

Fair Shake Readers' Recommendations 2020

(for tablet (Project Gutenberg) and paper format books)

Readers' Recommendations ~

I hope you'll find some gems! The emphasis in all reviews is the author's; not mine.

This list has been built completely from the recommendations of Fair Shake's newsletter subscribers. It was created from the idea that folks inside can share titles that may be available in prison libraries everywhere, and on tablets where they are being used. I've decided to remove some of the more obvious lines where the reviewers talk specifically about tablets, however, so that the books will be accessible to all equally. If you have a tablet, look up any you find interesting! If you do not, you might wish to keep the 'classic' book titles for when you have access to the internet as many are available for free from Project Gutenberg. Many classic titles are also available in libraries everywhere...quite possibly even where you are now.

I will post this list on the Newsletter Page of the Fair Shake website so you can share the titles with your family and friends, if you like! You will also be able to find them when you see the website...whether in a software format in prison, or online whenever and wherever you get access.

Thanks so much to those who shared recommendations! They had a 100-word limit to tell us why they liked the book and why they think we might like the book. They did a great job!

BRIAN sent in:

LETTING GO by Dr. David Hawkins.

The best book I've read on how to actually "let go" of the things that recurringly bother us, cause stress, anxiety, regret, frustration, impatience, anger. It's well written and provides techniques for creating peace the moment negative feelings are experienced. Eventually they no longer even arise in response to triggering events. I recommend this book because I was finally able to learn precisely how to "just let it go". We can all learn how to use these internal tools that we're born with; tools that help us break free from our internal chains of limitation and from the causes of personal sabotage. This book will give readers a head-start on achieving internal freedom. (The ONLY kind of freedom that keeps us physically free after returning back to society.)

ERIC shared two:

IN CHARGE. By Myles Munroe.

The main point I received from Mr. Munroe is that we are all children of God and we have a gift. We need to identify with that gift, nurture that gift and take it to the world and help as many people as we can with that gift. That is where we will achieve true success. Thank you for your effort, and the platform you have created to affect a positive change for others!

THINK AND GROW RICH By Napoleon Hill

This book changed my life. It is a 25-year case study on how highly successful people think and do business. One important thing it taught me is that success is a team sport and you must have your mental, spiritual, physical and moral parts of your life in order. If one area of your life is off, then success can be elusive.

CHARLES sent a few:

REFERENCE: CHAMBER'S TWENTIETH CENTURY DICTIONARY (in 4 volumes)

An invaluable resource for writers and for those who would like a better command of the English Language. Although it is broken into 4 volumes (I'd prefer it all in one) it strikes a nice balance between those dictionaries that have too few entries to be useful, but are in one volume, and those in 10 or more volumes, which is just annoying. The "supplements" in the last volume are especially useful, with (e.g.) the meanings of familiar Latin and French idioms.

CIA WORLD FACTBOOK 2010 By: Central Intelligence Agency

No, you won't be put on a "watch list" for downloading this excellent resource. Sadly, the 2010 version is the latest one available for tablets; nevertheless, this book contains entries on all the countries of the world, including demographic data, information on treaties, geographical descriptions, and the like. No maps, nor other pictures (flags would have been nice). I particularly like that you can browse by country by placing an "@" before the country's name in a search.

POETRY

IT CAN BE DONE: POEMS OF INSPIRATION

Collected by: Joseph Morris & St. Clare Adams

This book contains over 200 inspirational poems and includes such timeless classics as "If" by Rudyard Kipling, "Invictus" by William Ernest Henley, and "To Althea from Prison" by Richard Loveless, and many more works to provide a boost to anyone looking for a pick-me-up.

RELIGION

THE ESSENCE OF BUDDHISM Edited by E.

Haldeman-Julius This is a collection of Buddhism-inspired quotes from various authors. It is up to the reader to ponder the meaning of each pearl. Well worth the investment.

SCIENCE

WORLDS WITHIN WORLDS: THE STORY OF NUCLEAR ENERGY (3 volumes) by Isaac Asimov Commissioned in 1972 by the U. S. Energy Research and Development Administration Office of Public Affairs, this series of three pamphlets provides a well-illustrated historical account of the birth and development of Nuclear Physics. It was written by one of the most well-loved Science Fiction authors of the 20th century in clear and distinctive prose simple enough for the layman to understand, but detailed enough to give a firm grasp of the subject covered.

