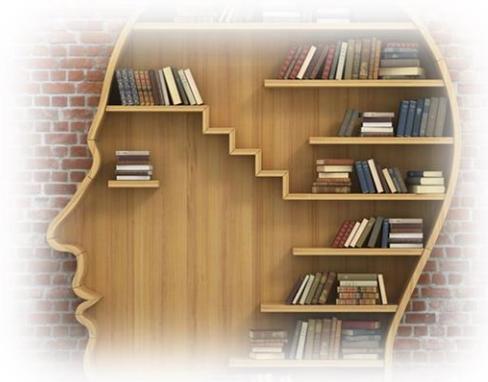


# BOOK THOUGHTS

## BATCH 27



1. THE WINNERS - FREDRICK BACKMAN (AT)
2. THE OUTSIDER - ALBERT CAMUS (AT)
3. GONE GIRL - GILLIAN FLYNN (AT)
4. INDELICACY - AMINA CAIN
5. HEATING THE OUTDOORS - MARIE-ANDRÉE GILL
6. THE DEVIL OF MISS PRYM - PAULO COELHO
7. DISLOCATIONS - KAREN ENNS
8. SEDATING ELAINE - DAWN WINTER
9. THE WHITENESS OF WEALTH - DOROTHY A. BROWNE
10. A CASTLE IN BROOKLYN - SHIRLEY RUSSAK WACHTEL

BLUE = MEMOIR OR BIOGRAPHICAL

BLACK = FICTION

DARK RED = EDUCATIONAL

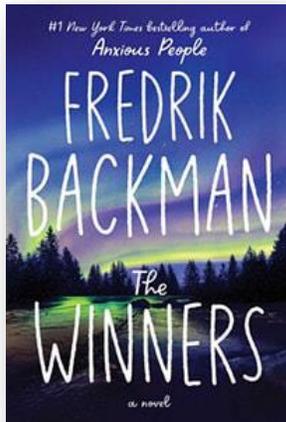
PURPLE = ESSAY OR STORIES

ORANGE = POETRY

Lindsay Wincherauk

## THE WINNERS

FREDRICK BACKMAN



*Backman is one of my favourite authors.*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

Backman is one of my favourite authors; I started with Ove – a book I never wanted to end.

In the trilogy starting with Beartown and ending with The Winners, Backman doesn't disappoint as he runs through the gamut of social issues plaguing humanity today – with drippings of a sardonic brush.

Backman writes from a place of consciousness, delivering readers easily digestible morsels of insight which are delightfully simple and peel the skin from the onion, revealing a capacity to care about the truth. On every page, Backman deftly throws the lights on for us, allowing the

story to flow smoothly without the burden of trying to disseminate what's going on.

In *The Winners*, readers will recognize the characters in the literal pictures Backman paints for us, stripping away the isolation of trying to cobble his words together piece by piece.

I think what I like most about Backman is his storytelling is accessible to all: When Backman tells a story, he simply tells a story in its simplest and purest form.

Backman has an incredible capacity to warm our souls and leave us feeling less alone.

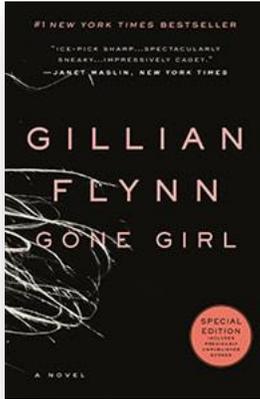
WRITTEN: 6 March 2023

1

Lindsay Wincherauk

## GONE GIRL

GILLIAN FLYNN



*Two sociopathic-psycho-narcissistic-megalomaniacs fall in love.*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

Two sociopathic-psycho-narcissistic-megalomaniacs fall in love.

How did the book make me feel/think?

Two sociopathic-psycho-narcissistic-megalomaniacs fall in love.

How did the book make me feel/think?

We're only three months into 2023; it has already been a stellar reading year. I've read 16 books, with 5 of them

making my all-time list; *Gone Girl* (2012) has etched its way onto my list.

I know, I'm late, to the party.

What's not to love?

