

Welcome to: THE *Laid-Back* BOOK CLUB



Welcome to the Laid-Back Book Club at Harvard Diggins Library. In our self-paced book club, there are no meetings, no deadlines - just great books. Read on schedule, read ahead, read behind - the choice is yours. The library will have copies of each book available on-schedule, but you can request any book, anytime, through your PrairieCat account or digitally on Libby.

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- This booklet includes all of the reading guides for the books
- Fill in the stars to rate each book you read
- Join our Facebook group for discussion prompts and announcements
- Questions? Contact Leticia at adulthoodservices@harvard-diggins.org



Download the Beanstack app to log each read book as an 'activity' for entries towards the grand prize at the end of the year

Earn bonus badges and raffle entries in Beanstack for attending any Illinois Libraries Present virtual author events. Pick up a newsletter to see a schedule of upcoming events.



2023 Book Selections



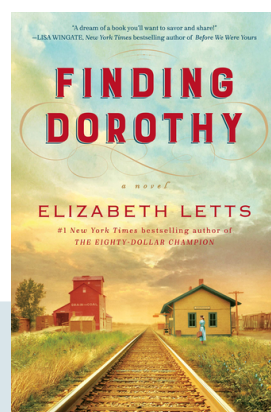
January
Small Great Things
by Jodi Picoult
Contemporary;
Realistic Fiction;
Literary Fiction



February
One Last Stop by
Casey McQuiston
Romance; Magical
Realism; LGBTQIA

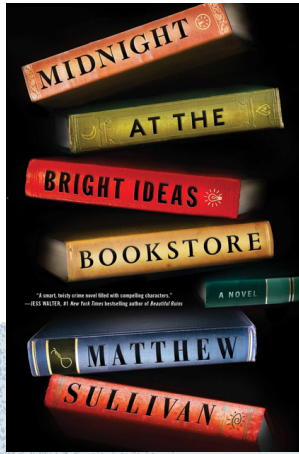


March
The Farm by Joanne
Ramos
Contemporary;
Literary Fiction;
Dystopian; Sci-Fi

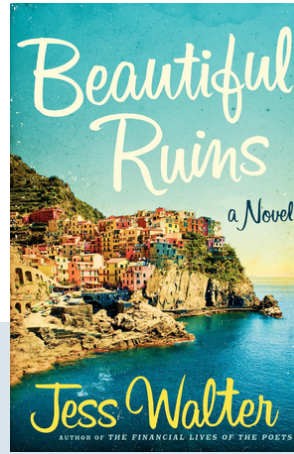


April
Finding Dorothy by
Elizabeth Letts
Historical Fiction
(Hollywood 1939)

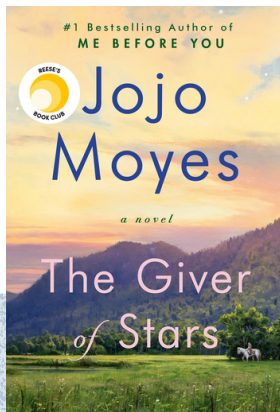




May
*Midnight at the
 Bright Ideas
 Bookstore* by
 Matthew Sullivan
 Mystery



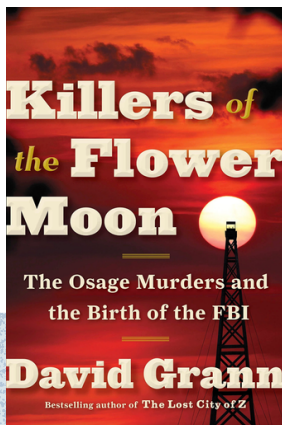
June
Beautiful Ruins by
 Jess Walter
 Both Historical &
 Contemporary;
 Romance



July
The Giver of Stars by
 Jojo Moyes
 Historical Fiction;
 Romance



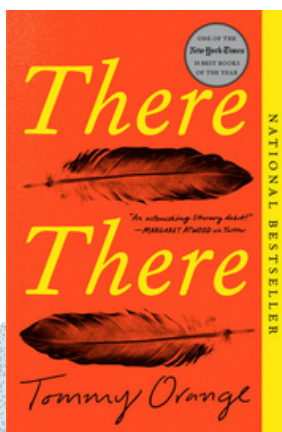
August
*The Midnight
 Library* by Matt
 Haig
 Magical Realism;
 Contemporary



September
*Killers of the Flower
 Moon* by David
 Grann
 Non-Fiction;
 History; True Crime



October
*Local Woman
 Missing* by Mary
 Kubica
 Suspense; Thriller;
 Mystery



November
There There by
 Tommy Orange
 Contemporary;
 Literary Fiction;
 Native Voices



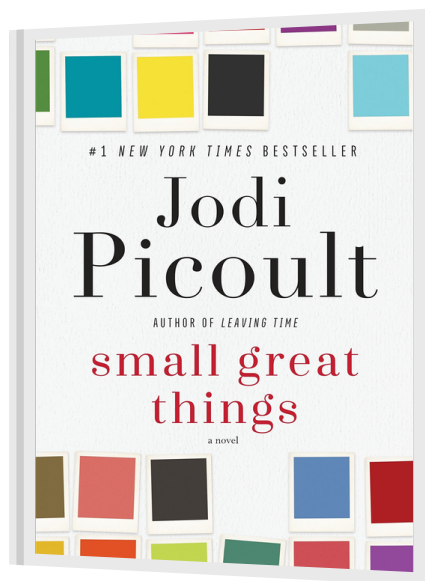
December
Tell the Wolves I'm Home
 by Carol Rifka Brunt
 Contemporary Fiction;
 Coming-of-age



THE *Laid-Back* BOOK CLUB



January 2023 Book Selection: *Small Great Things* by Jodi Picoult



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.