TED shared:

THE STATE: IT'S HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT VIEWED SOCIOLOGICALLY By: Franz Oppenheimer, M.D., Ph.D. I think anyone incarcerated in the modern state should read Oppenheimer's history of, and hope for, "the state." Historical states weren't invincible all over the planet, but the modern state is invincible. It is controlled by allied families that don't want to share the planet's wealth with "criminals" and

"unlawful" killers. This means that the kindreds that control the modern state's muscle, superior technology, and justifications will likely get exactly what they want against "criminals".

DENNIS contributed:

ANDERSONVILLE: A STORY OF REBEL

MILITARY PRISONS By John McElroy

It is a long book, but an entertaining and informative read. It talks about the civil war, the battles fought and captured prisoners. It's about one of the most notorious prison camps during the civil war and the atrocities committed there. It is unbelievable some of the stuff they went through! Makes one stop and think how bad things were at one time. Read it; I'm sure you'll enjoy it and learn a lot about those terrible times.

DEREK reminds us to read:

THE UNITED STATES BILL OF RIGHTS Passed by Congress in 1789; Ratified in 1971.

Every American should possess this book. It's very on-topic with what's going on right now. This is a patriotic book of law, substance and facts. You should love the soil you were born on. You have the freedom to do a lot of things you couldn't do anywhere else.

DEREK also recommends reading THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES 1787

NOAH shared this one, hot off the presses:

PERMANENT RECORD By: Edward Snowden

Whistleblowers find themselves in such a moral dilemma that endangers their comfort for the prospect of conscientious moral fortitude. It is more memoir than a technical break down. One of the journalists that assisted him on his journey, Glenn Greenwald, has recently refreshed his own journalistic integrity by resigning from the Intercept, an online publication he helped to create, when editors went about censoring a recent article. It was this synchronistic event that encouraged me to share the book with you here and now.

THERESA shared two:

A HOUSE OF NIGHT

A novel series by P.C. & Kristin Cast.

If you like vampires, you'll enjoy this series! It's not the horror type of stories but there's a bit of gore here and there.

THE PILLARS OF THE EARTH By Ken Follett.
This is about free masons in the days of castles and chivalry! It kept me hooked till the end & it's a big book!

And EVY shared three:

WOMEN AND VIOLENCE. By Barrie Levy
The author interweaves real-life stories and deft analysis with global perspectives on violence, overviews of controversies and debates, and thought-provoking coverage of social change strategies and activism. It's great book!

THE APOLOGY By Eve Ensler

Eve was sexually and physically abused by her father..a man who died without ever apologizing for what he did to her. This book is an apology letter written by Eve to herself, from her father's point of view, in the words she longed to hear. This book is a very emotional read and I feel is a must for those who have been sexually or physically abused by a family member or loved one.

IN OUR TIME (MEMOIR OF A REVOLUTION) By Susan Brown-Miller.

This book draws upon four decades of Susan's work on the frontlines of the women's movement as a feminist and activist. It is very well written. I found it very educational, but didn't feel like I was reading a history book. It is a must read for women and men who want a better understanding about being a woman in a patriarchal society.

PATRICK invites us to test our courage:

THE WENDIGO By: Algernon Blackwood (1910)
I enjoyed this book very much. It is a folktale I've often wondered about. It is a mystery, with few characters but plenty of action and suspense. The descriptions of supernatural occurrences let your imagination make the best images. It's an exciting read and I think others would enjoy it as much as I have. Because it's a short story, 119 pages, it's not a big commitment. And it's very engaging!!!

ROBERT offers two classics:

HEART OF DARKNESS

By: Joseph Conrad (Fairly short read.)

The Englishman in command of a remote outpost in colonial Africa has gone rogue, become a warlord and gone mad. A band makes a dangerous river journey to remove him from power. It poetically deals with themes of intertwined beauty and destruction. The film "Apocalypse Now" was an adaptation of this story

set during the Vietnam war, but still remained very true to this original. I found many lines describing the mad Mr. Kurtz relatable to myself while dealing with mental crisis and my past during imprisonment, like "I remembered his abject pleading, his abject threats, the colossal scale of his vile desires, the meanness, the torment, the tempestuous anguish of his soul".

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO By: Alexandre Dumas. (Long, but well worth it!)

A man is wrongfully accused and imprisoned by enemies who steal his love, fortune and future. Years later, and now free, he becomes an immensely rich, and powerful man who dedicates his life to ensuring epic and complicated revenge against those who ruined his life, as all their own terrible deeds come back at them. Many intricate story lines develop into outrageously related conclusions. Who better than one in prison to enjoy the story of a man leaving his fate in a dungeon to become unbelievably successful and loved...while making sure those who wronged him have their every bad deed returned to them in karmic retribution?

