

## **Windows & Mirrors—Winter 2021 Reading Challenge**

### **Scandinavia Public Library**

All of the following titles are available at the Scandinavia Library. Adults may also read young adult and children's fiction. Large Print means that the Scandinavia copy is in this format.

#### **Asian American Voices**

**The Namesake** by Jhumpa Lahiri—*The Namesake* takes the Ganguli family from their tradition-bound life in Calcutta through their fraught transformation into Americans. With penetrating insight, she reveals not only the defining power of the names and expectations bestowed upon us by our parents, but also the means by which we slowly, sometimes painfully, come to define ourselves.

**Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet** by Jamie Ford—Split between the ethnic neighborhoods of Seattle during World War II and 1986, this debut novel tells the heartwarming story of widower Henry Lee. A chance discovery in a boarded up old hotel brings back long forgotten memories of the sacrifices he has made for family, for love, for country, and sends Henry on a search for a long-lost object whose value he cannot even begin to measure.

**Shanghai Girls** and **Dreams of Joy** by Lisa See—In 1937, sisters Pearl and May flee Shanghai as it is bombed by the Chinese. After a fraught journey across the Chinese countryside, they finally settle in Los Angeles where they strive to embrace American life even as they fight against discrimination and Communist witch hunts. In the sequel, Pearl's defiant daughter, Joy, returns to Shanghai in search of her birth father. Determined to save her daughter, Pearl confronts old demons and almost insurmountable challenges as she follows Joy, hoping for reconciliation.

**Never Fall Down** by Patricia McCormick—Based on the true story of Cambodian advocate Arn Chorn-Pond, and authentically told from his point of view as a young boy, this is an achingly raw and powerful historical novel about a child of war who becomes a man of peace. It includes an author's note and acknowledgements from Arn Chorn-Pond himself. (Young Adult)

#### **Black Voices**

**Between the World and Me** by Ta-Nehisi Coates—Through a series of letters to his adolescent son, Coates shares the story of his awakening to the truth about his place in the world. Beautifully woven from personal narrative, reimagined history, and fresh, emotionally charged reportage, *Between the World and Me* clearly illuminates the past, bravely confronts our present, and offers a transcendent vision for a way forward. (Nonfiction)

**Sing, Unburied, Sing** by Jesmyn Ward—Winner of the National Book Award for Fiction, Ward's *Sing, Unburied, Sing* chronicles the tense dynamics of a family in a fictional rural town in Mississippi. It follows a biracial 13-year-old boy named Jojo—who struggles to understand manhood—plus his drug-addicted mother Leonie and his white father, who is newly released from prison.

**The Hate U Give** by Angie Thomas—After witnessing her friend's death at the hands of a police officer, Starr Carter's life is complicated when the police and a local drug lord try to intimidate her in an effort to learn what happened the night Kahlil died. (Young Adult)

#### **Diverse Abilities**

**The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time** by Mark Haddon—Narrated by a 15-year-old autistic savant obsessed with Sherlock Holmes, this dazzling novel weaves together an old-

fashioned mystery, a contemporary coming-of-age story, and a fascinating excursion into a mind incapable of processing emotions.

**The Bell Jar** by Sylvia Plath—A shocking, realistic, and intensely emotional novel of a woman falling into the grips of insanity, *The Bell Jar* chronicles the crack-up of Esther Greenwood. Sylvia Plath masterfully draws the reader into Esther's breakdown with such intensity that Esther's insanity becomes completely real and even rational. Such deep penetration into the dark and harrowing corners of the psyche has made *The Bell Jar* a haunting American classic.

**Me Before You** by Jojo Moyes—Will Traynor knows his motorcycle accident took away his desire to live. He knows everything feels very small and rather joyless now and he knows exactly how he's going to put a stop to that. What Will doesn't know is that Lou Clark is about to burst into his world in a riot of colour. And neither of them knows they're going to change the other for all time.

