and drew on her Chinese-born background effectively, but the protagonist was a pretty horrible woman. There was no way something good was going to come in her relationships except for maybe with her grandmother. Can't say I would recommend this to anyone.

A reader from Arlington read *The Dictionary of Lost Words* by Pip Williams: This book offered a fascinating look at women whose work on the first Oxford English Dictionary was largely ignored, but whose contributions added greatly to its content. during the first decades of the 20th century., when women were also fighting for their rights, including the vote. The female characters are a reminder of all that women go through, and are still going through, when they are forced to make challenging decisions about their lives, considering the limitations imposed on them by their social, political, and cultural circumstances.

A reader from North Billerica read *Murder Road* by Simone St. James: I enjoyed the book! I have read a few of her others and purchased this one at one of her book signings. She writes mysteries with a ghost angle. She was born in Toronto, Canada.

A reader from Wrentham read *Killing Commendatore* by Haruki Murakami: It was a joy to get a sneak peak into Japanese culture, especially the spirituality, in Killing Commendatore. This book combined elements of WWII historical fiction and traditional Japanese art to craft a thrilling tale about two artists who lived separate lives that intertwine.

A reader from Sandwich read *I Who Have Never Known Men* by Jacqueline Harpman: I'd never heard of this book before, but I'm so glad the translation has been brought back into print. Harpman's dystopian future feels so far ahead of it's time, and the story, of female friendship and what it means to live without witness felt so familiar and spectacular at the same time. Terrifying and beautiful!
A reader from Sharon read *Dawn* by Eli Wiesel: Very powerful!

A reader from Berlin read *Prince of Foxes* by H. L. Macfarlane: I read this during the height of the pandemic in 2021 and fell in love. It is the first in the "Bright Spear" trilogy. It's a gothic fantasy romance adventure that follows a young woman who lives on the shores of Loch Lomond during the 1800s when industrialization is beginning to creep in and encroach on the natural beauty and nature of the Scottish Highlands. (Well, Loch Lomond is the “gateway to the Highlands.” Sorcha and her family are the stewarts of the land and are increasingly subject to Clearances. In order to safeguard this, her father arranges her to marry a gentleman, Mr. Murdoch Buchanan, a former local who has made a life in London and has the funds and want to protect the area from outsiders stripping the area of nature. However, Sorcha is not on board with marrying someone she doesn’t know so she heads off to the forest. There, she meets a Seelie Prince. He has been cursed by his father-in-law and step-brother, who are Unseelies, and is transformed into a fox. Crossing paths, Lachlan, the Seelie Prince, and Sorcha, set out on a quest to reverse the curse because the longer Lachland stays a fox, the more he loses himself and becomes an animal. As they travel around Loch Lomond looking to reverse said curse, they come up with the idea of getting a Kelpie to help. Now, Kelpies are quite specific to Scottish lore. They are horse-like creatures that typically have grey or black hair and dwell in lochs. In some folklore, the hooves are backwards to that of earthly equines. They devour those who enter their water. Kelpies also have the ability to shapeshift and have a penchant for taking human form. Kelpies also have a silver bridle, either in horseform, or as a silver bridle piece of jewellery in human form. Kelpies are some of the most powerful creatures in folklore - more powerful than Seelie, Unseelie, fae, wizards, etc. The bigger and older a loch, the more powerful the Kelpie since they are solitary creatures. Back to the story - Sorcha gets the idea that if they can get the Kelpie to give Lachlan the bridle, he would be able to transform himself back into his Seelie, human-like form because of the Kelpie’s incredible power. Now, since Loch Lomond is very large, the Kelpie residing within is one of, if not the most powerful Kelpies in all of Scotland. So, they begin their quest to find the Kelpie of Loch Lomond before the spell takes full hold, Lachlan is either hunted down and killed because he is a fox, or Sorcha’s family finds her and makes her marry Mr. Buchanan. And there are other obstacles that crop up. The story is so atmospheric and beautiful. As someone who has been to Loch Lomond and felt its pull, this story captures it. The author, Macfarlane, is from a small village on the shores. So, she has the ability to imbue the story with realness, giving it that extra bit of magic. It’s very much gothic and I adore it.

A reader from Belchertown read *The lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.s.lewis: I can't believe I didn't read this until now. Unbelievable way to portray Christ for children and I cannot wait until my kids read it.

A reader from Stoughton read *Glorious Exploits* by Ferdia Lennon: This debut novel by an Irish-born author of Libyan and Irish descent takes place in the 480s BCE on the island of Sicily. Two out of work potters living in Syracuse decide to stage Euripides' Medea starring the Athenian prisoners of war from the failed Sicilian Expedition. Written in modern English with Irish slang, it's unlike any novel I've ever read.
A reader from SOUTH HADLEY read *The Winners* by Fredrik Backman: This is the last of the Beartown trilogy books, and I waited a year from reading the second book because I did not want it to end. As usual, Backman does his best to give us characters that are fully formed and human and we empathize with all of their humanity. There are a lot of characters that carry forward from the previous 2 books, but also a few new ones, but the reader will have no issues keeping them straight, even if you have not read the previous 2 books (which you don't need to do before reading this one, but do yourself a favor). Backman is from Sweden, and is the author of A Man Called Ove.

A reader from Shutesbury read *Now You See Us* by Jaswal, Balli Kaur: This was a book I probably wouldn't have found if not for the reading challenge.

A reader from Scituate read *Friends, Lovers, and Chocolate* by Andrew McCall Smith: Set in Scotland, this was an interesting read about morals, solving a mystery, love, and friendship.

A reader from Brookline read *Maurice* by E. M. Forster: Maurice was written by E. M. Forster, who was born in London, England on New Year's Day in 1879. The book was published posthumously due to its frank depiction of the experiences of gay men in England. But more importantly, as Forster says in the notes proceeding the story, the real issue is that these men do not die or end up in prison at the end. They walk away largely unscathed. It has been over 100 years since the book was first written, and I could see that in a very sad way, nothing has changed. Conversion therapy still exists. Love and affection often must happen behind closed doors. Secrets and logistics and safety concerns rule many experiences. But also, in the happiest of ways, I read that nothing has changed. I, a queer woman, am so like these men who love men. We confuse love for lust and class for intelligence and how many years you've known a person for friendship. This novel should be celebrated for its lasting relevancy and not as a nice example of how much we've progressed, as we haven't in most ways. This book is an example of how loving a person has changed so little for the LGBT+ community. We will always find ways to work around straight people's needs and discomfort, because all this matters to us, and always has.

A reader from Swansea read *Room* by Emma Donoghue: Heartbreaking. Inspiring. Thought-provoking. Read this in 2-3 sittings because of how compelling I found it. Such an interesting view on the most pivotal elationship development in such unique and terrifying circumstances.

A reader from Andover read *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Alexander Solzhenitsyn: This book was originally written in Russian (1978) and then translated into English (1991). Although it is supposed to be fiction, there's an opinion that it is partially based on the author's life, as he was in a Russian work camp in 1951. The story is very descriptive of the lean and stark conditions, lack of food and resources, strict and unfair punishment for certain behaviors at this work camp which houses supposed criminals as prisoners. Ivan (S-854) describes how to survive, by hiding and spreading out food rations, bartering and trading food and items, getting along with others, keeping out of trouble and staying positive. For example, the punishment for over sleeping is 3 days stay in the "hole", which is in a solitary confinement cell. Ivan almost gets this, but instead his superior substitutes cleaning the floors of the offices.
They participate in body searches and body counts multiple times a day. Lunch is bowls of watery gruel, work is building a brick wall, which Ivan takes pride in, and works extra time doing this. If someone receives a package, others may bargain or barter a trade to receive some of it's contents. For good work and behavior, they may receive a extra ration of food. I would recommend this book, although I found it sad and dire. It was informative and interesting about the desperate conditions and how to survive them.

A reader from Andover read *Sense and Sensibility* by Jane Austen: I picked this book for two reasons one I had never read it before I enjoyed following the Dashwood sisters hopping everything worked out for them sad when it did not and surprised at the end. And reason number two it is my sister in-laws favorite book and author.

A reader from webster read *The fellowship of puzzlemakers* by Samuel Burr: It is a nice uplifting book. And I learned a thing or two about puzzle making as well. It is very British and that is what I liked about too.

A reader from Pembroke read *The Lost Bookshop* by Evie Woods: This was a lovely story about finding oneself and connecting with others. I enjoy any story about bookstores-so a “hidden” bookstore through time is right up my alley. Thoroughly enjoyed this.

A reader from San Leandro read *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro: As a fan of dystopian fiction, I was looking forward to reading this, regarded by many as one of the premier books in the genre (including the recent NYT Best Books of the 21st Century list). Honestly, I was disappointed. It's well-written, but I found the narrator's 200-page recounting of her childhood at boarding school and relationship with her two friends to be drawn out and dull. Very little happens at all in this book. The premise had so much potential, and I feel like Ishiguro barely scratched the surface of where the story could have gone. If you read Never Let Me Go, go into it thinking it's literary fiction, not dystopian/sci-fi, and you shouldn't be disappointed like I was.

A reader from Waltham read *The Berry Pickers* by Amanda Peters: A very thoughtful and though provoking book about exploitation, motherhood, and belonging.

A reader from Sharon read *The Berry Pickers* by Amanda Peters: The parents of a young Mi’kmaq girl keep a shocking family secret from her. After both parents die, the girl can piece together the life that was stolen from her.

A reader from Seekonk read *Until August* by Gabriel García Márquez: This book is about a woman who visits the island where her mother is buried each year. Taking a different lover each year, she deals with how it affects her life and marriage the rest of the year. What is most interesting is reading how this book came to be published posthumously after the author had spent years writing and was not happy with it.

A reader from Springfield read *Blood on the Tracks Vol. 11* by Shuzo Oshimi: This psychological horror is wild. Just when I think it can twist any more it does!

A reader from Ipswich read *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by CS Lewis: Always delightful. I had not read it in a long time. It was a fun reread.
A reader from Colrain read *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* by J. K. Rowling: I have greatly enjoyed the books I've so far read by J. K. Rowling and for this month decided to continue my journey through the Harry Potter series by reading book 5, The Order of the Phoenix. It does not disappoint. Mystery and worry met Harry around every corner as Harry and his friends wonder just what You-Know-Who will do next.

A reader from Brighton read *Touch* by Olaf Olafsson: All of the novels I read this month could have been submitted! Ha Jin's *The Woman Back from Moscow*, James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Iris Murdoch's *The Message to the Planet*, and Marcel Proust's *The Guermantes Way*. The authors are from Iceland, China, the United Kingdom, and France — all places I have visited or aspire to visit!

A reader from Sutton read *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro: I loved the idea of this book, but it ended up being pretty boring/anticlimactic. It reminded me of Klara and the Sun, but I liked that much better as Klara made for a more interesting main character. All of the characters in this were too flat.

A reader from Montague read *The Cemetery of Untold Stories* by Julia Alvarez: I found this book fascinating because of the views of the Dominican-American experience and also the wonderful magical realism of the characters from the author's unfinished books working so hard to tell their own stories.

A reader from West Tisbury read *The Runaway* by Alice Munro: Alice Munro beautifully explores the varying characteristics of the human condition through this collection of short stories.

A reader from New Bedford read *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak: This book is about the horrors of the Holocaust as seen through the eyes of a non Jewish girl and told by “death.” It was a unique perspective; and as all books about the Holocaust was tragic.

A reader from Indian Orchard read *The Seven and a Half Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle* by Stuart Turton: Not my favorite. Overly convoluted and pacing was off.

A reader from Bedford read *Midnight Feast* by Lucy Foley.

A reader from BERKLEY read *The Silent Patient* by Alex Michaelides: Very well written, great setup for a great twist.

A reader from Somerville read *This Summer Will Be Different* by Carley Fortune: This Summer Will Be Different by Canadian author Carley Fortune instantly became one of my favorite romance novels that I’ve read. It was the perfect poolside and early-evening-on-the-front porch read and it made me want to visit Prince Edward Island. The day after I finished it, I went to the used bookstore and picked up a copy of Anne of Green Gables.

