Deb’s All-time Favorite Books to Read

*Lilydale, the True Story of the Town that talks to the dead* – Christine Wicker - Actual Town in New York where you have to be a physic to live and the experiences people have there (I loved this).

*True Confessions of a Shopaholic* - Sophia Kinsella - Becky has a problem with her credit card and is obsessed with shopping. (great fun). Becky owes a lot of money, but she is a good person and she comes out on top in the end.

*Magic Hour* – Kristin Hannah – A child is found unable to speak in the company of a wolf. A dishonored psychiatrist helps the child to communicate and to protect her from the exploits of others while finding her true love. I liked it. One of Hannah’s best.

**Wicked** – Gregory Maguire – the other side of the story about the Wicked Witch of the West from the Wizard of Oz (very good).

*Infidel* – Ayann Hirsi Ali (shocking story about Islam). Makes me afraid of the radicals Islamic. Girl must run and hide and fear for her life from them.

*The Secret Life of Bees* – Sue Monk – excellent story about a young girl who runs away from her father to find out information about her dead mother. She goes to a town and is taken in by a family of black women who touch the heart and she learns her mother had found her way to their house too.

*Water for Elephants* – Sara Gruen – a story about the circus and love is always fun (very good). I love Rosie the elephant who steals the show. A guy who never got to finish his vet final exam finds a circus and gets a job taking care of the animals. He falls for the wife of the circus owner and the trouble starts.

*The Sugar Queen* – Sarah Addison Allen – (delightful) Josie stays in her closet and eats sweets, afraid to face the world. Her cousin helps her to overcome her shyness and nab her man. The author has a way of using recipes intertwined to make the book deliciously fun.

Like Water for Chocolate - Laura Esquivel – recipes and a story of a Mexican family during the Mexican Revolution. Another book which adds recipes to enhance the story.

*She Who Runs With Wolves* - Clarissa Pinkola Estes. Inspiring words of wisdom for every woman.

*P.S. I Love You* – Cecelia Ahearn –(very good) Holly’s husband (soul mate) dies at a young age from a brain tumor and he made preparations and leaves her notes for every occasion/holiday to help her get over her grief.
*A Thousand Splendid Suns* - Khaled Hosseini – (wonderful). Centers on the lives of two women, Mariam (illegitimate) raised in a hut by her mother, the only highlight of her destitute life is the Thursday visits from her father. When her father’s family rejects her she is forced into a marriage with the brutal shoemaker Rasheed. A devout follower of the Taliban's cruelty towards females. Laila lives down the street from Mariam in very different circumstances. She is raised in a modern family, by a loving father & depressive mother. Poignant descriptive story of Afghanistan.

*The Road* – Cormac McCarthy – apocalyptic tale of a father and son journey through the US after the world was destroyed by nuclear war. (exceptional)

*Garden Spells* - Sarah Addison Allen - (delightful) A story of the Waverly sisters who have magical powers. Claire has a garden that grows year round and and each flower is used to enhance dishes for her catering business. Subtle spells can be gained with a pinch of marigold, a dab of crystallized pansies or an apple from a very temperamental tree. Bay Waverly, 6 years old, has a talent to know exactly where everything goes in any home she enters as well as in any life she enters. Her sister, Sydney, finally embraces her ability to style and cut hair with a magic that spells her customers into feeling self confident and flirty. Their cousin, Evanelle, gifts people items they don’t know they need until something happens later. This charmed family is so endearing, so lovely, one can’t help but embrace them heartily.

*The Glass House* – Jeanette Walls – (interesting memoir about a girl whose parents are homeless and how she reacts to them) – memoir.

*Made in America* – Billee Letts – Wonderful wonderful!! (sister and brother, orphans travel to Las Vegas, meet circus tightrope walker, and changes their lives)

*When Madeline was Young* - Jane Hamilton, I love Jane Hamilton’s books. Unique story about a woman w/brain injury living w/the husband and 2nd wife.

*Where Rainbows End* – Cecelia Ahearn – (two best friends writes letters, emails, texts) (unique – all done in letter and email format).

*What the dead know* – Laura Lippman -2 sisters who disappear and 30 years later a woman in a car accident divulges who she is. Keeps your attention (murder mystery).

