

BOOK THOUGHTS

BATCH 10
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BY **LINDSAY** WINCHERAUK
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BLUE = MEMOIR OR BIOGRAPHICAL

BLACK = FICTION

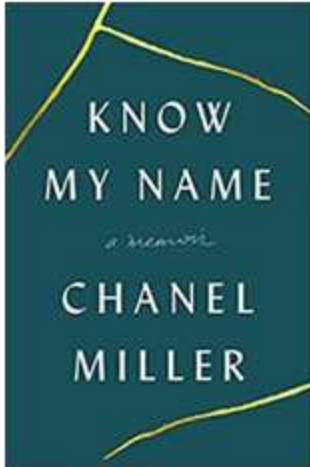
DARK RED = EDUCATIONAL

PURPLE = ESSAY OR STORIES

ORANGE = POETRY

KNOW MY NAME

CHANEL MILLER



Every man is capable of sexual assault.

How did the book make me feel/think?

KNOW MY NAME is a deftly written, extraordinary book about becoming whole again after being sexually assaulted. Chanel Miller is a gifted writer, and as she so aptly put, she would have much rather have written about a different subject—however, this was the story she had been given. Fortunately for us, she survived and found the strength to dig deep within herself to shed light on how, as a society, we allow ourselves to live with our heads in the sand, making each of us culpable.

Every man is capable of sexual assault. A bold statement?

Yes.

As much as every man is capable, mercifully, the percentage who is gripped by the appalling illness is few. Most men evolve, whether through family or life lessons → develop a sense of right or wrong and know better than repulsively inflicting incurable damage upon another human being. That does not take the rest of us off the hook. Many of us look the other way, diminishing the lives of those assaulted even more. Perhaps we have a propensity to inflict more pain by questioning the victim's motivation because of conditioning. **NO VICTIM WANTED TO BE SEXUALLY ASSAULTED.**

And despicable society challenges them, screaming about the motivation of the victim.

WE NEED TO KEEP EVOLVING.

We need not give in to the shameful realities of the entitlement of the athletic world. I played at a high level, and though most teammates were upstanding individually, as a group, because of peer pressure, they behaved in a predatory manner.

CHANEL MILLER IS A HERO

KNOW MY NAME should be mandatory reading in High School + University.

It should be a requirement for every coach + athlete to read and discuss. Any athlete who does not read should not be allowed to take part in sports.

It should be mandatory reading for any man accused of sexual assault.

It should be compulsory reading for any prisoner serving time for sexual assault—followed by writing their interpretation of what they digested. If their analysis does not meet specific guidelines—more time needs to be added to their sentence.

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And in this time when dinosaurs are holding the highest offices in the land, speaking to a base of ignorance, we must thank Chanel for her fortitude to be strong enough to make her debilitating recovery mainstream.

On a final note, wouldn't the world be a better place if they held the parents of a sexual assaulter accountable for their inability to instill morals in their children, and as a result, faced jail time along with their revolting offspring?

How could the mother of a sexual assaulter stand behind their child?

Is it not time for all men to stop being relics and evolve?

WRITTEN: April 17, 2020

IS EVERYONE HANGING OUT WITHOUT ME?

MINDY CALLING



It's like a stroll with a new friend!

How did the book make me feel/think?

Gooey. Warm.

Knock + Knock + Knock

“Hello, Mindy, would you like to go for a walk?”

How fast do I read 220-pages of a conversation with a new friend?
= 4 hours.

That’s what IS EVERYONE HANGING OUT WITHOUT ME IS? — like — a walk with a new friend.

I was just in Chapters; this book was in the BEST BOOKS of the decade section. Wow! Lofty.

Mindy and I walked a block together. I fell down laughing. Another block and the mirth continued with a nuanced dose of the reality of growing up brown and female in America. I couldn’t stop reading. Literally. One sitting. Sure, the content is easily digestible, but there is something in her stream-of-consciousness style like no other.

I need more words for guffaw - chortle — cackle — hoot; whoop — honk; howl — snicker — not giggle because I’m an adult; thanks, Mindy, for splitting my side.

Let’s stop by B. J. Novak’s house to see if he’d like to join us. He does.