A reader from North Chelmsford read *The Diary of Lady Murasaki* by Murasaki Shikibu: Both the original author, Murasaki Shikibu (her real name is unknown, this was merely a pseudonym) and the translator, Richard Bowring, were born outside of the United States!
A reader from Norwood read *The Kamogawa Food Detectives (Kamogawa Food Detectives, #1)* by Hisashi Kashiwai: I was looking for a good mystery and a friend recommended this to me with the winning endorsement of 'my mom really liked this.' And I will say, this is the epitome of a cozy mystery. Especially since the mystery is centered around the detective trying to track down ingredients and cooking methods for specific dishes their clients are trying to recreate. It took me about a third of the book to finally realize there was no murder, the stakes were nonexistent, but it was incredibly pleasant and wholesome to just listen to descriptions of Japanese food and people eating. There is no stress whatsoever involved in this book, and as someone who knows very little about Japanese cuisine, I felt a lot of it went over my head. However, I have a new craving for sushi and a burning desire to run off to Japan and learn about all the stuff I've been missing out on.

A reader from Danvers read *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen: Jane Austen, born in 1775 in Steventon, Hampshire, England, is super famous for her witty novels about rich British people. Her best-known book is "Pride and Prejudice," which everyone loves because it's all about love and what society expects, starring Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy. Austen's smart observations and funny jokes make her a total legend in literature.

A reader from TEWKSBURY read *The Land of Lost Things* by John Connolly: As wonderful a story as the first book, *The Book of Lost Things*. I wish I had re-read the first, since it had been so long, but it was wonderful to go back to David's world for a little while, and Ceres' story even more compelling as I'm older and wiser and relate as a mother.

A reader from Chelmsford read *Wrong Place, Wrong Time* by Gillian McAllister: This is one of those books that I would have stopped reading after the first few chapters. But since I was reading it for the challenge I could not stop reading it. And I'm glad I stuck through it. I love a happy ending and this book provided just that!

A reader from Mashpee read *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez: I chose One Hundred Years of Solitude this month by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Gabriel Garcia Marquez was born in Aracataca, Colombia. The village in this book, Macondo, was inspired by his hometown. The town of Aracataca has a museum dedicated to Gabriel Garcia Marquez and a park named after one of the characters in the story. The book is about the rise and fall of a small sleepy village and the roles the founding family plays in the formation of the town. This book was hard to read because the characters had the same names and unfamiliar terms. However, I found it easier to follow when I ignored the details and followed the storyline. The book had many relatable topics that continue today, keeping the story very engaging despite some of the fictional imagery used. Overall, I enjoyed this book.

A reader from Lynnfield read *The Midnight Feast* by Lucy Foley: This book kept me engaged! I liked the summer setting and I’m glad to have read it around the time of Midsummer. The different perspectives added another element to it as well.

A reader from WAKEFIELD read *The Buried Giant* by Kazuo Ishiguro: Intriguing and suspenseful tale set in Arthurian legend times, with an aged Sir Gawain included as a main
character. Thought provoking and lovely. So atmospheric - this book transported me entirely and gently set me down at the end - so satisfying to read a book with an absolutely perfect ending.

A reader from Beverly read *The Dark Forest* by Cixin Liu: This book was a little less structured than it's predecessor, but still very interesting. It ended on a suddenly hopeful note, surprisingly.

A reader from Weymouth read *Persuasion* by Jane Austen: Jane Austen was born in England in 1775 and Persuasion is her final novel published posthumously in 1818. It is a second chance romance between Anne Elliot, the daughter of a spendthrift baronet, and Frederick Wentworth, a navy captain of inferior birth. They were engaged to marry when very young and Anne was persuaded to end it. They meet again eight years later and both never forgot each other.

A reader from Reading read *The Sympathizer* by Viet Thanh Nguyen: I learned a lot about the Vietnam war and its refugees. Good writing. But harrowing, too much violence and torture, some gratuitous. Women are few, minor and mainly victims. Frankly I didn't like any of the characters. I decided to finish it but can't say I enjoyed it. Disappointed because it was highly recommended.

A reader from Billerica read *Furia* by Yamile Saied Mendez: Furia was about a young girl in Argentina fighting sexism in her own way. I thought it was a good read and had great potential in teaching young adults about other countries and their policies.

A reader from WAKEFIELD read *Harbour Street* by Ann Cleeves: Born in England, Ann Cleeves writes the Detective Vera Stanhope mystery series. Harbour Street is set in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Northumberland. I have just recently returned from visiting my son in Newcastle and was delighted to follow Vera through the city and nearby environs that I had experienced myself. What fun!

A reader from Newton read *The Sympathizer* by Viet Thanh Nguyen: The problems never lie in people who have two or more minds. They always lie in people who only have one mind.

A reader from Attleboro read *cockroach* by Jo Nesbo: I didn't like the way it went towards pedophiles. It was kind of all over the place

A reader from Dighton read *Quiche of Death* by M.C. Beaton: This is the first book in the 35 book Agatha Raisin series. Agatha sells her successful public relations firm and London apartment to take early retirement in a small village in the Cotswolds. Having time on her hands, she enters a local baking contest (she has never baked before) with fatal results for one of the judges! A delightful cozy mystery series!


A reader from Topsfield read *How to Say Babylon* by Safiya Sinclair: Fascinating look into a culture and religion about which I knew very little. Beautifully written, powerful story.

A reader from North Dighton read *Against the Loveless World* by Susan Abulhawa: This novel by an author of the (displaced) Palestinian diaspora provides a micro window into a macro conflict. It does so in a way that highlights the effects of displacement and occupation.
A reader from FOXBOROUGH read *The Man Who Died* by Antti Tuomainen: Such a good book! The victim is slowly dying of poison and searches for his own killer. The writing was superb. I enjoyed the comedic aspects and laughed out loud at times. Great book! Author is from Finland.

A reader from Salem read *Greta and Valdin* by Rebecca Reilly: I read this book for a book club I'm in, and to be honest I didn't like this book very much. It takes half of the book for anything to really happen, and the title characters of Greta and Valdin are really annoying. Not all books are winners.

A reader from Ercing read *The No. 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency* by Alexander McCall Smith: Smith, from Scotland, wrote this light and whimsical novel. I believe it might be the start of a series about MMA Ramotwe, who runs a detective agency in Africa. Riding around in her “tiny white van,” she solves a number of mysteries, some more serious than others. I enjoyed the lightly humorous style of Smith’s writing, and hope to read more of his novels.

A reader from Wakefield read *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys: This is kind of a prequel to *Jane Eyre*, written primarily from Bertha's (who prefers to go by Antionette) perspective, by Jean Rhys, who was born and grew up on the Caribbean island of Dominica.

A reader from Boston read *When We Lost Our Heads* by Heather O’Neill: This book by a Canadian author had been on my to-read list for quite a while. It was definitely not what I was expecting it to be. Set in the late 1800s, Montreal during the time of factory worker uprisings, it focuses on the life trajectories of two young girls and follows them and their relationship throughout their lives. A couple of big plot twists thrown in and with some courtroom drama elements, this book packed a punch.

A reader from Dracut read *potsdam station* by David Downing: Probably the best of the John Russell novels I’ve read so far. This British author does a great story of spies in Berlin at the end of WWII.

A reader from Wakefield read *Daughter of Fortune* by Isabel Allende: A very long setup, but it pays off at the end. A multicultural family saga, the first in a trilogy, it leaves you wanting to know more.

A reader from Lowell read *Traces of Enayat* by Iman Mersal translated by Robin Moger: Interesting story by an Egyptian poet/writer about a fellow Egyptian woman writer who committed suicide in her twenties before her one novel was published. The author chanced upon the book and became intrigued/obsessed with learning what little she ultimately was able to discover about Enayat.

A reader from Reading read *A Thread of Violence* by Mark O’Connell: Irish true crime...well-reported and fast-paced.

A reader from Wakefield read *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* by Milan Kundera: Beautifully written - captures a gamut of emotions and is a pleasure to read.
A reader from Cambridge read *Planet of the Apes* by Pierre Boulle: I have never seen the 1960s movie so I was going in blind to the book. I haven't realized how much they americanized the franchise. It was very tense and easy to read and still the same twists just done in a different way. Highly recommend.

A reader from Quincy read *Little Rot* by Akwaeke Emezi: Akwaeke Emezi is one of my favorite authors and this book was such a fast paced and enthralling adventure.

A reader from Arlington read *X-Gender Volume 1* by Asuka Miyazaki: I actually really did not like this book- but it got me out of my comfort zone and exposed me to different cultural experiences I didn't know about!

A reader from Beverly read *Vera Wong's Unsolicited Advice for Murderers* by Jesse Q Sutanto: Very funny and well-crafted.

A reader from Florence read *Sea of Tranquility* by Emily St. John Mandel: While I'm not typically a fan of sci-fi/fantasy (although, honestly, I'm not sure how to categorize her books), Mandel is such a gifted storytelling that I really enjoyed this and her two other linked novels, "The Glass Hotel" and "Station Eleven."

A reader from Salem read *Poldark* by Winston Graham: The story of Ross Poldark was engaging and was well written.

A reader from New York read *My Brilliant Friend* by Elena Ferrante: I can't wait to read the rest of this series!


A reader from southborough read *The Air Raid Book Club* by Annie Lyons: author is British. story set during WW II in London.

A reader from Foxborough read *This is How You Lose the Time War* by Amal El-Mohtar: This one has been on my list for a while, I'm glad this prompt made me finally pick it up.

A reader from South Hadley read *Vera Wong's Unsolicited Advice for Murderers* by Jesse Q Sutanto: I generally don't read mysteries, but this one captured me in the first chapter. I found Vera to be incredibly endearing and I'd love for her to help nurture me and improve my life. I loved the use of the found family trope and found all the characters to be quite loveable. I plan to read Sutanto's other books.

A reader from Byfield read *The Other Americans* by Laila Lalami: A must read for all. Loved every second of the book and couldn't put it down.

A reader from Plainville read *How To End A Love Story* by Yulin Kuang: This may have been cheating because the author was born in China but not raised there, but regardless, I am glad I chose this book. Though there were parts that were frustrating, I liked the backstory shared by the two main characters. It was a unique relationship compared to many other romance-type books.
A reader from Mattapoisett read *The Lion Women of Tehran* by Marjan Kamali: Well written.

A reader from Stoneham read *The Last Word* by Elly Griffiths: Good characters, continuation of prior book. Enjoy characters and setting more than the mystery.

A reader from East Bridgewater read *The Husbands* by Holly Gramazio: I read this book quickly because I'm camping, not because I felt compelled by the story. As books go, it's okay. The premise is intriguing and, while I have no trouble suspending my disbelief for the sake of a plot point, I still prefer to have an explanation or development or something as to why x-y-z has happened. So picture me, on the beach, racing to get to the end to understand the revolving attic of husbands and coming up empty handed. I was hoping for so much more from the main character in terms of development (it came too little and too late) and the secondary characters added very little to the story. This would have worked better as a rom com or meet cute but instead it just fell flat. Holly Gramazio is from Australia.

A reader from Ipswich read *I Hope This Finds You Well* by Natialie Sue: This novel is both funny and sad, set in a corporate office where a woman struggles with relationships and her traumatic past.

A reader from Braintree read *Lost Ark Dreaming* by Saying Davis Okungbowa: This was an interesting read with multiple character points of view and an interesting near future world that's greatly covered in water.

A reader from Beverly read *Rebel Rising* by Rebel Wilson: I enjoyed reading about Rebel's life in Australia leading up to her fame in the US. It wasn't the best memoir I've ever read but it was entertaining and insightful, nonetheless.

A reader from Holden read *Sense and Sensibility* by Jane Austen: Sense and Sensibility is one of my favorite Jane Austen novels (along with Persuasion) and it was a pleasure to have an excuse to read it again! The adventures and misadventures of Eleanore, Marianne, Edward, Willoughby, Col. Brandon, Miss Steele, Mr & Mrs. Palmer, Mrs. Dashwood, Mrs. Jennings, and Sir John Middleton are hilarious and touching. I love Austen’s wit and commentary on the gender roles of her day.

A reader from Belchertown read *Dissolved* by Sara Blaedel and Mads Peder Norbo: Both authors are Danish. I love the Scandinavian/Icelandic mysteries and this one was excellent.

A reader from Quincy read *Yellowface* by R.F. Kuang: I finally got around to reading what was ostensibly last year's most popular book; while I understand some of the criticisms readers had of it, I didn't find it to be overhyped and I read it in just a few days, which is a compliment from me.

A reader from Belmont read *Foster* by Claire Keegan: What a subtle story!

A reader from Nahant read *Shadow of the Wind* by Carlos Ruiz Zafon: Still working on it, but making more progress this month. Fun to read about places in Barcelona that I am familiar with!
A reader from Blackstone read *Spare* by Prince Harry: I was surprised how much I enjoyed this book. It made me realize we don’t know everything and to take what the media says with a grain of salt. It’s heartbreaking all that he went through.