With incredible empathy, intelligence, and candor, Jodi Picoult tackles race, privilege, prejudice, justice, and compassion—and doesn't offer easy answers. *Small Great Things* is a remarkable achievement from a writer at the top of her game.

Published Oct 2016

Genres: Contemporary Fiction;
Literary Fiction; Realistic Fiction

Setting: Modern-Day Connecticut

Subjects: Racism; Medical; Trials

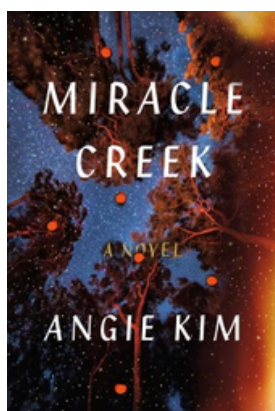
Tone: Moving & Thought-Provoking

*"If I cannot do great things, I can do
small things in a great way."*

**See back page for
discussion questions**

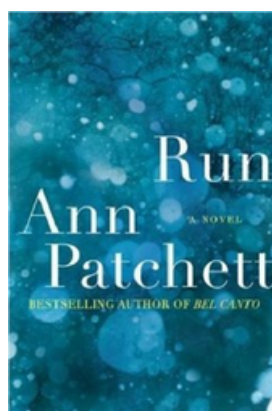


If you enjoy this book, you might also enjoy:



Miracle Creek by
Angie Kim

A dramatic murder trial in the aftermath of an experimental medical treatment and a fatal explosion upends a rural Virginia community where personal secrets and private ambitions complicate efforts to uncover what happened.



Run by Ann Patchett

Bernadette and Bernard Doyle share a great love for family. Already blessed with a son, they adopt two black children, Teddy and Tip. Even after Bernadette dies, she continues to exert a profound influence over the family. And then Tip is pushed out of a car's path in a sudden act of heroism, and lives are bound by this selfless act.



Things to ponder while you read...

These discussion questions are from the author's book club discussion guide

Do you think legal action would have been brought against Ruth if she were white? How far back in the story do you need to go to consider this outcome?

White people have a historical habit of ‘helping’ and ‘fixing’ people whom they deem ‘other’ and inferior. This damaging pattern even has a name: “White Savior Syndrome.” The ultimate, and deadly, irony is that it serves mostly to reinforce ideas about white superiority and white goodness. Can you find three moments in this story where Kennedy falls into that inherited behavioral pattern?

What do you think Kennedy learns in this story about the ways being white has shielded her from racial discrimination? Did you feel she was open to learning? If yes, how did she demonstrate that? If no, how did she demonstrate that?

THE *Laid-Back* BOOK CLUB



February 2023 Book Selection: *One Last Stop* by Casey McQuiston



For cynical twenty-three-year-old August, moving to New York City is supposed to prove her right: that things like magic and cinematic love stories don't exist, and the only smart way to go through life is alone. She can't imagine how waiting tables at a 24-hour pancake diner and moving in with too many weird roommates could possibly change that. And there's certainly no chance of her subway commute being anything more than a daily trudge through boredom and electrical failures.

But then, there's this gorgeous girl on the train.

Jane. Dazzling, charming, mysterious, impossible Jane. Jane with her rough edges and swoopy hair and soft smile, showing up in a leather jacket to save August's day when she needed it most. August's subway crush becomes the best part of her day, but pretty soon, she discovers there's one big problem: Jane doesn't just look like an old school punk rocker. She's literally displaced in time from the 1970s, and August is going to have to use everything she tried to leave in her own past to help her. Maybe it's time to start believing in some things, after all.

Casey McQuiston's *One Last Stop* is a magical, sexy, big-hearted romance where the impossible becomes possible as August does everything in her power to save the girl lost in time.

Published June 2021

Genres: Contemporary Romance;
Magical Realism, LGBTQ

Setting: New York City

Subjects: City Life; Time Travel

Tone: Funny; Offbeat

*"You're the most important person
I've ever met." she says. "And I
should have never met you at all."*

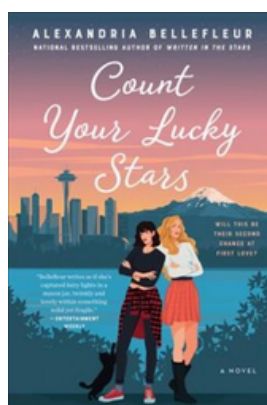
See back page for discussion questions

If you enjoy this book, you might also enjoy:



In A New York Minute by Kate Spencer

Becoming media sensations after a meet-cute moment in lower Manhattan, Franny Doyle and Hayes Montgomery III are the most disastrous match until repeated chance meetings lead to unexpected love.



