

Metrowest Readers' Advisory Roundtable

Historical Fiction - Momentous Events

January 21, 2022 @9:30am

Benchmark Title: *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak

Overrated?

Not a fan of writing style

Story felt too drawn out to begin and then a sudden, dramatic ending

Feelings about WW2/Holocaust stories? Better stories?

Number the Stars, Send for Me, The Lovely War, The Nightingale, The Rose Code

How to define YA literature?

Adolescent character goes through arc that results in maturity in some way

Written for audience of 12-20 years old

One person read it a while ago and remembered liking the characters, feeling sympathy for what the protagonist experiences

Death as narrator doesn't have enough payoff

Some descriptions are fresh and interesting

Second Titles

The Lovely War, by Julie Berry

Told from perspective of Aphrodite, with love stories with war backdrop

Romance, fantastical element

The Four Winds, Kristin Hannah

Strong story element but utilitarian writing, straight chronology, no flashbacks or other interesting conventions

Not sure of the popularity behind it

Dust Bowl era, Texas family

Climate anxiety makes it kind of relatable to current events

Anti-immigrant themes, also wealth gap, fear of others

Probably appealing to readers of womens' fiction, romance, looking to broaden interests; probably not appealing to non-fiction readers, history fans

Send for Me by Lauren Fox

WW2 fiction, "achingly beautiful", Germany and Wisconsin

Jenna's book club pick (The Today Show)

Liking the prose in this one even though it seems similar to *The Book Thief* (which was not liked)

The Island of Sea Women by Lisa See

Female Korean sea divers who basically provide economy for whole community and the men care for the home and children

Trigger warning - torture scene about halfway through book

Audiobook is highly recommended

The Remains of the Day by Kazuo Ishiguro

“Character study” - his style

Slow pace, more character and atmosphere than plot

No Angel, Penny Vincenzi

First in trilogy, English aristocratic family in run-up to WW1

Lots of history, family saga

Dry social commentary

Code Name Verity by Elizabeth Wein

England WW2 female pilot who befriends another woman who's a spy

Well-written and engaging even in technical aspects

Usually listed as YA but would recommend to adult readers too