

Trinity Book Discussion Group

Books Selected for January to June 2018

Meets at 9:30 in rooms 232-234 on the third Sunday of each month

Everyone is invited to come discuss the current month's book!

1. [Poison Study](#) by Maria V. Snyder © 2005 (361 pages) **January 21:** Julie Evanish leading
2. [Snow Falling on Cedars](#) by David Guterson © 1995 (460 pages) **February 18:** Virginia Ely leading
3. [The Hidden Life of Trees](#) by Peter Wohlleben © 2016 (288 pages) **March 18:** Earl Henry leading
4. [Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania](#) by Erik Larson. 2015 (415 pages) **April 15:** Margy Fox leading
5. [North Korea Confidential: Private Markets, Fashion Trends, Prison Camps, Dissenters and Defectors](#) by Daniel Tudor and James Pearson. 2015 (224 pages) **May 20:** Julie Evanish leading
6. [News of the World: A Novel](#) by Paulette Jiles 2016 (224 pages) **June 17:** Virginia Ely leading

A short synopsis of each selected book

1. [Poison Study](#) by Maria V. Snyder © 2005 (361 pages) **One book, One community selection** www.oboc.org

This is a rollicking, exciting fantasy novel with a strong, intelligent female protagonist, Yelena. Her world is authoritarian and rigid with strict laws. Yelena is offered a choice between death and becoming the leader's poison taster. "Sieges weather, fight together, friends forever" is a quote from the book that encapsulates Yelena's adventures as she learns to adapt to and change her world. On one level, this is a wonderful fantasy novel, but the deeper themes stay with readers for years.

About to be executed for murder, Yelena is offered a reprieve. She'll eat the best meals, have rooms in the palace, and risk assassination by anyone trying to kill the Commander of Ixia. And so Yelena chooses to become a food taster. But the chief of security, leaving nothing to chance, deliberately feeds her Butterfly's Dust, and only by appearing for her daily antidote will she delay an agonizing death from the poison. As Yelena tries to escape her dilemma, disasters keep mounting. Rebels plot to seize Ixia and she develops magical powers she can't control. Her life is at stake again and choices must be made. But this time the outcomes aren't so clear!

2. [Snow Falling on Cedars](#) by David Guterson © 1995 (460 pages)

San Pedro Island, north of Puget Sound, is a place so isolated that no one who lives there can afford to make enemies. But in 1954, a local fisherman is found suspiciously drowned, and a Japanese American named Kabuo Miyamoto is charged with his murder. In the course of the ensuing trial, it becomes clear that what is at stake is more than a man's guilt. For on San Pedro, memory grows as thickly as cedar trees and the fields of ripe strawberries—memories of a charmed love affair between a white boy and the Japanese girl who grew up to become Kabuo's wife; memories of land desired, paid for, and lost. Above all, San Pedro is haunted by the memory of what happened to its Japanese residents during World War II, when the entire community was

sent into exile while its neighbors watched. Gripping, tragic, and densely atmospheric—a masterpiece of suspense—one that leaves us shaken and changed.

3. The Hidden Life of Trees by Peter Wohlleben © 2016 (288 pages)

In *The Hidden Life of Trees*, Peter Wohlleben shares his deep love of woods and forests and explains the amazing processes of life, death, and regeneration he has observed in the woodland and the amazing scientific processes behind the wonders of which we are blissfully unaware. Much like human families, tree parents live together with their children, communicate with them, and support them as they grow, sharing nutrients with those who are sick or struggling and creating an ecosystem that mitigates the impact of extremes of heat and cold for the whole group. As a result of such interactions, trees in a family or community are protected and can live to be very old. In contrast, solitary trees, like street kids, have a tough time of it and in most cases die much earlier than those in a group. Drawing on groundbreaking new discoveries, Wohlleben presents the science behind the secret and previously unknown life of trees and their communication abilities; he describes how these discoveries have informed his own practices in the forest around him. As he says, a happy forest is a healthy forest, and he believes that eco-friendly practices not only are economically sustainable but also benefit the health of our planet and the mental and physical health of all who live on Earth.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR After studying forestry, **Peter Wohlleben** spent over twenty years working for the forestry commission. He left to put his ideas of ecology into practice, and he now runs an environmentally friendly woodland in Huemmel, Germany, where he promotes the return of ancient, sustainability managed forests.

4. Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania by Erik Larson. 2015 (415 pages)

Amazon's review summarizes: On May 1, 1915, the Lusitania set sail on its final voyage. That it was sunk by a German U-boat will be news to few and Larson's challenge is to craft an historical narrative leading up to the thrilling, if known, conclusion, building anticipation in his readers along the way. Focusing on the politics of World War 1, on nautical craftsmanship and strategy, and on key players in the eventual attack and sinking of the Lusitania, Larson illustrates his gift for seducing us with history and giving it a human face. Dead Wake puts readers aboard the famous Cunard liner and keeps the pages turning until the final, breathless encounter. The widely acclaimed author draws upon telegrams, war logs, love letters, survivor depositions and pictures to provide the heartbreaking details of this horrifying event involving 2000 men, women, and children. *The book was named by numerous major publications as a best or notable book of 2015.*

5. North Korea Confidential: Private Markets, Fashion Trends, Prison Camps, Dissenters and Defectors by Daniel Tudor and James Pearson. 2015 (224 pages)

This book is one of the best of 2015 according to *The Economist*, which notes that it offers a bird's eye view of everyday life revealing how the terrible famine of the 1990's prompted unexpected change in the attitudes, governance and lives of ordinary North Koreans and challenges "the simplistic view that North Koreans are a homogenous people under the thumb of a power-crazed dictator." *The Daily Beast* comments: "Despite horrific prison camps, lack of Internet, and a national fabric called 'vinylon,' most people still take the risk to watch a foreign film, regularly consume South Korean pop culture, party, and even argue with the police." British authors Tudor, a former *Economist* correspondent, and Pearson, a Reuters reporter, pieced together their story by interviewing North Korean insiders, defectors, diplomats, and traders and from a careful reading of texts in English, Korean, and Chinese.

6. News of the World: A Novel by Paulette Jiles 2016 (224 pages) National Book Award Finalist-Fiction

"It is 1870, and Captain Jefferson Kyle Kidd travels through northern Texas, giving live readings to paying audiences hungry for news of the world. An elderly widower who has lived through three wars and fought in two of them, the captain enjoys his rootless, solitary existence. In Wichita Falls, he is offered a \$50 gold piece to deliver a young orphan to her relatives in San Antonio. Four years earlier, a band of Kiowa raiders, having

killed Johanna's parents and sister, spared the little girl and raised her as their own. Recently rescued by the US army, the ten-year-old has once again been torn away from the only home she knows." So begins this story of their journey, which changes Kidd's and the girl's lives forever.