Count Your Lucky Stars by Alexandria Bellefleur

Two women get a second chance at romance. Margot and Liv shared a bond and one steamy week back in high school, and ten years later they become roommates by chance. This time, they're not letting one another go again.



Things to ponder while you read...

These questions are from ReadingGroupChoices.com

In her search to find out who Jane is, August studies 1970s history, with an emphasis on LGBTQ+ history. How does this inform August's understanding of Jane? What will the past Jane lived in mean for their future together?

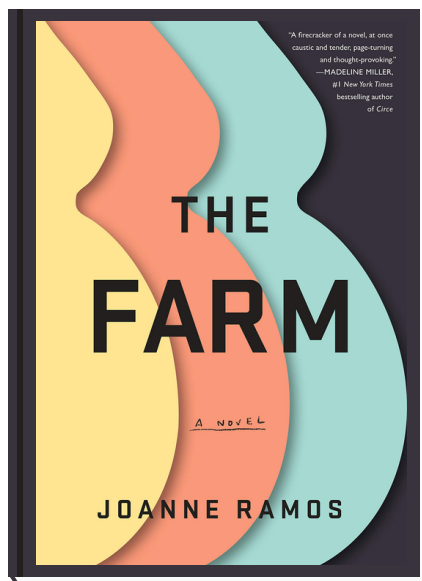
August willfully creates distance, geographical and emotional, from her mother. How is this important to August's growth, and in what ways does it actually allow her to grow closer to her mother?

August's mother has stopped living her life because of her obsession with her brother's case, but August starts living her life because of her obsession with Jane's case. Why do you think that is?

THE *Laid-Back* BOOK CLUB



March 2023 Book Selection: *The Farm* by Joanne Ramos



Nestled in the Hudson Valley is a sumptuous retreat boasting every amenity: organic meals, private fitness trainers, daily massages—and all of it for free. In fact, you get paid big money—more than you've ever dreamed of—to spend a few seasons in this luxurious locale. The catch? For nine months, you belong to the Farm. You cannot leave the grounds; your every move is monitored. Your former life will seem a world away as you dedicate yourself to the all-consuming task of producing the perfect baby for your überwealthy clients.

Jane, an immigrant from the Philippines and a struggling single mother, is thrilled to make it through the highly competitive Host selection process at the Farm. But now pregnant, fragile, consumed with worry for her own young daughter's well-being, Jane grows desperate to reconnect with her life outside. Yet she cannot leave the Farm or she will lose the life-changing fee she'll receive on delivery—or worse.

Heartbreaking, suspenseful, provocative, *The Farm* pushes our thinking on motherhood, money, and merit to the extremes, and raises crucial questions about the trade-offs women will make to fortify their futures and the futures of those they love.

Published May 2019

Genres: Science Fiction; Dystopian;
Contemporary Fiction

Setting: New York State

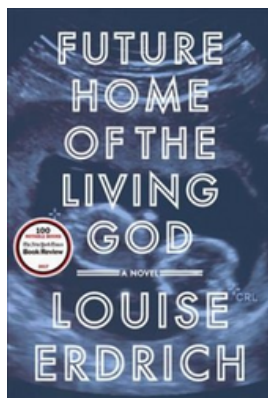
Subjects: Class Struggle; Surrogate
Mothers

Tone: Heartwrenching; Suspenseful;
Thought-provoking

“You should not raise them to be too tender, like little lambs. Small lambs, soft lambs—they make the best meat; they are always devoured.”

See back page for discussion questions

If you enjoy this book, you might also enjoy:



Future Home of the Living God by Louise Erdrich

A tale set in a world of reversing evolution and a growing police state follows pregnant twenty-six-year-old Cedar Hawk Songmaker, who investigates her biological family while awaiting the birth of a child who may emerge as a member of a primitive human species.



Followers by Megan Angelo

Decades after an ambitious writer and her A-list wannabe roommate abandon their ethics for social-media stardom, a government-appointed celebrity discovers a shattering secret from her past that her corporate sponsors would gladly exploit.



Things to ponder while you read...

These discussion questions are from the publisher's book club discussion guide

Reagan and Jane come from very different worlds, yet end up being close friends. How are their experiences and viewpoints similar, and how do they differ? Why do you think they formed such a close bond? What does each of them offer to the other?

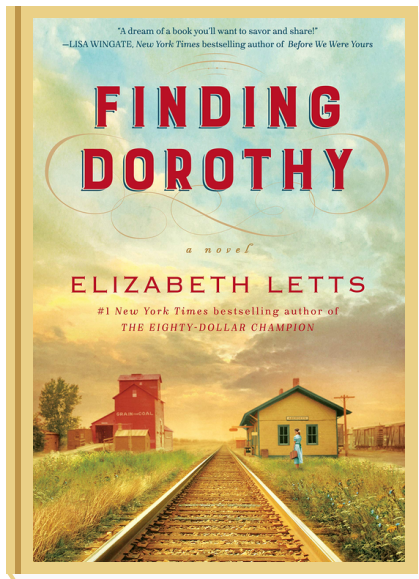
What did you think of Jane's choice to work for Mae after leaving Golden Oaks? How do you think this decision relates to the agency she gains throughout the novel? Considering all the factors at play in Jane's life, do you think she made the right decision? What would you have done in her place?

