

December Book Group

Norma Brodsky read *The Mystery Guest* by Nita Prose. In this mystery, Molly Gray, the chief maid at a luxury hotel, confronts the sudden, suspicious death of an esteemed hotel guest. The guest, J.D. Grimthorpe, dies in the hotel tearoom just before a talk he is to give. Norma enjoyed this book and recommends it.

Alice Outerbridge read *The God of the Woods* by Liz Moore. This is a mystery set in the Adirondack Mountains at a chalet and resort patronized by the wealthy. Their children attend an adjoining camp which features a three-day survival trek. Years apart, two of the children disappear. Alice found this mystery a great read with fascinating characters, and overtones of class differences. She recommends it.

Carol Mattaino reported on *Beneath a Scarlet Sky* by Mark Sullivan, historical fiction based on a true story. It is set in Milan and other places in Northern Italy during WWII. The hero is a young man who escorts Jews over the Alps by an underground railroad to the relative safety of Switzerland. His parents encourage him to enlist in the army to ensure his safety. After being injured, he becomes the driver for the Nazi commandant in Northern Italy. Meanwhile, he becomes a spy for the Italian resistance. Carol liked this book quite a bit.

Sarah Tatum is reading *The Boys of Riverside*, non-fiction, by Thomas Fuller. This is the story of the vaunted Riverside High School football team comprised entirely of deaf young men, and their coach, who is also deaf. Against all odds, the team goes on to win the California state championship. The author had been *The New York Times* bureau chief in San Francisco but left that posting to follow the Riverside High team. Sarah, who spent many years as a special education teacher with some deaf students, is enjoying this book a lot. Sarah's overview led to a very interesting group discussion of the deaf community, its sense of unity, and its views on cochlear implants for long-deaf people.

Cher Terry read *Lady Clementine*, historical fiction by Marie Benedict. This novel is about Clementine Churchill's support for her husband, Winston, during WWI and WWII and her many contributions to the war efforts. Cher's view of this book is lukewarm in the sense that it wasn't always clear what was fact and what was imagination.

Louise McLean read *The Warden*, a novel by Anthony Trollope. *The Warden* centers around Reverend Harding who manages a bequest to benefit 12 elderly parishioners. It is set in an English cathedral town in the mid-19th century. It explores social morality, human motivation, and class structure in England at that time.

Laurie Tracy read *Seward, Lincoln's Indispensable Man*, biography by Walter Stahr. The once-governor and senator from New York strongly opposed slavery and had been a northern Whig. In the 1850s, as the US began to divide over slavery, Seward became an early member of the

then new Republican Party. Lincoln named him Secretary of State. Seward's main accomplishments in foreign policy were to keep the British and the French from recognizing and backing the Confederates, and the purchase of Alaska from the cash-strapped Czarist government of Russia. Laurie found this biography too long, turgid, and overly detailed about many matters.