

## 52 BOOKS IN 52 WEEKS (2019) From Chris Little

**Week 1** - Nicholas Sparks, *Every Breath*. Not my favorite Nicholas Sparks. Somewhat predictable while at the same time too unbelievable. However, I did find it fairly enjoyable with likable characters. Just an average 3 star read.

**Week 2** - Liane Moriarty, *Nine Perfect Strangers*. HUGE disappointment! I have been an adoring fan of Liane Moriarty for some time now so I absolutely wanted to love this book but honestly the only reason I finished this book was because of the jaw dropping endings that I have come to love her for. It really never happened. I kept expecting it to get better. That didn't happen either.

**Week 3** - Elizabeth Klehfoth, *All These Beautiful Strangers*. I love reading debut authors, especially when it turns out that I love it, as was the case with this one. It was well written and kept me enthralled from beginning to end. If you're a fan of *Pretty Little Liars* type stories look no further for your next read. Elizabeth Klehfoth weaves a web of secrets and betrayals that keep you guessing until the end. Excellent!

**Week 4** - Rebecca Alexander, *A Baby's Bones*. Some archaeology, some history and a big bunch of mystery. I really enjoyed this book tremendously. Not quite a five star read for me (I'm chintzy with those) but as the first in a series I will definitely continue on with the saga!

**Week 5** - Joshilyn Jackson, *The Almost Sisters*. I absolutely LOVE this author! From her debut novel back in 2005 I have read and followed this author (not stalkerish). I so loved the characters in this book that I really hated for the story to be over. This is actually one that I listened to and it was read by the author which just made it all that much more perfect.

**Week 6** - David Baldacci, *The Simple Truth*. This was just a so-so read for me. I have been a Baldacci fan for years and generally love the suspense and twists that come out in his story lines but this one was not a favorite. Several parts throughout the book I found myself, well, bored frankly. A story about an innocent prisoner set-up for the most part by the military he was a member of, Rufus Harms swears to go free, get justice and make the conspirators pay (not necessarily in that order). Can he really trust the high level government officials that say they're trying to help him?

**Week 7** - David Baldacci, *The Fallen* (Amos Decker series #4). I love this Amos Decker series and I hope there are more to come. If you're unfamiliar with the story line, Amos Decker who had suffered from a traumatic brain injury ending his football career, wakes up to find himself with Hyperthymesia (can recall almost everything they experience, read, see, etc). With this he becomes a member of the FBI and hunts down the bad guys. Nobody can pull one over on Amos Decker and his perfect memory!

**Week 8** - Alice Blanchard, *A Breath After Drowning*. Anyone who knows me knows that I LOVE a good psychological thriller and this book "fits that profile". I hadn't read anything by Alice Blanchard previously but I most certainly plan to in the future. Not quite 5 stars but almost. When one of child psychiatrist Kate Wolf's young patients commits suicide Kate begins to doubt herself and her ability to

help another troubled girl who comes into her waiting room. But when this young patient knows secrets about Kate's past the past and present collide.

**Week 9** - James Patterson and James O. Born, *Ambush*. I've pretty much given up on the James Patterson stand-alones but I really, really like the Michael Bennett series. Even at number 11, I haven't tired of the characters or the plots. If you've never read Patterson and have thought about giving him a try I would highly recommend this series. Michael Bennett is a New York City detective. The main characters in Bennett's world are his Irish Priest grandfather, his ten adopted children, and his Irish fiance/nanny. Honestly, they are a delightful clan. They pretty much steal your heart

**Week 10** - Victoria Gilbert, *A Murder for the Books*. I very much enjoyed this "new to me" author and series. When a heartbroken librarian moves jobs to her small hometown and murder erupts not once, not twice, but three times?! Great characters and a pretty okay plot if not a little on the unbelievable side. So, a librarian, books, a sweet little aunty and a hunky next door neighbor. What's not to love? I will definitely be on to the second in the series.

