

BOOK THOUGHTS

BATCH 6
BATCH 6



BY LINDSAY WINCHERAUK
BY LINDSAY WINCHERAUK

BOOK THOUGHTS: BATCH 6
BOOK THOUGHTS: BATCH 6

BOOK THOUGHTS

BATCH 6



2

1. **HOW TO CATCH A MOLE - MARC HAMER**
2. **THE NICKEL BOYS - COLSON WHITEHEAD**
3. **ALL YOU CAN EVER KNOW - NICOLE CHUNG**
4. **NORMAL PEOPLE - SALLY ROONEY**
5. **TIN MAN - SARAH WINMAN**
6. **THICK - TRESSIE McMILLIAN COTTOM**
7. **THEY BOTH DIE AT THE END - ADAM SILVERA**
8. **THE AMERICAN STORY - DAVID M. RUBENSTEIN**
9. **VOICE OF REBELLION - ROBERTA STALEY**
10. **THE SECRET - RHONDA BYRNE**

BLUE = MEMOIR OR BIOGRAPHICAL

BLACK = FICTION

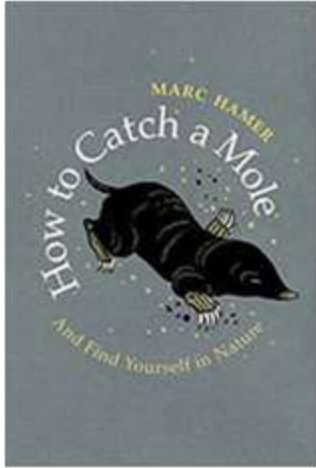
DARK RED = EDUCATIONAL

PURPLE = ESSAY OR STORIES

ORANGE = POETRY

HOW TO CATCH A MOLE

MARC HAMER



A review? My thoughts? My days? How the book tripped my mind?

How did the book make me feel/think?

My alarm is about to rattle my soul, sparking me awake. The day is about to begin. It's just before 4 am. The necessity of work beckons. It's been screaming my name for over 14-years, at least this version of adulthood responsibilities.

I cannot get used to the hour, being out-of-sync with the rest of society + my relationships.

I take the simple route; I go to work.

There is comfort in having the illusion of a place of belonging.

I crack open the gorgeous cover of a new day.

The days blend into each other. There is no time to breathe. The pressure to live up to expectations is unrelenting. I must be SOMETHING, I've been told. I am. But, because I am part of the judgment, I must judge everyone, everything... myself. The drive to work has become a blur. I pull into the parking lot. I park. I only remember A and B, nothing in between. We all think we know what's best. We all believe if only we were in charge. Collectively, have we stopped living?

Have we stopped realizing we are simply part of nature, and all the noise blaring around us is ephemeral, pointless, limiting?

It doesn't matter.

Until we can clear our minds of the inherent sense of self-importance, I'm not sure any of us can indeed be. We must be nothing more.

How to Catch a Mole made me realize everything in nature is connected. We overthink what we are supposed to be.

We have a propensity to become part of the noise.

We live in a time where we nearly criminalize those who become less than what societal delusion has determined to be the norm.

We are the mole, nothing more. Beauty in life comes from acceptance.

From cover to the last word - How to Catch a Mole is a breathtaking trip through the life of a man. Many would shun. A man who has his thumb firmly planted on the pulse of today. Thank You.

I look forward to tomorrow!

THE NICKEL BOYS COLSON WHITEHEAD



Collectively we must be better!

How did the book make me feel/think?

I'm taking the easy way out of my thoughts on this important work of fiction; I'm going to let a passage from the book layout my inner turmoil.

"My aunt says I'm a get-along type," he told the boys one shift while they idled outside the five-and-ten. "I suppose I am. I grew up around you boys, white and colored, and I know you're just like me, but you had some bad luck."

Mouth agape, this isn't a work of fiction. I'm naïve. I'm fortunate to be living in Canada. My gut churns because a passage of that ilk exists.

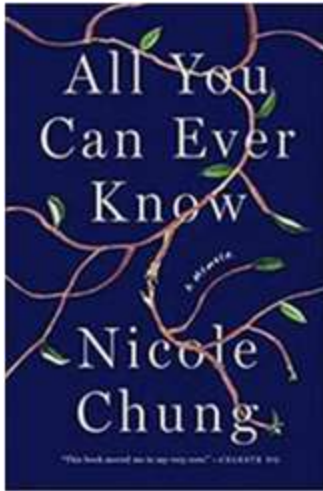
I want to be a better person.

I'll leave you now. I'm going to recoil and ponder how I will behave each day to make the world a tad better.