A reader from Hull read *The stars in their eyes* by Kristy Gardner: This book had so many twists and turns. I chose it because the author was not from the USA and she is a queer writer and this was a book about a bisexual heroin which I've never seen. The book was a sci-fi live triangle adventure book. I've never read anything quite like it and I start the sequel tomorrow!

A reader from Weymouth read *Welcome to St. Hell* by Lewis Hancox: This trans coming of age memoir was filled with heart and levity. I love it!

A reader from Wilmington read *In Search of Lost Time* by Marcel Proust: the first time i heard of Proust was from monty python sketches (tv series) a long time ago. the fact they made fun of the author... just made me want to read him so i put his name on my to be read list. fast forward many years later now and i'm looking for an author to read for july and i saw his name and verified he was born in France. after more research i saw he wrote several books, so i started my journey on swann's way. many, many hours later i discovered that swann's way was only 1 of 7 total parts that makes up a complete work titled *In Search of Lost Time* and i determined to just quickly get through everything. about half way through book 4 or stopped and researched it some more and turns out this is this is the longest complete novel according to guinness world records with around 9.6million characters. boy i sure knew how to pick them! i put on my speed-reading cap and finally completed it. godamn what a massive piece of work. while i appreciated it and i enjoyed the literary nature of every nuance, description of high class french society at the turn of the 20th century when people were transitioning from aristocracy to "common folk", at the present time of this post i still felt like the published volumes (1-4) needed to editing down/pairing down. that's probably sacrilege, i understand but is the man verbose! in the middle of volumes3-4 i really felt bored. i hoped proust would bring it home and he does sort of. i've always wondered what would have happened if he were alive during 5-7... maybe he would have continued to supersize them and we'd end up with 15million character unbeatable longest novel ever still. overall, i'm still glad i went through it, i did like the contrast of swann & odette's initial courtship i book1 ended up being a major motif throughout the final 3 to 4 books. the obsession that one needs to feel like they "own" another human being and throwing that into what love means. the other interesting thing was proust (being gay himself) was pushing society comfort/social conventions by confronting all of this head on throughout the works. while (at the time of this writing) i still felt like the whole thing was really excessive and needs some editing, it was very much still worth the read to me, having traverse and come out on the other side of a solid classic.

A reader read *Forgetting Alice* by Liane Moriarty: I am a huge fan of Liana’s work and this book didn’t disappoint. I liked the character development and the storyline. Her characters are very realistic, many have character flaws and some are underdogs. I would recommend this book to anyone who likes Liana’s writing.
A reader from Shrewsbury read *The Carousel Carver* by Perdita Buchan: This is a little known book that I picked up while on vacation in the area where it takes place. I was completely blown away by the elegance and beauty of the writing, and the sweet, often sad, story that gave me a little glimpse of history in one of my favorite places.

A reader from Sharon read *Not Even the Dead* by Juan Gomez Barcena: This was an interesting book. It begins after the conquest of Central and South America by Spain, with a man hired to hunt down a local man whose preaching threatens the Church and the power of Spain. The hunt starts in southern Mexico and progresses northward, with time passing decades at a time. It ends in modern day USA, with an illegal crossing into America during Trump's presidency. The geographic descriptions are lyrical and the commentary on power and poverty is consistent from the colonial era through modern times.

A reader from Belchertown read *Vita Nostra* by Marina & Sergey Dyachenko: Dark fantasy, intrigue, mysterious and other-worldly.

A reader from STOUGHTON read *Before the Coffee Gets cold* by Toshikazu Kawaguchi: Enchanting!

A reader from Turners Falls read *The Testaments* by Margaret Atwood: As I read The Handmaids’ Tale last month, it was great to be able to read the sequel this month, just by happenstance. Another interesting read.

A reader from Wakefield read *Small Things Like These* by Claire Keegan: Claire Keegan was born in Wicklow, Ireland. Unfortunately I did not enjoy this short book as much as many others.

A reader from Dracut read *Take a Hint, Dani Brown* by Talia Hibbert: I enjoyed this second book in the series!

A reader from Topsfield read *Child Of The Moon* by Jessica Semaan: This collection of poetry by Lebanon born and raised Jessica Semaan had a lot of empowering, relatable and moving poetry about healing from trauma.

A reader from Mashpee read *In the Midst of Winter* by Isabel Allende: Isabel Allende was born in Peru and raised in Chile. The book is about three vastly different people who are brought together in a snowstorm in Brooklyn. The trio embarks on a strange adventure. The story includes flashbacks to their separate past lives in Guatemala, Chile and Brazil. Enjoyed it.

A reader from Weston read *Hippos Remain Calm* by Sandra Boynton: I liked how I got to read it to my baby brother. I liked how it was written in poems. The hippos were cute. Especially when they were all cramped in the room with the ducks.

A reader from Shrewsbury read *Brooklyn* by colm toibin: coming of age story.

A reader from Springfield read *Alasdair Gray* by Poor Things: Poor Things by Scottish novelist Alasdair Gray is the story of Bella Baxter, a “biography” told from the point of view of her husband, Archibald McCandless, M.D. It is an incredible tale of reanimation, travel, sexuality, and feminism, which Bella herself disputes in a “letter” at the end of the story. This was a strange
yet delightful read. It pays homage to its Mary Shelley influences while being something completely its own.

A reader from Boston read Life of Pi by Yann Martel: Very interesting read! I was captivated by the movie as a kid, so picking this up to read was a delight! I thoroughly enjoyed it!

A reader from Andover read The Fleur de Sel Murders by Jean-Luc Bannalec: As with all of Bannalec's books, they provide such atmosphere and information that one wishes to fly immediately to Brittany and share the ambience and food; the mystery is only a side issue.

A reader from Greenfield read what you are looking for is in the library by Michiko Aoyama: This book was so quietly hopeful. I really enjoyed the enigmatic librarian and her impact on the lives of the community.

A reader from Chelsea read How to Age Disgracefully by Pooley, Clare: A very fun multi-generational read that most readers would be able to relate to regarding friendship and the people we surround ourselves with at different stages of life.

A reader from Amherst read The Traveling Cat Chronicles by Hiro Arikawa: I read both this and the sequel, The Goodbye Cat. The books are lovely, especially if you are a cat person. They are well written and it was very enjoyable to read them. The books give you a real flavor of Japan.

A reader from Brookline read Why we sleep by Matthew Walker: A good overview of the physiology of sleep, but especially of the dire consequences of not getting enough high-quality sleep.

A reader from Wrentham read A Lesson in Secrets by Jacqueline Winspear: Love the Maisie Dobbs series!

A reader from Vineyard Haven read How to end a love story by yulin kuang: so so.

A reader from Vineyard Haven read The Women by Kristin Hannah: Absolutely LOVED it!

A reader from Vineyard Haven read EMMA by Jane Austen: One of my favorite books to reread every summer..

A reader from Braintree read stranger diaries by Elly Griffiths: This is a new series by Elly Griffiths to me, I like all of the characters especially the main character Harbinder a DCI with Indian descent.

A reader from ashburnham read the forever dog by Karen Shaw Becker & Rodney Habib: As a brand new dog owner for the first time in my life, this was an extremely informative book. Helped me better understand my pup’s health, history, behavior, and so much more.

A reader from South Hadley read Men of Capital: Scarcity and Economy in Mandate Palestine by Sherene Seikaly: More PhD application reading prep. An excellent look at the priorities of Palestinians of different socioeconomic classes, and how they responded radically differently to the British and Zionist threat in the early 20th century.

A reader from Sharon read Dear Life by Alice Munro: Great short stories.
A reader from Lowell read *The Covenant of Water* by Abraham Verghese: A multigenerational story which reminded me of 100 years of solitude for its complex a long family history.

A reader from Wilmington read *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* by Jules Verne: Disappointing. Was hoping for more action.

A reader from Stoneham read *Booked for Murder* by Val McDermid: Author born in Scotland.

A reader from Arlington read *Aednan: an epic* by Linnea Axelsson: So beautiful! It's rare to read an epic-length poem like this now.

A reader from NAHANT read *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen: Reading this book is like reconnecting with an old friend. The last few months have been hard. My husband and I have resorted back to watching the tv shows we watched during 2020. There’s this feeling of anything can happen at any moment in the air. And that’s when I need to read a letter from Mr. Darcy that explains why everything is the way it is. It’s a comfort book. This book is filled with walks outside in the English countryside, beautifully written letters amongst friends, balls with eligible suitors, family comraderies, close friendships, and just so much intelligence squeezed into the pages. I always forget how much plot there is at the end too. The movies always cut off too soon. The book is so much better than every movie version. I guess the book can fit into almost all of the MA Reading challenge categories, but I'm using it for July because July is when I personally needed to read it.

A reader from Dracut read *China Rich Girlfriend* by Kevin Kwan: I am not a rom com kind of person, but Kevin Kwan’s writing is very captivating. It also continues to amaze me how wealthy some people can be.

A reader from Shrewsbury read *The Black Spectacles* by John Dickson Carr: Kind of wordy, it was hard to follow at times. Too many things that weren’t really relevant to the story.

A reader from Longmeadow read *Before The Coffee Gets Cold* by Tashikazu Kawaguchi: I love a good time travel concept! This was done really well and added new elements to the idea that I really enjoyed.

A reader from Sandwich read *The Covenant of Water* by Abraham Verghese: Beautifully written! It was a great summer read as it follows many different characters so I could pick it up and put it down and then return.

A reader from Readville/Yarmouth read *The Mystery Guest* by Nita Prose: This is an easy beach read about a maid who helps solve a crime in the hotel where she works using her neurodivergent thinking style.

A reader from Reading read *The Duke at Hazard* by Charles, K. J.: Lots of familiar characters and situations from Georgette Heyer, but with a 2024 sensibility.

A reader from Quincy read *The Stranger in the Seine* by Guillaume Musso: Guillaume Musso has been described as one of the most popular contemporary French authors, which is why I choose to read the Stranger in the Seine for my July pick. The story of a woman pulled from the
Seine with amnesia has the same DNA as a woman already deceased. A good mystery to solve, unfortunately for me although I liked most of the premise, in the end I was disappointed. I couldn’t recommend this read. Perhaps I’ll try another of his books in the future.

A reader from Beverly read The Sympathizer by Viet Thanh Nguyen: I loved the inspiration for this book. The author, himself a Vietnamese refugee, grew up watching Hollywood movies about the Vietnam War that were centered on the American soldiers’ experiences, with the Vietnamese citizens treated as an afterthought or solely as victims or spies. This book tells the story of a North Vietnamese spy embedded in South Vietnam who ends up coming to America, still spying for the North, while also living life as an American and working as a consultant on one of the aforementioned Hollywood films about the war. It was interesting, but I felt it sort of lost its way at the end. It was still much better than the streaming series, where Robert Downey Jr. played four separate roles for no real reason beyond ego, which distracted from the story completely.

A reader from Worcester read the Pilgrimage by Paulo Coelho: Interesting spiritual journey. I appreciate the perspective and it definitely goes hand in hand with the alchemist. As a skeptic though I don’t quite take all the events as true.


A reader from Fairhaven read The Midnight Feast by Lucy Foley: Not my favorite of hers, but I still enjoyed it.

A reader from Wakefield read The Handmaid’s Tail by Margaret Atwood: Fantastic book, would recommend to everyone and anyone, loved reading this!

A reader from North Weymouth read The Other Queen by Philippa Gregory: Very talented author with a fascinating and nearly unbelievable story to tell of the cousin queens, Elizabeth I and Mary Queen of Scots. This book has been waiting for me to read it for a long time! Glad it fit the category and I finally opened its covers. Loving the Reading Challenge.

A reader from Hudson read The Henna Artist by Alka Joshi: Well written historical novel by the India-born author!!! I felt like I traveled to Jaipur to experience the daily trials and triumphs of the henna artist and her friends. I highly recommend this novel to others who love to travel vicariously through literature.

A reader from Hanson read Stolen Focus: Why You Can't Pay Attention--and How to Think Deeply Again by Johann Hari: I read several books from authors born outside of US but this one really made me stop and think about why so many struggle with focus and how technology has changed that for us and I believe altered the younger generations even more that have grown up with it. I’ve become much more aware of my screen time and found ways to reduce it.

