

A Beautiful Blue Death

By Charles Finch

The first of a 10 book series. Charles Lenox is the main character- a Victorian gentleman and an armchair explorer. He is an independently wealthy man who likes to solve mysteries with his friend Dr. Thomas McConnell, who has a somewhat strained marriage to Lady Victoria. Definitely recommend it- If you've watched Downton Abbey, you'll really enjoy the series.

Points Unknown: The Greatest Adventure Writing of the Twentieth Century

Call these disaster stories- excerpts from different authors.

Norse Mythology

By Neil Gaiman

Thought it would be a scholarly tomb about Norse mythology, and it's actually a retelling of the myths. He does a nice job of capturing the personalities of the Norse gods, but updating it for a modern audience. He's done a nice job of bringing myths that people aren't too familiar with and bring them to a modern age.

The Storied life of AJ Fikry

About a man who has a book store on an island of the coast of Massachusetts. He's a real curmudgeon, his wife has died, he wants nothing more than to read certain books, nothing romantic or popular. He spends his evenings getting drunk to try to deal with the pain of losing his wife. One of his pieces of good fortune is that he had found a copy of a book by Edgar Allan Poe in a bunch of used books when they went to a shop. The book is worth thousands of dollars and this one night he gets drunk and takes it out of its sealed case and talks to Poe. He wakes up in the morning and his house has been cleaned, but the book is gone and he's devastated, and decides it's a sign he should get his life together, so he starts running. One day he comes back from running and hears a 2 year old sitting in the book section reading "Where the Wild Things Are," and there's a note that says "I'm leaving you my daughter I want her to grow up in a literary environment- she's a delightful child. Signed, Maya's mother." It changes his whole life, and the rest of the book, each chapter begins with a book or short story he's recommending to her when she leaves for college one day. If you're a book lover it's the book for you. It's very literary and it has so much of other books in it.

The Expression of Emotion in Man and Animals

By Charles Darwin

Darwin didn't assume anything. He talks about blushing as an expression of emotion, and he gets sources from different places in the world about how different races blush. He was very conservative in his expectations. Conrad Lorenz, an observer of behavior, wrote in the preface that Darwin did not overestimate- if anything he erred on the side of understatement.

The American Spirit

By David McCullough

A book of graduation speeches McCullough has given at different universities across the country. Gives you hope that things will become better and that they can. It gave me a good feeling at the end of the day to read one of the speeches. He writes so well about what our country has done and been through since it was founded- he gave it a different insight.

The Library at Mount Char

Scott Hawkins

Carolyn and a dozen other children being raised by "Father," a cruel man with mysterious powers, begin to think he might be God, so when he dies, they square off against each other to determine who will inherit his library, which they believe holds the power to all Creation.

Amor Towels

A Gentleman in Moscow

Take a lower level aristocrat and what happens to him when the Russian government shifts over to something that does not accept nobility. They condemn him to stay in a hotel and all of his estates are absorbed by the government. He figures out what he can do, which is not much. If he leaves the hotel he'll be killed. He gets to know the people who come to the hotel and he establishes relationships with some of them and then eventually he figures out it would be kind of fun and interesting to work at the hotel, as long as no one knows. He ends up helping out. The book is about what you do with your life in those circumstances and how you can survive and become kind of happy.