

Goodnow Library March Madness Book Summaries

Adult Fiction

The Underground Railroad: a Novel / Colson Whitehead

Cora is a slave on a cotton plantation in Georgia. When Caesar, a recent arrival from Virginia, tells her about the Underground Railroad, they decide to take a terrifying risk and escape. Though they manage to find a station and head north, they are being hunted. Their first stop is South Carolina, in a city that initially seems like a haven. But the city's placid surface masks an insidious scheme designed for its black denizens. And even worse: Ridgeway, the relentless slave catcher, is close on their heels.

Small great things : a novel / Jodi Picoult

A woman and her husband admitted to a hospital to have a baby requests that their nurse be reassigned - they are white supremacists and don't want Ruth, who is black, to touch their baby. The hospital complies, but the baby later goes into cardiac distress when Ruth is on duty. She hesitates before rushing in to perform CPR. When her indecision ends in tragedy, Ruth finds herself on trial, represented by a white public defender who warns against bringing race into a courtroom. As the two come to develop a truer understanding of each other's lives, they begin to doubt the beliefs they each hold most dear"-- Provided by publisher.

The whistler / John Grisham

Lacy Stoltz, an investigator for the Florida Board on Judicial Conduct, takes on a case involving a corrupt judge, a Native American casino, and the mafia when a previously disbarred lawyer approaches her on behalf of a client who claims to know the truth.

Echoes in death / J.D. Robb

"After a party in New York, Lieutenant Eve Dallas rides home with her billionaire husband, Roarke, happy to be done with cocktails and small talk. After another party, not far away, a woman retires to her bedroom with her husband--and walks into a brutal nightmare. Their paths are about to collide ... When the young woman--dazed, naked, and bloody--wanders in front of their car, Roarke slams on the brakes just in time, and Eve, still in glittering gown and heels, springs into action. It's been a long night for the tired homicide cop, and it's far from over..."-- Provided by publisher.

The handmaid's tale / Margaret Atwood

A look at the near future presents the story of Offred, a Handmaid in the Republic of Gilead, once the United States, an oppressive world where women are no longer allowed to read and are valued only as long as they are viable for reproduction.

Lincoln in the bardo : a novel / George Saunders

On February 22, 1862, two days after his death, Willie Lincoln was laid to rest in a marble crypt in a Georgetown cemetery. That very night, shattered by grief, Abraham Lincoln arrives at the cemetery under cover of darkness and visits the crypt, alone, to spend time with his son's body. Set over the course of that one night and populated by ghosts of the recently passed and the long dead, Lincoln in the Bardo is a thrilling exploration of death, grief, the powers of good and evil.

The mistress : a novel / Danielle Steel

"A dazzling contemporary novel that interweaves the lives of a Russian mistress and the young French painter who falls in love with her. Set in the South of France, London, and Paris, a gorgeous, innocent mistress of a Russian oligarch gradually finds independence via her own efforts and through her friendship with the artist son of a world-renowned painter and his devoted muse/now restaurateur mother, reminiscent of Picasso and La Colombe D'or in St-Paul-de-Vence.

Big little lies / Liane Moriarty

A murder... a tragic accident... or just parents behaving badly? What's indisputable is that someone is dead. But who did what? Big Little Lies follows three women, each at a crossroads: Madeline is a force to be reckoned with. She's funny and biting, passionate, she remembers everything and forgives no one. Celeste is the kind of beautiful woman who makes the world stop and stare. But royalty often comes at a price, and Celeste is grappling with how much more she is willing to pay. New to town, single mom Jane is so young that another mother mistakes her for the nanny. Jane is sad beyond her years and harbors secret doubts about her son. But why? While Madeline and Celeste soon take Jane under their wing, none of them realizes how the arrival of Jane and her inscrutable little boy will affect them all.

A gentleman in Moscow / Amor Towles

"A Gentleman in Moscow immerses us in another elegantly drawn era with the story of Count Alexander Rostov. When, in 1922, he is deemed an unrepentant aristocrat by a Bolshevik tribunal, the count is sentenced to house arrest in the Metropol, a grand hotel across the street from the Kremlin. Rostov, an indomitable man of erudition and wit, has never worked a day in his life, and must now live in an attic room while some of the most tumultuous decades in Russian history are unfolding outside the hotel's doors. Unexpectedly, his reduced circumstances provide him a doorway into a much larger world of emotional discovery..."-- Provided by publisher.

