

2019/2020 Lit Group Selections

October: The Five by Hallie Rubenhold. Although they never met, five women—Polly, Annie, Elizabeth, Catherine and Mary-Jane—are bound together in history and fate. All brutally murdered in 1888, their killer was never officially identified. But the character created by the press in the absence of a conviction - “Jack the Ripper” - has long overshadowed any of the victims. They died because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time, but what if virtually everything we’d ever come to assume about these five women were largely untrue?

November: Beneath a Scarlet Sky, by Mark Sullivan, based on the true story of a forgotten hero, is the triumphant, epic tale of one young man’s incredible courage and resilience during one of history’s darkest hours.

December: Heartland: A Memoir of Working Hard and Being Broke in the Richest Country on Earth, by Sarah Smarsh, is a memoir which reveals one woman's experience of working class poverty with a startlingly observed, eye-opening, and topical personal story.

January: The Nickel Boys, Colson Whitehead’s bravura follow-up to The Underground Railroad, brilliantly dramatizes another strand of American history through the story of two boys sentenced to a hellish reform school in Jim Crow-era Florida.

February: In A Place for Us, Fatima Farheen Mirza tells the story of a family. Parents Rafiq and Layla must reckon with the choices their children make. Mirza takes us back to the beginning of this family’s life: from Rafiq and Layla’s own arrival in America from India, to the years in which their children tread between two cultures, seeking to find their place in the world, as well as a path home.

March: Still Life with Breadcrumbs by Anna Quindlen is a deeply moving and often very funny story of unexpected love, and a stunningly crafted journey into the life of a woman, her heart, her mind, her days, as she discovers that life is a story with many levels, a story that is longer and more exciting than she ever imagined.

April: Before We Were Yours by Lisa Wingate, a thought-provoking and complex tale about two families, is based on a notorious true-life scandal in which Georgia Tann, director of a Memphis-based adoption organization, kidnapped and sold poor children to wealthy families all over the country.

May: There, There is Tommy Orange’s shattering novel follows twelve characters from Native communities, all traveling to the Big Oakland Powwow, all connected to each other in ways they may not yet realize to tell of the plight of the urban Native American.