Flip a coin. What book made me laugh more, Novak’s - **ONE MORE THING** or **IS EVERYONE HANGING OUT WITHOUT ME IS?**

What’s that, Mindy?

These thoughts are about your book, not B.J.’s — you want him to leave.

I come to the end of your book and find several references to a BlackBerry — I fell in hilarity once more.

WRITTEN: March 18, 2020

UNCANNY VALLEY

ANNA WIENER



We have willfully agreed to announce how lonely we are.

How did the book make me feel/think?

DISTRAUGHT - OVERWHELMED - OBSOLETE

UNCANNY VALLEY is a voyeuristic look into the male-dominated Gold Rush of Silicon Valley from a woman on the inside. I found the world of technology revealed within to be parasitic. I couldn't help thinking the valley was nothing more than a cult populated by people years away from maturity.

They dangle a carrot. The brightest young talent chases it. And then, they are used up to quench the thirst of a cadre of primarily introverted, morally insipid visionaries. Who under the guise of

bringing us together — use — and then discard the youthful talent, because a new class of dreamers is graduating. Many of the visionaries disgustingly become billionaires. Not because of genius. But because of our collective addiction to the screen. And because most of us have willfully agreed upon announcing to the world how lonely and disconnected we are.

"There was no moral structure in which the vast accumulation of wealth should be acceptable."

UNCANNY VALLEY is an arousing must-read. I don't think many of us can afford the world the valley is creating. A world where technology sees us as nothing more than data cultivated to sell power to the companies needing us to consume.

After reading, I wanted to shut off my computer.

I didn't.

I'm too lonely to find the strength.

WRITTEN: April 6, 2020

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

TOMMY TOMLINSON



Tommy Tomlinson tackled his demons head-on while sharing ...

How did the book make me feel/think?

REFLECTIVE

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM is not a diet book.

It is a gripping tale about a man's life and his ongoing struggle to be the best person he can become, like the rest of us.

Tommy Tomlinson weighed 460 pounds. His girth was a slow burn, starting from the day he was born – when, once again, like the rest of us, food symbolized love. I learned from reading this book this love of food may be tenfold in the south.

What I loved about this book is Tommy's willingness to humanize his struggles. To admit to the colossal lies he's told himself his whole life. I am not struggling with a weight like the daunting obstacles Tommy faced – but I can definitely relate to the addiction to fast food and the lie of telling myself, "Today will be the last day I eat it," only to be in the drive-through line the next day.

"As a people, we are getting too big for our britches → companies that supply furniture to schools are having to sell big-and-tall desks because kids can't fit into the regular ones anymore."

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM personalizes the struggle to be healthy and whole every day. It shares how restrictive the demons: fat, sugar, and fat impact daily life. A boxer has an opponent. For those who struggle with food – we face an even more unrelenting, constraining opponent. One that leads to lying to oneself and to those you love.

Tommy Tomlinson tackled his demons head-on while sharing who he is and wants to be in one of the most challenging years of his life – and in doing so, during one passage, brought tears to my eyes.

If you don't think we lie to ourselves about how the relentlessness of mass-marketed food makes us feel – \$19-trillion has been spent on weight loss programs in the USA this year (as of 1 PM Eastern Time, April 20).

WRITTEN: April 10, 2020

WHY DID I EVER

MARY ROBISON



A brilliantly, weird, highly original romp into absurdity ...

How did the book make me feel/think?

CONFUSED

What the heck did I just read? Am I now part of some literary cult?

I enjoyed this book—I think—I think I’m supposed to.

I laughed as many times as I went, huh?

I never got lost on the pages.

Mary Robison’s every word tickled my sense of sanity.

This is a brilliantly weird, highly original romp into absurdity —

I know.

I think Mary Robinson got together with the ghosts of Kafka + Hunter S. Thompson and partied while they watched her drop thoughts from her mind onto the page — in a fashion similar to dropping acid.

I pondered tossing this book into my read pile without sharing my thoughts, but then one passage elevated it to delightful!

“I was playing with the cat—throwing things, and she’d chase after them—and by mistake, whomped her with a walnut.

I’ve gotten onto my knees to apologize. I say, “I’ll buy you anything you want. Or I could take you someplace. Would you like to listen to music?”

I’ll probably stop laughing in about a week.