The wrong side of goodbye : a novel / Michael Connelly

California's newest private investigator, Harry Bosch, searches for a reclusive billionaire's possible heir, a case with odd links to his own past, and volunteers to find a serial rapist for a small cash-strapped police department.

A dog's purpose / W. Bruce Cameron

Surprised to find himself reborn as a rambunctious golden haired puppy after a tragically short life as a stray mutt, Bailey's search for his new life's meaning leads him into the loving arms of 8 year old Ethan. During their countless adventures Bailey joyously discovers how to be a good dog. But this life as a

beloved family pet is not the end of Bailey's journey. Reborn as a puppy yet again, Bailey wonders, will he ever find his purpose? Heartwarming, insightful, and often laugh out loud funny, this book is not only the emotional and hilarious story of a dog's many lives, but also a dog's eye commentary on human relationships and the unbreakable bonds between man and man's best friend. This story teaches us that love never dies, that our true friends are always with us, and that every creature on earth is born with a purpose.

Golden prey / John Sandford

Thanks to some very influential people whose lives he saved, Lucas is no longer working for the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, but for the U.S. Marshals Service, and with unusual scope. He gets to pick his own cases, whatever they are, wherever they lead him. And where they've led him this time is into real trouble. A Biloxi, Mississippi, drug-cartel counting house gets robbed, and suitcases full of cash disappear, leaving behind five bodies, including that of a six-year-old girl. Davenport takes the case, which quickly spirals out of control, as cartel assassins, including a torturer known as the "Queen of home-improvement tools" compete with Davenport to find the Dixie Hicks shooters who knocked over the counting house. Things get ugly real fast, and neither the cartel killers nor the holdup men give a damn about whose lives Davenport might have saved; to them, he's just another large target (The Huffington Post).

The girl before : a novel / JP Delaney

EMMA Reeling from a traumatic break-in, Emma wants a new place to live. But none of the apartments she sees are affordable or feel safe. Until One Folgate Street. The house is an architectural masterpiece: a minimalist design of pale stone, plate glass, and soaring ceilings. But there are rules. The enigmatic architect who designed the house retains full control: no books, no throw pillows, no photos or clutter or personal effects of any kind. The space is intended to transform its occupant--and it does. JANE After a personal tragedy, Jane needs a fresh start. When she finds One Folgate Street she is instantly drawn to the space--and to its aloof but seductive creator. Moving in, Jane soon learns about the untimely death of the home's previous tenant, a woman similar to Jane in age and appearance. As Jane tries to untangle truth from lies, she unwittingly follows the same patterns, makes the same choices, crosses paths with the same people, and experiences the same terror, as the girl before.

The Circle / Dave Eggers

When Mae Holland is hired to work for the Circle, the world's most powerful internet company, she feels she's been given the opportunity of a lifetime. The Circle, run out of a sprawling California campus, links users' personal emails, social media, banking, and purchasing with their universal operating system, resulting in one online identity and a new age of civility and transparency. Mae can't believe her luck, her great fortune to work for the most influential company in the world--even as life beyond the campus grows distant, even as a strange encounter with a colleague leaves her shaken, even as her role at the Circle becomes increasingly public. What begins as the captivating story of one woman's ambition and idealism soon becomes a heart-racing novel of suspense, raising questions about memory, history, privacy, democracy, and the limits of human knowledge"-- Provided by publisher.

On Turpentine Lane / Elinor Lipman

"An endearing romantic comedy from the beloved best-selling author of *The Family Man* and *The View from Penthouse B*. At thirty-two, Faith Frankel has returned to her claustro-suburban hometown, where she writes institutional thank-you notes for her alma mater. It's a peaceful life, really, and surely with her recent purchase of a sweet bungalow on Turpentine Lane her life is finally on track. Never mind that her fiancé is off on a crowdfunded cross-country walk, too busy to return her texts (but not too busy to post photos of himself with a different woman in every state. And never mind her witless boss, or a mother who lives too close, or a philandering father who thinks he's Chagall. When she finds some mysterious artifacts in the attic of her new home, she wonders whether anything in her life is as it seems. What good fortune, then, that Faith has found a friend in affable, collegial Nick Franconi, officemate par excellence.

Commonwealth : a novel / Ann Patchett

"Commonwealth is the story of two broken families and the paths their lives take over the course of 40 years, through love and marriage, death and divorce, and a dark secret from childhood that lies underneath it all"-- Provided by publisher.