Towards the end of the book, Reagan is saddened when contemplating the lives of Jane and Ate, because she feels nothing will change—for them or for their children. However, Jane, at the very end of the novel, expresses hope that the future might be different. Have things changed for these characters? What, if anything, hasn't changed? Who believes in change, and why?

THE *Laid-Back* BOOK CLUB



April 2023 Book Selection: *Finding Dorothy* by Elizabeth Letts



Maud Gage Baum, widow of the author of the book *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, met Judy Garland, the young actress playing the role of Dorothy on the set of *The Wizard of Oz* in 1939. At the time, Maud was seventy-eight and Judy was sixteen. In spite of their age difference, Maud immediately connected to Judy--especially when Maud heard her sing "Over the Rainbow," a song whose yearning brought to mind the tough years in South Dakota when Maud and her husband struggled to make a living--until Frank Baum's book became a national sensation.

This wonderfully evocative two-stranded story recreates Maud's youth as the rebellious daughter of a leading suffragette, and the prairie years of Maud and Frank's early days when they lived among the people--especially young Dorothy--who would inspire Frank's masterpiece. Woven into this past story is one set in 1939, describing the high-pressured days on *The Wizard of Oz* film set where Judy is being badgered by the director, producer, and her ambitious stage mother to lose weight, bind her breasts, and laugh, cry, and act terrified on command. As Maud had promised to protect the original Dorothy back in Aberdeen, she now takes on the job of protecting young Judy.

Published Feb 2019

Genres: Historical Fiction

Setting: Hollywood; South Dakota, 1939

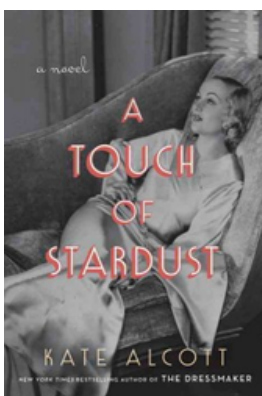
Subjects: The Wizard of Oz

Tone: Heartwarming, Engaging

*"Oh, Kansas isn't the state of Kansas,"
Maud said. "Kansas is just the place
you're stuck in, wherever that might be."*

See back page for discussion questions

If you enjoy this book, you might also enjoy:



A Touch of Stardust by Kate Alcott

Taking a job at the studio where David O. Selznick is filming *Gone with the Wind*, Julie Crawford becomes an assistant to Carole Lombard, a rising actress from Julie's hometown who embarks on a scandalous affair with Clark Gable.



Love and Ruin by Paula McLain

The author of *The Paris Wife* returns to her fan-favorite subject, Ernest Hemingway, in a tale set on the eve of World War II that is inspired by his passionate, stormy marriage to a fiercely independent, ambitious young Martha Gellhorn, who would become one of the 20th century's leading war correspondents.



Things to ponder while you read...

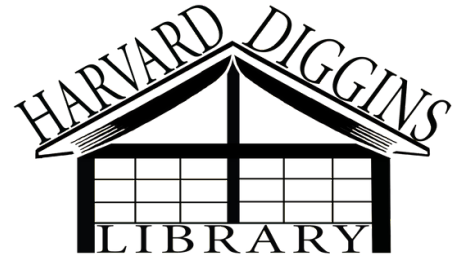
These discussion questions are from the publisher's book club discussion guide

Almost everyone remembers watching the iconic 1939 film, *The Wizard of Oz*. Write your special memories: Did you see it in a theater or on television? Did you watch it every year? What characters and scenes have remained with you? What frightened you the most? Did reading *Finding Dorothy* make you want to watch the film again?

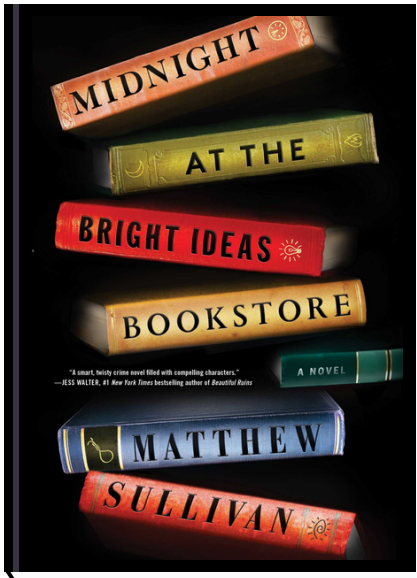
Did young Maud grow into the kind of woman you expected her to be? Do you think it was harder for Maud, as an older woman, to make her voice heard? Do you think women of a certain age are sometimes over-looked or marginalized? Do you think it has improved for women or stayed about the same as it was in Maud's day?

Judy Garland suffered abuse at the hands of the studio executives at MGM and struggled throughout her life with addiction until her early death at age forty-seven. What is it about Judy Garland that makes so many people relate to her and gives her such enduring fame? Do you think child actors have it better today, or do you think that overwhelming fame is antithetical to a happy childhood? Was there anything else Maud could have done to help Judy?

