

January 2018 Wayne Readers' Recommendations



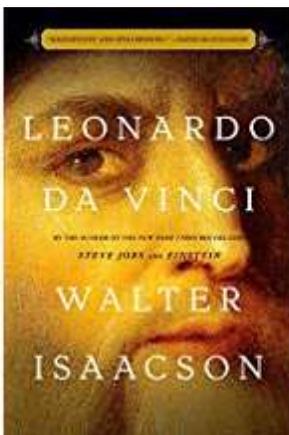
We want to hear from you. Please send a blurb about something you've read and want to share with CML. Postings will be published monthly except over the summer. Next posting will be in February 2018. Send your recommendations to

jadelbergCML@gmail.com

*This month's blog has **12** entries from enthusiastic readers. Try some of these selections. This spectacular weather is made for cozying up to the fire in slippers with a hot drink and a good reading lamp. Eat your heart out ---shorts and sandals crowd.*

Non-Fiction

Leonardo da Vinci by Walter Isaacson (Biography)

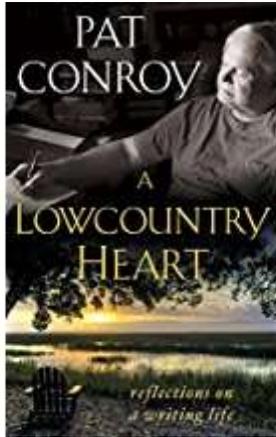


Don't expect the vivid scenes or structure of a non-fiction novel here. Isaacson biographies (Franklin, Jobs, Kissinger) are all about genius – how does it manifest itself; what does it mean in a life? In da Vinci, Isaacson sees a stunning convergence of scientific observation, artistic imagination, and raw talent. I took it one chapter at a time until I understood what he was up to, and then it got easier. Learned a lot about technique in painting, apprenticeships in the studio system, what it was like as an artist to seek commissions from the big money in Renaissance Italy. But best of all was being helped to understand the content and creative purpose of Leonardo's magnificent notebooks, which are beautiful but puzzling (to say the least).

Reviewed by Betsy Bowen

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A Lowcountry Heart by Pat Conroy (Essays/Memoir)



A Lowcountry Heart is a series on reflections on the life of one of America's favorite authors. The book is a series of magazine articles, speeches, letters and interviews from Conroy's literary career.

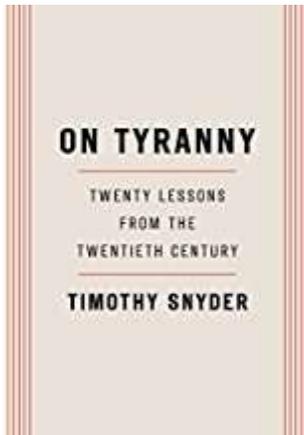
Anyone who has ever had to privilege and responsibility of being a teacher will love these short pieces. Conroy makes many complimentary comments about his teachers, especially his English and Literature teachers. He makes us all proud to have been part of that profession.

Conroy wrote eleven books and if you are a fan you know by now that his two favorite subjects are his own dysfunctional family and his years at The Citadel. His books *The Great Santini* and *The Lords Of Discipline* are great examples of his love for these topics.

If you have never read any of Conroy's books *A Lowcountry Heart* is a good place to start.

Reviewed by Jim DiRenzo

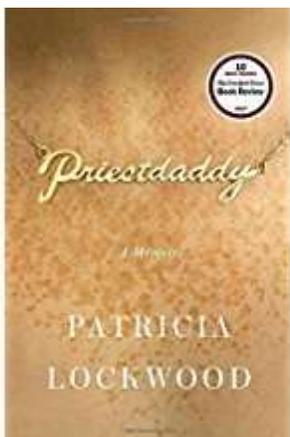
On Tyranny by Timothy Snyder (History)



Everybody should read this little book. It's like an extended pamphlet. Snyder is a Yale historian who has studied deeply in the ghastly events of the Holodomor and the Holocaust in Eastern Europe, as reported in his book *Bloodlands*. His other works examine the history of Ukraine and nearby areas, as well as the Holocaust. His analysis of current American politics and comparisons to the rise of Naziism in Germany turn up bold-chilling parallels. Not just the Nazi banners marching at Charlottesville. Available at major bookstores as well as on Kindle. These are all upsetting, save 'em for after the Holidays. I predict you'll recommend *On Tyranny* to friends and relatives.

Reviewed by Lloyd C. Irland

Priestdaddy: A Memoir by Patricia Lockwood



The book sounded intriguing: a heart-breakingly funny memoir about having a married priest for a father. It made the *New York Times* top ten books of 2017. The writing is remarkable--Lockwood is a magician with words--as she details her upbringing which gives new meaning to the word "dysfunction." I didn't enjoy this but it did have a poignancy that remains with me a few days after finishing it.

The final pages powerfully capture her lifelong longing for validation from / connection with her father. Not for everyone. But it will stay with you.

