

BOOKS FOR SUMMER 2020

June 22 Discussion Leader : Rick

The Comedians : Graham Greene. 1966. 320p.

Haiti, under the rule of Papa Doc and his menacing paramilitary, the Tontons Macoute, has long been abandoned by tourists. Now it is home to corrupt capitalists, foreign ambassadors and their lonely wives—and a small group of enterprising strangers rocking into port on the Dutch cargo ship, *Medea*: a well-meaning pair of Americans claiming to bring vegetarianism to the natives; a former jungle fighter in World War II Burma and current confidence man; and an English hotelier returning home to the Trianon, an unsalable shell of an establishment on the hills above the capital. Each is embroiled in a charade. But when they're unsuspectingly bound together in this nightmare republic of squalid poverty, torrid love affairs, and impending violence, their masks will be stripped away.

July 27 Discussion Leader : Paul

Catherine the Great : Portrait of a Woman : Robert Massie. 2011. 656p.

The Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Peter the Great*, *Nicholas and Alexandra*, and *The Romanovs* returns with another masterpiece of narrative biography, the extraordinary story of an obscure young German princess who traveled to Russia at fourteen and rose to become one of the most remarkable, powerful, and captivating women in history. Born into a minor noble family, Catherine transformed herself into Empress of Russia by sheer determination. Possessing a brilliant mind and an insatiable curiosity as a young woman, she devoured the works of Enlightenment philosophers and, when she reached the throne, attempted to use their principles to guide her rule of the vast and backward Russian empire.

August 24 Discussion Leader : Pattye

The Night Watchman : Louise Erdrich. 2020. 464p.

Thomas Wazhashk is the night watchman at the jewel bearing plant, the first factory located near the Turtle Mountain Reservation in rural North Dakota. He is also a Chippewa Council member who is trying to understand the consequences of a new “emancipation” bill on its way to the floor of the United States Congress. It is 1953 and he and the other council members know the bill isn't about freedom; Congress is fed up with Indians. The bill is a “termination” that threatens the rights of Native Americans to their land and their very identity. How can the government abandon treaties made in good faith with Native Americans “for as long as the grasses shall grow, and the rivers run”?