A reader from Brookline read How Beautiful We Were by Imbolo Mbue: The first chapter of this book is an absolute knock out, and the rest of the novel was very good too, though it couldn't sustain the same level of energy and surprise. Having recently finished "A Burning," I saw many similarities in these two tales of young women standing up to broad corruption in nations far
away (India in "A Burning"; an unnamed African country in this book -- likely Cameroon, where the author is from.) Definitely eye-opening and important for understanding the lives of others across the globe (and, in this book, the impact of American corporations on those lives.....)

A reader from Reading read Watching You by Lisa Jewell: A well-written, suspenseful British psychological thriller. Compelling characters and a twisty plot make for a fun summer read.

A reader from Foxboro read Morland Dynasty: The Cause by Cynthia Harol-Eagles: I love this book and the entire series.

A reader from Springfield read A Spark of White Fire by Sangu Mandanna: It wasn't quite what I was expecting (I thought there'd be more Indian mythology and more sci-fi elements, from the book's description) but it was still interesting!

A reader from Beverly read Banyan Moon by Thao Thai: It took a bit to get into but then flowed nicely.

A reader from Reading read The Gown by Jennifer Robson: An interesting historical novel about the people who created Queen Elizabeth's wedding gown.

A reader from East Falmouth read Americanah by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: What a fascinating view into Nigerian culture as well what life can be like for American immigrants.

A reader from Gloucester read Still Life by Louise Penny: Great story and writing. I've traveled quite a bit in Canada and it was fun to have some many familiar places pop up.

A reader from Naples read Miracle Creek by Angie Kim: Literary courtroom thriller debut novel about immigrant family (Korea), parenthood, and experimental medical procedures. Many flawed characters. How far will you go to protect your family...white lies or whoppers? Partially autobiographical. Ms. Kim immigrated to US at age 11. Read her sophomore novel, Happiness Falls, this month too. Both great reads, Miracle Creek won The Edgar.

A reader from Amherst read Oil on Water by Helon Habila: Oil is a major commodity that runs the world economy. it is intriguing to find out how the communities living around the oil-producing areas are impacted as the oil continues flowing.

A reader from Whitinsville read Meet me at the Lake by Carley Fortune: I liked this sweet romantic comedy. I like learning about the city of Toronto and the lake area north of the city.

A reader from Atkinson read The Dare by Natasha Preston: Full of suspense. Kept me on the edge of my seat until the very end.


A reader from Reading read Long Island by Colm Toibin: Wonderful follow-up to the previous book Brooklyn - though it could stand in its own. Great observations and considerations of freedom, independence, and the burden of expectation.
A reader from Spencer read *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien: “A rather unadventurous hobbit sets out on a dangerous quest along with a group of dwarves and a wizard. On the harrowing journey, Bilbo discovers his own latent courage and mettle. Though not all the company survives, Bilbo and his magic ring are absolutely essential for the success of the quest.”

A reader from Beverly read *The Fake Boyfriend Fiasco* by Talia Hibbert: Is it convenient that one of my favorite romance authors lives in the UK? YES! Loved this book from Talia Hibbert :)

A reader from Agawam read *Tales from the Cafe* by Toshikazu Kawaguchi: This is the second book in the Before the Coffee Gets Cold series, which revolves around a cafe where people can time travel to meet someone they know who has visited/will visit the cafe. Mainly the series focuses on lots of different people and we mostly get information about the main characters (the people running the cafe) through the people visiting the cafe, which makes it a little harder for me to connect with them.

A reader from Melrose read *Night Sky with Exit Wounds* by Ocean Vuong: Incredible 5/5.

A reader from Brighton read *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini: I have no idea how I've waited so long to read this book- it really is moving.

A reader from Belmont read *hurricane season* by Fernanda Melchor: eep!!

A reader from Hopkinton read *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop* by Satoshi Yagisawa: A beautiful story with great details.

A reader from Franklin read *Can You Keep a Secret* by Sophie Kinsella: Fun RomCom. Book adapted to a movie that followed the book near exact.

A reader from Sandwich read *Out of Africa* by Karen Blixen: From the opening sentence "I had a farm in Africa, at the foot of the NGONG hills" Karen captures the beauty and majesty of Africa in moving and heartfelt descriptions. Having visited this area of Kenya, I also was deeply moved by its spell described in this autobiography.

A reader from South Hadley read *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier: A sophisticated version of the classic Cinderella story told with psychological realism. A true page turner.

A reader from Rochester read *Journal of a Solitude* by May Sarton: I love reading about writers, so when I came across this book on a library book sale shelf, I knew I wanted to read it. May Sarton, pen name of Eleanor Marie Sarton, was born in Wondelgem, Belgium and spent many years of her life in New England. Journal of a Solitude, which was published in 1973, offers snapshots of her time living in Nelson, New Hampshire before she moved to York, Maine. Peppered throughout with black and white photos, Journal of a Solitude gives us a glimpse into the inner life and emotional struggles of a woman who managed over her lifetime to write eighteen books of poetry, nineteen novels, and sixteen works of nonfiction as well as two books for children! Despite her voluminous output, neither writing nor solitude come easily. "But I have begun to realize that, without my own intention, that book [her previous book, Plant Dreaming Deep] gives a false view. The anguish of my life here - its rages - is hardly mentioned. Now I hope to break though into the rough rocky depths, to the matrix itself. There is violence
there and anger never resolved." Writing requires not only solitude but also the emotional and spiritual wrestling that happens there, a never-ending process that Sarton eloquently captures in her chronicle of one year at Nelson.

A reader from Hadley read Red Mandarin Dress by Qiu Xiaolong: I'm a long time mystery fan, and very glad I stumbled upon Qiu's works on the shelf one day. I haven't found much fiction set in 1990s China, speaking about the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, and his Inspector Chen series provides Qiu's point of view on that along with a satisfying mystery.

A reader from Saugus read The Curse of the Flores Women by Angelica Lopes: The author was born in Brazil and the book was translated by Zoe Perry. I enjoyed the relationship between the women and the story of their lace making and how it came about. I like books with dual timelines, but I wish this one developed the current timeline a little more. It was very sad how the women were treated by men and the story has some tragic moments.

A reader from Eden Prairie read Behold the Dreamers by Imbolo Mbue: Great story! It held my interest; offered beautiful, complex characters and challenged me to re-examine my notions of the "haves and have nots".

A reader from Chelmsford read How Beautiful We Were by Imbolo Mbue: Tragic tale of a fictitious, African village’s decades-long fight for environmental justice. Well-written. It really makes you think about other people’s perspectives, what it takes to stick to your ideals in the face of extreme adversity, and what desperation can drive you to do.

A reader from Stoughton read The Garden of My Imaan by Farhana Zia: OK book. I wish Aliya stood up for herself more, but it is a kids book.

A reader from Watertown read The Mystery Writer by Sulari Gentill: I picked up this book when I needed an audiobook while cleaning. The audio was a bit tedious, so about halfway through, I switched to print. The story got a lot better!

A reader from Franklin read Ikigai by Hector Garcia and Francesc Miralles: This book wasn't quite what I'd expected. There wasn't much new to me about the longevity insights covered in this book. I'd still recommend it to someone interested in the topic, though it wasn't one of my best reads so far this year.

A reader from Worcester read The Language of Trees by Katie Holton: Beautiful and heart-wrenching celebration of trees.

A reader from Belchertown read My Grandmother Asked me to Tell You She's Sorry by Fredrik Backman: This is one of my new favorite authors this year, and he's from Sweden! I have given all of his books 4-5/5 ratings, and I can't get enough. This one was definitely different from his others with a fairy tale twist I didn't expect. Backman's writing is soothing for my brain, and I always feel better after I read his work! The main character, Elsa, was an extremely emotionally intelligent child who must deal with the passing of her grandmother. I loved Elsa's ability to manage such adult situations in a way that still made sense at her age of 7. Overall, loved it and can't wait to read more of Backman's books!
A reader from Braintree read *Your Second Life Begins When You Realize You Only Have One* by Raphaëlle Giordano: I enjoyed this.

A reader from Montague read *The Underground Library* by Jennifer Ryan: It's been awhile since I read a WWII book because I find them sad and somewhat repetitive (how many do we need?!?) but I always love a book about libraries and the importance of them in forming community.

A reader from Woods Hole read *Inkheart* by Cornelia Funke: A father-daughter duo discover that they have the power of reading things out of books. Meggie’s father gets captured by a villain named Capricorn and he gets forced to read his every whim out of books. With help from an author Meggie devises a plan to turn Capricorn’s friend against him.

A reader from Rockland read *Wonderlight* by Tina Spencer: Author is from Canada. Book needed a lot of proofreading help as the errors kept me from getting into the book.

A reader from Amherst read *The Misunderstandings of Charity Brown* by Elizabeth Laird: Elizabeth Laird was born in New Zealand and raised in London. Charity Brown's black-and-white worldview is challenged after WWII and her recovery from polio, as her older siblings take actions inconsistent with their family's small, strict religion, and Charity herself becomes friends with a Jewish girl next door.

A reader from Haverhill read *The Ballad of Jacquotte Delahaye* by Briony Cameron: Cameron is an author of Latino heritage based in the UK. Her debut novel imagines the life of legendary pirate in the 17th century Caribbean. Jacquotte Delahaye, the daughter of a French father and Haitian mother, is forced into indentured servitude on a pirate ship after her father is assassinated but eventually becomes a notorious captain herself.

A reader from Andover read *Master & Commander* by Patrick O'Brian: A book to disappear into. And there are only 20 more in the series. Hooray!

A reader from Derry read *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens: Charles Dickens was born in England in 1812. He wrote "David Copperfield" in 1850 which is a loose autobiographical fictional novel. I've owned the book for decades but never read it. Inspired by reading "Demon Copperhead" for the March challenge, I thought I'd tackle it. There are similarities in the very likable characters of David and Demon but the stories differ, mainly due to the eras they took place in. Both stories start with their births and continue through early adulthood. Their triumphs and tribulations correlate to some extent. The stories touch on social injustices of their times. Both have happy endings. "David Copperfield" was not an easy read, unnecessarily wordy and a bit dry. I probably wouldn't recommend it to most people, I still would recommend "Demon Copperhead" to most, not all.

A reader from Haverhill read *Before Your Memory Fades* by Toshikazu Kawaguchi: I liked this book, but not as much as the first installment in the series. My favorite of the four short stories was “The Comedian.”

A reader from SOUTH YARMOUTH read *Gingerbread* by Helen Oyeyemi: While I did enjoy reading this book, I often found it hard to follow exactly what was going on. Even upon finishing
the book, I am still unsure of what happened. Not sure if it's the author's writing style, the subject matter, or my state of mind, but I am still a little confused.

A reader from Shrewsbury read *The Reading List* by Sara Nisha Adams: Fun read for book lovers!

A reader from Gloucester read *Simpatia* by Rodrigo Blanco Calderon: The story of a son-in-law's conversion of his father-in-law's grand estate into a shelter for dogs abandoned as their owners fled Venezuela. It presents a blend of personal and political upheavals ranging from humorous to menacing. Sympathetic characters, intense settings, and a profound respect for dogs. And in translation, phrases/sentences/ideas that stopped me with their depth.

A reader from Melrose read *Natalie Tan's Book of Luck and Fortune* by Roselle Lim: Beautiful novel about Chinatown family connections, an interesting integration of mental health (agoraphobia), food and the healing powers of cooking and feeding others.

A reader from Weymouth read *The Winners* by Fredrik Backman: Fredrik Backman is an author from Sweden. His novel, The Winners, is a continuation of the story that began in a previous novel, Beartown. Maya and Benji return to Beartown to attend a funeral. Life in the community has changed to some degree but still some things remain the same, like the hockey rivalry with the neighboring town of Hed. Friendship, loyalty, and loss come together in this story.

A reader from Oxford read *Whereabouts* by Jhumpa Lahiri: Totally pointless book about the meanderings of a depressed 40 year old woman in Italy. No plot, had a hard time finishing.

A reader from Feeding Hills read *Crazy Rich Asians* by Kevin Kwan: This was a really fun book - and once again something I probably would not have sought out without the prompt of the reading challenge. The author was born in Singapore. Though the book mostly focuses on the family and relationship of a young couple I also learned some interesting things about that part of the world and its customs. I ended up watching the movie after reading the book and also found myself going online to learn more about Singapore - I wasn’t even able to identify it on the map previously! I did finish the book really quickly so decided to read the first sequel in addition (China Rich Girlfriend) but I couldn’t get into that one.

