

52 BOOKS IN 52 WEEKS (2017)

From Chris Little

Week 1 – Mary Higgins Clark, *The Melody Lingers On*. I don't know if I've outgrown Mary Higgins Clark or if her books have simply become too predictable. A very disappointing read for me.

Week 2 – Jane Velez-Mitchell, *Exposed: The Secret Life of Jodi Arias*. If you enjoy true crime or Ann Rule type books, this was a fascinating story to follow, however, it was a little tedious and not very well written. There were too many details repeated over and over...as if we, the readers, might be too dense to figure out the significance.

Week 3 - James Patterson, *Murder House*. One of my favorite Patterson stand-alones. Everything about this thriller intrigued me...the title, the cover, and I was stumped until the very end.

Week 4 – Maisey Yates, *Part Time Cowboy*. Not my typical kind of read at all. In general I avoid romance-ish type books, especially those with cowboy heroes but...with that said...I REALLY enjoyed this book, the characters and the small town.

Week 5 – Dean Koontz, *Ashley Bell*. I'm generally a huge Dean Koontz fan and love the way he can twist so many little details and bring everything together so brilliantly. However, I can say this is my least favorite of his many books. I just couldn't wait for it to be over.

Week 6 – Vanetta Chapman, *Anna's Healing*. As a fan of Amish fiction I'm always anxious to try a new series. While a sweet and charming story, this one, the first in "The Plain and Simple Miracles" series, was just a little too unbelievable and unrealistic for me.

Week 7 - Patricia Cornwell, *Flesh and Blood*. I think it's time to face the fact that I have outgrown Patricia Cornwell or her Kay Scarpetta series. Scarpetta spends so much time bailing her friends and family out from their daily dramas and poor choices that she doesn't have time to solve crimes anymore. I think it's time for Scarpetta to retire.

Week 8 – Richard Paul Evans, *The Mistletoe Inn*. I ADORE Richard Paul Evans books and will forever be a fan. This one was a good story but pretty predictable. But if you like to read Christian based inspirational stories ANY book by this author will touch your heart.

Week 9 – Kate Alcott, *The Daring Ladies of Lowell*. I really, really liked this book...A LOT. Historical fiction being a favorite of mine and characters that I genuinely came to care about made this a definite book on my favorites list. There's no doubt that, as a reader's advisor, I will encourage others to read this title.

Week 10 - Tess Gerritsen, *Playing With Fire*. A stand-alone very different than what were used to from Tess Gerritsen but I really liked it. The combination of historical fiction mixed with the modern day kept me intrigued from start to finish.

Week 11 – Paul Tremblay, *A Head Full of Ghosts*. Possession? Exorcism? No, it's acute schizophrenia. I don't remember where the recommendation for this book originated but I think it will always remain in my memory as one of the worst books I've ever read. The shocking ending, the books one redeeming quality, made slugging my way through the rest of it ALMOST worth it.

Week 12 – Spencer Quinn, *Dog On It*. (Chet and Bernie Mystery #1) An enjoyable series. Fast-paced and funny. The books are narrated by Chet, the very personable canine partner in the Chet and Bernie private investigation business. Definitely a clever concept for canine and mystery fans. I look forward to reading more of these little cozies.

Week 13 – Carolyn Hart, *Ghost At Work*. (Bailey Ruth Series #1) This was my first with this author and honestly I give it 3.5 stars. It was better than just "I like it" but not quite what I consider a 4 star read. However, I am definitely going to read more in the Bailey Ruth series. Cute paranormal mysteries.

Week 14 – Elizabeth Strout, *My Name is Lucy Barton*. Both this book and the author seem to have gotten some rave reviews but I gave it a generous two. The best thing about this book was that it was a short read.

Week 15 – Alex Kava, *Breaking Creed*. I've always been an Alex Kava fan and this series is no exception. It's about a former marine who trains mostly unwanted K-9 to be search and rescue dogs. A lot of mystery, and a man's heart warming relationship with his canine companions make this series a favorite of mine. However, they are definitely not for the squeamish.

Week 16 – Alex Kava, *Silent Creed*. I enjoyed the first one so much that I jumped right into book #2. I didn't enjoy this one quite as much as the first. However, it was still an enjoyable read and left me hanging in such a way that I am definitely anxiously awaiting *Restless Creed*.

Week 17 – Spencer Quinn, *Thereby Hangs a Tail*. The second book narrated by the loveable and wise dog Chet. As enjoyable as the first and just a fun series.