Reviewed by Janet Adelberg

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Fiction

To Capture what we Cannot Keep by Beatrice Colin. (Historical Fiction)

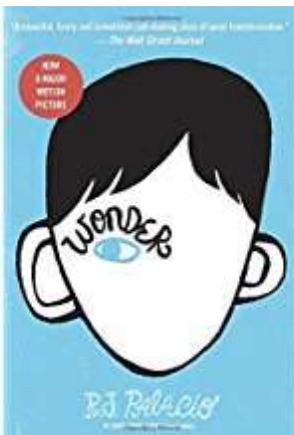


An historical fiction novel set in Paris in the 1880's featuring the building of the Eiffel Tower. Emile Nouguier is the actual engineer and although many of the other characters are fictional, many of the historical details are accurate. The author does a great job creating the culture and place of the time, and writes beautifully.

Reviewed by Judy Danielson

Wonder by R.J Palacio (Juvenile Fiction)

Wonder by R. J. Palacio was written for young children, but is a book that should be read by all adults as well.



Auggie Pullman was born with severe facial deformities. He was born with no outer ears and eyes which were placed in the wrong position. In his early life he underwent many operations and because of the surgeries he was home schooled until fifth grade. At that point his parents wanted Auggie to experience school with other children to help prepare him for an adult life outside their apartment.

Academically, Auggie was prepared, but emotionally he was not ready for the taunting and exclusion by other students. His exposure and interest in many scientific principles helped him make his first real friend. School life changes when Auggie goes on an overnight outdoor activity with his class.

This is a story that every parent should read to or with their children.

Reviewed by Lucy DiRenzo

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Small Great Things by Jodi Picoult (Contemporary Fiction)



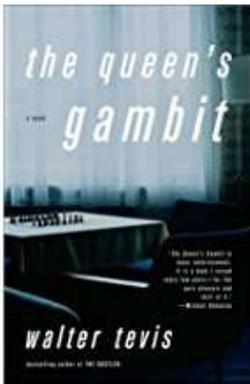
The author takes on racism and white supremacists. Ruth Jefferson is an African American labor and delivery nurse with 20 years of experience. She is present at the delivery of a baby born to white supremacists. The parents have their son reassigned to a white nurse. Ruth is hurt and indignant, but accepts the supervisor's decision. The baby goes into cardiac arrest and dies while Ruth is in the nursery.

A legal suit is taken and Ruth is charged with a crime. Ruth is assigned a public defender who must come to terms with her feelings.

The book tackles race, privilege and justice. This is a real page turner.

Reviewed by Lucy DiRenzo

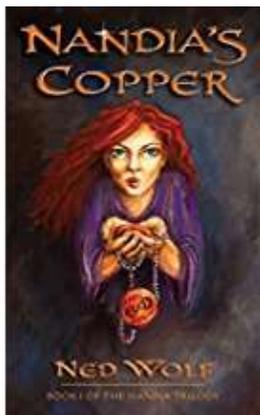
The Queen's Gambit by Walter Tevis (Historical Fiction)



Elizabeth Harmon, orphaned at age eight, learns chess from an orphanage janitor and turns out to be a natural, a chess prodigy. Her obsession with the game overpowers an addiction to tranquilizers and alcohol. She rises through the chess world to beat a Russian grandmaster at the height of the Cold War. In Walter Tevis's superb narration, chess moves push the action. Suspense rivets you to the pages and you turn them faster. Even if you don't know anything about chess, which I don't, The Queen's Gambit is sheer fun and a great companion on a snowy housebound day.

Reviewed by Betsy Bowen

Nandia's Copper (Book One of the Nandia Trilogy) by Ned Wolf (Sci Fi/Fantasy/Visionary)



Wow! Some books exceed their labels. NANDIA'S COPPER certainly has done so. The genre label says "Science Fiction/Fantasy/Visionary Fiction", it is that and more. It is a life lesson.

In the book Nandia and Bernard are sent from the World Council to investigate and quell a mysterious illness. They do so by helping the villagers to use the powers of toning, a vibrationally balanced herbal tonic, and positive thought. The extent and kinds of remedy are determined through dowsing.

The book has the look and feel of a Young Adult book. However, needs to be read by all for its helpful message.

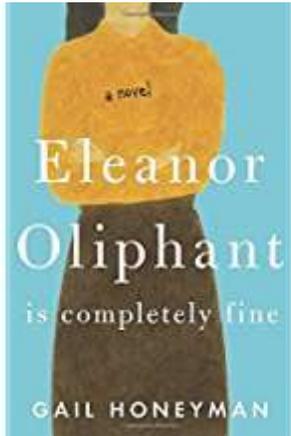
Author Ned Wolf is a dowser and healer from Arizona. His goal in writing the NANDIA Trilogy is to demystify dowsing and other modes of nurturing well-being.

A recent check of Amazon, shows that books II and III, NANDIA'S APPARITION, and NANDIA'S CHILD are now available.

