



2024 Reading Challenge

JANUARY

A book you read
years ago that you
may feel differently
about now

A reader from Hadley read *Black Elk Speaks* by John G. Neihardt: “I read *Black Elk Speaks* nearly 40 years ago, but was too young to understand the significance of what was being shared. I did not understand the sad history of stolen land and lost cultures. I understand a lot more about this now, and this book hit deep. I recently read (forgot to write down source, unfortunately) that it seems like many Americans know more about yoga, buddhism and other eastern religions and traditions than they do about the indigenous cultures and traditions of the land they inhabit. *Black Elk Speaks* is a great way to begin this conversation.”

A reader from Woburn read *The Perks Of Being A Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky: “I still love this book just as much as when I read it the first time.”

A reader from Springfield read *The Throne of Fire* by Rick Riordan: “I have been re-reading the Percy Jackson series which is one of my favorites. That inspired me to give *The Kane Chronicles* another chance even though I wasn't a fan when I read them over ten years ago. I will say, although they don't beat PJO, I am definitely enjoying them much more this time around.”

A reader from Spencer read *Joni: An Unforgettable Story* by Joni Eareckson Tada: "I read this book back in 1976. Re-reading it now makes me even more inspired. Joni was in a diving accident when she was 17 years old. She became a quadriplegic. Her story changed my life back in the seventy's causing me to become more aware of people with disabilities. We can all make a difference."

A reader from Spencer read *Blubber* by Judy Blume: "I reread *Blubber* because I remember feeling such sadness for Linda, who is bullied. Reading this again as an adult, my focus has shifted from compassion for the victim to anger toward the bullies. I suppose now that I am a parent and a teacher, I want to go right to the discipline!"

A reader from Mashpee read *Circle of Friends* by Maeve Binchy: "I first read this book when I was in high school about 30 years ago. I found it on my Nana's bookshelf when I visited my family for the holidays. The book has stuck with me for decades, even though it was set in Ireland in the 50s and I am a 70s kid from Massachusetts. My Nana passed away last December and I was the lucky recipient of most of her library. I just reread this one over the recent holiday season and it brought back many happy memories of snuggling on the sofa in front of a fire with a cup of tea and the wonderful characters from Knockglen and Dublin. Every time you read this book you will learn a new lesson about life."

A reader from Shrewsbury read *Inspector Gamache Series* by Louise Penny: "Still terrible"

A reader from Dracut read *The Absolute Diary of a Part Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie: "I had to read this book for school when I was in High School. I enjoyed it then, and I enjoy it even more now as an adult. Mr. Sherman Alexie quickly became one of my favorite authors and I have read more of his books."

A reader from Springfield read *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte: "I am enjoying this book again. The first time I read it was before I had access to an online dictionary. Now I hold my finger on the word in question and the definition comes up! So many words that are not familiar to me. Now I can really get into the amazing tale, understanding every emotion and detail. It's interesting to read about the landscape of the moors and the weather. Really sets the mood for all the drama and emotional ups and downs of the story."

A reader from Amherst read *Pride & Prejudice* by Jane Austen: "For the January book I decided to revisit *Pride & Prejudice*. I have to say I find it tedious to read now. I rarely prefer the movie to the book, but I don't feel the need to read it again after this and I'll just watch the movie!"

A reader from Reading read *Dragonson* by Anne McCaffrey: "Loved these books as a teenager--the story is still compelling but the sexism is a bit hard to take!"

A reader from Amherst read *All Systems Red* by Martha Wells: "What's not to love about a sassy, poorly adjusted killer robot with more anxieties than most humans?"

A reader from Woburn read *The Last Straw (Diary of a Wimpy Kid, #3)* by Jeff Kinney: "This book is still funny for a child, but the more times I read this, the more I wonder if kids actually realize that the main character is not necessarily supposed to be a hero."

A reader from Topsfield read *Freakonomics* by Steven D. Levitt: "I last read this book when I was fresh out of college. Reading it now as an information professional hits differently."

A reader from Springfield read *The Lighting Thief* by Rick Riordan: "It was a fun book just like I remember in middle school. Some of the jokes are a little corny now, but I still have a lot of love for it and might decide to read the rest of the series again."

A reader from Dedham read *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald: "I read this many years ago and just reread it for a book group, while I feel I understood the book better on the second reading, I did not particularly like it."

A reader from Shutesbury read *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* by Richard Bach: "As a teenager I thought this book was profound. Fifty years later- not so much. Revisiting the book was a fun contrast to my then and now self as a reader and a person."

A reader from Easthampton read *Giovanni's Room* by James Baldwin: "A powerful and sad story. I appreciated being prompted to re-read this book that I first encountered 28 years ago!"

A reader from WAKEFIELD read *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien: "For 30+ years I've mentally shelved *The Things They Carried* as one of the best-written books I have ever read. It still holds true."

A reader from Hudson read *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* by Betty Smith: "I don't remember loving this book so much! And I know the deep and important thread of reading and education (particularly for girls) did not resonate with me last time although now it seems obvious that that is what the book is ABOUT!"

A reader from Chicopee read *Fortune's Rocks* by Anita Shreve: "Thought this book was romantic when I read it at 19. As an adult and parent, there's so much that is wrong going on here."

A reader from Indian Orchard read *In The Woods* by Tana French: "I'm surprised by how much my tastes have changed in the years since I first read this book. Now I find that it's too long and also totally unsatisfying at the same time."

A reader from SOUTH HADLEY read *At Risk* by Alice Hoffman: "I read this book in 2005 as a high school junior. I loved it then. I have just re read this book now as an adult and also as a mother, and I think being a parent is what impacted me then most. I saw both sides because I am a mother. I'm also a nurse, so I definitely could feel the main character's mothers pain. It was a quick read and I downloaded the ebook and got through it in about 4 hours. Still enjoyed it very much."

A reader from Plainville read *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson: "I chose to read *Bridge to Terabithia*. I first read this book in 5th grade and I remember really enjoying it. Now being an adult and have experienced losing a loved one, this time reading it has hit harder for me. This is also the oldest book I own!"

A reader from Dracut read *Animal Farm* by George Orwell: "I certainly understood the references to communism that I didn't when I first read it in High School."

A reader from Woburn read *The Joy Of A Peanuts Christmas: 50 Years Of Holiday Comics* by Charles Schulz: "This is still heartwarming and enjoyable, an annual classic."

A reader from Melrose read *Walk in Love - Episcopal Beliefs and Practices* by Scott Gunn & Melody Wilson Shobe: "I read this book a few years ago and it made no impression. This time around it taught me much about the religion I have practiced for decades."

A reader from Sudbury read *1984* by George Orwell: "Holy cow. I read this in high school, and again about 15 years ago. I read it just now for the 3rd time and this time, given the state of the world, it really resonated and scared the heck out of me!! It's one of those books that is worth reading with insight that is lost on high school students."

A reader from Hopkinton read *Freak the mighty* by Rodman philbrick: “In middle school this book stuck with me because of the play with vocabulary and the story that was so far out of my privileged bubble that it seemed like fantasy not just fiction. Now I see the brilliant writing that highlights the main characters voice and makes him real.”

A reader from Whitinsville read *The Whitin Machine Works Since 1831* by T. R. Navin: “This book is my go to for research of my town. I love reading it every few years. I can find a simple fact that has not been explored and spend months researching those facts. My true research is the years between 1600's to 1840's before the Whitin family changed the town into an Industrial Revolution Empire and the town it is today. Stories in this book give hints to land takeovers, pushing out of the natives, profit from Southern slave labor and control over the three swift rivers water rights, while one family capitalized one their ‘New England Ingenuity.’”

A reader from Derry read *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass* by Lewis Carroll: “Not sure why this book came to mind for January's challenge. I remember reading the fantasy version of Alice in Wonderland as a child. I remember it being a whimsical tale of a young girl falling down a rabbit hole while following the White Rabbit to Wonderland. She meets a host of strange characters and has a tea party, etc. Reading the Lewis Carroll original version was indeed a different experience. While it was weird and nonsensical, it did introduce some deeper meaning to the story. Carroll (while a bit of a character himself) focuses on Alice's curiosity while still a child and trying to understand what it will be like to grow up.(Drink me-makes her grow, Eat me-makes her shrink) She meets the Mad Hatter, the Cheshire Cat, The Red Queen and a hookah smoking caterpillar among other strange creatures. It's really a bizarre story but filled with fantastic quotes, Too many to list! ‘Curiouser and couriouser.’”

A reader from NORTH ATTLEBORO read *Magic in the Alley* by Mary Calhoun: “This was one of my favorite books as a child and I still have my copy. Sadly, there is less 'magic' when I read it as an adult.”

A reader from North Reading read *if this gets out* by Cale Dietrich and Sophie Gonzales: “Bandmates who develop feelings for each other, but cannot let anyone find out.”

A reader from Brewster read *End Of Watch* by Stephen King: “I enjoyed reading all three books in the series and looking forward to reading Holly next.”

A reader from Attleboro read *The Long Winter* by Laura Ingalls Wilder: “Her books were a favorite of mine in middle school decades ago . The Long Winter Is about the harsh 7 month winter endured by the Ingalls family when Laura was 14 years old. Enjoyed rereading it.”

A reader from Worcester read *Parable of the Sower* by Octavia Butler: “Grim, haunting, far-seeing and urgent. I’d read this many years ago and meant to reread it. I’m glad this challenge pushed me to do so, but given that the story takes place in 2024-2027, it was especially unsettling. Butler was such a talented author and Lauren Olamina is a force of a narrator.”

A reader from Chicopee read *Walden and Civil Disobedience* by Henry David Thoreau: “An account of Thoreau's stay at Walden Pond and his natural observations of the forest, pond, and the seasons. During his stay, he argues that we can find our true self in nature, and that to truly experience nature, we have to expect nothing, in which in turn we will receive everything.”

A reader from Ware read *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank: “I read this book in middle school and decided this would be a perfect opportunity to reread this book that made me so interested in the holocaust. Her writing of her relationship or lack their of with her mother is so similar to my relationship

with my mother. As an adult you also realize just how young she really is and how it shows in her diary entries. I wish she had someone she could have truly confided in and felt she could have shown her true self to.”

A reader from Sharon read *Are You There God? It's Me Margaret.* by Judy Blume: “This book is still very relevant.”

A reader from Belchertown read *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins: “I loved this book just as much the second time, but I focused a lot more on the political messages in the book rather than the character relationships. I am now rereading *Catching Fire* :)”

A reader from Stoughton read *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* by Judy Blume: “I still love this book.”

A reader from Berkley read *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis: “I loved it as a kid. It was enjoyable and a fun, quick read.”

A reader from Manchester read *The Final Diagnosis* by Alex Hailey: “I chose this book because when I read it over sixty years ago, it helped me to decide what I wanted to do "when I grew up" I used to read my parents' books when i was in high school. This author was very popular and wrote several NYT best sellers It is very dated but I enjoyed reading it again.”

A reader from North Easton read *Flowers In The Attic* by V.C. Andrews: “This was a book I read as a young adult and it felt so scandalous then. Made me love evolving as a reader and I loved the series and watching the movies when they aired on TV. I can still remember reading it vividly as a young girl.”

A reader from Brookline read *Flowers for the Judge* by Margery Allingham: “Nope. I still don't think these books are my cup of tea. Overwrought psychology, contrived plots and tedious back-and-forth between the aristocratic amateur sleuth and his ex-con personal servant.”

A reader from Plainville read *Mere Christianity* by CS Lewis: “An interesting re-read after nearly 25 years. What a great prompt to start the year and this challenge! Thank you!”

A reader from Dracut read *The Night Circus* by Erin Morgenstern: “I found more understanding and love for these characters since my first reading of this book. I would recommend this book!”

A reader from Milton read *The summer I turned pretty* by Jenny Han: “This book is about a girl and her family who go to a summer house each year with her moms best friend and her two sons. The main character belly, has always had feelings for one of the brothers but things change when the other brother shows interest in her. Although she loves both brothers, who she will choose in the end is a mystery.”

A reader from Milford read *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky: “even in the effort to shape ourselves into an ideal, or push ourselves into the box of who we are and what we feel we deserve... we cannot escape being human. how bound we are to guilt, to insecurity, to the need to love and to be loved by others.”

A reader from Wrentham read *The Penderwicks* by Jeanne Birdsall: “I first read this book because my third grade teacher read it in her book club. I remember liking it somewhat, but my memory on the book was fuzzy and I didn't remember many of the details. Upon re-reading this book, I was brought back to the world of the Penderwicks and their summer vacation in the Berkshires, and I remembered why I liked this book so much!”

A reader from North Reading read *Spare* by Prince Harry: “‘A book that made you question why it's so popular’ There are many good reasons to pick up SPARE, better yet, the audiobook. I enjoyed listening to Prince Harry's narration most of all - his voice is soothing and the occasional chuckles make the memoir more personal. Some of his stories are outlandish and not at all relatable and I found the more salacious stories very invasive and silly. However, I appreciated hearing "his side" of the story. What is most important is hearing of his quest to figure out his emotions, get treatment for severe PTSD, and explain how even a prince can feel helpless.”

A reader from Derry read *ANIMAL FARM* by George Orwell: “I read this book for the first time in 7th grade, in 1977 or 78. At the time I read it during the cold War with the Soviet Union, so it was easy to see this as an allegory about the Russian Revolution and the rise of Stalin in the form of Napoleon and the ruling class of pigs. I remember reading the final page and being convinced my book was missing additional pages as the book ended so abruptly on the Twilight Zone like twist that the other animals could not see a difference between the humans and the pigs. Fast forward to the present day, I reread it long after the fall of the soviet union but in a world increasingly imperiled by the rise of fascism, of a world filled with disinformation, a world in which the idea of a chorus of sheep chanting their masters slogans has been twisted to disparage those bold enough to speak out against the fascists. My view of the book has shifted with age and experience. However the genius of Orwell, his vision of the future, remains on point and relevant. Which explains why after all these years the book remains a target for those who would ban or burn it, for the ideas and message are dangerous for it opens eyes and makes people think, not sheep.”

A reader from South Weymouth read *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* by Carson McCullers: “I read this book in high school and came away with a completely different understanding this time. I enjoyed having a different perspective this time.”

A reader from South Grafton read *Children of Dune* by Frank Herbert: “Going into *Children of Dune*, re-reading it over twenty years after first (and last) reading it, was nerve-wracking. Once I got back into the flow of Herbert's writing and storytelling style--including, yes, his navel-gazing philosophizing--I was in! The novel follows Alia, her consort, the Preacher, and the titular children of Dune, Leto and Ghanima. Through these characters, Herbert explores themes of addiction and control, identity and tradition, and religious fanaticism and the use of its influence and power. *Children of Dune* is the novel where Herbert starts to get even more philosophical on ecology, politics and leadership, and culture, and you start to see the "weird" in the latter half of the book that he carries into the subsequent books in the series.”

A reader from Turners Falls read *A child called it* by Dave Pelzer: “I didn’t remember a lot of this from when I was a kid but knew I had read it. Now as an adult who is a paramedic and works for a police department it hit me in soooo many ways.”

A reader from Northampton read *Harry Potter* by Jk Rowling: “Still feel how I did.”

A reader from Reading read *Maus* by Art Spiegelman: “As dark and affecting as when I first read this in college. Now that I am a parent myself, there is an added sadness and horror that I couldn’t have understood before.”

A reader from Northampton read *Way of the Peaceful Warrior* by Dan Millman: “I had been thinking about re-reading this book for a while. I remember reading it as a teenager while training intensely for a sport and it impacted me, but I was thinking that if I were to read it again it wouldn’t have the same impact - I would be more skeptical. I wasn’t even sure it would be worth reading but then I was at an event with Ross Gay and he mentioned the book so I felt like maybe it was worth a re-read. Overall, my

impression was right. The book didn't hit me the same way. Although at times there were moments that caused me to pause and think - consider how to be more present, how to approach stress, and find peace - the story felt kind of "culty." I also felt like there was something more to be desired when discussing the impacts of meditation and ties to the actual history of it versus what felt like general ideas of what Western culture has taken on."

A reader from Hull read *My Brother Sam is Dead* by James Lincoln Collier: "I read this in Middle School (1995-1996) and remember enjoying it at the time, but could not remember anything, other than...well, the title gives the plot away. Still enjoyable overall, though the book uses dialog was more modern of the 70's, and not of the time the book took place. It was much more violent than I remember (which probably is why I liked it at the time)."

A reader from Blandford read *Canyon Winter* by Walt Morey: "In middle school this was a book I read so often that my school librarian gave it to me when I moved on to high school. It is about a fifteen year old boy who's been in a plane crash in rugged mountain country. The pilot was killed in the crash. The boy then eventually follows a deer that leads him to a cabin where an elderly man lives. The man teaches the boy about survival and the importance of the whole eco system in the virgin forest. The boy is rescued in the spring and he goes on to testify before Senate about the hazards of clear cut logging on hills and mountains. My draw as a kid was the idea of living in the wilderness like they did and I didn't recall the land conservation message in the story. That part stands out to me now as I have always had such strong feelings about nature conservation. I think a big part of that came from reading this book at an impressionable age. I still love this book!"

A reader from Sharon read *The Giver* by Lois Lowry: "I recall reading this in elementary school and it was interesting to revisit it."

A reader from Attleboro read *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis: "When I read this book as a child, I did not realize C.S. Lewis also wrote books on religion. Others had said his Chronicles of Narnia series had religious references and undertones and I wanted to re-read them with that in mind. I enjoyed the stories then and I found they were just as good now."

A reader from Belchertown read *Gary Paulson* by Hatchet: "I read this about 20 years ago and remembered very little, but the fact that I remembered I read it meant it stuck with me in some way. I have a terrible memory. I was surprised at the protagonist this time around. Brian was only 13, but he was mentally superior to any 13-year-old I've ever worked with as a counselor. He was able to make connections and form theories many adults today wouldn't be able to reach. I enjoyed the writing style, but I struggled with the believability aspect. I'm not sure my almost 13-year-old stepdaughter would make it in the Canadian wilderness, even though she has learned a great deal about survival and spends loads of time outside. She's mentally much younger than Brian. While I understand that the idea behind it is regressing to what our bodies and minds were originally designed to do and how humans can come up with amazing mentalities and strategies when survival is on the line, I just saw Brian as more of a 16-18-year-old character rather than 13. Enjoyed the read, though!"

A reader from Attleboro read *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens: "I was curious to see if I might feel differently about something I was required to read in high school, so I chose a book I just couldn't get into at that time...A Tale of Two Cities. Fast forward many years, and...I still had a hard time getting into it. My reading choices, understanding, and desire have increased over time, but I found it difficult to read the period-correct terminology, spelling, and ways of speaking from the characters. There were many topics or ideas that were "outdated" or would be seen as non-PC today. Those all made me appreciate that we as a society have improved since the book's 1775 timeframe. On the flip-side, it was disappointing to

read some of the same issues still persist 200+ years later: division of social classes, abuse of power, accepted violence, some people caring only for themselves even when shown how beneficial or rewarding caring for all can be, etc. etc. Overall, I would have to say reading *A Tale of Two Cities* 200+ years after it was written showed me 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times' is still true."

A reader from Pepperell read *Resistance* by Anita Shreeve: "I chose a book that technically I have not fully read in the past. I have TRIED to read this book at least twice in the past and just could NOT get into it. I have read all of Anita Shreeve's other books really enjoyed them. So, I decided to give this one a try again now that I am older perhaps I would appreciate the subject matter more? I found once again it was difficult to get into this title. It was not until I got passed the first 50-60+ pages that I finally found I could get into the main characters and the story. However, it is not a fun, breezy read given the subject matter and found it tough to keep going at times. However, I did ultimately enjoy the story's two main characters and how the book ended."

A reader from Ludlow read *Wired* by Bob Woodward: "I first read this book after John Belushi had died of a drug overdose as I was a big fan of his, I still am. I don't think I feel any different now about the content of the book; I thought then, as I do now, that John Belushi was extremely talented but also extremely misunderstood. I also feel that vices of choice have changed over the decades. People will always struggle with inner demons."

A reader from Worcester read *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman: "I read *The Yellow Wallpaper* for the first time when I was in high school. At the time, I didn't form very many opinions for myself, and I do not recall feeling any type of way about the story. Now reading it, and after experiencing periods of deep depression without help, I see much more in the story. I read the relationship between the narrator and her husband and can see the effects of gaslighting and denying someone's realities and mental health issues- and particularly how gender plays into this. I think about all of the various stories and books that I read in school, without the experiences that I have now, and how I rushed through them to finish rather than sit with them."

A reader from Charlton read *The Outsiders* by S.W. Hinton: "As a parent I related more to Darry's character when reading it, which was not perspective I had reading this as a teenager."

A reader from Reading read *Memoirs of a Geisha* by Arthur Folden: "This is an old favorite of mine. I'm glad I re-read it again. Just love the story and how it was written. Sayuri had such a hard life. She never seemed truly happy. Hatsumomo was always so unkind and mean to her. She did end up getting what she deserved. I think it was the way it was written, and it describes that time period of how she grew up. It just seemed like another world to me."

A reader from Salem read *Sorcery and Cecilia* by Patricia Wrede and Caroline Stevermer: "This is a fun example of the letter game. I enjoyed it years ago and found that I still like it."

A reader from Salem read *The Hunger Games Trilogy* by Suzanne Collins: "I have not read these novels since 2011, when *The Hunger Games* was assigned as my sixth grade summer reading. Then, I read *Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* in December, and I was, once again, fully engrossed in the world of Panem. Reading *The Hunger Games* after reading *Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* gave me such a new appreciation for the world that Collins has created across these three novels. The stories presented in this novel are woven like a spider web, with thin strands connecting to each other, creating a miraculous picture once you step back and take a look at the whole. The way that Collins paralleled Lucy Gray's life with Katniss' was unbelievable! So intricate and compelling, but not so similar that it seemed like the same story twice. Collins could keep writing about Panem for years to come, and I would stay hooked!"

A reader from Leominster read *Harriet the Spy* by Louise Fitzhugh: “This was one of my favorite childhood books. I wondered how it had held up over time. While I don't know how well it would speak to today's kids, reading it again made me realize that I still love it for all the reasons I loved it as a child. It's still too hard to separate myself from the emotions I felt back then, when Harriet helped me through some challenging times. As a children's librarian, I can see why it was considered ground-breaking when it was published. I loved the experience of re-reading it.”

A reader from PEPPERELL read *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth George Speare: “I read this book first when in grade school. Many years later I have developed an interest in the Salem Witch trials and the history of the persecution of witches. Now having read many different stories and done my own research, this book carried a new weight as I read it with a deeper knowledge, breadth and appreciation for this period in history.”

A reader from WAKEFIELD read *The Great Gatsby* by f scott fitzgerald: “I wondered if I would feel differently about this book, bc in high school what I recall is the glitz and glamour of the parties. Now it reads as an absolute indictment of wealth and elitism. But I think the separation of the social classes is even more pronounced now than then- it's unlikely anyone not of the elite would find themselves at Gatsby's party. Favorite scene to me was Nick's reminiscing of the boarding school students traveling home/west for the holidays, in the dusty waiting room of union station in chicago. Innocent, palpable excitement, with no sense of what lies ahead in the years to come. that was my age perspective coming through on this read.”

A reader from Reading read *Animal Farm* by George Orwell: “I haven't read this book since I was about 10 and thought it was just a book about farm animals. Hits different now.”

A reader from Quincy read *Caraval* by Stephanie Garber: “I decided to reread Caraval this year because I remember loving it in high school. I want to finish reading the series, but I couldn't remember enough to dive into the second book. Reading it again was magical, YA fantasies will do that to you! I am very happy I reread it, I will be continuing with the series this year.”

A reader from Chelmsford read *Forever* by Judy Blume: “I read this book last year and I really enjoyed it. Now I have read it again, I think that this book is not very inappropriate for my age because it has some not good scenes in the book. The plot of the book is not a very good one.”

A reader from Wrentham read *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger: “It was my favorite book as a teenager.”

A reader from Tyngsborough read *Dominic* by William Steig: “One of my favorite books as a child and rereading it, I still love it. Steig has a beautiful way of writing and story telling that definitely kept me engaged even as an adult.”

A reader from OXFORD read *Salem's Lot* by Stephen King: “Stil as scary now as it was when I first read it when it was first published.”

A reader from Basking Ridge read *Catcher In The Rye* by J.D Salinger: “Holden Caulfield is an annoying ass.”

A reader from Attleboro read *Betsy - Tacy* by Maud Lovelace: “This book was published in 1940. I read it, and other books in the series, when I was in fourth grade in the early 1960s. My best friend, a redhead like Tacy, also read these books, and we loved the friendship portrayed. We could identify with Betsy and

Tacy's simple and innocent life in a safe neighborhood, walking to each other's house and making our own adventures."

A reader from Quincy read *The Shadow of the Wind* by Carlos Ruiz Zafón: "This is my all-time favorite book, and I try to read it every year or two. Every time, I find something new to appreciate about this love letter to literature."

A reader from Melrose read *The Crucible: A Play in Four Acts* by Arthur Miller: "A fantastic book to read in these strange times. I have different thoughts on this since reading this book in high school."

A reader from Boston read *Don't make me think* by Steve Krug: "Read about 5 years ago and again now!"

A reader from Beverly read *Animal Farm* by George Orwell: "I was more aware of the social injustice in this second reading. It is a complex read."

A reader from Pembroke read *Shade's Children* by Garth Nix: "I read this probably 15 years ago and remember liking it- I know I read it more than once. I enjoyed a lot of Nix's work and this makes me want to go back and read Sabriel, etc. The book held up exactly like it did back then, and it has been long enough that I forgot how it ended, so finding out the ending all over again was fun."

A reader from Foxboro read *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett: "Re-read the book more than 10 years later, and it still sucks me in. The transitions between the different perspectives is flawless and the overall story keeps you entertained and keeps you wanting more."

A reader from Amesbury read *Twelve Shapr* by Janet Evanovich: "An entertaining read, though not as funny as I remembered it."

A reader from Tewksbury read *Illusions of A Reluctant Messiah* by Richard Bach: "I really like this book. It gives you permission to have fun and do what you want yo do. It is also a little dark because at the end the Messiah is shot to death. It is one of my favorite reads, although this time I felt more on the side of responsibility."

A reader from NORTHAMPTON read *1984* by ORWELL GEORGE: "BOOK ABOUT CONTROL, SOMEONE WATCHING YOU, SOME GOOD BUT WANTED TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO JULIA. EVEN THOUGH THERE IS ANOTHER BOOK OUT ABOUT JULIA. 2050 IS A YEAR MENTIONED."

A reader from Amherst read *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* by Betty Smith: "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn was the perfect "read again". I always thought of this book fondly but after reading it again 20 years later I can now say that I have found my favorite book of all time."

A reader from Woburn read *Fig Pudding* by Ralph Fletcher: "I still love this heartbreaking book as much as I did in childhood."

A reader from Dartmouth read *Siddhartha* by Hermann Hesse: "I first read Siddhartha in high school. The book spoke to me as a young person searching for the meaning of life as Siddhartha does. Rereading the book fifty years later was fascinating; it brought back the me I was all those years ago."

A reader from Essex read *The Great Gatsbu* by F. Scott Fitzgerald: "I've always loved the last few lines of this book."

A reader from Greenfield read *Summer of the Monkeys* by Wilson Rawls: "My fifth grade teacher read this to us every day after lunch. As soon as we finished one book she began another. There was no book

report or test or anything just a good book read to a class of 10 year olds for the sake of reading. She is a major reason I love to read. However, I'm not sure what I loved so much about this story. But I remember being disappointed when time was up for the day. The story does not stand up to growing older but the memories associated with it do.”

A reader from Lowell read *Paper Towns* by John Green: “It was unfortunately not as good as I remember :(”

A reader from Wilmington read *Mistborn: Secret History* by Brandon Sanderson: “Enjoyed this book a lot more this time around. I did not understand the Cosmere the first time reading it and thus didn't really like the book, but now having a deeper appreciation for the Cosmere, enjoyed it thoroughly.”

A reader from Dracut read *Upgrade* by Blake Crouch: “I still love this book! It's so exciting, even the second time around it was hard not to read it all in one go again. It's fast paced but detailed. I love everything the author writes so far!”

A reader from Dudley read *The Deep End of the Ocean* by Jacquelyn Mitchard: “This evoked more emotions for me reading it as a mom of 2.”

A reader from Northampton read *The Scarlett Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne: “I definitely think this book is too advanced for 15-16 year olds. Many things were pointed out as "symbolism" when I was younger, but upon a re-read I am not sure if the novel is as intense as it was originally taught to me. I enjoyed it much more this time around.”

A reader from Maynard read *Trixie Belden and the Mystery at Bob-White Cave* by Kathryn Kenny: “My grandmother sent us one of these books each Christmas. I found this one in my mom's house after she passed away. When I was a kid, I enjoyed the different activities and regions of the country explored by the kids. As an adult, the thin plot and stereotyped characters make me wince. I feel especially sorry for Honey, whose only accomplishments are being rich, sewing, and wringing her hands at Trixie's bold exploits.”

A reader from Scituate read *The Bodhran Maker* by John B. Keane: “When I reread the book I was surprised to remember how much people followed each other.”

A reader from Franklin read *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky: “Rereading this book at this time gave me a sadder feeling than the first time I read it, many years ago. Did it sadden me more because I am at a different stage in my life? Or because I know folks who are experiencing mental health struggles similar to those of the characters in the book? I am still glad I chose to revisit this novel. It's a good one.”

A reader from Webster read *Land's End: A Walk in Provincetown* by Michael Cunningham: “I read this book originally in Summer 2020 which was my 2nd summer in P-Town. That 2020 summer was obviously very different than the summer I experienced before and I didn't think I had a good grasp on all the town had to offer. Now that 2024 will be my 6th summer in P-Town, I thought it would be good to revisit this book so I could truly appreciate and relate to the things I read. I loved it!”

A reader from Danvers read *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker: “Many years ago, I started and stopped this book several times. But, I wanted to try again with the new movie release. While the movie was great, the book was certainly better. I loved that the story is told through letters that the sisters write to each other. Alice Walker is a great storyteller.”

A reader from South Hadley read *Steps* by Jerzy Kosinski: “Haunting.”

A reader from Wilmington read *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck: “This was a required reading when I was in high school and I didn't enjoy it. I reread it this month, and my opinion hasn't changed. I didn't enjoy it at all. Hopefully, kids are no longer required to read this!!!”

A reader from Springfield read *Twilight* by Stephanie Meyer: “This was for a while a favorite of mine and now since I have gotten older, I can definitely see the issues that the book has and how my opinions on certain things have changed. I definitely don't love this book as much as I once did, but I can't unfortunately say that I hate it.”

A reader from Dracut read *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck: “I read this book first in high school and for various reasons, did not like it. Too young to appreciate, too much "work". And a teacher who didn't inspire me. But nearly 30 years later, I definitely have matured enough to appreciate. Not to be considered a favorite of mine, but certainly no more despising it.”

A reader from Franklin read *Eragon* by Christopher Paolini: “I loved this book 20 years ago and still do now. I will continue to read the rest of the series this year as it has been a long time. I am amazed by Christopher Paolini's writing abilities and recommend his books to everyone.”

A reader from North Reading read *the perks of being a wallflower* by Stephen Chboski: “This book is one of my favorites, the way it's written and how it portrays SA is really realistic and beautiful in a sad way.”

A reader from Beverly read *The Catcher in the Rye* by JD Salinger: “I cannot believe I thought this book was so insightful when I was 16. Reading it now, 55 years later, it is tedious! Could not finish.”

A reader from Quincy read *The Catcher in the Rye* by JD Salinger: “I read this book in high school and loved it. Now, I very much understand why this is assigned to read while a teen.”

A reader from Hingham read *The Postcard* by Anne Berest: “A fascinating look at generational trauma and what it means to be Jewish. So relevant to today's campus conflicts.”

A reader from Hudson read *The Diary of a Young Girl: The Definitive Edition* by Anne Frank: “Having read this book in high school when I was roughly the age Anne was during her years of hiding, I easily related to the coming-of-age feelings she had about her individuality. Reading her diary, nearly 60 years later, I responded to it in a more global way with a focus on the anti-Semitism that existed then and continues to be prevalent today. The other thing that came to mind was the isolation Anne and her fellow teenagers experienced from their social world. I couldn't help thinking about the isolation teens experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic. Although the pandemic quarantine does not compare to the hatred and violence the Jews experienced, I still wonder how that sense of being cut off from one's peers has affected our teenagers' development.”

A reader from Springfield read *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams: “The Hitchhiker's Guide tells the story of Arthur Dent whose house gets demolished to make way for a byway and, in the process, gets saved by his Betelgeusian friend, Ford Prefect. Ford uses his electronic thumb to hitch a ride on a passing hostile Vogon spaceship just as the Earth is demolished to make way for a hyperspatial expressway. With incredible improbability, they are saved by galactic president Zaphod Beeblebrox and his companion Trillian on their stolen ship, The Heart of Gold. From there they travel to the mythical planet-building planet of Magrathea, where they find out the story of the answer to the meaning of life and Earth's place in devising the BIG QUESTION. I bought a first edition of this book at a tag sale when I was in my twenties. I thought it was silly and fun and bloody brilliant. To this day my husband and I joke that the true meaning of life and the reason why we are happy is 42. I wondered if, twenty-five years later, I would find the book as amusing and funny as I did then. To be honest, I think I

found it more clever and entertaining reading it now at fifty-two. Some of the commentary and quips which I may have missed with my younger intellect have tickled my older and wiser self. As a result, I have been inspired to take my towel and my Guide and read the rest of Adams's witty series."

A reader from North Brookfield read *Throne of Glass* by Sarah J Maas: "Obviously, this book was read for the challenge in January. I read this book when I was a young teen. I'm now in my early twenties. I still enjoyed the plot of the book but I am unsure if I enjoy Sarah's writing style now that I am older. To me, it is very subpar compared to what I read nowadays. I chose this book since it gets a lot of hype on TikTok. I do not feel like I am missing out anymore..."

A reader from Longmeadow read *The Amber Spyglass* by Philip Pullman: "Finished."

A reader from New Bedford read *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor: "Read it 40 years ago. Very different perspective on this family in MS. Now as an adult and parent, I related more to the adults in the book. I was conflicted on the kids. Proud of their pride and sense of justice. Fearfully the consequences they may suffer without fully understanding why. Still a wonderful book."

A reader from Pocasset read *People of the Book* by Geraldine Brooks: "This is one of my favorite books and it's been a long time since I've read it. As I revisited this literary gem, I found a deeper appreciation for Geraldine Brooks' intricate storytelling and meticulous research. The novel's exploration of the Sarajevo Haggadah becomes even more poignant upon a second read, revealing hidden layers and connections that I had overlooked initially. Brooks' ability to weave together disparate narratives across centuries showcases her masterful storytelling. Overall, I enjoyed the opportunity to travel through history once again with *The People of the Book!*"

A reader from Springfield read *Death Be Not Proud* by John Gunther: "I read this originally in high school and 30 years later, it definitely hits different. After experiencing grief myself, I was able to see things from a different perspective and empathize with the author."

A reader from Agawam read *Fences* by August Wilson: "I read this play my senior year of high school and remember not really liking it that much. Reading it a second time as an adult with a broader perspective, I have a much greater appreciation of the play."

A reader from Boston read *Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain: "Reading it with my younger brother brought back memories of when I read it for the first time."

A reader from Salem read *Battle Royale* by Koushun Takami: "I last read this book in high school, so it's been nearly a decade, and I remember liking it when I read it back then as well. Upon a reread, it's still a very exciting book! It's a long book, but it reads really fast, and there's a lot of dramatic irony, which I'm always a big fan of. It was also interesting seeing how many scenes I remembered from my first read all those years ago too."

A reader from Wrentham read *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller: "I read *The Crucible* back when I was in high school and did not like it at all. It was very surprising to me that I remembered the whole story as I reread it. I must have been more interested in it back then than I thought I was. It is still a disturbing story but an interesting one."

A reader from Spencer read *Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell: "I had to read this book in high school English class. A chapter a class. I was so interested in it that I just kept reading it. By the time the term was done, I had read it 4 times."

A reader from Lowell read *City of Glass* by Paul Auster: “Read this sometime in the past decade and didn't quite understand the author's intent. Having now read it again, find that I am still in the dark about what is going on, but intrigued enough to read the other two novels in the trilogy.”

A reader from Rochester read *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho: “An individual on a spiritual journey. I did not realize the the references in the Bible or Koran when I read it many years ago.”

A reader from Salem read *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens: “I read this when I was in high school, and I don't think it resonated much with me at the time. I've been reading a lot of Dickens lately and enjoying it, so I thought this month's challenge was a good excuse to revisit this novel. What strikes me is that there's a significant portion of the plot that we avoided discussing in class, maybe appropriately so, given that we were a group of 13- and 14-year-olds. It was interesting and gratifying to read it with a new (oh fine, older) perspective.”

A reader from Mashpee read *Mrs. Dalloway* by Woolf, Virginia: “I read this as a young adult around 2007 or so and liked it, but didn't think it was anything super special. Reading it now I just saw Woolf's understanding and sympathy for people, for their aspirations and how they view themselves, and how those perceptions of self and the reality of their lives can contrast or even be in conflict. I saw her adult characters subsume themselves to the demands of their surrounding societies and compromise elemental aspects of themselves to build a life in their current worlds. And yet, they still kept various connections alive. It all really hit home for me and made me feel more understood.”

A reader from Duxbury read *The Sinister Mystery of the Mesmerizing Girl* by Theodora Goss: “The Extraordinary Adventures of the Athena Club was one of my favorite series a few years ago, and I decided to reread the series to get myself out of a reading slump. The Sinister Mystery of the Mesmerizing Girl is the last book in the series and it was a fun and funny and frivolous as I remembered! I enjoyed every minute of the series, but was reminded that I still really wish the author had written more to the series.”

A reader from Arlington read *Vector Prime* by RA Salvatore: “I read this book, and the whole series, back in college, and I've been hoping it would be as good as I remembered... Maybe book 2 is where it really finds its footing?”

