

Kathleen's Recent Reads—March 2022

Non-Fiction

What My Bones Know: A Memoir of Healing from Complex Trauma by Stephanie Foo

Foo, a journalist and producer for radio shows such as *This American Life*, tackles her complex PTSD with the same approach she brings to a story: she investigates leads, is open to suggestions, and willing to do what it takes to complete the piece. She is also a very good writer and tells a compelling story, and the end result far exceeds your run of the mill “how I survived” memoir. You’ve probably met someone with complex PTSD, but may not realize what causes their problematic behavior; Foo conveys what it is like to live with the disorder, and is able to gracefully draw a line between the trauma and the accompanying problems. Above all, though, this uplifting memoir details one woman’s courage and resilience.

Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know by Adam Grant

Is it possible, in our culture of “experts”, to admit you don’t know everything—that you may, gasp, be wrong? It’s not only possible, but necessary, argues Grant, an organizational psychologist and professor at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. With evidence-based research, Grant shows how learning to question our beliefs and opinions can actually make us smarter and help us to communicate better.

Fiction

Who is Maud Dixon? by Alexandra Andrews

A naïve young woman, an aspiring writer, lands a dream job as assistant to a famous writer whose identity is concealed by a nom de plume. Florence is enthralled by Helen’s lifestyle and sophistication, never dreaming there may be a reason Helen hides behind another name. A suspenseful, twisty page-turner.

We Are the Brennans by Tracey Lange

The members of a large Irish-American family have been keeping secrets from each other for far too long, secrets that weighed on Jackie, threatened the marriage of Denny, and caused Sunday to abruptly move across the country, isolating herself from her family and fiancé. When Sunday returns to the fold, the family must come to terms with their past and make new plans for the future. You’ll want to be another adopted member of this warm, appealing clan; try if you’re a fan of the TV series *Blue Bloods*.

Once There Were Wolves by Charlotte McConaghy

Twin sisters Inti and Aggie have come to the Scottish Highlands for Inti’s job as a wolf biologist, and to heal from a traumatic experience. Inti leads an effort to reintroduce wolves into the wilds of Scotland, and finds herself facing the resistance of the local sheep farmers and caught up in the old secrets of a small town. As relations between the researchers and those who oppose them disintegrate to an appalling extent, Inti’s history is slowly revealed. Captivating and dreamlike.

The Last Mona Lisa by Jonathan Santlofer

Artist Luke Perrone has been obsessed with the 1911 theft of the Mona Lisa from the Louvre for most of his life, and with good reason: it was stolen by his great-grandfather. Perrone is all too aware of the rumors that the painting that was recovered and is now hanging back in the Louvre is, in fact, a fake, so when he learns his relative's journal has been discovered, he drops everything to race off to Italy, hoping to discover the truth. Suspense + art = a fun read.

Audiobooks (available on cloudLibrary)

Finding Freedom: A Cook's Story; Remaking a Life from Scratch by Erin French

Erin French is the embodiment of Yankee grit and determination. In this frank memoir, she discusses the obstacles she overcame to become one of the most famous chefs in America, running a tiny restaurant in a rehabbed mill in Freedom, Maine, for which patrons enter a lottery to win an opportunity to dine. The audiobook is narrated by the author, which lends an immediacy to the story, if not an actor's polished delivery. Her extraordinary story of triumph over adversity, and her gift of finding beauty in everyday things, will remain with you long after you finish the book.

Monogamy by Sue Miller

Reflections on the nature of marriage are inevitable after reading this tale of a longtime relationship and the lives it touches. Graham and Annie have been married for almost 30 years, and are seen by most everyone who knows them as a model couple. But, of course, there is no such thing, and the story revolves around revelations that shake the family's foundation and the searching questions that arise as a result. Beautifully written, introspective, character-driven.