# **BGBG Book Reading List for 2021-2022**

**September 1, 2021** Caste, The Origins of Our Discontentsby Isabel Wilkerson, discussion led by Alissa Williams. What is caste? According to Wilkerson, "caste is the granting or withholding of respect, status, honor, attention, privileges, resources, benefit of the doubt, and human kindness to someone on the basis of their perceived rank or standing in the hierarchy." Racism and casteism do overlap, she writes, noting that "what some people call racism could be seen as merely one manifestation of the degree to which we have internalized the larger American caste system." Wilkerson's argument is based on an exploration of what she names the three resonant caste systems in history: the Indian caste system, the Nazi caste system and the American caste system — which the Nazis researched when creating their own.  **•**  nonfiction

**October 6, 2021** If I Were Youby Lynn Austin, discussion led by Linda Young. War changes people. This story is about the lives of two women who met as girls and became friends. It was a friendship that could not be in those days because they came from very different social classes. Eve Dawson’s mother was a lady’s maid and Audrey Clarkson was that lady’s daughter. But WWII changed British society, not to mention individual lives. Eve and Audrey became friends again during the war through the various ways they served their country and the losses and hardships they endured. No one was spared no matter how wealthy they might have been. In the process they learned just how strong they were. And then after the war events altered their lives once again and threatened to destroy their newfound faith in God. Christian historical fiction

**November 3, 2021** Saving Mona L*i*sa: The Battle to Protect the Louvre and Its Treasures from the Nazis by Gerri Chanel, discussion led by Juel Bennewitz. In late August 1939, as war loomed over Europe, curators at the Louvre nestled the world's most famous painting into special red-velvet-lined case and spirited her away to the Loire Valley. Thus began the biggest evacuation of art and antiques in history. A small army of workers swiftly emptied the Louvre's cavernous galleries of all but the most cumbersome and fragile pieces and tucked away the displaced treasures in the châteaux of the Loire countryside. As the Germans neared Paris in 1940, the French raced to move the masterpieces still further south, then again and again during the war, crisscrossing the southwest of France. Superbly researched and accompanied by riveting photographs of the period, it is a compelling story of art and beauty, intrigue and ingenuity, and remarkable moral courage in the face of one of the most fearful enemies in history. Historical non-fiction

**December 1, 2021** Book suggestions for gifts and self

**January 5, 2022** Angle of Reposeby Wallace Stegner, discussion led by Roberta Beutel. Pultizer Prize-winning novel is a story of discovery: personal, historical, and geographical. Confined to a wheelchair, retired historian Lyman Ward sets out to write his grandparents' remarkable story, chronicling their days spent carving civilization into the surface of America's western frontier. But his research reveals even more about his own life than he's willing to admit. What emerges is an enthralling portrait of four generations in the life of an American family. The title is [an engineering term](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angle_of_repose) for the angle at which soil finally settles after, for example, being dumped from a mine as tailings. It seems to describe the loose wandering of the Ward family. fiction

**February 2, 2022** Firekeeper’s Daughterby Angeline Boulley, discussion led by Paige Hadsall. A thrilling and stunning debut novel that is part crime fiction and part coming of age. Daunis Fontaine is 18 years old born to a Native father and a white mother. Daunis balances these two worlds better than could ever expected. With crystal meth abuse on the rise in her community, Daunis uses her knowledge of science and native medicine to go undercover as a confidential informant with the FBI, but what she uncovers makes her question everything she’s ever known.  Young Adult thriller

**March 2, 2022** Wine Girlby Victoria James, discussion led by Lynne Walters. Victoria James worked in restaurants since she was 13. At just twenty-one, the age when most people are starting to drink (well, legally at least), Victoria she became the country’s youngest sommelier at a Michelin-starred restaurant. Even as Victoria was selling bottles worth hundreds and thousands of dollars during the day, passing sommelier certification exams with flying colors, and receiving distinction from all kinds of press, there were still groping patrons, bosses who abused their role and status, and a trip to the hospital emergency room. It would take hitting bottom at a new restaurant and restorative trips to the vineyards where she could feel closest to the wine she loved for Victoria to re-emerge, clear-eyed and passionate, and a proud leader of her own Michelin-starred restaurant. Exhilarating and inspiring, Wine Girlis the memoir of a young woman breaking free from an abusive and traumatic childhood on her own terms; an ethnography of the glittering, high-octane, but notoriously corrosive restaurant industry; and above all, a love letter to the restorative and life-changing effects of good wine and good hospitality. memoir

**April 6, 2022** The Tasterby V.S.Alexander, discussion led by Judy Griffin. Amid the turbulence of World War II, a young German woman finds a precarious haven closer to the source of danger than she ever imagined--one that will propel her through the extremes of privilege and terror under Hitler's dictatorship . . . In early 1943, Magda Ritter's parents send her to relatives in Bavaria, hoping to keep her safe from the Allied bombs strafing Berlin. Young German women are expected to do their duty--working for the Reich or marrying to produce strong, healthy children. After an interview with the civil service, Magda is assigned to the Berghof, Hitler's mountain retreat. Only after weeks of training does she learn her assignment: she will be one of several young women tasting the F hrer's food, offering herself in sacrifice to keep him from being poisoned. Perched high in the Bavarian Alps, the Berghof seems worlds away from the realities of battle. Though terrified at first, Magda gradually becomes used to her dangerous occupation--though she knows better than to voice her misgivings about the war. But her love for a conspirator within the SS, and her growing awareness of the Reich's atrocities, draw Magda into a plot that will test her wits and loyalty in a quest for safety, freedom, and ultimately, vengeance. The Taster examines the harrowing moral dilemmas of war in an emotional story filled with acts of extraordinary courage. Historical fiction

**May 4, 2022**  Book Selections

**June 1, 2022** West with Giraffesby Lynda Rutledge, discussion led by Marilyn Morrow. While conducting research in the archives of the San Diego Zoo, Rutledge came across a trove of newspaper articles about two giraffes that had survived a hurricane on the deck of a freighter and a cross-country trip, from New York to California, in 1938. Inspiration struck, and the result is this charming and wondrous enchantment of a novel. The tale is told through Nickel’s memoir as he writes it in the VA hospital, in a race against time the avenger, the historical story unfolding in first-person narration, regularly interrupted by various nurses and orderlies doing their utmost to convince this cantankerous author-on-a-mission to rest, eat, or take a pill already; he is 105 years old. Even the foreshadowing of tragedy manages to be funny. The plot unfolds fast and steady, with a surprise down every highway. The dialogue is simple, as related by a seventeen-year-old from the sticks, sometimes clever, sometimes sweet, always true. Two giraffes miraculously survive a hurricane while crossing the Atlantic. What follows is a twelve-day road trip in a custom truck to deliver Southern California’s first giraffes to the San Diego Zoo. Inspired by true events, the tale weaves real-life figures with fictional ones, including the world’s first female zoo director, a crusty old man with a past, a young female photographer with a secret, and assorted reprobates as spotty as the giraffes. Part adventure, part historical saga, and part coming-of-age love story, *West with Giraffes* explores what it means to be changed by the grace of animals, the kindness of strangers, the passing of time, and a story told before it’s toolate. Historical fiction