A reader from Middleboro read *The Giver* by Lois Lowry: “I read this book in middle school and really liked it at the time so I was excited to read it again. I still really enjoyed it the second time and am sure thought about it differently than I had at the time.”

A reader from Hanover read *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* by J. K. Rowling, Jack Thorne, and John Tiffany: “I read this book the first time before I became a mom. This time I got to read it with my son, who recently became a Harry Potter fan! It's wonderful to get to share the book with my him. I understand Harry's and Draco's love for their sons better than the first time I read the book now that I have my own son.”

A reader from Brooklyn read *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho: “I have never been able to finish this book, and I've tried many many times. Finally I worked through it, and I'm so glad that I did, because I really appreciated the story in such a different and more fulfilling way.”

A reader from Ashland read *Beowulf* by Unknown, translated by Seamus Heaney: “We read this in high school, or rather, what I now realize is a highly abridged version. I had a better sense of the poetry, themes, and history of the work now. Also, there was a dragon! Probably won't read this again but happy to have finished it this month.”

A reader from Brookline read *The Lightning Thief (Percy Jackson Book 1)* by Rick Riordan: “For being a short, quickly-paced children’s book, I really struggled to get through this novel. I loved this series in middle school, but something about it did not capture my attention now. The action scenes were great, as they were only a few pages each. However, between every fight scene was lengthy disposition about greek mythology that brought the energy down.”

A reader from dover foxcroft read *Watership Down* by Richard Adams: “As an older reader, I didn't love this book as much as I thought I did. The absent of strong female characters was something I hadn't thought about as younger reader many, many years ago. Hazel was a great character, however. Loved how he was open to making friends with all creatures.”

A reader from Rochester read *Harriet the Spy* by Louise Fitzhugh: “I loved this book as a kid! I was a little nervous that rereading it as an adult would ruin my memories of it, but thankfully that was not the case. I didn't remember how negative and even cruel she was when writing about other people, so that was a little surprising and yes, disappointing, and yet, I still found myself admiring her refusal to conform to anybody's expectations that she be anything or anyone other than herself. She may not have a lot of friends or close connections to people despite spying on them so closely, but she does come back to her two true friends at the end.”

A reader from Pittsfield read *Hamnet* by Maggie O’Farrell: “I picked this book up years ago when it was first written and I could not get into it at all which is why I choose it for my January reading challenge. This time I loved it. It is beautifully written. The prose, the language. I devoured it this time. I cried. I enjoyed the story of Shakespeare’s wife and family. I love how he is described and yet never actually named. Fabulous book!”

A reader from Chelmsford read *Grandfather Twilight* by Barbara Berger: “Grandfather Twilight makes more sense to me now. When I was little I thought the pearls can't grow or float up into the sky, but now that I understand it's my imagination and the pearl represents the moon.”

A reader from Spencer read *Go Ask Alice* by Anonymous: “First time rereading since high school. I don't know how I ever thought this was real or true. It reads as Mr. Mackey saying 'Drugs are bad, mmmkay' There are so many other actually true stories that are actual cautionary tales out there. Leave this one on the shelf.”

A reader from BEVERLY read *Emma* by Jane Austen: “I love Jane Austen. I've read *Pride and Prejudice*, *Persuasion*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Mansfield Park* over and over. I have seen just about every film adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. HOWEVER. I cannot stand *Emma*. Don't get me wrong. Jane is masterful. So masterful that every time I try to read *Emma*, I have to give up. I can't stand her. She's a manipulative, entitled little beast. I tried re-reading *Emma* for January. I couldn't get very far. So I tried an audio book. I got a little further, but I had to give up. I believe this is a sign of a good author: being able to make characters so believable that you think they are real. *Emma* is not someone I'd want in my living room, and reading about her makes it feel like she is in my living room. I had to disinvite her. Again. I tried Mass Reading Challenge. I'm moving on to February.”

A reader from Bolton read *Brining Down the Duke* by Evie Dunmore: “I loved this book a few years ago - but basically hated the followups. So I was curious if I was wrong on book #1... Sadly, I was.”

A reader from Brewster read *The Samurai’s Garden* by Gail Tsukiyama.: “I loved this book. A very touching story, I have read this book 3 times and recommended it to many friends.”

A reader from Wilmington read *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte: “Hated it when read in high school. Still don’t love it, but it was better than remembered.”

A reader from Belchertown read *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles: “I read this book in high school and figured I would like it more this time around, reading it with an adult mindset. I ended up liking it much less. The racism disappointed me. It wasn’t as queer as I remembered, and I think there are just so many better coming of age classics out there that can be taught in schools.”

A reader from Wakefield read *American Gods* by Neil Gaiman: “I read this in college when I was really interested in mythology and religion. I re-read it this time with more of an eye toward the commentary on American culture and was able to reflect on how the culture has (and hasn’t) changed in the last 20 years.”

A reader from Holyoke read *The Sign of the Twisted Candles* by Carolyn Keene: “I never reread books, so this was an interesting way to start the challenge. It was fascinating to reread this book that I had devoured unquestioningly at summer camp when I was probably 10 years old. The writing does seem a bit dated and over-explanatory to my adult eyes, but I can still feel that childlike excitement.”

A reader from Mashpee read *The Yearling* by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings: “I don’t remember reading this book in school, but seemed to be a popular title the years I was in school. This is definitely a coming of age book. It was sweet how Penny would allow Jody to play and wander off as he knew what it was like to grow up and not be able to do those things. It’s interesting to me that Jody wanted something for himself, to care for. I remember when I was a child that I wanted my own pet. Not the dogs my folks had, but something that loved me and me it. Even though life is very different now, there are still things that are similar in childhood regardless of the time. This story was bittersweet for me. We follow Jody through a year or so of his childhood & at the end Jody has grown and left childhood behind. We see how he has experienced love, respect for his father, loss, loss of Grandma Hutto and Oliver when they moved away and loss of his pet, disappointment, and hate. This story does not have a sad or happy ending in my opinion, just an ending that is a matter of fact, of how life really is.”

A reader from Peabody read *Misfit* by Gulman: “Soul searching read.”

A reader from Quincy read *Impulse* by Ellen Hopkins: “It has been close to a decade since I last read *Impulse*. It has been one of the books I tell people about when they ask what my favorites are. The novel itself is good, but the ending is still as shocking and amazing as the first time I read it on subsequent re-reads.”

A reader from Weymouth read *Celebrating a Christ Centered Christmas* by Emily Belle Freeman: “I greatly enjoyed rereading *Celebrating A Christ Centered Christmas* by Emily Belle Freeman. I was reminded of the different aspects of the characters in Luke 2.”

A reader from Montague read *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho: “I read this book probably 20 years ago when I was on the brink of a midlife crisis of sorts. *The Alchemist* is all about finding your Personal Legend and pursuing your dreams despite the many obstacles you will encounter (including self-generated obstacles). Now that I am in my 60s, I can agree that the path is not obvious and you will undoubtedly suffer in your efforts. I think I expected that to be true when I first read the book, but I hadn’t lived it yet.”

A reader from Springfield read *Coraline* by Neil Gaiman: “I am participating in the #massbookreadingchallenge. It’s a new year! January’s challenge/book is a book you read years ago that you may feel differently about now. I chose *Coraline*. When I was younger it was one of the books my

brother and I read. I still found it a little boring though creepy. I hope to watch the movie soon to compare.”

A reader from Tyngsboro read *The Beautiful* by Renée Ahdieh: “When I first read the book I thought it was creepy and I had to stop but I picked it back up and I thought that it was really well written and well thought out.”

A reader from New Bedford read *Mrs. Mike* by Benedict and Nancy Freedman: “For the January challenge I chose a book I read in 7th or 8th grade. I remembered that I enjoyed it but didn’t remember too much about it. I’m so glad to have revisited it. It’s about a young girl who marries a Canadian Mountaineer in the late 1800’s and the struggles and joys of life. I found it so meaningful reading it now as a middle aged mother and I wonder what my middle school aged self truly thought about it.”

A reader from CHICOPEE read *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini: “I reread this book because it was a book that stuck with me and made me grateful that I don’t live in India during the times of the Taliban and their harsh punishments. Also women are treated like second class citizens and required to cover up from head to toe.”

A reader from Fall River read *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J.K. Rowling: “Just a magical and addicting as I remember!”

A reader from Oxford read *Gone baby gone* by Dennis Lehane: “I read this book originally about 20 years ago and thought it was great. When the movie came out I remember saying. The book was much better. My son brought up the movie the other day and I decided I would read it again. Wow just as powerful as the first time. Now I want to recreate more of his books again.”

A reader from Roslindale read *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C. S. Lewis: “I reread a childhood favorite but with fresh eyes. As a girl, I never appreciated the story is an allegory of Christ’s resurrection. I am now reading the other Narnia chronicles in order of publication date!”

A reader from East Otis read *Me Talk Pretty One Day* by David Sedaris: “Read this book years ago and have ready every David Sedaris book since. It was a fun re-read.”

A reader from Providence read *Memoirs of a Geisha* by Arthur Golden: “An enjoyable read.”

A reader from Wakefield read *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury: “This was a great idea for a challenge. I like to revisit books I read in high school because at that time it was just a rush to get through. However, I didn’t like this one then, and didn’t really enjoy it now either. But I respect that the story was pretty creative and full of lessons.”

A reader from Somerville read *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen: “I stumbled on a few remixed versions of this classic novel in the last few months, so I was delighted to return to this original text for January’s reread prompt. Lizzie Bennet remains a delightful heroine as she navigates the social triumphs and failings of her silly sisters while realizing her own quick judgements were in need of growth and examination.”

A reader from Amesbury read *High Fidelity* by Nick Hornby: “Rob, the main character, is much more frustrating than I remember.”

A reader from Attleboro read *The giver* by Lois Lowry: “I read this book originally as a young teenager and I didn’t see how awful the community was. The community tried to eliminate hatred and selfishness by suppressing feelings, even making color and weather be obsolete. Reading it again as an adult was

really eye opening of how terrible this community actually was. Wanting to euthanize a newchild simply because he wouldn't sleep through the night, because Gabe was different from the rest of the children. We should be celebrating everyone's differences not releasing them because of it. It made me see how governments really do control us and if they don't like you they can simply get rid of you. I had a complete change of mind from what I saw this book as when I was younger.”

A reader from Chelmsford read *The House in the Cerulean Sea* by T.J. Klune: “Loved it in 2020 and still love it now!”

A reader from Wilbraham read *The Salt House* by Lisa Duffy: “The book takes place in Maine, and after reading it in 2024, I’ve realized that I have visited that state several more times and have a clearer understanding now of the area and the coastal towns. I also note how much more of an impact this book has made on me because I’ve met people who have lost a child, and back when the novel came out, I hadn’t.”

A reader from Hull read *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding: “I read this book in High School (2002) and really enjoyed it at the time. Re-reading it as a 40 year old man...it's fine. It's very pessimistic about young boys in general, and Piggy does not deserve the constant berating he gets from the boys. I still enjoyed the surreal experience/conversation Simon has with ‘The Lord of the Flies.’ Overall, I enjoyed rereading it, but did not have the same impact it did when I first read it.”

A reader from Lowell read *My Sister’s Keeper* by Jodi Picoult: “I read this as a teen and fell in love with it. Then I watched the movie and was furious about the changes. This time, I did that in reverse and I’m in love with the book all over again.”

A reader from Dracut read *Quentin’s* by Maeve Binchy: “One of my favorites from Maeve Binchy! Her ability to intertwine characters from many of her other books is a talent not seen often. Having read this book more than 15 years ago, the effect that the main characters relationship had and the outcome was something that seemed romantic at the time. Now that I am married and have my own children, I empathize more with the wife of the male character.”

A reader from Dartmouth read *Hawthorne* by Nathialle: “Thought I had read this book in high school but apparently I either was part of a discussion or only learned what I knew from others who had read it. I was surprised but more frustrated by that lengthy chapter one that went on forever discussing puritanism in Massachusetts. I actually gave up on the written book and was able to complete it due to an audio book. I was very surprised by the ending.”

A reader from Berkley read *Brian song* by William Blinn: “I loved this book when I was a kid. I reread it as an adult and I still love it. I was in a puddle of tears then and now.”

A reader from Beverly read *What is a Family?* by Edith Schaeffer: “We got this book as wedding present, so I read it 46 years ago or so, and it didn't really seem applicable because we waited 7 years before having children, and by then I'd forgotten about the book. It was interesting to reread it now, from the perspective of a grandparent. I thought there was a lot of wisdom in some of the chapters, despite how dated parts of it seemed.”

A reader from Hudson read *Shiloh* by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor: “Interesting to reread this book as an adult. It had me thinking about animal cruelty, yes, but also so much more - cycles of violence, moral decisions about lying, breaking the law, and helping those in need, socioeconomic factors, and regional cultures.”

A reader from Hadley read *Tales of the Unexpected* by Roald Dahl: “Roald Dahl was a favorite author of mine in childhood, and when I started reading his fiction for adults, I was fascinated and a little horrified. I have more of a taste for horror in fiction now, so I enjoyed how masterfully he draws out some disturbing or suspenseful scenes during this reread. I'm now starting a Roald Dahl biography by Matthew Dennison.”

A reader from Wakefield read *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee: “This book made teenage me fall in love with reading and I still think it's one of the finest books ever written. Scout Finch is my favorite narrator and Atticus is a true hero: an average man who volunteers to take on the burden of doing the right thing when others are unable or unwilling to.”

A reader from Braintree read *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger: “I found this to be a very depressing story of a young man's entry into adulthood while not wanting to leave his childhood behind.”

A reader from Northampton read *Old Friends* by Tracey Kidder: “I first tried reading this book over 20 years ago. The characters did not interest me and I could not relate to the story . I now have more thoughts about what it means to be very old . I have seen assisted living and nursing homes with loved ones which resonates in the stories in *Old Friends*.”

A reader from North Dighton read *Annotated Lovecraft* by H.P. Lovecraft: “I first read Lovecraft's fiction in middle school and loved it. Though I still appreciate his ability to craft a story, it's hard to look past the obvious prejudices that weren't apparent to my younger self.”

A reader from Harwich read *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury: “Published in 1951, *Fahrenheit 451* described a dystopian world in which books were burned, knowledge was unnecessary - even worthless, and entertainment was a drug. I read this novel over 55 years ago, believing this would never, could never, be. Re-reading the book today, I am disheartened to see how close we have come...”

A reader from Orleans read *Dune* by Frank Herbert: “stopped dead in the middle many years ago. Perhaps this time around will grab my attention!”

A reader from Ludlow read *On the Beach* by Neville Shute: “Read 50 or more years ago. Back then, futuristic but not ‘real,’ sci-fi but years (and life experience) away from today. More...sobering given 2024 political landscape!”

A reader from Wakefield read *Catch of the day* by Kristin Higgins: “I read this book before but am excited to read it again.”

A reader from Rindge read *Rebecca* by Daphne DuMaurier: “This is my favorite book of of all time, and I love rereading it.”

A reader from Georgetown read *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi: “When I first read this book, I concentrated on the author and his illness. This read I looked at the doctor’s perspective and how difficult it must be for them to treat cancer patients. This must be so challenging. . As I get older, I am watching a lot of my friends go through cancer treatments. Some are able to fight this disease and others succumb to the dreadful cancer. My utmost respect for all the doctors, nurses and caretakers.”

A reader from Ludlow read *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles: “I read *A Separate Peace* in middle school for class. For years I said it was one of my favorite books I had to read for school. I decided it would be fitting to re-read the novel as my January book as it has been nearly two decades since I read it. The first few chapters felt slow-pace, and I had a difficult time focusing on the story. As I kept reading, the pace improved, and I thoroughly enjoyed re-reading the book.”

A reader from Santa Cruz read *Salvador* by Joan Didion: “I read this book years ago. Just reread it after recently spending quite a bit of time in El Salvador teaching English. Most of what she says was true about the country then is still true now. Great stories!”

A reader from Burlington read *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin: “This was more devastating as an adult, especially as a mother. It makes me think more about the ways that we give up ourselves as we grow older, as society dictates.”

A reader from Newton read *Percy Jackson: the lightning thief* by Rick Riordan: “I first read this book probably 10-15 years ago. I loved it for its humor and adventure. It’s fun to take mythical creatures and put them in the modern world. I still enjoyed the book though I may have outgrown it somewhat. Really enjoying the series on Disney Plus.”

A reader from Springfield read *Darkly Dreaming Dexter* by Jeff Lindsay: “I initially read this book in high school and really enjoyed it as a new thriller/horror reader; however, this time I find myself not as entranced with it as I once was.”

A reader from Worcester read *When The Emperor Was Divine* by Julie Otsuka: “This book was assigned reading in college, and I got busy with classes and work and never finished it. I chose this for my January book because it had always seemed important to me to read. The beginning of the book that I made it through in college held no comparison to how heart wrenching and impactful this book actually was and I am glad that that I chose to pick it up again.”

A reader from MILLERS FALLS read *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee: “This is the first time I've tried the audio version of this book. I'm so glad I experienced it this way. I had many of the same feelings I did reading this book many times in the past, but now there is the additional feelings that come with a better understanding of white saviorism. I'm still enraged, heart broken, and comforted by life in Maycomb. It's just more complicated now.”

A reader from Dracut read *Sirens of Titan* by Kurt Vonnegut: “I remember reading this in high school (for fun) and thinking it was so serious and philosophical. Re-reading it, it's still philosophical, but definitely not serious. I remember writing an essay in English class where I mentioned this book, and now I don't have the faintest idea what I could have mentioned about it. Still a really good book, though.”

A reader from Brookline read *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C. S. Lewis: “Even better than I remember, especially reading it with my own child!”

A reader from Northfield read *1984* by George Orwell: “I have read this book several times as you can see from the staining. but never has it hit me like it did this time, which is why i chose it. wow just wow. it actually feels like this country is becoming big brother.”

A reader from Mashpee read *A is for Alibi* by Sue Grafton: “I decided to re-read Sue Grafton's entire Alphabet series to kick off 2024 and began on the 2nd of January with "A is for Alibi" (I'm up to K by mid-month). What a fun adventure for a gloomy January! One of my favorite books in the entire series, "A is for Alibi" begins with the murder of Laurence Fife, a prominent lawyer, and the conviction of his wife, Nikki, for the crime. Eight years later, Nikki hires Kinsey Millhone to uncover the real killer. One can't help but adore Kinsey, the sassy private investigator located in the fictional town of Santa Teresa (based on Santa Barbara, California), as she sleuths through the twisting plot of murder and deceit. A stellar start to the Alphabet series, "A is for Alibi" has a gripping storyline that weaves suspense and humor into the fabric of the story, making this book a delightful and thrilling read. Grafton's writing is

crisp and engaging, bringing to life the sun-drenched streets of Santa Teresa with vivid descriptions and beautiful detail.”

A reader from Dedham read *Death Comes as the End* by Agatha Christie: “Death Comes as the End is one of Christie's historical mysteries set in ancient Egypt, which is different from her usual contemporary mystery novels. I read this in middle school over 20 years ago and decided to read it again to see if I felt different about it now. As a child I didn't pick up on the slavery in the novel. It was unsettling reading about the family's slaves because I didn't remember it being in the novel as a child. Christie also makes it a point to say they were black slaves as if black people in Egypt could not be part of the freed Egyptian population. As we know now, that is not the case and slavery in ancient times was not based on skin color. I am not one to re-read books that I have already read, but I might do that with books I read as a child to see if there are things I missed.”

A reader from Boston read *Travels with Charley* by Steinbeck: “Read this in high school- after *Grapes of Wrath* - because I had a dog named Charley. Read it again now that I'm retired and saw all the geopolitical, socioeconomic and racial interactions. Had no recollection of that! It also prompted me to read "Dogging Steinbeck" by Bill Steigerwald who retraced Steinbeck's trip 50 years later.”

A reader from Montague read *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain: “I read this last in about 1975. I was much more conscious of the casual racism throughout and understand better why African Americans would find it difficult to read. Twain was clearly confronting slavery and white entitlement and was opposed to both, but it was difficult to hear how engrained it was in society.”

A reader from Dartmouth read *The Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger: “I have not read that book in about 45 years. I found it interesting how when I was younger I could relate to some of Holden Caulfield's assessments of human nature and now as an older adult I can recognize it as mental illness. I found it to be terribly sad but I was relieved at the end when hopefully, he is finally getting help for his illness.”

A reader from Attleboro read *Meg Mackintosh and The Mystery in the Locked Library* by Landon, Lucinda: “Re-read a children's mystery novel that I read in elementary school.”

A reader from Woburn read *Lord Of the Flies* by William Golding: “I chose this book because I remember reading it in 10th grade and not liking it so much. I wanted to one either figure out why I didn't like it originally and two see if I liked it this time around. Well I did not like it because the writing seems chaotic to me. I get that it represents the craziness in the story but it was a bit confusing. I will say unfortunately I still did not like it. The representation of the breakdown of society is great just not the style I enjoy reading.”

A reader from Beverly read *Gift From The Sea* by Anne Morrow Lindbergh: “In 1955 Anne Lindbergh wrote “modern communication loads us with more problems than the human frame can carry. My life cannot implement in action the demands of all the people to whom my heart responds.” She goes on to tell her readers that we must decide how we will live an authentic life while making time for others. We cannot help everyone, but we can help someone and we must do so. When I first read this book in 2004, I found that Anne Lindbergh proposed many helpful suggestions for living a good life. Now, twenty years later, in 2024 her ideas still resonate with me.”

A reader from North Attleboro read *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift: “Read this book as a kid. Thought I'd have a greater appreciation for it now as an adult 60 years later, but I found it devoid of any

real action and wondered how it could still be considered a classic. Had to google its satire to understand the intent of the author to his contemporary readers. Wasn't really worth a second read."

A reader from Quincy read *Night* by Elie Wiesel: "I gave this book to my 12yr old nephew. I decided to read it again myself and potentially try to see it from his perspective. This approach did make certain parts of this powerful story feel different to me this time. I think you could read this account over and over and be impacted differently each time. Such an important read."

A reader from WEST YARMOUTH read *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood: "I read this book in 1985, thinking it was a haunting, terrifying view of a world that could never exist. In 2024, I realized it is a haunting, terrifying view of a world that could exist in some forms... As far as characters, writing, story, plotline, I loved it as much as I did the first time. I am just seeing it through different eyes. One part of Gilead that I didn't notice my first read through was that our environmental abuse was the root cause of most of the issues; a shame we haven't yet learned to be better stewards of our planet."

A reader from Berkley read *Still Alice* by Lisa Genova: "I read this book originally when I began as an OTR. Reading now, I am considering how my patients and their families may feel. I enjoyed how the book was told from Alice's perspective and how her relationship with her youngest daughter changed."

A reader from Braintree read *S.E. Hinton* by The Outsiders: "It was enjoyable to revisit this book about 25 years or so after required reading in middle school. I appreciate that the author wrote the book when they were a teenager."

A reader from Hopedale read *night road* by Kristin Hannah: "Read this when I was 29 and now I'm 42 - with this book about teen drunk driving and forgiveness, and now having 2 step teens of my own, it definitely hit my emotions in a different way than when I was 29 and no kids!"

A reader from Charlton read *Ramona Forever* by Beverly Cleary: "What a fun trip down memory lane! It was very cool to reflect on the ways that certain teaching from this book series are still with me."

A reader from Centerville read *If you tell* by Gregg Olson: "He writes a tragedy in a way that kept me going."

A reader from North Billerica read *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton: "I read the book when I was in middle/high school and watched the movie and LOVED it. I must have watched the movie 20 times. I was curious to read it as an adult. I enjoyed it still and was reminded of the basic theme - don't judge a book by its cover."

A reader from Dudley read *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens: "This was a more recent re read! I read this one in mid 2019. Reading it now as a teacher, I wish students read more modern, recent lit such as this one in school."

A reader from Northampton read *Garden of Shadows* by V. C. Andrews: "I had other ideas for a book to reread. Then I was in the library, looking for something else in the A section, when the many series of VC Andrews caught my eye. I started flipping through them to see what I remembered, and I just decided I had to get one. It was just as trashy and smutty as I remembered! I also discovered that several of the books are now Lifetime movies, which are also not very good, but I still watched them!"

A reader from belmont read *Frog and Toad (all 4 books)* by Arnold Lobel: "Something i read growing up, but i watched a semi-documentary on youtube last fall ("Frog and Toad: The Philosophy of Simple Living") while I was really going through the wringer. decided to reread and it's definitely something I appreciate a lot more as an adult."

A reader from Lowell read *Nimona* by ND Stevenson: “I first read *Nimona* when it was released in print form in 2015. With the film recently released, I decided to re-read it. I thoroughly enjoyed it again! I'm glad my initial positive opinion has not changed. I look forward to watching the movie.”

A reader from Andover read *Ray Burnbury* by Fahrenheit 451: “I had to read this book in high-school I did not like reading it back then. This time I wanted to know more.”

A reader from Chelmsford read *Ethan Frome* by Edith Wharton: “I hated this novel when forced to read it in high school. I refused to even consider teaching it as a high school English teacher. I guess, rereading it 50 years after my first painful reading, I have matured and lived long enough to tolerate the characters' issues and not loathe them. Still not a favorite but better than I had originally felt about it.”

A reader from Franklin read *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez: “I read this book a few years ago and just didn't love the magical realism and surreal storytelling. But I thought I'd give it a try after watching *Encanto* 1000 times with my son and while I still don't think this is my favorite genre, I did appreciate the story and what Márquez was trying to do a lot more this time around!”

A reader from Burlington read *A Walk To Remember* by Nicholas Sparks: “I read this book many years ago, before having children of my own, so I was interested to see how I related to Landon's mother and Jamie's father this time around. The first time, I remember crying and feeling so sad about the story. This time, it was equally as sad, but I felt differently. I felt as though their parents supported them as best they could and allowed for their wishes to be met, even though they may not have been exactly what the parents envisioned for their children. Interesting for me to go back to this one and probably wouldn't have if it wasn't for this awesome reading challenge! :) Thank you for organizing this!”

A reader from somerville read *The Lovely Bones* by Alice Sebold: “Didn't hit the same way as when I read it when I was young.”

A reader from SOUTH YARMOUTH read *1984* by George Orwell: “The last time I read this book was in 1970, and everything seemed fantastical and impossible. Reading it again in 2024, I found it more frightening, given the developments in technology and the political climate that we live in today.”

A reader from North Attleboro read *Lightning-Struck Heart* by TJ Klune: “This book is so sweet and funny! Definitely a comfort read of mine:) It is a great choice for the LGBTQIA community and great for a lover of silly fantasy!”

A reader from Shrewsbury read *Ethan Frome* by Edith Wharton: “I read this book in high school and vaguely remembered it but recently saw it on a list of books you should read as an adult, which is what made me pick it up. It is a short read, and what struck me the most was the setting. The descriptions of winter in Massachusetts felt so real that it was “cold” reading this and provided a somber background to a tragic story.”

A reader from Boston read *Aristotle & Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* by Benjamin Alire Sáenz: “I feel like this book is timeless, and its themes can be applied to you no matter what stage in life you're in. I reread this book almost every year for that reason! When I first read it the summer before high school, I resonated deeply with Aristotle's feelings of loneliness and struggle to connect with his many identities. Reading it now in college, the book still has a significant impact on me, but in different ways. I find Ari and Dante's unique relationships with their parents meaningful, and offers me a lens to look at my relationships and be kinder to my family.”

A reader from Springfield read *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho: “Still as inspirational as ever. Glad I was able to pick this up again to read. Santiago's story of following his personal legend and all the things he learns in pursuit of following his heart, always pulls at my heart strings.”

A reader from Weston read *The Book With No Pictures* by B.J Novak: “This book was good because it made me laugh. Also, my favorite was when they made up a song and it was very funny.”

A reader from Belchertown read *Macbeth* by Shakespeare: “Works of Shakespeare were high school required reading so I read them in that context. An optional choice this time around decades later; it was OK but didn't overwhelm me.”

A reader from Weston read *Goodnight Goodnight Construction Site* by Sherri Duskey Rinker/Tom Lichtenheld: “It is a cute story about the machines going to bed.”

A reader from Pembroke read *Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut: “I read this in High School many years ago when I did not have the capacity to appreciate it.”

A reader from Erving read *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C. S. Lewis: “Long ago, we read this with our kids as a fun and entertaining book. Rereading it now, knowing the Christian meanings behind it, gave me a whole new view of the book. And, yes, it is still a fun entertaining book either way!”

A reader from Berkley read *The Notebook* by Nicholas Sparks: “Still just as lovely as I remember!”

A reader from Gloucester read *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez: “First read this book in the 1970's when so many of my friends and acquaintances also read it. It blew me away then and I always regarded it as a masterpiece. Rereading it now confirms my estimation of it. I recognized many of the powerful images in it after 40 years. And with 40 years added to my age, I feel so much more for the aging characters.”

A reader from Attleboro read *Of mice and Men* by John Steinbeck: “I read this in high school, and I still feel the same.”

A reader from Spencer read *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley: “I thought very similar to when I read this more than 25 years ago. The message is heavy handed but it's a classic so worth reading. Also what is with that ending?”

A reader from Wakefield read *The Crucible* by Nathaniel Hawthorne: “I read this in school years ago, and wanted to revisit it now that I have: a) more life experience, and b) an interest in mass hysteria movements. As a student, I took it very literally to be about the Salem Witch Trials. With this life experience, I found it a chilling allegory for mass hysteria and the dangers of a hive mind.”

A reader from Andover read *The Summer I Turned Pretty* by Jenny Han: “Read first 3 years ago but wanted to read it again after the show came out to see how it differs from the show.”

A reader from Uxbridge read *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston: “It was a very different experience reading the book now versus high school. More appreciation for the development of the main character. Ultimately cannot say I like the book more now though.”

A reader from Plainville read *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway: “I first read this my freshman year of high school, which was 30 years ago. I remember being bored by it. Rereading it now was definitely a different experience, and one where I could appreciate the writing more.”

A reader from Ashburnham read *The Pictures of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde: “This was a great classic to read. The plot twists were shocking and highly entertaining. A great show of vanity and selfishness encompassed in a book. I would recommend for others to read and enjoy.”

A reader from Medway read *The Great Gatsby* by F Scott Fitzgerald: “I reread this every few years, since I never read it in high school. I forget each time how sad it is.”

A reader from Arlington read *Player Piano* by Kurt Vonnegut: “I first read this book when I was struggling to find a job during the 2008 recession, and it was a really intense emotional experience for me. I chose this book for the challenge to see how it would hold up for me today when I am more established in my career, the themes of machines replacing jobs have become even more relevant, and labor unions are regaining their popularity. I've reread some other Vonnegut works in the last few years and found that they generally resonate with me a lot less now than they did in my 20s. This holds true of *Player Piano*, but it is still a solid work.”

A reader from Newton Highlands read *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald: “I hated it in high school, and my teacher told me, “wait until you're older.” She was right! I understood and appreciated it so much more this time around.”

A reader from Boston read *The Queen's Gambit* by Walter Tevis: “I had originally read this book back in 2021, and became obsessed with Beth Harmon. I had tried to teach myself chess (online) and could not quite grasp the intricacies as she had. This year, I am committed to making Beth proud. I used a gift card I received over the holidays to purchase a physical chess board and can't wait to learn!”

A reader from Northampton read *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen: “15 year old me. English class. Assignment- *Pride and Prejudice*. “Boring.” “It puts me to sleep.” Decades later I stay awake while reading it and appreciate Mr.Bennet’s humor, Charlotte’s calculated decision and the Gardiners’ take on reality. However, the Hallmark movie quality is still a bit “boring.” But - I am glad I read it and enjoyed its history lesson.”

A reader from NAHANT read *Angus, Thongs and Full -Frontal Snogging* by Louise Rennison: “I loved this book and the rest of the series when I was younger. These books have travelled across the country. They went to college, grad school, different apartments, cities, and states. I've purged books over the years. Some part of me refused to let these go even though I have not re-read them since I was a teen. I was hoping I'd still love this book, but also afraid to revisit this and find I had completely outgrown it. At first, I hated it. The main character is shallow, angsty, and rude. However, I did not give up. And I'm remarkably glad. I found myself (at 37) laughing out loud while reading this. I cannot say there are many books that can do this. I'm grateful for this challenge allowing me to reunite with an old friend.”

A reader from Milton read *Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway: “I have read this book numerous times over the years. With each reading I discover symbolisms I had missed and subsequently gain a deeper appreciation for this story.”

A reader from Ipswich read *Johnny Tremain* by Esther Forbes: “My only memory of this book was that the main character had burned his hand. I remember thinking the rest was boring but this time around I enjoyed the history and descriptions of the time period.”

A reader from Arlington read *Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt: “I read this book 20 years ago. I still remembered quite a bit of the plot but I was more receptive the commentary on mortality as compared to when I was about 10 when I first read this book. I also was better able to recognize the man in the yellow suit as an allegory for capitalism/development. I did find the relationship between Jesse and Winnie more

problematic than I did back then with the implication of "17" year old Jesse wanting 11 year old Winnie to drink the spring water at 17 so they could get married. That aside, this is a good morality lesson about death acceptance for young adults that speaks to me more today."

A reader from Lynnfield read *Peeled* by Joan Bauer: "I read this book with my 8th grade English class, but I remembered nothing about it before re-reading it now. It's an easy read and a likeable story about fear, truth, rebellion, and journalistic integrity. 3.5 stars rounded up!"

A reader from Dartmouth read *Anne of Green Gables* by Lucy Maud Montgomery: "The first time I read *Anne of Green Gables*, I was probably around 11 or 12 years old, the same age as Anne in the book. I am reading it again, but now I have a daughter that is 11 years old. It is a totally different perspective reading *Anne of Green Gables* as a child versus a mother of a child. I am happy to say, though this book may have been written some time ago, the timelessness of the setting and characters still holds up today, though most people do not drive a horse and buggy. I love Anne Shirley and her great imagination and non-stop chatter. She reminds me so much of my own daughter. If we all had Anne's spirit, lust for life and vivid imagination this world would be a much more jovial place."

A reader from Arlington read *Perks of being a wallflower* by : "I first read this book my senior year of high school I found Charlie troubled and even back then I found the concept of a 15-16 year old hanging out and drinking and doing drugs with 18-19 year olds and sometimes even older just uncomfortable and odd as an adult that didn't really change if anything it felt more uncomfortable i thought reading this book as an adult would make me nostalgic and emotional for my own teenage years but instead I just felt uncomfortable and didn't like or relate to our Main character at all."

A reader from Norwood read *The Selection* by Kiera Cass: "It is a ridiculous book, but so so entertaining. The writing is average, the characters...Meh. But the story is such a ridiculous one, it can't be anything but amusing."

A reader from Melbourne read *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger: "First read this in high school and it was the first book that made me feel that I wasn't the only teen having "subversive" thoughts about hypocrisy and "phonies". Rereading the book as an adult, I see all of the examples of forced sexual behavior by the boys on the girls in Holden's world and find it pretty shocking, especially since it didn't seem odd at the first reading."

A reader from Everett read *The Phantom of the Opera* by Gaston Leroux: "It was my favorite book as a teenager - so much fun to reread!"

A reader from Pegconlon@gmail.com read *Catcher In the Rye* by J. D. Salinger: "Wow, what a difference between reading this book when I was a teen to now. Then, I only scratched the surface of the story and viewed it as a cocky teen coming of age story. I didn't remember many details at all but loved the writing style and remember reading all JD Salinger's work quickly afterwards. Now, I found the story a bit tragic. Holden Caulfield's observances and perspectives of women a spot-on critique of the male perspective at the time. I see why I related to his struggle and conflicts with wanting human connection but not seeing how to fit in the social construct of his world. The dialogue is such a joy."

A reader from Danvers read *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan: "I chose this book because I last read it in middle school, and the series has been premiering on Disney Plus. Much like when I read the *Hunger Games* I was surprised how dark this story is. I thought these 12 years were so cool for battling monsters when I was young, but now I just see them as children doing the dangerous tasks of adults. The series also expands on the theme of whether to fix a broken system (Percy) or to just completely destroy and rebuild

it (Luke). I missed the overarching theme of this when I was younger, but find it very compelling now. Coupled with the fact that the Greek gods represent Western civilization, and it leads to a more interesting argument about how we see our culture and civilization now. Should we fix western civilization or should it just be disregarded and started anew? Is there room for forgiveness and growth or are we too far gone? Deeper philosophical questions than I was expecting from a middle grade book. The action and humor holds up, and it might even be funnier than I remember. This was a great visit to the past, and I appreciate this challenge giving me the push to do a reread.”

A reader from Brockton read *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* by J. K. Rowling: “The first time I read this book aloud to my kids many years ago. I enjoyed reading it this time for myself.”

A reader from Chelmsford read *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* by J.K. Rowling: “When I was younger, I just could not get into the Harry Potter books. Now that I am older, my children are interested in them. It is an exciting experience to see the series through their eyes. Now I enjoy reading the books with them.”

A reader from Amherst read *Understood Betsy* by Dorothy Canfield Fisher: “One of my most beloved childhood books. I loved reading it again!”

A reader from Chelsea read *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster: “The Phantom Tollbooth is my favorite children's book, and I hadn't read it in over 20 years. I was curious if the lessons from the book would still hold true as an adult. It did! It particularly ran true in relation to how social media, smartphones, and other technologies keep you from appreciating the world around you, and lead to time suck. This book is complex but digestible. Though it's written in the 60's - you could never tell. It's content is evergreen. I'm so glad I chose this for January and it affirmed why this is my favorite children's book.”

A reader from Springfield read *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan: “Enjoyed reading this book again as it used to be my favorite when I was middle school age. The humor and lightheartedness are still wonderful to read, and the comments on ADHD hit differently now I've been diagnosed myself. I feel some of the themes of environmental destruction are also more hard hitting.”

A reader from Chicopee read *Colter* by Rick Bass: “I read this book back in 2000 when it first came out. Being a dog lover, it touched my heart to read this beautiful love story about a man and his dog. Reading it again actually brought tears to my eyes. I loved the story even more.”