Collectively, we must pull our heads out of the sand and be better.

ALL YOU CAN EVER KNOW

NICOLE CHUNG



Filled with passages guaranteed to leave mouths agape.

How did the book make me feel/think?

Grateful.

I'm grateful Nicole dared to share her stirring, heart(wrenching)warming story.

"I finally understood what my birth parents did not: my adoption was hard, and complicated, but it was not a tragedy. It was not my fault, and it wasn't theirs, either. It was the easiest way to solve just one of too many problems."

All You Can Ever Know is filled with passages guaranteed to leave mouths agape. The dreadful challenges of growing up

Korean, adopted by a white family, and living in a white community, would be unfathomable for most because most of us have the luxury of just being – with little thought.

Nicole's life was littered with thoughts.

I was a secret baby. Born in a secret place. The shame of family, community, and religion. I found out by accident who I'm destined to be. The layers of secrecy, when stripped away, can never repair the damage caused by the roots of the lie.

In Nicole's case, she wasn't lied to about the adoption, but everything else was shaded in deception until she challenged her identity.

As I tore through the pages, my emotions spiked. I could never understand what it is like to face cultural taunts or try to understand why I'm different based on skin colour – because I blend in. But what everyone shares with Nicole who has ever faced the shrouds of secrecy – the challenge to become whole is a lifelong quest.

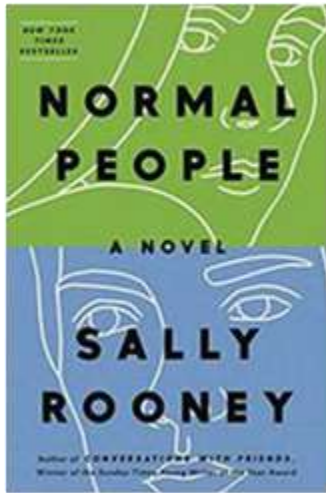
No child that is a product of secrecy can find comfort when their first breaths of life were stapled to "not a tragedy" and "just one of the too many problems."

And no child that is a product of secrecy can fully understand what it's like to be expected (wanted from birth). So, it's the curse/blessing making these beautiful children unique and capable of giving so much back.

That's how this book made me feel!

NORMAL PEOPLE

SALLY ROONEY



What happens when popularity is turned upside down?

How did the book make me feel/think?

Connell Waldron: Popular, athletic, poor; from the wrong side of the tracks.

Marianne Sheridan: Rich, plain-looking, odd, stubborn, friendless, from the right side of the tracks.

The common denominator, they're both highly intelligent.

Normal People could easily be titled *An Opposite Reality*, where wealth doesn't guarantee popularity, and a lack of money doesn't lead to shunning. Especially when attractive + athletic are part of the equation.

4 **Normal People** → tackles society's norms and incinerate them. Connell + Marianne are drawn to each other for inexplicable reasons. Connell's attractiveness and athleticism allow him to fit in, whereas Marianne's wealth in this riveting tale keeps her on the outside ostracised.

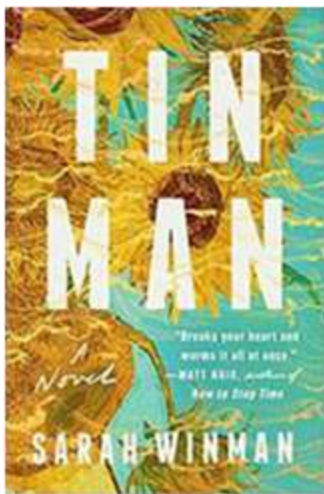
Partway through the book, when the two characters escape to an institution of higher learning, they switch sides of the track. Marianne grows into herself and blossoms while being trapped in a dangerous game of revolting against who she is and where she's from by pushing sexual boundaries. Marianne puts on blinders to mask unrelenting pain. She spirals downward, teetering on demise.

Connell grows; growth brought on by depression ensconced in reality: life is ever-changing, and what once was can never be again. Except for his deeply conditioned love for Marianne, the one person who appears to be suffering from the same infliction. Connell needs Marianne to save himself, and Marianne needs Connell to accept who she is.

Normal People ultimately taught me that normal is an abstract, non-existent concept. Don't believe me, ask yourself: Am I normal?

