Brown Bag Book Review
Wednesday, January 11, 2022
12:00 PM-1:00 PM

Reviewers: Abby, Mary, El, Eve, Lauren S., Caitlin, Carly, Lee

Upgrade by Blake Crouch [Abby]
The Change by Kirsten Miller [Abby]
An Immense World by Ed Yong [Mary]
Fox Creek by William Kent Krueger [Mary]
The New Husband by D.J. Palmer [El]
The Marcus Ryker Series by Joel C. Rosenberg [El]
The Judge’s List by John Grisham [El]
11/22/63 by Stephen King [Eve]
The Wedding Date by Jasmine Guillory [Eve]
My Gentle Barn by Ellie Laks [Lauren S.]
The House of Mirth by Edith Wharton [Caitlin]
Ender’s Game by Orson Scott Card [Caitlin]
Oryx and Crake by Margaret Atwood [Caitlin]
The Black Panther Party by David F. Walker [Carly]
The Sunbearer Trials by Aiden Thomas [Lee]
Leech by Hiron Ennes [Lee]
Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe by Benjamin Alire Saenz [Lee]

-SAVE THE DATE-
Brown Bag Book Review
Wednesday, March 8, 2023
12:00 PM-1:00 PM
Upgrade by Blake Crouch

At first, Logan Ramsay isn’t sure if anything’s different. He just feels a little . . . sharper. Better able to concentrate. Better at multitasking. Reading a bit faster, memorizing better, needing less sleep. But before long, he can’t deny it: Something’s happening to his brain. To his body. He’s starting to see the world, and those around him—even those he loves most—in whole new ways.

Intimate in scale yet epic in scope, Upgrade is an intricately plotted, lightning-fast tale that charts one man’s thrilling transformation, even as it asks us to ponder the limits of our humanity—and our boundless potential.

[Abby]

The Change by Kirsten Miller

Big Little Lies meets The Witches of Eastwick—a gloriously entertaining and knife-sharp feminist revenge fantasy about three women whose midlife crisis brings unexpected new powers—putting them on a collision course with the evil that lurks in their wealthy beach town.

In the Long Island oceanfront community of Mattauk, three different women discover that midlife changes bring a whole new type of empowerment. The trio of women discover a teenage girl whose body was abandoned beside a remote beach. The police have written the victim off as a drug-addicted sex worker, but the women refuse to buy into the official narrative. Their investigation into the girl’s murder leads to more bodies, and to the town’s most exclusive and isolated enclave, a world of stupendous wealth where the rules don’t apply. With their newfound powers, Jo, Nessa, and Harriet will take matters into their own hands...

[Abby]

An Immense World by Ed Yong

In An Immense World, author and acclaimed science journalist Ed Yong coaxes us beyond the confines of our own senses, allowing us to perceive the skeins of scent, waves of electromagnetism, and pulses of pressure that surround us. Because in order to understand our world we don’t need to travel to other places; we need to see through other eyes.

[Mary]
Fox Creek by William Kent Krueger

The latest in the New York Times bestselling Cork O’Connor Mystery Series follows Cork in a race against time to save his wife, a mysterious stranger, and an Ojibwe healer from bloodthirsty mercenaries.

The ancient Ojibwe healer Henry Meloux has had a vision of his death. As he walks the Northwoods in solitude, he tries to prepare himself peacefully for the end of his long life. But peace is destined to elude him as hunters fill the woods seeking a woman named Dolores Morriseau, a stranger who had come to the healer for shelter and the gift of his wisdom.

[Mary]

The New Husband by D.J. Palmer

What makes Simon Fitch so perfect?

- He knows all her favorite foods, music, and movies.
- Her son adores him. He was there when she needed him most.
- He anticipates her every need.
- He would never betray her like her first husband.

The perfect husband. He checks all the boxes. The question is, why?

[El]

The Marcus Ryker Series by Joel C. Rosenberg


[El]

The Judge’s List by John Grisham

As an investigator for the Florida Board on Judicial Conduct, Lacy Stoltz sees plenty of corruption among the men and women elected to the bench. In “The Whistler,” she took on a crime syndicate that was paying millions to a crooked judge. Now, in “The Judge’s List,” the crimes are even worse. The man hiding behind the black robe is not taking bribes—but he may be taking lives. “The Judge’s List” — you don’t want to be on it..

[El]

11/22/63 by Stephen King

On November 22, 1963, three shots rang out in Dallas, President Kennedy died, and the world changed. Unless... In 2011, Jake Epping, an English teacher from Lisbon Falls, Maine, sets out on an insane — and insanely possible — mission to prevent the Kennedy assassination. Leaving behind a world of computers and mobile phones, he goes back to a time of big American cars and diners, of Lindy Hopping, the sound of Elvis, and the taste of root beer. In this haunting world, Jake falls in love with Sadie, a beautiful high school librarian. And, as the ominous date of 11/22/63 approaches, he encounters a troubled loner named Lee Harvey Oswald....

[Eve]
The Wedding Date by Jasmine Guillory

Agreeing to go to a wedding with a guy she gets stuck with in an elevator is something Alexa Monroe wouldn't normally do. But there's something about Drew Nichols that's too hard to resist.

On the eve of his ex's wedding festivities, Drew is minus a plus one. Until a power outage strands him with the perfect candidate for a fake girlfriend...

