

The Light Between the Oceans

by M.L. Stedman

July 17, 2013

In Stedman's deftly crafted debut, Tom Sherbourne, seeking constancy after the horrors of WWI, takes a lighthouse keeper's post on an Australian island, and calls for Isabel, a young woman he met on his travels, to join him there as his wife. In peaceful isolation, their love grows. But four years on the island and several miscarriages bring Isabel's seemingly boundless spirit to the brink, and leave Tom feeling helpless until a boat washes ashore with a dead man and a living child. Isabel convinces herself-and Tom-that the baby is a gift from God. After two years of maternal bliss for Isabel and alternating waves of joy and guilt for Tom, the family, back on the mainland, is confronted with the mother of their child, very much alive. Stedman grounds what could be a far-fetched premise, setting the stage beautifully to allow for a heart-wrenching moral dilemma to play out, making evident that "Right and wrong can be like bloody snakes: so tangled up that you can't tell which is which until you've shot 'em both, and then it's too late." Most impressive is the subtle yet profound maturation of Isabel and Tom as characters.

The Rules of Civility

By Amor Towles

August 21, 2013

This sophisticated and entertaining first novel presents the story of a young woman whose life is on the brink of transformation. On the last night of 1937, twenty-five-year-old Katey Kontent is in a second-rate Greenwich Village jazz bar when Tinker Grey, a handsome banker, happens to sit down at the neighboring table. This chance encounter and its startling consequences propel Katey on a year-long journey into the upper echelons of New York society—where she will have little to rely upon other than a bracing wit and her own brand of cool nerve. With its sparkling depiction of New York's social strata, its intricate imagery and themes, and its immensely appealing characters, "Rules of Civility" won the hearts of readers and critics alike.

Wild

by Cheryl Strayed

September 18, 2013

At twenty-two, Cheryl Strayed thought she had lost everything. In the wake of her mother's death, her family scattered and her own marriage was soon destroyed. Four years later, with nothing more to lose, she made the most impulsive decision of her life. With no experience or training, driven only by blind will, she would hike more than a thousand miles of the Pacific Crest Trail from the Mojave Desert through California and Oregon to Washington State—and she would do it alone. Told with suspense and style, sparkling with warmth and humor, *Wild* powerfully captures the terrors and pleasures of one young woman forging ahead against all odds on a journey that maddened, strengthened, and ultimately healed her. **Possible speaker from Appalachian Trail.**

Outliers

by Malcolm Gladwell

October 16, 2013

In this stunning book, Malcolm Gladwell takes us on an intellectual journey through the world of "outliers"—the best and the brightest, the most famous and the most successful. He asks the question: what makes high-achievers different? His answer is that we pay too much attention to what successful people are like, and too little attention to where they are from: that is, their culture, their family, their generation, and the idiosyncratic experiences of their upbringing. Along the way he explains the secrets of software billionaires, what it takes to be a great soccer player, why Asians are good at math, and what made the Beatles the greatest rock band.

*Descriptions from amazon.com and
Publisher Weekly Review*