**Week 11** - Dean Koontz, *Darkest Desires*. One of the things that I've always loved about Dean Koontz books is that while they're creepy the reader is left feeling and believing that "OMG" this could probably really happen! Even when the story is a little bit "out there". In this trilogy, I was very much enjoying the first story and had high hopes for this series and more to come. I felt the potential was something to look forward to, however, things kind of went downhill from there. Each story became more and more "out there" and less and less believable. By the time the third story was over frankly I was happy to see it go. I do think there could be future stories with Makani, Pogo, Frank and of course Bob the dog. But tone it down a bit, Mr. Koontz!

**Week 12** - Shari Lapena, *An Unwanted Guest*. Hmm, not really impressed. I really enjoyed *The Couple Next Door* by Shari Lapena but this one, not so much. It was just an okay read for me. Honestly, as much of a mystery reader that I am, I've never been a huge fan of Agatha Christie type books and this one seemed very similar to that style. This is still an author that I will continue to follow and enthusiastically plunge into the next one!

**Week 13** - Amy Meyerson, *The Bookshop of Yesterdays*. Debut author? Really?! I enjoyed this book very much! The story, the plot, the characters all just did it for me. There was enough mystery surrounding the past that I found myself reading on and on and on in the hopes of FINALLY getting to the bottom of what the real story was. And Amy Meyerson keeps you hanging until the last possible minute. What's next Amy Meyerson? I'm ready!

**Week 14** - Janet Evanovich, *Look Alive Twenty-Five* (Stephanie Plumb series). I'm kind of at a stalemate with myself over this series. On the one hand I've invested so much time reading all 25 books and even though I'm kind of tired of the whole Joe vs. Ranger dealio I truly do still enjoy the supporting characters. Lula and Grandma Mazur still crack me up! So, will I keep reading them if they keep coming out? Most likely.

**Week 15** - Heather Morris, *The Tattooist of Auschwitz*. I very much enjoy historical fiction, particularly this time period and I found this book both educating and enjoyable to read. However, it feels like so much was left out and the ending seemed rushed. I do hope to see more from this author. She writes beautifully.

**Week 16** - Jojo Moyes, *Still Me*. I really loved this third in the series. Not quite as much as the first but WAY better than the second (which I did not like at all). I do understand people's statements that this series needs to end BUT. Now I kind of want to see where life goes for Louisa and Sam!

**Week 17** - Bill Clinton, James Patterson, *The President is Missing*. SNORE!!! Its books like this that have made me quit reading the Patterson stand-alones.

**Week 18** - B.A. Paris, *Bring Me Back*. I really loved *Behind Closed Doors* so I was excited to pick this one up, however, it somehow lacked something for me. I did actually struggle with giving it 3 or 4 stars. I did find myself not wanting to put it down at different points throughout the book but the ending was a disappointment to me. The story brought this back and forth build up and then the ending was just kind of too hurried. A bit of a letdown for me. But I will continue to follow B.A. Paris. I'm sure there are more thrillers to come!

**Week 19** - J.D. Vance, *Hillbilly Elegy*. This was not an enjoyable read for me. It was well written but I felt there were a lot of places that ran on and on. It was one of those books that you read simply because it's "the thing" to do but, frankly, I couldn't wait for it to be over.

**Week 20** - Terrie Todd, *Bleak Landing*. Fabulous historical fiction! I don't often give five stars but I loved this book from cover to cover! Twelve-year-old Irish immigrant Bridget O'Sullivan lives in a ramshackle house and dreams of another life, even as the Great Depression rages. When she finally gets a chance to run, run she does. You can't help but cheer Bridget on.

**Week 21** - Jodi Picoult, *A Spark of Light*. As always Jodi Picoult hits the nail on the head with another timely and controversial novel. This time an abortion clinic is the scene of the current pro-life/pro-choice "war zone". Emotions are high from both ends of the spectrum. With the story being told backwards from present time it just may give readers, no matter their stance on the subject, second thoughts on what they've always believed. While I always have and always will hold one stance on the abortion subject I found this a very enjoyable read.