A reader from dorchester read *Pilu of the Woods* by Mai K. Nguyen: “Pilu of the Woods is a graphic novel story about a girl who is struggling with anxiety, trauma, and intrusive thoughts, which manifest as little monsters. She gets in trouble because as she is repressing the monsters, she gets angry and lashes out at people. One day after getting in a fight at school and then yelling at her sister, she goes into the woods with her dog, where they meet a girl around her age named Pilu, who has run away from her home in the woods after a fight with her mom. The story is gentle and the parallels between the characters as they all struggle with their own monsters was sweet, although I wish there was a bit more nuance and clarity about the monsters themselves. All in all i would give it 4 stars. I thought after being diagnosed with some more mental health issues since I first read it, I might have different feelings, and actually I liked it a little bit more than I remembered the first time.”

A reader from Attleboro read *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London: “This was a required reading book as a kid, when I was more interested in the main character being a dog and found Buck's connection with his primordial roots and nature inspiring. As an adult, I read the book much differently with the brutal

demands and harsh unforgivable economy of nature. I internalize I very well would not make it in this Yukon environment with lack of exposure or competence. I reflect another realization I missed from my earlier reading was that almost every character in book does not survive.”

A reader from Haverhill read *Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes: “I remember liking this book when I read it in middle school but I was absolutely blown away rereading it as an adult. It's an incredible book that mostly holds up today.”

A reader from Gill read *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte: “I love this book more the older I get. Such a nice story.”

A reader from Montague read *The Giver* by Lowry: “Disturbing as ever!”

A reader from North Chelmsford read *Mort* by Terry Pratchett: “I read this book several years ago and chose it without too much thought -- it was a mass market paperback, and it fit in my bag on a plane ride. I read it now because of my poor mental state, -- seasonal depression -- with an incredible need for comfort, especially from books.”

A reader from Yarmouth Port read *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte: “Reading book as an adult I find Mr. Rochester manipulative and cruel rather than as a teenager when I thought he was brooding and romantic.”

A reader from Amherst read *The Mayor of Casterbridge* by Thomas Hardy: “I bounced off this book when it was assigned in my 11th grade English class. Forty plus years later I tried again, and managed to get through it while doing housework, thanks to the audiobook ably narrated by Simon Vance. I find the characters unsympathetic, either calculating or gormless. And the story is still dismal and dreary.”

A reader from Bourne read *Orphan Train* by Christina Baker Kline: “I read this four years ago. I love books that have been carefully researched.”

A reader from Somerville read *Ethan Frome* by Edith Wharton: “I was required to read Ethan Frome in high school and hated it. I suppose the characters’ many flaws and relentless misery turned me off. Having read and enjoyed *The Age of Innocence* a little over a year ago, I thought I’d revisit this quintessential Massachusetts-in-winter book for the challenge! This time around, what stood out to me was the fine line between gossip and genuine care and concern in a community, and the impossible conditions imposed on women and the poor in the rural early 20th century setting.”

A reader from Chelmsford read *Truth or Beard* by Penny Reid: “This book is the first in a series of seven books focused on the Winston brothers. The series has character overlap with other series by the same author. Also, the timeline in this book overlaps with the timelines in some of the other books, so it is really interesting to go back and read *Truth or Beard* for a second time after reading other books in the series that talk about some of the same situations, but from different characters’ perspectives. It is really easy and enjoyable to get caught up in the Winston family’s world.”

A reader from Westport read *The Fellowship of the Ring* by JRR Tolkien: “The first time I read this series I liked it but I found it kind of slow. I was in the mood to reread because it’s been years and I don’t remember all the details and this time I really loved it and didn’t find it boring at all. It’s such an exciting adventure with an in-depth world as the backdrop. I am excited to continue on with rereading the series.”

A reader from Woburn read *Diary Of A Wimpy Kid: Big Shot* by Jeff Kinney: “I still feel the same about this one; it’s a good book for kids.”

A reader from Grafton read *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon: “I read this book in high school and I liked it and thought it was good disability representation. I was inspired to read it again now that I work in special education and know more about ASD. Turns out, it felt icky reading a book from the point of view of someone with ASD written by someone who does not identify as on the spectrum despite the research he put into it. It was a bit infantilizing.”

A reader from Melrose read *Middlesex* by Jeffrey Eugenides: “When I first read this 20 years ago, I liked it but was at times put off by the intersex exploration. Now I’m more familiar with intersex and transgender people, and I was very moved by and compassionate toward the main character.”

A reader from Boston read *Conversations with Friends* by Sally Rooney: “I first read this book in 2019 when I was 22, about the same age as the main character. I also read *Normal People* around the same time, which I reread last year and didn't like nearly as much as I did the first time around. The fact that I loved this book in 2019, against the grain of popular opinion, had me nervous that it was one of those "found me in the exact right moment" books. Despite being a bit harder to get into via audiobook than physical copy, I stand by my 5-star rating--I still got chills at the ending!”

A reader from Cambridge read *Seedfolks* by Fleischman, Paul: “Smart, concise, empathetic, and grounding. Inspired me to keep gardening and share what I can.”

A reader from New Salem read *Charlotte's Web* by E.B.White: “It was fun to read it again after so long.”

A reader from North Attleboro read *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte: “Just as good as I remembered, although I forgot what a strong character Jane is!”

A reader from Plymouth read *Watership Down* by Richard Adams: “Loved this book as a child. It opened my eyes to fiction as allegory. Really enjoyed a re-read after 45 years!”

A reader from Taunton read *Nancy Drew: The secret of the Old Clock* by Carolyn Keene: “★★★★ - Nancy drew was my favorite childhood series! I really enjoyed reading it again after all these years. Great characters and story line!”

A reader read *The Tender Bar* by JR Moehringer: “I re-read this book after watching the movie remake for the second time. The first time I saw the movie, I was so fixated on the differences between the book and movie, especially the Uncle Charlie character, played by Ben Affleck in the movie. When I watched the movie for the 2nd time, I was able to focus much more on the story, which is a love story for the bar itself and the patrons who influenced the author’s life. After re-reading, I picked up much more of the humanity of the author and his family and friends, detailed in the book. I especially appreciated the relationship with his mom and that she was such a positive influence in his life. I also picked up on the anxiety and fear that JR lived with most of his life until he finally accepted who he was. I didn’t realize he was the ghostwriter for SPARE, so I think I will add it to my must read list.”

A reader from Hatfield read *Black Beauty* by Anna Sewell: “My earliest memory is of my mother reading this to me (and my two older brothers) when I was just barely 3 years old. Re-reading it brought all sorts of sense memories back to me. I’m so grateful that I had a mother who read to us every night and who chose good meaty literature. All 3 of us grew into early and avid readers. We are now all in our 60s, but continue our love of books.”

A reader from Hull read *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis: “Loved this book as a kid, loved re-reading it as an adult, and will probably still love it 20 years from now!”

A reader from Agawam read *Down the Rabbit Hole* by Peter Abrahams: “I had originally read this book in middle school and have had such incredible memories of it since! I am glad to say I still love it, though maybe not as passionately as I had when I was in its intended age group. The character is so fun and relatable, the mystery truly keeps you on your toes, and the characters are so much fun! It helps that it is a New England town quite reminiscent of my childhood Wilbraham home. A strong recommendation to any mystery lover!”

A reader from Somerville read *Atonement* by Ian McEwan: “I chose this book for the January prompt because I have previously tried reading it a handful of times about a decade ago, and never been able to get past the first chapter. However, like Briony, age has changed my opinions of certain things, and for some reason this time around I was able to finish it. While there were some sections that I found to be a bit dry, overall I was impressed by the stylistically complex writing and intricately laid plot. A haunting story with themes of guilt and redemption told by an unreliable narrator.”

A reader from Medford read *Time and Again* by Jack Finney: “I read this time-travel book about 35 years ago when I lived in the city that the main character travels back in time to, and I found the novel utterly magical. It changed the way I viewed the area. Re-reading it was an interesting experience, since I couldn't believe how many details I'd forgotten. In this age of the internet, I found myself looking up a lot of the historical information referenced in the book, which is something I wouldn't have been able to do so easily when I first read it. I'm still a fan of the book, but my reading experience was definitely different and more expansive this time around.”

A reader from Scituate read *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupery: “I read this as a child and didn't particularly like it. I didn't understand why it was so popular. As an adult, I have a better understanding of the author's description of big concepts such as caring for another and of loss and death. I loved the book so much this time around.”

A reader from East Falmouth read *The Gift of Fear* by Gavin DeBecker: “I read this book my senior year of high school and have thought about it at various times since then. Reading it for a second time I realize that the information is still very relevant today.”

A reader from Quincy read *Summer Sisters* by Judy Blume: “I read this book 25 years ago when I was a lot younger. I only remembered the ending. Once I read it again. I enjoyed it very much. I would say a lot more than the first time, and I appreciate the historical events that were mentioned over the years this book took place.”

A reader from Mattapoisett read *Where the Red fern grows* by Wilson Rawls: “It was interesting reading this as a parent (I previously read this as child). For one I know my children read it and I kept picturing them reading it and wondered how they felt when they read it. Then also I considered the parents perspective in the story a lot more. The parents desire to do better for their children up against the worry the mom felt for her son to go out hunting. I kept putting myself in her shoes with the worry I feel for my own children and then the sadness for her son when his dogs died and there was nothing the parents could do to ease his pain.”

A reader from TEWKSBURY read *Carolyn Keene* by The Secret of the Old Clock: “Certainly reads differently then when I got the book as a Christmas gift in 1978!”

A reader from Stoneham read *Some Tame Gazelle* by Barbara Pym: “I recently read a biography of the author which said she based this book on friends and family imagined 30 years in the future. At first this

colored my re-reading, but then I got absorbed in the story and stopped worrying about matching people up.”

A reader from Blackstone read *The Woman in Me* by Britney Spears: “This book was an insightful look into the life and conservatorship of Britney Spears. Britney highlighted her struggles in life and how she’s learning to move forward from the control that came from her family.”

A reader from Middleboro read *The Shining* by Stephen King: “I first read this book when I was in college in 2006. It was my first Stephen King book and it has remained one of my favorites by him. I remember when I first read it I was always shocked by the amount of domestic abuse and child abuse. Back then as a single student I couldn’t imagine hurting a kid or anyone I loved. As an adult with a spouse and child I was really hit with how the domestic abuse cycle was portrayed. The downward spiral just seemed so much more devastating this time around.”

A reader from Beverly read *Words of Radiance* by Brandon Sanderson: “I read this book in 10th grade, and it is vastly different to reread it a number of years later. It felt familiar but as if I was looking at the familiar with a different understanding of life and who I am. What a good and beautiful thing it is to reread a book.”

A reader from Weymouth read *The Cay* by Theodore Taylor: “I remember reading this book in highschool but didn’t remember most of the details, mostly just about the hurricane, so it was quite surprising to be reading about Americans in the Caribbean helping the war effort against the Germans.”

A reader from Foxborough read *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* by J.K. Rowling: “I thought I might not enjoy the book anymore because of the author’s recent remarks, but found that once I got away from the Dursleys it remained a fun adventure.”

A reader from Brookline read *Walk Two Moons* by Sharon Creech: “I picked this book for my Jan Reading Challenge because I remember it being one of my favorites as a child, but now, 2 decades later, I can’t quite pinpoint why I loved it so much. Suffice to say, I devoured this book. It’s a book written for young adults, delving into important topics such as loss, empathy, coming-of-age, etc; but it’s also a book that adult readers can find solace in. Reading it this time around, I definitely see other sides of the story that my 12-year-old self didn’t — depression, grief, etc. One last note: I’d like to commend my sixth-grade teacher for featuring a book with a non-white female protagonist — perhaps, subconsciously, that’s why I felt connected to Sal as a kid.”

A reader from Seekonk read *Cry, the Beloved Country* by Alan Paton: “Written as a love letter to South Africa, the book also contains a lot of universal truths anyone can relate to. I first read it as a high school student, but hated it. I’ve always wanted to reread it, but never got around to it. It’s a beautiful book.”

A reader from Salem read *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins: “I read this series when I was in high school. I enjoyed book 1 but felt bored by the other two. Reading this now I am realizing how much of this series went over my head. So much has changed in the world and in myself since I first read this that everything has new context.”

A reader from Hanson read *1984* by George Orwell: “I first read 1984 when I was in middle school, and I definitely missed most of the points. I now disagree with much of Orwell’s understandings of political systems, but I was able to appreciate his storytelling to a much greater extent as an adult.”

A reader from Winthrop read *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys: “I read this book nearly 15 years ago, and I reread it now because I was thinking of teaching it as an example of modern and postmodernism. I have

decided to do so because not only do I still love it, but now that I look at its structure alongside the the historical context, I'm even more enamored!"

A reader from Pembroke read *The Thorn Birds* by Colleen McCullough: "I first read this book when I was in my 20s; 40 years later I was surprised at how many things I had completely forgotten about. My views on love, God, and the rest of the world are so much different now. I first read it as a love story; although it still is, it is so much more than that. It's a story about love between men and women, love of family, love between men and God, and love of money and power."

A reader from Newton read *Caps for Sale* by Esphyr Slobodkina: "I chose to re read one of my favorite childhood picture books. My mom says she read this book to me every night (I loved the monkeys and their mischief). It brought back so much nostalgia and I remember the joy of being read to as a child! I hope to bring the same love of reading to my future children."

A reader from Erving read *Midnight in The Garden Of Good And Evil* by John Berendt: "I chose to read as I went to Savannah in 2021. Having been there it made it possible to imagine the places that were spoken of. For me, it made it a richer read."

A reader from Watertown read *Wishful Drinking* by Carrie Fisher: "To choose this book I looked at my 1 star reviews on Goodreads. I originally read this book in 2012 and HATED it. This time, it was more enjoyable for me, due to life circumstances and having a greater appreciation for Star Wars."

A reader from Lowell read *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien: "Though it is still not one of my favorite books, I'm glad I re-read this since high school. Reading it as an adult, I appreciated a lot more of what the writing and storytelling had to offer."

A reader from Springfield read *The Fledgling* by Jane Langton: "I read this last in 1986 at 9 years old. Going back to it, I still find the main story charming and a lovely example of how to do magical realism for children. The end made me sad and angry as a child, and now I am sad, angry, and a little horrified at how they ended it. The main villain both shoots a child, and then shoots and kills the goose character illegally, and never suffers any consequences. He's weirdly treated as just a plot point, implying to young readers that his actions were bad, but not that bad. It's not a bad book, but that part I just can't get behind. If anything, I'm FAR more disturbed as an adult than as a kid with the ending."

A reader from Boston read *A million miles on a thousand years* by Donald Miller: "I read this book in 2009 when I joined the Peace Corps. Back then it really resonated with me, building my excitement as I began an exceptional chapter on my life. Reading it in 2023, I was disillusioned. It was more religious than I remembered (since 2009 I have become an atheist) and more misogynistic than I remembered. I didn't like the author. But there were a few moments of inspiration, mostly when the author talks of other more impressive people, that made me reflect on my life and story."

A reader from Lowell read *Beloved* by Toni Morrison: "I had to read this 18 years ago in AP English and I did NOT enjoy it. I'm so pleased that the January theme prompted me to try again; what a beautifully written book. The story was so supernatural, but filled with relatable and emotional elements."

A reader from Boston read *The Making of Another Major Motion Picture* by Tom Hanks: "This was surprisingly good. A topic I don't know much about told through personal stories and vignettes. I cared about the characters, enjoyed the pacing, and wanted to learn more. A bit of Tom Hanks shone through too (single gloves found on a sidewalk, typewriters...)"

A reader from Boston read *The Last Traverse* by Ty Gagne: “Humbling and important read. I think of it every time I hike and have an REI cart full of survival gear.”

A reader from Boston read *The Women* by Kristin Hannah: “This book got better and better with each page. Vietnam War era historical fiction is so rare, let alone one that focuses on women. The characters were so raw and real. I felt their emotions and despair, and even hope. Couldn't put it down.”

A reader from Sharon read *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel: “This was a re-read for me (I did not finish the book my first attempt). After a bit of a slow start, the book captured my imagination and the complex dynamic between boy and tiger kept me engaged. I enjoyed the ending and will think about this book long after I've finished.”

A reader from Hanover read *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child Parts One and Two* by J.K. Rowling and Jack Thorne: “I read the book when it first came out and the nostalgia of it left me giving it a rating of a 3. Now years later, I can read it with a clearer mind and it's definitely a 1.5. The dramatic shift in some of the character development is too much to overcome and makes every part of the story feel forced. There are plenty of spin off stories that could have been told to keep the magic of the world alive but this was not it.”

A reader from Webster read *Vein of Gold* by Julia Cameron: “I bought this book in 1998 after working with it during a women's retreat in New Zealand. I loved every thing about it and I still use the tools quite frequently. Morning Pages, Artist date and daily walk are part of my life and helped me become a better artist/writer. I collected almost all works of Cameron and of course The artist way (which I did not like as much, too spiritual for my taste). I have picked up the books lately and did not find the same inspiration. I do like the tools but I have outgrown the spiritual content. I recommended the tools to quite a lot of people.”

A reader from Hanson read *Anne of Green Gables* by L.M. Montgomery: “When I first read this book, I was Anne's age and I read the book through her eyes. Now I'm Marilla's and Matthew's age and I read it through their eyes.”

A reader from Blackstone read *The Prisoner* by B.A. Paris: “★★★★”

A reader from Charlton read *The Hour I First Believed* by Wally Lamb: “I feel like this was more difficult for me to read this time. Tragedy and trauma stays with you and builds, as the story tells us. We have lived through a great deal of this since this book was written. This is a very moving book.”

A reader from Holyoke read *The Reader* by Bernhard Schlink: “A beautifully written account of an adolescent boy's affair with an older woman and how this relationship affects him for the rest of his life.”

A reader from Belchertown read *War of the Worlds* by H. G. Wells: “Never finished bc of the frightening concept. Now that I have I loved it.”

A reader from Halifax read *Moby Dick* by Melville, Herman: “I read my brother's copy of this years ago and loved it. I realize now that this was most likely due to the fact that I was able to steal my brother's book without him knowing. It had a promising start, but turned into real chore to finish. I'll wait another 20 years before trying this one again.”

A reader from Salem read *walking across egypt* by clyde edergton: “It's been at least 20-25 years since I last read this book. There were parts which were sweet and endearing and other parts which I found somewhat strange and perhaps attributable to when the book was written.”

A reader from Milton read *Siddhartha* by Hermann Hesse: “The story of a man who was on a quest for enlightenment. It follows his life as the son of a Brahman who needs to find his own way. Through various trials, including meeting the Buddha, he finds that each human needs to find his own way; wisdom can't be taught. I read this book in early high school and I think most of it went over my head. I found it somewhat boring and thought the main character was spoiled and entitled. When I read it this time I realized he was searching for meaning, he had to learn through experience. I had forgotten most of the story but I did remember the river was important. When one character appeared I figured that character was very key although I hadn't remembered that character when I started re-reading the book.”

A reader from Turners Falls read *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan: “I read this several years ago and absolutely loved it. With the recent Disney+ show I wanted to give it a reread and it still holds up - now I have to reread the whole series again!”

A reader from Tewksbury read *Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: “Try this is the second time I read this book. After spending some time in Nigeria, I understand the story and characters better.”

A reader from Salem read *Ecotopia* by Ernest Callenbach: “Reading this now after having more experience with recognizing bad sci-fi tropes... I did not realize how much it pulled out that "sexy woman from the other side convinces main character to join their cause by having lots of sex" trope, but wow. I read a review that described it as a "CULT classic... in every sense of the word". I was much younger when I read it and was mostly focused on the technology... which nowadays doesn't even seem all that impressive!”

A reader from South Hadley read *Unbroken* by Laura Hillenbrand: “Exhaustively researched and well written. Amazing story of resilience.”

A reader from Arlington read *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan: “I read this when I was a teenager. Now I read it to my 7 year old son. It was very fun to experience it with him (and I have forgotten most of the story!)”

A reader from Boston read *The 7 Habits Of Highly Effective People* by Stephen R. Covey: “I received this book in high school to learn more and be more time efficient. I remember skimming through the book finding not much interest in the pages. After rereading this book in college, I enjoyed the shift in my mindset in wanting to become more effective and enjoyed learning all the knowledge that Stephen has condensed for us, readers :)”

A reader from Easton read *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson: “Not as boring as 7th grade me thought it was. However, I still can't understand a word Long John Silver says.”

A reader from Beverly read *1984* by George Orwell: “While I did enjoy it (and understand it) more than when I last read it in high school, it's still not exactly the type of book I enjoy reading!”

A reader from Worcester read *The Outsiders* by S. E. Hinton: “I first read this book in high school and remembered being one of the few kids in class who enjoyed it. I have been meaning to reread it for awhile, so this was the perfect opportunity. I definitely had a different perspective reading it as an adult. The version I read is the 50th anniversary addition that includes archival materials and writings about the book, which were enlightening. I had no idea S. E. Hinton is a woman, or that she wrote this book as a teenager and helped develop modern YA fiction!”

A reader from Weymouth read *The little Prince* by Antoine de saint-exupery: “Love this book.”

A reader from Wakefield read *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee: “An absolutely amazing read. I had previously read this book 18 years ago and was much too young to understand a lot of the setting and story. I'm so glad this gave me a chance to revisit this.”

A reader from Melrose read *The Blue Sword* by Robin McKinley: “I enjoyed re-reading this after a couple decades! I can more clearly see some problematic aspects of it than I did as a teen, but I also see why I liked it when I read it back then.”

A reader from Northampton read *Possession* by A.S. Byatt: “I first read *Possession* in my young twenties when it came out, and only remembered it in the most general strokes. I know it had a big impact on me at the time and wanted to re-read to learn why. Whoa! What a wonderful, amazing book by an author I truly admire. How did she even write this?! Tremendous and inspiring!”

A reader from Orleans read *The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand: “Third time reading this book. Wielyd at times, but it pays to stay with it.”

A reader from Wakefield read *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad: “This book was just as painful to read now as it was in high school.”

A reader from Hull read *Dharma Bums* by Jack Kerouac: “This was one of my most loved books 18 years ago. I decided to re-read it as the challenge suggested. I did find that I still loved it and it brought back a lot of memories of how I once lived almost as this book as a guide. I now live a very different life and I can't say that a lot of it resonates in the same way. It was like revisiting an old friend, remembering the cabin you and your ex lived in without electricity and how you are grateful for those experiences but also grateful to have a warm house and electricity now.”

A reader from Northampton read *The Stranger* by Albert Camus: “I didn't know what I felt about it back then. I don't know what I feel about it now. At least now I feel better not knowing what I feel about it than I did back then.”

A reader from Gardner read *Life As We Knew It* by Susan Beth Pfeffer: “This is a book that I read over and over again as a kid. I loved re-reading it just as much as I did then. This book is about the moon shifting closer to Earth and the fallout that ensues. It specifically follows one 16 year old girl in Pennsylvania. What I found most jarring about this reading experience versus when I had previously read it, was the character's reaction to a worldwide tragedy after going through a similar experience myself during the pandemic. I knew exactly how they felt when they were saying "I'm sure this will just blow over" or "Who knows how long this all will last, no need to overreact". It brought me back to March 2020 when I spoken similarly about not needing to stock up on toilet paper. The biggest difference being that these character absolutely did need to stock up on toilet paper (and every other type of supply). A great read, I'm so glad I picked this book up again after so many years.”

A reader from Methuen read *Fever 1793* by Laurie Halse Anderson: “The first time I read this book it was assigned for summer reading and it was like pulling teeth to get through it. Reading this time around was exciting because I am much more interested in plagues and historical tellings so this book definitely captured my attention. Glad I had a chance to give this one another try!”

A reader from Cambridge read *Slaughterhouse Five* by Kurt Vonnegut: “I read this book for a banned book assignment in high school, and only really remembered Billy Pilgrim being 'unstuck in time' and trafalmadorians seeing time like each moment is like bugs in amber. Reading it again, it reads much more like ptsd flashbacks and dissociative episodes, things I had not yet studied at the age of 16, woven throughout a core narrative of Billy as a prisoner of war. Given that the book originally came out around

the Vietnam war, and it is a very anti-war book, I can see why it had been put on that banned book assignment all those years ago. I maintain that this is an important book to read, especially in the light of recent events.”

A reader from Southampton, MA 01073, USA read *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger: “Very descriptive writer, funny and sad. Teen angst over a lot of self-examination. The humor became redundant and stale. Holden seemed deeply depressed and his own worst enemy.”

A reader from Andover read *The Sparrow* by Mary Doria Russell: “When I read it before, I loved the creativity of Jesuits in Space. Reading it again, I hadn't appreciated how much of historical imperialism they had carried with them, as hard as they had tried not to.”

A reader from Plainville read *Anxious People* by Fredrik Backman: “I loved this book in 2020 and still love it today. Backman does such a wonderful job developing his characters and unveiling the story a piece at a time. His observations about human nature and life speak to me.”

A reader from read *84 Charing Cross Road* by Helene Hanff: “Helene Hanff was a television screenwriter and book lover who started a witty and wry correspondence with a London bookstore and over a twenty year period befriended the staff and their families, especially the manager, Frank Doel. Her requests of rare writings would promote a time involved hunt. Hanff wrote that she preferred sending her dollars to England rather than searching in NY. (This was an early version of online shopping.) She used a typewriter and her punctuation and capitalization are part of the charm of her writing. At Christmas she sent food parcels to Marks & CO staff during rationing days and the staff thank you letters are included in the book. Book shops and beloved books as well as historic happenings, the coronation of Queen Elizabeth and Kennedy’s run for president are featured during the time period. “AND I NEED READING”

A reader from Melrose read *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles: “This book was my favorite book in High school. After reading it again this month, i understand why. I loved the characters. The background of WWII set up the symbolism of good versus evil and our loss of innocence. I enjoyed the book just as much in the 2nd reading.”

A reader from Easton read *The Thorn Birds* by Colleen McCullough: “I never reread books so this is a first. It has been over 40 years since I’ve read this but I have always referred to it as my favorite book. I was surprised but how many details I forgot but pleased that I remembered most. I still love this book.”

A reader from amyp1118@gmail.com read *The curious incident of the dog in the night-time* by Mark Haddon: “I read this book a long time ago before I really knew anything about autism. Now reading it I feel less I like I’m learning about autism and more sympathy and understanding for what the main character says and does.”

A reader from Danville read *The da Vinci code* by Dan Brown: “I haven’t read this book in about 20 years and I still really enjoyed it. I read an illustrated version this time around which heightened the experience because all the art and locations spoken about were accompanied by an image. The story wraps up nicely and conveniently as it did the first time but I appreciated it more.”

A reader from Weymouth read *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald: “It was a pleasure to reread this classic novel. I remembered the characters but had forgotten some of the details about them. Now I have a better understanding about Jay Gatsby and his relentless obsession. The character of Daisy remained the same to me.”

A reader from Quincy read *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee: "I first read this in 10th grade English class. I loved everything about it, and bought myself a \$5 paperback copy. That was in 1992, and I still have it. When I first read it, I was blown away by Scout. I was so excited to read a book with a character like me! Like Scout, I was a tomboy who had strong opinions and a strong sense of right and wrong. I asked a lot of questions because I wanted to understand why people did the things they did. Reading the book again now as a middle aged woman, I was glad to revisit with my friend Scout, but my heart was so sad to read of the racism so casually felt by the adults. When I read the book as a teenager, the hatred seemed so extreme and nonsensical that I saw it as I would Alice in Wonderland- just an imaginary situation. Sadly, now as an adult, I can see that this is not a made up situation- I know now about the ugly hate and racism in some people's hearts. This really is a powerful book, still my favorite."

A reader from Reading read *Some Tame Gazelle* by Barbara Pym: "This was the first book by Barbara Pym I'd read, over 35 years ago, and it set me off reading them all. Though not much happens to the village people in them, they have rich interior lives, and the perfect descriptions are by turns slightly sad or comfortable and also hilarious. I'm glad my first impressions held up all this time later."

A reader from Burlington read *Till We Have Faces* by CS Lewis: "I loved this book as much as when I read it when I was younger. A brilliant retelling and fascinating look at womanhood."

A reader from Yarmouth Port read *The Scarlet Pimpernel* by Emmuska Orczy: "I read this book in High School. I am a Franco-American. The book shocked me. My roots are from France, Canadian, then American. This time it isn't shocking me. I actually enjoyed the history. Maybe it's been long enough time passed for the shock wore off."

A reader from Plympton read *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift: "Good to read a classic from back in high school. Brought back memories of English Lit, as well as the poignant use of satire in literature."

A reader from Beverly read *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* by Agatha Christie: "Thought I would like it less since I know her plot formula, but actually I liked it more because Poirot is such a fun character!"

A reader from Wareham read *The Amazing Mrs. Pollifax* by Dorothy Gillman: "I loved it for all the same reasons I did over 50 years ago. Exotic locales, adventures, thrills, and great characters. Writing is a little stilted and dated, but still fun to read!"

A reader from Cambridge read *To kill a mocking bird* by Harper Lee: "This is a book that I was forced to read in school and I really hated it. It was extremely boring to me. However now as an adult i genuinely enjoyed reading this book and have a newfound appreciation for it."

A reader from Northampton read *Ever After High: A Wonderlandful World* by Shannon Hale: "I became so attached to these characters upon rereading, and was (oddly) genuinely emotionally affected by this book! And promptly extremely upset when they reversed all of the character development in favor of mass amnesia. I'm sure as a child I was just excited to be reading something so fantastical."

A reader from west springfield read *just kids* by patti smith: "Still one of my favorites after all these years."

A reader from Belchertown read *The Giver* by Lois Lowry: "I chose this book because I didn't like it when I read it in school years ago. I listened to it as an audiobook this time and, while I still didn't like it, reading it as an adult was a much different experience and I'm glad I gave it a try."

A reader from Florence read *A Wrinkle In Time* by Madeleine L'Engle: "I chose to re-read this book because I have kept a copy since I first read it in 1962. It brought me back to my ten-year-old self who thoroughly enjoyed this story then and now more than sixty years later!"

A reader from Seekonk read *Madam, Will You Talk?* by Mary Stewart: "I read this books many years ago as a teenager. I have thought of it through the years and greatly enjoyed reading it again. I had remembered most of the plot and now understood the meaning of the word "spanner". It was great to revisit it. I always enjoyed Mary Stewart's writing and she affected the books I enjoy reading today."

A reader from Norfolk read *GHosted* by Rosie Walsh: "Lots of twists and turns."

A reader from Franklin read *Secluded Cabin Sleep Six* by Lisa Unger: "Murder at cabin with siblings, friends, and lovers."

A reader from Naples read *Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic and Madness* by Erik Larson: "I loved reading this non-fictional account of the fair that changed America, when it was first published (2003). I enjoyed it even more 20 years later. The novelistic style is perfect for those who love fiction and the documentation gives the non-fiction lover, all that they expect."

A reader from Gill read *Slaughterhouse Five* by Kurt Vonnegut: "Found it much funnier and wiser than I appreciated as a kid."

A reader from Fairhaven read *Letters to a Young Poet* by Rilke, Rainer Maria: "A friend gave this to me in college, nearly 30 years ago, and I always talk about it being one of my favorite books, but I'm not a re-reader, so this is the first time I've picked it up since then. And I still love it! Lyrical, heartfelt, passionate... it's all the reasons why I still love to write!"

A reader from Hopkinton read *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth George Speare: "Published in 1958, this was one of my favorite books when I read it as a preteen. Set in rural Connecticut, it contains themes of religious persecution, community, and hardship. The book is timeless, as we continue to struggle with these topics today."

A reader read *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* by Suzanne Collins: "'I loved "The Hunger Games" and was so intrigued by this prequel about Coriolanus Snow and his rise to power. But I finished this and was disappointed. I remember being nervous Collins giving Snow a redemption arc like that of Kylo Ren. And while very relieved she didn't do that, I felt Coryo's return to Gaul was very abrupt and out of the character he had grown to be. Coryo loathed Gaul and found her methods repulsive and extreme. So why the sudden shift? How did he go from wanting to run away with his beloved Lucy Gray to trying to kill her with a flip of a switch? However, after seeing the movie, I was motivated to re-read the book. I felt the movie showed me how Capitol Coryo was there all along — that he was just shoved down, repressed. I also saw many of the pieces Collins laid that showed Coriolanus hadn't really changed from the Capitol elitist that saw the District folk as subhuman. Like when he thinks "They'd ship him off to some horrid backwater district where the people were hardly better than animals" (p. 36) and "This was his life now. Digging for worms and being at the mercy of the weather. Elemental. Like an animal. He knew this would be easier if he wasn't such an exceptional person... If he'd been useless and stupid."

A reader from Gloucester read *Sharon Creech* by Love That Dog: "I read this book in either elementary or middle school and it was a poignant revisit. It inspired a lot of my own childhood poetry. The story tells so much with very little. I loved re-reading this from an adult's point of view, seeing a young boy open his mind towards his creativity. Highly recommend!"

A reader from East Taunton read *Going on Being* by Mark Epstein, M.D.: “I read this book 15 years ago and it was one of the most profound reads I can remember from this time. I found it to be reinvigorating and ever topical. I’m sure I will read it again.”

A reader from Longmeadow read *The Great Gatsby* by F Scott Fitzgerald: “Just as good as I remembered!”

A reader from North Bethesda read *The Night Circus* by Erin Morgenstern: “The reading challenge prompt for January was “A book you read years ago but may feel differently about now.” We all know *The Night Circus* is one of my favorite books of all time but I last read it in 2019, so a friend and I both went in for a revisit for January. I of course still loved it but I had been skeptical if I’d feel any differently and I did. Life and years and new perspectives really do show up when you reread. It was still beautiful and floaty and dreamlike. But it felt absolutely wrapped in a layer of melancholy this time. I felt acutely the lingering sadness across all the pages and felt so much this time how no one had any choice. It was sad. Still beautiful but this time around I cried. What a gift to reread a favorite book and still bring forth new emotion. Thanks for suggesting this for January’s prompt, Niki. If you haven’t read this book, put it on your list asap.”

A reader from Beverly read *The Diary of a Young Girl: Definitive Edition* by Anne Frank: “I read Anne Frank's diary when I, myself, was a young teenager. I was eager to read the updated version of the book, with passages previously edited out by Otto Frank, as well as experiencing the material as an adult with a daughter of my own. If you haven't read the book since you were young, I highly recommend revisiting the diary. Completely heartbreaking, while also funny, astute, and at times exasperating. In an age of book-banning and Holocaust-denying, it's more important than ever to keep this book in circulation.”

A reader from Erving read *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee: “It's interesting to see how things were in the South during this period and makes me wonder if conditions in the schools were as depicted in the book. How the kids play acted with their peers was interesting and I think a lot of it depended how their parents also looked at things. I think one would have to have been brought up in the South to understand some of the ideas & customs that were mentioned.”

A reader from Dracut read *The Pact* by Jodi Picoult: “So glad I decided to read this book again...just as captivating to read as the first time and couldn’t put it down! I couldn’t remember how it ended. Jodi is a great author and pays attention to details. Great book!”

A reader from Beverly read *Dandelion Wine* by Ray Bradbury: “I chose to reread *Dandelion Wine* since it really resonated with me 20 years ago and I wanted to see if it still would. I have to say, while the book itself is pure magic, it certainly hit me differently all these years later, and not as profoundly. Maybe a little upsetting, but I am a different person now so it's fine.”

A reader from Melrose read *Beloved* by Toni Morrison: “Devastating. 5/5”

A reader from Lynn read *Why Sinead O'Connor Matters* by Allyson McCabe: “Interesting! I only had a nominal knowledge of Sinead O'Connor, having been too young for when she hit her peak, but still somehow growing up with her as a household name.”

A reader from Chatham read *Death Comes as an End* by Agatha Christie: “It was wild, like a traditional Agatha Christie novel but set in ancient Egypt!”

A reader from Longmeadow read *Twilight* by Stephenie Meyer: “I loved this book in college, and I still love it now! Makes me want to reread the whole series and then watch all the movies. This was certainly the book that got me start on my favorite genre!”

A reader from Reading read *The Great Gatsby* by F Scott Fitzgerald: “I reread this title and appreciated it more as an adult than a high school student. The American Dream is still such a relevant theme and I’m also hoping to see the new Gatsby musical.”

A reader from Dartmouth read *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett: “I also really like the movie this book is based upon.”

A reader from Florence read *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding: “I read this book in junior high school. A long time ago!! I don’t remember being affected by it very much. This time I really thought about how savage-like the boys became.”

A reader from Springfield read *Shatter me* by Tahereh Mafi: “I really loved this book when I was 14 and I thought I was going to love just as much when I read it again... That didn't happen. I just couldn't immerse myself the way I did a few year back, but I just couldn't. The reading just felt impersonal at the begging. But after chapter 10 I started to enjoy it again and don't get me wrong, I love the shatter me series and always will. Now I'm thinking of starting the third book of the series because I never got to it, I hoped about the books and bought them but never read them (this is a classic addiction). Thank you Massbook for giving me a reason to finish the Shatter Me series.”

A reader from Sandwich read *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier: “I first read this book when I was age 13-14. I found it as haunting now as it was then. I did appreciate more the detailed description of the various settings What reader could ever forget the Manderley estate?”

A reader from Mansfield read *Two Old Women* by Velma Wallis: “First read this about 20 years ago and liked it. Reading it again as a retired person and really appreciate the fact that older people have valuable skills and knowledge to share.”

A reader from Shrewsbury read *Winter Garden* by Kristin Hannah: “It stayed with me all this time.”

A reader from Amherst read *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee: “Still love it; even if a product of it's time with an element of "white savior-ism", I still think it's a classic and one of my all time favorites.”

A reader from Florence read *Linden Hills* by Gloria Naylor: “Still reading.”

A reader from Quincy read *Anne of Green Gables* by L.M. Montgomery: “As an adult I can feel more connected to the reservations Mariila had associated with taking in Anne. It is even more heartbreaking to see the situation Anne starts with in the beginning but becomes even sweeter knowing that she becomes a beloved family member to both Matthew and Marilla.”

A reader from Lynn read *Nancy Drew Mystery of Crocodile Island* by Carolyn Keene: “I reread this series and I feel like it holds up well. As long as you remember that it was written a while ago, and that it is a fiction story.”

