



Gratz Insider, Summer 2015 - Story Continuation

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Summer Reading Suggestions

We begin with the recommendations from Gratz faculty and staff.

Joy Goldstein, President

***The Shadow of the Wind* (Carlos Ruiz Zafon)** - Set in Barcelona, this book is a thriller that begins when Daniel, then a ten-year-old child, selects a book - *The Shadow of the Wind* by Julian Carax - from a trove of antiquated titles kept in a place called the Cemetery of Forgotten Books. This book and its author are cloaked in a mystery that consumes Daniel, following him into adulthood. Daniel eventually realizes that he has one of the last remaining novels written by Carax because someone has been mysteriously and deliberately destroying all the books by this author. As explained on Carlos Ruiz Zafon's website, "What begins as a case of literary curiosity turns into a race to find out the truth behind the life and death of Julian Carax and to save those he left behind."

(www.carlosruizzafon.co.uk)

Goldstein calls *The Shadow of the Wind* "excellent, a real page-turner."

***All Who Go Do Not Return* (Shulem Deen)** - In this memoir, Shulem Deen recounts his experience growing up in an ultra-Orthodox Jewish community. He also details his journey from that world to a more secular life style, as well as the consequences that followed. The Jewish Week describes Deen as the "poet laureate of ex-Chasidim."

***All the Light We Cannot See* (Anthony Doerr)** - This book brings together two unlikely characters: a blind French girl who escaped Nazi-occupied Paris with her father for Brittany in northwestern France, and a German boy whose mechanical skills earned him a spot in a Nazi military academy and a job tracking members of the Resistance. A favorite of Goldstein's book club, *All the Light We Cannot See* was awarded the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for fiction.

***Orphan Train* (Christina Baker Kline)** - In this book, Molly Ayer, a troubled teen, is able to avoid juvenile detention by performing community service. Her service responsibility is to assist 90-year-old Vivian Daly with the job of cleaning out her attic. This task becomes Kline's pretext for enabling Vivian to share her story - a story that makes Kline's novel a book of historical fiction, revealing a shameful practice in American history. Beginning in the mid-1800's, and continuing for about 75 years, orphaned children from the East Coast were sent across the country on trains to be adopted by families in the Midwest. In reality, many of these "adopted" children were ill-treated and forced to labor as farmhands or domestics for their new families. In *Orphan Train*, Vivian comes to terms with her difficult past and connects with young Molly in the process.

Dodi Klimoff, Executive Assistant, Office of the President

50 Children (Steven Pressman) - This book tells the true story of Eleanor and Gil Kraus, a Jewish couple from Philadelphia, who in 1939, rescued 50 children from Vienna. Had it not been for the bravery of the Krauses, these children would have faced almost certain death in the Holocaust. Pressman's book was based on his HBO documentary of this remarkable story. (Interesting tidbit: Pressman's wife is a grandchild of Eleanor and Gil Kraus.)

Klimoff described this book as a "great story with a Philly connection."

Dr. Joseph Davis, Associate Professor of Jewish Thought and Academic Coordinator of the Distance Learning Program

The Memoirs of Gluckel of Hameln (written by Gluckel; translated by Marvin Lowenthal) - Professor Davis describes this book as "an extremely lively and amusing memoir of [Gluckel's] busy life. It is one of the first books by any Jewish woman, certainly the first memoir of a Jewish woman. And, Gluckel is a genius at telling anecdotes."

Born in 1646, Gluckel was originally from Hamburg, Germany. Married as a teenager, she was active in her first husband's business, which she ran after his death in 1689. As a legacy to her 12 children, Gluckel began writing her memoirs in 1690, detailing the family history and providing anecdotes about their daily lives. In the introduction to *The Memoirs*, Robert Rosen writes, "In writing of *her* life, *her* family and business dealings, [Gluckel] has left us a portrait of an era. Better than any history text she instructs us about what it was like to be a Jew in Europe in her time."