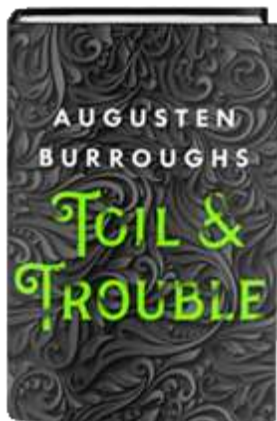
I may reread this book.

I will invite the ghosts of Kafka + Hunter S. Thompson over to party with me, and they can read it out loud to me.

That is how WHY DID I EVER made me feel ...

TOIL & TROUBLE

AUGUSTEN BURROUGHS



... as much as this book is hilarious, you can feel him glow in ...

How did the book make me feel/think?

Augusten Burroughs is a witch, of course, he is.

TOIL & TROUBLE is a dazzling cornucopia of riveting stories, dropping us deeper into the magick life of one of the greatest + freshest storytellers of our time. Augusten takes us on a lockstep journey through a devilishly rich life sprinkled with absurdities.

Augusten Burroughs is a witch. Why not?

There is no reason to doubt. There is reason to embrace what we do not know or understand. This memoir reads like a life-quilt

complete with the laugh-out-loud bizarreness emanating from a life far outside the norm – that while reading, I became drunk in the visceral joy of tripping into the spells of his sumptuous realities.

“Scars are nothing to hate. They are nothing to deny. They serve as our proof of what we’ve survived, and there is nothing more beautiful than to have survived something.”

A flip of a page and Augusten’s love blasts through in resplendent beauty.

My heart warms when his deep love for his husband Christopher is layered into his sanity. Augusten lays himself vulnerable, and as much as this book is hilarious, you can feel him glow in the openness of allowing himself to share profound love.

I thank him for this. I also thank him for expressing the relatable necessity of saying goodbye to his long-since-gone mother, something many of us struggle with doing.

Thank you, Augusten.

WRITTEN: April 27, 2020

THE WHISPER MAN

ALEX NORTH



Upsetting. Unsettling. Ruffling to the core.

How did the book make me feel/think?

After I broke through 50 pages, I became locked in—pages flipped, I’m not sure I turned them. The Whisper Man started uttering directly to me. I shook. Evil began tugging at my soul—stretching my strings—breaking me.

“The Whisper Man” is a horrifyingly unsettling, gripping look in the darkness resting in far too many of us. It is a macabre page-turner—the prose, intoxicating, beautiful, eloquent, real, maddening. Page after page, my spirit sank. Reading about the evils of the deranged

is burdensome. People are broken—people are ill—people are who they are; for some, their damages are insurmountable, there is no redemption. The Whisper Man is a literary gem, but —

— as much as the subject is unsettling, I can’t imagine the dark places Alex North had to have gone to create this disturbing work. But, as much as I loved this book, I can’t believe in good conscience, say I enjoyed it.

A PERSONAL NOTE

1975–Social Studies Class (High School - Saskatoon)

The teacher asked us to show the class that it had incredible emotional value + meaning. I bought a baseball.

My classmate (female) brought a picture of a young girl.

I made a joke about how goofy the picture was. My classmate started crying. I asked her who the photo was of—

“My youngest sister, one of the five children abducted and murdered by _____.”

I cried.

WRITTEN: May 12, 2020

FEASTING WILD

GINA RAE LA CERVA



A troubling, captivating read about mankind eating everything in Earth's pantry.

How did the book make me feel/think?

TROUBLED. CAPTIVATED. BREATHLESS.

Feasting Wild troubled me.

It is an eloquently written story about the history of humanity through the consumption of food.

It is a love story.

It is a beautiful, evocative, eye-opening, thought-provoking, genre-changing gem.

As much as **Feasting Wild** is about food, it's not. It deftly delves into societal issues plaguing society today—basically, the disease of ism: Racism + Capitalism. The prose sings in perfect harmony. "Athena's voice is husky and scratched by cigarettes."

The book delves deeply into the evolution of humanity, from hunter-gather to consumer, from how a food source jumps from peasant food needed to survival to scarcity, and often extinct when the wealthy members of society determine it to be a delicacy.