THE *Laid-Back* BOOK CLUB



May 2023 Book Selection: *Midnight at the Bright Ideas Bookstore* by Matthew Sullivan



When a bookshop patron commits suicide, his favorite store clerk must unravel the puzzle he left behind. Lydia Smith lives her life hiding in plain sight. A clerk at the Bright Ideas bookstore, she keeps a meticulously crafted existence among her beloved books, eccentric colleagues, and the BookFrogs.....the lost and lonely regulars who spend every day marauding the store's overwhelmed shelves.

But when Joey Molina, a young, beguiling BookFrog, kills himself in the bookstore's upper room, Lydia's life comes unglued. Always Joey's favorite bookseller, Lydia has been bequeathed his meager worldly possessions. Trinkets and books; the detritus of a lonely, uncared for man. But when Lydia flips through his books she finds them defaced in ways both disturbing and inexplicable. They reveal the psyche of a young man on the verge of an emotional reckoning. And they seem to contain a hidden message. What did Joey know? And what does it have to do with Lydia?

As Lydia untangles the mystery of Joey's suicide, she unearths a long buried memory from her own violent childhood. Details from that one bloody night begin to circle back. Her distant father returns to the fold, along with an obsessive local cop, and the Hammerman, a murderer who came into Lydia's life long ago and, as she soon discovers, never completely left.

Published June 2017

Genres: Mystery; Thriller

Setting: Denver, Colorado

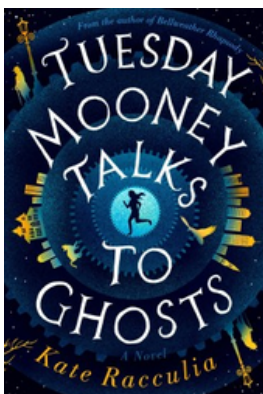
Subjects: Bookstores; Murder Investigations

Tone: Suspenseful; Compelling

"You leave yourself open to answers, he'd always taught her. You keep turning pages, you finish chapters, you find the next book. You seek and you seek and you seek, and no matter how tough things become, you never settle."

See back page for discussion questions

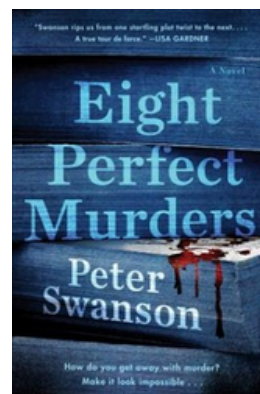
If you enjoy this book, you might also enjoy:



Tuesday Mooney Talks to Ghosts by Kate Racculia

Engaging characters set off to follow the mysterious clues of the will of an elderly, wealthy eccentric for a chance at winning the grand prize. Young grief and loss, family guilt, secrets, and hilarity are featured throughout.

Plus: ghosts!



Eight Perfect Murders by Peter Swanson

Years after establishing a literary career through his compilation of the mystery genre's most unsolvable classics, an unsuspecting bookseller is tapped by the FBI for help solving murders that eerily mimic the books on his list.



Things to ponder while you read...

These discussion questions are from the publisher's book club discussion guide

While talking with Raj, Lydia reminisces about her relationship with Gas 'n Donuts: "but her nostalgia for the place had never been strong enough to outweigh her dread of dredging up the past" (138). How is Lydia's relationship with the past presented, and how do you see it evolve over the course of the novel?

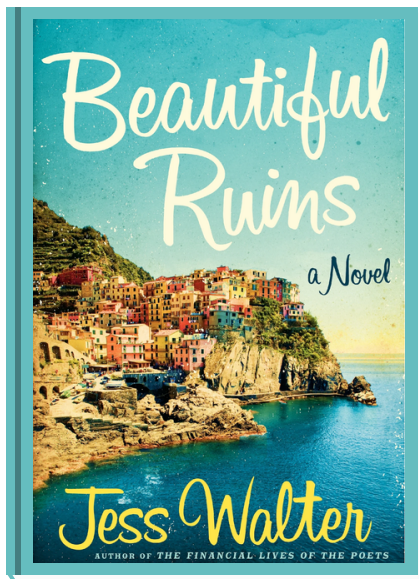
What were your initial impressions of the characters, specifically Lydia's father? How did these impressions change over the course of the novel?

Lydia's familiarity with books and the bookstore setting are crucial to the plot of the novel. What is the significance of Joey's cutouts in books as a means of communication? What metaphorical gesture might Sullivan be making?

THE *Laid-Back* BOOK CLUB



June 2023 Book Selection: *Beautiful Ruins* by Jess Walter



The story begins in 1962. On a rocky patch of the sun-drenched Italian coastline, a young innkeeper, chest-deep in daydreams, looks out over the incandescent waters of the Ligurian Sea and spies an apparition: a tall, thin woman, a vision in white, approaching him on a boat. She is an actress, he soon learns, an American starlet, and she is dying.

And the story begins again today, half a world away, when an elderly Italian man shows up on a movie studio's back lot - searching for the mysterious woman he last saw at his hotel decades earlier.

