

Recent Reads--March

Non-Fiction

Beyond This Harbor by Rose Styron

This memoir by the activist and widow of novelist William Styron (*Sophie's Choice*) is remarkable in breadth, and told in a breezy, name-dropping style—and Styron seems to have known just about everybody of importance in the last half-century. Details of her work with Amnesty International, and unconventional marriage, are scanted more than this reader would have wished, and Styron's full-flow conversational style does not allow for much reflection; still, this is an entertaining joyride through diplomacy, politics and the arts at a particular moment in time.

Fiction

This Other Eden by Paul Harding

Based on the actual story of Maine's Malaga Island, one of the first mixed-race communities in this country, this historical novel has garnered a certain amount of criticism for its depiction of the island's residents. Lauded for his lyrical prose and imaginative characterizations, Harding's intent of celebrating human dignity in the midst of degradation is somewhat less successful, and has elicited claims of reviving harmful stereotypes. A flawed but still beautiful piece of literary fiction.

Audiobooks--available on cloudLibrary

The Sea by John Banville

A widower returns to the Irish seaside town where he summered as a child, intertwining reminiscences about the life-altering events of one particular summer with tales of his marriage, in this first-person novel told in the style of a memoir. Powerful and with a sense of immediacy; recommended for readers who value character development over plot.

Haven Point by Virginia Hume

Three generations of women are bound together by family ties and shared trauma, but it is up to the matriarch to reveal to her granddaughter an untold story that will change her view of the coastal Maine enclave where they have summered for over fifty years. Try if you enjoyed *Colony* by Anne Rivers Siddons, or *Fellowship Point* by Alice Elliott Dark.

Sugar and Salt by Susan Wiggs

A young woman reaches an unexpected level of professional success after a series of traumatic events as a teen, only to find herself threatened by antagonists from her past in this complex women's fiction. Trigger warning for sexual assault and violence.