**Week 22** - Tami Hoag, *The Boy*. Although this is book #2 in a series it could absolutely be read as a stand-alone. Tami Hoag has always been a favorite author of mine for psychological thriller/mystery type books. I hadn't actually picked one of her books up in quite some time and now I'm asking myself WHY?! Fabulous suspense, great characters (good and evil) and an unsuspected conclusion. A PAGE-TURNING READ!

**Week 23** - James Patterson, Ashwin Sanghi, *Count to Ten*. Halfway through this book I lost all interest. I felt completely disconnected from the characters and frankly had a difficult time keeping track of who

was who. I think I'm probably done with the "Private" series. I'll stick with Michael Bennett and The Women's Murder Club series.

**Week 24** - Tess Gerritsen, *I Know A Secret*. I never seem to tire of this series or the characters. There were a few parts that I felt were a bit slow moving and tedious but for the most part another great suspense by Tess Gerritsen. I found myself going back and forth throughout the story regarding who-dun-it. I was half right 😊.

**Week 25** - Vannetta Chapman, *What the Bishop Saw*. I am a big fan of Vannetta Chapman and her various Amish series books so I was excited to see this new Amish Bishop Mysteries series. I love the fact that the main character is a man rather than a woman and Henry's "gift" is so much fun. I think this series can go in many different directions. I liked this book a lot but I didn't LOVE it, hence 4 stars out of 5, however, I am definitely anxious to read more. Good job Vannetta! Keep them coming!

**Week 26** - John Grisham, *The Reckoning*. This was a very different book than what I'm used to from Grisham which is not necessarily bad, however, it was just too long and drawn out for my liking. I understand that SOME narrative of the war needed to be included but it went WAY beyond enough. Honestly, I was going to give this book 2 stars until the ending. I must admit, I did not see it coming. So 3 stars it is!

**Week 27** - Katie Davis, *Kisses from Katie: A Story of Relentless Love and Redemption*. I struggled with what I wanted to rate this book. On one hand, I found it truly inspiring and it very much changed how I look at the world and all of the things that I THINK I don't have. And honestly, it made me want to be a better person. But on the other hand, by the time I got to the end I was more than ready for it to be over. Overall I did it end up giving it 3.5 stars.

**Week 28** - T.R. Kenneth, *A Room Full of Night*. This book really wasn't my cup of tea. I'm generally very enthusiastic about anything historical or in reference to the Holocaust but this story really left me feeling, well, a little bored. One night I even fell asleep only three pages from the end. Not a very grabbing ending I'd say.

**Week 29** - Stuart Turton, *The Seven Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle*. I'm not exactly sure HOW I feel about this book. Think *Downton Abbey* meets *Groundhog's Day*. A great concept perhaps, but a bit too complex and confusing for my reading tastes. When the main character keeps waking up in the body of someone else I found it very difficult to keep up with who he is and who he no longer is. Kudos to the author though for keeping all of this confusion straight in your brain. Perhaps I just wasn't of the right mindset at the time I was reading this.

**Week 30** - Sherry Harris, *Tagged for Death*. Okay I LIKED this book, I didn't love it nor did I even like it A LOT but. I did like it enough to want to give book two in the series a try. I'm a fan of cozies and this one has potential. After a divorce, Sarah Winston falls into the job of organizing and marketing garage sales for clients, however, she also seems to walk into trouble at every turn. Does Sarah make a better sleuth or organizer? See for yourself! Three stars.

**Week 31** - David Baldacci, *Long Road to Mercy* (Atlee Pine #1). I've been contemplating my review for this book and the best I can say is that I liked this new series and intend to give the next one a chance.

It's definitely not my favorite series by Baldacci but I like the protagonist Atlee Pine and her supporting characters. This series has a LOT of potential.