TIN MAN

SARAH WINMAN



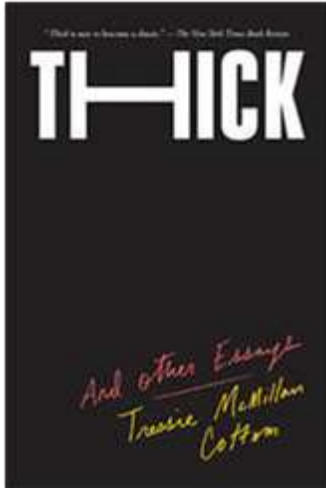
A beautifully written look at the entirety and tragedies of living.

How did the book make me feel/think?

Never has a book broken my heart in such a breathtakingly beautiful way. TINMAN drips in elegant prose, slashing with realism, sharing tragedy and heartache in such a way it highlights the reality of love being boundless. The book reads like lavish brush strokes dripping from Van Gogh's brush, leaving me drunken in sadness yet revelling in the delight of every word mattering. Winman, with precision and every ounce of her heart, painted dying in such a way it burst off the page, blasting forth in a spectacular tapestry. Eventually, for me, sadness was replaced with the completeness of the experience of living.

THICK

TRESSIE McMILLAN COTTOM



Time to reflect!

How did the book make me feel/think?

DEAR NON-WHITE PEOPLE,

Here is my evolution from THICK to THINK.

Birth: 1989

I'm white. I grew up in insular Saskatoon, where native jokes were (?) the norm. The conditioning begins.

We had a Siamese cat named Guy. GRGSENF for short. I'd stand on the steps of our house screaming, "Here, Guy, r_ce gobbler, g__k, slant e__d, n-face." I was 10.

I had three intellectually + athletically gifted black friends. We lauded them for athleticism.

6

Montego Bay: 1989

During a tour, I was the only Caucasian on the street. My blood curdled. Before entering a church, my guide said, "Put on your shirt. Respect mon."

Vancouver: 1990-Present

My favourite aunt told me that Vancouver's problem is too many Chinese and gays.

2003

My parents, whom I watched die, were not my birth parents. Instead, an elderly lady offered to help find my birth parents; she shared a reunion story. "The father was black..." she said, finishing with, "...we all thought the boy had a little n— in him."

Seoul: 2012

A man sporting a huge smile emphatically mouthed, "HELLO." He was white—I counted ten "whites" in my week-long visit. But, unlike Jamaica, I haven't been conditioned to fear Asians.

Back in Vancouver

An employee asked if I noticed how many white people are dating Asians? I fired back, "Hey, have you noticed how many white people are dating Germans?"

BOOK THOUGHTS: BATCH 6

A black worker approached the counter and shamefully asked, “Where are you from?”

A white homeless person entered the office. “Snow is coming. It’s best to keep off the roads because of foreign drivers.”

If I make a boneheaded driving error – I quickly don an Asian mask. Just in case the other drivers are racist – I don’t want to confuse them.

I can never understand what non-whites endure, but at least I can acknowledge my ilk, have had an unfair advantage since the beginning of –

Thanks to **THICK**: I’m slightly less racist than before.

Discourse is the pathway to whites no longer fearing blacks, and hopefully one day, for non-whites, to overcome the disparity of whiteness.

THEY BOTH DIE AT THE END

ADAM SILVERA



Happy – Sad – Hopeful – Trashed – Sad – Reflective!

How did the book make me feel/think?

A friend saw me reading *A Little Life* – he noticed I was nearing the end. He asked me how I was feeling? I told him, a bit depressed, destroyed. He recommended a light read to take my mind off the despair: **They Both Die in the End**. *Sounds light*.

I began reading – what a ride. I will refrain from giving the story away. Many people are given a timeline on how much time they have left to live. The timeline is always associated with a terminal illness.

Now imagine you're 18 or 17-years-old. A service calls you, telling you you will die in the next 24 hours – there is no escaping destiny.

What would you do?

Would you even shower?

“I turn off the faucet, and the water stops raining down on me; today isn't the day for an hour shower.”

I'd probably wrap myself in bubble wrap, turn the lights off, and hide in a closet, shaking.

They Both Die in the End reinforced the need to live each day to the fullest, reach out, love unconditionally, allow vulnerability to take center stage, and face down fear.

The clock ticked down with each page.

Characters flashed in and out.

Growth became exponential.

The characters were simple to love, cheer for, and will for the title to change.

Would you “come out” if you were gay?

Could you imagine not being sick and not knowing how or when life will end – except you know; it will be today?

