True Story Book Club 2021

**January 5th** -*Just Don't Fall: A Hilariously True Story of Childhood, Cancer, Amputation, Romantic Yearning, Truth, and Olympic Greatness by Josh Sundquist (336 pp)*

This winning memoir of triumph over tragedy tells a story that has deeply affected thousands of readers. When he was just nine years old, Josh Sundquist was diagnosed with Ewing's sarcoma, a virulent cancer strain that eventually claimed his left leg. Told in a wide-eyed, often heartbreaking voice, Just Don't Fall is the astounding story of the boy Josh was and of the young man he became-an utterly heroic struggle through numerous hospitalizations and worse to become an award-winning skier in the Paralympics and renowned motivational speaker. What emerges is one of the most fresh and sincere works of inspiration to come along in years.

**February 2nd-** *The Real Diana: The revealing biography of The Princess of Wales by renowned royal commentator, Lady Colin Campbell by Lady Colin Campbell (348 pp)*

Royal insider Lady Colin Campbell was the first to predict the Waleses' separation and divorce, in her international bestseller, Diana in Private. People magazine said of it: 'Some Palace watchers note that she has an impressive roster of well-placed contacts and credit her with writing the most believable Diana biography'; while Lynn Barber, in the Daily Telegraph, called it 'Jaw-droppingly sensational'. The Real Diana contains startling new revelations about Diana which Lady Colin Campbell has unearthed since Diana's tragic death, including new theories on her death itself. The Real Diana is based on 35 interviews with Princess Diana conducted by Lady Colin Campbell – and for the first time Lady Colin Campbell names her Royal sources.

**March 2nd**- *438 Days: An Extraordinary True Story of Survival at Sea by Jonathan Franklin*

On November 17, 2012, two men left the coast of Mexico for a weekend fishing trip in the open Pacific. That night, a violent storm ambushed them as they were fishing eighty miles offshore. As gale force winds and ten-foot waves pummeled their small, open boat from all sides and nearly capsized them, captain Salvador Alvarenga and his crewmate cut away a two-mile-long fishing line and began a desperate dash through crashing waves as they sought the safety of port. Fourteen months later, on January 30, 2014, Alvarenga, now a hairy, wild-bearded and half-mad castaway, washed ashore on a nearly deserted island on the far side of the Pacific. He could barely speak and was unable to walk. He claimed to have drifted from Mexico, a journey of some seven thousand miles.

**April 6th**- *Titanic: Voices from the Disaster by Deborah Hopkinson (301 pp)*

In this award-winning book, critically acclaimed author Deborah Hopkinson weaves together the voices and stories of real TITANIC survivors and witnesses to the disaster -- from the stewardess Violet Jessop to Captain Arthur Rostron of the CARPATHIA, who came to the rescue of the sinking ship. Packed with heartstopping action, devastating drama, fascinating historical details, loads of archival photographs on almost every page, quotes from primary sources, and painstaking back matter, this gripping story, which follows the TITANIC and its passengers from the ship's celebrated launch at Belfast to her cataclysmic icy end, is sure to thrill and move readers.

**May 4th**- *Goodbye to All That: An Autobiography by Robert Graves (347 pp)*

In this autobiography, first published in 1929, poet Robert Graves traces the monumental and universal loss of innocence that occurred as a result of the First World War. Written after the war and as he was leaving his birthplace, he thought, forever, Good-Bye to All That bids farewell not only to England and his English family and friends, but also to a way of life. Tracing his upbringing from his solidly middle-class Victorian childhood through his entry into the war at age twenty-one as a patriotic captain in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, this dramatic, poignant, often wry autobiography goes on to depict the horrors and disillusionment of the Great War, from life in the trenches and the loss of dear friends, to the stupidity of government bureaucracy and the absurdity of English class stratification. Paul Fussell has hailed it as ""the best memoir of the First World War"" and has written the introduction to this new edition that marks the eightieth anniversary of the end of the war. An enormous success when it was first issued, it continues to find new readers in the thousands each year and has earned its designation as a true classic.

**June 1st**- *Not Without My Daughter: The Harrowing True Story of a Mother's Courage by Betty Mahmoody and William Hoffer (420 pp)*

In August 1984, Michigan housewife Betty Mahmoody accompanied her husband to his native Iran for a two-week vacation. To her horror, she found herself and her four-year-old daughter, Mahtob, virtual prisoners of a man rededicated to his Shiite Moslem faith, in a land where women are near-slaves and Americans are despised. Their only hope for escape lay in a dangerous underground that would not take her child...