A reader from Spencer read *The Count of Monte Christo* by Alexander Dumas: “Enjoyed on the surface previously. Enjoyed more deeply as I learned more history of the time period in which it was written.”

A reader from Holden read *The Mismeasure of Man* by Jay Gould: “I read this many years ago as required reading during my Masters of Education degree and found it fascinating. Since then I’ve recommended it

several times to others saying that it was both super interesting and an easy read. I stick with my statement regard the subject matter but not the “easy read” part! Still cool but you have to want to get through all the stats and science to get to the interesting bits! I hadn’t remembered that part LOL.”

A reader from Scituate read *My Brilliant Friend* by Elena Ferrante: “I read this book 5 years ago, and only recently traveled to Italy for the first time. Learning about the recent history of Italy as a country helped me frame the experiences of the characters in a way that made me love this book I thought I couldn't love any more! The complexity of the story was made even more so, understanding that Lila and Lena were growing up in a new democratic republic, understanding how embroiled the country was still in Mussolini's fascism paired with the growing socialism of the country. In addition, I was able to reflect more deeply on the more ancient history of the city/states of Italy and the fierce pride different people felt coming from the various parts of the country before it was a country.”

A reader from Amherst read *The Box-car Children* by Gertrude Chandler Warner: “This is a book that was read aloud to our class in school, one chapter a day. I remember enjoying it. Reading it now, it struck me how everybody was very white!”

A reader from Waltham read *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder: “I picked this back up because of reading Ann Patchett's ‘Tom Lake.’”

A reader from North Andover read *Little House in the Big Woods* by Laura Ingalls Wilder: “I absolutely loved the Little House series growing up and read all the spinoffs and watched the show. Re-reading it now, I realized how many problematic things are in it, including multiple racial slurs. It makes me wonder how these books could have unconsciously shaped me as a kid and also why this series has such a wholesome reputation and image.”

A reader from Amesbury read *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare: “It was interesting to reread a book I read for the first time in high school. I had a better appreciation for it this time around.”

A reader from Northampton read *Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert: “I was really hoping to have more sympathy for Madame Bovary this go-round. I hated this book in my 20's because I couldn't understand her selfishness, idleness and apathy. I don't find my opinion changed, but have quite enjoyed being reacquainted with Flaubert's wonderful prose. The Lydia Davis translation certainly shines.”

A reader from Feeding Hills read *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville: “The first time I read Moby Dick I was sixteen; I reread it this month, 46 years later. I again found it an onerous read but this time around I was able to appreciate the symbolism and really savor the book. Just as in the first time around, I found it difficult to plow through the detours into whale biology and anatomy. Sprinkled within the story were some gems that I jotted in my commonplace book: “There is no folly of the beasts which is not infinitely outdone by the madness of men.” (Chap 87), and “Better sleep with a sober cannibal than a drunken Christian” (Chapter 3). are two of my favorites. I am really glad I revisited this book; it is definitely more meaningful with a stretch of my lifetime in between the two readings.”

A reader from Dedham read *The Five People You Meet In Heaven* by Mitch Albom: “Read this book in high school (2017)! Loved it then and loved it even more when I reread it. This was my 3rd time reading it!”

A reader from Brewster read *The Shipping News* by Annie Proulx: “It was such a pleasure to revisit the raw beauty of Newfoundland, meet such colorful characters such as Nutbeam and Jack Buggit, hear their stories and read as Quoye finds true love...”

A reader from Forestdale read *Almost Heaven* by Judith McNaught: “I read this years ago and loved it. It still is one of my favorites!”

A reader from HAMPDEN read *Smash Cut* by Sandra Brown: “Twisty turny plot.”

A reader from Seekonk read *Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger: “Yeah, I still really love this book. Holden not knowing who he is, nevermind who he'll become, is still so fucking real and terrifying. Holden's perspective is so painfully childlike and naive (plans of running away to live in a cabin and never have to talk to anyone again) touches so poignantly on not just the loss of innocence, but the fear of that loss. Just as when I read it years ago in sophomore English class, Holden's relationship with his sister tugs hard at my heartstrings. It's so fucking hard to watch your sibling grow up and know there's nothing you can do to save them from all the "Fuck You's" scribbled on the walls. All you can do is buy them a ticket for the carousel to try and keep them from growing up a little while longer. I think it's really easy to read this book as an adult and judge Holden's perspective and actions. But he's 16 and who really had anything figured out any better back then? Our worlds were so small, the future was so big and all we wanted to know was where the ducks went in the winter.”

A reader from Amherst read *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee: “Before beginning I let my mind wander through the pages of memory. I began, reading slowly and soberly. I couldn't help examining my conscience along the way. My face reddening with judgment and indignation...my pulse quickening with anticipation...my eyes misting and melting. Is it ever really possible to walk in someone else's shoes?”

A reader from Baldwinville read *Escape from Home* by Avi: “I revisited a book that I loved in middle school, and I was delighted to still enjoy it. The plot was full of fun cliffhangers, and it reminded me of the Victorian novels that I would go on to love in high school and college.”

A reader from Wellfleet read *Not Under Forty* by Willa Cather: “Love the pace of her writing now, I have more appreciation for her beautifully crafted sentences and thoughts. Still love her recounting meeting Flaubert's niece Caro!”

A reader from Bolton read *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams: “Still loved it!”

A reader from Andover read *The Secret History* by Donna Tartt: “This novel is about a small group of college students who spend almost all their time, both inside and outside of the classroom, together. After an unexpected event, one of them makes a decision which permanently changes their lives.”

A reader from Sandwich read *Holidays on Ice* by David Sedaris: “I first read this book when it was published in the 90s. I remember thinking it was incredibly funny. It still had me laughing, but I was surprised how some of the words used in jest are no longer acceptable. The book is 100% irreverent, 30% offensive and 1000% hilarious.”

A reader from Clinton read *Why We Broke Up* by Daniel Handler: “I first read this book back in 2011, and it spoke directly to my broken teenage heart. As an adult, it initially didn't quite resonate the same, but by the end, I was hit with an overwhelming wave of nostalgic grief. Wishing I could hug Min and tell her (and my young self!) that time isn't a panacea, but it does take the edge off those wounds.”

A reader from Nahant read *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J.K Rowling: “The book that I recently re-read and now have a different view on is Harry Potter. The main part that I have a different view on now is Draco Malfoy. I feel different about him now because as a kid, I always viewed him as a bad, selfish person, but now, I realize that he was also a victim and he was forced to make the actions that he made.”

A reader from Rockland read *Paper Towns* by John Green: “I read this book about 12-15 years ago. I still enjoyed it but hated how much it used “retarded” as a descriptor. Overall the book was still fun and kept you guessing.”

A reader from Milford read *The Outsiders* by SE Hinton: “I enjoyed reading this book again after so many years. I read it many times as a pre-teen, and it was both very familiar but also surprising. There were aspects of the story that went over my head when I was a child but it still resonated with me.”

A reader from Hampden read *Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger: “As a teen reader, I was excited by the explicit language; found Holden Caulfield relatable; and I was intrigued by the adventure. As a geezer reader, I found the explicit language predictable; Holden not relatable. Nevertheless, I continue to find the story intriguing. One undeniable aspect of *Catcher in the Rye* is that Salinger is a wonderful storyteller who all young people should read. Keep reading those banned books!”

A reader from Amherst read *This is How You Lose the Time War* by Amal El-Mohtar and Max Gladstone: “This was a book I initially read during the 2020 lockdown and I am so glad it held up as well as I remembered it. Having started college and declared my English major since first reading this book I have read a lot of works that have been mind opening but this one still sticks in my head and inspires me with its creative imagery and exhilarating pacing.”

A reader from Methuen read *The Chemist* by Stephenie Meyer: “I liked it just as much as when I read it in 2016. It has a bit of mystery, romance and suspense.”

A reader from Rochester read *Forever Amber* by Kathleen Winsor: “Read this book in the 70’s. Was captivated by how Amber made it up society ladder, and British culture in history. Was interesting reading it again, having much more knowledge now of British royalty than I did as a teenager in the 70’s.”

A reader from Mattapoisett read *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens: “I had not noticed before how anti-Semitic this book is. Fagin is not the only Jew described in a negative. However, Dickens is harshly critical of the workhouse system, and the book moves along quickly.”

A reader from LeClaire read *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck: “I chose this book because I had recently found there was a movie version of the book that I read so many years ago. I appreciated the book for more as an adult than I did as my younger self. I understood the avarice that can grip people when they don't have basic needs met. The dream, no, the drive, that a parent could have to create a better world for their children.”

A reader from Worcester read *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott: “Read it for a course in young adult literature and absolutely hated it, even though I loved it as a child- found it and the girls- quite frivolous.”

A reader from Woburn read *Animal Farm* by George Orwell: “I found this just as powerful as when I read it as a teenager, but a little more frightening and disturbing.”

A reader from Parkland read *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger: “It was time to revisit this classic, after 50 years, and it did not disappoint! I had not recalled most of the story and was surprised by the depth of Holden Caulfield's teenage angst and his lack of filter with his language, but I treasured so many of his descriptions of people and places, as well as his use of 'old-fashioned' phrases such as 'damn near...' 'dough' for money, and 'if you want to know the truth.' Salinger was a genius in how he captured the mind of a young man with his own Peter Pan syndrome who wanted to protect kids from the cruel world of adults.”

A reader from Cambridge read *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang: “I read this as required reading in middle school and didn't much care for it then. Now I can appreciate it's themes more but I'm still not the intended audience for it.”

A reader from Middleboro read *The Penderwicks* by Jeanne Birdsall: “I hadn't read this book in a while! I loved the series as a kid and my sister and I read the last one together. Such a cute story - perfect for older elementary kids and young tweens!”

A reader from Weymouth read *The Giver* by Lois Lowry: “I read this book when I was younger, and liked it. Now I'm teaching it, and it's interesting to see how the world has changed and how the students perceive a dystopia based on the world they're growing up in.”

A reader from Sutton read *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood: “Four decades ago, the story line seemed to me like the product of an expert writer's complex imagination. Yes, it was startling, but it seemed improbable. Re-reading it in the context of today's world, the fear that it so articulately elicits feels all too real.”

A reader from Boston read *Catherine, Called Birdy* by Karen Cushman: “I reread this after watching the movie adaptation by Lena Dunham. Turns out I feel pretty much the same about it now as I did in 1994 - which is to say I still love it, on the page and on the screen.”

A reader from Montague read *Cat's Cradle* by K. Vonnegut: “First read this book in college...50 years later it seemed even crazier! Eccentric characters, implausible plot and setting - the perfect fantasy read for a winter's night! Even better when foot to foot with someone (Boko-maru!).”

A reader from Beverly read *Chronicles of a Death Foretold* by Gabriel García Márquez: “I remember reading this book in high school and feeling really uncomfortable by it. As an adult I could see my discomfort but it didn't resonate in the same way.”

A reader from Sherborn read *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee: “Loved it just as much as I did 30 years ago but had a totally different perspective as an adult and parent. Also found it interesting to look at how mental illness was treated then vs now.”

A reader from Easthampton read *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath: “This January, I reread *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath, a book I first read fifteen years ago in California, and last read now in Easthampton, one left turn away from Plath's college town of Northampton. To me, as a teen, *The Bell Jar* was absolute electricity. Plath's language had a pulse, one that I hadn't found in the books assigned to me in school. On rereading, I noticed details that I had previously overlooked: the blink-or-you-missed-it reference to having had a baby, and, largely, Esther's efforts to obtain birth control. Somehow I'd forgotten this plot point though it was central to the book's ending.”

A reader from SCITUATE read *Little House on the Prairie* by Laura Ingalls Wilder: “Beloved book from childhood that upon adult reading reveals moments of concern. Quotes like "the only good Indian is a dead Indian" and the note that the land had no one living there, followed by a brief mention that there were 'Indians.'”

A reader from WAKEFIELD read *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain: “This is actually two books, but I re-read the pair after many years. This time I listened to the audio versions, which I found helped me with the dialect. I also forgot how much of a rascal Tom was. Huck was more endearing, and I enjoyed his adventures more, as well as seeing his friendship and connection with Jim.”

A reader from Erving read *Dare to be scared* by Robert D. San Souci: “I read this when I was younger, teens maybe twenties and honestly I don’t remember much of the book. I remember them being somewhat more scary. Now I find the stories to actually be creative, some a bit more sad or deep. I feel like now I get the stories and can sort of put them like a movie in my head, instead of thinking it was just boring and a bit corny instead of scary as I did when I was younger.”

A reader from Worcester read *The Cat In the Hat* by Dr. Seues: “I thought the book was a little unsettling and scary for children when I first read it. A cat causing havoc when parents are away. But after becoming a teacher realized how much children loved the book for its silliness and it's ease of learning to read.”

A reader from Hampden read *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott: “I loved reading this again! I feel a lot differently about some of the topics. She is a great writer.”

A reader from Fitchburg read *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald: “I remember not liking this book in high school, but couldn't remember details of the story. As I re-read it, I enjoyed the story...until the end. I hated the ending and I think that may be why I wrote off the book all those years ago.”

A reader from Wobur read *The Thornbirds* by Colleen McCullough: “This book still held the same feelings as I had years ago when I first read it.”

A reader from LOWELL read *The Great Divorce* by C.S. Lewis: “This book was recommended to me back in 2016/2017. At the time I was an active member in the church and had a closer relationship with God. That has changed since then. I remember really liking the book at the time and I was curious to see if my opinion would change now that I have a different perspective. I have to say I still very much enjoyed the book and see myself re-reading it often.”

A reader from Boston read *The Crunk Feminist Collection* by Brittney Cooper, Susana Morris, and Robin Boylorn: “A super interesting exploration into the world of Crunk Feminist praxis which is centered on uplifting the most marginalized and living out our best feminist lives!”

A reader from BEVERLY read *The Twenty-One Balloons* by William Pene Du Bois: “I have loved this book since I was about 13. As I reread it, I questioned a lot more about the viability, safety, and logistics of the story. I also wish there was more of a female presence. I have such wonderful memories of this book though, so it's still a favorite.”

A reader from South Hadley read *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* by Benjamin Alire Sáenz: “I first read Benjamin Alire Sáenz's "Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe" sometime in middle school. At the time, I didn't understand a lot of what I had been reading and so the novel quickly became discarded, left and hidden behind the other books on my shelves. I returned to it this month as a college student and was struck by how deeply and carefully the novel explored the intricacies of love (the expansion of love), family, and coming-of-age. It reminded me of what I had been learning about in my Asian American Studies courses -- the formations of family and kinship, the silences that families keep, and what happens when people choose to break those silences. It's a beautifully written book. I'm glad I returned to it. It will stay with me for years to come.”

A reader from Tewksbury read *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens: “Assume everyone knows the story. Last time I read this I was a teenager and loved it. I still love it now almost 60 years later, but Dickens' profuse wordiness got to me sometimes. That being said, I would not change a thing. God bless us!”

A reader from Amherst read *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold: "I originally read this 30 years ago; it solidified my feeling about the importance of wild spaces. I was gratified to re-read this book, and be reminded of Leopold's beautiful prose, as well as his clear discussion of critical land conservation."

A reader from Groton read *A Haunting on the Hill* by Elizabeth Hand: "This was a disappointing book - I suggest *The Haunting of Hill House* by Shirley Jackson."

A reader from Erving read *Matilda* by Roald Dahl: "I wasn't sure if it would still be meaningful, and it was."

A reader from Whately read *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson: "I read *Silent Spring* when I was a teenager. Back then I understood the concerns and began to realize how we were negatively impacting our environment. I feel more strongly now about protecting the environment. I also have a greater appreciation for all of the evidence Rachel Carson presented in this book. *Silent Spring* is still relevant today."

A reader from East Brookfield read *The Pecan Man* by Cassie Selleck: "Absolutely loved this book. The audio version is simply the best. The characters are so believable, this has to be a movie. Just found out there is a sequel called *The Truth About Grace* ...excellent read also."

A reader from Dracut read *Holly* by Stephen King: "Meh."

A reader from Shrewsbury read *Please Don't Eat the Daisies* by Jean Kerr: "I read this book as a teenager and didn't enjoy it very much but did like it this time."

A reader from Oakham read *Peer Gynt* by Henrik Ibsen: "In high school I was moved by *Peer Gynt's* anthem of living for himself alone. Re-reading it as an adult, I see he was just a selfish jerk."

A reader from Franklin read *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury: "I reread this book for the first time since high school and found a new appreciation for the characters, their motivations, and the world they inhabit. I found myself itching to reread this book as I thought about its resonance in American society today, and I wasn't disappointed."

A reader from Groton read *The Life Changing Magic of Tidying Up* by Marie Kondo: "I enjoyed reading this again and it has motivated me to go through another tidying session."

A reader from Malden read *The Great Gatsby* by F Scott Fitzgerald: "I didn't finish it the first time, used cliff notes. It was fine, but definitely didn't miss anything by skipping through it the first time :)"

A reader from Amherst read *Meet the Austins* by Madeleine L'Engle: "I read this book when I was young and wanted to re-read it. I enjoyed and hope to read the others in the series."

A reader from Ludlow read *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens: "I enjoyed the book very much and then tried to watch the movie. The movie was so off based that I was questioning the validity of what I read."

A reader from Attleboro read *The One and Only Bob* by Katherine Applegate: "I read this 4 years ago when it first came out, and I just read it with my class again. They really enjoyed it."

A reader from Saugus read *The Accidental Tourist* by Anne Tyler: "I thought I read this book 20-30 years ago, but after 're-reading,' I think I may have only started it and never finished it. I did enjoy the story, although it did feel a little dated since it was written in the mid-80s. I also feel it ended a bit abruptly, but not so much that you couldn't figure out where the story was going to go from there."

A reader from North Attleboro read *The Good Earth* by Pearl S. Buck: “I read this book in school many years ago and it always stuck with me. It still resonates with themes of greed, lust and taking the fruit of your hard work for granted.”

A reader from west boylston read *Hoops* by matt tavares: “It was a good book, i read it in 9th grade and i would reccomend.”

A reader from South Hadley read *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker: “I had not read this book since 1995, in sophomore English class in high school. I appreciated this month’s challenge, because there are so many books that I still want to read that I don’t usually re-read books. This struck me as more memorable and powerful. When I read it in high school, I was struck by Shug’s character, but I had not yet come out even to myself, so reading it now was special. Thanks for the challenge!”

A reader from Richmond read *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan: “Rereading this book for the first time in probably 10 year was a very interesting experience. The entertainment factor held up, but imagining the characters as actual 12 year olds and not envisioning myself as a much younger person who felt much older was surreal.”

A reader from Webster read *Flowers For Algernon* by Daniel Keyes: “I listened to the audiobook version after seeing a friend on Facebook consider it their favorite read of 2023. I read a version of it in middle school, and remembered the basic premise of it. However, reading the full novel as a young adult was a different experience. I was able to understand Charlie's struggle with emotions and human relationships as a result of his increased intelligence much better than I did as a kid, and in some ways found it relatable.”

A reader from Dracut read *Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen: “Good story about circus life on the 1930's. The author was descriptive and detailed, leading the reader to feel and see the story.”

A reader from Brewster read *Connie Bell, M.D.* by Helen Tann Aschmann: “Set in 1871, this book for teens (and one I initially read as a teen), follows a fictional female who is a part of the first graduating class of Chicago's Women's Medical College. It was still a nice read, but I did notice quite a few things now as an adult that could use some updating.”

A reader from Springfield read *Maus* by Art Spiegelman: “I first read Maus when I was 8 years old. I’m a lot older than I was then, and now I work for a Holocaust Remembrance organization. It is still as stunning and haunting as it was all those years ago.”

A reader from West Boylston read *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury: “I love you how poetic the book reads. The message hit so differently than the first time I read it. In high school, the English class discussions surrounded the idea of book bans and I recall we came to the conclusion of how dystopian/unrealistic that sounds, and yet here we are... The big thing I have a tough time looking over is how poorly women are depicted. Bradbury either writes a mindless housewife who he slaps around, or an uncomfortably described underage girl who the middle-aged married character deeply admires (but at least she is smart??). Tis a damn shame.”

A reader from Stoneham read *Catherine, Called Birdy* by Karen Cushman: “When I read this book 30 years ago I found it funny and entertaining. Reading it again, older and wiser, it is still very funny, laugh out loud sometimes, but it also was thought-provoking about how girls had little choice in their lives in the past and how I hope today's young women realize what they have and what they could lose.”

A reader from Lowell read *Invisible Man* by Ralph Elliso: “Still as powerful when I read it in high school, perhaps even more so in 2024.”

A reader from North Andover, MA read *Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess: “I read this book when I was 18 and it completely opened me up to enjoying reading again. The edition I read previously had a glossary to check what words meant. This experience feels so different without a cheatsheet to check word meanings. I recently learned to code in JavaScript and I've been studying Spanish more. I love that this book is a puzzle where each argot word is scanned for context and some fuzzy idea of what it means gets adopted, only to readjust again and get clearer and clearer.”

A reader from Salem read *Beloved* by Toni Morrison: “Deeply haunting, even more moving to reread as a mother now.”

A reader from Rockland read *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee: “I originally read this when I was young. I found there were a lot of nuances that I either didn't pick up on back then, or didn't remember. I highly enjoyed this re-read.”

A reader from Newton Upper Falls read *Liberal Education and the Public Interest* by James O. Freedman: “I chose to reread this book in light of recent controversies involving college presidents. On rereading it, I was struck by Freedman's ideas about the importance of the role of a college president as a public intellectual, willing to talk about moral issues and controversies of the day. Freedman does admit that it's important for a president to speak out as a private individual rather than in their role as college president so as not to influence the free debate of ideas on campus, In this day and age however, it seems challenging to speak out and not have it come across as a statement from the school. Freedman also noted that schools have come a long way in terms of leaving anti-semitism behind. Maybe so, but this quite clearly remains an issue today.”

A reader from Danvers read *Ella Enchanted* by Gail Carson Levine: “Now that I have a daughter of my own and am teaching a "revisionist fairy tales" unit at my school, I am revisiting this title.”

A reader from Newton Upper Falls read *Liberal Education and the Public Interest* by James O. Freedman: “I chose to reread this book in light of recent controversies involving college presidents. On rereading it, I was struck by Freedman's ideas about the importance of the role of a college president as a public intellectual, willing to talk about moral issues and controversies of the day. Freedman does admit that it's important for a president to speak out as a private individual rather than in their role as college president so as not to influence the free debate of ideas on campus, In this day and age however, it seems challenging to speak out and not have it come across as a statement from the school. Freedman also noted that schools have come a long way in terms of leaving anti-semitism behind. Maybe so, but this quite clearly remains an issue today.”

A reader from Chelmsford read *Redwall* by Brian Jacques: “I was pleasantly surprised to see that this novel still holds up decades after I first read it back in 6th grade or so. It's much darker than I remember it being. It's somewhat predictable but the cast of characters is delightful and it was nice to just read a really solid straightforward fantasy quest novel.”

A reader from North Weymouth read *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* by Richard Bach: “Having read this book decades ago and enjoying it as a simple story, I understood the author's deeper meaning this time around. I understood Jonathan.”

A reader from Irvine read *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee: “It's different to view Atticus as the white savior and Jim as only a plot device.”

A reader from South Hadley read *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding: “I remember loving this book in high school and was wondering how I would feel about it now in my 30s. It was great revisiting this and I am happy to know I still really enjoyed it.”

A reader from Sharon read *Love Story* by Erich Segal: “After seeing *Love Story* way in the back of a bookshelf, I selected it to see if it really was the romance that I remembered. I graduated college in 1970 and dated a Yalie. *Love Story* was our theme, although we’re on our 53rd year of marriage with neither one of us dying. *Love Story* brought back my college memories of early romance and marriage. The reading held up over the years that conveyed a true love story that provoked tears at the end. It still is a sweet little love story. I’m happy to have read it again and have the theme song running in my head.”

A reader from South Yarmouth read *Gone With The Wind* by Margret Mitchel: “Book was just I remembered from reading it years ago. Full of suspense it was nice to read a book that I read so many years ago again.”

A reader from Middleboro read *Little women* by Louisa May alcott: “Little women had me at the beginning. Couldnt out down. Characters were very personable. Louisa has a gift for telling the story without prejudice. Loved the Jo storyline the most. Loved how it worked out for her. When I had to read this in high school hated it. Loved it as an adult. Thanks for great read.”

A reader from Harvard read *Ethan Frome* by Edith Wharton: “I initially read this book as a sophomore in high school. I remembered liking it more than my classmates did (they complained loudly). It's not an exciting book (it wasn't back then, either), but it is a good examination of characters and our perception of them. I still think Zeena is given a bad rap. And more so than ever, I find Ethan immature and impulsive. Mattie is a non-factor (just young and lively compared to what surrounds Ethan, and based entirely on his opinions). I still feel like there was no build-up to their love story, especially to the point of terminal sledding. Although, maybe the lasting point is that a long Massachusetts winter can make anyone act illogically.”

A reader from Sandwich read *The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand: “I loved this book about self-reliance and absolute devotion to your highest ideals when I was a teenager. It reads totally differently as a parent and involved community member. The story is compelling. However, self and art first and only doesn't ring true for me anymore. There's also a rape scene that I didn't focus on in my younger years. I was not inspired to keep reading and got impatient with this absolute unflinching refusal to adapt.”

A reader from Bedford read *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin: “I first read this in high school, and I absolutely loved it. I wrote a huge term paper on it. Fast forward *many* years, and now I've read it as an adult and mother. Wow! What I loved hit me even harder.”

A reader from Plymouth read *The Last Mrs.Parrish* by Liv Constantine: “This book I read a few years ago and it was instantly a favorite. I am curious what I will think of it now that I frequently read thrillers!”

A reader from Fall River read *Harvey Potter's Balloon Farm* by Jerdine Nolen: “A nostalgic little read, read when I was in kindergarten! :)”

A reader from Sharon read *Harry Potter and the Sorcerers Ston* by J. K. Rowling: “Definitely still held up, even though it's a kids book. I enjoyed it but probably would not read it again.”

A reader from Dedham read *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J. K. Rowling: “This is a book I reread from the past and it is still incredibly enjoyable as I remember. It’s very comforting to read

something familiar. It's a book about a wizard who just finds out he is a wizard and how he grows up and makes friends."

A reader from Hadley read *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle: "I first read this in the mid 90s and was recently reminded about it by an article on the first edition's iconic cover art. I remembered really liking this as a kid, but I couldn't remember anything about it! I can't say that it still resonates with me all these years later, but I am grateful to have reread it and can see how this book is still on reading lists over 50 years after it's first publication."

A reader from Belchertown read *The Black Pearl* by Scott O'Dell: "The tension between the Church and the Indians was something I did not key into when I read this as a child."

A reader from Framingham read *Rumors* by Neil Simon: "This is actually a play, which I first read in high school (almost 15 years ago!) when I directed a version of it for my advanced theatre class. It's one of my favorite plays, but I have not read it for a number of years. It's been fun to revisit, and there happens to be a local production of it next month!"

A reader from Belchertown read *The Pilot's Wife* by Anita Shreve: "I loved this book years ago, and didn't know if I would be as moved by it years later. In spite of now knowing the plot, I was just as taken in with the stages of grief and discovery the main character goes through."

A reader from Boston read *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien: "I read the Hobbit as a child and didn't remember a damn thing, but I sure am glad I re-read it! Not my favorite book of all time, but a delightful adventure read. Listening to the audiobook, narrated by Rob Inglis, was lovely. I'm really excited about this challenge! Next up: Stone Butch Blues."

A reader from Foxboro read *Judy Moody* by Megan McDonald: "I used to think the book was boring but now it is very fun for me to read at my spare times."

A reader from Hartland read *Kurt Vonnegut* by Slaughterhouse-Five: "Well worth re-reading. Humorous, and devastating."

A reader from TEWKSBURY read *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry: "I read this over 25 years ago as a student. At the time, my world view was very limited. Reading it as an adult with my own children and a view on the very disjointed world we live in, I have a new appreciation and understanding for how people would be willing to risk their own lives for others."

A reader from Brookline read *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls: "I first read this book in High School. I remember having discussions about themes of poverty, homelessness in society, and family values in English class. One point of discussion being centered about "are they good parents?". I found myself being more upset at the parents this time around (maybe being older helps). Example upon example of the parents being terrible was so apparent and made me angrier than I remember. Such as the mom being selfish and not giving her children food in times of starvation. Letting a strange men in your house, who groped your daughter and doing absolutely nothing about it. There's an argument to be made that they did love their kids and the kids have thick skin because of it. However the selfishness of the parents throughout the whole book really stuck with me."

A reader from Tewksbury read *A Chant to Soothe Wild Elephants* by Jaed Coffin: "An interesting coming of age memoir about a half American, half Thai man who spends the summer before a last year of college in his mother's village in Thailand as a monk."

A reader from Beverly read *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac: "I most definitely do not feel the same way about this book as I did when I read this as an early teen. It felt torturous, it felt like it was taking me weeks to read it. With different eyes and a different mindset, it's not the lovely mess I remember but just a mess. The characters aren't these great Beat bohemian men, they are rude and cruel and not worth the effort to read their story."

A reader from Wilmington read *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom: "I think this is third time I've read this book over the course of my life: first in high school, then after college, and now when I'm married with two kids and nearly forty. This book never fails to touch my heart and to cause tears to flow. Such a beautifully written book that makes you want to completely reassess your life and reset things. Reading this book again now...I still love it as much as I once did, but with all the added life experiences I have now compared to when I was back in high school, it hits a bit harder. Going to go hug my kids and call my mom."

A reader from Minneapolis read *Everything on a Waffle* by Polly Horvath: "I wasn't sure if I would still enjoy a childhood favorite but I did! It was a wonderfully swift read and way funnier than I remembered. I actually laughed out loud while reading which hasn't happened in years. It was silly reading about Uncle Jack's plans for developing Coal Harbour on the waterfront directly after reading a very long, dense, piece of literary criticism that talked quite a bit about waterfront development."

A reader from Sharon read *Rebecca* by Daphne DuMaurier: "As I've grown and gotten married myself, looking back on the narrator's insecurities in a young relationship was very nostalgic. The book had just enough mystery to keep me interested but not scare me."

A reader from Danvers read *How To Be Good* by Nick Hornby: "Reading this 4.5 years post-divorce was very different than reading it when I thought I was in a happy relationship. It affirmed some thoughts I always had and opened my eyes in other ways."

A reader from Foxborough read *My Louisiana Sky* by Kimberly Willis Holt: "I read this book so many times when I was young, but I could hardly remember the story. It was interesting to revisit and see the story almost like new again. Now in hindsight, I can see that this book taught me about the experiences of people different from me, and helped me to understand and develop empathy."

A reader from Greenfield read *R.U.R* by Karel Capek: "I first read this play about 50 years ago. The translation read then was different than the Stepan S. Simek one recently published. There are many aspects which are a part of this play that were either not translated, or altered from the original work. I am amazed at how prescient and forward thinking this drama must have seemed in 1920. I also realise that when I was younger I missed much of the philosophic and political underpinings of this work. I am so happy that a recent and more complete translation has been published by MIT Press. And, that I have a more full understanding of the work and all that it is about - it definitely has relevance to our 21st century world. I regret that I can not honor the original language by including the necessary diacritical marks when writing down the creator and/or translators names."

A reader from Northfield read *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott: "I read this book when I was a teenager and I could relate to the girls when they were young and full of dreams. Reading the book as an adult, I could relate to the mother, her wishes and dreams for her children, along with the joy and heartache that comes with loving & caring for them. I still felt that Amy was spoiled and that Jo deciding to get married was a little off character for her. I enjoyed the book and remembered some of the events i.e. ice cream for Christmas, the girls putting on plays and Amy falling through the ice in winter. An unforgettable book. A classic."

A reader from Wilbraham read *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan: "I read this book initially when it first came out. I was obsessed with it and the whole series. I decided to reread it partially for this challenge and partially because I want to read the other series within the universe. I still loved this book but it was a bit harder to connect with than when I was a teen."

A reader from East Brookfield read *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros: "I read this in 9th grade and didn't appreciate it very much at the time. I enjoyed it much more the second time around!"

A reader from Southborough read *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf: "the story of the Ramsay family reads so much differently for me now 50 years after reading as a young person in college. marriage and raising a family makes this story resonate in a much more meaningful way."

A reader from Worcester read *Age of Innocence* by Edith Wharton: "I read this book in high school, and it was my favorite assigned reading. I still loved it. It still crumpled my heart at the end, but I felt I could appreciate the beauty of the prose more. Wharton is also so good at subtle storytelling -- she could have been a great mystery writer if she wanted. Side note -- she is a great ghost story writer. "Afterward" is one of my favorite ghost stories."

A reader from Northfield read *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles: "I read this book back in high school and my first impression was not good. I have a different perspective now on what the author was trying to portray. The looming war and the relationship between Finny and Gene had huge impacts on their lives. Peace meant different things to each of them."

A reader from Barnstable read *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles: "It was great to re-read this classic."

A reader from MASHPEE read *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck: "As a senior, I certainly interpreted this book much differently than what my thoughts were in the 60s when I first read it!"

A reader from Berkley read *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom: "Every time I read this, I love it even more. We live in such a fast paced, busy culture. We need reminders like this to slow down and appreciate the people in our lives and the small, insignificant moments that, in the end, are the most significant."

A reader from Tyngsborough read *Anne of Green Gables* by L.M. Montgomery: "This book hits much differently as an adult as it did when I was a child. I have a deeper appreciation for Anne and can relate more to Marilla than in the past."

A reader from Braintree read *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins: "I still loved this book as much as when I was in high school; it has everything you need in a YA dystopian book to keep you wanting to read more."

A reader from Stoneham read *1984* by George Orwell: "How different it is to read this book at 40 compared to when I was in high school. The first time it was scary but now can feel terrifying knowing so much more about the world and grasping more historical events. How could one person have had such insight to write this?!"

A reader from Foxborough read *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville: "I almost did not re-read it as it was so long and I remembered my college student response (from over 45 years ago) as it being a tedious experience. However, I was struck by the diversity of the cultures of the characters and Melville's respect for them. It was much, more more than a very long tale of a whale."

A reader from Attleboro read *Bridge To Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson: "OMG! So much different to read as an adult. So much deeper, more emotional, and so much has changed in how kids spend their

downtime nowadays. Same book, same physical person reading it, but such a different emotional person reading it. Nice experience.”

A reader from Sunderland read *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* by Betty Smith: “I read ‘A Tree Grows in Brooklyn’ when I was in junior high school, and it was like reading a whole new book when I re-read it this month. At 12 years old I was not mature enough to understand some of the underlying socio-economic themes, and could only relate to Francie's development in the context of her family. I am glad I read this new 75th anniversary edition, which includes a forward by Anna Quindlen and an afterward by Betty's daughter.”

A reader from Arlington read *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* by Betty Smith: “I remember reading this book as a young woman growing up in poverty and resonating so much with the shame and ostracization the protagonist, Francie, experienced- but also the joy she made out of it and the beauty she found in difficult circumstances. The circumstances of my life are very different now, but returning to this book helped me get in touch with my inner child once more and give her a big hug.”

A reader from Belchertown read *A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams: “I got more out of this book as an adult than I did as a kid.”

A reader from STOUGHTON read *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins: “I first read this series over 10 years ago when it first came out. I still enjoyed the series overall, but was not team Gale or Peeta. I feel like it made more sense not as a love story.”

A reader from South Hadley read *East of Eden* by John Steinbeck: “I had to read this in high school for summer reading, and I remember really enjoying it. I've been wanting to reread it for 20 years. I admit it's very slow going so I haven't finished yet, so I don't know if my feelings about the book have changed or not, but it's great to finally have a reason to reread it!”

A reader from Reading read *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White: “I so enjoyed this book. I think it was only read to me in grade school. White's descriptions are so detailed, probably not appreciated by young readers like they were by me!”

A reader from North Dighton read *The Night Circus* by Erin Morgenstern: “I read this many years ago and remember it being an excellent book. It was still good but actually not as wonderful as I remembered it. I think I've read a lot since my first reading of *The Night Circus* and with more perspective, my opinions have changed. Still good but not as excellent.”

A reader from Attleboro read *The Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane: “I had to read the *Red Badge of Courage* in high school in the 1980s, and I had found it boring and hated it. Upon reading it today, I see how well written it is. I love the language that Crane uses to describe the youth's surroundings. I felt like I was there. I'm glad I read it again.”

A reader from Braintree read *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger: “I remember very much liking “*The Catcher in the Rye*” by J.D. Salinger when most of my classmates in an all girl Catholic high school in the early seventies did not. What immediately struck me today is that Sr. Helen certainly went against the norm assigning a book that portrayed a teen boy's depression/anxiety, under age drinking, night life of NYC, sexual activity and plenty of swearing. The invaluable gift of fiction is that you can “experience” many things outside the realm of your actual daily life. That was the case then. Today I could appreciate the writing and nuances while noticing some terms and references that are dated. This senior woman certainly no longer sees Holden Caulfield through a 14 year old girl's eyes, but I still wanted to read his

story and hope that he will apply himself next time at the next school, but this jaded adult is much less sure that he will be able to.”

A reader from Hanover read *A Little Princess* by Frances Hodgson Burnett: “I remember getting "A Little Princess" by Frances Hodgson Burnett at a book fair when I was 9 years old. It took me a long time to read it and then I reread it at least 3 times! I loved orphan stories. I liked the thrill and anxiety of knowing something the characters didn't. I wanted to tell, "The child you are looking for is right next door!" In retrospect, this child, Sara, is too amazing! Not sure any child could be so strong against bullies and optimistic in such a horrible downturn of events. I loved the book for its great all is well with the world ending but probably because I never experienced bullying and extreme hunger so the book was more a fantasy world than a reality world. I can hope that Sara's survival skills could be helpful today, but I am afraid that the reality would be too bleak. We can all hope for better endings!”