Week 18 – Liane Moriarty, *What Alice Forgot*. This author hasn't written anything that I haven't loved. This book is what I would call a rainy day comfort book. After a head injury, Alice woke up to find that she'd lost all memory of the last ten years of her life. She didn't know her kids nor that she'd ever had any for that matter. And she only knew her husband and her feelings for him from BEFORE their separation. I found myself sniffing and cheering the characters on, almost hoping that Alice wouldn't get her memory back.

Week 19 – Anthony Doerr, *All the Light We Cannot See*. I enjoyed this book a good deal. You know how some books that you read just seem to stick with you even years after you've read it? I think this will be one of those books for me. Historical fiction fans will find this a very enjoyable read.

Week 20 – Sarah Price, *An Empty Cup*. Another Amish fiction that I just could not enjoy. I personally gave it one star; however, there are some fabulous reviews out there for this one. So...if Amish fiction is your thing, give it a try.

Week 21 – Isabel Allende, *The Japanese Lover*. Because of my love for *Hotel at the Corner of Bitter and Sweet*, I was very excited to read this but ended up being sorely disappointed. Reviews on this book go from one star (mine) to 5 stars. I believe with this one it's simply in the eye of the beholder.

Week 22 – Elizabeth Joy Arnold, *The Book of Secrets*. A well written and enjoyable story about family secrets and how they pull a family apart. Some parts of this book are fascinating and I was pulled into the story, but in other parts I just wanted to hurry up and get through to the next "really good" part. All in all a 3 star read for me.

Week 23 – Paula Hawkins, *The Girl on the Train*. OF COURSE I had to read the acclaimed psychological thriller that everyone was talking about. Every character in this book is absolutely terrible, and untrustable...which is what keeps you up reading late into the night. I didn't see the ending coming until it was there.

Week 24 – Martha Kelly, *Lilac Girls*. This book is a HUGE success amongst historical fiction fans. But despite the high ratings and popularity of the book, I struggled with giving it two or three stars. I did like the book relatively well, or at least the historical "non-fiction" aspect of it, but I simply couldn't relate to or even like the main characters very much.

Week 25 – J.J. Cook, *That Old Flame of Mine*. (Sweet Pepper Fire Brigade Mystery #1) Ghosts, dogs and a mystery. What's not to love! Very enjoyable little cozies.

Week 26 – Lisa Scottoline, *Most Wanted*. I've always been a huge fan of Lisa Scottoline but have been a little disappointed in the last couple. *Most Wanted* has reestablished my love for her books. Review for this book are all over the place but I personally loved the suspense, the twists and her always controversial subject matter.

Week 27 – William Kent Krueger, *Ordinary Grace*. Beautifully written. Narrated by a child coming of age and telling the story of a tragedy that strikes his family one summer. A very emotional read.

Week 28 – Shelley Shepard Gray, *Missing*. (Secrets of Crittenden County #1) One of my favorite kinds of books. Amish fiction with a lot of mystery. Enjoyable characters and a Who-Done-It ending leaving you anxious to read the next in the series.

Week 29 – Nicholas Sparks, *See Me*. I was a Sparks fan before it was popular to be a Sparks fan...before his books started becoming movies. With that said, I can be impartial, I swear. I enjoyed the book...sort of. There were some pretty predictable plot twists but the air of mystery and thrill he's added to the story was a pleasant change from his normal romantic fluff.

Week 30 – Harlan Coben, *The Stranger*. I am probably Coben's BIGGEST fan but I found this book mediocre. Not much more to be said here.

Week 31 – Carolyn Haines, *Them Bones*. (Sarah Booth Delaney series #1) I simply HAVE to read books in order so while this is an older series I had to start at the beginning. It's a fun series with charming

characters. I enjoyed reading this and will likely continue with the series. Not an exceptional 5 star read but definitely a 3.5.

Week 32 - Jolina Petersheim, *The Outcast: A Modern Retelling of The Scarlet Letter*. Technically this isn't Amish fiction as it takes place within a Mennonite community, however, whether you're a fan of this genre or not I think you would enjoy this book as much as I did. It's a dark story but I was hooked from the first chapter.

Week 33 – Jessica Knoll, *Luckiest Girl Alive*. This book either got rave reviews or rotten tomato (thumbs down) reviews. Personally, I hated it. Not only could I not relate to the main character I couldn't even LIKE her. If you enjoy books about the elite, self-absorbed, sanctimonious sects of society you might possibly enjoy this book.

Week 34 – Alafair Burke, *The Ex*. This author has become a huge favorite of mine. As the daughter of James Lee Burke, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. This book was suspenseful and "twisty" enough to keep me turning the pages late into the night. If you're a Harlan Coben fan I think ANY of Alafair Burke's books would fit the bill.

