

**READERS ON THE HILL**  
**READING SCHEDULE – 2019**

*January 7, 2019*

Kristin Hannah: **THE GREAT ALONE**

Alaska, 1974. Ernt Allbright came home from the Vietnam War a changed and volatile man. When he loses yet another job, he makes the impulsive decision to move his wife and daughter north where they will live off the grid in America's last true frontier. Cora will do anything for the man she loves, even if means following him into the unknown. Thirteen-year-old Leni, caught in the riptide of her parents' passionate, stormy relationship, has little choice but to go along, daring to hope this new land promises her family a better future. But as winter approaches and darkness descends, Ernt's fragile mental state deteriorates; and soon the perils outside pale in comparison to threats from within. In their small cabin, covered in snow, blanketed in eighteen hours of night, Leni and her mother learn the terrible truth: they are on their own.

*February 4, 2019*

Ron Hall: **SAME KIND OF DIFFERENT AS ME**

Meet Denver who was raised under plantation-style slavery in Louisiana until he escaped the "Man" in the 1960's, by hopping a train. Non-trusting, uneducated, and violent, Denver spent another 18 years on the streets of Dallas and Fort Worth. Meet Ron Hall, a self-made millionaire in the world of high priced art deals who is concerned with fast cars, beautiful women, and fancy clothes. Meet the woman who changed their lives -- Miss Debbie. She helped the homeless and gave of herself to all of "God's People," and had a way of knowing how to listen and helping others talk and be found -- until cancer strikes. *Same Kind of Different as Me* is a tale told in two unique voices -- Ron Hall & Denver Moore -- weaving two completely different life experiences into one common journey where both men learn "whether we is rich or poor or something in between this earth ain't no final restin' place. So in a way, we is all homeless, just workin' our way toward home."

*March 4, 2019*

Karen White: **THE NIGHT THE LIGHTS WENT OUT**

Recently divorced, Merilee Talbot Dunlap moves with her two children to the Atlanta suburb of Sweet Apple, Georgia. When an anonymous local blog starts dishing about her failed marriage, Merilee finds some measure of peace in town matriarch Sugar Prescott. Sugar's stories give Merilee a different perspective on the town and its wealthy school moms in their tennis whites and shiny SUVs, and even on her new friendship with glamorous young mother Heather Blackford. In a town like Sweet Apple, where sins and secrets are as likely to be found behind the walls of gated mansions as in the dark woods surrounding Merilee's house, appearance is everything. But just how dangerous that deception can be will shock all three women.

*April 1, 2019*

Ivan Doig: **LAST BUS TO WISDOM**

Donal Cameron is being raised by his grandmother, the cook at the legendary Double W ranch. However, when Gram has to have surgery for “female trouble” in the summer of 1951, all she can think to do is to ship Donal off to her sister in faraway Manitowoc, Wisconsin. In Wisconsin, Donal is in for a rude surprise: Aunt Kate—bossy, opinionated, argumentative, and tyrannical—is nothing like her sister. She henpecks her good-natured husband, Herman the German, and Donal can’t seem to get on her good side either. After one contretemps too many, Kate packs him back to the authorities in Montana on the next Greyhound. But as it turns out, Donal isn’t traveling solo: Herman the German has decided to fly the coop with him. In the immortal American tradition, the pair light out for the territory together, meeting an ensemble of characters and having rollicking misadventures along the way.

*May 6, 2019*

Joshilyn Jackson: **THE ALMOST SISTERS**

Superheroes have always been Leia Birch Briggs’ weakness. One tequila-soaked night at a comics convention, the usually level-headed graphic novelist is swept off her barstool by a handsome and anonymous Batman. It turns out the caped crusader has left her with more than just a nice, fuzzy memory. She’s having a baby boy—an unexpected but not unhappy development in the thirty-eight year-old’s life. But before Leia can break the news of her impending single-motherhood (including the fact that her baby is biracial) to her conventional, Southern family, her step-sister Rachel’s marriage implodes. Worse, she learns her beloved ninety-year-old grandmother, Birchie, is losing her mind, and she’s been hiding her dementia with the help of Wattie, her best friend since girlhood. Leia returns to Alabama to put her grandmother’s affairs in order, clean out the big Victorian that has been in the Birch family for generations, and tell her family that she’s pregnant. Yet just when Leia thinks she’s got it all under control, she learns that illness is not the only thing Birchie’s been hiding. Tucked in the attic is a dangerous secret with roots that reach all the way back to the Civil War.

