

The Bookmarks

Free Public Library of Monroe Township

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2019 BOOK CLUB READING LIST

The Bookmarks meet on the last Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. except for December. All adults are invited to read along with us and join our monthly discussions held in the library meeting room. For more information, please call 856-629-1212.

JANUARY 29: The Orphan's Tale by Pam Jenoff (Fiction) F JEN

Sixteen-year-old Noa has been cast out in disgrace after becoming pregnant by a Nazi soldier and being forced to give up her baby. She lives above a small rail station, which she cleans in order to earn her keep... When Noa discovers a boxcar containing dozens of Jewish infants bound for a concentration camp, she is reminded of the child that was taken from her. And in a moment that will change the course of her life, she snatches one of the babies and flees into the snowy night. Noa finds refuge with a German circus, but she must learn the flying trapeze act so she can blend in undetected, spurning the resentment of the lead aerialist, Astrid. At first rivals, Noa and Astrid soon forge a powerful bond. But as the facade that protects them proves increasingly tenuous, Noa and Astrid must decide whether their friendship is enough to save one another—or if the secrets that burn between them will destroy everything.

FEBRUARY 26: A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles (Fiction) F TOW

From the New York Times bestselling author of Rules of Civility—a transporting novel about a man who is ordered to spend the rest of his life inside a luxury hotel. A Gentleman in Moscow immerses us in an elegantly drawn era with the story of Count Alexander Rostov. When, in 1922, he is deemed an unrepentant aristocrat by a Bolshevik tribunal, the count is sentenced to house arrest in the Metropol, a grand hotel across the street from the Kremlin. Rostov, an indomitable man of erudition and wit, has never worked a day in his life, and must now live in an attic room while some of the most tumultuous decades in Russian history are unfolding outside the hotel's doors. Unexpectedly, his reduced circumstances provide him a doorway into a much larger world of emotional discovery. Brimming with humor, a glittering cast of characters, and one beautifully rendered scene after another, this singular novel casts a spell as it relates the count's endeavor to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to be a man of purpose.

MARCH 26: Manhattan Beach by Jennifer Egan (Fiction) F EGA

Manhattan Beach opens in Brooklyn during the Great Depression. Anna Kerrigan, nearly twelve years old, accompanies her father to the house of Dexter Styles, a man who, she gleans, is crucial to the survival of her father and her family. Years later, her father has disappeared and the country is at war. Anna works at the Brooklyn Naval Yard, where women are allowed to hold jobs that had always belonged to men. She becomes the first female diver, the most dangerous and exclusive of occupations, repairing the ships that will help America win the war. She is the sole provider for her mother, a farm girl who had a brief and glamorous career with the Ziegfeld Follies, and her lovely, severely disabled sister. At a nightclub, she chances to meet Dexter Styles again, and she begins to understand the complexity of her father's life, the reasons he might have vanished. Mesmerizing, hauntingly beautiful, with the pace and atmosphere of a noir thriller, Egan's first historical novel is a masterpiece, a deft, startling, intimate exploration of a transformative moment in the lives of women and men, America and the world.

APRIL 30: The Tattooist of Auschwitz by Heather Morris (Fiction) F MOR

In April 1942, Lale Sokolov, a Slovakian Jew, is forcibly transported to the concentration camps at Auschwitz-Birkenau. When his captors discover that he speaks several languages, he is put to work as a *Tätowierer* (the German word for tattooist), tasked with permanently marking his fellow prisoners. Imprisoned for over two and a half years, Lale witnesses horrific atrocities and barbarism—but also incredible acts of bravery and compassion. Risking his own life, he uses his privileged position to exchange jewels and money from murdered Jews for food to keep his fellow prisoners alive. One day in July 1942, Lale, prisoner 32407, comforts a trembling young woman waiting in line to have the number 34902 tattooed onto her arm. Her name is Gita, and in that first encounter, Lale vows to somehow survive the camp and marry her. A vivid, harrowing, and ultimately hopeful re-creation of Lale Sokolov's experiences as the man who tattooed the arms of thousands of prisoners with what would become one of the most potent symbols of the Holocaust, The Tattooist of Auschwitz is also a testament to the endurance of love and humanity under the darkest possible conditions.

MAY 28: Pachinko by Min Jin Lee (Fiction) F LEE

NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALIST * A NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW TOP TEN OF THE YEAR * NEW YORK TIMES NOTABLE BOOK OF 2017.

PACHINKO follows one Korean family through the generations, beginning in early 1900s Korea with Sunja, the prized daughter of a poor yet proud family, whose unplanned pregnancy threatens to shame them all. Deserted by her lover, Sunja is saved when a young tubercular minister offers to marry and bring her to Japan. So begins a sweeping saga of an exceptional family in exile from its homeland and caught in the indifferent arc of history. Through desperate struggles and hard-won triumphs, its members are bound together by deep roots as they face enduring questions of faith, family, and identity.

JUNE 25:

The Girl from Venice by Martin Cruz Smith (Fiction) F SMI

The Girl from Venice is a suspenseful World War II love story set against the beauty, mystery, and danger of occupied Venice. Venice, 1945. The war may be waning, but the city known as La Serenissima is still occupied and the people of Italy fear the power of the Third Reich. One night, under a canopy of stars, a fisherman named Cenzo comes across a young woman's body floating in the lagoon and soon discovers that she is still alive and in trouble. Born to a wealthy Jewish family, Giulia is on the run from the Wehrmacht SS. Cenzo chooses to protect Giulia rather than hand her over to the Nazis. This act of kindness leads them into the world of Partisans, random executions, the arts of forgery and high explosives, Mussolini's broken promises, the black market and gold, and, everywhere, the enigmatic maze of the Venice Lagoon.