A reader from Boston read *Fierce Femmes and Notorious Liars: A Dangerous Trans Girl's Confabulous Memoir* by Kai Cheng Thom: I started the month reading Thom's most recent work, Falling Back in Love with Being Human, but really didn't like it. So I switched to her most well known work, which I'd been wanting to read for a while. And for the most part, I loved it. The last chapter was a little self-reverential, but I loved Thom's storytelling and world-building. The book explodes with color and visuals. I don't know what I'm reading in August yet, but it will have to start with a "J"!

A reader from Newton read *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini: A sad story, but great read!

A reader from South Pasadena read *Bride* by Ali Hazelwood: Although this wasn’t my favorite read, it was a good light-hearted beach read.
A reader from New York read Women Don’t Owe You Pretty by Florence Given: This book has completely changed my perspective in so many ways! It's a must read for sure.

A reader from Franklin read My Effin’ Life by Geddy Lee: It is difficult to condense this long and powerful autobiography into a few sentences. Canadian Geddy Lee is the amazingly talented bass player for the band, RUSH. Geddy's very detailed autobiography chronicles his growing up and forming the band with Alex and eventually Neil. It details the constant grind of producing music and engineering it to perfection, intense touring, the strain on the families, difficult times of illness and deaths...it's not the glamorous rock star life one might think! Geddy includes a very important chapter about his mom and dad and how they survived the horrors of the Holocaust and arrived in Canada to start a new life. It is a very detailed, but powerful autobiography by one of the most talented musicians in history.

A reader from Scituate read solito by javier zamora: Incredibly high reviews on good reads. And it’s a good book overall, truly a unique experience by an El Salvadoran boy trying to cross the border into the US in 1999. However for me it was so repetitive and long. I appreciated and enjoyed the book, but think it needed an editors heavy hand.

A reader from South Portland read The Tattooist of Auschwitz by Heather Morris: Had such high hopes for this book, but the writing and storyline were horrible.

A reader from Brookline read We by Yevgeny Zamyatin: This novel is a fascinating story of a man desiring not to be different in a society of forced uniformity. It speaks very well to the transition from a more open period after the Russian Revolution to a more oppressive one and the implications that has for those living in the society.

A reader from Sutton read The Covenant of Water by Abraham Verghese: I’ll begin with a favorite line from the book:”To see the miraculous in the ordinary is a more precious gift than prophecy.” I found this tome well worth my investment of time to drink in this story that spans more than three decades, beginning in 1900. From the physician author I learned important aspects about leprosy, birth defects, smallpox, and most notably, neurofibromatosis, as characters grappled with these challenges and more. For me, the numerous storylines coalesce into a gorgeous gestalt.

A reader from Amherst read Dry by Jane Harper: This was Harper's first mystery novel, and it is a very exciting and well-written story. The character of Aaron Falk is intriguing, as he returns to his hometown he left decades ago after being suspected of murder (no, he didn't commit the murder). Now he's back to investigate the death of an old friend and his family. A serious drought, angry townspeople, and a horrific murder, plus the past murder make this a suspenseful read. Excellent book, and there are two more Aaron Falk mysteries after this one. Harper is Australian, I think, where the novel is set.

A reader from Tewksbury read Night For Day by Roselle Lim: Creative premise and a different kind of fantasy romance, but lacking in key details and length at times.

A reader from East Longmeadow read Novel Without a Name by Duong Thu Huong: This novel follows three childhood friends from Dong Tien village who become soldiers in the North
Vietnamese army; they left their families and sweethearts because they were eager to support their country. Yet after ten grueling years, the protagonist Quan expresses his bleak realization that their patriotism came at great personal cost. Through her disillusioned protagonist, Duong Thu Huong somberly questions the sad reality that military conflict depends on the bravery of young people prepared to suffer, starve, and sacrifice their life .... for what?

A reader from Wakefield read beautiful world where are you by salley rooney: I’m interested in reading this audiobook.

A reader from Dracut read The Devil and the Dark Water by Stuart Turton: Paranormal mystery on the high seas. I enjoyed the book, I love mysteries and strange things happening and this fit the bill.

A reader from Oxford read The Silence in her eyes by Armando Lucas Correa: Great book. The ending is completely unexpected. I hated to finish I wanted more.

A reader from Amesbury read The Color of Magic by Terry Pratchett: Not his best, but fun nonetheless.

A reader from Everett read The Fountainhead by Ayn Rand: Hope she gets picked.

A reader from Lexington read PET by Akwaeke Emezi: I liked it! It's been a long time since I read any young adult fiction but it was a nice change of pace. Child abuse is central to the plot, and I'm grateful that Emezi uses only just enough detail to convey what needs to be conveyed; there is no sensationalism and no graphic abuse. The book makes a case that justice can be done without violence, but ultimately, violence is necessary to apprehend this villain, which I find interesting; it feels like a genuine moral dilemma rather than an aesop, which I initially expected.

A reader from Boston read Butter by Asako Yuzuki: The subtitle of this book says that it's a "novel of food and murder", and while that's accurate, reflections on society and the role of women in society are also front and center. The book is full of sumptuous descriptions of food and follows a reporter as she tries to understand an accused murderer through a shared connection to food and cooking. This is a slow and twisty tale, but ultimately an interesting rumination on relationships and social roles.

A reader from Harwich read The Heart in Winter by Kevin Barry: The Heart in Winter by Irish writer Kevin Barry, is a brilliant novel about love, loyalty, and loss. Barry, masterfully skilled at word play, evocative imagery, and deft characterization, is an award-winning star in the Irish constellation of literary genius.

A reader from Plainville read Anxious People by Fredrik Backman: I really enjoyed this book and I look forward to watching the Netflix show that it is based on. I loved Backman’s Beartown trilogy as well. The way he writes is full of understanding about the human condition and the complexity of the emotions we all feel. There are so many lines in his books that could fit into any scenario and as a teacher I think of putting all these great quotes into some presentation or lesson to share with my students. He takes really difficult, heavy emotional subject matter and always weaves it into a story that makes it all feel lighter.
A reader from Weymouth read *The Cat Who Saved Books* by Sōsuke Natsukawa: The Cat Who Saved Books had a lot of good messages.

A reader from Amherst read *Neon Roses* by Rachel Dawson: A coming-of-age lesbian romance set against the 1984 Welsh Miners strike and working class feminist resistance to Thatcher’s vision of England. Vivid and grubby period details and a great 1980s soundtrack make this a compelling and heartfelt book. The audiobook is brilliantly narrated by Ffion Aynsley, it immersed me in the story (and helped with the Welsh names).

A reader from Wakefield read *In the Distance* by Hernan Diaz: Unique character which made me want to continue reading. Interesting and unusual story.

A reader from Southampton read *Smoke and Ashes* by Amitav ghosh: Deeply researched and personal work on the world wide effect of opium. There was no surprise as to how old this enterprise and that the Dutch, English and Indian nations grew wealthy. Some of the wealthiest Americans, i.e. Astors were part of the web of global monies from opium. I kept thinking of Sir Walter Scott's, "Oh what a web we weave when we first practice to deceive." I can't help to think that the effects of the opium trade world wide was/is greater than oil.

A reader from Pepperell read *A Nearly Normal Family* by M.T. Edvardsson: This was recommended to me by my husband years ago, so it was fun to read now and get to chat about it with him. It’s a novel that’s part legal drama (taking place in Sweden), part behind-the-scenes of the family involved, and told from each of their perspectives in three parts. Kept me engaged throughout, and I enjoyed listening on audio.

A reader from Uxbridge read *The Narrowboat Summer* by Anne Youngson: This was a drama free read, the story is a gentle story of discovery.

A reader from Fitchburg read *Apples Never Fall* by Liane Moriarty: I really like the authors way of telling the story and character development. I do wish she got a little more in depth in certain areas and less detailed about seemingly regular things. The twists are turns kept me engaged.

A reader from Westport read *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Beautiful poem!

A reader from Northampton read *Rich People Problems* by Kevin Kwan: I thought this was a great ending to this trilogy. Do I feel like some storylines could have been left out to add more depth to others? Yes, but I think the style of the books thus far having an “ensemble cast” begets many different storylines. All in all, a very fun read (and one I would definitely recommend the audio book for!)

A reader from Baldwinville read *Lies and Weddings* by Kevin Kwan: I didn’t enjoy this book as much as Kevin Kwan’s others. The characters didn’t seem as fully realized, and the conclusion felt rushed. That said, it was a fun, light summer read.

A reader from Maynard read *Lore Olympus, vol. 1* by Rachel Smythe: Smythe was born in New Zealand. For someone who doesn't know a lot about Greek mythology, Lore Olympus is a fun and interesting take into a world that feels very overwhelming. While I have trouble
distinguishing characters before they're officially introduced (I seriously do not know anything about who these people are and how they're connected!!), I love the unique spin Smythe is putting on stories that have been around for millennia.

A reader from Newton read *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* by Holly Jackson: A Good Girl's Guide to Murder is a murder mystery that takes place in the U.K. It's about a girl named Pip who decides to investigate a murder that occurred five years ago in her small, sleepy English town. I really enjoyed the book because it was very suspenseful and I love murder mysteries. I also loved how Pip's discoveries were paced perfectly and kept me reading until the end.

A reader read *Revenge* by Ruth Ogawa: A series of dark stories that loosely connect. Ruth Ogawa is a wonderful author I have recently discovered and this series does not disappoint.

A reader from Danville read *Watership Down* by Richard Adams: I grew up watching this movie so I have always been interested to read it. The book follows a group of rabbits who journey from their warren to escape the destruction of their home. The rabbits’ own religious history/stories are entwined with the tale as well as their language. The story is so rich and I found my mind wander more than a few times about the adventures. Definitely worth the read!

A reader from Worcester read *Real Americans* by Rachel Khong: Rachel Khong was born in Malaysia and is now living in California. I liked this book. I think it would be a interesting book club choice. The book spans three generations of families and the intricacies of each member.

A reader from Amesbury read *The Dry* by Jane Harper: I liked that the book wasn’t predictable and kept me guessing about both mysteries. However I listened to then audio version of this book and it made it more difficult to follow along since there were parts of the book from the present and then it would switch to the past but it was hard to tell.

A reader from Somerville read *The Final Strife* by Saara El-Arifi: This was so impressive for a fantasy debut! Let's all be scared of the tidewind together!!!

A reader from Northfield read *The Comfort of Ghosts* by Jacqueline Winspear: It was with some trepidation that I began reading the final offering in the Maisie Dobbs series, as I hoped it would offer the same compelling immersion into her life and times as previous books in the series. Could I trust that Jacqueline Winspear would be able to close out this long adventure in grand and signature style? Fingers crossed and, upon completion, hands clapping, tipping of a hat and gratitude for leaving me with a calm satiety. Of course I want MORE as I am greedy. I am an American after all... However, the author took care of Maisie, her family, friends, compatriots, professional associates, ghosts (per the title), animal friends and recurring ethical conundrums. She gently played out this long adventure in such a way that I felt as if a bedtime story had concluded and it was okay to tuck in, lights out.

A reader from Grafton read *On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous* by Ocean Vuong: I wanted to love it but I struggled to get through it. The writing is beautiful at times but I wasn’t pulled into the story.
A reader from Florence read *The Green Road* by Anne Enright: What started out as a beautifully written book with great character descriptions got slow and boring about 1/2 way through. It seemed like the second half was written by a different writer.

A reader from Brewster read *Remainders of the Day* by Shaun Bythell: "Remainders of the Day" is by British used-book seller Shaun Bythell who loves buying and selling beautiful old used books. The quirky sources of his old books, his eccentric employees and customers and his battles with Amazon are subjects of this amusing memoir. This is a fun read.

A reader from Easthampton read *Do Glaciers Listen?: Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, and Social Imagination* by Julie Cruikshank: Describes Native oral histories related to life near and with glaciers in the last few centuries in what is now western Canada and southeastern Alaska. Quite academic but very interesting and useful before traveling to the area!

A reader from Winchester read *Une Belle Vie* by Virginie Grimaldi (France): This was a fun read about two sisters who reunite after being estranged. I enjoyed the flashbacks and the short chapters-it was a fun and easy summer read. I’m looking forward to reading more from this author from France.

A reader from Northampton read *The Psychology of Time Travel* by Kate Mascarenhas: Normally I don't dive into sci-fi! out of my comfort zone.

A reader from Whately read *the family next door* by Sally Hepworth: The story centers around three families who live in a suburb of Melbourne where everyone knows their neighbors. However, they all have secrets in their private lives. The character development was perfect. I felt like I knew everyone. I would read another book by this author.