*Dewey the small town library cat that changed the world*, Vicki Myron and Bret Witter, Excellent and a tear jerker about a stray cat who lives in the library and has a secret sense to help people in need.

*Plain Truth* – Jodi Piccoult, an Amish girl and a dead baby and discovering who killed her. (very good)

*True Colors* – Kristin Hannah, Best book ever by author. About horse farm and 3 sisters. One falls for an Indian who goes to prison for murder

*The Girl with No Shadow* – Joanne Harris, Excellent sequel to Chocolat, very good about witches and a chocolate shop in Paris.
*Chez Moi* – Agnes Desarthe, about a restaurant owner who has a secret past – Myrium, who has lost everything, opens a restaurant and amazes everyone with her food while rebuilding her life. I liked it

*Shanghai Girls* – Lisa See - Very good, kept your interest. Two sisters from wealthy class forced to marry two brothers – travel to LA, USA from Shanghai and all their travails.

*Guernsey Potato Peel Pie Literary Society* – Delightful story (based on facts) written entirely in letters regarding post WWII on the Channels Islands, England. Learned something new about an island of England that was held captive by the Germans and their officers lived in their homes.

*The Forgotten Garden* – Kate Morton - Very good. Couldn’t stop reading, done in three eras about a young child and who her parents are. Aussie author, takes place in Wales/England.

*Twenties Girl* – Sophia Kinsella - Lara Longley’s aunt dies and comes to her as a ghost, owns a ‘headhunter’ business, needs to find the aunt’s dragon fly necklace (good!!)

*Sarah’s Key* - Rosnay, Tatiana de – French Jews deported to Nazi camps about a young girl who locked brother in cupboard and had the key in the camp, she escapes. Very good.

*Julie and Julia* - Julie Powell, Girl tries to cook like Julia Childs - Great Book, I loved it although I liked the movie better than the book because it focused more on Julia Child’s life.

*The Help* – Kathryn Stockett – Exceptionally good book about black maids in south and how their white employers treat them, humorous as well as informative.

*The Shack* – William P. Young, Powerful and inspirational – very good. God speaks directly with a man whose daughter is murdered by leaving him notes. Thought provoking tale about a family’s terms with tragedy and forgiveness.

*Her Fearful Symmetry* - Audrey Niffenegger. Interesting story of twins who inherit their aunts flat with the condition that they live in it for a year and their parents cannot enter it. Their aunt’s ghost inhabits the apartment.

*Escape from the Baggage Group* - Laura Conrad – I liked it. Similar to the Devil wears Prada, local Barash Group is the subject of the book but names were changed. A woman who goes to work for a magazine as an ad salesman and her boss is extremely difficult.

*My life at Grey Gardens* - Lois Wright – diary written by Lois who lived with Big and Little Edie Bouvia Beale (relations of Jackie Kennedy) in the squalor of their 28 room mansion in East Hampton. Addicting.

*Keeping Faith* - Jodi Piccoult – Very interesting novel about a 7 yr old girl who speaks with God and has stigmata where she bleeds from her hands. Keeps you guessing up to the end.
Angel of Destruction – Keith Donahue - a little girl arrives at the house of a woman whose daughter ran away 9 years ago. Woman thinks it is her daughter, but she came on purpose to teach her something. VERY GOOD.

Gone - Julia E. Powell – Interesting concept of what happens when you die, inspired by a true story, long hallway w/doors towards the light, but with tests along the way


A Ticket to the Circus – Norris Church Mailer – Memoir by the woman who was the 6th wife of Norman Mailer and their crazy life, which was very crazy.

**The Girl Who Chased the Moon - Sarah Addison Allen (May) Delightful book. I read it in two days. Girl went to live w/her 8’ grandfather, falls for boy who glows in the dark, learns about her mother who is hated in the town, neighbor bakes wonderful magic cakes – Awesome

**Messages from Loved Ones at 9-11 - Bonnie McEneaney, Awesome book of spiritual and phenomenal happenings regarding people who died at the Twin Towers. Written by the wife of Eamon McEneaney who died there and experiences of other widows, children, mothers, etc. of lost loved ones.

