

Fendrick Library Book Group “Book Clubs’ Favorites” 2019/2020

***The All-Girl Filling Station’s Last Reunion* / Fannie Flagg (347 pages) 2013**

Mrs. Sookie Poole has married off the last of her three daughters and is looking forward to relaxing and traveling, but she still has to deal with her overbearing mother. When Sookie discovers a family secret, a search for answers takes her to California, the Midwest, and back in time to the 1940s.

***Circe* by Madeline Miller (400 pages) 2018**

Circe follows the banished witch daughter of the Titans as she practices her powers for an inevitable conflict with one of Olympus’s most vindictive gods. With unforgettably vivid characters, mesmerizing language and page-turning suspense, *Circe* is a triumph of storytelling, an intoxicating epic of family rivalry, palace intrigue, love and loss, as well as a celebration of indomitable female strength in a man's world. Motherhood, mortality, feminism, a strong female lead. Historical and mythical fiction.

***The Death of Mrs. Westaway* by Ruth Ware (416 pages) 2018**

On a day that begins like any other, Hal receives a mysterious letter bequeathing her a substantial inheritance. She realizes very quickly that the letter was sent to the wrong person—but also that the cold-reading skills she’s honed as a tarot card reader might help her claim the money. Soon, Hal finds herself at the funeral of the deceased...where it dawns on her that there is something very, very wrong about this strange situation and the inheritance at the center of it. This is an unputdownable thriller from the Agatha Christie of our time.

***Educated: a memoir* by Tara Westover (334 pages) 2018**

Tara Westover was seventeen the first time she set foot in a classroom. Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, she prepared for the end of the world by stockpiling home-canned peaches and sleeping with her "head-for-the-hills bag." In the summer she stewed herbs for her mother, a midwife and healer, and in the winter she salvaged in her father's junkyard. The family was so isolated from mainstream society that there was no one to ensure the children received an education, and no one to intervene when one of Tara's older brothers became violent. As a way out, Tara began to educate herself, learning enough mathematics and grammar to be admitted to Brigham Young University. Her quest for knowledge would transform her, taking her over oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge. Only then would she wonder if she'd traveled too far, if there was still a way home. With the acute insight that distinguishes all great writers, Tara Westover has crafted a universal coming-of-age story that gets to the heart of what an education offers: the perspective to see one's life through new eyes, and the will to change it.

***The Heartland : a memoir of working hard and being broke in the richest country on Earth* / Sarah Smarsh. (290 pages) 2018**

During Smarsh's turbulent childhood in Kansas in the '80s and '90s, the forces of cyclical poverty and the country's changing economic policies solidified her family's place among the working poor. Her personal history affirms the corrosive impact intergenerational poverty can have on individuals, families, and communities. Combining memoir with powerful analysis and cultural commentary, this is an uncompromising look at class, identity, and the particular perils of having less in a country known for its excess.

***The Immortalists* by Chloe Benjamin (346 pages) 2018**

It's 1969 in New York City's Lower East Side, and word has spread of the arrival of a mystical woman, a traveling psychic who claims to be able to tell anyone the day they will die. The Gold children--four adolescents on the cusp of self-awareness--sneak out to hear their fortunes. Their prophecies inform their next five decades. Golden-boy Simon escapes to the West Coast, searching for love in '80s San Francisco; dreamy Klara becomes a Las Vegas magician, obsessed with blurring reality and fantasy; eldest son Daniel seeks security as an army doctor post-9/11, hoping to control fate; and bookish Varya throws herself into longevity research, where she tests the boundary between science and immortality. *The Immortalists* probes the line between destiny and choice, reality and illusion, this world and the next. It is a deeply moving testament to the power of story, the nature of belief, and the unrelenting pull of familial bonds.

***An American Marriage* by Tayari Jones (308 pages) 2018**

Newlyweds Celestial and Roy, the living embodiment of the New South, are settling into the routine of their life together when Roy is sent to prison for a crime he didn't commit. An insightful look into the lives of people who are bound and separated by forces beyond their control.

***Before the Fall* by Noah Hawley (416 pages) 2016**

Creator of the FX television series "Fargo" and "Legion," Hawley won the 2017 Edgar Award for Best novel for this riveting mystery about a plane crash off the coast of Martha's Vineyard that claims the lives of nine well-to-do passengers. Only two aboard survive: struggling painter Scott Burroughs and the 4-year-old son of a wealthy media titan.

***There There* by Tommy Orange (294pages) 2018**

Jacque Red Feather is newly sober and trying to make it back to the family she left behind in shame in Oakland. Dene Oxedrene is pulling his life together after his uncle's death and has come to work the powwow and to honor his uncle's memory. Edwin Frank has come to find his true father. Bobby Big Medicine has come to drum the Grand Entry. Opal Viola Victoria Bear Shield has come to watch her nephew Orvil Red Feather; Orvil has taught himself Indian dance through YouTube videos, and he has come to the Big Oakland Powwow to dance in public for the very first time. Tony Loneman is a young Native American boy whose future seems destined to be as bleak as his past, and he has come to the Powwow with darker intentions. Fierce, angry, funny, groundbreaking--Tommy Orange's first novel is a wondrous and shattering portrait of an America few of us have ever seen. *There There* is a multi-generational, relentlessly paced story about violence and recovery, hope and loss, identity and power, dislocation and communion, and the beauty and despair woven into the history of a nation and its people.