After Alexa and Drew have more fun than they ever thought possible, Drew has to fly back to Los Angeles and his job as a pediatric surgeon, and Alexa heads home to Berkeley, where she's the mayor's chief of staff. Too bad they can't stop thinking about the other. They're just two high-powered professionals on a collision course toward the long distance dating disaster of the century—or closing the gap between what they think they need and what they truly want.

[Eve]

My Gentle Barn by Ellie Laks

Founder Ellie Laks started The Gentle Barn after adopting a sick goat from a run-down petting zoo in 1999. Some two hundred animals later (including chickens, horses, pigs, cows, rabbits, emus, and more), The Gentle Barn has become an extraordinary nonprofit that brings together a volunteer staff of community members and at-risk teens to rehabilitate abandoned and/or abused animals. As Ellie teaches the volunteers to care for the animals, they learn a new language of healing that works wonders on the humans as well.

My Gentle Barn weaves together the story of how the Barn came to be what it is today with Ellie's own journey. Filled with heartwarming animal stories and inspiring recoveries, The Gentle Barn is a feel-good account that will delight animal lovers and memoir readers alike.

[Lauren S.]

The House of Mirth by Edith Wharton

Lily Bart, beautiful, witty and sophisticated, is accepted by 'old money' and courted by the growing tribe of nouveaux riches. But as she nears thirty, her foothold becomes precarious; a poor girl with expensive tastes, she needs a husband to preserve her social standing, and to maintain her in the luxury she has come to expect. Whilst many have sought her, something - fastidiousness or integrity - prevents her from making a 'suitable' match.

[Caitlin]

Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card

Andrew "Ender" Wiggin thinks he is playing computer simulated war games; he is, in fact, engaged in something far more desperate. The result of genetic experimentation, Ender may be the military genius Earth desperately needs in a war against an alien enemy seeking to destroy all human life. The only way to find out is to throw Ender into ever harsher training, to chip away and find the diamond inside, or destroy him utterly.

[Caitlin]
Oryx and Crake by Margaret Atwood

Oryx and Crake is at once an unforgettable love story and a compelling vision of the future. Snowman, known as Jimmy before mankind was overwhelmed by a plague, is struggling to survive in a world where he may be the last human, and mourning the loss of his best friend, Crake, and the beautiful and elusive Oryx whom they both loved. In search of answers, Snowman embarks on a journey—with the help of the green-eyed Children of Crake—through the lush wilderness that was so recently a great city, until powerful corporations took mankind on an uncontrolled genetic engineering ride. Margaret Atwood projects us into a near future that is both all too familiar and beyond our imagining.

[Caitlin]

The Black Panther Party by David F. Walker

A bold and fascinating graphic novel history of the revolutionary Black Panther Party, from an award-winning comic book writer.

Founded in Oakland, California, in 1966, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense was a revolutionary political organization that stood in defiant contrast to the mainstream civil rights movement. This gripping illustrated history explores the impact and legacy of the Panthers, from their social, educational, and healthcare programs that were designed to uplift the Black community to their battle against police brutality through citizen patrols and frequent clashes with the FBI, which targeted the Party from its outset. Using dramatic comic book-style retellings and illustrated profiles of key figures, The Black Panther Party captures the major events, people, and actions of the party, as well as their cultural and political influence and enduring significance.

[Carly]

The Sunbearer Trials by Aiden Thomas

Welcome to The Sunbearer Trials, where teen semidioses compete in a series of challenges with the highest of stakes, in this electric new Mexican-inspired fantasy from Aiden Thomas, the New York Times bestselling author of Cemetery Boys.

“Only the most powerful and honorable semidioses get chosen. I’m just a Jade. I’m not a real hero.”

As each new decade begins, the Sun’s power must be replenished so that Sol can keep traveling along the sky and keep the evil Obsidian gods at bay. Ten semidioses between the ages of thirteen and eighteen are selected by Sol himself as the most worthy to compete in The Sunbearer Trials. The winner carries light and life to all the temples of Reino del Sol, but the loser has the greatest honor of all—they will be sacrificed to Sol, their body used to fuel the Sun Stones that will protect the people of Reino del Sol for the next ten years.

[Lee]
Leech by Hiron Ennes

In an isolated chateau, as far north as north goes, the baron’s doctor has died. The doctor’s replacement has a mystery to solve: discovering how the Institute lost track of one of its many bodies.

For hundreds of years the Interprovincial Medical Institute has grown by taking root in young minds and shaping them into doctors, replacing every human practitioner of medicine. The Institute is here to help humanity, to cure and to cut, to cradle and protect the species from the apocalyptic horrors their ancestors unleashed.

In the frozen north, the Institute's body will discover a competitor for its rung at the top of the evolutionary ladder. A parasite is spreading through the baron's castle, already a dark pit of secrets, lies, violence, and fear. The two will make war on the battlefield of the body. Whichever wins, humanity will lose again..

[Lee]

Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe by Benjamin Alire Saenz

Dante can swim. Ari can't. Dante is articulate and self-assured. Ari has a hard time with words and suffers from self-doubt. Dante gets lost in poetry and art. Ari gets lost in thoughts of his older brother who is in prison. Dante is fair skinned. Ari’s features are much darker. It seems that a boy like Dante, with his open and unique perspective on life, would be the last person to break down the walls that Ari has built around himself.

But against all odds, when Ari and Dante meet, they develop a special bond that will teach them the most important truths of their lives, and help define the people they want to be. But there are big hurdles in their way, and only by believing in each other—and the power of their friendship—can Ari and Dante emerge stronger on the other side.

[Lee]

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