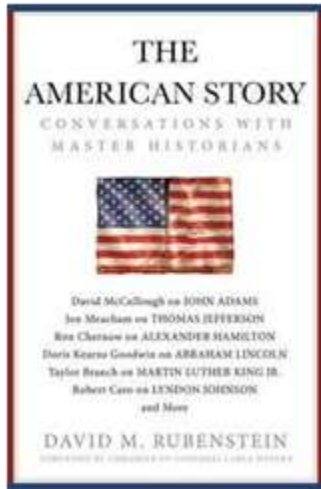
They Both Die in the End is reminiscent of the 1995 movie, *Before Sunrise*, a beautiful story about a chance meeting ending in the hopes for something more, a plan to meet on the same train platform in six months.

In **They Both Die in the End**, two young lives are running out of time, but they still pack a lifetime into a single day. In the end, they plan to meet –

I loved this book.

THE AMERICAN STORY

DAVID M. RUBENSTEIN



And the rockets red glare, the bombs bursting in air.

How did the book make me feel/think?

HOPEFUL

I'm Canadian. My understanding of the history of the USA is limited to what I learned in school (a million years ago), plus what I gleaned from American television and the American news. Based upon those, I'm terrified.

Since we are a million years into my lifetime, and thanks, yes, thanks to Trump, my thirst for understanding has grown significantly. In the past few years, I've read countless books on the struggles of non-whites in the land of opportunity. I've read

9 exceptional books highlighting the litany of events that have deposited us today in these uncertain times.

And then, I read THE AMERICAN STORY has not made me anything more than a neophyte. But what it has done is give me pause – I understand America has come a long way – and there is hope for a glorious future. I gathered from this informative gem that America has always had deep-rooted racist tendencies. But with each leader, and ounce, a pound of progress, there have been factions of society pulling it toward darkness. But no matter how hard the pull is – brilliant, often flawed leaders have a populace to answer to, and the public dictates the level of their success. For every inherent racist tendency of one leader, he is met with the next leader, having a moral compass dictating genuine progress comes as representation for all!

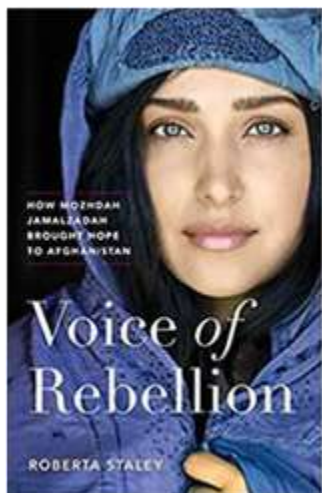
I think America will be okay, and walls will continue to be broken down instead of erect. And, eventually, it will once again be the shining beacon on a hill.

That's how THE AMERICAN STORY made this neophyte feel.

WRITTEN: March 17, 2020

VOICE OF REBELLION

ROBERTA STALEY



An uplifting story, providing beacons of hope!

How did the book make me feel/think?

If you've read any of my book reviews, you'd realize they're not reviews – but thoughts on what I've digested.

How did the book make me feel (think)?

Hopeful was my initial emotion as I flipped the pages. We live in a day where being Politically Correct is being savagely attacked, as if being a better person, less toxic, less bullying is being stripped away from us because we are so hard done by; it's a load of –

Bear with me. I can't fathom why there is a war on Political Correctness?

Let me extrapolate. The Jamalzadah family, risking great peril to themselves, escaped a war-torn region of the world, leaving loved ones behind – to perhaps face unrelenting atrocities, all in search of a better way of life. A life where they no longer fear for their safety with every step they take. However, they bemoan what they've left behind, family, identity, home with every step. They arrive in a new, unknown land, where the challenges of assimilation are daunting. They do their best. Yet, they face racist invectives from people (even children) conditioned by an insular existence, afraid of difference. I'm astonished by their courage.

Flash to the present. A Sports Talk Celebrity (Hockey) with a large platform punches downward and drops a "you people" into one of his rants. He's fired. The outrage by the followers of the sport is instantaneous. "How could you fire this ICON? PC culture has run amok. Everyone is way too sensitive these days." They scream.

In the meantime, another suicide bomb goes off in the war-torn country, killing innocent people. Hockey doesn't seem as important anymore. But it does because the PC attackers are hard done by. They rebel against their hatred being stifled by Political Correctness.

Flashback to VOICE OF REBELLION. The Jamalzadah family worked long days, making a new life for themselves. They succeeded. The racist taunts are still there, but they've dodged bombs. They'd be okay. Mozhdah, through relentless work, her star began rising.

She wanted to give back impact change in her homeland.

She tried to make a difference.

She returned to her homeland, Afghanistan, to become a voice of influence.

She tackled taboo subjects, the oppression of women; she punched upward.

She challenged norms + encouraged evolving by becoming a beacon of hope for women, for those who have had their voices muted for far too long.