JULY 30:

Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens (Fiction) F OWE

For years, rumors of the "Marsh Girl" have haunted Barkley Cove, a quiet town on the North Carolina coast. So in late 1969, when handsome Chase Andrews is found dead, the locals immediately suspect Kya Clark, the so-called Marsh Girl. But Kya is not what they say. Sensitive and intelligent, she has survived for years alone in the marsh that she calls home, finding friends in the gulls and lessons in the sand. Then the time comes when she yearns to be touched and loved. When two young men from town become intrigued by her wild beauty, Kya opens herself to a new life—until the unthinkable happens. Where the Crawdads Sing is at once an exquisite ode to the natural world, a heartbreaking coming-of-age story, and a surprising tale of possible murder. Owens reminds us that we are forever shaped by the children we once were, and that we are all subject to the beautiful and violent secrets that nature keeps.

AUGUST 27:

Small Great Things by Jodi Picoult (Fiction) F PIC

Ruth Jefferson is a labor and delivery nurse at a Connecticut hospital with more than twenty years' experience. During her shift, Ruth begins a routine checkup on a newborn, only to be told a few minutes later that she's been reassigned to another patient. The parents are white supremacists and don't want Ruth, who is African American, to touch their child. The hospital complies with their request, but the next day, the baby goes into cardiac distress while Ruth is alone in the nursery. Does she obey orders or does she intervene? - Ruth hesitates before performing CPR and, as a result, is charged with a serious crime. Kennedy McQuarrie, a white public defender, takes her case but gives unexpected advice: Kennedy insists that mentioning race in the courtroom is not a winning strategy. Conflicted by Kennedy's counsel, Ruth tries to keep life as normal as possible for her family—especially her teenage son—as the case becomes a media sensation. As the trial moves forward, Ruth and Kennedy must gain each other's trust, and come to see that what they've been taught their whole lives about others—and themselves—might be wrong.

SEPTEMBER 24:

Educated by Tara Westover (Nonfiction) B WES

Tara Westover was seventeen the first time she set foot in a classroom. Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, she prepared for the end of the world by stockpiling home-canned peaches and sleeping with her "head-for-the-hills" bag. In the summer she stewed herbs for her mother, a midwife and healer, and in the winter she salvaged metal in her father's junkyard. Her father distrusted the medical establishment, so Tara never saw a doctor or nurse. The family was so isolated from mainstream society that there was no one to ensure the children received an education, and no one to intervene when an older brother became violent. When another brother got himself into college and came back with news of the world beyond the mountain, Tara decided to try a new kind of life. Educated is an account of the struggle for self-invention. It is a tale of fierce family loyalty, and of the grief that comes from severing one's closest ties. Westover has crafted a universal coming-of-age story that gets to the heart of what an education is and what it offers: the perspective to see one's life through new eyes, and the will to change it.

OCTOBER 29:

Fates and Traitors by Jennifer Chiaverini (Fiction) F CHI

The New York Times bestselling author of Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker returns with a riveting work of historical fiction following the notorious John Wilkes Booth and the four women who kept his perilous confidence. John Wilkes Booth—driven son of an acclaimed British stage actor and a Covent Garden flower girl, whose misguided quest to avenge the vanquished Confederacy led him to commit one of the most notorious acts in the annals of America—has been the subject of scholarship, speculation, and even obsession. Though in his plot to assassinate President Abraham Lincoln Booth did not act alone . . . he is often portrayed as a shadowy figure, devoid of human connection. Yet four women were integral in the life of this unquiet American: Mary Ann, the mother he revered above all but country; his sister and confidante, Asia; Lucy Lambert Hale, the senator's daughter who loved him; and the Confederate widow Mary Surratt, to whom he entrusted the secrets of his vengeful wrath.

NOVEMBER 26:

**Ruthless Tide: the Heros and Villians of the Johnstown Flood,
America's Astonishing Gilded Age Disaster by Al Roker (Nonfiction)
974.8 ROK**

Central Pennsylvania, May 31, 1889: After a deluge of rain—nearly a foot in less than twenty-four hours—swelled the Little Conemaugh River, panicked engineers watched helplessly as swiftly rising waters threatened to breach the South Fork dam, built to create a private lake for a fishing and hunting club that counted among its members Andrew Mellon, Henry Clay Frick, and Andrew Carnegie. Though the engineers telegraphed neighboring towns on this last morning in May warning of the impending danger, residents—factory workers and their families—remained in their homes, having grown used to false alarms. At 3:10 P.M., the dam gave way, releasing 20 million tons of water. Gathering speed as it flowed southwest, the deluge wiped out nearly everything in its path and picked up debris—trees, houses, animals—before reaching Johnstown, a vibrant steel town fourteen miles downstream. Traveling 40 miles an hour, with swells as high as 60 feet, the deadly floodwaters razed the mill town—home to 20,000 people—in minutes. The Great Flood, as it would come to be called, remains the deadliest in US history, killing more than 2,200 people and causing \$17 million in damage.

DECEMBER:

The Book Club does not meet in December