Reviewed by Bill Chellis

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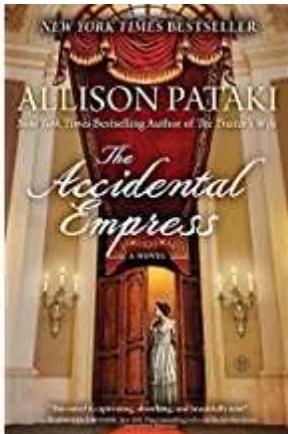
Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine by Gail Honeyman (Contemporary Fiction)



A lovely novel with the heroine's voice conveying a very distinctive perspective on the world. As the story unfolds we learn Eleanor's unique tale, and how she's figured out how to cope, and how she's learning to move forward in her life. Beautifully written and quite hilarious at moments, this is a compelling story that will keep you reading and wanting more at the end.

Reviewed by Judy Danielson

The Accidental Empress by Allison Pataki Published 2015

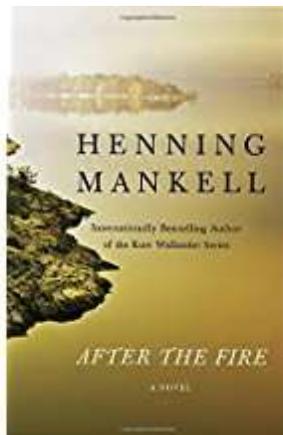


The year is 1853 and the Habsburgs are Europe's most powerful ruling family with the empire stretching from Austria to Russia, German to Italy. Young Emperor Franz Joseph is ready to marry and the bride picked for him is a duchess from Bavaria who has no interest in marrying. Her 15 year old younger sister, Elizabeth, travels with her to the Habsburg court where the Emperor falls in love with "Sisi" (Elizabeth) and they get married. Plucked from obscurity and thrust onto the throne she faces struggles and dangers and a wretched domineering mother-in-law. The story is set during this period of time with a great deal of history involved.

Very detailed historical fiction based on fact. Pataki is the author of *The Traitor's Wife*.

Reviewed by Connie Locashio

After the Fire by Henning Mankell (Fiction/Mystery)

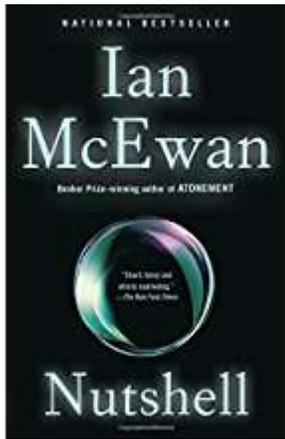


Mankell continues his dark-brooding-troubled-in-old-age men characters with surgeon, Fredrik. Our hero retires in disgrace to his ancestral solitary island. He is content to ponder the end of his career, the end of his relationship with his adult daughter, and of course, his own looming demise. Then his well-loved house burns down and he is suspected of arson.

Reviewed by MJ Cowing

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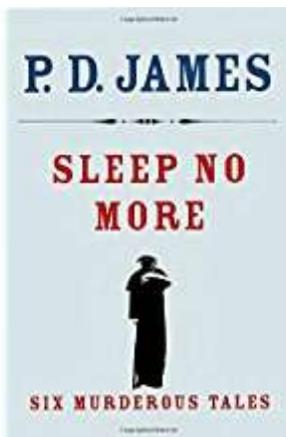
Nutshell by Ian McEwan (Contemporary Fiction)



This novel has a seemingly strange story line (told from perspective of fetus in womb), but in fact is cleverly written and hilarious at times. The plot is loosely based on Shakespeare's Hamlet. A fun, quick rewarding read should you be in the mood for something a little different.

Reviewed by Judy Danielson

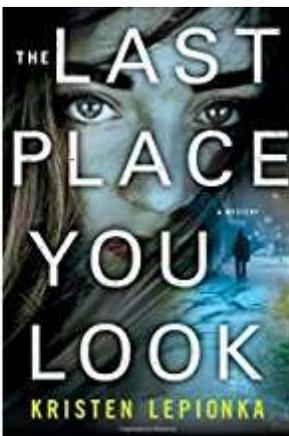
Sleep no More by P.D. James (Short Story/Mystery)



The best 6 short stories you will read this year, this posthumous little book is a collection of some of her writings, each a sugar plum of a treat. Here's a glimpse into the mind of murderers-is it an explanation, justification, or just plain trying to stay one step ahead of the action? You will not be disappointed and will have several great chuckles along the way. Your head does several mind swivels in each story.

Reviewed by MJ Cowing

The Last Place You Look by Kristen Lepionka (Suspense/Mystery)



Roxanne Weary PI is hired to save a man on Death Row. Kidnapping, shooting, police brutality (all in the first week) make this thriller a ride worth taking.

Reviewed by Steve Dodge

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An Event in Autumn - A Kurt Wallander Mystery by Henning Mankell (Mystery)



Inspector Wallander discovers a skeletal hand while house hunting. If you haven't discovered Wallander yet you are in for a treat! Read it!

Reviewed by Steve Dodge