**July 6th** - *Charlie Chaplin: A Brief Life (Ackroyd's Brief Lives) by Peter Ackroyd (304 pp)*

He was the very first icon of the silver screen and is one of the most recognizable of Hollywood faces, even a hundred years after his first film. But what of the man behind the moustache? Peter Ackroyd's new biography turns the spotlight on Chaplin's life as well as his work, from his humble theatrical beginnings in music halls to winning an honorary Academy Award. Everything is here, from the glamor of his golden age to the murky scandals of the 1940s and eventual exile to Switzerland. There are charming anecdotes along the way: playing the violin in a New York hotel room to mask the sound of Stan Laurel frying pork chops and long Hollywood lunches with Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks Jr. This masterful brief biography offers fresh revelations about one of the most familiar faces of the last century and brings the Little Tramp vividly to life.

**August 3rd** – *Sybil Exposed: The Extraordinary Story behind the Famous Multiple Personality Case by Debbie Nathan (320 pp)*

Sybil: a name that resonates with legions of obsessed fans who followed the nonfiction blockbuster from 1973. The book rocketed multiple personality disorder into public consciousness and played a major role in having the diagnosis added to the psychiatric bible, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. But what do we really know about how Sybil came to be? In her news-breaking book Sybil Exposed, journalist Debbie Nathan gives proof that the allegedly true story outlined in the megabestseller was largely fabricated. The actual identity of Sybil (Shirley Mason) has been available for some years, as has the idea that the book might have been exaggerated. But Nathan reveals the trio of women behind the legend: the willing patient, her ambitious shrink, and the imaginative journalist who spun their story into bestseller gold.

**September 7th** - *I Heard You Paint Houses: Frank "The Irishman" Sheeran & Closing the Case on Jimmy Hoffa by Charles Brandt (384 pp)*

The Irishman is an epic saga of organized crime in post-war America told through the eyes of World War II veteran Frank Sheeran, a hustler and hitman who worked for legendary crime boss Russell Bufalino alongside some of the most notorious figures of the 20th Century. Spanning decades, Sheeran’s story chronicles one of the greatest unsolved mysteries in American history, the disappearance of legendary union boss Jimmy Hoffa, and it offers a monumental journey through the hidden corridors of organized crime: its inner workings, rivalries and connections to mainstream politics. Sheeran would rise to a position of such prominence that in a RICO suit against The Commission of La Cosa Nostra, the US Government would name him as one of only two non-Italians in conspiracy with the Commission.

**October 5th** *- H.J. Heinz: A Biography by Quentin R. Skrabec Jr. (291 pp)*

Though Heinz Ketchup is one of the most recognized corporate symbols in the world, few people know anything at all about H. J. Heinz. Industrial giants Rockefeller, Carnegie, Westinghouse, and Mellon became household names, and Heinz slipped into obscurity. Yet during a time of great transfers of wealth brought about in part by these famous robber barons, Heinz was well known for his humane treatment of his employees, customers, and suppliers. At the same time Heinz built a commercial empire by his use of industrialized food processing before Henry Ford. This book includes 45 photographs many of which are being published for the first time.

**November 2nd** - *Captive of the Labyrinth: Sarah L. Winchester, Heiress to the Rifle Fortune by Mary Jo Ignoffo (280 pp)*

Since her death in 1922, Sarah Winchester has been perceived as a mysterious, haunted figure. After inheriting a vast fortune upon the death of her husband in 1881, Sarah purchased a simple farmhouse in San José, California. She began building additions to the house and continued construction on it for the next twenty years. A hostile press cast Sarah as the conscience of the Winchester Repeating Arms Company—a widow shouldering responsibility for the many deaths caused by the rifle that brought her riches. She was accused of being a ghost-obsessed spiritualist, and to this day it is largely believed that the extensive construction she executed on her San José house was done to appease the ghouls around her.

**December 7th** - *My Father's Paradise : A Son's Search for his Jewish Past in Kurdish Iraq by Sabar, Ariel (369 pp)*

In a remote corner of the world, forgotten for nearly three thousand years, lived an enclave of Kurdish Jews so isolated that they still spoke Aramaic, the language of Jesus. Mostly illiterate, they were self-made mystics, gifted storytellers, and humble peddlers who dwelt in harmony with their Muslim and Christian neighbors in the mountains of northern Iraq. To these descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel, Yona Sabar was born. Yona’s son, Ariel, grew up in Los Angeles, where Yona had become an esteemed professor, dedicating his career to preserving his people’s traditions. Ariel wanted nothing to do with his father’s strange immigrant heritage—until he had a son of his own. Ariel Sabar brings to life the ancient town of Zakho, discovering his family’s place in the sweeping saga of Middle Eastern history. This powerful book is an improbable story of tolerance and hope set in what today is the very center of the world’s attention.