What unfolds is a dazzling, yet deeply human, roller coaster of a novel, spanning 50 years and nearly as many lives. From the lavish set of Cleopatra to the shabby revelry of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Walter introduces us to the tangled lives of a dozen unforgettable characters: the starstruck Italian innkeeper and his long-lost love; the heroically preserved producer who once brought them together and his idealistic young assistant; the army veteran turned fledgling novelist, and the rakish Richard Burton himself, whose appetites set the whole story in motion - along with the husbands and wives, lovers and dreamers, superstars and losers, who populate their world in the decades that follow.

Published June 2012

Genres: Contemporary & Historical; Romance

Setting: Italy; Western U.S.; Parallel Narratives

Subjects: Film Actors, Unrequited Love

Tone: Romantic & Upeat

“His life was two lives now: the life he would have and the life he would forever wonder about.”

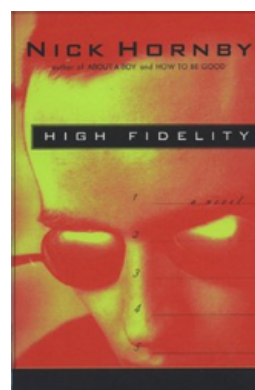
See back page for discussion questions

If you enjoy this book, you might also enjoy:



All the Stars in the Heavens
by Adriana Trigiani

Reimagines the career of actress Loretta Young, tracing the decades she shared with her assistant Alda, a former nun, as they face successes, scandals, and obstacles that threatened their bond.



High Fidelity by Nick Hornby

A snob of a high degree, Rob finds his life thrown into turmoil when live-in girlfriend Laura suddenly leaves. He embarks on a journey through the past, tracking down old lovers while finding solace with Marie, an American folk/country singer living in London, even as he yearns for Laura's return.



Things to ponder while you read...

These discussion questions are from LitLovers.com

One of Jess Walter's concerns in *Beautiful Ruins* is how real life intersects and influences art. What are some ways that this plays out in the novel?

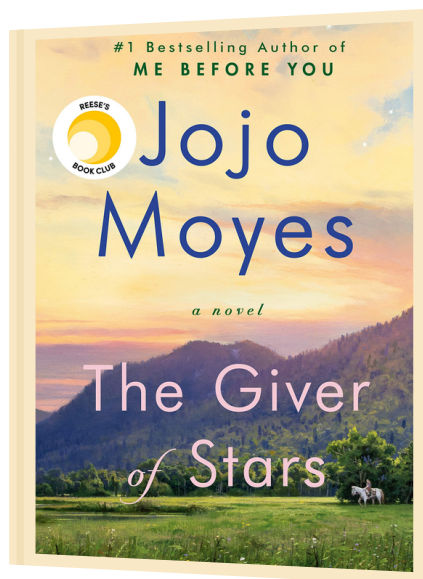
The book's opening is reminiscent of a lush, epic romantic film—the beautiful dying Dee Moray steps off the boat and into Pasquale's heart. Although the book veers off new directions, is it still a love story? What kinds of love are presented in the novel? What, ultimately, does the novel have to say about love?

The book's timeline, locales, different voices and unusual text treatments (Hollywood film pitch, biography, unfinished novel, how-to book) are jumbled. Did you find it confusing, hard to follow, irritating? Or was the variety intriguing? What might the author be hoping to achieve by scrambling everything up? How would the book be different if it were told in chronological order with a straightforward narrator?

THE *Laid-Back* BOOK CLUB



July 2023 Book Selection: *Giver of Stars* by Jojo Moyes



Alice Wright marries handsome American Bennett Van Cleve hoping to escape her stifling life in England. But small-town Kentucky quickly proves equally claustrophobic, especially living alongside her overbearing father-in-law. So when a call goes out for a team of women to deliver books as part of Eleanor Roosevelt's new traveling library, Alice signs on enthusiastically.

The leader, and soon Alice's greatest ally, is Margery, a smart-talking, self-sufficient woman who's never asked a man's permission for anything. They will be joined by three other singular women who become known as the Packhorse Librarians of Kentucky.

What happens to them—and to the men they love—becomes an unforgettable drama of loyalty, justice, humanity and passion. These heroic women refuse to be cowed by men or by convention. And though they face all kinds of dangers in a landscape that is at times breathtakingly beautiful, at others brutal, they're committed to their job: bringing books to people who have never had any, arming them with facts that will change their lives.

Based on a true story rooted in America's past, *The Giver of Stars* is unparalleled in its scope and epic in its storytelling. Funny, heartbreaking, enthralling, it is destined to become a modern classic—a richly rewarding novel of women's friendship, of true love, and of what happens when we reach beyond our grasp for the great beyond.

Published Oct 2019

Genres: Historical Fiction;
Romance; Chick-Lit

Setting: Kentucky, 1937

Subjects: Adventure, Female Friendship

Tone: Descriptive; Lush

*"There is always a way out of a situation.
Might be ugly. Might leave you feeling like
the earth had gone and shifted under your
feet. But there is always a way around."*

See back page for discussion questions

If you enjoy this book, you might also enjoy:



*The Book Woman of
Troublesome Creek* by Kim
Michele Richardson

A last-of-her-kind outcast and member of the Pack Horse Library Project braves the hardships of Kentucky's Great Depression and hostile community discrimination to bring the near-magical perspectives of books to her neighbors.



