

THE PAGE TURNERS

2018

April 16th – The Good Earth by Pearl S. Buck

The Good Earth is a novel published in 1931. It was the best-selling novel in the United States in both 1931 and 1932 which was an influential factor in Buck's winning the **Nobel Prize for Literature** in 1938. It is the first book in a trilogy that includes *Sons* (1932) and *A House Divided* (1935).

The novel dramatizes family life in a Chinese village before **WWI**. The novel helped prepare Americans of the 1930s to consider Chinese as allies in the coming war with Japan.

The main theme of *The Good Earth* is the nourishing power of the land. Throughout the novel, a connection to the land is associated with moral piety, good sense, respect for nature, and a strong work ethic. Alienation from the land is associated with decadence and corruption.

May 21st – The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck

Tom Joad and his family are forced from their farm in the Depression-era Oklahoma Dust Bowl and set out for California along with thousands of others in search of jobs, land, and hope for a brighter future. Published in 1934 and considered John Steinbeck's masterpiece, *The Grapes of Wrath* is a story of human unity and love as well as the need for cooperative rather than individualistic ideals during hard times. Steinbeck won a Pulitzer prize in 1940 for this novel.

June 18th – The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter by Carson McCullers

With the publication of her first novel, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, Carson McCullers became a literary sensation. With its compassionate glimpses into its characters' inner lives, the novel is considered McCullers' finest work, an enduring masterpiece first published in 1940. At its center is the deaf-mute John Singer, who becomes the confidant for various types of misfits in a Georgia mill town during the 1930s. Each one yearns for escape from small town life. When Singer's mute companion goes insane, Singer moves into the Kelly house, where Mick Kelly, the book's heroine (and loosely based on McCullers), finds solace in her music. With a deft sense for racial tensions in the South, McCullers spins a haunting, unforgettable story that gives voice to the rejected, the forgotten, and the mistreated.

July 16th – A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith

The American classic about a young girl's coming-of-age at the beginning of the 20th century. From the moment she entered the world, Francie needed to be made of stern stuff, for the often harsh life of Williamsburg demanded fortitude, precocity, and strength of spirit. Often scorned by neighbors for her family's erratic and eccentric behavior—such as her father Johnny's taste for alcohol and Aunt Sissy's habit of marrying serially without the formality of divorce—no one, least of all Francie, could say that the Nolans' life lacked drama. By turns overwhelming, sublime, heartbreaking, and uplifting, the Nolans' daily experiences are tenderly threaded with family connectedness and raw with honesty. Betty Smith has artfully caught this sense of exciting life in a novel of childhood published in 1943.

August 20th – The Razor's Edge by W. Somerset Maugham

Larry Darrell is a young American in search of the absolute. The progress of his spiritual odyssey involves him with some of Maugham's most brilliant characters - his fiancée Isabel whose choice between love and wealth have lifelong repercussions, and Elliott Templeton, her uncle, a classic expatriate American snob. Maugham himself wanders in and out of the story, to observe his characters struggling with their fates. A classic story by a master, The Razor's Edge is so well-written that the reader glides through the story easily. The story is about a self-discovery journey taken in an era long before it was common to do so. It describes one man's strength of will to keep searching for meaning at the cost of his place in society, The character descriptions are vivid and detailed. The Razor's Edge was published in 1944.

September 17th – The Hollow by Agatha Christie

Agatha Christie is the most widely published author of all time, outsold only by the Bible and Shakespeare. Her books have sold more than a billion copies in English and another billion in a hundred foreign languages. She died in 1976. The Hollow was published in 1946.

A far-from-warm welcome greets Hercule Poirot as he arrives for lunch at Lucy Angkatell's country house. A man lies dying by the swimming pool, his blood dripping into the water. His wife stands over him, holding a revolver. As Poirot investigates, he begins to realize that beneath the respectable surface lies a tangle of family secrets and everyone becomes a suspect.

October 15th – Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl translated by B. M. Mooyaart

Discovered in the attic in which she spent the last years of her life, Anne Frank's remarkable diary has become a world classic—a powerful reminder of the horrors of war and an eloquent testament to the human spirit. This was published in 1948.

In 1942, with the Nazis occupying Holland, a thirteen-year-old Jewish girl and her family fled their home in Amsterdam and went into hiding. For the next two years, until their whereabouts were betrayed to the Gestapo, the Franks and another family lived cloistered in the "Secret Annexe" of an old office building. Cut off from the outside world, they faced hunger, boredom, the constant cruelties of living in confined quarters, and the ever-present threat of discovery and death. In her diary Anne Frank recorded vivid impressions of her experiences during this period. By turns thoughtful, moving, and surprisingly humorous, her account offers a fascinating commentary on human courage and frailty and a compelling self-portrait of a sensitive and spirited young woman whose promise was tragically cut short.

November 12th = 1984 by George Orwell

Published in 1949, 1984 was George Orwell's chilling prophecy about the future. And while 1984 has come and gone, his dystopian vision of a government that will do anything to control the narrative is timelier than ever...

"The Party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears. It was their final, most essential command."

Winston Smith toes the Party line, rewriting history to satisfy the demands of the Ministry of Truth. With each lie he writes, Winston grows to hate the Party that seeks power for its own sake and persecutes those who dare to commit thoughtcrimes. But as he starts to think for himself, Winston can't escape the fact that Big Brother is always watching...

December 17th – Where the Red Fern Grows by Wilson Rawls

Published in 1961, but written in the 30's and 40's as Rawls traveled the world. Where the Red Fern Grows is a beloved classic that captures the powerful bond between man and man's best friend.

Billy has long dreamed of owning not one, but two, dogs. So when he's finally able to save up enough money for two pups to call his own—Old Dan and Little Ann—he's ecstatic. It doesn't matter that times are tough; together they'll roam the hills of the Ozarks.

Soon Billy and his hounds become the finest hunting team in the valley. Stories of their great achievements spread throughout the region, and the combination of Old Dan's brawn, Little Ann's brains, and Billy's sheer will seems unbeatable. But tragedy awaits these determined hunters—now friends—and Billy learns that hope can grow out of despair, and that the seeds of the future can come from the scars of the past.