Licoricia of Winchester: Marriage, Motherhood and Murder in the Medieval Anglo-Jewish Community (Written by Suzanne Bartlet; edited by Patricia Skinner) - Another one of Professor Davis' favorites, this book is also the story of a successful Jewish businesswoman who lived centuries ago. It is the biography of Licoricia, a Medieval Jewish woman who lived in Winchester, England, and was found mysteriously murdered in her home in the year 1277. Licoricia's story provides a window into life within the Jewish community of Winchester during the time period that preceded the Jews' expulsion from England in 1290.

Dr. Davis points out that this book has a fascinating backstory: The author, Suzanne Bartlet, became interested in the Medieval Jewish history of her town after learning that the ruins of Winchester's Medieval Jewish cemetery lay right behind her home. Although Bartlet researched and wrote the book, earning her master's along the way, she died prior to its publication. Her thesis advisor, Dr. Patricia Skinner, saw the book through the publication process.

Rita Ratson, Director of the Yiddish Program

Life is with People: The Culture of the Shtetl (Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog) - Shtetls - the small towns where Eastern European Jews lived for generations, speaking Yiddish, supporting their families, practicing their religion and developing a culture and way of life - had already declined in number by World War II, and were completely wiped out during the Holocaust. *Life is with People* is a

nonfiction book that Rita Ratson describes as “a wonderful read for those interested in Yiddish culture and history and in understanding Jewish life in the shtetl in Eastern Europe.”

Dr. Ruth Sandberg, Leonard and Ethel Landau Professor of Rabbinics and Director of the Jewish-Christian Studies Program

Judaism and Science (Noah J. Efron) - In this book, Efron traces Jewish perspectives on science and the natural world through the millennia, beginning with biblical times and concluding with the accomplishments of Jewish scientists in the 19th and 20th centuries. Dr. Sandberg describes Efron as “a strong proponent of the belief that Judaism and science are harmonious and not antithetical.”

Jewish Book Lists

Gratz librarian Nancy Nitzberg recommended the following three links to Jewish book lists, adding that the Tuttleman Library at Gratz College has quite a few of these titles in its collection:

1. http://www.jewishbookcouncil.org/_blog/The_ProsePeople/post/spring-2015-jewish-book-preview
2. <http://atlantajewishtimes.com/2015/06/summer-reading-bag/>
3. http://www.goodreads.com/search?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=jewish&search_type=lists

In addition, the link below provides access to the 2015 list of "The Latest and Greatest in Jewish Fiction for Adults." Presented and distributed at the 2015 conference of the Association of Jewish Libraries, this incredibly extensive list of current titles was compiled by Rachel Kamin, director of The Joseph and Mae Gray Cultural and Learning Center at North Suburban Synagogue Beth El in Highland Park, Illinois; Lisa Silverman, director of the Sinai Temple Blumenthal Library in Los Angeles, California; and Ellen Tilman, Director of Library Services for the Meyers Library at Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania.

<http://databases.jewishlibraries.org/sites/default/files/bibliography-bank/JewishFiction2015Handout%20%281%29.pdf>

Gratz College Tuttleman Library

For people in the Greater Philadelphia Area, Gratz’s Tuttleman Library is a wonderful resource, not only for seeking out summer reads, but also for discovering great books throughout the year. While visitors to the library can create an account onsite, they can also set up a library account online. The library catalogue can be accessed online too, making it possible for library users to easily check on the availability of a book or create a list of reading materials on a particular subject matter without leaving home. For links to the catalogue, to account creation and to other resources, view the

Tuttleman Library's homepage [here](#). Or, contact the librarian by phone at 215-635-7300 x 159, or by email at nnitzberg@gratz.edu. For those interested in receiving updates on the library's newest acquisitions - whether they be cookbooks, fiction, historical or religious nonfiction, or other genres - simply let the librarian know, and she will add your contact information to her update list.