“There are other things to consider,” she said. “Few divorced women will ever marry again, as it’s considered a disgrace to both herself and her relatives. The attitude is that the woman failed to protect the marriage.”

“Even if the relationship ends because of abuse from the husband?” Mozhdah said indignantly.

In her new home, we swathe people from her part of the world with the same brush. Many interpreted the religion of her land – without an ounce of knowledge. They claimed that their bible (Quran) encouraged violence against women. It doesn’t. Much of the male population in her homeland misinterpret the words of their bible. Misogyny lives carried forth from the Stone Ages, so deeply ingrained that an infuriating struggle to inspire change seems never-ending. Mozhdah fearlessly sheds light on this while rousing a better way. She did this by asking questions. She continued to punch upward.

TODAY

“You people” continues to ring loudly as the Sports Personalities defend the words of their fired comrade. They continue to punch downward. They continue to punish the marginalized. After all, they have a platform. They continue to bully.

11 Mozhdah punched upward, calling out those who’ve been calling the shots – in Afghanistan, risking her life in doing so. But, relentlessly, Mozhdah makes things better for those bombarded with misinformation by those with a large platform. She is the David, challenging Goliath.

A mall Santa gets fired for posting pictures on Facebook playfully groping women back in the present. He says the women were okay with it. The attackers of Political Correctness go wild. They say it’s no big deal; everyone is too sensitive; he shouldn’t have been fired.

I laugh at “playfully gr....”

I guess Santa hadn’t been paying attention, and besides, he’s an adult. So why would he post... never mind.

I could never possibly understand the extent of Mozhdah and her family’s experiences, their drive, compassion, and love, + unwavering focus on creating a better way. I could never understand what it is like to be a refugee – but what I can say, Mozhdah, thank you for the audacity to punch upward in your quest to make the world a better place. The world is better because you’ve shared parts of your life. So far, too many are punching downward because they fear change.

Why speak about the Sportscaster and Santa? Because it is imperative, we don’t allow those with the loudest voice to drag us back toward oppression and misogyny. And because it sheds light on checking those in power. If we don’t, the atrocities associated

with it risk highlighting that many use their capacity for evil regardless of where we're from. So, it's crucial to keep punching upward.

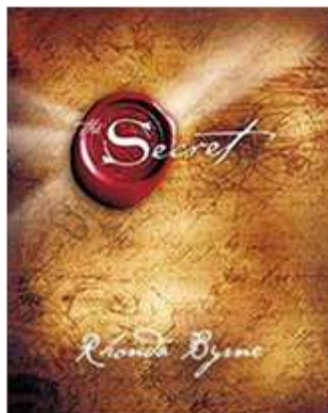
VOICE OF REBELLION is an uplifting journey, providing beacons of hope for not only women but for all of us willing to open our hearts and to punch upward to bring about change.

I'll leave you with this "courageous, loving family" that should be enough to stop those with large platforms from saying "you people" ever again. I know it likely won't, but at least it's a start.

VOICE OF REBELLION is must-read.

THE SECRET

RHONDA BYRNE



The Universe is listening, so, ask + believe = receive!

How did the book make me feel/think?

I am so happy and grateful now that I'm sending out positive thoughts to the Universe regarding every aspect of my life. I want some things. Don't you? It's okay to strive for whatever you want from life as we rotate together with the rock, EARTH.

I believe we arrive at two doors with every step-in life. The door on the left leads down into misery. The door on the right leads to happiness. Maybe we are destined to pick the doors we select.

I don't believe that. My life lessons have taught me I have a choice. I could have chosen to continue spiralling downward, losing myself in misery, dragging everyone in my path down with me. But I chose the door on the right.

We all have the choice as to the path we decide to take. The way I see things now, I was fortunate.

13 I highly recommend everyone needs to read the secret. Even if it is merely to help you realize life is lived, Joy + Kindness is expected to be paramount. And, to live a life of abundance, the way you talk to the Universe is likely the only answer.

As for me: My next memoir will be released, and it will turn into a rousing success. I'm not entirely sure when, but I will live part of the year in a beautiful home on a tropical island paradise. And I will be a beacon for helping people overcome negative thoughts, allowing them to have a healthier, happier life.

Why not?

What's the other option?

Lamenting... Nah, choose to dream + chase those dreams; Hollywood got one thing right: the Happy Ending!

I think The Secret may help us all to reach it!

HONESTY BREAK

Hey, bleeping Universe, where's my stuff?

I've been a good boy for a long time, compassionate and empathetic and kind → I've been firing messages to you for quite some time now → why do you return pain?