**Week 32** - Karen Kingsbury, *Two Weeks*. This review is a surprise to me. I am NOT a fluffy, everyone is wonderful kind of story reader and this book was a whole lot of that, but, it also addressed some true to life issues and did so from a faithful, Christian aspect. As a Christian myself I could relate very much to the not-so-Christian-like emotions that even good people experience. It made me feel less "unworthy". The author's depiction of so many of the emotions I've felt, being a mother, a Christian, the bittersweet heartbreak of sending your child off to college...dead on, Karen Kingsbury. Having done a bit of writing myself I actually had the ending going in a completely different way than the author sent it but... it worked.

**Week 33** - Krista Davis, *The Diva Runs Out of Thyme*. Martha Stewart meets Columbo? I'm all about new or new to me cozy writers and I enjoyed this story very much. At this point, I'll say it's probably not a FAVORITE series but enjoyable none the less and I would like to continue reading this Domestic Diva series and following Sophie and her fun sidekicks.

**Week 34** - Mary Higgins Clark, Alafair Burke, *Every Breath You Take*. I do enjoy this series and I've been a big Mary Higgins Clark fan for many years, however, the stories in this series all tend to be very similar to each other. There are no twists or surprises to suck the reader back in.

**Week 35** - Lisa Gardner, *Never Tell*. I'll start by saying that I rarely EVER start a series in the middle. I'm a fanatic about reading everything in order, however, for whatever reason, this book came to me and I read it anyway. Honestly, this book could be read as a stand-alone. D. D. Warren, this kick-butt investigator, is a great character and she is surrounded by an interesting and enjoyable group of colorful characters. I would definitely like to go back to book #1 and start at the beginning.

**Week 36** - Virginia Gaffney, Ginny Dye, *On To Richmond* (Bregdan Chronicles #2). I just LOVE this series! Historical fiction at its best. If the civil war era is your thing this series is a must read.

**Week 37** - Mary Higgins Clark, Alafair Burke, *You Don't Own Me*. I'm a big Alafair Burke fan and I really like this series. There is always suspense and surprises, however, with that said, as is typical with all of Mary Higgins Clark's books (for me anyway) the who-dun-it is generally fairly obvious. But still an enjoyable read.

**Week 38** - Shelley Shepard Gray, *The Caregiver* (Families of Honor #1). Excellent! If you like Amish fiction I highly recommend this series. As much as I personally like Amish fiction I rarely give it 5 stars as they do all tend to follow similar story lines but this book delves into issues we don't normally relate to Amish communities. Domestic abuse and breast cancer don't seem to go along with what we think of these passive, God-fearing people. But I also believe it happens. They just handle it differently. Great series that I look forward to reading more of!

**Week 39** - Stephen King, *The Outsider*. I've been reading Steven King for close to 40 years and it's been a roller coaster of a ride. His early works were SO fabulous to me who started reading them as a teenager. When I hit my 30's his books seemed to be on the downhill slope of the roller coaster and I wondered if it was my age or his writing. I did actually quit reading his books for several years and don't really pick them up often anymore but the description for this one intrigued me so. And I say, "Bravo, Mr. King." I enjoyed this book very much. It is reminiscent of the good old days when I couldn't read his books fast

enough. I probably don't enjoy creepy like I used to but I must still like it a little. 😊 For those of you unhappy with the paranormal aspect of the story? It's Stephen King, people. 😊

**Week 40** - Tara Randel, *The Lady in the Attic* (Annie's Attic Mysteries #1). Okay, I didn't LOVE this book but I did LIKE it and would like to read on in the series. A mystery that didn't involve a murder was actually quite refreshing. Not a whole lot of action or suspense involved with the storyline but a fun read none the less.

