

# Build Your Kingdom . . . READ!

## 2010 READERS' CHOICES FOR ADULTS • WINDHAM COUNTY READS

Compiled and annotated by Laura Casey

**Alexie, Sherman.** *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian.* 2008. Sherman Alexie writes with poise and wit about a young man torn between two worlds. Arnold lives on the Spokane Reservation where poverty reigns and hope is sparse. A teacher gets him into a wealthy white school, but this change makes Arnold feel like an outcast in both societies.

**Asher, Jay.** *13 Reasons Why.* 2007. Clay, a high school student, receives a package of cassettes from Hannah, a friend who has recently committed suicide. On these cassettes, Hannah documented the reasons she was choosing suicide, and then sent them out to 13 of her friends. This is an intense account of Hannah's last months and Clay's reactions to them.

**Berg, Elizabeth.** *The Year of Pleasures.* 2006. While 55-year-old Betta Nolan's husband lies dying, he makes her promise to follow his strict directions on changing her life. Dutifully, Betta leaves her comfortable life in Boston to move out to a suburb of Chicago where she tracks down her old college friends. Betta's adventures cause her to reexamine her life, both past and future.

**Collins, Susan.** *The Hunger Games.* 2008. In a futuristic world, two young children are selected to compete to the death on a nationally televised reality program that citizens are required to watch. A book full of action that delves deeply into the realms of the human spirit.

**Corrigan, Kelly.** *The Middle Place.* 2008. Corrigan's memoir of her struggle with cancer (while her father is also battling the disease) chronicles her life from a sturdy American childhood to her marriage and the births of her beloved daughters.

**Croggin, Alison.** *The Naming.* 2006. In this fantasy, 16-year-old Maedra is rescued from slavery and embarks on an epic journey. On her travels she learns many things, including her own magical abilities.

**de Rosnay, Tatiana.** *Sarah's Key.* 2008. The magazine Julia writes for assigns her to report on the Vel' d'Hiv' Jewish roundups in Paris in 1942. During her research, Julia discovers that the Paris apartment building she lives in was acquired by her husband's family after its Jewish owners were deported to Auschwitz. This remarkable historical novel brings to light a disturbing and hidden aspect of French behavior during the war.

**Dunant, Sarah.** *The Birth of Venus: A Novel.* 2004. Travel to 15<sup>th</sup> century Florence where young Alessandra is growing up among the Medici family, Savonarola, the plague, serial killers and the threat of French invasion.

**Edleman, Hope.** *The Possibility of Everything.* 2009. When the author's three-year-old daughter becomes obsessed with a violent imaginary friend, she struggles to help her. Eventually, Edleman travels deep into Belize to consult a shaman. This memoir is a vividly written story of a mother's willingness to do anything to help her daughter.

**Friedman, Thomas L.** *Hot, Flat, and Crowded.* 2008. Thomas Friedman proposes ambitious strategies for combating the planet's global energy crisis and environmental devastation. Bravely and beautifully written, Friedman offers explanations, solutions and answers.

**Jacobs, Kate.** *The Friday Night Knitting Club.* 2008. A series of stories about women who meet each Friday to knit and chat, this book centers on Georgia Walker, who runs the knitting store where the club meets. When Georgia's ex-husband attempts to return to her and her daughter, the ladies in the club weigh in.

**Kellerman, Jonathan.** *Rage.* 2006. In this psychological thriller, psychologist Alex Delaware is caught up in the deaths of two teenagers he had examined after they confessed to kidnapping and killing a two year old girl. Eight years have passed, and the boys' sudden deaths call into question a case that had seemed closed.

**Lent, Jeffrey.** *Lost Nation*. 2003. A western, set in 19<sup>th</sup> century New Hampshire, *Lost Nation* chronicles the story of Mr. Blood, a man with a mysterious past who opens a saloon in a small town with a 16-year-old girl he purchased in Maine. Full of intrigue, violent upheavals and outlaws, this book is sure to excite.

**Letts, Billie.** *Shoot the Moon*. 2008. Shortly after the kidnapping of her baby, Cherokee Gaylene Harjo is murdered. When the child returns 30 years later, he questions the circumstances of his mother's death. The people of the small town where the tragedies occurred have never rested easily with the outcome of the case, and now they call everything into question.

**Lessing, Doris.** *The Fifth Child*. 1989. A young couple have a perfect life—a big and beautiful house, lots of friends, a good income and four perfect children. Then their fifth child arrives and their nightmare begins. Set in the 1970s, this slim book opens up many ethical, moral and social dilemmas.

**McDougall, Christopher.** *Born to Run: A Hidden Tribe, Superathletes, and the Greatest Race the World Has Never Seen*. 2009. Part memoir, part history, part adventure, McDougall writes with brilliance about the human race's ability to run. Read about the amazing Tarahumara Indians of Mexico, who train from an early age to run in and out of canyons for days at a time. Learn why shoes are actually bad for you. Embrace your superpower: the ability to run and run and run.

**Miles, Jonathan.** *Dear American Islands*. 2004. Bennie Ford's life can't get any worse. He is middle aged, lives with his disabled mother in a tiny apartment, has been divorced several times and is battling alcohol. Then he gets stranded in O'Hare airport on his way to his daughter's wedding. While he attempts to get a refund, Bennie reflects on his life.

**Patterson, Richard North.** *Exile*. 2007. David Wolfe, an upstanding attorney about to run for political office, is called to defend a former lover accused of conspiring to kill the Israeli prime minister. This suspenseful novel probes the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the history of a lawyer and his client.

**Penny, Louise.** *Still Life: A Chief Inspector Gamache Novel*. 2007. Inspector Gamache is called in from Montreal to the small town of Three Pines to review an odd death. It soon becomes clear the retired school teacher and artist was not killed in a hunting accident. This is the first in a series of Canadian mysteries that feature fine art and food and an inspector with a philosophical bent.

**Reichl, Ruth.** *Garlic and Sapphires, The Secret Life of a Critic in Disguise*. 2006. Join Ruth Reichl in this fun memoir as she describes her exploits working as a food critic for *The New York Times*. The author writes with great detail and humor about restaurants, foods, disguises and experiences during her tenure at the *Times*.

**Sharma, Robin.** *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari: A Fable About Fulfilling Your Dreams and Reaching Your Destiny*. 1999. It takes a heart attack for high powered attorney Julian Mantle to question his fast paced lifestyle. Mantle takes a spiritual journey to India to find deeper meaning.

**Willett, Marcia.** *The Golden Cup*. 2006. As Honor Trevannion lies dying in her beautiful home in rural Cornwall, she asks her granddaughter Joss to find a collection of letters from her youth. What Joss discovers in the letters is a tale of family deception.

**Yoon, Carol Kaesuk.** *Naming Nature: The Clash Between Instinct and Science*. 2009. Impossible to put down, this book by a *New York Times* science writer details the scientific community's quest to name the entire living world. Alongside her taxonomic inquiry, Yoon writes about her new obsession with umwelt—how each animal species perceives the world in a unique way. Beautifully written for scientists and lay people alike, this book details modern scientific discoveries into what it means to think and perceive.

**Young, William P.** *The Shack*. 2007. Mack's young daughter disappears during a family vacation, and strong evidence is found suggesting she was brutally murdered in an abandoned shack deep in the woods. Four years later, Mack receives a letter from God inviting him back to the shack for a weekend. What he finds there makes him question everything.