

# Parkdale Book Club

## 10 June – Racing in the Rain and next year's choices

Eleven of us voted for the top 10 of the 21 nominations, and here are the choices for next year.

1. ***Being Mortal***, by Atul Gawande - Doreen
2. ***The Curious Charms of Arthur Pepper*** by Phaedra Patrick - Beth
3. ***The Endless Knot*** by Gail Bowen -- Lynn
4. ***Fifteen Dogs*** by Andre Alexis -- consensus
5. ***The Humans***, by Matt Haig -- Lynn
6. ***Into the Magic Shop: A Neurosurgeon's Quest to Discover the Mysteries of the Brain and the Secrets of the Heart***, by James R. Doty MD -- Barb
7. ***My Grandmother Sends Her Regards and Apologises*** by Fredrik Backman -- Beth
8. ***One Brother Shy***, by Terry Fallis -- Joan
9. ***Slaughterhouse Five*** by Kurt Vonnegut -- Lindsay
10. ***The Spiral Staircase: My Climb Out of Darkness*** by Karen Armstrong -- Lee

Do we want to reschedule the Nov. 11 date to the 4<sup>th</sup> because of Remembrance Day? I've assigned dates, as shown below, and would appreciate feedback about whether you'll be on vacation at the time I've scheduled your book.

## Schedule

Date (10 am on 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday)

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Sept. 9      ***The Endless Knot*** by Gail Bowen -- Lynn

Oct. 14      ***Into the Magic Shop: A Neurosurgeon's Quest to Discover the Mysteries of the Brain and the Secrets of the Heart***, by James R. Doty MD – Barb (all of us)

Nov. 11 (or 4) ***The Curious Charms of Arthur Pepper*** by Phaedra Patrick - Beth

Dec. 9      ***Slaughterhouse Five*** by Kurt Vonnegut -- Lindsay

Jan. 13 2018 ***Being Mortal***, by Atul Gawande -- Doreen

Feb. 10	<b><i>Fifteen Dogs</i></b> by Andre Alexis – all of us
Mar. 10	<b><i>My Grandmother Sends Her Regards and Apologises</i></b> by Fredrik Backman -- Beth
Apr. 14	<b><i>The Spiral Staircase: My Climb Out of Darkness</i></b> by Karen Armstrong -- Lee
May 12	<b><i>The Humans</i></b> , by Matt Haig -- Lynn
June 9	<b><i>One Brother Shy</i></b> , by Terry Fallis -- Joan

## The Art of Racing in the Rain

I told Sidney we were discussing this book by Garth Stein, and she remembered that she uses this quotation when she talks with people about listening:

- ↻ Enzo: “Here’s why I would be a good person. Because I listen. I cannot speak, so I listen very well. I never interrupt, I never deflect the course of the conversation with a comment of my own. People, if you pay attention to them, change the direction of one another’s conversations constantly. It’s like having a passenger in your car who suddenly drops the steering wheel and turned you down a side street. ... Learn to listen! I beg of you. Pretend you are a dog like me and listen to other people rather than steal their stories.”
- ↻ I liked when Enzo went and guarded Eve - he stayed awake all night, and then when he slept during the day, they called him lazy
- ↻ “She was my rain. She was my unpredictable element. She was my fear. But a racer should not be afraid of rain; a racer should embrace the rain.”
- ↻ I loved the book
- ↻ I did not like it because it was a dog, but in the end, I thought it was a fabulous book

- ↻ I liked especially when Enzo the boy came back at the end
- ↻ My copy is ‘dog-eared’
- ↻ I liked the comments about human nature
- ↻ I liked when Enzo pooped on Maxwell & Trish’s expensive rug
- ↻ I’m scared to death of dogs
- ↻ Are all dogs like Enzo? (no)
- ↻ Was Denny too perfect? We see Denny through Enzo’s eyes. (I loved this comment - the important idea of the unreliable narrator.) “He is so brilliant. He shines. He’s beautiful with his hands that grab things and his tongue that says things and the way he stands and chews his food for so long....” And yet, “The true hero is flawed...”
- ↻ So what is the truth about what happened in Denny’s bedroom with Annika? Enzo’s version? Denny’s presentation to Annika at the coffee shop? Annika’s version?
- ↻ A race car driver would not be my 1<sup>st</sup> choice as single parent - high mortality rate
- ↻ First reading, I supported the grandparents, but 4 years later, they seemed more sinister.
- ↻ “That which you manifest is before you. The visible becomes inevitable. Your car goes where your eyes go.”
- ↻ Why weren’t Annika’s parents still at the family reunion?
- ↻ Denny was partly responsible for what happened because he drove Annika home. No, that was completely innocent behaviour if

- evaluated in the context of nothing bad happening.
- ↻ “The true hero is flawed. The true test of a champion is not whether he can triumph, but whether he can overcome obstacles--preferably of his own making--in order to triumph. A hero without a flaw is of no interest to an audience or to the universe, which, after all, is based on conflict and opposition....”
  - ↻ Was it plausible that Eve's family kept Denny away from her funeral?
  - ↻ The false accusation story line was sexist male fantasy material, and implausible. He slept through Annika's pulling his pants off but woke up to Enzo's barking?
  - ↻ Annika's approach to Denny mb not plausible for someone in my generation, but more plausible given the current level of exposure to sex at younger ages via internet, snapchat, etc.
  - ↻ Denny's approaching Annika at the coffee shop felt coercive to me.
  - ↻ Remember, the book is about racing, strategies - Denny was looking ahead.
  - ↻ Our experiences colour how we read anything.
  - ↻ Even with an unreliable narrator, I think Denny is unlikely to violate his fiduciary responsibility as an older relative because he is the father of a daughter.
  - ↻ It is only a story.
  - ↻ There had to be something to hold against Denny in the custody battle
  - ↻ Enzo says, "I suddenly realized. The zebra. It is not something outside of us. The zebra is inside of us. Our fears. Our own self-destructive natures. The zebra is the worst part of us when we are face-to-face with our own worst times. The demon is us!"
  - ↻ “We are all afforded our physical existence so we can learn about ourselves.”
  - ↻ “Did (Denny) understand, as those interminable minutes ticked by, that being alone is not the same as being lonely? That being alone is a neutral state; it is like a blind fish at the bottom of the ocean without eyes, and therefore without judgement. Is it possible? That which is around me does not affect my mood; my mood affects that which is around me. Is it true? Could Denny have possibly appreciated the subjective nature of loneliness, which is something that exists only in the mind, not in the world, and, like a virus, is unable to survive without a willing host?” - factually inaccurate!
  - ↻ “And I wonder: Have I squandered my dogness? Have I forsaken my nature for my desires? Have I made a mistake by anticipating my future and shunning my present?”
  - ↻ “Demon. Gremlin. Poltergeist. Ghost. Phantom. Spirit. Shadow. Ghoul. Devil. People are afraid of them, so they relegate their existence to stories, volumes of books that can be closed and put on the shelf or left behind at a bed and breakfast; they clench their eyes shut, so they will see no evil. But trust me when I tell you that the zebra is real. **Somewhere, the zebra is dancing.**”