A reader from Chelmsford read *Blackthorn Winter* by Katheryn Reiss: “I read this murder mystery book as a teen, and remembered really liking it, but couldn't remember the plot whatsoever. On the re-read as an adult, I have some quibbles with the behavior/dialogue of the townsfolk and the protagonist's choices (such as voicing murder-suspect suspicions of literally everyone she's met), but the third act really ramps up the tension. The reveal of the protagonist's past surprisingly dark. The murderer reveal was cleverly done. Considering I still love a mystery thriller (such as Ruth Ware), I can see why I enjoyed this book as a teen.”

A reader from Boston read *John Green* by Turtles all the way down: “I read turtles all the way down when I was 16 and in high school and now I'm in first year of my masters and it still feels the same.”

A reader from Sandwich read *The Brief and Frightening Reign of Phil* by George Saunders: “Humorous and heartbreaking. So strange and yet so full of humanity. A lesson in how to be a good neighbor over a good citizen. And a reminder that the worst of our history is repeatable if we don't pay attention.”

A reader from Ipswich read *The Long Winter* by Laura Ingalls Wilder: “I loved this book as much as I did the first time I read it 45 years ago.. This brave, upright and independent family is the epitome of everything I believe made this country so great. I was so proud of my country 45 years ago but sadly not anymore.”

A reader from Sharon read *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway: “I first read this book in high school and did not love it. Rereading it, I was more understanding of the old man's pursuit and appreciated the narrative more. But I still did not love it.”

A reader from Florence read *The Stranger* by Albert Camus: “For this challenge, I chose *The Stranger* by Albert Camus, something I'd read 40+ years ago in high school and barely remembered. It is narrated in the first-person point of view by the protagonist, Meursault, an amoral and apathetic young Frenchman living in 1940s Algiers, who commits murder and is sentenced to death. *The Stranger* is filled with questions regarding mortality, justice, morality, religion, and faith. Within the confines of a novella, Camus manages to establish numerous symbols and motifs - unrelenting heat, Salamano's dog, the courtroom, the chaplain, the elder home, Meursault's cell - that drive the main theme that the universe is indifferent to human life. To do this within the space of 154 pages is an astounding feat. While Camus rejected labeling *The Stranger* "existential" (preferring "absurdist"), it undeniably poses awesome existential questions which, as an adult, I find intriguing. By choosing a high school reading list novella, I thought I was choosing something quick and easy for my first challenge. Clearly, I didn't understand this novel when I read it in the 1980s; short it may be, easy it is not. I'm glad that this challenge encouraged me to revisit a masterpiece that the teenaged me had naively written off. Lesson learned.”

A reader from Rockland read *Sarah, Plain and Tall* by Patricia MacLachlan: “I had a hard time choosing a book I had read before. I don’t often reread books, but I was suggesting this one for my daughter and decided it would be a perfect quick reread. I realized I still love it, but now as a mom I was listening to Sarah’s POV rather than Anna’s as I had when I read it as a child. I would have considered it one of my favorite books from childhood but did not know it was a series. Now I want to read them all, and recommend them to my students.”

A reader from Georgetown read *A Great and Terrible Beauty* by Libby Bray: “I read this when I was a young adult and remembered really enjoying it. It was my first ever “fantasy” novel where it delved into other realms and such and remember finding it dramatically different from anything else I ever read. Reading it now, it was an entertaining read but harder to relate to as the characters are in high school (I am not) and I’ve read other more recent fantasy style books that have had more world building/way more detail put in so I had a hard time with the simpleness of this book. Interesting!”

A reader from Rockland read *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger: “I chose this book because I read it a lot 15-20 years ago. When I was a kid/teenager, Holden Caulfield seemed so cool and rebellious. Now he just seems depressed and lost. I still enjoyed it, but it really hit differently from an adult perspective.”

A reader from Boston read *Stonewords: A Ghost Story* by Pam Conrad: “I picked this book up from my local library on a whim probably around age 10 and have proceeded to re-read it many times since then. As an adult, I remembered it again and found a former library copy to buy but have not read my own copy until now. I'm so glad I did. It holds up well. It's a quick read but it's well-written, emotional, melancholy, spooky. I love this book just as much as I did 30 years ago!”

A reader from Norton read *Stitches* by David Small: “This is a graphic memoir of illustrator David Small's difficult childhood. The first time I read this I wasn't a parent; it definitely hit differently this read.”

A reader from Beverly read *Over Sea, Under Stone* by Susan Cooper: “What child, smitten by C. S. Lewis and Lloyd Alexander wouldn't love The Dark is Rising Sequence? As a tween I was obsessed with Cooper's series of ordinary kids drawn into the ultimate epic: The return of King Arthur. Fast forward 40 something years (yikes) and this book stands the test of time: adventure, forces of good and evil, ancient mysteries . . . My only regret is that I cannot find my original copies of the series. With all of the great books to read, this book (and series) is definitely worth a revisit.”

A reader from SANDISFIELD read *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles: “What a beautifully written book. Much better when the reader is older and wiser.”

A reader from Quincy read *The Outsiders* by Aoife: “I chose to re-read this book because I felt like I read it when I was too young to truly understand the themes in it. Unfortunately, I think this time around I was too old because the attempt to make a point felt clunky this time around. I am still glad I gave it another try though!”

A reader from norwood read *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott: “I reread this classic as an adult. Read it as an young teen 40 years ago. My takeaway from reading this as an adult is that the March family is extremely progressive for the time period. The values and ideals of the family and their aspirations for the four girls are not typical of mid 1800's. This is more clear to me as an adult than a teen”

A reader from Fairhaven read *Amulet Book One* by Kazu Kibuishi: “Amulet is about a family that moves to an old house. Later in the book, they find that the house has a basement that leads to a world that is like the opposite of Earth. During their time down there, the mother gets eaten by a man-eating slug and the

two children, Emily and Navin, go to find help. Eventually, they find a house circled by a large pond that is almost like the house they moved into on Earth. Once they see the house they notice the Elf King's son watching them and they go to find help. A robot bunny named Miscit (my favorite character) leads them into the mansion where they will begin their story to save their mother. My favorite part of the book is when Emily fights the Elf King's son. After finally saving their mother, they find she is in a coma and they must go find an antidote for the poison. That is how book one ends. 5 out of 5 stars!"

A reader from Rockland read *Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne: "Read this in high school many years ago, but I felt that I understood Hester and her fey daughter, Pearl, more this time around."

A reader from Stoneham read *The Pit and the Pendulum and other stories and poems* by Edgar Allan Poe: "Scarier than I remembered. His use of language is go great. The poetry is memorable as well."

A reader from ALLSTON read *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran: "I first read this book as part of an Arabic Literature class as an undergrad. I enjoyed it at that time, but I think at 19 I had not yet experienced enough of life to truly appreciate the wisdom in it. Coming back to it again at 33 it was much more apparent why this is such a famous and beloved book worldwide. My favorite quote: 'The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain.'"

A reader from East Bridgewater read *Hallowe'en Party* by Agatha Christie: "Released with new name (A Haunting in Venice). I originally read this as a teenager. It's now 50 years later. This is not one of Christie's strong books. I saw a lot more holes in the plot, but still enjoyed it and found the personalities of Poirot and others very compelling. It was also interesting that one of the themes seemed to be the expected criminal acts among young people (the book was written in 1969) and how some people seemed to be tolerant, and others condemning. Still, two of the heroes were the teenage boys, and this choice may have been Christie's opinion on this subject. I also viewed the new film, and found the changes interesting - least because of the change in setting. Discussed in a group, I saw even more 'similarities' in the film version. This was a good exercise. I have revisited other books read in the past, with different impressions. In general, I realize how much 'adult' behavior and emotions I didn't attend to when young."

A reader from Duxbury read *A Court of Thorns and Roses* by Sarah J. Maas: "When I first read this book I was a bookseller at a bookstore and didn't quite read it the same way I read it this time- first time was to be able to recommend it to shoppers, so I quickly went through it in a few days. This time I took my time to read it and get to know the characters, the plot, and the world-building. I absolutely loved the way Maas writes her female characters."

A reader from Billerica read *Matched* by Ally Condie: "I first read "Matched" for my 8th grade English class. Although this type of book, dystopian fantasy, was what I enjoyed at the time, I found I had trouble getting through this one in class. I wasn't sure if it was because it was an assigned book or another reason but I opted to try reading it again now, a decade later. I found that this book is still not my favorite, it wasn't because it was assigned. I just don't think I enjoy the author's writing style and felt like it was a slow pace most of the time."

A reader from Boston read *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky: "I had read this book first when I was in grade 7. Since then, I have read it more than 30 times. I really resonate with the protagonist. The difference is that now I understand the motivations and behaviors of the protagonist much better because of my enhanced maturity. I can connect with the protagonist on a much deeper level."

A reader from Fitchburg read *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe: “I first read this book in college on the plane to Senegal for a short study abroad trip there. I was glad for an excuse to read it again!”

A reader from Boston read *A Court of Silver Flames* by Sarah J Maas: “First read back in 2022 but did not pay attention to the details in the world building.”

A reader from BERKLEY read *Animal Farm* by George Orwell: “Great commentary on society at any point in time.”

A reader from Dover read *The Three Body Problem* by Liu Cixin: “Very interesting sci-fi book!”

A reader from Reading read *Chernowitz!* by Fran Arrick: “A young adult book from 1983 about a teenage boy who is bullied for being Jewish. Despite its age, the book is incredibly relevant to today. I first read this book in seventh or eight grade, and given recent events I decided to revisit it for January's theme. The only thing I'd remembered from the entire book is the fact that the bullies (including his former best friend) taunted him by calling him "CKC" ("Christ Killer Cherno"). When I first read this, I think it hit different because I was the same age and I was somewhat inured to the world of adolescents and how brutal they could be to one another. More significantly perhaps, I lived in a very white town and didn't really witness much, if any, bigotry (which is definitely not to say it wasn't there - I just never witnessed it, as far as I can recall). Reading this as an adult, I found it utterly harrowing. The bullying the protagonist goes through in an otherwise idyllic New York suburb would quite possibly turn out quite differently today - it's my impression the schoolyard "kids don't snitch, even on bullies" rule isn't as ironclad in today's generations. But the school's ultimate response to the bullying, while powerful, would also never be allowed (except perhaps for high school seniors). I definitely believe this book opened my young eyes up to bigotry in a way my actual experience of life had not up to that point. I think it made me a better person to have read it, and I wish it were still the sort of book that was required reading in schools today.”

A reader from Chelmsford read *American Psycho* by Bret Easton Ellis: “The first time I read *American Psycho*, I found some of the material to be rather shocking, which I feel like overshadowed other aspects of the book. I appreciated it more on the reread.”

A reader from Cambridge read *Animal Farm* by George Orwell: “I read this for the first time in middle school and remembered not enjoying it so chose to reread! This book is such masterfully written commentary on the dangers of totalitarianism. I enjoyed it much more this time around!”

A reader from Chelmsford read *Animal Farm* by George Orwell: “I enjoyed reading this book with the different lens of age and experience. I first read this as required in high school and remember being bored by it. After having lived a full life and experienced some of the political and social themes explored in *Animal Farm* I found it more thought provoking than I did in high school.”

A reader from SOUTH HADLEY read *The Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* by e.l. konigsburg: “re-read a childhood favorite. It holds up, even better with the edition I have with an update from the author written in 2002 (the original book was published in 1967) noting changes at the Met and in the world from the different time periods.”

A reader from Amherst read *Circe* by Madeline Miller: “I originally started this book when I first moved to Massachusetts. The hurdles of moving made me stop reading it and I just picked it up again a year and a half later. I'm glad I did. While the constraints of the original sources give the lead character little to no agency, the ending is nothing short of masterful.”

A reader from Norwell read *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding: “I read *Lord of the Flies* as my summer reading my freshman year of high school, which was back in 1996. I recall liking the story for its adventurous backdrop, particularly since I romanticized getting lost on an uninhabited island. I was horrified by the complete loss of control at the end of the book but, as a 15 year old kid, I didn't fully grasp the ending as a commentary on the nature of society. Today, I can see more clearly the theme of order vs. chaos. The boys go from adventurous, free-spirited humans to 'inimical creatures' and 'savages', unquestionably following a leader set on destroying any voices of reason that lay in opposition. I found it interesting to see the change in Jack's character, how he agreed with Ralph in the beginning, holding a firm understanding that rules should be set to avoid becoming savages, and yet in his final hours, he becomes a savage himself. In the political climate we exist in today, I think the story has powerful connections to what happens to society when we, either out of fear or admiration, follow a power hungry leader who lacks a voice of reason.”

A reader from Spencer read *The Sirens of Titan* by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr: “I read this book back in High School for summer reading and remembered almost nothing about it besides enjoying it and the fountain. I loved revisiting this, it was funny, evocative, thoughtful. I don't understand why this work isn't more popular, I liked it way better than *Slaughter House 5* that I read for the first time last year.”

A reader from Stoughton read *Beloved* by Toni Morrison: “I last read this in high school and recognized that it was a work of genius. I remember identifying more with Denver, the teen girl who is desperate for approval and eventually needs to make her way in the world. I was intimidated to read it again because I remembered it being a difficult read due to the subject matter. This time around I still think it's a work of genius and difficult subject matter. But this time around, as a mother myself, I feel so much for Sethe. I also feel I understood the historical and cultural context, particularly surrounding slavery and racism, better than I did as a high schooler.”

A reader from Brighton read *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne: “Time to come back to this classic as an adult. It was a challenging read as a high school student. The closing scenes broke my heart and took my breath away.”

A reader from Avon read *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan: “I read this book when it was first published. I reread it to compare to the Disney series. It is a strong storyline and is suspenseful. There are enough twists to keep the adult mind entertained. I enjoyed my second reading. Still holds my interest.”

A reader from Lowell read *Castle waiting* by Linda medley: “An old favorite.”

A reader from Millers Falls read *Ethan Frome* by Edith Wharton: “I hated this book in high school, but I've read and liked-a lot!- other Wharton since then, so I thought I'd give this a try. Unfortunately, forty years has made virtually no difference. I still don't like this book. But I'm glad I read it again.”

A reader from Hanson read *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood: “I first read this when it came out in 1998. At that time I was struck mainly by the horrors of religion and reliability on computers to ease everyday life being used by rich white men to take over the country and hold everyone hostage, a la “1984.” Rereading 25 years later. I am shattered at how close we now are to this becoming a reality. I'm also struck by how all of the things that Offred experiences and witnesses are things that have already happened at some point in history somewhere in the world. And that's what I see in our world today. People are using the worst of human nature to control others, playing us off each other while they sit back pulling strings and manipulating our lives. In essence, on first reading I found it a cautionary tale. On rereading, I found it a playbook for those among us looking to control women and the 'other' for their own personal benefit.”

A reader from Wrentham read *Are you there God, it's me Margaret?* by Judy Blume: "I read this book as a child and had wanted to read it again before watching the movie. This challenge made it a good opportunity to do so."

A reader from Seekonk read *The Outsiders* by SE Hinton: "I fell in love with this book at 11 and have never looked back. At 37 and a teacher, I re-read this with all the same heartbreak--with an added yearning for protecting these kids."

A reader from Chicopee read *Nobody is ever missing* by Catherine Lacey: "At times frustrating, but this second time reading it, I find myself feeling more compassion towards the main character. Catherine Lacey is a phenomenal writer. Her narration gets in your head as if they were your own thoughts. At times I had to put the book down, but that doesn't take away from the level of skill the author exhibits."

A reader from Salem read *The Compleat Works of Wllm Shkspr (Abridged)* by Adam Long: "I first read this book back in the early 2000's. My Dad had a copy (the copy I read again for this challenge, actually) in his script library in his office. One day, while poking around, I discovered the book, sat down, and spent the next few hours laughing my butt off. I wanted to see if the jokes stil made me as amused as when I was younger, and they were still definitely great. It wasn't quite as hilarious, as I knew what was coming, but still most enjoyable. I also realized many of the word associations and silly phrases I've used for years are actually from this book! A lovely walk down memory lane."

A reader from Seekonk read *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton: "I read this in middle school and remember feeling disconnected from the characters. As an adult / parent / teacher, I felt for Johnny and Ponyboy. I saw so much of my students in this book and I can understand why schools have it in their curriculum. But, just as from my own experience with the book in my youth, sometimes you might not be ready to connect with the book."

A reader from Somerville read *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams: "I was suggested this book by many teachers and adults I admired when I was in high school. After several attempts, I put it down. The goofiness seemed too forced; too self-aware. Thankfully, I decided to give it another go. Now, as an adult who has learned not to take everything so damn seriously, I immensely enjoyed this book. I marvel at how Adams can write about the absolute destruction of the earth as a springboard into a hilarious and thought-provoking book."

A reader from Florence read *Angelina on Stage* by Katharine Holabird: "I appreciate more now the sibling rivalry/jealousies and the wonderfulness of sibling friendship now that I'm an adult sibling and parent."

A reader from Lowell read *Under the Never Sky* by Veronica Rossi: "This is a book that I read in early high school and I loved it. It stuck in my head as one of my favorites. Now that I've read it again, I still enjoyed it as a good story but I don't think it would stand out as much if it was my first read. As a younger reader, I think I was captivated by the love story that played out in a life threatening situation. Now as an adult, it feels a little more cliché and I appreciated the world that Rossi built more than the romance. The bizarre nature of the dystopian society stood out to me more than it did as a teenager and I think I caught some of the parallels being made to modern life now more than I did then. Overall, still a good book. Would definitely recommend it to high schoolers."

A reader from Yarmouthport read *My side of the mountain* by Jean Craig head George: "It was my favorite book as kid. I loved the idea of abandoning everything and creating a life in the wilderness. Reading as an adult, I felt sorry for the main character. The hardships endured and not understanding why moving to the woods was his best option. Still a beautiful story."

A reader from North Reading read *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* by Neil Gaiman: "I first read this in one sitting on the day it came out in 2012. Nearly 12 years later and now reading it as a mother and a woman in my 40s, I definitely noticed different things and found I didn't really remember the story - which is what the story is about. But I still loved it!"

A reader from Attleboro read *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* by Judy Blume: "I read this book about 45 years ago and still love the book. When I first read the book I was concentrating more on the coming of age piece and not how much the book is also about religion. The book holds up and is very interesting whether you're a young person or an adult. Interesting to me is that Margaret's grandmother is 60 years old and I'll be turning 60 in a couple of years. Great book!"

A reader from Melrose read *Breasts and Eggs* by Mieko Kawakami: "This is a book I started when it was first published but finally decided to try it again. It's a character driven book centered around a childless woman (though not by choice) who turns to her sister, niece, colleagues and the internet for an answer to the questions "what does it mean to be a mother?" and "what does it mean to be someone's mother?"

A reader from Sterling read *Inkheart* by Cornelia Funke: "This book has always stuck with me as one that I absolutely adored when I was younger. Rereading it now, it is much darker than I remembered, but still as wonderful. It is above all a book about the power of stories and imagination."

A reader from Yarmouth Port read *Redwall* by Brian Jacques: "I loved this series of books as a young child (when I was interested in reading the Hobbit and Lord of the Rings, Redwall was a mix of those with animals as the characters). I reread the first of the series now as an adult and was surprised by how much I didn't remember and how much fighting, sadness, and actual death there is in the book. I'm glad I revisited as an adult and got a fresh perspective."

A reader from Whitman read *Shutter Island* by Dennis Lehane: "I read this book 15 years ago and reread it to see if a mystery can be reread once the mystery is gone. I am happy to report it was a success, the book is so lush even though I remembered a lot of it, it kept me entertained and when push came to shove, I had forgotten the biggest part of the mystery!"

A reader from Danvers read *The Bean Trees* by Barbara Kingsolver: "It makes me sad that immigration is still a topic of conversation 20+ years after originally reading this book."

A reader from Plymouth read *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles: "A re-read from high school over 20 years ago, I definitely related to it differently this time around."

A reader from Bolton read *Annotated rime of the ancient mariner* by Samuel Taylor coleridge: "The notes were way longer than the book! But I haven't read this since seventh grade. I think I appreciated the poetry much more now that it's easier for me to read 18th century english."

A reader from Allston read *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S Lewis: "Loved this book as a kid and Narnia is definitely a world I would pick to live in even with new adult fantasy world favorites! Although I was worried the religious overtones would impact my reading as an adult, I enjoyed greatly! Made it even more special that I was reading a copy gifted to me by my late book loving grandfather! Thank you for this prompt- it came at the right time and had more meaning than I thought it would!"

A reader from South Yarmouth read *Lord of the Flies* by Golding, William: "I had to read this one in high school but I hated it so much I couldn't finish. (I got an A on my paper, though.) I tried to read it again as an adult and I regret to inform you that I still hated it so much I couldn't finish."

A reader from Rockland read *Microserfs* by Douglas Coupland: "I first read this book in 1995. When I was 25. I know have a 25 year old and I'm the age of the parents in the book."

A reader from Blackstone read *Something Wicked This Way Comes* by Ray Bradbury: "I first read this book in my late teens-early twenties. I loved it then for its Halloween "flavor". I read it this month at age 75 and was delighted with the exquisite detail, character development, plot and resolution. I have a much better appreciation of the father now than I had then."

A reader from Brighton read *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker: "I LOVED re-reading this book! I read this book in high school and remembered being moved by the beautiful, strong, and fascinating characters in the book. I also remember loving the way Walker shapes the women's relationships and how they endure even throughout life-long separation. Upon reading it this month, I was newly struck by Walker's profound descriptions of spirituality and God, through the Celie's wrestling with her own faith and Nettie's experiences/struggles as a missionary in Africa. I think because Celie's struggles match my current questions about faith, I resonated with her character more deeply during this read. Overall, I'm so glad I came back to this book. I could've chosen it for next month's prompt but I'm glad I didn't wait- I needed this read now!"

A reader from Atkinson read *The Outsiders* by S.E.Hinton: "Every time I read this book, I fall more in love with it. The Outsiders is a classic that never gets old."

A reader from Brookline read *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame: "I read this book when I was a child as it's cast of animal characters often makes it come across as a children's story and I had remembered it as such. I was however surprised to find it full of rich commentary on society life, privilege, and greed. Relevant even to modern times, the obsession of Toad with motorcars and indulgent self-flattery reminds me of modern fascination with the latest smartphones and social media. Worth the read (or re-read) for any age."

A reader from Woburn read *Slam Book* by Ann M. Martin: "Ooo boy...this book does not hold up well today, particularly the ending."

A reader from NORTHAMPTON read *Animal Farm* by George Orwell: "Just as I remembered it. Still stands today, especially given the current political situation."

A reader from Sandwich read *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift: "I read this book years ago and remembered three of the countries Gulliver visited. I enjoyed the imaginative mind of the author then and still am amazed at the extent of his creativeness. I realize now that there is quite a bit of satire underlying the adventures of Gulliver which I don't believe I was aware of when first reading this story."

A reader from Brookline read *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott: "I read this as a kid in the mid-1960s and didn't remember much about it. I enjoyed the themes of independence and the importance of friendship and family. I especially liked the friendships the "little women" had with Laurie, which I suspect was not typical of the times. The book was OK as I found the writing style to be dense and tough to wade through much of the time. My favorite books are the ones that are hard to put down. This wasn't one of those. But, I'm glad I read it as an adult, especially since The Orchards is nearby."

A reader from Haverhill read *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan: "It was my favorite book in middle school so I decided to reread it with my friends partner. We both still loved it after all these years!"

A reader from Reading read *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee: "I read this book in high school and remember thinking it was good, especially for a book we "had to read." Reading it 20 years later... what a

different experience! A timeless classic indeed. The story is multilayered and the messages are so important and relevant still. Atticus is an incredible human being and Scout is a riot!”

A reader from Woburn read *The old man and the sea* by Ernest Hemingway: “I absolutely loathed this when I read it like 16 years ago. This time I didn’t particularly like it, but didn’t still hate it at least.”

A reader from West Boylston read *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller: “This book still sparks intrigue and interest for me even 15 years later. I’m fascinated by the with trials themselves. However, reading it now as an adult with a child in school, rather than as a teenager who was in school I can see the book in other ways now that I couldn’t then. For instance, how easily rumors spread, how one little accusation made in a fit of jealousy or rage can derail someone else’s life. Depending on the accusation made, and the consequences of that, it can cause more accusations leading to hysteria. It’s also relatable in some ways to having gone through Covid as asthmatic individual. The slightest hint of a cough, resulted in the accusation that you were walking around exposing others to Covid. The quiet whispers, and stares as a result of the hysteria caused. While very different situations, they feel as they have parallels in the theories.”

A reader from Attleboro read *Night* by Elie Wiesel: “I have read a lot of text about the Holocaust and WWII since I first read “Night”. This reading was just as impressive and heartbreaking.”

A reader from seattle read *Get the f*ck out your own way* by MJ Harris: “I re-read the book and I felt that all these years between the first read and this time read, I have had so many experiences and I have introspected so much that I have processed my transformational process more consciously. I don’t do instant response, or instant gratification and can start my transformational journey from scratch on my own, and no matter how hard is the process I have the resilience as the book gives the courage for that. The book helped me realise my patterns more whole-heartedly and with time my acceptance level has increased while earlier when I read I felt that its all words. So, I am glad :)”

A reader from Dracut read *1984* by George Orwell: “I remember reading this in 1984 and thought it preposterous that there would be cameras and microphones everywhere. Today that doesn’t seem so crazy.”

A reader from Oxford read *1984* by George Orwell: “Although I have read this book several times, I like reading it again as its themes have relevance to the modern times.”

A reader from Blackstone read *The Water Dancer* by Ta-Nehisi Coates: “Listened to the audiobook
★ ★ ★”

A reader from Salem read *A tale of two cities* by Charles Dickens: “I first read this book in high school where I quickly fell behind and had to rush through to try to catch up. Reading it on my own time has been much more pleasurable. Having already read it but a while ago, I got excited for the parts I remembered while also for the parts I forgot about!”

A reader from Wilmington read *Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince* by JK Rowling: “This is a re-read of one of my favorite childhood books. It’s just as magical as the first time around. It also brings me right back to the emotions I experienced the first time around - when I didn’t know what was going to happen. Definitely still such a comfort book for me. It is interesting that as an adult I relate more with the adult characters. I can’t wait to read the series to my daughter and watch her experience the magic herself for the first time.”

A reader from Boston read *Until the Real Thing Comes Along* by Elizabeth Berg: “I first read this book in 2016. Elizabeth Berg is one of my favorite authors. Her writing style is appealing because of her finely drawn characters and her attention to the details of everyday life. In 2016, I gave this novel 4 out of 5 stars on Goodreads. In my second reading, I picked up on some problems with the storyline. This time around, Patty's romantic dilemma (she is in love with her childhood best friend, Ethan, who as it turns out is gay) seemed a bit selfish and immature. I wanted to tell Patty to grow up, accept what she can't change and move on with her life. Also, I would like to have seen a more detailed picture of Patty's family life growing up and her relationship with her siblings, who play a minor role in the story. Showing more completely the family dynamics surrounding her mother's unexpected diagnosis would make this subplot more poignant. My rating on Goodreads today is 3.5 stars.”

A reader from Malden read *And Then There Were None* by Agatha Christie: “I absolutely loved this book when I read it (I think over 10 years ago now!) and I still find this to be one of the most creative mysteries ever. That said, I do feel a little differently about it now, as I found the writing to be a bit of a drag. In particular, the way the dialog was written pulled me out of the story continually.”

A reader from Boston read *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald: “I first read *The Great Gatsby* my junior year of high school in english class and it has always been one of my favorite books I've ever read for school. It was so great to go back to it 7 years later with more life experience. I found I really noticed the themes of ideation vs reality on this reread. There is so much build up of the idea of Gatsby by his neighbors and other parties and the idea of Daisy by Gatsby that when they actually begin to discover the person, they are disappointed and their assumptions fall flat. I feel like in my own life I'm starting to reach a point where grand ideas of things begin to fall flat and as I understand them more, I begin to become more of a realist. Anyways Gatsby is such a great read and I think everyone should get to experience the decadence, vapidity and reality of life in the 1920s!”

A reader from Lowell read *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C. S. Lewis: “I read this book as a child and later learned it was supposed to have Christian undertones. I was interested as an adult to reread the book to see how obvious the connection was. In rereading the book, it is clearly written for a younger audience. The sentences are spare without much character development. The copy of the book I bought actually has all seven books of the series included. I probably won't reread all of the books which was my initial thought in buying the book but this exercise makes me want to reread a few other childhood favorites. I was recently at the MET museum in NYC and saw a copy of *From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*. I wonder if I would like it as much this time - as I remember liking it the first time?”

A reader from East Sandwich read *The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway: “It was thoroughly enjoyable when I was in my '20's...the running of the bulls, the joy of life. Now it is boring with Hemingway attacking his "friends!" And Brett bathing all the time!”

A reader from Winchester read *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky: “one of the best books i have ever read. i read it for the first time at 15 during quarantine and didn't quite have the life experience to appreciate it fully, and reading it at 19 was like reading a completely different book. heart-wrenching, beautifully written, and so GOOD. i love this book.”

A reader from Northampton read *Dakota: A spiritual Geography* by Kathleen Norris: “At my second reading, earlier this month, I was struck by how political it seemed --not heavy-handed at all, just more pointed in its observations than I had recalled.”

A reader from Turners Falls read *the CATCHER in the RYE* by J. D. Salinger: “A good reread, it had been so long.”

A reader from Shrewsbury read *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up* by Marie Kondo: “Although many people swear by the KonMari method, I still give this book 3 out of 5 stars. My favorite author of books on the topic is Dana K. White. One of her titles says it all--Organizing for the Rest of Us. Her decluttering method and container concept are more realistic for those of us who are overly sentimental, easily distracted, and/or frequently interrupted.”

A reader from Shrewsbury read *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini: “I had read this book in 2005 and see the book is now 20 years old. It was my first experience reading of a culture that was pulled away from its home because of cruelty. This past year I read about two other recent cultures with similar circumstances - Palestinians and then Isabel Allende’s recent book with Nazi and El Salvadorans and border crossings. There is a connection between these and given me a better and more empathetic view of persecuted cultures.”

A reader from Pepperell read *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley: “I read this in high school, many years before the internet. I remember thinking it was far fetched idea that the world could be controlled by machine and science. Doesn't feel as far away now. Huxley demonstrated that much is lost in an utopian world. Especially individualism.”

A reader from Wellfleet read *The Red Tent* by Anita Diamant: “I read this book years and years ago and loved it. I think my appreciation for it has only deepened. The story itself, combined with rich descriptions and fully developed, complicated characters, specifically the relationships among women, speak even more to me now than they did when I was younger.”

A reader from Methuen read *The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes: “The way I remembered it, the book was about a girl who said she had 100 dresses, and nobody believed her. At the end of the book, there was some art submission where she drew each of her 100 dresses but with her classmates wearing them. Upon rereading it, I realized there was political motivation in the background where the girl's family had to move away. The girl was being bullied by the other girls in her class throughout the book as well. I missed the more nuanced activities when I was younger, but I'm glad to have reread it.”

A reader from South Yarmouth read *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck: “The story was written the year of my birth. So heartbreaking and true about the dust bowl migration to the land full of promise-California.”

A reader from North Reading read *The Outsiders* by S. E. Hinton: “I understand why high school teachers assign this title as required reading, However, there are more contemporary titles available that would speak more to teens. Rereading this title filled me with a sense of sadness.”

A reader from Charlton read *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë: “I read this book 20 years ago when I was in high school. I don't believe that I comprehend the story or the characters back then. I enjoyed this reading much more than when I was younger.”

A reader from Reading read *Justine* by Lawrence Durrell: “Read this about 45 years ago. After watching the Durrells of Corfu, I was interested to reread this, now knowing more about the author.”

A reader from Spencer read *Street Magic* by Tamora Pierce: “I discovered this book and the rest of the series when I was a kid, and absolutely loved it. “Street Magic” is a coming of age story about a teenage mage overcoming his past and fulfilling his potential. In a full circle moment, the student has become the teacher. He takes in a 10-year old homeless girl with untrained magic, just as he was once a homeless 10-year old boy given a life-changing opportunity by another mage. The two mages have a similar background, and both are currently living in a city rife with gang violence. The young teacher is

determined to give his younger student an education as well as a better life. Re-reading this novel as an adult, I can't imagine myself as a teenager dealing with those massive responsibilities. Nonetheless, at any age, I always enjoy Pierce's incredible worldbuilding."

A reader from Somerville read *The Virgin Suicides* by Jeffrey Eugenides: "I couldn't remember anything about it except that I had really liked it, but every time I heard someone talk about it I thought "That doesn't sound like a book that I'd like." Turns out that I did not, in fact, like it this time around."

A reader from Ayer read *The Lottery* by Shirley Jackson: "I reread *The Lottery*, by Shirley Jackson. I first read it in high school, and I found it to be chilling and disturbing. I felt the same this time, but I was also struck by the "this is how things are done" mentality. While results that are certainly not as drastic as in the book, that mentality is certainly pervasive in many facets of our lives. I think this is the case because people fear change. We need to be open to change in our lives, and we can't keep doing the same things over and over again. We must learn from history, look at our moral compasses, and be thoughtful."

A reader from South Hadley read *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath: "I read this many years ago and could relate as a teenager/young woman. Now I found it was even deeper and a sobering look at a woman going through a nervous breakdown."

A reader from Berkley read *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville: "I hated having to read this book in high school. Seeing the movie helped me get the overall story. Listening to it as a recording helped me to appreciate all the knowledge of the whaling industry and the natural history of whales. This time reading it impressed me with the depth and breadth of ancient history, religion, literature, geography, art and philosophy that the author drew upon and incorporated in the book. WOW! It's not just an exciting story, nor even an encyclopedia; it's a library in a single book!"

A reader from Amherst read *The Color of Water* by James McBride: "Having just read *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store*, I decided to reread *The Color of Water*. I had read *The Color of Water* back in the 1990s and I discovered that I still loved the book just as much this time around. It is a moving, beautifully written tribute to his white, Jewish mother. The story is compelling, the writing is excellent. How his mother managed to raise all 12 children and send them to college is a story of perseverance, determination, and strength. Against all odds she survived and thrived. The loss of her first husband was a tragedy, but she endured, found love again and she led a good life."

A reader from Readville/ Yarmouth read *Babe, the Gallant Pig* by Dick King-Smith: "I used to read this book to my Kindergarten classes. I still love that it teaches that you can aspire to do the unexpected and you succeed by being respectful and polite."

A reader from Chelmsford read *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte: "I first read this book during my senior year of high school and didn't like it quite as much as I could have and it didn't leave any particular impression on me at the time. This time around I thoroughly enjoyed everything about it, deeply appreciated the themes and characters, and it has become one of my favorite books I've read!"

A reader from South Hadley read *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* by Muriel Spark: "It's an interesting, sneaky novel that really captures the experience of growing up and becoming increasingly aware of adults as full (and fallible) human beings."

A reader from FOXBOROUGH read *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding: "Great to read as an adult. Golding's phrases and descriptions are beautiful. This piece of history that we are living through is a good time to read a book on humans getting caught up in tribal violence."

A reader from Blackstone read *The Face on the Milk Carton* by Caroline B. Cooney: “I read this book as a child, probably around 8 or nine years old. This was one of the books that began my lifelong love of mystery/crime/thrillers. It did feel dated but I really enjoyed rereading it.”

A reader from Sandwich read *The Giver* by Lois Lowry: “Although this book was written twenty years ago, the themes of climate change, society, stereotypes, community and family are so relevant today.”

A reader from Salem read *Tsubaki-chou Lonely Planet Vol. 5* by Mika Yamamori: “I first read this book many years ago before it was officially published in English; I read fan translations as they were released and remember absolutely loving it! As an adult reading it again, since it was a series marketed mostly towards a tween/teen girl audience, I definitely have some different views now about the significant age-gap romance element, as well as how the heroine is treated as "mature" and basically like an adult by other adults despite the fact she is only 16. I find myself hoping now that this story doesn't give its younger readers any false ideas or romantic beliefs regarding predatory behavior. But, the nostalgia factor, great art and story, and really beautifully complex characters still make it a fun and enjoyable read!”

A reader from Westminster read *American Cooking: New England* by Jonathon Norton Leonard: “My choice this time is American Cooking : New England which the editors of Time- Life Books published in 1970. I took this book out of the library decades ago and am thoroughly enjoying it more than ever at the present time . It is not just the recipes but the factual knowledge of New England is fascinating.”

A reader from Bellingham read *It's Kind Of A Funny Story* by Ned Vizzini: “I read this book when I was 13, and a couple months after I did, Ned Vizzini died due to suicide. And the month after that I would bravely admit myself to a hospital, as the character in the book did. Reading it again was very bitter sweet, over ten years have passed. There are so many things that happened in this novel that would go on to happen in my life. This was one of the first books that saw me for who I was, and told me that I would be okay. I'm grateful for this book, for the chance to be alive to read it again, knowing that we can be brave even at our lowest.”

A reader from Fitchburg read *Hope Against Hope: Three Schools, One City, and the Struggle to Educate America's Children* by Sarah Carr: “I first read this book as a college student in New Orleans. This time around, I'm a teacher. Hope Against Hope is a close look at the state of education in New Orleans in 2010. It's interesting to see how much and how little has changed since then.”

A reader from Boston read *Heartstopper* by Alice Oseman: “This is the second time I have read this graphic novel. I read all of the other ones in the series and went back to the first one.”

A reader from Quincy read *Freckles* by Gene Stratton-Porter: “I read this book in the 80's. It was a Christmas gift from my mother. I loved this story so much it has stayed with me all these years. Reading it again 40 years later, I enjoyed it all over again.”

A reader from Rochester read *Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger: “I disliked the book when I first read it many many years ago. I guess the years have mellowed me, as I was much more understanding on this rereading.”

A reader from Frankljn read *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte: “I read this book when I was in high school. I don't think I really understood the nuisances of a parent/ child relationship and how one's experience can play such a critical role in their future relationships and decisions. It's a good reminder of how positive family structures are an integral part of one's development.”

A reader from Rochester read *Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger: “I disliked the book when I first read it many many years ago. I guess i have mellowed over those years as I was more empathetic on this rereading.”

A reader from Braintree read *Glucose Revolution* by Jessie Inchauspé: “An informative book about how to lower glucose spikes for everyone.”

A reader from Southborough read *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan: “I ended up not liking it as much as I used to.”