**Wonder** by R.J. Palacio—Ten-year-old Auggie Pullman, who was born with extreme facial abnormalities and was not expected to survive, goes from being home-schooled to entering fifth grade at a private middle school in Manhattan, which entails enduring the taunting and fear of his classmates as he struggles to be seen as just another student. (Children's Fiction)

### **Hispanic American Voices**

**The House on Mango Street** by Sandra Cisneros—The House on Mango Street is the remarkable story of Esperanza Cordero, a young Latina girl growing up in Chicago, inventing for herself who and what she will become. Told in a series of vignettes-sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes deeply joyous-Sandra Cisneros' masterpiece is a classic story of childhood and self-discovery. Few other books in our time have touched so many readers.

**One Hundred Years of Solitude** by Gabriel García Márquez—The brilliant, bestselling, landmark novel that tells the story of the Buendía family, and chronicles the irreconcilable conflict between the desire for solitude and the need for love—in rich, imaginative prose that has come to define an entire genre known as "magical realism."

**The Shadow of the Wind** by Carlos Ruiz Zafón—Barcelona, 1945: A city slowly heals from its war wounds, and Daniel, an antiquarian book dealer's son who mourns the loss of his mother, finds solace in a mysterious book entitled *The Shadow of the Wind*, by one Julian Carax. But when he sets out to find the author's other works, he makes a shocking discovery: someone has been systematically destroying every copy of every book Carax has written. In fact, Daniel may have the last of Carax's books in existence. Soon Daniel's seemingly innocent quest opens a door into one of Barcelona's darkest secrets--an epic story of murder, madness, and doomed love.

### **Immigration**

**Behold the Dreamers** by Imbolo Mbue—A compulsively readable debut novel about marriage, immigration, class, race, and the trapdoors in the American Dream, this is the unforgettable story of a young Cameroonian couple making a new life in New York just as the Great Recession upends the economy. (Large Print)

**The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bars** by Dinaw Mengestu—Seventeen years ago, Sepha Stephanos fled the Ethiopian Revolution for a new start in the United States. Now he finds himself running a failing grocery store in a poor African-American neighborhood, longing for his home continent. When a series of racial incidents disturbs the community, Sepha may lose everything all over again. (Nonfiction)

## LGBTQ+ Voices

**The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo** by Taylor Jenkins Reid—Aging and reclusive Hollywood movie icon Evelyn Hugo is finally ready to tell the truth about her glamorous and scandalous life. But when she chooses unknown magazine reporter Monique Grant for the job, no one in the journalism community is more astounded than Monique herself. Why her? Why now? (Large Print)

**Luna** by Julie Anne Peters—Fifteen-year-old Regan's life, which has always revolved around keeping her older brother Liam's transsexuality a secret, changes when Liam decides to start the process of "transitioning" by first telling his family and friends that he is a girl who was born in a boy's body. (Young Adult)

**Simon Vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda** by Becky Albertalli—Sixteen-year-old and not-so-openly gay Simon Spier prefers to save his drama for the school musical. But when an email falls into the wrong hands, his secret is at risk of being thrust into the spotlight. Now change-averse Simon has to find a way to step out of his comfort zone before he's pushed out--without alienating his friends, compromising himself, or fumbling a shot at happiness with the most confusing, adorable guy he's never met. (Young Adult)

## Native American Voices

**There There** by Tommy Orange—*There There* follows twelve characters from Native communities: all traveling to the Big Oakland Powwow, all connected to one another in ways they may not yet realize. Tommy Orange's first novel is a multi-generational, relentlessly paced story about violence and recovery, hope and loss, identity and power, dislocation and communion, and the beauty and despair woven into the history of a nation and its people. (Large Print)

**The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian** by Sherman Alexie—This is the story of Junior, a budding cartoonist growing up on the Spokane Indian Reservation. Determined to take his future into his own hands, Junior leaves his troubled school on the reservation to attend an all-white farm town high school where the only other Indian is the school mascot. (Young Adult)

**Chickadee** by Louise Erdrich—In 1866, Omakayas's son Chickadee is kidnapped by two ne'er-do-well brothers from his own tribe and must make a daring escape, forge unlikely friendships, and set out on an exciting and dangerous journey to get back home. (Children's)

