

Lucky Ladies Book Club upcoming Reads!

(Date in parenthesis is date of read by book club.)

(Note: Synopsis obtained from Barnes & Noble Website.)

1. "Breakheart Hill" by Thomas Cook (Jan. 23, 2008)

Synopsis

The town was Choctaw, Alabama. The place was Breakheart Hill. The girl was Kelli Troy. But the story of what really happened to her there on an August afternoon in 1962 is known by only one man, Ben Wade, the boy who loved her then and who must tell her story now: "For what really happened never truly leaves me, no matter how often my imagination insists upon rewriting it. I hear the blow that echoed through the trees, see her fall to the ground, then rise and begin to stagger up the killing slope.... And after that, each life returns to me, each life that was destroyed in the deep woods that day, their faces circling in my mind, one behind the other like heads on a potter's wheel." The violence that rocked Breakheart Hill on that summer afternoon did not end on its wooded slope. At least not for Ben Wade, now the town's doctor and one of its most revered citizens. Perhaps it never ended for anyone in Choctaw.

2. "Divine Secrets of the Ya Ya Sisterhood" by Rebecca Wells (February 27, 2008)

Synopsis

When Vivi and Siddalee Walker, an unforgettable mother-daughter team, get into a savage fight over a New York Times article that refers to Vivi as a 'tap-dancing child abuser,' the Ya-Yas, sashay in and conspire to bring everyone back together. In 1932, Vivi and the Ya-Yas were disqualified from a Shirley Temple Look-Alike Contest for unladylike behavior. Sixty years later, they're 'bucking 70' and still making waves. With passion and a rare gift for language, Rebecca Wells moves from present to past, unraveling Vivi's life, her enduring friendships with the Ya-Yas, and the reverberations on Siddalee. The collective power of the Ya-Yas, each of them totally individual and authentic, permeates this story of a tribe of Louisiana wild women who are impossible to tame.

3. "Water for Elephants" by Sara Gruen (March 26, 2008)

Synopsis

As a young man, Jacob Jankowski was tossed by fate onto a rickety train that was home to the Benzini Brothers Most Spectacular Show on Earth. It was the early part of the great Depression, and for Jacob, now ninety, the circus world he remembers was both his salvation and a living hell. A veterinary student just shy of a degree, he was put in charge of caring for the circus menagerie. It was there that he met Marlena, the beautiful equestrian star married to August, the charismatic but twisted animal trainer. And he met Rosie, an untrainable elephant who was the great gray hope for this third-rate traveling show. The bond that grew among this unlikely trio was one of love and trust, and, ultimately, it was their only hope for survival.

4. "Dark Mission" by Richard Holbrook (April 23, 2008)

Synopsis

For most Americans, the name MASA suggests a squeaky-clean image of technological infallibility. Few people are aware of the hard evidence that secret brotherhoods quietly dominate NASA, with policies far more aligned with ancient religious and occult mystery schools than the facade of rational science the government agency has successfully promoted to the world for almost fifty years. Why is the Bush administration intent on returning to the Moon as quickly as possible? What are the reasons for the current "space race" with China, Russia, even India? Remarkable images reproduced within this book provided to the authors by disaffected NASA employees give clues why, including information about lunar and Martian discoveries. Former NASA consultant and CBS News advisor Richard C. Hoagland (Monuments of Mars) and Boeing engineer Mike Bare offer extraordinary proof of the secret history of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the astonishing discoveries it has suppressed for decades.

5. "Education of Little Tree" by Forrest Carter (May 28, 2008)

Synopsis

The memoir of a Cherokee boyhood in the 1930s. The most sensitive and evocative autobiographical account ever of the Cherokee way, as seen through the eyes of a young boy in the Appalachian Mountains.

6. "Home to Holly Springs" by Jan Karon (June 25, 2008)

Synopsis

With Home to Holly Springs, New York Times bestselling author Jan Karon launches a new series, The Father Tim Novels, featuring the retired Episcopal priest that her readers have come to love. With all the deep feeling, insight, and humor that fans of the Mitford series cherish, Karon in this novel takes Father Tim on a journey to his hometown of Holly Springs, Mississippi. A host of fascinating encounters with people along the way ensure that the trip is colorful, though as Father Tim arrives in response to a mysterious summons, he may discover that home is where the heart is but also where secrets are hidden.

