

The Ledding Book Club: Book Picks July 2023 – February 2024



JULY - *Defending Jacob* by William Landay
(*Legal Mystery/Thriller*)

A fast, compelling, and compulsively readable courtroom drama, *Defending Jacob* tells the story of a district attorney's son who is accused of killing a classmate. As the father attempts to prove his son's innocence, Landay explores uncomfortable territory. Can a tendency toward violence be inherited? Is the capacity for murder a genetic disposition? The author, a former district attorney, gets the taut nuances just right, capturing the subtleties of a trial in a packed courtroom, where a small rustle or murmur can signify a lot.

AUGUST - *The Personal Librarian* by Marie Benedict & Victoria Christopher Murray
(*Literary Fiction*)

A novel based on the historical figure, Belle da Costa Greene, who was the personal librarian for JP Morgan. She was a Black woman who passed for white throughout her tenure there. The book is co-written by a Black author and a white author and offers a fascinating insight and commentary on early New York City society, scholarship and racism.

SEPTEMBER - *Fathers & Sons by Ivan Turgenev
(*Russian Classic*)

This novel explores the changing times and clash of generations in Russia during the period between Russia's defeat in the Crimean War and the emancipation of Russian serfs.

OCTOBER – *Diary of a Misfit: A Memoir and a Mystery by Casey Parks
(*Memoir, LGBTQ+ History*)

Casey Parks is a reporter for *The Washington Post* who covers gender and family issues. She was previously a staff reporter at the *Jackson (Miss.) Free Press* and spent a decade at *The Oregonian*. *Diary of a Misfit* was named one of the best books of 2022 by *The Washington Post*, *Boston Globe*, *Booklist*, *Kirkus Reviews* and *New York Public Library*. It is part memoir, part sweeping journalistic saga: As Casey follows the mystery of a stranger's past, she is forced to reckon with her own sexuality, her fraught Southern identity, her tortured yet loving relationship with her mother, and the complicated role of faith in her life.

NOVEMBER - *The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell: A Novel by Robert Dugoni
(*Literary Fiction*)

Sam Hill was born with ocular albinism. With a strong mother of devout faith and an African American friend, Sam weathers the storm of growing up to become a small-town eye doctor. A light read filled with wisdom and humor.

DECEMBER - *Wake Up With Purpose!: What I've Learned in My First 100 Years* by Sister Jean Dolores Schmidt w/Seth Davis

(Memoir)

A memoir filled with history, humor and common sense wisdom from the Loyola Chicago matriarch and college basketball icon- thought it would provide fun, humor and insights.

JANUARY - *After Lives* by Abdulrazak Gurnah

(Nobel Prize Winner)

A sweeping, multi-generational saga of displacement, loss, and love, set against the brutal colonization of east Africa.

FEBRUARY - *The Long and Faraway Gone by Lou Berney

(Mystery)

Six movie-theater employees were killed in an armed robbery, while one inexplicably survived. Then, a teenage girl vanished from the annual State Fair. Neither crime was ever solved. Twenty-five years later, the reverberations of those unsolved cases quietly echo through survivors' lives. Julianna struggles with the past-- with the day her beautiful older sister Genevieve disappeared. When Julianna discovers that one of the original suspects has resurfaced, she'll stop at nothing to find answers.