As I turned the pages, my appetite shrunk. I realized humanity is parasitic. But, unlike the unsuspecting creatures that are forced into extinction because they consume everything they need for survival, man consuming everything in his path devastates their habitats, resulting in destroyed ecological environs and altering the destiny of all living beings until...?

The difference between man and beast is beast acts instinctively. Whereas a man can see the destruction he's creating, since our lifespans are minute, we kind of don't care. But, oh yeah, and we created weapons, and to the animal world, they are weapons of mass destruction.

Feasting Wild troubled me because it made me aware that we are desperately flawed despite all the brilliance of humanity. The consumptive model of capitalism has no brakes and is flailing its way down a steep grade. The end of the race is likely to be bleak.

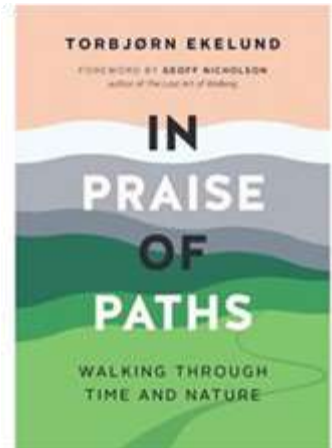
Thankfully, Gina Rae La Cerva found the strength to paint a beautiful tapestry of love into her journey, showering readers with love's unconditional tenderness.

I loved this book.

Feasting Wild delivered me to a place where I devoured a tiny morsel about a subject I knew little about—I may have intuitively understood the topic at hand, but because my head was in the sand, I, like the rest of us, might live in denial.

IN PRAISE OF PATHS

TORBJØRN EKEKUND



We can never walk the same path twice; nothing remains the same.

How did the book make me feel/think?

The timing of this book arriving at my door could not be better. COVID-19 has almost shut down the world and will change the path of humanity.

They have laid me off – a 15-year career, all for...?

I'm scared.

Are you?

A bout' of uncertainty laced with sadness kicked in – WTF is next?

My sadness manifested itself in a lack of movement. One day, I walked nine steps.

I burst out of sadness and moved. I also broke out of sorrow because I got fat. SO. We walked city paths and sidewalks excessively with my friend Jay. Some days, 20 miles. We tracked our distance and virtually walked from Vancouver to Saskatoon and back, 2,000 miles.

We walked and walked and walked and are still walking.

Amazing things began happening; my mind cleared, + fat melted away. I meditated. I became less scared of the future regardless of what destiny might have in store for me, us, the world?

By coincidence, **"In Praise of Paths"** landed at my door during this journey of discovery. It is an informative read, filled with delightful mind-bending insights on what happens when you walk into the past and then back to the present. It adroitly examines a spiritual awakening for many who embark on a journey into their souls and how we are destined to become who we are.

There was one thing in this compelling read that bothered me. A passage I feel has no place in society.

"When you walk, you don't need spandex pants or a headband or one of those strange upper-arm configurations that joggers often wear as if it were a defibrillator or pepper spray, and they were running through Baltimore's most dangerous alleyways."

I was reading "In Praise of Paths," I was reading "White Fragility." I paused. Why would an author who's walking paths in Norway mention Baltimore?

"In Praise of Paths" is an evocative trek to the abundant benefits of moving forward while reflecting on where we once were.

We can never walk the same path twice; nothing remains the same.

GINGER BREAD

HELEN OYEYEMI



I felt lost, angry, confused.

How did the book make me feel/think?

LOST

At the 175-page mark, I felt lost, angry, confused. I despise the word stupid – I’m confident I’m not. I felt like I was trapped inside a dream while reading. That dream took me back to an Economics course in University where I had to cram for an exam – I kept reading page after page of the textbook, but nothing was registering – as soon as I finished a page, what I had read vanished from my mind. The difference between **GINGER BREAD** and my Economics textbook is I had to reread the textbook because my grade depended upon

understanding – I can’t say that for **GINGER BREAD**.

I passed my Economics class. If someone were to ask me what **GINGER BREAD** is about – I don’t have a clue.

Maybe I am daft. **GINGER BREAD** made me feel the opposite of connected – detached?

Maybe I am daft. I don’t like feeling that way. I think I may give up reading – anything.

I did not enjoy writing my thoughts on this book.

WRITTEN: April 1, 2020