

### Marblehead League Book Discussion Group 1/22/2021

1. **“War and Peace” (2008) Leo Tolstoy** – Our reader says War and Peace is the equivalent of 3-4 books. It is definitely worth it - the characters, the descriptions of social life, the chaotic aspects of war, and a deeper philosophical look at life and fulfillment. Some say it is a great novel with some philosophy, and others a book of philosophy with novel aspects. For me it was more the latter. The length of the book is necessary to convey life more accurately, not an abridged one that many books take. It takes place in the early 1800s as Napoleon’s army is marching through Europe and details the effect on several aristocratic families in Russia. Fiction.
2. **“Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World’s Most Dangerous Man” (2020) by Mary L. Trump Ph.D.** Family secrets that reveal the shaping of the President, written by a niece and clinical psychologist. Our reader remarked on the fact that despite inheriting a fortune, Trump found ways to destroy it, harm siblings, denying medical insurance to a sick nephew. Favored by his grandfather despite all his faults, the book shows how much damage parent can do to children, teaching win at any cost because the worst thing to befall anyone would be to become a loser. Nonfiction.
3. **“Caste” (2020) by Isabel Wilkerson** The author compares the caste systems of Nazi Germany, India and American blacks and the structures of domination that underpin it. The realities of American structural racism are made crystal clear, in this beautifully written and researched blockbuster. Nonfiction
4. **“The Warmth of Other Suns” (2011) by Isabel Wilkerson**  
The author traces the migration of Southern Blacks from the South between WWI and the 1960’s /70s by following three individuals as they left for a variety of reasons and settled elsewhere in the US. Nonfiction
5. **“The Misinformation Age: How False Beliefs Spread” (2020) by Cailin O’Connor and James Owen Weatherall.** Written by two professors of logic and science, the book details how false beliefs spread. The authors suggest use of the scientific method to stop propagation of misinformation. They examine instances of propaganda including ozone layer, small pox inoculation, acid rain, cigarette industry. Although scientists can be misled, they contend that over time science approaches a truer understanding of truth. The price of free speech is a lot of misinformation. Nonfiction

6. **“The Forgiven: A Novel”** (2013) Fiction by Laurence Osborne is set in Morocco, revealing through its characters the Muslim understanding of the rest of the world. Fiction.
7. **“Son of Man: The Mystical Path to Christ”** (1999) by Andrew Harvey The author uses the scholarly approach to suggest the radical nature of Christ, as personal, merciful, and with concern for those least among us. Nonfiction
8. **“The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek”** (2019) by Kim Michele This fictional work drops the reader into the great depression. The government hires the laid off and destitute to distribute donated books around the state. One of the individuals hired to travel through western Kentucky is a woman known as a “blue skin” Fiction.
9. **“Kill Switch: The Rise of the Modern Senate and the Crippling of American Democracy”** (2021) by Adam Gentleson The author discusses how the Senate has become a tool of a minority. Nonfiction.
10. **“The Hidden Heart of the Cosmos”** (updated in 2019) by Brian Thomas Swimme The author is a cosmologist that fuses the wonder of science and mysticism. One of his classic books is *The Universe is a Green Dragon* (1984) Nonfiction
11. **“All the Light We Cannot See”** (2017) Anthony Doerr A beautifully written book and winner of the Pulitzer Prize, the book traces the life story of three people in Nazi Germany, a blind girl, a young man in the Hitler Youth and a dying Nazi. Surprising, gorgeous and mysterious. Fiction.
12. **“My Own Words”** (2018) Ruth Bader Ginsburg Not a biography, but a documentation of her work, each chosen by Ginsburg. Each short chapter begins with an introduction that provides background for the writings. It brings the logic of her arguments and thinking to light. Appointed by Bill Clinton to the Supreme Court, she has previously served as a lawyer for the ACLU in the civil rights division. Wonderful, readable! Nonfiction.
13. **“Blueprint: The Evolutionary Origins of a Good Society”** (2019) Nicholas A. Christakis Author’s thesis is that there is a suite of universal social characteristics that restrict and define how human cultures develop. One reader found it an optimistic book about humans. Nonfiction
14. **“The Woman Behind the New Deal: The Life and Legacy of Frances Perkins, Social Security, Unemployment Insurance”** (2010) by Kirstin Downey This biography of Frances

Perkins tells the story of how America ended up with child labor laws, Social Security, the 8 hour work day, and workplace safety, all part of Roosevelt's New Deal. Born in Worcester MA, Perkins deftly learned to use the political process and connections to place her in a position to make a difference in the development of these programs. Nonfiction

15. Film: on Netflix "**The Social Dilemma**", recommended TV program on the dangers of social media Nonfiction

16. Film: "Loving" tells the story of an interracial couple, Richard and Mildred Loving, whose Virginia court case challenging Virginia law that prohibited their marriage, went to the Supreme Court in 1967 and invalidated state law prohibiting interracial marriage. Nonfiction