A reader from Fitchburg read *Random Family* by Adrian Nicole LeBlanc: “I originally read this book 20 years ago. Reading it again proved to still be captivating, heartbreaking and haunting. You don't want it to end, you want to know what happens to them next. How have they all faired, what did the last 20 years bring? Where are they all now?”

A reader from Hull read *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker: “I first read *The Color Purple* when it was first published in 1982. I was 26 and had rarely been so moved by a novel. It took my breath away. I looked forward to Spielberg's film, but was ultimately disappointed with it. The film did not match my sense of the novel - it was too idealized and 'pretty'. More recently, I watched the new musical version, I imagine it worked better on stage, but again the film did not have the depth and grit that I remembered from my reading of the novel. As I reread it recently, now at the ripe of 68, I understand better the spiritual dimensions of the novel. I better appreciate how meeting and dealing with the hardships of life really do open one to the appreciation of miraculousness of life. I can better appreciate, too, the interpretations of the two films, even if I still don't connect with them fully. All in all, *The novel* stands the test of time; it is a wonder!”

A reader from Southampton read *Holes* by Louis Sacher: “It's been over 20 years since I first read *Holes*. While my appreciation of it is different now, I still really enjoyed it! I listened to the audio book and thought Sacher did a great job narrating it; I'm sure children would highly enjoy the audio version.”

A reader from East Sandwich read *Othello* by William Shakespeare: “The language was just as difficult a hurdle as I found it to be in high school, but the villainy of Iago is as intense and captivating as I remembered. Enjoyed the re-read.”

A reader from Arlington read *S.* by Doug Dorst (and J J Abrams): “I read this book as a teen and was so enamored by the concept of the writing in the margins and the spy antics. Reading it as a 27 yr old now I was much more interested in the saga of S., his struggle against faceless greed, and the story of love and perseverance. I found the story in the margins a little cringey this time around to be honest. Having been through the college senior phase Eric's reactions to Jen seem very immature. I still love the design and all the inserts! It feels magical. 3/5 stars. Thank you for getting me to reread it!”

A reader from Wilmington read *Say Cheese and Die!* by R.L. Stine: “I love the scary features. I thought they got rid of the camera more than once and it kept coming back when I read it the first time, but now reading it a second time, I realize they only tried once. So it cleared up some of the questions I had.”

A reader from Plymouth read *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* by J. K. Rowling: “I read the Harry Potter series when I was younger and absolutely loved it; it's what got me into reading. I remember always loving the 3rd book because I was so drawn to Sirius Black and Remus Lupin. After a couple of years, I finally reread the book and fell even more in love with those characters in particular, and it's led me back into a hyper-fixation on the Marauders era specifically. All in all, I still love the book and am very glad I had the persuasion to reread it.”

A reader from Wrentham read *Mansfield Park* by Jane Austen: "I am still amazed at Jane Austen's understanding of the social manners of her times."

A reader from Cumberland read *Leading with my Chin* by Jay Leno: "I had read this book once before, in the 1990s. I listened to it as an audiobook this month. It is a funny story, only made better by hearing it in Jay's own voice this time around. It's an interesting experience, after so many years go by, which parts of the book you remember distinctly and others it is like reading/hearing it for the first time!"

A reader from Boston read *Crying in Hmart* by Michelle Zauner: "A heartbreaking heart opener. I'm fortunate to have found Zauner's words as a source of comfort through the never ending heartache that is grief."

A reader from Wrentham read *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger: "I think Holden would still consider me a 'phony.'"

A reader from Lexington read *The Great Brain* by John D. Fitzgerald: "Fond memories of reading as a boy. Surprised at how enjoyable to read as an adult. Forgot many important details, such as the Utah locale and mix of Mormon and Christian citizens. Issues brought up in stories are timeless, such as resistance to immigrants - then and now."

A reader from Hopkinton read *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville: "Read again after 35 years. I love this story."

A reader from Hamilton read *The Wooden Sea* by Jonathan Carroll: "When I was eighteen, I completed a National Outdoor Leadership School spring semester. On my way to Lander WY, I stopped in an independent book store and picked up *Black Elk Speaks* and *Desert Solitaire* my intended field guides of the soul for the desert. Before leaving I happened upon an advanced uncorrected proof of *The Wooden Sea*. Years later many moves and lives later I still have this book. I remember reading it via headlamp, exhausted in the canyons of south west Utah, curled up in my sleeping bag. I recall the feeling the novel left with me but I couldn't really recall its plot or much more about it. Looking up the author & book I discovered this book was the final of a trilogy. So 23 yrs later this month I read the series starting with *Kissing the Beehive*, *The Marriage of Sticks* and again *The Wooden Sea*. The main connector between the trilogy is the character of Frannie McCabe and the town of Crain View. But the book with the greatest sense of wonder was, *The Wooden Sea* where Frannie not only travels to different points of time in his life, he also gets to interact with himself at different ages. The first time reading this I would have thought it an interesting idea but now in my 40's I feel as though I'm reliving my own parts of my earlier self. I find many parallels. I certainly would not have known all the references made by the author of specific artist authors and movies but chuckle now. In *The Wooden Sea*, while Frannie is tasked to discover a missing piece of the world machine, he is close to achieving a great epiphany. While he dies before this happens, there is a sense of hope at his ability to accomplish this when given another chance via a younger version. While this may make little sense in reading, the point I'm making is how touching this seems. More than anything I'm so thrilled to have rediscovered this author now. Reading all three of these books has been a delicious phenomenon for the soul. I look forward to the rest of his cannon."

A reader from West Barnstable read *Kate Vaiden* by Reynolds Price: "A work mentor introduced me to Reynolds Price 25 years ago and that is when I first read *Kate Vaiden* and several of his other books. In this one, *Kate Vaiden* relates the story of her life, trying to provide an honest assessment of her choices and actions, good and bad."

A reader from Pittsfield read *Are you there GOD it's me, Margaret.* by Judy Blume: "I read this book 48 yrs ago when I was in six grade. I had forgotten the details of the book. It was really nice to read it. It was nice. It's about four Eleven years girls. They are approaching puberty. They form a secret club. They are interested in getting their first bars and how it would feel to have their first period. They do exercises to increase there bust sizes. Also, Margaret has a year long report to do. She decided to research different religions because she is not part of any religion. She attends three different religions services, Jewish, a Christen service and a Presbyterian service. In the end, Margaret hasn't made a decision as to which religion she wants to belong to. In the end Margaret didn't make a decision, but she decided she'll try again when she's older. Three of the girls do get their period. This was a nice cute book. When I read it so many yeArs ago, I read out of curiosity. Besides all the six grade girls read the book. A nice quick read. I would recommend this book."

A reader from South Portland read *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky: "Still enjoyed this one after first reading it in my teens."

A reader from Groton read *Hunger games trilogy* by Suzanne Collins: "I reread the hunger games series after I read the new Ballad of Snakes and Songbirds book. Catching Fire was always my favorite of the trilogy, and that hasnt changed. I love how descriptive Collins is in her writing- she makes me feel all of the emotions of the characters, and I continue to love this book after so many years. I will say that now that I am a parent, there are parts to this series that hit home in A much different way than it did before children. I no longer enjoy the first book as much, and I cannot stomach the part of the mocking jay where the children of the capitol are killed. Having my own children makes the first book too real for me, so that has changed my views a lot."

A reader from Wenham read *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain: "A fun, yet difficult read. My heart sang when Huck finally said that Jim was a good MAN."

A reader from Berkley read *Animal Farm* by George Orwell: "Old lessons always need reminders regardless of time that has passed. Still relevant today."

A reader from Sharon read *The Clue of the Hissing Serpent* by Franklin W. Dixon: "I loved the Hardy Book Series when I was a kid, more so than Nancy Drew. Reading it now as an adult was fun, but not as much as when I was a kid. It was an exciting kid's mystery, but uses language that dates back to the era it was written in."

A reader from South Hadley read *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte: "What a delight ! I forgot how wonderful this book is- or probably in high school I didn't appreciate the riveting story to the same degree I do now. Had to use the dictionary a lot!"

A reader from Brighton read *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger: "I enjoyed this book in high school, I was nervous to read it again, but I did and still enjoyed it!"

A reader from North Brookfield read *The Sister (The Behavior of Moths)* by Poppy Adams: "I feel like this novel is under rated. It has such a similar feel to 'Wuthering Heights'. The book explores the complexity of family relationships through the lense of mental illness. It's so relatable the way the within the family structure seems to make short sighted decisions for its own presevation. I'm surprised to say that I don't find myself looking at this book much differently. I knew then and I know far better now that families are complicated and individuals come with their own baggage. This book is aware of that. I think this book is wise in knowing that not all the questions needed to be answered either."

A reader from Brewster read *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier: “I always found it very intriguing, now more so than ever, that wait a minute I'm cheering for a murderer. Should I be? I also find it fascinating that they never mention her name once in the entire book.”

A reader from Wakefield read *Busman's Honeymoon* by Dorothy Sayers: “I reread an old favorite British murder mystery, with the rich, educated, and charming Lord Peter Wimsey and his educated published writer wife Harriet Vane, with an eye to class issues this time. Harriet and Peter go off on their honeymoon to a house he's bought for her as a gift; they quickly find no preparations for their arrival and of course a body in the cellar. Lord Peter immediately and always presumes the deferential assistance in all things of everyone within his new sphere, abetted by his manservant Bunter. While Wimsey and Harriet navigate the first few days of the marriage of independent and experienced people against the backdrop of a mystery, Wimsey displays a stupendous entitlement at every turn. He expects every detail of his noble life to spring to immediate life in his new house, and it does. I still love the witty and erudite repartee of Sayers' sleuths and the sensitive treatment of their new marriage and his old shell shock, but the class aspects of these books are really striking to me now.”

A reader from Wilmington read *The Hobbit* by JRR Tolkien: “i read LOTR first before the peter jackson films came out in 2000 because i wanted my own imagination of who these characters are rather than the actor's interpretation of them are. but then i read the hobbit afterward. it's been more than 20yrs since i revisited the hobbit and as dimly as i can recall that work, it felt more like a let down from LOTR. i know it was a prequel but i was in a rush to read LOTR before the films came out. now that it has been that long, i felt it was time to revisit this and see if my perspectives have changed and i have to say that it has! i can definitely see all of the same motif reinforced in LOTR but layed out quickly in a short book of the hobbit. the motif is the love of Gold vs. love of just being and spending time with relationships. while the the ring itself is in the hobbit, it isn't the primary source of tension as it was in the LOTR. in the hobbit, it was actually the love of money or Gold because with that came power. in essence both hobbit and LOTR are all about who can control the thing that controls the power. that is probably the biggest theme as when thorin dies in the end he wished he traded all of the gold in the mountain to spend more time on relationships. in the end greed did him in, it wasn't a dragon, as the dragon was a symbol and external representation of the greed. surprisingly everyone was tempted from the orcs/hobgoblins to dwarves to all the elves to men. in short, it was a good revisit and there were so many similarities in structure to LOTR, like there is a 'return of the king' vibe with thorin a lost 'ranger' as it were. a battle for power and domination over all others. an adventure, trials and tribulations and lots and lots of songs and poetry about the said adventures.”

A reader from Beverly read *The Amber Spyglass* by Philip Pullman: “I loved the plot of this book as a child and it felt like a happy ending when I read it then. In re-reading it, I realized that, like life, the happy ending is somewhat in the eye of the beholder, for death is just an ending that we can't choose and can feel a myriad of ways about. Plus this was WAY more scathing towards the church than I remembered! I will say the writing and storyline were aa fabulous as I remember.”

A reader from Greenfield read *Grendel* by John Gardner: “When I read this in school, I don't think I recognized the humor sprinkled throughout. There are these little lines of wit that just slap.”

A reader from South Hadley read *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho: “I read this book about 20 years ago, and now as I approach my 50th year, the notion shared in the book that "...when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it," really resonates with me. This book about a young man's quest was a good reminder that one can always believe in a dream, and that the universe can

conspire with each of us to reach it. This is a book I easily got lost in 20 years ago and in my visit back with it this month. Highly recommended!”

A reader from Arlington read *Mr. Sammler's Planet* by Saul Bellow: “My vaguest recollection was reading this book when I was in grade school after my sister who was five years older and in high school talked to me about it. For many years, the only thing I remembered from the story was feeling that the father, Mr. Sammler, was just an inconsequential member of his family. How did I miss then that Mr. Sammler, like a close friend of my family who taught my high school freshman German class, was a concentration camp survivor? Now that I'm a retired Army officer watching wars in Ukraine and Gaza fifty years later, I see courage and contradictions in Mr. Sammler, a partisan fighter who escaped the camp where his wife perished and who years later came out of retirement to report from Gaza the Israeli side of the Six Day War that resulted in what are still today occupied and disputed territories. Mr. Sammler's Planet remains relevant.”

A reader from Beverly read *Eleanor & Park* by Rainbow Rowell: “I absolutely loved this when it came out. I still think the author is the very best at natural dialogue and nuanced characterizations. However, I was not as enchanted by the first love element as I had been and overall I was less invested in the story. The portrayal of Park's race has been criticized in recent years and that did affect my enjoyment as well.”

A reader from Waltham read *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams: “Still great!”

A reader from New York read *Bunny* by Mona Awad: “I read this a while ago and LOVED it. It quickly became one of my favorite books. However, since then, I think a lot more books with its style of writing and off-kilter plot have come out, and I've read a lot of them. I was interested to see if this book would rock my world like before or if it would feel less special now. It is just as good as I remember it!”

A reader from Sudbury read *Anna Dressed in Blood* by Kendare Blake: “I read this book in middle school and remember being obsessed even as a easily scared kid. Now that I'm more into the horror movies, revisiting this duology was very interesting and definitely something I would recommend to teens interested in the genre!”

A reader from Middleboro read *Manitou and Providence* by Neal Salisbury: “This book is a staple at my job and I wanted to sit down and read the entire thing in its entirety to see how it measured up to my expectations. It's certainly a product of its time at some points but is important nonetheless.”

A reader from Boston read *The Magicians* by Lev Grossman: “I reread this book and the other two in the trilogy. I first picked the series up in high school, before going into college, and I've read it again after years of being a young professional. I have more life experience, including more time to break down my own mental health, and I still stand by my appreciation of how the main character is just some guy with depression who fumbles a lot of the chances in his life.”

A reader from North Dighton read *The Westing Game* by Ellen Raskin: “A favorite as a child, and still a thrilling read. I'm thankful that as the years have passed, I did not remember what the exact ending was or the twists that occurred along the way.”

A reader from Foxborough read *The Maze* by Will Hobbs: “I first read this twenty-something years ago, and all the memories I thought I had from it were actually of Hatchet. It's got some good characters and an author's love for the condors, the setting, and hanggliding. It also has an author's distaste for dogs, or maybe just pit bulls. Overall, an okay story.”

A reader from Wakefield read *The Invisible Life of Addie Larue* by V.E. Schwab: “It was good.”

A reader from Arlington read *Beloved* by Toni Morrison: “I read this book in high school, and I don't think I was really ready or aware enough to understand it fully. It's such a heartbreaking and empathetic look at the lives of all its characters in pre and post civil war America.”

A reader from Wakefield read *Eat, Pray, Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert: “I first read this book soon after it was published (nearly 20 years ago) so it was interesting to re-read it now. My life was very different at that time so, reading it again at this time, was a completely different experience.”

A reader from Canton read *We Were Liars* by E. Lockhart: “I love this book because no matter how many times I read it and I know what's going to happen, I still cry everytime.”

A reader from Brewster read *The Underneath* by Kathi Appelt: “I read this book many years ago. There is almost no dialogue between characters but more poetic observations on nature and emotion by the narrator. It was enjoyable.”

A reader from Randolph read *A Tree Grows In Brooklyn* by Betty Smith: “I loved this book when I read it in High School. Now, fifty plus years later I'm pleased to say that I still enjoyed the book and related to all of the characters rather than being totally absorbed in just the main character. It was a snapshot in time of human behavior in families and society that still exist in the world now.”

A reader from Georgetown read *The Art of Stillness* by Pico Iyer: “I first read this a few years ago, at a time when I felt stressed and was looking for an answer to everything. As much as I appreciated the idea of stillness, I couldn't slow down enough to appreciate the message. Reading it again, at a different point in my life, I felt myself listening a little closer and easing into the idea of going 'nowhere' in stillness. I'm very happy to have read it again and looking forward to quieter moments ahead.”

A reader from Billerica read *Random in Death* by J.D. Robb: “Another great mystery solved by Lt. Eve Dallas and her trusty sidekick Sgt. Peabody. This is the 58th in the “In Death” Series – Robb pulls you right into the story when Jenna Harbough a 16-year-old girl is jabbed with something and dies at a concert full of teenagers. The characters are well-developed and pull you into their story, like Peabody, McNabb, Nadine and Jake. Nadine calls Eve to let her know that a young girl died in Jake's arms and that she should investigate. Then another teenager dies in the same method and Eve knows that she has a serial killer on the loose. Eve and her team of detectives are on a race against time to try to find this young killer before he strikes again. I highly recommend this book and once you start you won't be able to put it down. Plenty of action, and a great plotline with tons of twists.”

A reader from Brewster read *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan: “I totally recommend this book, and the new Disney+ series as well! Rick Riordan picked such great diverse actors/actresses to play these characters. This book is so good and it has always been one of my favorites. It's great that a new generation will be get into this because of the series too. It's always been such a great inspiration for a lot of kids, so I hope that continues!!! ❤️”

A reader from Northampton read *Tom Brown's Schooldays* by Thomas Hughes: “I read this 1857 classic multiple times as a child, absorbing its messages about becoming a stiff-upper-lip cricket-playing British boy despite being a timid American girl. It's mostly as retrograde as I remember, but with a few flashes of heart and humor.”

A reader from Hull read *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway: “I haven't read A farewell to Arms since highschool. Admittedly there was so much I missed due to it being required reading back then. As an adult I truly can enjoy the story now. I can envision the struggle that they went through and I cried at

many points that I did not the first time since I now have greater life experience than I did at age 15. I highly recommend it to people who only had read it as required reading in school.”

A reader from Beverly read *The Fellowship of the Ring* by J.R.R. Tolkien: “I love Bill the Pony. I forgot how much I loved these characters and places and songs. I also love the hobbit practice of waiting until dawn to tell dark stories or news.”

A reader from Wilmington read *Henry and Mudge in the Family Trees* by Cynthia Rylant: “I like it's about Henry's extended family. The whole family ends up loving Mudge.”

A reader from Attleboro read *Messenger* by Lois lowry: “The third book in the giver quartet. It had a strong ending but other than that it fell flat compared to the giver and gathering blue.”

A reader from Fairhaven read *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou: “Still as amazing as I remember when I read it in high school in the 90s, but lots of different reactions to the history and Angelou's experiences.”

A reader from San Leandro read *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck: “It's a cautionary tale about the lengths men will go for the possibility of wealth, even to the detriment of himself and his loved ones. I first read this novella in 7th grade and it is even more devastating to read as an adult.”

A reader from Wrentham read *Mansfield Park* by Jane Austen: “I started reading this for a book group with my sister and mother. I had read it 30 years and hadn't remembered how rigid and stern and unlikeable most of the characters were. Very much different from *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* which I have re-read more recently. But still superbly written and there is no other writer who writes so eloquently of her time and place in the world as Jane Austen which is why she is so popular still today.”

A reader from Merrimac read *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck: “I read this book for the first time in high school. Now having had children of my own, the magnitude of losing a child has a much greater emotional impact on me than it probably did years ago. The lesson that objects can't bring you happiness, only people you love can, has a much clearer message for me now.”

A reader from Acton read *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston: “I read this book originally for highschool when I was 16, the age of the main character Janie at one point in the book. I remember falling in love with Hurston's beautiful descriptions of nature, and related to the themes of Janie's coming of age. Now at 26, I decided to read it again to see if I could pick up on any more themes as an adult. And oh boy, did I! I understood the themes of race far more now than I did back then. I also see this as a revolutionary work in terms of gender, as Janie is an incredible portrayal of a woman unashamed to live her life for herself despite the culture around her. She also struggles with her grandmother who came from a time of slavery and who harms Janie in an effort to keep her safe by marrying her off to a much older but financially stable man, revealing themes of generational issues and feminism. I still find Hurston's poetic descriptions of nature to be breathe taking and found myself closing my eyes to picture the scenes after reading them.”

A reader from Hopkinton read *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky: “I originally read it when I was in 10th grade and hated it. My teacher told me he personally believed it is a book best read after 40, not as a teenager - so I decided to re-read it for this challenge. I am surprised by all the details I completely forgot (or maybe never noticed). I still didn't enjoy it, but I didn't have the same visceral negative reaction to the characters as I did 25 years ago. It's definitely a classic and I think it's a good book to read, but I wouldn't say it's a MUST read.”

A reader from Hull read *Goosebumps: One Day in Horror Land* by R.L. Stine: “I LOVED this book as a kid when it came out, but I could not remember anything about the plot. I see why 11 year old me loved it so much, and I had a lot of fun revisiting it. The reality TV spin of the book was ahead of it's time!”

A reader from Beverly read *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien: “I read this book a while ago for school, and I didn't enjoy it due to the forced timeline. I tried it again for this month's challenge, and my love for this book hasn't changed. I love reading, but I kept forgetting to pick this book up. However, I think my understanding on this topic increased. I will try it again a few years from now, yet again.”

A reader from Georgetown read *Siddhartha* by Herman Hesse: “I guess it sort of bothers me more now that this was written by a white guy than it did when I first read it in high school. There are some nice messages and images overall, but I think I'll read some other texts about Buddhism to compare and contrast.”

A reader from College Park read *The Collected Poems* by Sylvia Plath: “During the summer between my 8th grade and 9th grade years, I discovered Sylvia Plath's writing. I read this book of her poetry along with *The Bell Jar*, admiring her use of language and her ability to make poetry out of everyday life. I began to emulate her style and themes without really understanding how her education and experience informed her work. Now when I read these poems, I realize how intricate and sophisticated they are and how unique they are in the greater world of 20th century poetry. I'm glad to have this opportunity to compare my interpretations of the poems from my relatively innocent teenaged readings to my wiser, more mature mindset.”

A reader from Middleboro read *A tale of two cities* by Charles Dickens: “I read a tale of two cities as a requirement for high school but wanted to revisit it because I remember it being a good story and remembered the general story line but had forgotten many of the details.”

A reader from West Boylston read *Catcher In The Rye* by JD Salinger: “This book ticked me off. I am an optimist and over achiever so Holden completely got under my skin. He rambled endlessly and was a total slacker. Yes, I could tell he was depressed, grieving Allie, and having a breakdown but just shut up!! I feel bad for all the HS students that have to suffer thru this classic of “self discovery”. Read something more motivating.”

A reader from Easton read *Sloppy Firsts* by Megan McCafferty: “Published in 2001, this book showcases teen experiences that are both universal and unique to the early aughts. A tribute to friendship, growing pains, and learning to see the truth about ourselves and others.”

A reader from Attleboro read *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou: “Having read Maya Angelou's most famous autobiography a few years ago, I remember not having loved it for some reason. I think I was able to grasp a little more this time just how much Maya went through as a child. Some of it comes across as very old-fashioned; Maya's wisdom does manage to permeate many of the pages outside this fact, though. Four stars.”

A reader from Foxboro read *The Blessing Cup* by Polacco, Patricia: “The book is a good reminder of the rich blessings of life if we can but stop and embed them in our homes ... Though there may be instability in the world around us, there is, symbolized by a tea ritual passed down and shared through generations, hope.”

A reader from hudson read *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee: “When I reread this moving and compelling book for the second time, I felt it was somewhat unrealistic and idealistic, even though it is still extremely important. I recommend reading *Go Set a Watchman* for those who love *Mockingbird*--it's

very interesting to see an alternative to *Mockingbird*. Also, I've heard *My Father & Atticus Finch* is worth reading, a true story about Foster Beck which claims he inspired the character of Atticus.”

A reader from Scituate read *Anne of Green Gables* by L.M. Montgomery: “I do recall enjoying this book as child however not as much as I did now. Anne Shirley is such an endearing character with her joyful outlook and desire to fully embrace all that is around her. So very poignant how the relationship between Anne, Matthew and Marilla evolves and deepens.”

A reader from Greenfield read *Tuesdays With Morrie* by Mitch Albom: “I originally read this book as a teen, and it's been so long that I don't remember my initial feelings about it. As an adult, I finished the book feeling fairly neutral about the whole story. I remember this title being touted as profound and evocative when it came out, but personally I didn't feel any significant connection to any of the the characters and the life lessons weren't very impactful for me.”

A reader from Shrewsbury read *El viento conoce mi nombre* by Isabel Allende: “I've read many of her previous work, but this one hit me hard. In the context of the ongoing immigration crisis in the border and multiple atrocities around the world endorsed by the Government, the message that the people, their good will, solidarity and resilience might help to improve a situation, provides hope. The way a kid that survived the Holocaust connects in 2020 with a Salvadoran girl trapped in the detention center on the border os fascinating and hearth breaking: despite the decades in between, the struggle, loneliness and despair is still there.”

A reader from LOWELL read *THE SHELTERING SKY* by PAUL BOWLES: “RICHER DARKER AND MORE PSYCHOLOGIALLY DEPRESSING THAN I REMEMBER.”

A reader from BREWSTER read *Sense & Sensibility* by Jane Austen: “So fun to reread - I read the Jane Austen Society last year and it made me want to revisit the books I read as a teenager.”

A reader from Dartmouth read *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald: “For the January challenge, I decided to revisit a required reading book from high school. I read the book originally over 20 years ago, when reading for pleasure was nonexistent in my life. It took many years after finishing school to start reading for pleasure, and reading this book makes me understand why. While I'm sure it was a great book 100 years ago, I found it just okay the second time around. There was no wow factor or suspenseful plot to keep me engaged. I'll stick to my light, easy reads.”

A reader from Whitinsville read *Ninth House* by Leigh Bardugo: “I first read *Ninth House* a few months after graduating college. Now that it's been a few years and a pandemic, I wanted to refresh my memory before grabbing the sequel. I am struck by how child-like Alex and Darlington seem now. When I was twenty-two, I thought it reasonable that magical societies of college kids could fuel the rich and powerful. Now, I wonder how the alumni and faculty let these kids get away with anything. However, like my first read, I admire Bardugo's sense of place and her wondrous sensory imagery.”

A reader from Beverly read *Alive!* by Piers Paul Read: “Reread this book to watch the movie, ‘Society of the Snow’ (movie was WELL DONE).”

A reader from Tyngsboro read *Every Secret Thing* by Susanna Kearsley: “I am so glad I chose to reread this book! It is a WWII spy mystery set in present day (2006), but looking into a murder that happened during WWII. There were so many twists and turns, and even though I knew who did it, it still kept me on my toes. I would highly recommend this book!”

A reader from Hopkinton read *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett: “I still love this book; however, if written today I'm sure the vocabulary would be quite different. Regardless, the character development and story progression, especially of the children was wonderful.”

A reader from Boston read *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles: “This book was read aloud to me in the fifth grade, and I remembered being so bored and disinterested in it then. But I'm so glad I reread it again as an adult! The loss of innocence of the story's characters, boys on the brink of WW2, was heart-wrenching. I also loved how the setting (a boarding school) and the New England seasons in which different parts of the story took place (a summer to winter transition) also highlighted the themes of youthful innocence being slowly undone. Definitely not the most uplifting of endings, but a beautiful and powerful read for sure!”

A reader from Florence read *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margret Atwood: “I read this in 1986 and did not remember the details of it except that she was used to procreate and used butter to soften her hands. There is so much more. How quickly she lost her independence and life in an autocracy based on religious principals of the minority. As one of the first in this new world order she remembers the "before" and the narrative takes you back and forth, her present life and the the life she had had.”

A reader from Boston read *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins: “For January I was very excited about the first month of the challenge being "A book you read years ago that you may feel differently about now" since I rarely re-read/revisit books. I chose *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, a book I remember loving! I don't read YA now but I love to read sci-fi, fantasy, and speculative fiction so it still fits in with something I enjoy to reading today. I can happily say that it holds up! I really enjoyed picking up on all the foreshadowing Collins includes throughout this first book. I thought it was still an engaging read and I remembered a lot of the plot!”

A reader from Derry read *Beloved* by Toni Morrison: “A very well written book. What stood out about the book when I originally read it is very different than what stands out now as an adult.”

A reader from Moorestown read *The Velveteen Rabbit* by Margery Williams: “Why do books and movies about toys connect with us deeply? Simple. They are at their core about love. Evidence of the timelessness of this comes from making an unexpected connection with this past year's pop culture phenomenon, the Barbie movie. What came to mind is one of its central themes as expressed beautifully by the Billie Eilish song with the description of the theme itself in the title: “What Was I Made For?” The Velveteen Rabbit responds to this question. We are made to love and be loved, through discomfort, through vulnerability, retaining who we are and what we truly want. That is what Real is. That is how we become Real, by risking failure, pain, judgment, and all that comes with vulnerability. Yet love, being loved, and life changed by that love is a worthwhile journey. I would like to add that Love and Being Loved can come in many forms and that Real may sound like a destination but it is only part of it all. As *The Velveteen Rabbit* and even Barbie show...the adventure does not end there! (Did I think I would be bringing up Barbie and Billie Eilish in a reflection about a children's picture book? Nope, yet here we are.)”

A reader from Brookline read *Chimney-Top Lane* by Gunnel Linde: “Reread one of my favorites from childhood to see if I would still love it, and I did! It was quite different reading it as an adult, and a mother, but it was good to spend time with the characters again.”

A reader from Northborough read *Peter Pan* by J.M.Barrie: “I thought Peter Pan was a creepy character when I read it aloud to my daughter.”

A reader from Brighton read *Divergent* by Veronica Roth: “This was my favorite book series when I was in middle school/high school! I was interested to see if it held up.”

A reader from Hubbardston read *A Little Princess* by Frances Hodgson Burnett: “A childhood favorite, but one I haven't read for years and years. I re-read it together with my daughter, and still enjoyed it. I was surprised by how flowery some of the language was, but it was still a great story. I also picked up on changes from the movie version that I had not remembered in the past.”

A reader from Leominster read *The Virgin Suicides* by Jeffrey Eugenides: “This was required reading for a college course I had taken in 2013 and I then had difficulty getting through it. Roughly mid-way through the book this second read it did get dry, however now I realize that was a part of the plot point - it puts focus on the men in the story revolving around the women which I believe is a pivotal point as we are only seeing the boy's perspective on the lives of these 5 girls.”

A reader from Falmouth read *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott: “I loved this book as a child! I was worried that it wouldn't age well, but I still found it charming.”

A reader from Hull read *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood: “Never conceived this could feel so real.”

A reader from Lawrence read *Ninth House* by Leigh Bardugo: “January prompt.”

A reader from Forestdale read *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë: “Didn't care for it years ago and still don't. Such a dysfunctional group of characters.”

A reader from Manchester read *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan: “Read this when it came out and loved the series. Wanted to reread to refresh myself before watching the new TV series and read the new book published late last year. Great to dive back into a series I loved so long ago.”

A reader from Arlington read *My Cousin Rachel* by Daphne DuMaurier: “I had not read this book in over 50 years! I first read it as a pre-teen, so I really did not remember much of it, except for a vague recollection of the characters and the plot, as well as the outcome. It is so well written and suspenseful! I have a much deeper appreciation now of its detail, the insight into character, the settings, and the skill of the author at drawing in the reader. I chose this book because I remembered that it inspired me, at the age of 11 or 12, to write a poem about it for my English class, and I still remembered every word of the poem, even though I had forgotten many of the details of the book.”

A reader from Boston read *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kid: “I think I read this when I was in 6th grade, and I remembered most parts as I read on. Mostly I kept thinking to myself, “I read this in 6th grade?!” Regardless, this is definitely one of my favorite books of all time. It's such an amazing tribute to love and the family you can create for yourself. Four stars because I felt like the ending was rushed.”

A reader from East Longmeadow read *Hiroshima* by John Hersey: “With the tremendous buzz surrounding the movie “Oppenheimer” I thought it would be interesting to re-read John Hersey's journalistic report of the victims of America's atomic “innovation.” Again, I was struck by the devastation in Hiroshima and I found myself squirming in my seat while viewing Oppenheimer; the Los Alamos scientists, staff, and families cheering wildly after the test was especially disturbing. For those eager to examine the thinking of the American government surrounding August 6, 1945, I highly recommend Lesley M.M. Blume's 2020 book entitled “Fallout.””

A reader from South Deerfield read *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver: “Amazing adaptation of David Copperfield. Somewhat abrupt ending, bit of a letdown.”

A reader from Danvers read *A Court of Thorns and Roses* by Sarah J Maas: “I had read this book years ago, but Sarah's most recent series revealed a connection between this story and her new trilogy, and I am going back to find the links and hints she may have placed before reading her newest book. I do now feel this is the weakest of the ACOTAR series, and it was a bit of a struggle to get through this time around given I felt it leaned on a lot of common tropes and coincidences to move the story forward.”

A reader from Brighton read *The Year of Magical Thinking* by Joan Didion: “As part of my Year of Reading Didion, where I will be reading 6-8 pages of a different book by Joan Didion each month, I chose the one I had read first a long time ago, in 2006, around when it came out. I had a feeling that reading it now, nearly 20 years later, at a slower pace, I would "get" more, feel like I have a stronger grasp on how Didion writes, and generally, have a cooler touch toward the perennial topic of grief and mourning. All of this was borne out. And I was happily surprised that I managed to do what I set out to do, and that in the intervening years, many translations of the book, including in Spanish and Chinese, have sprouted up.”

A reader from Salem read *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott-Fitzgerald: “I read this in high school 30 years ago and my only memory was I hated it. Looking back, I am guessing 80% of it went over my head. I am glad I chose this to re-read because it was a totally different experience this time around -I couldn't put it down!”

A reader from TEWKSBURY read *Are you there god its me Margaret* by Judy Bloom: “Interesting to read something that I read when I was younger.”

A reader from dover read *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton: “I still love this book! When I read it and watched the movie as a teen, it was all about the cute boys. As I read it again, I was focused on the amazing bond these kids had. Family and chosen family alike. So good!”

A reader from West Boylston read *The Outsiders* by SE Hinton: “I didn't expect to cry as much as I did when I was a teen, but I did.”

A reader from Atlanta read *Hoot* by Carl Hiaasen: “I read this book for the first time 19 years ago in 2005! I remember liking it a lot. This time around I really appreciated the bigger message: to care about the owls (literally and metaphorically) and the power of community in change. This book was also a lot funnier than I remember, I think I appreciated the adult characters a lot more (especially the quirky ones, the police officer and the foreman were funny).”

A reader from Derry read *1984* by George Orwell: “1984 by George Orwell. The first time I read 1984, it was still a year in our collective future. And as the year approached, we all a laugh at oh here it comes. Well the year is now way beyond the rear view mirror with the laugh on us that 2024 is the object in the mirror that appears closer. Reading this book in 2024, one finds Orwell to be a mid 20th century Nostradamus. Weaver of fables, warnings of a bleak future in which the public never truly knows the truth, that truth can be bent to move the people's will, the government is in everyone's bedroom, and even children are not safe from being used in the system. I found the book still holds up, remains incredibly relevant and most of all is a stunning achievement in showing just how fragile our life, liberty and pursuit of happiness truly is.”

A reader from Princeton read *Slaughterhouse Five* by Vonnegut, Kurt: “I loved this book when I read it in high school, and I still love it. But it did feel much darker to me in a way that did not resonate with my in high school.”

A reader from Groton read *The Stranger* by Albert Camus: “I read this book in high school literature. I really enjoyed the book when I first read it and felt like many of my classmates didn't fully understand or appreciate the book. I still enjoyed the book this time around. The biggest thing I've noticed while reading this time that I didn't think about before is this dude has got to be on the spectrum. I know the book is about existentialism but the main character's behavior to me reads as autistic, especially in his interactions with the main love interest.”

A reader from Westminster read *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison: “I'm not sure that I feel differently about this book today than I did the first time I read it as a college freshman. It was required reading in my African American Literature class. This was just one of many books and poems that had a profound effect on me. But much has happened to American society in those 30 years. As I read *The Bluest Eye* again, I thought about how radical this was as a writer's first novel. It turns so many assumptions on their heads. I also thought about how the ideal of "the bluest eye" seems to have diminished in mainstream advertising, mass media, and among many people in general. This has even reached the halls of legislatures around the country with bills being proposed - and passed - outlawing discrimination against those who wear their natural hair. One thing stayed the same, though: I'm devastated by the ending every time.”

A reader from Brockton read *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee: “Story of how life was when people were poor no matter what color but prejudices ran deep and justice was non-existent when it came to color. I thought things could be different in the future, but maybe not. Like I said, prejudices run deep.”

A reader from Lunenburg read *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury: “What at one time I saw as a scary possibility, I now see as a scary reality.”

A reader from Beverly read *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt: “Enjoyed more this time around. Seems I have developed more empathy as a reader.”

A reader from Boston read *Dune* by Frank Herbert: “I read *dune* a long time ago when the intricacies of politics and human interaction escaped my immature brain. However reading it again now I am absolutely absorbed in the story in a way I don't ever remember being before !”

A reader from Northampton read *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy: “Takeaway very different from the original read. That each man is its own island and the notion of love and connection is a construct of the mind. That faith cannot be explained but felt. That we are united in this shared experience of life and living. Vignettes of the countryside drew me in. Long book, made it just in time!”

A reader from Middleboro read *East of Eden* by John Steinbeck: “First read this as a teenager and was just devastated at how evil people could be to one another. Now, nearly 50 years later, the book doesn't shock me at all.”

A reader from Middleboro read *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry: “I loved rereading this! I remember thinking how brave Annemarie was and I still do!”

A reader from Weymouth read *The Story of Arthur Truluv* by Elizabeth Berg: “I read this book when it was first released and didn't particularly love it or hate it. I re-read it this month and have more of an appreciation for it. Interesting story and characters.”

A reader from ROCKLAND read *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker: “I read it years ago and it has remained a powerful and impactful story. I am in awe of the resilience and capacity for moments of joy in the characters - even when they are overwhelmed by violence and hardships.”