A reader from Hudson read *how to say babylon* by Safiya Sinclair: a compelling story of a girl growing up in a Rastafari family. it shows how sexist and restricting the interpretation of a religion can be and the suffering it imposes on young girls (& boys).

A reader from Foxborough read *Nick and Charlie* by Alice Oseman: Nick and Charlie have a mega huge argument, and the question of breaking up lingers.

A reader from Bolton read *Beowulf* by Seamus Heaney: Continuing my tour of ancient literature, Beowulf is another Epic adventure, but one that also tells what it means to be a good ruler, and live in accordance with god(s).

A reader from Boston read *Emily Wilde's Map of the Otherlands* by Heather Fawcett: Author is Canadian.

A reader from Roslindale read *Death Comes As The End* by Agatha Christie: Agatha Christie's only historical fiction mystery is similar in a lot of ways to her other work (complicated family dynamics rooted in a problematic patriarch), though the diversity of setting is a nice change of pace. As usual, the who-done-it is nigh impossible to guess but still makes total sense once revealed, leaving you delightfully guessing until the very end.
A reader from Attleboro read *Toward a True Kinship of Faiths* by His Holiness the Dalai Lama: I found this book thoughtful, insightful, and informative about the world's most common religions. The Dalai Lama did a wonderful job describing the commonalities of these religions and also those who are secular. I enjoyed his reminders to be compassionate and his plea to religious leaders to band together to stop the violence in the world as well as the assault on the environment.

A reader from Boston read *The Gentleman's Gambit* by Evie Dunmore: very enjoyable.

A reader from Hanover read *44 Scotland Street* by McCall Smith, Alexander: This novel, originally serialized in the Scotsman daily newspaper, is a glimpse into the lives of those living at 44 Scotland Street, and their small circle of friends, family, and co-workers. Each 'chapter' is a self-contained, but delicious, slice of life in Edinburgh, Scotland.

A reader from Roslindale read *Etta and Otto and Russell and James: A Novel* by Emma Hooper: This was a great quick, summer read, especially if you're looking for something different. The book includes imagery from different parts of wooded Canada.

A reader from Attleboro read *In Order to Live* by Yeonmi Park with Maryanne Vollers: What an amazing story of perseverance, love and determination. The journey of Yeonmi and her mother from North Korea to gain freedom in South Korea led them through so many unbelievable obstacles and horror at times it was hard to read. To feel a mother’s love for her daughter and how they never gave up. And now the courage of Yeonmi to be a voice and advocate to educate and bring awareness to the cruelties and realities of North Korea and human trafficking.

A reader from Blackstone read *Confessions* by Kanae Minato: This 2008 Japanese novel was translated into English in 2014. Each chapter is told from a different character's perspective as the story unfolds. I couldn't put this one down. Exploring themes like revenge, guilt, and motherhood, the author keeps you on the edge of your seat from start to finish.

A reader from Norfolk read *The Candid Life of Meena Dave* by Namrata Patel: good story.

A reader from Franklin read *Marshmallow & Jordan* by Alina Chau: A sweet graphic novel set in Indonesia. The themes are community, compassion and friendship.

A reader from Dartmouth read *The Road Trip* by Beth O'Leary: Didn't like this book. But really enjoyed other books by this author.

A reader from Harwich read *Pippi Longstocking* by Astrid Lindgren: I try to read (at least) one Middle Grade book a year, and this year I revisited Pippi Longstocking. It was such a treat, and I was surprised by how many of the stories/chapters that I remembered from childhood.

A reader from Amherst read *Ouran High School Host Club, Vol. 7* by Bisco Hatori: I love this series! It’s hilarious. It’s a new all time favorite feel-good for me. I know that whenever I need a laugh, I can always count on the host club!

A reader from Boston read *Home Going* by Yaa Gyasi: Yaa Gyasi was born in Ghana, and shared this mutli-generational story of two half sisters born in Ghana and their descendants. It is a
difficult story of the long-reaching and devastating effects of colonialism and the slave trade. A real life horror story told with grace.

A reader from Northampton read *Emma* by Jane Austen: This was my first time reading Emma, but it was far from my first time meeting Emma Woodhouse. I’ve seen several movie adaptations of this story, some many times, so it was inevitable that I would one day read Austen’s original work. It was exactly as expected, without surprises.

A reader from Hartland read *IQ84* by Haruki Murakami: sublime.

A reader from Longmeadow read *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare: I decided to read *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare from England because I never had but have heard so much about it. I never watched any or the movies or other productions that have been made. It was difficult to read and understand but I got the main idea. I will have to read some commentary on it to have a better grasp. I am still glad I tackled it. Even knowing the characters will help with my crossword puzzles.

A reader from Attleboro read *Zero Days* by Ruth Ware: I enjoyed Ruth Ware's "Zero Days" thriller very much. She combined cybersecurity and mystery, which I enjoyed. Just when the reader thinks they have it figured out, she throws in quite a bit of misdirection, which starts the next day's mystery all over again. Fans of science fiction, mystery, thriller, and crime-solving may find this book interesting. I thought it might get old with all the misdirection and mystery, but it held up quite well, right up until the Zero Day finale.

A reader from Brewster read *And Every Morning the Way Home Gets Longer and Longer* by Fredrik Backman: This book was very well done. It was sad but handled the topic of dementia well.

A reader from Northampton read *My Documents* by Alejandro Zambra: I thought this was a novel, so I was surprised when it was actually short stories - but still good!

A reader from Northampton read *3 Streets* by Yoko Tawada: Short sort of ghost stories.

A reader from Lynnfield read *Beartown* by Fredrik Backman: I expected to love it but I didn't. It reminded me of all the reasons why I hate sports and I didn't enjoy the writing, which is surprising to me because I like some of Backman's other works. But I did like the storyline, the characters, the conflicts, and its social commentary and themes. Another 3 for me.

A reader from West Boylston read *The Plague* by Albert Camus: Who knew a story written in 1947 about the plague would ring so true in 2024. After Covid, this book was horribly relatable. As they said in the book, you may not have the disease, but you will always carry it in your heart.

A reader from Bourne read *Miss Eliza's English Kitchen* by Annabel Abbs: "Miss Eliza's English Kitchen" by Annabel Abbs is a historical novel that takes place in Victorian England. The story is inspired by the real-life Eliza Acton, a pioneering cook and writer who is often credited with creating one of the first modern cookbooks. Annabel Abbs wrote about the challenges and
triumphs of women in a male-dominated society, especially the unsung women of culinary history. This book is a fun read and I enjoyed it.

A reader from Danvers read *Moriarty* by Anthony Horowitz: I chose this book because it has been on my shelf for a while. It is a good book that is reminiscent of Doyle's work. It utilizes similar puzzles and twists in the story to remind the reader of its connections, but it separates out enough that it doesn't feel as though it is trying to be an exact copy of the style.

A reader from Brookline read *Disgrace* by J.M. Coetzee: The author, who won the 2003 Nobel Prize in Literature, was born in Cape Town, South Africa. This novel paints a picture of disgrace on multiple levels - personal, familial, societal, and political. The main character is shunned personally and professionally following an affair with his student. He then flees to his daughter’s where a violent and terrorizing incident forces them to confront their strained relationship and the complicated racial complexities of South Africa. While the women characters (the student, his daughter, and daughter’s friend) are strong, the story clearly shows the difficulties third-world women face and their need to be protected by men. This is the first book I’ve read by Coetzee, who won the Booker Prize for Disgrace. I highly recommend this.

A reader from PEPPERELL read *The Shadow of the Wind* by Carlos Ruiz Zafron: The story takes place in 1945 post-WWII Barcelona where this Spanish author is from. It follows the journey of a young man, Daniel, after his discovery of a mysterious book "The Shadow of the Wind" found in a secret library known as the Cemetery of Forgotten Books. Daniel becomes obsessed with the book and its author. His journey is one of mystery, danger, romance, loyalty, kindness, and adventure. This is part of a four-book series, and I am excited to continue on!

A reader from Wilmington read *A Hero Born* by Jin Yong: Enjoyed the book, it read like an anime and it was very entertaining.

A reader from Brookline read *What You Are Looking for Is in the Library* by Michiko Aoyama: I loved it! The librarian character was so interesting, and the stories were honestly quite inspiring.

A reader from Wellfleet read *Summer* by Ali Smith: I actually ended up reading several books that qualified for the prompt this month. This was an easy one for me, as I tend to read more books by authors from the UK, Canada, Ireland and elsewhere than I do American authors. Among my favorites, over the last dozen years or so, has been Ali Smith. Her brilliant novel *How To Be Both* was my introduction and nothing I've read by her since has disappointed. Having said that, I had a bit of a rocky start to this final volume in the seasons quartet. It's been on my TBR list for some time and I've been reluctant to start it in part because I've enjoyed the previous three books so much and didn't want my experience of the series to end, A "last cookie in the jar" moment if there ever was one. And, once I did begin it, I found the Robert character so despicable that I had to put it aside and pick up something else. But I circled back to Summer as the month was ending and I'm very glad I did. I had said to a friend recently that I'm having a hard time these days reading fiction with a contemporary setting. All it usually takes is a mention of someone texting and I start to lose interest. A notable exception would be these books by Ali Smith and I think the difference is that she's extremely perceptive as to just what all the technology we've so rapidly embraced is doing to us as well as for us. And it certainly doesn't
hurt that her politics align with my own. And, as it turns out, there's one more cookie in the jar after this one, her companion piece, titled appropriately enough, Companion Piece. I'm saving that for another day, though.

A reader from Holyoke read *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox, and the Horse* by Charlie Mackesy: This is a lovely book about friendship and so much more! There are so many life lessons such as, “What do we do when our hearts hurt?” “We wrap them with friendship, shared tears and time, till they wake hopeful and happy again.” As a quick read, this is a book I will read again and again.

A reader from Malden read *Linghub* by Ai Jiang: Incredibly sad, but well-written horror book, in the vein of Shirley Jackson. Highly, highly recommended!!

A reader from Somerville read *Normal People* by Sally Rooney: I decided to read this so I could watch the show finally. It took a while to get into the writing style, but once I got into the groove it was nice. It's one of those books that could go on forever without a satisfying ending. Watching the show after, it did a great job of following the story. In fact, the ending of the show dredged up more emotion for me than the book, which is not always the case.

A reader from Salem read *Ester and Ruzya* by Masha Gessen: I love reading books about individual people's stories in the context of historical events. It gives so much more meaning to your understanding of the events.

A reader from Milton read *Journeys to the Far Side of the World* by David Attenborough: David's descriptions of his adventures and the flora, fauna, and rituals he observed are incredibly fascinating. This was wonderful reading.

A reader from Stanford read *The Fury* by Alex Michaelides: A thriller set on a private island with many twists and turns. Thoroughly enjoyable for fans of mysteries. Is it murder or a love story?

A reader from Springfield read *The Inheritance of Orquidea Divina* by Zoraida Cordova: Reads like a legend.

A reader from Turners Falls read *Mrs. Quinn's Rise to Fame* by Olivia Ford: Easy 5 star book. This was a hug in book format. I’ve recommended it to everyone!

A reader from Beverly read *A Secret Kept* by Tatiana de Rosnay: de Rosnay is an author from France who penned the best seller "Sarah's Key". This book is intriguing, but slow-going, about extended-family trips [and relationships] to a French island and a dark secret revealed.

A reader from Attleboro read *The Coin* by Yasmin Zaher: I did not enjoy this book. I found it very odd and disturbing.

A reader from Wilmington read *The Redbreast* by Jo Nesbo: This is book 3 in the Harry Holes series, and I was told this is a great book to start with if I wanted to give the series a try. I had a hard time following the story line and almost gave up on it. It's a crime novel and is considered "Nordic Crime." It just wasn't my style, I guess.
A reader from Barnstable read *The Wizard of the Kremlin* by Guiliano Da Empoli: A timely and insightful look into the political apparatus and regime of Russia. While it explores the inner working of Putin's government, it also has insights and implications regarding the political situation in the US today.

A reader from Dix Hills read *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* by Leo Tolstoy: Incredibly insightful story of a position most don't consider until it passes them. Very reflective summary of suffering as a whole and the ability for one instance to consume all else we experience.

A reader from Norton read *Icebreaker* by Hannah Grace: Surprised to find out the author is British, but it made this month's challenge easy!

A reader from South Hadley read *The Days of Abandonment* by Elena Ferrante: Visceral and terrible, deeply propulsive. Also I just generally appreciate stories of reacting to the cruel and terrible logics of oppression by going batshit insane.