## Poverty and Homelessness

**Hillbilly Elegy** by J.D. Vance—The author retells his family's struggles as they moved out of poverty and into the middle class, and all the baggage from their former life that came along with them. A deeply moving memoir, with its share of humor and vividly colorful figures, *Hillbilly Elegy* is the story of how upward mobility really feels. And it is an urgent and troubling meditation on the loss of the American dream for a large segment of this country. (Autobiography)

**Driven: From Homeless to Hers, My Journeys On and Off Lambeau Field** by Donald Driver—In this memoir, Driver recalls what it was like to go from living in a U-Haul trailer with his mom on the streets of Houston to earning a spot on the Packers roster and becoming one of Brett Favre's favorite targets on the way to football stardom. (Memoir)

**The Glass Castle** by Jeannette Walls—This story is a remarkable memoir of resilience and redemption, and a penetrating look into a family at once deeply dysfunctional and uniquely vibrant. When sober, Jeannette's brilliant father captured his children's imagination, teaching them physics, geology, and how to embrace life fearlessly. But when he drank, he was

dishonest and destructive. Her mother was a free spirit who hated anything to do with domesticity. The Walls children learned to take care of themselves. They fed, clothed, and protected one another, and eventually found their way to New York. Their parents followed them, choosing to be homeless even as their children prospered. (Memoir)

**Sold** by Patricia McCormick—Thirteen-year-old Lakshmi, though poor, enjoys her life until the Himalayan monsoons wash away her family's crops and she is sold to a brothel in India by her stepfather. Lakshmi lives a nightmare and gradually forms friendships with the other girls that enable her to survive in this terrifying new world. Then the day comes when she must make a decision to risk everything for a chance to reclaim her life. (Young Adult)

## Social Injustice

**The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness** by Michelle Alexander—A provocative critique of the American criminal justice system from a prominent young legal scholar who deftly argues that the prison system functions as the new Jim Crow—a system of racial control. (Nonfiction)

**Night** by Elie Wiesel—Elie Wiesel was a teenager when he and his family were taken from their home in 1944 to the Auschwitz concentration camp, and then to Buchenwald. *Night* is the terrifying record of Elie Wiesel's memories of this time as it also eloquently addresses many of the philosophical as well as personal questions implicit in any serious consideration of what the Holocaust was, what it meant, and what its legacy is and will be. (Memoir)

**The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks** by Rebecca Skloot—Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. Her cells--taken without her knowledge--became one of the most important tools in medicine and have been bought and sold by the billions. Yet Henrietta Lacks is buried in an unmarked grave. Her family did not learn of her "immortality" until more than twenty years after her death, when scientists began using her husband and children in research without informed consent. The story of the Lacks family is inextricably connected to the dark history of experimentation on African Americans, the birth of bioethics, and the legal battles over whether we control the stuff we are made of. (Nonfiction)

## Women's Voices

**D-Day Girls: The Spies Who Armed That Resistance, Sabotaged the Nazis, and Helped Win WWII** by Sarah Rose—The dramatic, inspiring story of the extraordinary women recruited by Britain's elite spy agency to sabotage the Nazis, shore up the Resistance, and pave the way for Allied victory in World War II. (Nonfiction)

**The Only Woman in the Room: Why Science Is Still a Boys' Club** by Eileen Pollack—A bracingly honest exploration of why there are still so few women in the hard sciences, mathematics, engineering, and computer science In 2005, when Lawrence Summers, then president of Harvard, asked why so few women, even today, achieve tenured positions in the hard sciences, Eileen Pollack set out to find the answer. (Nonfiction)

**Shout** by Laurie R. King—This poetic memoir shares the author's life, covering her rape at thirteen, her difficult early childhood, and her experiences surrounding her publication of "Speak," the award-winning young adult novel depicting the psychological and social aftermath following the rape of a high school outsider. (Memoir)

**The Help** by Kathryn Stockett—In Jackson, Mississippi, in 1962, there are lines that are not crossed. With the civil rights movement exploding all around them, three women start a movement of their own, forever changing a town and the way women--black and white, mothers and daughters--view one another.