A reader from Norfolk read *The Intellectual Devotional: Biographies* by David S. Kidder and Noah D. Oppenheim: “Great compilation of 365 biographies of philosophers, world leaders, scientists, religious leaders, authors and artists, rebels and reformers from BC to modern times. Great tidbits of information. I read this years ago and it was good to revisit to learn / relearn something new about people that had an impact.”

A reader from Dracut read *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller: “Read as assignment in Catholic High School. Taught as a cautionary tale. Read again in January as a mature adult and took a much different message this time.”

A reader from Colrain read *Mr. Penguin and the Fortress of Secrets* by Alex T. Smith: “When I first read this book a few years ago, I didn't feel particularly impressed, but upon reading it again, I find that I really enjoy the story and the characters. They are fun and it is a well written adventure story for young readers.”

A reader from Seekonk read *The Red Tent* by Anita Diamant: “I first read this book in 2000 and always considered it one of my favorite books. After recently reading this author's book, *The Boston Girl* (of which I was disappointed), I thought perhaps my memory of how good *The Red Tent* was exaggerated. But the second read did not disappoint. I had forgotten so much of the book and it was great to use this month's challenge as an excuse to read what I still consider my favorite book.”

A reader from Reading read *The General* by C.S. Forester: “When I first read this book, I thought “Yeah? So what?” This time, I saw that it's far more subtle than I'd previously understood-- it's not the plot that matters, it's the subtle inferences the character's actions make the reader think about OUTSIDE of the novel's scope that give it its power. Thanks to the fellow who told me to give it a second try, relaying the story of a US Army officer who reread it with each promotion during a decades long career in the service.”

A reader from Wilmington read *Nobody's Princess* by Ester Friesner: “This is a Young adult historical fiction novel about Helen of Troy when she was young. I read it when was in middle school and I thought at that time the book was great. Reading it now as an adult, while I find the topic interesting, I find the main character to be a bit annoying and bratty and so typical of YA heroines that the book did not hold my interest and it took me quite a while to finish. While I would say early young adults readers will probably like the book, as an adult it is not for me.”

A reader from Lexington read *I feel bad about my neck* by Ephron, Nora: “I enjoyed this when it came out. Unfortunately, some of the essays didn't age well. Observations that were meant to be amusing, just seemed sad.”

A reader from Braintree read *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by JK Rowling: “I try to reread the Harry Potter series every year, but didn't reread it last year. I enjoy rereading the series as the movies left out a few details that add to the overall story.”

A reader from Worcester read *The Unredeemed Captive* by John Demos: “A 1994 historical narrative that draws from the Mohawk Iroquois-French raid on Deerfield, MA in 1704 that involved killings, and 112 captives on a march to the Kahnawake-Montreal area. Concerns of borders, hostage exchange and the Williams family look to the child Eunice Williams who chose to remain within the Kahnawake Catholic-Mohawk community rather than return to Deerfield.”

A reader from Foxborough read *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee: “I read this book as assigned reading in high school and decided to listen to it this time around. Sissy Spacek, the narrator captured

Scout perfectly! It was jarring to read this again especially after going to school for sociology, witnessing the birth of the BLM movement, and just generally understanding more about racial tensions in our society.”

A reader from Centerville read *The House on Prytania* by Karen White: “Loved it just as I did the first time. I love Karen White’s characters and the mysteries she crafts.”

A reader from Springfield read *Breathers: A Zombie's Lament* by S.G. Browne: “I enjoyed the book in high school, but found I appreciated it a lot more now that I'm a little older. Some of the jokes didn't age that well, but overall still a good read!”

A reader from Richfield read *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott: “Little Women is about a family during the Civil War with four girls. Their father is fighting in the war and they are at home with their mother. The book goes through their day to day life as they grow up. I chose this because I read it a long time ago and I am at a different place in life now. I feel differently about the text because I can relate to the girls more and connect with the story in new ways.”

A reader from Sutton read *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini: “Beautiful book. I had forgotten so much from the last time I read this years ago.”

A reader from Foxboro read *The Outsiders* by S.E.Hinton: “It was just as good as I remember when I read it in the 8th grade. S.E. Hinton was an inspiration to me as an aspiring writer because she was 16 when she wrote this.”

A reader from Danvers read *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde: “I do not feel differently whatsoever. I still LOVEEEEEEEEEEE IT! It's been my favorite since I read it in high school. Listened to it via audiobook last year, and enjoyed rereading it to kick off my 2024 :)”

A reader from Berkley read *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie: “Some things never change!”

A reader from Brookline read *The History of Love* by Nicole Kraus: “I've often cited *The History of Love* as one of my favorite books ever, but this time, it didn't send me in the same way. Probably a few reasons for that:

- 1) The first time I read it (2007), I was on an unexpected vacation abroad that removed me from a home with 2 small children and placed me on a beautiful beach with a wonderful book! Context counts.
- 2) The structure of the book was revolutionary at the time. Now it's had its influence, and I've read other books that are structured similarly, so the novelty is gone.
- 3) I did not remember much from the plot, but I definitely remembered the conclusion....maybe it made the book a little less special to already know where it was headed?

All that said, Kraus is an amazing writer and storyteller. She builds rich and interesting worlds. Still highly recommend that you read this book if you have not already!”

A reader from North Brookfield read *Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd: “This was a re-read, as the prompt suggested. I read it for the first time over a summer, while I was in college (maybe 20 years ago). It was a book I couldn't put down. I loved the relationships, I loved the women in the book...I loved how they cared for each other and the bees. It is set in 1964, so there are racial tensions and Black people have just been given the right to vote-there are moments of violence, and those parts are certainly heavy (and, I

hope, accurate to the time), but overall, the love in the book is what drew me in (as well as the facts about bees) and keeps me loving this book (as much now as then). The movie is lovely too.”

A reader from Newton read *Lord of Scoundrels* by Loretta Chase: “I originally read this book several years ago when I was first interested in exploring historical romance novels. In January, I picked it up again for a romance book club. This book is still a hit! I loved returning to these characters and this world. Loretta Chase is fantastic at writing witty characters placed in laugh-out-loud scenes and sparkling dialogue. I loved that the main characters initially fought their attraction for each other and constantly butted heads to prove their points. In the end, their happily ever after story was a wild read, but also a very satisfying conclusion for their journey.”

A reader from NEWTON CENTER read *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* by Muriel Spark: “So many things to appreciate, see on the second (or third) time around, sleek and slim and in it's prime and oh so disturbing!”

A reader from Westborough read *Annihilation* by Jeff Vandermeer: “Just as good as the first time. I noticed a lot of nuance that I missed the first time. Tried the audiobook this time as opposed to the physical copy I read in grad school.”

A reader from Quincy read *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer: “LOVED LOVED LOVED. Really didn't remember this story and am so glad I read it again!”

A reader from Edgartown read *Are you there God, it's me Margaret?* by Blume, Judy: “It was wonderful to revisit something I haven't read since I was twelve, and grappling with so many of the questions Margaret struggles with, and viewing it all through the lens of being not only an adult, but also the mother of a daughter :)”

A reader from Hopkinton read *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck: “Read this in high school, highly enjoyed reading it again 10+ years later.”

A reader from Haverhill read *Until I Find You* by John Irving: “I've always meant to read this book again someday, and this challenge provided the perfect opportunity. I've read, I believe, everything John Irving has written. When I first read this book I was still dreaming about getting tattooed in the manner of some of these characters. Since then, which was many years ago, I have earned quite a bit of my own ink. So having finally had my own experiences similar to many characters made me feel like less of an outsider, a tattoo voyeur I suppose. This time around I felt more connected on a much deeper level to the characters. Also, as I have grown older I have become so much less judgemental and I felt differently about the family dynamic between Jack and Alice. I have a difficult relationship with my own mother and reading about Jack and his close relationships this time around really impacted me. I wouldn't even mind getting a chance to read this a third time one day. John Irving has a way of touching your soul through his characters, and this is probably my favorite next to *A Prayer for Owen Meany*.”

A reader from Hanson read *The Magic of Thinking Big* by David J. Schwartz: “Probably one of the first self-help books I read decades ago at the beginning of my working career. It was interesting to re-read it later in life to see how I interpreted it more personally than professionally this time around. Sure it was written back in 1959 but the principles are still very valid today. Enjoyed it just as much.”

A reader from Brooklyn read *In the Heart of the Sea* by Nathaniel Philbrick: “Loved seeing how I responded to a book I read almost 20 years ago. Enjoyed it then for being one of the more interesting books I read in high school given that it was about a shipwreck and hunting whales. This time around, I

was more taken by the idea of preserving a story — it's incredible intact the narrative it — and the exploration of social structures in the early 1800s in a lens not related to the founding of America.”

A reader from Wrentham read *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd: “I read this when it first came out but did not remember any details. I loved the book and am sad its done.”

A reader from Dartmouth read *The Velveteen Rabbit* by Margery Williams: “Loved it then, love it now.”

A reader from Edgartown read *Call the Darkness Light* by Nancy Zaroulis: “Great book first time reading, then did not feel as great second time.”

A reader from Cambridge read *The Secret History* by Donna Tartt: “The writing is as fluid as I remembered but I was less interested in the characters on this re-read.”

A reader from Lynnfield read *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame: “It had been a long time since I read this classic, and I decided this would be the first chapter book that I read to my daughter (she is only three months old, but I'll enjoy sharing the memory with her once she is older). I remembered some of the story but was reminded of how well this story is written, and some passages are truly beautiful. A favorite of mine is the start of chapter three, The Wild Wood.”

A reader from Shrewsbury read *Forever* by Judy Blume: “I found the book to be much less scandalous and much simpler than I did when I last read it at the age of 12. In a lot of ways I think it is still important for kids to read and to think about the gravity of sexual relationships. On the other hand, I think today's kids are much more worldly and better informed than I was or than the kids in the book are.”

A reader from Dracut read *Percy Jackson and the lightning thief* by Rick riordan: “The Percy Jackson series used to be my favorite when I was young. I would think "wow there's people out there who have powers!". Now I realize it's more than just people who are half god, it's about friendships. The friends we make are not always loyal to us, some may stab us in the back, others are more trustworthy than we initially thought. This book has changed my perspective on the series and on life.”

A reader from Reading read *The Fellowship of the Ring* by J.R.R. Tolkien: “Listened to the Andy Serkis narration of the audiobook (Hoopla) - I first read a mass market paperback version as a young teenager. Then, I enjoyed it for the wide adventurous sweep of the story and all the fantastic details of Middle Earth. Now, I really appreciated how it's also a story of a world facing great challenges and changes and the importance of loyalty and friendship in facing it all. So I may feel very much the same, that I love it, but now I appreciate different things about it.”

A reader from AUBURN read *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain: “I loved the compassion and humor in this book. The fence painting is funnier today than reading it as a child, of course. The book is brilliant in the dialogue and dialects keeping in mind the sensibilities of the time and places. Genius writing.”

A reader from Wrentham read *Mansfield Park* by Jane Austen: “I am reading this book again with my mother and sister. I remember it being easier to read.”

A reader from South Yarmouth read *The Scent of water* by Elizabeth Goudge: “I loved it as much this time! I first read it in my late teens. Now I am very close to the age of the main character so I was reading it through a different lens. It was a slow magical start to the New Year!”

A reader from Otter River read *London Lines: The Places and Faces of London in Poetry & Song* by Kenneth Baker (editor): “This was first published in the early 1980s and is a collection of poetry and

songs about London that go back centuries. Baker was a Conservative minister in Thatcher's Government and had a very wide-ranging sense of literature. I bought this when I lived in the UK as a student and have returned to it twenty years later. When I first read it, it was part of my discovery of Britain and London in particular--engaging with the history of the city through the literature. Now it's part of my nostalgia for living in the UK and being young and full of discovery (much of it through second-hand bookshops)."

A reader from West Tisbury read *Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd: "This was a book that I really loved when I was younger and wanted to see what my feelings were after rereading it. Still a personal favorite."

A reader from Newton read *Transitions* by William Bridges: "I read this in my thirties, again in my forties, and now again in my sixties. It has been informative and inspiring for the life transitions I was going through at each point. Now it is instigating a new look back at the many transitions in my past. I also like to give it as a gift to friends going through life transitions, so I often buy a couple of copies at a time. Pure wisdom!"

A reader from Wakefield read *Percy Jackson: The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan: "Reading this book from an older perspective I gained a new appreciation for the innocence of the characters. Having read the book for the first time being around 12 years old, and now almost 10 years later, I am reading the books again. I do not resonate with the characters as much, but appreciate the ability to go back and lose myself in the simplistic times of tween problems, paired with the heroic and outlandish quests that the characters undertake under the watchful eye and battlement of the gods."

A reader from Bondsville read *Autobiography* by Franklin, Benjamin: "I've read this book several times since I was a teenager. I'm now in my 50s. There are certain points that I've never forgotten, like Franklin demonstrating his industry and frugality by using a squeaky wheelbarrow to transport his printed materials to bolster his reputation. I always thought that I'd hate to be his wife. It's been nice to read this now. Franklin was 52, and I just turned 53. Knowing that places a different slant on my thoughts about where he was in his life and how he was choosing to look back and present himself. What he considered his accomplishments. This was published in 1758, and I wonder what his autobiography might have looked like decades later, after the Revolution. Franklin was very modern in many ways. He knew the power of reputation and presentation. He admitted in his text to have spent time with women and was grateful that he did not catch a disease from that before he married. He did not belong to any particular religion. He believed that women should be educated in subjects like mathematics because they are more useful than dancing. This boastful character truly was amazing for his accomplishments - forming libraries, fire departments, and more. Definitely glad that I visited this book again."

A reader from Groton read *The Visitor* by K. A. Applegate: "I loved the Animorph books as a kid. I reread this one to see how I like them now, and it's still fun!"

A reader from Berkley read *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck: "I read this book in middle school and couldn't remember why I disliked it so much. I reread it and remember that the book is incredibly negative. Negative toward woman, people of color, special needs, and animals. I had forgotten how cruel some of the wording was."

A reader from Winchester read *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee: "I have mixed feelings about this book..specifically about being assigned to read it as an eighth grader. Some of the writing is vivid and makes for a page turner, and there are some social justice statements that redeem certain characters. However, I can't believe my Mass school system assigned this so young. I doubt our underdeveloped minds and life experiences made for a nuanced enough read, and I fear that reading another trope of a

criminal Black man just added to subconscious stereotypes. I am glad to have reread it, sad that many of the issues are unchanged, and ready to read more stories of Black joy.”

A reader from Brookline read *The Story of Doctor Dolittle* by Lofting, Hugh: “Many elements were still enjoyable, but it was so much more racist than I remembered it being!”

A reader from Shelburne Falls read *A Wizard of Earthsea* by Ursula K. LeGuin: “I felt lukewarm about this book as a child, and I wanted to give it another try. While I now have more appreciation for the larger context of the series, I've lost some of the awe I experienced as a young reader. I was still touched by the ending, though. So on net, I feel roughly the same about the book.”

A reader from Westford read *Three Little Horses* by Piet Worm: “I have fond memories of this book as a child. I often requested it and enjoyed having it read to me. The horses got along and enjoyed each other.”

A reader from Dracut read *Stranger in a Strange Land* by Robert Heinlein: “Enjoyed it more the first time I read it. Getting cynical in my old age. A cult is a cult is a cult even when started by a Martian.”

A reader from Fitchburg read *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen: “This is such a beautiful book, perfect to read in January. In such a fast paced world this book slows down time and makes you appreciate the winter!!”

A reader from Clinton read *Eragon* by Christopher Paolini: “This book feels interwoven with my childhood and carved into my soul. I would love to be buried with my childhood copy to take into eternity with me.”

A reader from Bolton read *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee: “The more things change, the more they stay the same... When I read this book many years ago, I focused on the individual characters and had less of an understanding of the social ,racial and gender systematic dynamics at play- as presented in the book as well as in the world around me.”

A reader from Dover read *My Family and Other Animals* by Gerald Durrell: “The book brings back very happy memories of my mother reading it aloud to us at the dinner table.”

A reader from Newton read *My Name Is Yoon* by Helen Recorvits: “When I first read this book, I didn't really understand what the story was about. Now, I really understand that My Name Is Yoon is about embracing your identity. I enjoyed reading the book immensely.”

A reader from Danvers read *Cat's Cradle* by Kurt Vonnegut: “I first read this as assigned curriculum when I was fifteen and was unsure I understood all it had to say. Rereading it now, I'm still not sure if this was a very simple or very complex book thematically, but I do feel like I understood it better this time around.”

A reader from Watertown read *Little Women* by Louise May Alcott: “I loved this book as a girl and revisiting it, I still appreciate the cozy family unit and the sacrifices that are made for love. But what tickles me more is how bold Jo March was at a time when woman didn't have much of a public voice. You go girl!”

A reader from Haverhill read *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway: “I ended up not feeling differently about it than I did in high school and I still found it incredibly dull and a waste of time.”

A reader from Braintree read *Watership Down* by Richard Adams: “I read this as a teenager and remember loving it. I liked the different perspective of rabbits but seemed to remember human related danger being the main source of conflict. In reality there is a lot of rabbit on rabbit violence. I wasn't as enthralled this time around, although it's still a well written book.”

A reader from North Easton read *Charlotte's Web* by EB White: "I wanted to revisit one of my childhood favorite reads and find out if I still love it as much and if so, why. It didn't disappoint me- the language, the characters and the descriptions are all just as inspiring as ever."

A reader from Haverhill read *Mort* by Terry Pratchett: "I was hesitant to revisit *Mort* by Terry Pratchett, having last picked it up more than two decades ago. Comedy doesn't always age well. Fortunately and unfortunately, death is a constant, so this tale of an assistant grim reaper still holds up. I'm glad I experienced the novel again with more mature eyes."

A reader from Lincoln read *Dog Man* by Dav Pilkey: "Hilarious! And just as funny as when I read it two years ago and maybe more."

A reader from Lincoln read *Lucky Jim* by Kingsley Amis: "I read this 20 years ago and thought it was hilarious. A couple of years later, the movie happened to come on TV, and it matched perfectly how I'd pictured it! Just as funny the second time around and I'll have to watch the movie again."

A reader from Roslindale read *Dawn* by Octavia Butler: "Still as devastating as 15 years ago!"

A reader from Springfield read *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan: "I loved this series as a kid, it was nice revisiting it after all this time. Forgot how fun the chapter titles are!"

A reader from Northampton read *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger: "I re-read this book for the first time in about 10 years, and I'm glad that I did! When I read it the first time, I really hated it and thought that Holden was entitled and whiny. While it is hard to ignore his privilege and negative outlook on life, I had much more compassion towards him. I saw him much more as a child struggling with grief following death of his brother, which made him a much more likable character. Still not my favorite novel, but definitely read it with new eyes!"

A reader from Newton read *If you give a mouse a cookie* by Laura Joffe Numeroff: "My moms favorite kids book!"

A reader from Chelmsford read *Letters To Judy: What Your Kids Wish They Could Tell You* by Judy Blume: "Published 1986; first read this circa 1988."

A reader from Methuen read *Striped Ice Cream* by Joan Lexau: "A book that I remembered from childhood because the main character loved a specific flavor of ice cream. I would say this book gave me a "window" into a world very different than mine but I identified with the character in our love of books and ice cream."

A reader from Newton read *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins: "With the new hunger games book out, I thought I'd reread one of my favorite series when I was younger. I remember sitting in the car while everyone went inside just to finish a chapter. Reading it a second time was quite nostalgic and showed me how my personal reading preferences really hasn't changed that much since I was younger. I still like to read fast and I like action in my books!"

A reader from Melrose read *Harriet the Spy* by Louise Fitzhugh: "When I was doing some cleaning I found my old copy of *Harriet the Spy* (cover price \$1.50). I loved the book when I was 10 and I was pleasantly surprised at how much I enjoyed reading it again. *Harriet* is a wonderful character—intelligent, spunky and very much herself. As a kid I simply accepted *Harriet's* story. As an adult, I appreciate that the book shows so well what it's like to be 11 and beginning to figure out the adult world and relationships with your peers."

A reader from Attleboro read *It's Easier Than You Think* by Sylvia Boorstein: "I read this book many years ago when I was at a very different phase in my life. Now my takeaways are in regards to peace, calmness, happiness, and forgiveness. All of these are such great reminders at any phase in life and I'm so glad I took the opportunity to reread this. Always looking for the good, living in the moment and being present is a great reminder."

A reader from Attleboro read *Practically Twins* by Viola Rowe: "Mary Ann Rand gets a new Mom and a new sister after Dad remarries after the death of her mother. She and her new sister, Janice, are practically twins as they are the same age. At first it was exciting to both, but later there is drama. Mary Ann and Jan have to figure out how to make their sisterhood work for the benefit of the whole family. I feel it is relatable even today. I still love this book as I did in the past, but the reasons are different. My circumstances were that I may have had a sister same age as me, making us Practically Twins. Now I read the book as a parent. A favorite no matter what."

A reader from Quincy read *Doomed Queens* by Kris Waldherr: "I really liked it in high school so I decided to see if it held up. It includes two to three page blurbs on royal women who met unfortunate ends. I liked it less this time around. I think the problem is I know more about history now and the author has a habit of making definitive statements about things we cannot know for certain, which was kind of annoying as a history buff."

A reader from Charlton read *Animal Farm* by George Orwell: "I first read this book in the eighth grade. I remember enjoying it but did not have all the historical context or the inferential skills to fully comprehend. In this reading, I thought a lot about Squealer and the twisting of facts and re-framing of events with a very different presentation on the events as they happened. This remains for me an immensely powerful and instructive tale on the abuse of power."

A reader from Berkley read *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett: "As I began to read this book again after many, many years, I was surprised to find my memory of it was far different. I had forgotten about the cholera and her parents passing, which lead to Mary's move from India to England. Instead, my recollection of the book focused on how special the secret garden was to her. Reading this again years later certainly made me view it in a different light and made me wonder why I had considered it a childhood favorite despite forgetting so much about it."

A reader from Greenfield read *All Over Creation* by Ruth Ozeki: "Ruth Ozeki's first book, *My Year of Meats*, is one of my favorite books and has been since it came out. When her second book, *All Over Creation*, came out, I was very excited to read it... And then I just didn't click with it. A good few years have passed, I'm an adult now, and I've read and enjoyed the rest of her books as they've come out, so I figured it was time to finally give *All Over Creation* a second chance."

A reader from Rochester read *Lee* by Harper: "I first read this remarkable Southern Gothic Bildungsroman novel almost 60 years ago, and saw the movie and plays it inspired. How *Lee* mocks her own society, education, and the justice system as subjects of her humorous disapproval! She also addresses issues of class, courage, compassion and gender. And how clever that the last name of Finch is also a songbird like the bird in the title!"

A reader from Plymouth read *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien: "I read this book when I was a kid and I enjoyed it but I think the whole time I was caught up in trying to make it make sense as an allegory of some kind. Revisiting it as an adult with a better understanding of what the story is I think I actually enjoyed it more."

A reader from STOW read *The Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane: “Civil War and emotions. Gutting, still.”

A reader from Auburndale read *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by CS Lewis: “It held up, though I wonder why the children were so unfazed by not know if their parents were safe.”

A reader from Gill read *Billy Budd* by Herman Melville: “I chose to revisit a book that I remembered hating in high school English class. In intervening years, I have read and enjoyed several other Melville works. My appreciation for Moby-Dick helped me, I think, to see the (lesser) charms of Billy Budd. I enjoyed the author's tendency to, as he says, leave the main road and err into by-paths. I was less fond of the heaviness of the symbolism.”

A reader from Wakefield read *The Catcher in the Rye* by JD Salinger: “I read this for the first time as a junior in high school (2008-09) and a few times since and I've always loved it. However, this time, talking to my husband and sister-in-laws boyfriend, they didn't love it when they read it. They both found Holden annoying. And now that I'm reading with that lens, I'm actually kind of finding Holden annoying as well!”

A reader from South Hadley read *Heartless* by Marissa Meyer: “This book is an origin story for the Queen of Hearts from Alice in Wonderland. I found myself almost forgetting at parts who the main character would become. The world building is so fun and more detailed than I remembered from my first read. Even knowing the details of the ending does not change the impact.”

A reader from Webster read *Sheilds* by Carol: “I wondered if I would like this book as much as when I first read it back in the mid 1990s. I'm happy to say I am enjoying as much if not more than I did originally. The writing is almost a stream of thought, and it seems the emotions along with the life choices of each character seem more understandable now than they did 30 years ago.”

A reader from Hudson read *The Once and Future King* by T. H. White: “I first read this book about 60 years ago and fell in love with King Arthur and many of the other characters; it introduced me to what became a lifelong interest in English and Scottish history. Rereading it now, I found it less romantic and much sadder, in part as the result of learning that White was publishing these stories just as World War II was beginning in Europe.”

A reader from Amherst read *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: “Well told story of life abroad for young Africans in pursuit of better life.”

A reader from Somerville read *Hot Gimmick Vol. 1* by Miki Aihara: “When I was younger I thought some of the characters' actions were hot and now I see they are dumb and borderline abusive. And the main character definitely needs to set some healthy boundaries. I'm glad I got to reread this with a more adult perspective.”

A reader from Uxbridge read *Maida's Little Shop* by Inez Haynes Irwin: “I'd read it as a child/preteen and I wondered why it stuck with me. It was such a sweet story - a "crippled" rich girl heals by finding purpose, participating in community, helping others and being helped. Such a lovely message for any time.”

A reader from Franklin read *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley: “I first read this in high school. Reading it now, with more life experience and all that is happening on a national level, it certainly hits a little different.”

A reader from Plainville read *The Witches: The Graphic Novel* by Roald Dahl and Penelope Bagieu: “For this month's prompt, I immediately thought of the books I loved as a child, one of them being *The Witches* by Roald Dahl. I then thought about looking at this book in a different way, which led me to the graphic novel version. This story still holds the magic and adventure I felt while reading this book over and over again as a child, and was fun to read in a new format.”

A reader from Wakefield read *Dahlias A Little Book of Flowers* by Tara Austen Weaver: “I read this book a long time ago for general knowledge of dahlias after receiving a 1/2 a dozen tubers. All of which rotted by winter. This book is small but packed with information for anyone interested in taking care of dahlias. A bonus is the beautiful illustrations. This year, I really plan on spending time growing at least one flower successfully and I reread this to defamiliarize myself and give me inspiration.”

A reader from Boston read *Percy Jackson - The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan: “It was great to read this book again because the first time I read it, I was younger than the main character and looked up to him. Now I read it and have hope for the future generations and what they can accomplish while still young.”

A reader from Sharon read *Are You There God? It's Me Margaret* by Judy Blume: “I first read this book in the 1980's when I was in Elementary School. I believe that my mother bought it for me and it was one of the first books I had read (in fiction form) that talked about growing up and puberty. Back then, reading it seemed so embarrassing and something that I had to hide from others. Although I would have been completely mortified if someone had seen me reading it at school back then, I do remember finding a secret comfort in it. Reading it as a grown woman who now has a pre-teen daughter of her own it feels as if it has come full circle. While as a 10 year old, I related to Margaret and now that I am a mother, I can relate more to her mother's character. Although I recently bought the book again for my daughter to read and talk about with, I am glad that I re-read it and was able to get a new perspective. I still found the book to be relatable, well written, and enjoyable to read.”

A reader from Wakefield read *The name of the wind* by Patrick Rothfuss: “Such beautiful story telling. Reading it a second time allowed me to enjoy the set and witty clever details and conversations that I missed the first time.”

A reader from Tewksbury read *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Poe Society* by Mary Ann Schaffer: “I LOVED this book when I first read it years ago (probably 15 years ago at this point). While I still enjoyed it this time around, I definitely noticed my reading preferences have evolved and changed a bit.”

A reader from SPRINGFIELD read *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau: “An enriching book first read in college and appreciated more over the years in life and career.”

A reader from Lowell read *Journey Through Trauma* by Gretchen L. Schmelzer, PhD: “This book gave me a lot of hope during a distinct phase of my life where my mental health was noticeably challenging. I am now better understand the second half of the book, talking about the healing and coming together phases. I'm so proud and even more hopeful and curious about the future.”

A reader from Wilmington read *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr: “I am glad that I gave this book a second try. I enjoyed it a lot more when I read it this time. A good read for anyone who likes WWII.”

A reader from Worcester read *Behind the scenes at the museum* by Kate Atkinson: “First read this book 15 years ago and remembered it being funny. It's still amusing but strikes me as being very sad as well and I

think that's a function of being older, more life experience and better grasping some of the references that went over my head in my early 20s vs almost 40."

A reader from Wrentham read *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James.

A reader from Brookline read *Franny & Zooey* by J. D. Salinger: "I first read this book for a course in college about the mystical journey. Reading it again after 17 years, I was struck by how annoying all of the characters are. There seemed to be nothing to commend this book to others, and even the connection to the mystical journey seemed tenuous at best."

A reader from Danvers read *The Double Bind* by Chris Bohjalian: "I remember loving this book 15 or so years ago when I first read it. I remember it being quite complex and well done with interesting twists and turns and an ending I didn't see coming. I read it again because a friend read it recently after I recommended it, and really wasn't very impressed with it. I reread it so that we could talk about it. This time, I was not nearly as impressed and couldn't even recall why I thought it was so well done. (I typically do really enjoy this authors books.)"

A reader from Braintree read *My sister's keeper* by Jodi Picoult: "The book was regarding an illness. I currently work in the health care field, so reading this book now I was able to understand the medical terminology."

A reader from Worcester read *The great gatsby* by F scott fitzgerald: "The book hits a little different in the current state of economy. What use to feel like a starcrossed lovers in the roaring twenties felt more frivolous and tragic at the same time."

A reader from Wrentham read *Princesses Save the World* by Savannah Guthrie & Allison Oppenheim.

A reader from Sharon read *Pain Killer: An Empire of Deceit and the Origin of America's Opioid Epidemic* by Barry Meier: "Always looking to expand my knowledge on the opioid epidemic since I work in substance use. After reading this book again, I still prefer Empire of Pain (also about the opioid epidemic) to this book."

A reader from Somerville read *The Two Princesses of Bamarre* by Gail Carson Levine: "This book still makes me cry in 2024!"

A reader from Byfield read *Erika L Sanchez* by I am not your perfect Mexican daughter: "This book was one I read before and I needed to revisit it with a new perspective. There's so much that goes on in this young girls mind and working with young girls as a teachers, I wanted to remind myself of texts that they can read to see their situations in. Loved it again."

A reader from Hanover read *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank: "Reading this book almost thirty years after I read it as a young adult brings out new meaning to the words Anne wrote. In some ways Anne was wise beyond her years living as she must in order to survive and in other ways she was just an ordinary girl coping with extraordinary circumstances. Anne's commitment to confiding in her diary has allowed her story to touch the lives of so many and live on so we may never forget her sacrifice."

A reader read *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White: "'What I wrote on Instagram: A note about Charlotte's Web: when it was first published in 1952, Eudora Welty wrote in the New York Times, "What the book is about is friendship on earth, affection and protection, adventure and miracle, life and death, trust and treachery, pleasure and pain, and the passing of time. As a piece of work it is just about perfect, and just about magical in the way it is done." Reading it as a child, I didn't know any of this, but it was an instant favorite (this is Val!). And it was the first book that made me cry. As a child, I related most to the

relationship between Fern and Wilbur. As an adult, I found myself paying more attention to Charlotte. And yes, it still made me cry. But I also picked up on some of the wonders hidden in the language. Consider: “Do you understand how there could be any writing in a spider’s web?” “Oh”

A reader from Quincy read *Jo's Boys* by Louisa May Alcott: “There are certainly some social issues that would be treated differently today, but it's amazing how well this holds up. And Dan is still my favorite :)”

A reader from Boston read *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott: “I first read *Little Women* when I was 12, the same age as the youngest March sister at the beginning of the novel. Now at the age of 18, I find myself loving a lot of the same aspects I did when I was younger. I adored the relationship the March sisters had and their interactions with the people around them. *Little Women* will always be one of my favorite novels for its simplicity and easily lovable characters!”

A reader from Amherst read *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry* by Mildred D. Taylor: “I read this decades ago for school, and its sequel *Let the Circle Be Unbroken*, and I remember a powerful story but not the details (nor the grade I was in). I just reread both and found them excellent, the stories, the style, the historical window, the evocation of landscape, everything. I'm reminded of the importance and value of reading fiction and literature in school at all ages.”

A reader from Charlton read *Never ending Story* by Michael Ende: “It was similar as when I read it is a kid. I cried less, but felt deeply filled with sorrow in the same parts. But it still had that spark of joy and wonder with curiosity and the value of play and imagination.”

A reader from Wellfleet read *A Princess of Mars* by Edgar Rice Burroughs: “My father and my uncle both read the Burroughs Mars books when they were growing up and this, the first of the series, was still on the bookshelves at my grandmother's house when I was young. I eventually read the entire 10 book series and the third book, *The Warlord of Mars*, was the first chapter book I read all in one day. It might have been, in part, because they connected me with that previous generation, but I loved the books, especially the first three in the series. (Even as a young person, I could tell Burroughs got progressively less interested in telling a good story as the series went on.) There are some books I read or had read to me as a young person that shine just as brightly now as they did when I first heard them. *Wind in the Willows*, *David and the Phoenix*, *The Hobbit*, to name just a few. And then there's this one. Burroughs once said that he began his career as a writer after reading some pulp fiction and deciding that he could write stories just as "rotten." Mission accomplished, Mr. Burroughs. Whatever I found to love in this all those years ago certainly escapes me now.”

A reader from East Bridgewater read *The Truth About Forever* by Sarah Dessen: “This was a great book to reread and I felt differently about it now than when I read it a few years ago.”

A reader from Dennisport read *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder: “Read this play in high school & was about the same age Emily was in the 1st Act. Enjoyed it then & again after rereading it as an adult. Very insightful dialog in the play that I didn't realize the depth of until now.”

A reader from Boston read *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan: “I first read this book when I was in middle school many years ago. I wanted to reread this book because the new tv show came out for it and I wanted to reread the book before I watched the show. I was a bit worried that the book would be worse than I remembered since it was written for a younger audience. However it definitely still holds up and I loved it equally as much as I did back then (though it's partly due to the nostalgia factor). I love how the book made me laugh, and I loved how captivating the story and the world are.”

A reader from Natick read *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* by J.K. Rowling: “A book I have read many times, although I have not read any of the books in the series since finding out about J.K. Rowling's transphobia. I wasn't sure if my experience re-reading the series would be tainted, but I admit that it continues to bring me as much joy as it used to. I do pick up on some of the darker themes that I missed as a child though.”

A reader from Montague read *Persuasion* by Jane Austen: “I'm more aware of all the class distinctions and how they play out in the novel than I was before. Also wondering what the author really thinks of those distinctions. Does she support them or critique them?”

A reader from West Simsbury read *Bailey's Cafe* by Gloria Naylor: “I read this years ago and remember really liking it and talking about it to everyone. I enjoy Naylor's writing but I am finding the subject matter more difficult to “enjoy”. The depths of the sorrow are just so great. Will have to go back to other Naylor books and see.”

A reader from Watertown read *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck: “I definitely had a difference prospective reading this book almost 40 years later. I know I didn't feel the depth of this book when I was a teenager. Glad I had the opportunity to read it again.”

A reader from Leeds read *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott: “I read “Little Women” at between 3-4 times when I was in late elementary school. I thought it was very romantic, although I couldn't always understand the turns of phrase, or why things were happening the way they did. It was fun to revisit the story years later and create different images in my mind for the characters. They still seem “simpler” to me than people are in this time - I don't mean that pejoratively, more as an observation that, at least as it was written, maybe life was simpler, had fewer choices.”

A reader from Milton read *Edie: An American Biography* by Jen Stein: “I thought Andy Warhol's gang at The Factory were the coolest back in my 20's when I first read this book, I wanted to be just like Edie. Re-reading it I am saddened by how lost these people are and Edie dying of a drug overdose at 28 no longer feels romantic.”

A reader from Pepperell read *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger: “A favorite book from high school / first time reading again in adulthood. Interesting to see it from this perspective and stage in life; the story's the same, but I'm different. I enjoyed finding my younger self in the pages.”

A reader from Somerville read *On Writing* by Stephen King: “I originally read this book in high school when I was planning on becoming a writer some day. Now that I'm a teacher it was great to see this through a different lens.”

A reader from Braintree read *Notes From The Underground* by Fyodor Dostoevsky: “First Read: 2018. Initial Opinion (2018): I loved it. Current Opinion (2024): I still like it, but I'm far less favorable than I remember. I think it drags on much too long despite being a novella length already, and it was particularly difficult to slog through the first thirty pages or so.”

A reader from Medford read *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* by Robert Pirsig: “I read this book when I was in high school many years ago. I remember that it made a big impression on me at the time, but I wouldn't have been able to tell you why. When I was younger, I feel like my impressions were more literal than they were this time. While I've never been much of a black and white thinker, in recent years I feel like I've come to the realization that nothing is a dichotomy rather everything is a spectrum. I feel like that was more visible to me in this reading, the relation between reason and art.”

A reader from Shrewsbury read *This Is How* by Augusten Burroughs: “When I first bought this book 10+ years ago, I honestly only purchased it because Augusten Burroughs has been my favorite writer since I first immigrated to America. As soon as I read “Running With Scissors”, I was instantly hooked by not only this author but by memoirs altogether. I first read “This Is How” years ago when I was more interested in the love for the writer and I don’t quite remember connecting to the actual content of this book so much. Now that I am able to reflect on my life, who I am, and who I want to be in the future, re-reading this book was timed very perfectly with the stage I am in life and I was able to really understand this piece to its core. This book I like a self-help how to book that really gets you to question if you’re living your most honest self, in that comedic but very raw tone that is very fitting for the style of Burroughs’ writing. It was actually really therapeutic reading this after reading, “How To Come Out In a Walmart Parking Lot” by John Paul Brahma and it was such a good combination to have read both consecutively.”

A reader from Melrose read *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe: “I found it difficult to read so had to take breaks to finish reading it. However, I am glad that I reread it.”