Week 35 – John Grisham, *Rogue Lawyer*. I think I've outgrown Grisham. It was one disappointment too many from this author. This is what appears to be first in a new series (Rogue Lawyer) but if so, it's definitely the last for me.

Week 36 – Joshilyn Jackson, *The Opposite of Everyone*. Another author I love to read. If you like Southern fiction you would enjoy any of this author's books. This is book number eight and probably my least favorite but still a 3 star read.

Week 37 – Patricia Cornwell, *Depraved Heart*. Even though I swore after the last one that I was done with this series I decided to suck it up and give it one last try. I was comatose by chapter 3.

Week 38 – Chris Cleave, *Everyone Brave is Forgiven*. A book like this is normally right up my alley but I struggled with this one. It didn't work as well for me as it seems to have done for others. Perhaps I was just hoping/expecting it to be like *All the Light We Cannot See* which is a favorite. To be fair, it's well written but just didn't meet my expectations.

Week 39 – Cynthia D'Apris Sweeney, *The Nest*. Debut novel about four siblings and the fate of a shared inheritance and how it shaped each of their lives. Everyone enjoys a little (lot) family drama right? Nope, apparently not. I just couldn't even finish this book.

Week 40 – Amanda Flower (AKA Isabella Alan), *Crime and Poetry*. This author has become a favorite of mine. Not only is she a "for real" librarian but also a fabulous Amish, mystery writer. This particular series however is her first in "The Magical Bookshop" series. Mystery, magic and an old bookshop....what's not to love!

Week 41 – Anne Tyler, *Vinegar Girl*. A contemporary take on one of Shakespeare's most beloved comedies, *The Taming of the Shrew*. I LOVED this book. I actually listened to the audio of this one and I would highly

recommend this format. The accents and voice intonations really add to the story and makes it highly entertaining.

Week 42 – Camille Perri, *The Assistants*. A fun read! You find yourself rooting for the underdog even though “technically” she’s on the wrong side of the law.

Week 43 – Joe Hill, *The Fireman*. It’s not very often that I don’t at least finish a book but this one I just could not stick with. I’m a big fan of his previous works and as the son of Stephen King he has a fabulous talent for writing creepy stories but this one was a disappointment.

Week 44 – Beth Hoffman, *Looking For Me*. As was her previous book, *Saving Cee Cee Honeycutt*, FABULOUS! Southern fiction, a bit of mystery and unforgettable characters.

Week 45 – Harlan Coben, *Fool Me Once*. What?! A Harlan Coben book that I didn’t give 5 stars?! I generally read his books in a couple of days. This one took me a couple of weeks to slug through. A disappointing 2 stars.

Week 46 – Laurie Victoria, *Abbey Cooper, Psychic Eye*. My first by this author and I loved it. A perfect definition of a cozy mystery and I’m anxious to read them all. I like these far better than the Janet Evanovich, Stephanie Plumb series. Psychic Abbey Cooper gets involved with her FBI agent boyfriend’s crime solving. Together the two get into some crazy, laugh out loud situations.

Week 47 – Treick DeBoard, *The Drowning Girls*. This is the second book I’ve read by this author and I loved them both. Definitely a page turner. The only thing that keeps me from giving it 5 stars was that the ending just kind of fell flat.

Week 48 – Debbie, Howells, *The Bones of You*. Psychological thriller that reminded me a lot of *The Lovely Bones*. I LOVED this book. It keeps you guessing and turning the pages. I don’t easily give out a 5 star rating but no question that this book deserves it in my eyes.

Week 49 – Garth Stein, *A Sudden Light*. After reading and LOVING his book *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, I suspected that this book might be a bit of a disappointment to me and it was. It was not a bad read by any means...it just didn’t match my expectations.

Week 50 – Kathleen Grissom, *Glory Over Everything*. If you loved her book *Kitchen House* this is one of those times when subsequent books are as amazing as the first. Historical fiction fans this is a must read.

Week 51 – Armando Lucas Correa, *The German Girl*. This is another historical fiction book that is absolutely wonderful. Sadly this heart wrenching read is written around some actual events that took place during WWII. A unique look at a little known side of history.

Week 52 – Jennifer MacMahon, *The Winter People*. Do you like creepy, suspense, a bit of the supernatural? There were twists and turns that kept me up far too late into the night to read just one more chapter. The only thing that kept me from giving this book 5 stars was the ending. After such a mesmerizing read the ending was a huge disappointment. My imagination came up with far better scenarios (I think anyway) to

add an ending that would leave a more powerful, lasting impression.