Two sociopathic-psycho-narcissistic-megalomaniacs fall in love—they are beautiful, perfect, perfect for each other, feeding off each other's entitlement.

I want to hate them, but I don't.

The pages fly by, with this brilliant psychological thriller twisting and turning on every one of them.

I couldn't put this book down. I was out of breath, mouth agape. Wow!

And then, Gillian Flynn does something this reader loves; she makes us part of the story by reminding us; this is a captivating work of fiction, a product of Flynn's vivid imagination. And reminding us to pause to catch our breath.

How does Flynn do this?

"They say it's important for Nick and me (the correct grammar) to have some time alone and heal."

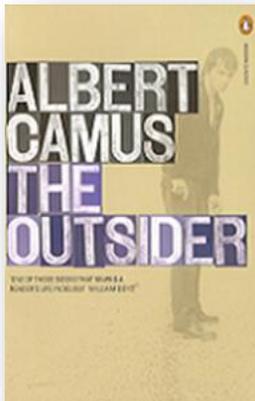
Enough said.

WRITTEN: 2 April 2023

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## THE OUTSIDER

ALBERT CAMUS



*Who are we to judge others?*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

I'm scared. We live in a world where others judge our emotions constantly.

The Outsider was written over 80 years ago.

A mother dies. A man doesn't grieve the way others think is normal. He's ostracized, deemed an outcast, untrustworthy, and sick.

The Outsider was written over 80 years ago. It resonated loudly with me. It is a classic and an all-time favourite for this reader.

3

Who are we to judge others?

The main character will not lie, shy away from opinions, and is trapped in a cycle of deception by befriending someone who sees that he is pliable, a pawn to be used—leading to murder.

The main character's fatal flaw is being different and walking alone. His downfall is the marginality of those around him and everyone on this spinning rock trying to survive this life while shackled in misguided judgment.

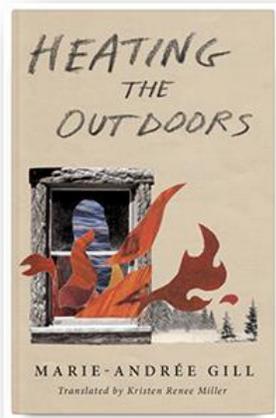
If we do not conform to the masses, we risk living alone or perishing in a violent few of what normal is.

WRITTEN: 23 April 2023

Lindsay Wincherauk

## HEATING THE OUTDOORS

MARIE-ANDRÉE GILL



*We must deal with the accumulation of emptiness.*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

It takes deep thoughts to write thoughts on poetry. It's like trying to crawl inside the mind of the poet.

I crawled inside. I'm moved. Two worlds are colliding: The past and the now. The past needs to be captured before it's gone.

Heating the Outdoors does precisely that.

What do we give up in exchange for progress?

Gill's verses are lyrical, words floating breathtakingly off the pages.

We must escape from the asylum.

We must deal with the accumulation of emptiness.

I can't help but wonder about how much culture and beauty we've lost, trapped inside the rot of assimilation as two divergent worlds collide.

Heating the outdoors captures the beauty of what is drifting into the ether while trying to make sense of what is being left behind as progress.

Once the assimilation is complete, what's the point?

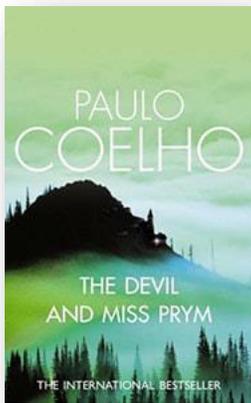
Who gets to decide what's right and what's wrong?

WRITTEN: 28 February 2023

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## THE DEVIL & MISS PRYM

PAULO COELHO



*The Devil & Miss Prym will have you questioning your morals and...*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

Would you be capable of making a deal with the devil to save your town?

Could you murder one innocent person to provide a dying town life and riches?

Who would you choose to murder?

Could you play God?

The Devil & Miss Prym will have you questioning morals, digging deep into your soul in search of defining how evil you are capable of becoming (but at what cost?), as you cheer for the main character to do the right thing?