*The Librarian of Boone's
Hollow* by Kim Vogel
Sawyer

A traveling librarian who delivers books on horseback to the superstitious coal-mining communities of Depression-era Kentucky bonds with a local man who has been shunned for pursuing an education. By the best-selling author of *A Silken Thread*.



Things to ponder while you read...

These discussion questions are from the publisher's book club discussion guide

The novel features families from vastly different backgrounds, and one of the central issues in the book is that of class inequality. In which scenarios did you see these dynamics play out, and between which characters?

Literacy and censorship are significant issues in *The Giver of Stars*, issues that affect the women of the novel very differently from the men. Why do you think Moyes chose to focus on these topics?

Alice, a Brit, is an outsider, but eventually acclimates to her new home in Appalachia, and even falls in love with her new home. She grew up in a rarefied world in England, so the change to “unremarkable” Baileyville proved quite the shock to her system. Have you ever moved to a distinctly different location? What was that transition like? How did you adapt?

THE *Laid-Back* BOOK CLUB



August 2023 Book Selection: *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig



Somewhere out beyond the edge of the universe there is a library that contains an infinite number of books, each one the story of another reality. One tells the story of your life as it is, along with another book for the other life you could have lived if you had made a different choice at any point in your life. While we all wonder how our lives might have been, what if you had the chance to go to the library and see for yourself? Would any of these other lives truly be better?

Nora Seed finds herself faced with this decision. Faced with the possibility of changing her life for a new one, following a different career, undoing old breakups, realizing her dreams of becoming a glaciologist; she must search within herself as she travels through the Midnight Library to decide what is truly fulfilling in life, and what makes it worth living in the first place.

*"We only need to be one person.
We only need to feel one existence.
We don't have to do everything in
order to be everything, because we
are already infinite."*

See back page for discussion questions

Published Sept 2020

Genres: Magical Realism;
Contemporary Fiction

Setting: Modern-Day
Bedfordshire, England

Subjects: Mental Health

Tone: Engaging; Mystical

If you enjoy this book, you might also enjoy:



Oona Out of Order by Margarita Montimore

As the countdown to the New Year begins, soon-to-be-19 Oona Lockhart faints and awakens 32 years in the future in her 51-year-old body; and, greeted by a friendly stranger in a beautiful house she's told is her own, Oona learns that with each passing year she will leap to another age at random.



Before the Coffee Gets Cold by Toshikazu Kawaguchi

At a century-old Tokyo coffee shop rumored to offer patrons the chance to travel back in time, four customers reevaluate their formative life choices.



Things to ponder while you read...

These discussion questions are from the publisher's book club discussion guide

The Midnight Library is different for each person who enters it. Nora experienced it as a library because of the meaningful relationship she had with Mrs. Elm, her childhood school librarian. Later, we learn that Huge experienced it as a video store, with a cherished uncle instead of a librarian. What do you think your Midnight Library would be? And who would be there?

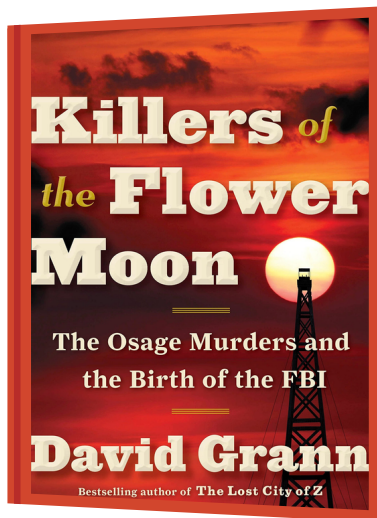
Nora experiences a number of alternate lives in which she achieves a great deal of success in one area of her life at the expense of all the rest, be it in music, swimming, or polar exploration. Do you think it's possible to reach fame and fortune in a single field and still maintain balance with other areas of your life?

In her life before she finds herself in the Midnight Library, Nora gave up many of the pursuits that brought her joy because she didn't feel like she could be the best at them. Do you think it's understandable that she would have given these things up? Do you think that wanting to be the best at something can inhibit us from enjoying it?

THE *Laid-Back* BOOK CLUB



September 2023 Book Selection: *Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI* by David Graham



In the 1920s, the richest people per capita in the world were members of the Osage Indian Nation in Oklahoma. After oil was discovered beneath their land, the Osage rode in chauffeured automobiles, built mansions, and sent their children to study in Europe.

Then, one by one, they began to be killed off. One Osage woman, Mollie Burkhart, watched as her family was murdered. Her older sister was shot. Her mother was then slowly poisoned. And it was just the beginning, as more Osage began to die under mysterious circumstances.

