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[Your Organization] Partners with Michigan Humanities for This Year's Great Michigan Read

Mary Doria Russell's 'The Women of the Copper Country' is 2021-22 Pick

[Insert City], Mich. — Residents in the **[Your Local Area/Region]** are invited to join in reading and discussing “The Women of the Copper Country,” Mary Doria Russell’s riveting account of 25-year-old Annie Clements as she stood up for the miners and their families during the 1913 copper strikes. The book is Michigan Humanities’ choice for the 2021-2022 Great Michigan Read and **[Your Organization]** is partnering with Michigan Humanities to distribute free books as well as supporting educational materials in **[Your Local Area/Region]**.

The Great Michigan Read aims to connect Michiganders by deepening readers’ understanding of our state, our society, and our humanity. A statewide panel of teachers, librarians, community leaders and book lovers selects the Great Michigan Read every two years. The 2019-2020 book was “What the Eyes Don’t See,” Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha’s account of her discovery that Flint’s children were being poisoned by lead leaching into the city’s drinking water. The 2017-18 book was “X: A Novel,” a fictionalized account of the early life and Michigan roots of civil rights leader Malcolm X.

Shelly Hendrick Kasprzycki, Michigan Humanities president and CEO, says she hopes Michigan citizens statewide can read, discuss and learn from Annie’s inspiring example as “America’s Joan of Arc” during an engaging Great Michigan Read program that addresses labor history, women’s history and a critical period in Michigan history when jobs dependent on the state’s ample natural resources – copper, iron, lumber – were switching to new jobs on production lines at Henry Ford’s auto factories.

Widely praised for meticulous research, fine prose, and the compelling narrative drive of her stories, Russell is the award-winning author of seven bestselling novels, including the science fiction classics “The Sparrow” and “Children of God”; the World War II thriller, “A Thread of Grace”; and a political romance set in 1921 Cairo called “Dreamers of the Day.” With her novels “Doc” and “Epitaph,” Russell has redefined two towering figures of the American West: the lawman Wyatt Earp and the dental surgeon Doc Holliday. She holds a Ph.D. in biological anthropology from the University of Michigan and taught anatomy at the Case Western Reserve University School of Dentistry. She lives in Cleveland, Ohio.

“I’m so honored Michigan Humanities chose ‘The Women of the Copper Country’ for the 2021-2022 Great Michigan Read,” said Russell, who spent time in Michigan’s Keewenaw Peninsula walking through the streets of Calumet, touring the mines and visiting local museums as she prepared to write her fictionalized account of the real-life Big Annie. “The copper strike itself has been studied and written about by historians and legal experts, but those accounts are not meant to engage the reader’s emotions. That was my job – to combine imagination and empathy with research.

“Here was a 25-year-old woman who is central to a strike against the most powerful company in the most dangerous industry of her time. A child of despised immigrants. A housewife with a simple education in a

time when women couldn't vote and weren't supposed to take part in public life. Somehow, she mobilized 10,000 miners and kept everyone going, day after day, month after month. So my task was to tell readers: What makes a woman like Annie Clements?" Russell added.

[Your Organization] will receive free reader's guides, teacher's guides, bookmarks, and other supplemental materials when the next Great Michigan Read kicks off in September 2021. Russell will participate in an author's tour through fall 2022, with times, locations and decisions on in-person or virtual sessions to be made at a later date. More information on how to get a free copy of "The Women of the Copper Country" and participate in Great Michigan Read programming is available at **[Your Organization]** and on its website at **[Your Website Address]**.

The 2021-22 Great Michigan Read is presented by Michigan Humanities and supported by national, statewide and local partners, including the National Endowment for the Humanities, The Meijer Foundation, and Martin Waymire.

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