WILLIAM grounds us:

WAITING FOR AN ECHO

by Dr. Christine Montross.

Dr. Montross is a practicing inpatient psychiatrist who brings an interesting view on incarceration. People view prisons as a necessary evil. They may well be necessary, but they need not be evil. They need not imprison so many vulnerable people whose real offense is not having any power or agency within the system. They need not employ practices like solitary confinement, nutraloaf, youth detention or family separation. Our prisons need not ruin the mental health of so many. Other countries have transformed dysfunctional prisons into effective, humane systems that render people far less likely to reoffend. Prisons join violence with vengeance, to harm those who've done harm. Our big-picture desires are for less risk and more safety, but our current practices are ineffectual and inhumane.

KEN brought back an old but very popular story:
THE MISTS OF AVALON

By Marion Zimmer Bradley.

This is the story of the women who put Arthur on the throne. Avalon is a land with women who are priestesses serve the Goddess. The mist is there to keep them safe on the island...from men and from Christians. The story is very Pagan but has Christianity such as: Christians believe in heaven, while Pagans believe Avalon is where they go after they die. They made a TV movie about this in 2001. There are other books in the series.

JOHNNIE offers a different perspective:

METU NETER By Ra Un Nefer Amen.

A "must read" for anyone who needs to change, grow, or to find spirituality...because we cannot get out of prison being the same person as we were when we came to prison. [Remember, life is growth, and there's no growth in death!] This is a book that deciphers the meaning of the pyramid's hieroglyphs. The gist of this spirituality is that: God is a part of its creation NOT separate from it. The Metu Neter gives us directions - step by step - on how to tap into that part of our being. We no longer need to settle for portions of the truth as we see in: The Secret, the Book of the Dead by Budge, the Bible and/or the Koran for hieroglyphs predates them all. We need to "Know Thyself".

CRAIG sent in two:

THE MAN THEY WANTED ME TO BE

By Jared Yates Sexton

This is a book that I feel every man should read. Through his own life experiences, along with societal examples, Sexton gives eye opening examples of just how toxic masculinity has become. "The key to defeating toxic masculinity is in its very definition. If men are invulnerable, then why are we so afraid and so terribly insecure? If men are independent and captains of their own destiny, then how are they subject to so many external forces?" These questions, along with so many more, are covered in this must read book. Everyone who reads this will take something from it to forever change their view on their own masculinity.

LITTLE BROTHER By Cory Doctorow

The novel is about a teenage boy, Little Brother, in San Francisco a few years after 9-11. He is part of a group of hackers, which Homeland Security labels as terrorists. The book is a critique of the Patriot Act and it considers how people accept

ever-more restrictive laws as necessary; out of fear and desire for protection. Justice is what the government says it is and people will rationalize their inaction and passivity.

TOMMY shared:

JUST A GIRL by Karen Harden

All men and women who have lived through trauma should read this book. Harden exposed a world few know about, and even fewer will admit is real. Family abusive cycles within the home is a generational cycle that just keep being passed down. We end up running away from it, but we never take a stand; we just pass it on to our kids. This is something we have to talk out to fix the problem. It not just a girl thing, it's a real thing. Read this book and you will look at life in a new way. When you look at your child, you will take them into your arms and be afraid for them. See yourself in them and stop the cycle.

The last two are from GRANT:

A CHILDREN'S BIBLE By Lydia Millet.

This book is an excellent dystopian novel in which a group of wealthy families are on vacation at a home in the Hampton's. A storm strikes and forces the children to take action in the wake of their parent's neglect. While the parents get high and drunk, have orgies, and generally ignore the incoming disaster, the children launch into action. Unlike most dystopian fiction, the novel is full of hope, set against the backdrop of a dystopian allegory of climate disaster. Highly recommended and engaging read.

THE NIGHT CIRCUS By Erin Morganstern

The night circus arrives without warning, creates buzz wherever it goes, and is only open from Dusk to Dawn. This circus is unlike any other; full of wonder and imagination. But the magic that holds the circus together is fragile and Morganstern makes excellent use of the time hop to reveal bits at pieces of the magic over the course of the novel. Ultimately the story is about love, free will, imagination and the never-ending march of time. An extremely well written narrative that is highly enjoyable and full of wonder! HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!