Who gets to define what the right thing is?

I don't want to walk with the devil; every day, I want to find a way to bring light and understanding to the world, instead of being swallowed by the diseases, ego, and greed.

That's how this book made me feel.

I love this book.

WRITTEN: 23 April 2023

Lindsay Wincherauk

## INDELICACY

AMINA CAIN



*You can win when you're poor. You're shunned when you rise. You can't win.*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

A cleaning woman at a museum drinks in the art. She wants more – she wants to write about what she sees by exploring her emotions. She's trapped in her life cards, shunned by those she works with, and looked down on by the elite.

She becomes an object of lust, escaping into the arms of a rich man, the proverbial white knight (of course) – providing her with everything she believed she wanted. But it's not. She's accepted(?) into... a dangerous world

where she is no better than the wealth that has provided her with an escape, leaving behind who she is. She craves warmth and love (another woman?) – instead, she's treated like a chattel. How can she climb when she becomes the oppressor – understanding one of her staff looks at her like a fraud, a grifter?

You can't win when you're poor.

You're shunned when you rise.

You can't win.

I read some of the other comments on this book; I rarely do that; what I can say after reading them, I'm not intelligent enough to understand what the reviewers are saying. I feel like I became like Victoria (the protagonist) – I'm more at home being a cleaner than a pompous aristocrat or reviewer who's only writing to flex their massive vocabularies to niche audiences. I don't think the reviews do *Indelicacy* justice.

*Indelicacy* is a powerful novella, flashing between class, art, sexuality, control, misogyny, and something no man (I'm a man) could understand – what it is like to be a woman living in marginality, vulnerable to want.

I don't know if anything I've written makes a snippet of sense.

What I can say is *Indelicacy* is an enjoyable read that may expand your view of humanity!

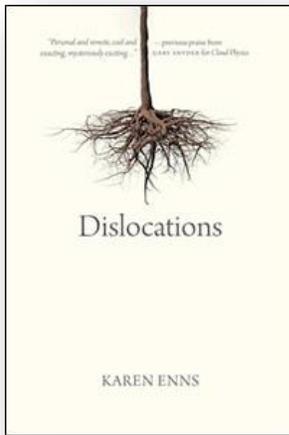
WRITTEN: 5 April 2023

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Lindsay Wincherauk

## DISLOCATIONS DISLOCATIONS

KAREN ENNS



*WE MUST DRINK IN YOUR GRANDEUR*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

Eight billion of us,  
only one of you,  
you nourish us,  
provide us with wonder,  
we are not the only living beings,  
but we have the propensity to subtract, destroy, want,  
we need to drink in your grandeur, respectfully,

Are we capable? – I don't know,  
are we racing toward the... line?

The most destructive word is finish.

STOP

We must drink in your grandeur, give you a break, a deer walks by, let it be.

Let's hope tomorrow the sun rises once more.

That's how I'm feeling.

WRITTEN: 30 March 2023

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Lindsay Wincherauk

## SEDATING ELAINE

DAWN WINTERS



*Don't buy drugs from drug dealers.*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

Don't buy drugs from drug dealers.

Drug dealers are not your friends.

Am I being Mister obvious?

No.

This is sage advice.

Then where should I get my drugs from?

Nancy Regan?

I suggest staying away from drugs.

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What about my doctor?

Your doctor will be okay if your doctor is trustable. Wow. Trustable is a word.

Sorry about the break.

Sedating Elaine is a marvellous read about what likeable people sometimes do when their lives are spiralling. Frances is in trouble. Frances lives with the bottle and pills; that is how it is. Frances is emotionally incapable of getting over lost love.

A drug dealer wants his money, the friendship shatters, and Elaine (new love) is an easy solution. A band aid.

If the solution is too good to be true, run, don't use it – it will come crashing down in a fury. Does it? Read for yourself and find out.

And whatever you do, if you still think drug dealers are friends, ask them for ingredient lists.

Better yet, stay away.

WRITTEN: 26 March 2023

**NEXT GREAT READ**  
NEXT GREAT READ

????