7. "Lucy" by Ellen Feldman (July 23, 2008)

Synopsis

An utterly absorbing novel about a famous political marriage and an epic infidelity. On the eve of World War I, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin Delano Roosevelt, fiercely ambitious and still untouched by polio, falls in love with his wife's social secretary, Lucy Mercer. Eleanor stumbles on their letters and divorce is discussed, but honor and ambition win out. Franklin promises he will never see Lucy again. But Franklin and Lucy do meet again, and again they fall in love. As he prepares to run for an unprecedented third term and lead America into war, Franklin turns to Lucy for the warmth and unconditional approval Eleanor is unable to give. Ellen Feldman brings a novelist's insight to bear on the connection of these three compelling characters. Franklin and Lucy did finally meet, across the divide of his illness and political ascendancy, her marriage and widowhood. They fell in love again. As he prepared to run for an unprecedented third term and lead America into war, Franklin turned to Lucy for the warmth and unconditional approval Eleanor was unable to give. Drawing on recently discovered materials to re-create the voice of a woman who played a crucial but silent role in the Roosevelt presidency, *Lucy* is a remarkably sensitive exploration of the private lives behind a public marriage. Reading group guide included.

8. "Evening Class" by Maeve Binchy (August 27, 2008)

Synopsis

Maeve Binchy brings together a cast of troubled characters whose lives are about to be transformed in the most unlikely way: by a night class. The class, on Italian language and culture, is taught by Signora, a mysterious, eccentric woman with an amazing talent for helping others. As the class meets night after night in a poor Dublin neighborhood, Signora learns the hidden fears and hopes of her students and then miraculously changes their lives. Binchy, author of *The Glass Lake* and *Circle of Friends*, weaves an emotional and inspiring tale of renewal.

9. "Red Tent" by Anita Diamant (September 24, 2008)

Synopsis

Author Anita Diamant, in the voice of Dinah, gives an insider's look at the details of women's lives in biblical times and a chronicle of their earthy stories and long-ignored histories. The red tent of the title is the place where women were sequestered during their cycles of birthing, menses, and illness. It is here that Dinah hears the whispered stories of her four mothers--Jacob's wives Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, and Bilhah--and tells their tales to us in remarkable and thought-provoking oratories. Familiar passages from the Bible take on new life as Dinah fills in what the Bible has left out--the lives of women. Dinah tells us of her initiation into the religious and sexual practices of the tribe; Jacob's courtship with Rachel and Leah; the ancient world of caravans, farmers, midwives, and slaves; her ill-fated sojourn in the city of Sechem; her years in Canaan; and her half-brother Joseph's rise in Egypt.

10. "Glass Castle" by Jeanette Walls (October 22, 2008)

Synopsis

Jeanette Walls grew up with parents whose ideals and stubborn nonconformity were both their curse and their salvation. Rex and Rose Mary Walls had four children. In the beginning, they lived like nomads, moving among Southwest desert towns, camping in the mountains. Rex was a charismatic, brilliant man who, when sober, captured his children's imagination, teaching them physics, geology, and above all, how to embrace life fearlessly. Rose Mary, who painted and wrote and couldn't stand the responsibility of providing for her family, called herself an "excitement addict." Cooking a meal that would be consumed in fifteen minutes had no appeal when she could make a painting that might last forever. Later, when the money ran out, or the romance of the wandering life faded, the Walls retreated to the dismal West Virginia mining town -- and the family -- Rex Walls had done everything he could to escape. He drank. He stole the grocery money and disappeared for days. As the dysfunction of the family escalated, Jeanette and her brother and sisters had to fend for themselves, supporting one another as they weathered their parents' betrayals and, finally, found the resources and will to leave home.

11. "We Are All Fine Here" by Mary Guterson (November 26, 2008)

Synopsis

A thoroughly irresistible debut novel about a discontented woman (married, with a teenage son, and fast approaching middle age) who dallies with her past-with startling, humorous, and bittersweet consequences.

A recent reunion-up against the bathroom sink-with a former college boyfriend leaves Julia pregnant, and wondering which man in her life, husband or lover, is the father of her child.

12. "Best Christmas Pageant Ever" by Barbara Robinson (December 24, 2008)

Synopsis

The Herdmans are absolutely the worst kids in the history of the world. They lie and steal and smoke cigars (even the girls). They talk dirty, hit little kids, cuss their teachers, set fire to Fred Shoemaker's old broken-down toolhouse, and take the name of the Lord in vain. So no one is prepared when the Herdmans invade church one Sunday-and decide to take over the annual Christmas pageant.

None of them has ever heard the Christmas story before. Their interpretation -- the Wise Men are a bunch of dirty spies and Herod needs a good beating-- has a lot of people up in arms. But the actual pageant is full of surprises for everyone, starting with the Herdmans themselves.