

Marblehead League Book Discussion Group 2/24/2023

League members and others (10) offered analysis of the following books at our February 2023 book group.

1. "This Tender Land: a novel" (2020) William Kent Krueger It is described as beautifully written story that takes place in 1930s America about four orphans who escape from the Lincoln Indian Training School.
2. "See No Stranger: A Memoir and Manifesto on Revolutionary Love" (2021) by Valerie Kaur. The author details her experience of racism as experienced by Sikhs in America. Beginning with an inner personal response, she finds the power of community to answer hatred and bigotry. The author is a civil rights activist, lawyer, filmmaker, innovator, and founder of the Revolutionary Love Project and is a much-sought after keynote speaker.
3. "To Tell the Truth: My Life as a Foreign Correspondent" (2022) by Lewis Simons and The Dalai Lama. The Pulitzer Prize- winning author covers his 30 years as a foreign correspondent in the Far East, beginning in 1965. Each chapter covers a different assignment. How such reporters gather detailed information in a country new to them is detailed, along with the dangers. The current state of journalism is addressed in the final sections of the book. Our reader said it was an exciting read. Highly recommended!
4. "It's What I Do: A Photographers Life of Love and War" (2016) by Lindsay Addario This is the story of a photojournalist who travels the world, providing photos to organizations such as the New York Times.
5. "Fly Already: Stories" (2019) by Etgar Keret. Online reviewers described these stories as humorous, strange and quirky.
6. "The Cotton Kingdom: A Traveller's Observations On Cotton And Slavery In The American Slave States, 1853-1861" (2017) by Frederick Law Olmsted. Before he became Americas great landscape architect, Olmsted was a journalist for a predecessor of the NY Times. He wrote a detailed journal of his travels in slave holding south from 1853-61 beginning in Maryland and Virginia, through the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas. This is a well written travelogue of several trips and commentary on the culture and economy of the south. He captures dialects and accents in the conversations of whites and slaves. He observes the huge differences between north and south and how slaves are treated, are bought and sold, but are not as productive as free labor.
7. "Beloved" (2019) by Toni Morrison In this historical fiction, Morrison delves deep into the psychological damage caused by slavery. An escaped slave, a mother, attempts to kill her children to prevent them from experiencing the humiliation that "dirties" them, even to themselves.
8. "Never Let Me Go" (2006) by Kazuo Ishiguro. This is a story of children who are clones, raised as replacement part for humans. At its core it is a book about dehumanization. Other books by this acclaimed author include Clara and the Sun and The Remains of the Day.

9. "All About Love" (2001) by bell hooks. The book explores the multilayered aspects of love, and what interferes with its fulfillment.
10. "These Precious Days: Essays" (2022) by Ann Pachett A beautiful compilation/memoir that captures the essence of this very life. Funny, poignant, surprising, entertaining, heart-warming. Highly recommended!
11. "Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America" (2017) by Ibram X. Kendi In this deeply researched book, Kendi posits that racist ideas came after discriminatory practices and in fact were used to justify those practices.
12. "Digital Gold: Bitcoin and the Inside Story of the Misfits and Millionaires Trying to Reinvent Money" (2016) by Nathaniel Popper This is a fascinating look into the motivation of bitcoin founders and how the whole thing works.