A reader from Allston read *The Cat Who Saved Books* by Sosuke Natsukawa: Such a fun read! Suggest for any book lovers!

A reader from Chelmsford read *The Paris Apartment* by Lucy Foley: An enjoyable thriller mystery. This book has been on my TBR pile for almost 2 years, so I was very happy to finally read it. Similar to Lucy Foley's other novels, it's told in multiple POVs in short chapters, which makes this a good novel to pick up and put down when on-the-go in the summer. The final reveal was a good twist, and still managed to surprise me even when I thought I had figured out the murderer.

A reader from Andover read *Homecoming* by Kate Morton: Kate Morton is an Australian author whose love of language and literature is evident throughout this book. Although it was fairly easy to guess one of the “big” revelations, others were surprising.

A reader from Springfield read *Sense and Sensibility* by Jane Austen: I appreciate reading these coming of age novels especially this one written so long ago.

A reader from Berkley read *Sarah's Key* by Tatiana de Rosnay: Heartbreaking but captivating. Read it in one sitting.

A reader from Seekonk read *The London Bookshop Affair* by Louise Fein: This historical novel contained a dual time format about a woman who had been a SOE agent during WWII and her daughter living in 1963. The daughter is involved in the peace movement concerning especially atomic weapons during the standoff between USSR and the US. It revealed information about the time of which I was unaware.

A reader from Melrose read *Birds of a Feather* by Jacqueline Winspear: Love the quirky 1930’s detective Maisie Dobbs! Winspear weaves in themes of post-World War One trauma that enrich the characters and plot.

A reader from Chelsea read *Kitchen* by Banana Yoshimoto: I’ve had this book on my shelf for years and I was so excited to finally have a reason to pick it up. This book is an English
A translation of a popular Japanese book. Based on the cover and description, I thought it was going to be a quirky story about dealing with grief of losing someone you love with the support of found family. I wasn’t completely wrong. The book does deal with grief and loss, but it is not quirky or whimsical. On the contrary, I found the book to be boring. Of the books I’ve read for this challenge, this has to be the most disappointing entry as I have such high expectations for it. The main themes of the book is around grief and dealing with the hardship of losing someone you love.

A reader from Beverly read *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* by Ocean Vuong: A family history that began in Vietnam and continued in America.

A reader from Danvers read *The Three Body Problem* by Cixin Liu: This was like reading a textbook and the only reason I finished is because it was too late for me to pick another book. I did not really enjoy this one.

A reader from Tyngsboro read *China Rich Girlfriend* by Kevin Kkwan: I read the first book in the trilogy last month. I liked the movie better, and I was hesitant to read this book. I really liked this one and am looking forward to reading the next one. There are so many different subplots going on this book, it made it an interesting read. I loved them all. Kitty Pong is a real surprise. I didn’t even expect her to be in the sequel. I love Astrid and reading about her life and of course Rachel and Nick. There are new characters as well Collette is so extravagant. I had no idea you could put a koi pond on an airplane! I’m looking forward to finishing the series.

A reader from Brewster read *And Every Morning the Way Home Gets Longer and Longer* by Fredrik Backman: Backman is from Sweden. He wrote this novela about fathers and sons dealing with dementia. I cried reading it. Very abstract but intentional.

A reader from Shrewsbury read *Home Fire* by Kamila Shamsie: This book was written by Kamila Shamsie, who was born in Pakistan. I learned after reading it that it is a modern retelling of Antigone, which I'm not too familiar with but found interesting.

A reader from Sandwich read *The Maker of Swans* by Paraic O'Donnell: The author lives in Wicklow, Ireland. This novel is a mix of supernatural storytelling blended with the elements of mystery and suspense. It also aligns with the theme of the creative power of the oral and written language that we choose to express ourselves.

A reader from Lawrence read *When the Moon Hatched* by Sarah A. Parker: July: author born outside the US (Sarah is from Australia).

A reader from Wrentham read *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini: The Kite Runner was a book that I always wanted to read but hadn't gotten around to it. I'm really glad this challenge sparked me to finally read it. It was very sad but also interesting to read about Afghanistan's culture and how the Taliban began.

A reader from Lynnfield read *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie: It took me a little while to get into this book, but once I did I really enjoyed it. Similar to an American Tragedy for me in
that the writing style at times was a bit trying, but the story and themes are moving and captivating.

A reader from Derry read *On Chesil Beach* by Ian McEwan: A fine book, quick read of the short history of young couples on their honeymoon night and how it impacts the remainder of their lives. Set in the 1950s in a coastal English town. The story revolves around the morals of the time, the ignorance of youth in a repressed sequel society. Of the so called good old days that never really were. Spoilers abound, so I will leave the reader to their own discovery. Not for the faint of heart, this is a raw honest story and how love needs communication to nurture and endure.

A reader from Derry read *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank: Anne Frank The Diary of a Young Girl. Perhaps no more relevant book for these times than this Diary of a Young Jewish girl hiding away hoping to survive the holocaust during occupation of Holland. This is the latest definitive version of the Diary, combined from what historians label Diary A, B & C. A is the original Diary, B is the version Anne herself started revising herself and C the final most complete version with restored missing pages found. Published after her death, her father Otto, made changes, removed passages involving Anne's awakening as a young woman, sexual and relationship with her mother. This book is a classic, that all humans can learn from including her shining final writings of still believing good is in the world.

A reader from Berkley read *The Vibrant Years* by Sonali Dev: I initially loved the story of three generations of women supporting each other and hoped it would build more on that. The concept of creating an app to find the perfect match was good to start, but then the plot took of in many different directions.

A reader from Arlington read *Anthills of the Savannah* by Chinua Achebe: I've heard of this author since high school, in particular his book "Things Fall Apart." I used this opportunity to read something by him and was not disappointed. Anthills of the Savannah chronicles the alternately humorous and horrible descent from a British overlord to a British-educated, African one. The language is beautiful in all that it is painful. The inevitable downfalls pained me and educated me at the same time. I will read more from this author.

A reader from Northfield read *the lord of the flies* by William Golding: this is the second book this year that i re read from high school and i know that i did the "cliff notes" in high school for this book, i know wish i hadnt. such an eye opening book.

A reader from Salem read *The Idea Of You* by Robinne Lee: UGH, what a waste of time.

A reader from SANDISFIELD read *LACANDON DREAMS* by Katayoun Medhat: Love the characters in the Milagro Mysteries.

A reader from Salem read *One Happy Couple* by Ruth Ware: Just ok.

A reader from Shelburne Falls read *10 años con Mafalda* by Quino: Good to challenge my language skills by reading a comic strip collection in Spanish. One quote compared Mafalda to Charlie Brown, which I agree with.
A reader from Hampden read *Most Beautiful Book in the World - Eight Novellas* by Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt: Recommended. A clever assembly of eight stories in which we find 8 different scenario, 8 different venues and eight different women all portrayed against one theme. The theme is the unrequited pursuit of happiness when it is staring one right in the face. Very enjoyable reading.

A reader from SCITUATE read *Music of the Ghosts* by Vaddey Ratner: A rich and deeply-felt story of the aftermath of war in Cambodia, this book reaches across decades and continents to convey what it is like to be an innocent civilian caught in the crossfire anywhere in our world.

A reader from Dracut read *MR. Know it All* by John Waters: Ehh...

A reader from Ludlow read *The Rocking Chair Prophet* by Matthew Kelly: For July I read *The Rocking Chair Prophet*. The book was a quick read and was insightful.

A reader from Melrose read *The People of the Book* by Geraldine Brooks: The People of the Book is an imagined history of a real illuminated manuscript, the Sarajevo Haggadah. Fascinating glimpses of Jewish history in Europe and of the process of preserving manuscripts.

A reader from Florence read *Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert: Madame Bovary was written by French author Gustave Flaubert in 1857 and is a seminal work of literary realism. Following the serialization of the novel in 1856, Flaubert was charged with obscenity. He was acquitted in 1857, after which Madame Bovary became a bestseller. Emma Bovary, the protagonist, is a romantic dreamer; never happy with what she has - from her home to clothing to her men. She behaves recklessly to get what she seems to think is the life she deserves, only to ultimately drive her husband and child into scandal and poverty from beyond the grave. The characters are, for the most part, pretty despicable. This novel was meant as an indictment of the bougeoisie and delusional aspirations far beyond ones means. Unfortunately, it is Charles and little Berthe who pay for Emma's follies. An excellent, if dark, read.

A reader from Springfield read *Real Americans* by Rachel Khong: Incredibly approachable literary fiction, this mix of family drama and mystery with interwoven timelines completely sucked me in.

A reader from Hanover read *Roman Stories* by Jhumpa Lahiri: "Roman Stories" is by Jhumpa Lahiri, an author born in Great Britain who now resides in Italy. She translated the book from Italian with some help from Todd Portnowitz. This is a book of short stories all taking place in Rome, Italy. In Part I, the reader feels the seperateness of the Rome natives with foreign immigrants. Lahiri's writing is concise and descriptive. The reader takes on the feelings of the characters. The immigrant is an outsider trying for acceptance and the local people love the routine or they are yearning for excitement. All of the stories in Part II take place at "The Steps". Many perspectives of life are explored -- good and bad. Part III deals with loss and yearning. To gain what was lost or to finally "fit in". All of these short stories will stay in your heart and make you reflect on them and yourself.

A reader from Springfield read *unger Pangs: True Love Bites: Fluff and Fangs* by Joy Demorra: I follow the author on tumblr for non-book related reasons, and figured I'd give her work a try!
The two editions depending on reader preference regarding spice level is much appreciated. A lovely read!

A reader from Arlington read *Code Dependent: Living in the Shadow of AI* by Madhumita Murgia: The author of the book grew up in India and is now a London based journalist for Financial Times covering artificial intelligence. She was educated as an immunologist in the UK. While the author has a technical degree in immunology, she does not describe having any technical education in AI, self taught or otherwise. With a technical grounding in AI, the author may see less malicious intent on the part of developers and see more of the challenges in developing nascent technology. The book disappointed me. Like other books covering the domain of artificial intelligence, I found this book heavily biased in the direction of how artificial intelligence is broadly harmful and, in the case of this book specifically, harmful to a segment of society that might be thought of as disempowered or disadvantaged. Missing is any narrative of how this same segment does and will benefit from AI. Generally, the author’s narrative describes AI as harmful to marginalized people both because she asserts that the outputs of AI perpetrate further marginalization the disadvantaged and because the labor of disadvantaged people is intentionally exploited so that these laborers receive low wages while AI tech companies generate large profits. While the author makes a passing attempt to show some possible benefits of AI such as in healthcare, in what she might call the social justice context, she characterizes AI as harmful by just about any measure. I find a subtle hypocrisy in the narrative of exploitation. The author describes tech companies using very low cost labor, in developing countries, doing menial but essential data labeling tasks. The author builds her narrative on interviews of people doing this work that she then uses to write a book that generates royalties for herself presumably without compensating any of the people she interviewed. Is this a subtle exploitation of the same people she purports to advocate for? (As an aside, could the contributors to the MA Reading Challenge generate revenue for the organizers?) The author describes many instances where AI is used maliciously. I accept the author considering how developers of technology can mitigate malicious use of this technology, but would like to see the author apply as much focus on how society can deter the actual malicious actors. I believe there is an audience for this book, but I do not believe that this book makes much of a contribution to understanding balancing the benefits of AI while discovering then mitigating undesirable outcomes.

A reader from Pepperell read *Miss Iceland* by Audur Ava Olafsdottir: A woman in Iceland who struggles to be a writer in the 1960s.

A reader from Hamilton read *Eastbound* by Maylis de Kerangal: I loved this novella. With a break speed narrative voice, protagonists that cannot speak to each other, this story is stunning, delightful and surprisingly translated. Typically I find translations awkward and halting, but Jessica Moore is a genius!

A reader from Monson read *Madame Secretary* by Madeleine Albright: This was a very interesting read. It was filled with detailed and descriptive historical content. Madeleine Albright was born in Czechoslovakia. She moved to the USA with her parents as a child. She was educated at Wellesley College. She was chosen to become the first female Secretary of State. She was very intelligent but also down to earth. She was a very successful person.
A reader from AUBURN read *The Piano Maker* by Kurt Palka: This is a compelling story of a woman arriving alone in a beautiful, rural Canadian town in the 1930's. She was trained by her mother to be a piano MAKER - not tuner. She tries to live quietly and purposefully in her new surroundings but her move is fraught with her dark past creeping in.

