

Booklovers Group April 2015

Lucky Us by Amy Bloom is the story of sisters Iris and Eva. They are abandoned by their mother and find themselves deposited on the steps of their father's house. They find life with their father is less than satisfactory, especially when their father loses his wife and his money. The sisters' work together to support one another, while the oldest sister stashes away money to allow them to escape to glamorous Hollywood. The bonds of family through love, war, and the ups and downs of life tells a good story.

The ***Transit of Venus*** by Shirley Hazzard. Well written and has a lot of twists and turns. Two woman who come over from Australia and their loves and men in their lives from WWI to WWII. Quite amazed by the writing. A true gem.

Old Filth by Jane Gardam. Absolutely well written and well-conceived book. It's the story of a Sir Edward Feathers, a lawyer who was able to have a great career in Hong Kong. Feather's grew up in Malaya during the rule of the British Empire but was a Raj orphan and never saw his parents. He eventually comes back to England. This book tells the story of his life.

We looked at themes... non-fiction picture books for children. One example is Shkelton's Journey. Do we need more pictures to draw us into the text? Right brain, left brain coming together with words and pictures. The Harlem Hellfighters is another great non-fiction kid's book about a WWI black infantry unit-It's authentic, not dumbed down. We need these types of texts.

The Emperor's General by James Webb. Describes MacArthur leaving the Philippines. Describes strategy and centers in the Japanese Occupation. Tells the story from the point of view from one of MacArthur's aide. Good history and great characterization.

Night of Camp David by Fletcher Knebel. The book came out in 1965 and is about a junior senator who is taped to be on the VP ticket. Brings in wiretapping (in 1965!), the president feels that we should be listening in to every one's conversations. He also has a plan to forge a super union, is the President a little off his rocker? Amazing book and can tie directly things that are happening now.

Boy, Snow, Bird by Helen Oyeyemi. Set in 1950's a1960's. Let's call it a fairy tale about passing as white. Boy Novak arrives by chance in a small town in Massachusetts, looking, she believes, for beauty—the opposite of the life she's left behind in New York. She marries a local widower and becomes stepmother to his winsome daughter, Snow Whitman. Very beautifully written.

Randy Wayne White writes ***Cuba Straits***. Doc Ford has an antique hippy friend in Florida and General Juan Garcia prefers what dealers call HPC items-high-profile collectibles-but when he manages to obtain a collection of letters written by Fidel Castro between 1960-62 to a secret girlfriend, it's not a matter of money anymore.

The Grace of silence by Michelle Norris. A family memoir. Michelle started some group gatherings and then inspired by Barack Obama's successful presidential campaign, Michele Norris, host of National

Public Radio's 'All things considered', explores the history of race in America as witnessed by her ancestors in the South and through her own eyes during her upbringing in Minnesota.

Allan G. Johnson writes the *First thing and the Last*. In the middle of a horrific night, Katherine Stuart barely escapes being murdered by her abusive husband in the kitchen of their suburban Boston home. In the aftermath of utter loss and devastation, Katherine is sought out by Lucy Dudley, an elderly woman living on a family farm in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont, who reads about Katherine in the news and is drawn to her by a closely guarded history of her own. Another theme is the son who has experienced PTSD and this is a book about healing and recovery. Addresses the issues authentically.