*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo - Stieg Larsson. Lisbeth Salander is an investigator and a computer hacker who aids Mikal Blomvist in finding Harriet Vanger, a girl who has been missing for 30 years. Mystery with many sideline stories which aid in the development of the story. First in the Millennium Trilogy. Shocking at times, but a page turner for sure - Millennium Trilogy (1)

*Miss Pelegrim’s School for Peculiar Children – Ransom Riggs - Delightful story of a young boy who is traumatized by his grandfather’s death who he was close to. His grandfather left behind a message for him to search out.

*The Girl Who Played with Fire – Stieg Larsson. Sequel to the 'Girl with the Dragon Tattoo', second in the Millennium Trilogy. Most of this book focuses on Lisbeth Salander who is the prime suspect in the murder of 2 journalists who were about to expose connections to human and sex trafficking in Sweden.

*The Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet - Jamie Ford – Very interesting book based on facts concerning Japanese Americans placed in camps during WW II and a boy and girl who loved each other. Very sweet.


Petty Magic – Camille DeAngelis - Evelyn is a 149 yr old witch who changes her appearance to look younger. She meets an antique owner who she thinks is her reincarnated lost love which causes many problems. Delightful story about a witch who lost her oompf!

The Royal Oaks: Starting Over and Rebuilding a Life – Carol Rizzoli – Memoir about a Bed ‘n Breakfast at The Royal Oaks (St. Michaels, MD). Very pleasant and makes me want to go there to stay when we go to St. Michaels. Across from the B & B the Oaks.

*The Room – Emma Donoghue - A 19 yr old woman is kidnapped and kept hostage for 7 years and kept in a room/shed where she has a child, Jack. When Jack is 5 yrs old, they plan the escape and they reach freedom and their adjustment to a new world begins. Very decent.

*A Vintage Affair - Isabel Wolff – Really cute story of a girl who opened up a vintage clothes shop in UK and her customers. Enjoyed this very much.
*Discovering of Witches* - Deborah Harkness – A witch who doesn’t use her powers, and a researcher of alchemy locates a lost manuscript which holds the mystery to witches/demons and vampires longevity. Now everyone wants the secret and one vampire, Matthew wants Diana as well. Very long book (672 pgs) but you don’t want it to end. I loved the house that is alive and colorful slamming doors, hiding things, not allowing people to enter, etc. I liked the book a lot.

The Life of Pi – Pleasant/clever tale of an Indian boy who’s father owns a zoo, who is a Hindu, Muslim, and a Christian, and ends up on a raft with a live Bengal tiger, Richard Parker, when their boat sinks moving them to Canada. An allegory which makes you ponder on it’s true meaning.

*Blood, Guts, and Butter* – Gabrielle Hamilton – Memoir of a woman who became a chef of a current restaurant in NYC called Prune. She was supposedly a lesbian but married an Italian Italian man and had two boys. She had a difficult life growing up but learned to cook from her mother, and the book tells of her many trips to Italy to visit her husband’s family. Eh, decent read.

*Blackberry Wine* – Joanne Harris - Story of a boy who learns about plants and wine from an old man on summer vacations at his grandparents. He becomes a writer and buys a chalet in France. Old Jackapple Joe sends him some ‘Specials’ seeds and he changes his life and career. Good!

*What Alice Forgot* – Liane Moriarty - Story of a woman who woke up from a fall at the gym and she lost ten years of her life. She remembers back to the time when she was pregnant w/her first child and now she has 3 children and her life is topsy turvey because of her amnesia. Very enjoyable.

The Night Circus – Erin Morgenstern – Eerie story about two magicians who found children with special abilities for a contest. A mysterious circus in black & white tent that only has shows after dark. Strange but interesting and worth a read.

**The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane** - Katherine Howe. Awesome story of a grad student sent by her Mom to her grandmother’s house to clean it out to sell. She finds a key that leads her to discover a book of magical spells. The story flips back to her relatives that were involved with the witch trials in Salem in 1692. She finds a man to fall in love with and saves his life with a spell.

**The Stolen Child** – Keith Donahue - Changelings kidnap a child and another changeling takes his place. Tells their story over years and how they connect with humans – very different.

The Language of Flowers – Vanessa Diffenbaugh – very good story about a girl who was a foster child with a violent past. She learned the meaning of flowers from a foster mother, starts her own flower business, has a child. Very mixed-up girl but the story is interesting and a good read.