A reader from Pepperell read *The City of Ember* by Jeanne DuPrau: “I loved The City of Ember series when I was younger. The City of Ember is such an adventurous novel full of discovery, from the underground city to the resilient characters, Lina and Doon. The series captivated me, ultimately making me see the importance of curiosity and perseverance in the face of adversity. Especially after many years, rereading it was so exciting as it brought back a wave of nostalgia.”

A reader from Boston read *Snow Falling on Cedars* by David Guterson: “I read this in college, shortly after it was published. It was the first time I had ever read anything about the Japanese Internment camps during WWII. It has always been on my list of favorites books - but almost 30 years later - I only remembered bits of the book. Mostly I had remembered the different settings of the book, and how the author wrote about nature. This time I was more moved by the characters and how they change. I’m also floored to remember how it was to read a historical fiction book that is set during real events - and not having the internet at hand to look up what ever I was reading about.”

A reader from Salem read *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* by Agatha Christie: “So it had been decades since I have read any Christie books. They were my absolute faves in high school. I was wondering how her writing would resonate with me now, with 4 decades having passed. Well, her writing and books have clearly withstood the test of time. I plan on rereading a bunch more this year!”

A reader from Northampton read *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger: “Reading this book again as an adult, I found myself feeling slightly more sympathetic towards Holden given his isolation from family and the death of his brother. However, I still think, as I did when I first read it, that he’s a bit of a snob, and pretentious.”

A reader from Dracut read *Gift of the Sea* by Anne Morrow Lindbergh: “I read the book when I was younger and it was nice to revisit it when I am older.”

A reader from Amherst read *Echo* by Pam Muñoz Ryan: “I love this book as much as the first time I read it. Historical WWII fiction combined with a fairy tale, and how a magic harmonica connected three stories. Fantastically crafted story.”

A reader from Belchertown read *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding: “Each year I set out to re-read a classic and to read one I have never read before. Lord of the Flies is a book I read in high school over two decades ago. It was my choice for a classic to re-read. One of the things that stuck out to me reading at the

age of 39 instead of 17, was that it was not a struggle to understand the language or what was going on. In high school, I barely grasped the actual story and certainly did not understand the added commentary about humanity, which sadly still rings true. I found myself wanting to create and sell t-shirts that say "In a world of Jacks, be a Ralph". It always amazes me when I read a book I know I have read before, but it feels like an entirely new experience."

A reader from Upton read *The Little prince* by Antoine de saint-exupery: "Such a lovely little fable! I read it in French in high school, so it was delightful to revisit (in English, as my French abandoned me due to neglect)."

A reader from Melrose read *Percy Jackson and the Olympians The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan: "I still love it and i got reminded of scenes that i had since forgotten about can't wait to reread the rest of the series."

A reader from San Jose read *With This Kiss* by Eloise James: "I had read this book 2 years ago, re-read it this month, there were so many minute emotions that I had overlooked before. It's a beautiful story. The more I read the more I like it. The way art, love and passion are woven into a wonderful world where the devastation and happiness are equally enjoyable gave me an addictive experience."

A reader from Amherst read *Suncatcher* by Romesh Gunesequera: "Reading this book again, I was struck by the subtle note of hope at the end -something I had missed before."

A reader read *Little House on the Prairie* by Laura Ingalls Wilder: "This is Indian country."

A reader from Waltham read *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck: "Read about 15 years ago in high school and remembered liking it so decided to give it a try again. It was so much shorter than I remember and the whole story takes place in just a few days. I still enjoyed the book, but 3.5/5 rating as I think I would prefer a more drawn out arc, character developments. It touches upon so many socio/economic points of the great depression and is interesting to see the POV of the traveling workman vs the families that we usually read about."

A reader from Harwich read *Stones From the River* by Ursula Hegi: "I first read this book over 20 years ago and thought it would be worthwhile to reread it as authoritarianism and intolerance are on the rise around the world — can we divert another holocaust?"

A reader from Nahant read *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee: "Excellent book, told from the perspective of a child that describes the trial of an innocent black man in the South, defended by a white man. A subplot involving a neighbor with disabilities sheds light on the dangers of making assumptions about others."

A reader from Danvers read *The Good Earth* by Pearl S. Buck: "It was quite different than what I thought I remembered! It was my initial introduction to an eastern culture and the hard working people of the earth."

A reader from Salem read *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins: "I have been wanting to revisit this series for a while I first read when it more than a decade ago, when it was first popular (in my young adult/teenaged years). I was impressed that the writing and characters - not just the themes - held up so well and still struck so hard. There was a new kind of stress reading this as an adult, feeling for the first time just how terribly young these characters are. It added a particular level of dread and horror to the book that I don't know I fully felt the first time I read it (back when I was closer to Katniss' age.)"

A reader from Chester read *Stranger Inside* by Lisa Unger: "Plot is even more relevant in today's world."

A reader from Medford read *Slaughterhouse Five* by Kurt Vonnegut: "I first read this in high school and it started my love for Vonnegut, but the darkness and anti-war message come through much more strongly on a second read from an adult perspective."

A reader from West boylston read *Grapes of wrath* by John Steinbeck: "An interesting read of the times that pulled in the true hardships that migrated people out of their homes -very sad - reading it now later in life after having a home and family -I just can't imagine what these families were put through and the hardships that they had to face - incredible strength."

A reader from North Andover read *Anxious People* by Fredrick Backman: "I LOVED this book the first time I read it. It was almost comforting just seeing feelings that other "people" were having that were similar to my life. The second time I read it just deepened that understanding and I was able to see more nuances throughout. One of my all time faves still for sure!"

A reader from Sharon read *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley: "I found myself still greatly shocked at the dystopic vision set out by the author. I also recognized how far we have come, and that is in fact much closer to this world where everything is optimized for maximum consumption and anesthetization from any discomforts. The exploration in John's final discussion with the World Director on beauty, god, a quest for a higher satisfaction was a good one. It attempted to describe something that is not available to most even with all of the money and power."

A reader from Reading read *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank: "Like a lot of people, I read this book in high school and am revisiting it in my late 40s. With more life experience, I can relate to how the characters process the trauma of the Holocaust (and their hiding) on an ongoing basis. With recent historical events like the COVID pandemic and the rise of Trumpism, I can also identify with how Anne and others try to keep up appearances after their lives have been turned upside down by larger historical events. Like many of us have done in recent years, the characters cling to routine (lesson plans, meal planning, correspondence courses) as the world is falling apart around them. Anne's processing of normal teenage emotions in this highly stressful circumstance seems more poignant to me now, having gone through more of the ups and downs of my own life. I have so much deeper of an appreciation for the unique gift of this diary as an example of resilience and hope in the face of war, fear and genocide."

A reader from Mashpee read *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker: "I read *The Color Purple* when I was in high school. I like the book because of the writing style and characters. At that time, I didn't fully understand some of the topics Ms. Walker was expressing due to my lack of experience and age, but I enjoyed the book. As an adult re-reading this book, I felt a deeper understanding and emotions for the characters and the topics expressed. I found I had new favorite characters and understood the "why" some of the characters reacted."

A reader from Woods Hole read *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen: "It's better my second time around - enjoying the prose so much more than when I was younger."

A reader from Wakefield read *Animal Farm* by George Orwell: "I last read this book in high school 20 years ago and definitely appreciate it more now than I did then."

A reader from Needham Heights read *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston: "I read this book in high school and loved it. This January I listened to the audiobook, narrated by Ruby Dee, and loved it even more."

A reader from Granby read *Green Mars* by Kim Stanley Robinson: "This is the second book in the Mars Trilogy, I read it back when it was first released. I have since read many of Robinson's books, and wanted

to see how these early works held up to what he is doing now. I am still amazed by his grasp of science, character development, and storytelling. Each of his works is an epic tale. This time reading *Green Mars* I am learning more about the people in the story and their parts in it. I was more interested in the travel to Mars aspect the first time I read it, so adding in the personalities and how they fit in with Mars gives it a different dimension.”

A reader from Worcester read *Nicobobinus* by Terry Jones: “My 4th grade teacher read this book aloud to the class in 1997. I loved it then and especially loved it now, having realized that it was written by none other than Terry Jones of Monty Python fame.”

A reader from Kingston read *Just listen* by Sarah Dessen: “I read this and other Sarah Dessen books as a teenager. I thought it would be watered down with a frustratingly naive girl protagonist like some other YA books I grew up with loving. But this book didn't make me cringe now as an adult! I understand what I liked about it. It's a simple story that depends on the reader liking the characters' personalities and relationships. It also appeals to those relating to having lost complicated relationships and having your self-worth challenged due to your life changing in ways out of your control. I finished this one on Jan 29th, at Craigville Beach; where I was a decade ago, first diving into this book.”

A reader from Hyannisport read *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll: “I first read this book in high school as part of a math class. We had to discover the mathematical concepts found in the tale. Now I read it as a story (or actually a collection of tales).”

A reader from Lynnfield read *The Candymakers* by Mass, Wendy: “This is a story about a boy who lives at a candy factory with his dad and grandfather who both won the candy contest a long time ago. The boy is now competing to be a candymaker in his factory against three other contestants. Each contestant carries secrets about themselves and the others. After re-reading, I would give this book four stars. I liked that the story was told in the characters' different perspectives. It held good lessons about honesty, trustworthiness and being yourself.”

A reader from Reading read *Seven Days of Us* by Francesca Hornak: “The first time I read this book was before COVID and I remember loving it but I decided to read it again because I was still in the holiday spirit and I had a whole new appreciation for quarantining with family! A great read with holiday vibes that kept me turning the pages.”

A reader from Hampden read *The Undertaking of Lily Chen* by Danica Novgorodoff: “I still love it! I have a new appreciation for the art style now though - when I was younger I laughed at some of the illustrations that now I see the undertone in. It is wonderfully unique in every sense.”

A reader from Ipswich read *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by JK Rowling: “My 7 year old got a used copy of the illustrated text for Christmas, and I was excited to introduce her to this magical world. While she is hanging on every word, I can't help but notice so much fat phobic language throughout the text. Disappointing.”

A reader from Clinton read *The Locked Door* by Freida McFadden: “This book was great. I previously read a different book by this author and didn't care for it. This book had been recommended by a coworker and it was a great book.”

A reader from Melrose read *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* by J.K. Rowling: “I haven't read this since it first came out - I'm working my way through the series with my kids. It is still magical, but it feels much longer than I remembered. I slogged through whereas before I would stay up and read it in one night.”

A reader from Blandford read *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad: "I could not understand nor finish this book in High School. I tried again several years later in college. I still could not get through it. Twenty years later, I have finished the book, understand most of it, and even enjoyed it a little. Life goals. Sometimes it takes a while to become old and wise enough."

A reader from WEST BOYLSTON read *The Cricket in Times Square* by George Selden: "This was one of my favorite books as a child. I loved listening to Tony Shaloub's reading of the book, and was pleased that it has been revised by Stacey Lee. I enjoyed learning more about Ms. Lee and her own writing."

A reader from Barnstable read *Peace Is Every Step* by Thich Nhat Hanh: "I actually keep this wonderful little book by my bedside to read every so often when life feels chaotic or my mind is racing. I find his words both inspiring and grounding."

A reader from East Sandwich read *The Secret* by Rhonda Byrne: "I'm glad I re-read it. It gave me a refresher of the techniques."

A reader from Boston read *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* by John Macomber: "This book was a good reminder of strategies to slow down and be mindful in my everyday life."

A reader from Wakefield read *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli: "I loved Stargirl when I was 12. More than 20 years later, I still found it a cute story. But now as an adult and a high school teacher, I find the themes about conformity to be a little outdated compared to Gen Z today, who overall seem to embrace individuality more than most generations before them. I am also finding Stargirl as a character to be a bit of a Manic Pixie Dream Girl, especially since the book is from Leo's POV and her role is mostly to help him grow. I wish this story was from her POV, I want to get inside her head instead of only seeing her through Leo's eyes."

A reader from Boston read *Normal People* by Sally Rooney: "I read this book back in 2021 and truthfully hated it. At the time I very rarely read fiction, but received the book as a gift so pushed through it. I reread for this challenge and was pleasantly surprised to find I loved it this time. I'm still thinking about why that is, but either way I'm feeling more open minded because of this experience."

A reader from South Hadley read *Flyte* by Angie Sage: "I read this book series as a child, and in rereading them I've realized that this is where my love of fantasy, magic, and found family really started. The library I've just joined has the whole series, and it's been delightful rereading them."

A reader from Tyngsborough read *Percy Jackson Lightning Theft* by Rick Riordan: "I love this book and I read it again and now I'm done with the whole series because I re-read it and gave it a chance."

A reader read *A Visit From the Goon Squad* by Jennifer Egan: "'I wasn't sure about this category at first, but after finishing the book I'm so glad it was included in this challenge. I loved this book when I first read it in my mid twenties and didn't expect it to hold up so well now that I'm in my mid thirties. I relate to the characters differently, but just as much as I did years ago. I think Egan said it best when she said, 'time is the stealth goon.'"

A reader from Danvers read *The Fault In Our Stars* by John Green: "I loved this book the first time I read it, but when I read it recently, I was actually able to understand what was going on and why it was so sad."

A reader from Hull read *All Quiet at the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque: "I was reminded of the book after the movie came out, and I would never have thought that the book would be movie material. I haven't seen the film yet, but after re-reading the book, I might as it is such a true reminder that there are

many losers in the war, and their own countries so brainwash the ones fighting that it is really sad to watch. This book was an excellent re-read for me, and I wanted to put it down for the sadness of the ending, but I'm glad I soldiered through. Even after my first read 20 years ago, the book stayed in my heart for a long time and will continue to stay in my memory even longer for all the right reasons."

A reader from Dartmouth read *The Giver* by Lois Lowry: "This is one of my favorite books. I first read it and was exposed to it when I was in Middle school. Loved it then and still love it but has a different meaning in the society we live in today. I am also in a different stage in my life as well."

A reader from North Andover read *Five Smooth Stones* by Anne Fairbairn: "I red this over 50 years ago. It is still unfortunately relevant and moving."

A reader from Wakefield read *1984* by George Orwell: "Previously read this book in high school. Definitely pick up more now on undertones."

A reader from Arlington read *A Moveable Feast* by Ernest Hemingway: "When I first read A Moveable Feast during my undergraduate fascination with Hemingway, it made me pull out a map of Paris and attempt to trace all the streets, boulevards, shops and eateries Ernest and Haley frequented. The only difference reading it 40 years later is that I pull out my phone and gps instead of a map. But the book still makes me feel fresh and innocent."

A reader from Worcester read *Sideways Stories from Wayside School* by Lois Schar: "The humor holds up and has now been shared with a new generation!"

A reader from Rochester read *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee: "I first read this Southern Gothic Bildungsroman novel almost 60 years ago, and saw the movie and plays it inspired. Re-reading it, I'm struck by how Lee mocks her own society, education, and the justice system as subjects of her humorous disapproval! And she doesn't stop there: She also addresses issues of class, courage, compassion and gender. And how very clever that the Finch family name also a songbird like the mockingbird of the title."

A reader from South Weymouth read *The Odyssey* by Homer, trans. by Emily Wilson: "A fresh translation of an ancient tale, this version flows easily and is eminently readable, but still seems to hold true to the classic I remember reading many years ago. The addition of a glossary at the end also makes it easy to keep track of the large cast of characters."

A reader from Monson read *Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah: "Learning about Trevor Noah's upbringing in South Africa in apartheid was an eye opener and helps me respect his comedy and intelligence even more. It was interesting to know he was a mischievous kid. My most recent reading reminded me of his humor and his mother's influence on his life."

A reader from Wellesley read *Traffic: Why We Drive the Way We Do (and What It Says about Us)* by Tom Vanderbilt with Marc Cashman: "I read this book about the psychology of driving and traffic BEFORE I learned how to drive. Interesting, this time - after learning to drive - I mostly found it boring. What changed? I have no idea."

A reader from West Hartford read *A Wrinkle in Time* by Ursula Le Guin: "This beautiful novel filled with complex emotions and complicated choices was remarkable to me when I read it for the first time, most likely 45 years ago. Rereading this novel was truly like stepping back in time and simultaneously knowing you never can truly go back to the innocence and beauty of your own young life."

A reader from Newton read *Atonement* by Ian McEwan: "I read the Chinese translated version of this book in high school, which was around 15 years ago. Back then, I was dreaming of becoming a novelist. I

empathized a lot with Briony in the book. Now, having become a scientist instead, this book still makes me cry and reminds me of my old dreams.”

A reader from Topsfield read *Le Petit Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: “I first read this book in French class in high school. I liked the feeling of the book, but never got too into it because I didn't have much motivation to learn that language. Now, I am an English as a second language teacher and work with some students from French-speaking countries. Improving my French speaking helps me communicate with them. I enjoyed re-reading this book in French, and the story of a boy travelling in space means a lot to me now.”

A reader from Quincy read *Much Ado About Nothing* by William Shakespeare: “The more into the theatre industry I get, the more I love Shakespeare.”

A reader from North Reading read *Go Ask Alice* by Anonymous: “I read this as a teenager/young adult. Wanted to revisit now that I have worked in healthcare and seen addiction first hand.”

A reader from Montague read *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller: “Amazing, hilarious, overtones of the existential horror of self-preservation in an insane world.”

A reader from Maynard read *Becoming Duchess Goldblatt* by Anonymous: “This is a wonderful book!”

A reader from Andover read *A Room with a View* by E. M. Forster: “The first time I read this, it was lyrical, lovely, a joy. This time, I found it dated and a bit stilted. It is a good story but does not seem to age well.”

A reader from Springfield read *Sorcerer's Stone* by J K Rowling: “I read this book the first time a long time ago. I have only watched the movie since then. I was surprised that there were many details in the book that were not in the movie.”

A reader from South Hadley read *The Giver* by Lois Lowry: “I read this book 30 years ago when it first came out, could not remember a thing about it except that I didn't like it much, but it was selected for the intergenerational book group that I belong to so I read it again. Still didn't like it much, especially the inconclusive ending, but it did create the liveliest discussion that we have had yet! I am in the midst of reading the other three books in this quartet and I find that they do answer some of the questions left unresolved in *The Giver*.”

A reader from Worcester read *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett: “Didn't remember how racist this book was in the beginning. Overall a fun story but no need for the racist epithets especially since the comments made by characters do nothing to drive the plot.”

A reader from Beverly read *Under the Tuscan Sun* by Frances Mayes: “I read the book before I went to Italy the 1st time in 2001. It was fun to reread since I've been back again.”

A reader from Fall River read *The Mayor of Casterbridge* by Thomas Hardy: “I read this book in high school (decades ago). Appreciated the geographic descriptions much more this time. Also found myself feeling much more sympathy for the title character and far less sympathy for Lucetta. Made me want to re-read other Thomas Hardy novels.”

A reader from Woods Hole read *Around the World in 50 Ways* by Dan Smith: “This book is sort of interesting. It talks about all different places and types of travel. I didn't like it a lot.”

A reader from Fitchburg read *Soulful Simplicity* by Courtney Carver: “I had read this book five years ago as I began to think more seriously about adopting a more minimalist lifestyle. Revisiting the book in January 2024, reinforced my intentions and encouraged me to celebrate the successes I have made thus far in this path. While I did not set New Year's Resolutions for 2024, I did think a lot about where I wanted to prioritize my time and energy. Courtney Carver's personal experience and practical tips are inspiring particularly in a culture focused on consumerism. It was a perfect time to reread her book.”

A reader from Chelmsford read *Joshua* by Joseph E Girzone: “I read this when my son Joshua was born in 1988 as recommended by my father in law. It was very good and very inspiring. But rereading it now it is very outdated and was going to give to my son but decided to get rid of it. Very disappointing.”

A reader from Groton read *Hello, universe* by Erin Entrada Kelly: “When I first read the book 2 years ago, I had a hard time following it. I enjoyed it the second time around.”

A reader from Boston read *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan: “I feel like this book embodied my tweenager self and I feel like I read it with a different idea in my mind.”

A reader from North Brookfield read *Catcher in the Rye* by JD Salinger: “I read this in high school and decided to read it again as part of the MA Reading Challenge. It's funny how your impression of the book after reading it many years ago can change when read later in life. He was my hero in high school but not this time I read it.”

A reader from Wrentham read *Crossing for Safety* by Wallace Stegner: “I first read this book about 30 or 35 years ago. I remember thinking it was excellent and the friendship between the couples in the book stayed with me. For the 2024 Massachusetts Center for the Book Reading Challenge for January, the challenge was to read “a book you read years ago that you may feel differently about now”. This was my choice, and I am so glad I reread it. I still think it is an excellent book, and I feel just as strongly about the friendships, but the connections at different times in these families' lives, their relationships in their marriages, their lives as they age.....I feel it all more deeply now.”

A reader from Washington read *Gathering Blue* by Lois Lowry: “I read this book in 7th grade and I only remembered impressions of it, like a dream. It was satisfying to come face-to-face with the plot again.”

A reader from Turners Falls read *The Complete Stories* by Flannery O'Connor: “It was a delight to re-read this collection of portraits of Southern characters caught in a changing world of existential, and often racial, identity. Those who are working now to "cancel" her demonstrate an ignorance exemplified by many of her most flawed characters. As with most great writers, there are times when the reader is often brought to a standstill by the sheer skill and beauty of one of her sentences!”

A reader from Bolton read *The Willpower Instinct: How Self-Control Works, Why It Matters, and What You Can Do to Get More of It* by Kelly McGonigal: “I read this book a number of years ago and got a lot out of it. Reading it again for the 2nd time was a refresher but I also got more out of it the 2nd time.”

A reader from Quincy read *The Little prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: “I really like this book. As a now immigrant this book had a new light than when I read it the first time”

A reader from Arlington read *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens: “I first read this book in high school and remember pushing through 200 pages in one afternoon and evening. I have some vague memories of the book but nothing that stayed for very long. I found it too long and boring. A second reading as an adult was quite different: it was charming and humorous. I reveled in the skillful use of

language and depictions of mid-19th century life. I enjoyed the book so much I felt inspired to read more works by Dickens. I'm now making my way through David Copperfield and enjoying every word!"

A reader from Somerville read *The Story of Babar* by Jean de Brunhoff: "He marries his cousin to become king?????"

A reader from Eden Prairie read *A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf: "I read this book at 17 and didn't have the life experience to fully understand Ms. Woolf's words. If you get past her tangential writing style, you find an astute and thoughtful review of the impact of oppression on women and their ability to express themselves creatively. It all comes down to this: a woman needs the power to contemplate and the power to think for themselves. Woolf says these two vital things come from financial security and freedom to access our own personhood beyond the expectations of our roles as wife, mother and dutiful daughter. At 47, I close the book and understand exactly what Ms. Woolf is trying to impart to her audience."

A reader from Braintree read *How to Manage Your Home Without Losing Your Mind* by Dana K. White: "I leaned a great deal when I read it the first time, but reading it again cemented more of the strategies in my mind."

A reader from Holden read *Cinder* by Marissa Meyer: "Hard to believe I first read this book almost ten years ago, it was the book that first got me into science fiction as a preteen."

A reader from Lowell read *The Time Traveler's Wife* by Audrey Niffenegger: "I loved this when I first read it years ago (when I was a teenager), but now I see how problematic some parts of it are. I also had trouble relating to the protagonists. I am not a big fan of rereading books, but I did get sucked into the story despite having issues with it."

A reader from Somerville read *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens: "When your station in life changes, how does it change you? A story of a young man navigating unexpected 'Great Expectations.'"

A reader from Northampton read *Satan in Goray* by Isaac Bashevis Singer: "I have not read this book since grad school in the late 90's. It was newly retranslated then. It is still a good, but strange, book. It ends fairly suddenly."

A reader from Shrewsbury read *Recursion* by Blake Crouch: "Fun to reread! I loved seeing how they foreshadowed what was to come."

A reader from Sharon read *Veronika Decides to Die* by Paulo Coelho: "Understanding the role of the society and how people behave in the presence of others. This book describes the role of individuals in the context of the society and how the society impacts individuals."

A reader from Toronto, Ontario read *Looking for Alaska* by John Green: "Revisiting this book was like taking a Time Machine back to high school, I thoroughly enjoyed rereading this powerful novel."

A reader from East Longmeadow read *Nightwings* by Robert Silverberg: "Having first read this novella over 40 years ago and not remembering anything about it, I felt it was a good choice. Set in the distant future of Earth, "Nightwings" starts out as an epic journey for The Watcher, tasked with monitoring the skies for an alien invasion that has been foretold. He travels to various locales, names somewhat changed but still recognizable to current places. When the invasion actually happens he finds himself out of a job, and begins wandering as a Pilgrim, eventually ending up at a destination where he is 'redeemed.' A

religious allegory, 'Nightwings' is Silverberg's version of mankind reaching a modern utopia, with definite references to the past. It won the Hugo award for best science fiction novella of 1969."

A reader from Dracut read *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan: "I originally read this book more than ten years ago. I read this series and a few other in the same world. However it's been awhile and I fell off the later series, so I was excited to restart here and decide how many more I want to read before picking up the latest. I enjoyed it."

A reader from Yarmouth Port read *Marcia Hummel* by Goldenseal: "A story of how important a close friendship in childhood can be and what happens when that friendship is destroyed."

A reader from Chelmsford read *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* by E.L. Konigsburg: "When I read the prompt for the January book, I knew immediately that my choice would be *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*. I read this book when I was a child, likely 9-10 years old. I have always always remembered this book being one of my favorites. As a teacher, I frequently recommended this book to my students, based upon my cherished memories. I also purchased this book as a gift to my daughter when she was in third grade (she is now 28), and chose it for gifts for family and friends. Reading this book as an adult gave me a different perspective. I wish I had reread it sooner and used it in my classroom with my small group of readers! So many different comprehension skills can be taught, but in the end, it's the story of an adventure taken by a brother and sister that will always be near to my heart."

A reader from Providence read *Dark is Rising* by Susan Cooper: "Good, did not remember well. But enjoyed."

A reader from Blackstone read *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* by J. K. Rowling: "I read this book when I was a kid. My daughter's been getting into the series so I decided to reread them. It's amazing how much foreshadowing and small details I definitely missed before!"

A reader from Beverly read *Ethan Frome* by Edith Wharton: "An assigned read in high school, I remember actually enjoying it, although I was in the minority! Thought I'd check it out many years later and discovered I still enjoyed this classic; however, I only remembered the "snow, the sled, and the accident". It came as a surprise to me that Ethan was married ... and it probably didn't come up for discussion in the 1960s!"

A reader from New York read *Catch 22* by Joseph Heller: "I read this book in high school and loved it. I loved it again this time around, but I did learn more about the way it was set up than I did the first time around and thought more about what the author was doing in that set up."

A reader from Beverly read *the Catcher in the Rye* by J D Salinger: "I was probably supposed to read this in high school but never did. I can't believe at 50 this is the 1st time I've read the *Catcher in the Rye*. It was upsetting to me that Holden Caulfield was so disturbed and no one recognized it until he was seemingly having a total break down. Thank God for little sisters!"

A reader from Barre read *Beautiful Creatures* by Kami Garcia and Margaret Stone: "Felt so nostalgic reading! Great Book and Great Challenge!"

A reader from Hopkinton read *Brideshead Revisited* by Evelyn Waugh: "Quite good - so much I had missed the first time around, I think I enjoyed it more the second time I read it."

A reader from Harwich read *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel: "I first read this book years before Covid, and then a second time months before Covid. And I got to reread it now with the context of being

a few years after the onset of Covid, a virus very similar to that in the book both in the spread and impact (though on a very different scale).”

A reader from BECKET read *Redwall* by Brian Jacques: “I loved this series when I read it to my children. It's been quite a few years, and I was excited to revisit the story and characters, but I was disappointed that I didn't enjoy it like I once did.”

A reader from Boston read *Divergent* by Veronica Roth: “The book made me realize that our world is a lot similar to the world in the book.”

A reader from Beverly read *The Pearl* by John Steinbach: “Different from reading in 1966. Realization that greed changes everything and death is final.”

A reader from Boston read *Long petal of the Sea* by Isabel Allende: “In addition to a great plot, this story gives great details about the Spanish Civil War. Reread it to gain more info on history.”

A reader from Sandisfield read *Exodus* by Leon Uris: “While I read this many years ago and it was written in 1958, with what is happening in the Middle East right now it takes on a new meaning when re-read.”

A reader from Northampton read *Carry On* by Rainbow Rowell: “I first read *Carry On* a couple of years ago. A few weeks ago I came across it while looking for available fantasy audiobooks on libby and thought a re-read or re-listen would be perfect for January's reading challenge. I liked it as much as the first time I read it.”

A reader from Hopedale read *Animal Farm* by George Orwell: “I read this in middle school well before I knew anything about politics. It read very different than I remember and more interesting. It was fun to re-read a book from my past!”

A reader from Ayer read *The Giver* by Lois Lowry: “I selected this one in January because it was a book that I remember reading as a child in school, but didn't enjoy it then. Over the years, I have grown to appreciate dystopian books and figured that it was past time to give this book another go. It was phenomenal! I read it almost in a sitting, and could hear my former english teacher's voice coming back to me "what is the significance of the red apple?". As a child I found it tough to wrap my head around as it was one of my first forays into fictional worlds that strayed from my own. This time around I fell right into it and was blown away by Lowry's exquisitely crafted story. I've since directed many of my fellow readers who haven't yet given this another chance since childhood to give this another go.”

A reader from Waltham read *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky: “I don't know if I found this book quite as believable as when I first read it over 20 years ago, but I still really enjoyed it.”

A reader from Hopkinton read *Ethan Frome* by Edith Wharton: “I hated this book when I read it in school. I'm surprised by how much I liked it now”

A reader from Melrose read *The Outsiders* by S. E Hinton: “I remember having to read this in school when I was younger and my 7th grader is reading it now. What a different perspective you have reading it as an adult!”

A reader from Foxboro read *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker: “It was a fantastic read that I read when I was much younger. When I read it as a young girl I was confused but now that I am older I have a greater understanding of the challenges that the main character and Sophia experienced.”

A reader from Duxbury read *Little House on the Prairie* by Laura Ingalls Wilder: “loved this series when I was a kid, but I didn't understand any of the parts about the displacement of Native Americans. Tough to read about the terrible racism, but it was interesting to read Ma Ingalls's justifications for why it was "right" for them to be taking over the land.”

A reader from Boston read *I Have Some Questions for You* by Rebecca Makkai: “Good writing and storytelling. I'm getting tired of so much violence against women in media. It felt too similar to other works out there both fiction and non fiction. it was a lot like Serial.”

A reader from Medway read *Gary Paulson* by Hatchet: “When I read this as a 10 year old in my 5th grade class I was frightened by the details of the pilot’s heart attack and death and the details of the plane crash. Reading this 7 years later I was surprised to realize how much I enjoyed the book. The setting in the wilderness, the primal urge to survive, and the frightening plane crash come together a create a great story for any who is interested in the topic of wilderness, hiking, search & rescue, etc.”

A reader from Northfield read *Zorba the Greek* by Nikos Kazantzakis: “A close friend and I read this book aloud to each other as 20 year olds. We were so in awe of the generationally expansive relationships and the wisdom being soaked up by the young man. In rereading, I have shifted to the elder end of things but still felt the awe. My reading partner died decades ago but I could call up his voice and in his honor, did speak out some memorable lines. So many books, so little time but this challenge reminded me of the worth of revisiting great ones.”

A reader from Beverly read *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* by J.K. Rowling: “I read this book 15 years ago and now I'm reading it with my 9-year-old son with a new perspective on J.K. Rowling.”

A reader from Worcester read *Other Voices, Other Rooms* by Truman Capote: “This has always been my favorite novel and I had already had the intent to read it again this year. I've read it several times now, but not in six or seven years. It's always been my favorite book, Capote my favorite writer, for how accessible the writing and world building is. I've personally always been able to really get into his stories from the first line of the book. I read this between "Yellowface" and "North Woods" and found that I felt less connected to the story as I'd been in the past. I don't necessarily have a change in opinion on themes or the prose itself, but the intimacy of the story.”

A reader from Revere read *Iron Flame* by Rebecca Yarros: “I know January's goal was for years ago but I read this for the first time in 2023 and needed to reread it already. This book is phenomenal and gave me a crazy book hangover. I wanted to reread it because I began listening to a podcast that did a deep dive of each chapter. It’s allowed me to see the book differently and start to make predictions about the next book in the series.”

A reader from Cambridge read *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath: “I read this for the first time at 20—the same age as Esther. I was going through a hard time and it instantly became one of my favorite books. I spent the next year reading Plath’s poetry and journals. She is easily one of the biggest influences on my writing in that her work showed me even private musings can full of voice and purpose. (When I look back on my journal from that year, I can see myself trying to mimic that.) It’s been years since I last picked up her work and ten years since I first read “The Bell Jar.” I decided to pick it up again now, at the same age Plath was when she died. Reading it again, I struggled to understand what I saw in this book originally. Was this really the same book I read and marked as an instant favorite? I think this is a book captures a certain feeling of being adrift that comes in your twenties. When you’re not in that moment, it can seem hard to understand. The one thing that has stuck with me all these years is the last chapter and particularly Esther’s final interaction with Buddy. Reading it again left me stunned and made me see again what I saw

in this book all those years ago. Plath truly was a talent and I am still sad we were deprived of her work, despite how much she achieved in a short time. She continues to inspire me as a writer and I'd wish she'd gotten a chance to write more novels beyond this."

A reader from Auburn read *Tim Sawyer* by Mark Twain: "65 years on my appreciation of Mark Twain's storytelling is greater now that I can see all the tools of style and composition he employed. Pure genius. Worth reading again if you haven't touched it for awhile."

A reader from Milford read *Eyes of the Dragon* by Stephen King: "I absolutely loved this book as a teenager and chose it for January with some trepidation because I wanted it to be as good as it was then. It did not disappoint. What I loved then as opposed to now hasn't changed much but I think the best part is the character development of the two sons. It is so heart wrenching and satisfying at the same time to see their personalities develop and to see Flagg's subtle influence (sometimes not so subtle) on Thomas in the developing chapters. There was a lot I didn't remember about the book but my sentiments are the same and it continues to be a favorite :)"

A reader from Quincy read *Hidden Potential* by Adam Grant: "Motivational, helped me find different way of thinking when achieving things."

A reader from Middleboro read *All the light we cannot see* by Anthony Doer: "Was as wonderful as I recalled!"

A reader from melrose read *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom: "It's such a great and heartfelt book, I read it about 20 years ago and I came across it at the book store and I really wanted to reread it. It's a beautiful story about a professor and a student who lost touch for many years and got to spend every Tuesday together once the professor got sick. One of my favorite quotes: 'once you learn how to die, you learn how to live.'"

A reader from Salem read *Plan 9* by Sharon Lee and Stephen Miller: "I read this book from the Liaden Universe when it was published in 1999. Since then I have read nearly everything that is available by Lee and Miller. It was fun to reread Plan 9 because the fortunes of Clan Korval, now former denizens of the planet Liad, and current leaders of the planet Surebleak have changed. And the writing, while just as fun and full of action, has grown in sophistication. I had forgotten a lot, but recognized the characters that still populate their universe. It was a great reread."

A reader from Tenafly read *Hush Hush* by Becca Fitzpatrick: "I can't believe I read this at the ripe age of 13 and turned out relatively normal when it comes to love."

A reader from Chelmsford read *The Widows' Adventures* by Charles Dickinson: "Although highly implausible, the possibility is exciting!"

A reader from Scituate read *Time Enough For Love* by Robert Heinlein: "While this was an important read for me as a young person, it failed to speak to octogenarian me."

A reader from Gloucester read *All Creatures Great and Small* by James Herriot: "Loved it just as much as I did when I read it 50 years ago. Wanted to read it and compare to the PBS series, which I also enjoy."

A reader from Lancaster read *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky: "WHEN I WAS A SENIOR IN HIGH SCHOOL, A GROUP OF US HAD TO 'TEACH' CRIME AND PUNISHMENT TO MY AP ENGLISH CLASS. IT WAS BORING, LONG, HAD DIFFICULT AND UNNECESSARY LANGUAGE, AND I HATED IT IN 2009. I RE-READ IT RECENTLY AND NOW THAT I ACTUALLY (KIND OF) KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT AS FAR AS THE HUMAN CONDITION, IT WASN'T

NEARLY AS MUCH OF A DRAG. CLEARLY OUR BOY RASKY IS SUFFERING FROM PARANOIA (AND MAYBE DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR?) AND I DON'T KNOW IF HIS PSYCHOTIC BREAK HAPPENED AS HE WAS KILLING HOME GIRL OR IF IT WAS BROUGHT ON BY THE GUILT HE SUFFERED BECAUSE OF IT. AS AN ADULT I HAVE A LOT MORE INSIGHT INTO WHY SONYA DID WHAT SHE DID TO SURVIVE, AND I CAN FULLY UNDERSTAND WHY SHE'S SO IMPORTANT TO RASKY. I STILL WOULDN'T CALL IT MY FAVORITE BUT I'LL GIVE IT A SOLID ★★☆☆.

A reader from Pembroke read *Inkspell* by Cornelia Funke: "A revisited book from childhood that actually held up pretty well!"

A reader from Beverly Hills read *Elsie Dinsmore* by Martha Finley: "As a girl, I cried in sympathy with Elsie. I had forgotten how religious the story was and how often the title character cried. The book tells a story about a little girl half orphaned and living in the home of her grandfather, his wife and children, who are her aunts and uncles, most of whom have only jealousy towards her because of her beauty and fortune."

A reader from Maynard read *The Great Gatsby* by F Scott Fitzgerald: "First time back in HS I thought it was a love story but now I also realize it's an autobiography too."

A reader from Waltham read *Song of Achilles* by Madeline Miller: "I read this for the first time in February 2021 and it kind of rocked my world. Definitely did not have as much of an emotional response while reading it this time around but it was still very good and would recommend:)"

A reader from Arlington read *The Bean Trees* by Barbara Kingsolver: "One of my all time favorites. Characters are so beautiful and the story spoke to me in my 20s and again in my 50s. She's a great storyteller and I love the "chosen family" theme of the book."