*June 3, 2019*

Gail Honeyman: **ELEANOR OLIPHANT IS COMPLETELY FINE**

No one’s ever told Eleanor that life should be better than fine. Meet Eleanor Oliphant: She struggles with appropriate social skills and tends to say exactly what she’s thinking. Nothing is missing in her carefully timetabled life of avoiding social interactions, where weekends are punctuated by frozen pizza, vodka, and phone chats with Mummy. But everything changes when Eleanor meets Raymond, the bumbling and deeply unhygienic IT guy from her office. When she and Raymond together save Sammy, an elderly gentleman who has fallen on the sidewalk, the three become the kinds of friends who rescue one another from the lives of isolation they have each been living. And it is Raymond’s big heart that will ultimately help Eleanor find the way to repair her own profoundly damaged one.

*July 1, 2019*

David Grann: **KILLERS OF THE FLOWER MOON**

Journalist David Grann recreates the events that tell how unsuspecting Osage families, the world's wealthiest in the 1920s, were murdered one by one by seemingly benevolent men who married into the family in order to inherit all the money gained from their land's oil deposits . Reported in the newspapers as the "Reign of Terror" or the "Osage Black Curse," Grann ties in the parallel story of how the modern FBI was created as a resulting effort to capture the murderers. What should interest us today, according to the author, is how greed continues to threaten American Indian lives.

*August 5, 2019*

Wallace Stegner: **CROSSING TO SAFETY**

This novel is a meditation on the idealism and spirit of youth, when the world is full of promise, and on the blows and compromises life inevitably inflicts. Two couples meet during the Depression years in Madison, Wisconsin, and become devoted friends despite vast differences in upbringing and social status. Hard work, hope and the will to succeed as a writer motivate the penurious narrator Larry Morgan and his wife Sally as he begins a term teaching at the university. Equally excited by their opportunities are Sid Lang, another junior man in the English department, and his wife Charity. They are fortune's children, favored with intelligence, breeding and money.

*September 2, 2019* **\*\*NO MEETING TONIGHT. LABOR DAY MONDAY\*\***

*October 7, 2019*

Kristina McMorris: **SOLD ON A MONDAY**

2 CHILDREN FOR SALE. The sign is a last resort. It sits on a farmhouse porch in 1931, but could be found anywhere in an era of breadlines, bank runs and broken dreams. It could have been written by any mother facing impossible choices. For struggling reporter Ellis Reed, the gut-wrenching scene evokes memories of his family's dark past. He snaps a photograph of the children, not meant for publication. But when it leads to his big break, the consequences are more devastating than he ever imagined. At the paper, Lillian Palmer is haunted by her role in all that happened. She is far too familiar with the heartbreak of children deemed unwanted. As the bonds of motherhood are tested, she and Ellis must decide how much they are willing to risk to mend a fractured family. This novel is inspired by an actual newspaper photograph that stunned the nation.

*November 4, 2019*

Donna VanLiere: **THE GOOD DREAM**

Tennessee, 1950: Still single and in her early thirties, Ivorie Walker is considered an old maid; a label she takes with good humor and a grain of salt. But when her mother dies, leaving her to live alone in the house she grew up in, to work the farm she was raised to take care of, she finds herself lost in a kind of loneliness she hadn't expected. After years of rebuffing the

advances of imperfect, yet eligible bachelors from her small town, Ivorie is without companionship with more love in her heart and time on her hands than she knows what to do with. But her life soon changes when a feral, dirty-faced boy who has been sneaking onto her land to steal from her garden comes into her life. Even though he runs back into the hills as quickly as he arrives, she's determined to find out who he is because something about the young boy haunts her. What would make him desperate enough to steal and eat from her garden? But what she can't imagine is what the boy faces, each day and night, in the filthy lean-to hut miles up in the hills. Who is he? How did he come to live in the hills? Where did he come from? And, more importantly, can she save him? As Ivorie steps out of her comfort zone to uncover the answers, she unleashes a firestorm in the town-a community that would rather let secrets stay that way.

*December 2, 2019*

Thomas Hardy: **THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE**

The story opens with a scene of such heartlessness and cruelty that it still shocks readers today. A poor workman named Michael Henchard, in a fit of drunken rage, sells his wife and baby daughter to a stranger at a country fair. Stricken with remorse, Henchard gives up alcohol and works hard to become a prosperous businessman and the respected mayor of Casterbridge. But he cannot erase his past. His wife ultimately returns to offer Henchard the choice of redemption or a further descent into his own self-destructive nature. A dark, complex story, The Mayor of Casterbridge brims with invention, vitality, and even wit.