**Week 41** - Emily Giffin, *All We Ever Wanted*. Most of what I've read in the past by this author has been a bit too romancy and fluffy for my taste, however, I very much enjoyed this book. Emily Giffin addresses a "for real" problem in this day and age regarding social media and bullying. One of the few things I would fight to my death for is my children. Were it my son who were taking inappropriate pictures of girls and sending them around I would like to think that I'd do the right thing and use punishment as a teaching tool. But I also understand how difficult it is to believe that your own child could do something so vile and not just believe them "because". I loved this story, I loved the characters and I loved that sometimes...the bad egg gets his comeuppance. 😊

**Week 42** - Wendy James, *The Golden Child*. LOVED. IT! Not only does it touch on the very real problem of bullying and cyberbullying but also on emotional personality disorders in youth. Definitely an unputdownable book with an ending that I did not see coming.

**Week 43** - Brené Brown, *Braving the Wilderness: The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone*. This is the first of this author's book that I've read and I must say I was pretty disappointed. Not so much so that I don't care to give her another try but... my eyes glazed over on frequent occasions. Perhaps it was too political for me as that's something I avoid LIKE THE PLAGUE.

**Week 44** - Camilla Way, *The Lies We Told*. My, what a tangled web she weaves! Great, page- turning psychological thriller! Totally twisted... and I so hope there's a sequel.

**Week 45** - Tara Westover, *Educated*. Perhaps because of hearing SO many rave reviews prior to reading this book I somehow expected too much. It wasn't bad, I did enjoy it, but it also wasn't great to me either. I have much respect for Ms. Westover for overcoming all of the obstacles placed in her path educationally, psychologically and familial.

**Week 46** - Francine Rivers, *Redeeming Love*. Loved it as historical fiction! Originally this book was recommended to me by a Christian friend for my church book club so when I first started it I was a little taken aback and concerned that I had chosen this for my church peeps to read but then as I got further in I came to understand that it was perfect. It was/is life for many people and it's our mission to reach out and love, not judge. Great read!

**Week 47** - Melanie Benjamin, *Mistress of the Ritz*. Just an average read for me. I read A LOT of historical fiction and am particularly fond of those that take place in the Nazi, Germany era, however, I had a hard time getting into this book. Fortunately, the second half of the book redeemed the first half otherwise I'm not so sure I would have even finished it.

**Week 48** - Kevin Kwan, *Rich People Problems* (Crazy Rich Asians #3). This trilogy is lighthearted, fun and utterly outrageous. I nice change of pace from the mystery/drama/suspense that I normally read. This last one was my least favorite of the three but... still, a fun read!

**Week 49** - Mark T. Sullivan, *Beneath a Scarlet Sky*. I really enjoyed this book. I don't understand all of the critical remarks regarding the writing style of this author. I've definitely read books that the writing was far worse or young adultish as the comments go. I also don't understand all of the negativism regarding the "supposed" true account of the main character Pino Lella. The author explains in the prelude that many details can't be proven because of the destruction of documents in the final days of the war. He wrote the book as FICTION people just for that reason. Regardless, I loved it. More like 4.5 stars.

**Week 50** - Irma Joubert, *The Girl From the Train* (not to be confused with *The Girl ON the Train*). OH MY GOODNESS! I loved this book! Considering the volumes of historical fiction that I read, especially it seems, around the WWII era I'd have to say this is one of my favorites. As a "Readers Advisor," this is one that I will absolutely recommend to my followers and historical fiction readers. 5 Stars!!!!

**Week 51** - K.A. Tucker, *Keep Her Safe*. I thought this book was fabulous. This was my first K.A. Tucker book but I definitely want to read more. A great psychological thriller with a little bit of romance thrown in.

**Week 52** - Delia Owens, *Where the Crawdads Sing*. I found this to be a fabulous book. I probably wouldn't put it on my list of all-time favorites but its right up there. Beautifully written Delia Owens! You know those books that you read and no matter how many years into the future you go that book or parts of it remain in your memory? I feel like this is one of those for me. With the number of books I read, I later forget far more than I remember. But there are always those memorable ones that you can never forget. Whether it be the character or the storyline, this is one of those for me.