*A bunch of descriptive words.*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

**Next Great Read**

WRITTEN: ?? ???? ??

**NEXT GREAT READ**  
NEXT GREAT READ

????

*A bunch of descriptive words.*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

**Next Great Read**

WRITTEN: ?? ???? ??



**NEXT GREAT READ**  
NEXT GREAT READ

????

*A bunch of descriptive words.*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

**Next Great Read**

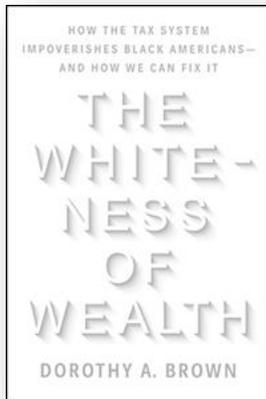
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Lindsay Wincherauk

## THE WHITENESS OF WEALTH

DORTHY A. BROWN



*We will only find solutions when every white person admits they are part of the problem.*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

I know it's hard to admit you've had an unfair advantage, but why don't you try? It won't hurt. Nobody is asking you to do anything except be less of a jerk.

White folk don't want to admit their advantage, often hiding it—a 400-year head start, and wealth built off the sweat of others (slavery), and yet; many of us are deluded, and think we've worked hard for everything we have.

They have stacked the cards in our favour. The system allowed white folk to build, and then, pass on, generational wealth. Black folk had massive hurdles stacked in front of them. Daunting hurdles. Impossible hurdles.

White = Marriage Benefit (One partner works, while the other manages the household, sparing the additional cost of raising kids). And then, the money they saved, could be invested, and grow and grow and grow.

Black often = 'd both partners working to earn the same as a White family, but no tax break and an added expense to have someone else raise your kids. No wealth building.

The two families earn the same, but only one family gets a break.

It doesn't stop there; the system has benefited white folk and burdened black (and everyone else) in homeownership, the labour market, education, school-to-prison pipelines, healthcare, and environmental racism.

Yet many of us are still stuck on "Everything I have earned through hard work."

Sure, maybe, but with thousands upon thousands of dollars head start, that I understand, why would you ever want to give that up or admit the truth?

And then the angriest white folk appropriated the word 'woke' to change its meaning from be careful out there, to damn it, I think they've figured our scam out so we must stop them.

The Whiteness of Wealth is a fascinating read. If you flip the pages with an open mind, a few of us, might finally, start looking at the world through a fairer lens.

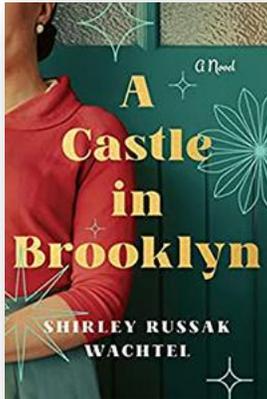
FYI: I'm white. I think. I was born in a place unwanted children were born. But at least I can understand if I weren't white, I'd probably not be here now.

WRITTEN: 19 February 2023

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## A CASTLE IN BROOKLYN

SHIRLEY RUSSAK WACHTEL



*The first chapter was rivetting.*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

The first chapter was riveting. And then...

They built a house. A family grows. A child dies. Friendships are destroyed.

Infidelity. Racism. Other stuff.

Who are these characters? Why are they here?

Someone from Japan enters the story. People keep dying. Stories lay unresolved. The characters become pedantic.

The house's new tenants rearrange the furniture. A jogger

runs by with water bottles, hugging their thigh (or something like that). A nosey neighbour.

Another page. Introspection. Two vehicles collide.

And then...

It's been 10 years since 9/11 - was mentioned; so is Aids.

Why is 9/11 mentioned?

**BACK TO THE VEHICLES COLLIDING**

The last thing he saw was MERCURY.

If it was the last thing, how do we find out?

Someone smokes weed, or does heroin, or cocaine, or... I'm being mean.

I'm confused. No, I'm not.

I read the acknowledgments.

I rarely read the acknowledgments.

Writing is hard.

The book's layout is good.

WRITTEN: 26 February 2023