A reader from Braintree read *Klara and the Sun* by Kazuo Ishiguro: My pick for July's MA Book Challenge (author not born in U.S.) is "Klara and the Sun" by Kazuo Ishiguro who was born in Japan and moved to Great Britain when he was five years old. This dystopian tale entwines AI, environmental harm caused by development and the most fundamental of human characteristics/emotions/reasons for living - love. Klara, a life-like android, is chosen by Josie to be her AF (Artificial Friend). As Klara spends more time with Josie and her Mother and friend, Rick, Klara learns that people can experience more than one emotion and she becomes determined to save the sickly Josie. The novel explores themes such as loneliness, love, sacrifice, and the meaning of human existence.

A reader from Tewksbury read *The Ornithologist’s Field Guide to Love* by India Holton: This book is so absurdly hilarious and magical and romantic.

A reader from Berlin read *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* by Shota Rustaveli: I read "The Knight in the Panther's Skin" by Georgian author Shota Rustaveli. I read the translated version by Lyn Coffin, which is seen as the best English translation of the medieval epic poem. Honestly, I am not entirely sure why I read it other than to check Georgia off my "reading around the world" list. It's very much like reading Chaucer... but with less fun, ribald humor, and more devotion to your "superiors." It is a beautiful piece of literature, don't get me wrong. But I think it's best to leave to the scholars.

A reader from Bellingham read *Body: The Photography Book* by Nathalie Herschdorfer: For this month I read Body by curator and art historian Nathalie Herschdorfer who's from Switzerland. Body is a book to highlight the human form in all of the ways that it can exist, babies in the womb to the elderly, fit to disordered, tattoos to surgeries. Specifically this book takes on the way body image has become such a front of mind issue with the rise of social media etc. I appreciated the written parts to start off each chapter and how they gave you something to consider and more context as you looked through the photographs.

A reader from Somerville read *The Muscle Girl Next Door* by Amesuke Ano: I was so excited when I found this at the library. The main girl love interest is my body goals. It was exciting to see a love story with a little gender role reversal. I was a little sad this seems to be only a one volume story, as I would love to read more little stories with the characters interacting. I was excited for this month's challenge because it meant I could pick almost any manga since all the authors tend to be from Japan (or Asia) so that meant a wide variety to pick from.

A reader from Hudson read *Death in Venice* by Thomas Mann: Mann was born in Germany, and the book was translated from the German. The story tells of an intellectual on a working holiday in Venice and the people he meets there. It's a compelling tale, beautifully told, and was understandably the inspiration for a film and an opera of the same name.
A reader from North Reading read *Bride* by Ali Hazelwood: I didn’t know Hazelwood was born in Italy when I picked this book up at the library, but I was pleasantly surprised when I read her author info, so that I could make a romance novel about vampires and werewolves work for my July entry! It wasn’t my favorite book but I did enjoy it; the mystery storyline kept me guessing until the very end and the steamy parts were steamy.

A reader from Brookline read *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi: I really enjoyed the concept of this book. However it was a little too “short story”-esque for me. I wish we stuck with one character longer than a chapter at a time. On top of the switching of the chapters, I also had to keep track of who’s family was who’s and where in time we were. It made the writing a little choppy for me which made it more difficult to follow.

A reader from Wrentham read *Murder Road* by Simone St. James: I met Simone St. James a few months ago at a Q&A/book signing author event. After learning she was from Canada I knew I'd hold onto this book for the July reading challenge. I enjoyed this book, creepy at times and it kept me wondering. I would definitely recommend if looking for a thriller book.

A reader from Dennisport read *Little Bee* by Cleave, Chris: Interesting book by British author about a young, female Nigerian refuge.

A reader from Worcester read *Love Another Day* by Regina Hanel: Regina Hanel was born in Germany and now lives in the US. This book was a fun read.

A reader from Burlington read *The Time of Contempt* by Andrezej Sapkowski: This is the second novel (and fourth overall book) of the Witcher saga. I was unable to finish this book a few months ago, but thanks to this challenge to read an author from outside this country, I picked it up and finished it. Ironically, just where I stopped reading (chapter 3) is where the book really gets good. War breaks out, Ciri discovers herself, and a lot of things are setup for the rest of the saga (which I have not yet read). I'm still very much interested in finishing this saga, although I will say I still prefer the earlier short stories to the novel format. Too many things happen in too large a world for me to possibly keep track, and I already feel like I need to re-read everything again (and take notes!) to gain the slight bit of understanding necessary to grasp the story. I'm trying to avoid the show as well since I heard it's not as good. Maybe it will help to put a face to some of the names.

A reader from Worcester read *the laramie project* by moises kaufman: I enjoyed reading this important play.

A reader from Shrewsbury read *The Bat* by Jo Nesbo: I enjoyed the book. But I also struggled a bit. Harry seemed to fall off the wagon pretty easily after someone he only knew a week was murdered. Some things were not quite realistic, but I did enjoy it.

A reader from Georgetown read *The Hunting Party* by Lucey Foley: I highly recommend. I love this style of book, many different perspectives, and a sort of “who dun it?” That you are trying to figure out alongside the characters in the story. I couldn’t put it down!

A reader from Greenfield read *Dreadful Company* by Vivian Shaw: A delightful sequel.
A reader from West Hartford read *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig: So interesting to consider the many lives of Nora Seed with the most important decision being for her to choose life over death. This well developed novel looks at all the angles and helps us realize how lucky we are to be alive.

A reader from Franklin read *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel: It was an interesting book with a very cool and original premise. I couldn't stop reading to find out what happened at the end!

A reader from Derry read *Howl's Moving Castle* by Diana Wynne Jones: Author from London.

A reader from Methuen read *The Harbor* by Katrine Engberg: “The deepest ring of Hell should be for people who hurt children.” Two Danish detectives, Jeppe Korner and Anette Werner, work to find Oscar Dryer-Hoff, a 15 year old possible runaway. Why? Deep and painfully overwhelming secrets! You will meet his wealthy parents: Dad who knows the secrets and Mom who doesn’t. Then, there is Aunt Jenny who knows the secrets, Oscar’s Danish class teacher who discovers the secrets and ends up dead, and Oscar’s younger sister Essie who knows and does something about them. A host of intriguing characters will keep you guessing about their connections to Oscar; you will root for some, weep for some, and wish for some to be punished, but you will be truly engaged in their lives! I want to read another book by Kathrine Egbert. The layers of action and gradual inclusion of characters fascinate me -a very good read!

A reader from Blandford read *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* by Haruki Murakami: Haruki Murakami is a Japanese author. This edition was translated from the Japanese by Jay Rubin. To badly misquote my local librarian when I checked out this book, "You will only experience your first Murakami once." She was right. This was my first Murakami and I have never read anything quite like it. It is marvelous.

A reader from Seekonk read *The Night of Baba Yaga* by Akira Otani: Very sad to give this two stars because of how excited I was to read this :[ The relationship between Yoriko and Shoko was so painfully underdeveloped which is doubly upsetting considering how much time was spent on the fight scenes (which were definitely cool but alas). Very cool gender and sexuality themes tossed in at the end as well which once again unfortunate we don’t get to delve into them deeper. Definitely think this could’ve been longer to allow for more story and allowing the characters to reach the places the author wanted them to.

A reader from East Sandwich read *Visions from San Francisco* by Milosz Czeslaw: Interesting. Unfortunately there were times I felt some of what he was saying was just ever so slightly beyond my grasp.

A reader from Dartmouth read *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* by Heather Morris: I listened the audiobook of this novel. I was engaged learning about the difficult journey of the protagonist. Only after I completed the book did I discover it was based on stories told by the real Lale Sokolav, which made the novel even more interesting.

A reader from Amherst read *Abyss* by Pilar Quintana: Fascinating account of the life of an 8 year old girl in Cali, Columbia. Her life with her family and friends takes some harrowing changes, which she navigates with the help of aunts and friends.
A reader from Ludlow read *Anil's Ghost* by Michael Ondaatje: Set in Sri Lanka during a raging civil war. Anil is a forensic anthropologist. She hadn't been back for years, her parents are dead. She is there to identify murder victims. The author beautifully describes the lush natural world. I even looked up the birds, foods and geology mentioned. He lets me see some of the inner workings of the characters. It broadened my understanding of that part of the world.

A reader from Reading read *The Graham Effect* by Elle Kennedy: A romance novel by a Canadian author. Unsurprisingly involves a lot of hockey.

A reader from Fall River read *The Jumblies* by Edward Lear: I really love reading discarded library books. They are always interesting and unique! This was a fun, nonsensical tale with beautiful pictures throughout.

A reader from Berkley read *Big Little Lies* by Liane Moriarty: I loved the twists and turns in this book. It started out feeling quite predictable, but the story kept changing and I couldn't figure out who the guilty party was.


A reader from Hopkinton read *The Mystery of the Blue Train* by Agatha Christie: The mystery itself is not her best - it's one of the earliest works - but still interesting. But I absolutely loved descriptions of the British society as it was nearly 100 years ago, and how subtly English language has changed between UK then and US now.

A reader from Hubbardston read *Escape Velocity* by Victor Manibo: Author Victor Manibo was born in the Philippines. I saw this novel billed as 'Knives Out in Space,' and I think that's a pretty good way to describe it! (sorry for the duplicate entry, I chose June as the month by accident on my previous submission).

A reader from Beverly read *Age pf Vice* by Deepti Kapoor: This was very dark and violent but a compelling story.

A reader from Haverhill read *The Janus Stone* by Elle Griffiths: A nice follow up to the first book I’d read prior, The Crossing Places. Books follow an overweight forensic archaeologist named Ruth Galloway and how her simple unassuming life on the salt marsh In Norfolk England gets uprooted when she’s pulled into a murder case by a pushy detective. Fun read for folks outside England, reading about the different terms and cultural differences between countries.

A reader from Chelmsford read *Long Island* by Colm Toibin: I had read Colm Toibin's Brooklyn and was looking forward to the sequel, the main character being Eilis Lacey. I was surprised yet intrigued as to where the story plot would lead. Reading about stories set in Ireland generally ensure a host of interesting characters and Long Island did not disappoint. In all, I enjoyed Long Island but I honestly enjoyed Brooklyn more, although for no specific reason. A part of me wonders if it's because I had already imagined a sequel... which was in contrast to the author's :) I definitely recommend both books in this series!
A reader from Quincy read *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank: Definitely wish this was assigned when I was in grade school. I feel like it would have been more impactful then.

A reader from Worcester read *A Fool of Death with Your Beauty* by Amwaeke Emezi: Beautiful story about grief and desire and experiencing life after tremendous loss.

A reader from North Dighton read *Apples Never Fall* by Liane Moriarty: Eh, it was okay. Not great. Longer than it needed to be. Interesting perspectives. Sometimes hard to follow as it jumped back and forth in time.

A reader from Amherst read *The Big Green Tent* by Ludmila Ulitskata: Epic Russian story following many characters through the Soviet years.

A reader from Boston read *Portrait in Sepia* by Isabel Allende: The sequel to Daughter of Fortune, A Portrait in Sepia follows more characters through the Del Valle family’s legacy of secrets and loss.

A reader from WEST BOYLSTON read *The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane* by Lisa See: The author was born in Paris, France but raised in Angeles. The story takes place in a remote area of China and introduces us to Akha culture and the process of making tea.

A reader from Boston read *Yellowface* by R.K. Huang: Loved it. Author born in Guangzhou.

A reader from Danvers read *One Perfect Couple* by Ruth Ware: Ware never disappoints!

A reader from Lexington read *The Secret Chord* by Geraldine Brooks: Thought I would like this book better. The author didn’t provide new insights about my knowledge of King David. And failed to present a King David that positively reflected his accomplishments and impact on his people.

A reader from Weymouth read *the love of my after life* by Kirsty Greenwood: Interesting premise. Fun, romantic comedy.

A reader from Milford read *Swimming in the Dark* by Tomasz Jedrowski: Soft, and painful, and lonely, and hopeful. Life is long and we keep going.

A reader from College Park read *The Witching Tide* by Margaret Meyer: The author, who was born in Canada and grew up in New Zealand, has written a historical fiction tale based on real events in England (“East Anglia”) in 1645. Martha is a respected village healer who has been enlisted by the traveling “witch finder” to seek out women suspected of the dark arts. Martha, who is mute, has secrets of her own and is fearful of being accused herself. Her story is involving and intense. I recommend this book!