In this last remnant of the Wild West—where oilmen like J. P. Getty made their fortunes and where desperadoes such as Al Spencer, “the Phantom Terror,” roamed – virtually anyone who dared to investigate the killings were themselves murdered. As the death toll surpassed more than twenty-four Osage, the newly created F.B.I. took up the case, in what became one of the organization’s first major homicide investigations. But the bureau was then notoriously corrupt and initially bungled the case. Eventually the young director, J. Edgar Hoover, turned to a former Texas Ranger named Tom White to try to unravel the mystery. White put together an undercover team, including one of the only Native American agents in the bureau. They infiltrated the region, struggling to adopt the latest modern techniques of detection. Together with the Osage they began to expose one of the most sinister conspiracies in American history.

Published Sept 2020

Genres: Nonfiction; History; True Crime

Setting: Oklahoma

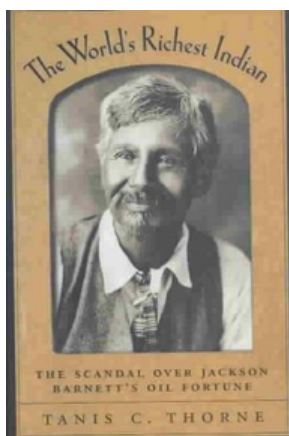
Subjects: FBI; Native Americans

Tone: Compelling; Richly Detailed;
Disturbing

“Stores gone, post office gone, train gone, school gone, oil gone, boys and girls gone—only thing not gone is graveyard and it got bigger.”

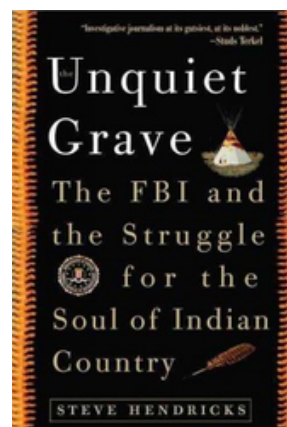
See back page for discussion questions

If you enjoy this book, you might also enjoy:



The World's Richest Indian by Tanis C. Thorne

The first biography of Jackson Barnett, who gained unexpected wealth from oil found on his property. This book explores how control of his fortune was violently contested by his guardian, the state of Oklahoma, the Baptist Church, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and an adventuress who kidnapped and married him.



Unquiet Grave by Steve Hendricks

Citing the 1976 murder of Native American activist Anna Mae Aquash, a history of the adversarial relationship between the FBI and Native Americans draws on the author's archival research into previously unreleased documents to reveal murderous conspiracies and cover-ups on both sides of the unofficial conflict.

A decorative graphic at the top of the page resembling a spiral-bound notebook. It features a series of grey loops on the left side, with a red horizontal band running through the center. The entire page is framed by a thick red border.

Things to ponder while you read...

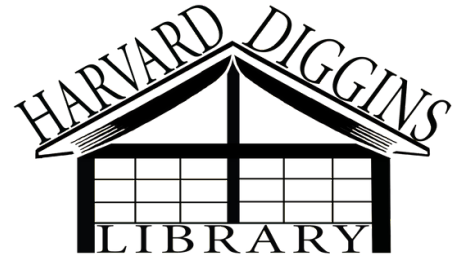
These discussion questions are from the publisher's book club discussion guide

The crimes in Osage County involved many levels of deception and betrayal. In addition to the actual conspirators, who else either directly profited from the crimes or was silently complicit in them? In what ways did accepted mores encourage the corruption that plagued the investigation?

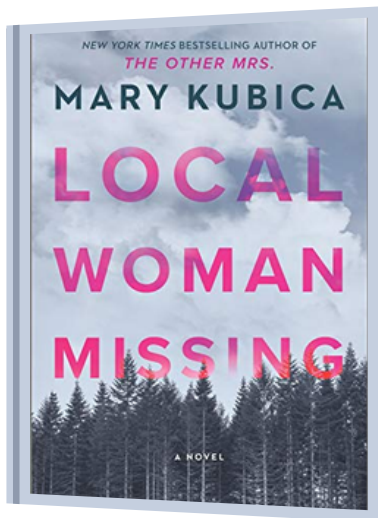
What was your first impression of William Hale (p. 17)? How does Grann bring to life his strengths and appeal, as well as the darker side of his nature? What qualities does he share with people who achieve power and influence today?

How were manufactured evidence, suborned testimony, and false confessions used to divert the FBI investigation? What role did independently hired private eyes and informants play in the search for the truth?

THE *Laid-Back* BOOK CLUB



October 2023 Book Selection: *Local Woman Missing* by Mary Kubica



Shelby Tebow is the first to go missing. Not long after, Meredith Dickey and her six-year-old daughter, Delilah, vanish just blocks away from where Shelby was last seen, striking fear into their once-peaceful community. Are these incidents connected? After an elusive search that yields more questions than answers, the case eventually goes cold.

Now, 11 years later, Delilah shockingly returns. Everyone wants to know what happened to her, but no one is prepared for what they'll find....

In this smart and chilling thriller, master of suspense and New York Times best-selling author Mary Kubica takes domestic secrets to a whole new level, showing that some people will stop at nothing to keep the truth buried.

Published May 2021

Genres: Mystery; Thriller; Suspense

Setting: Chicago Suburbs

Subjects: Cold Cases; Psychological Trauma

Tone: Fast-paced; Suspenseful

*“Sometimes being scared
makes you do things you didn't
know you could do.”*

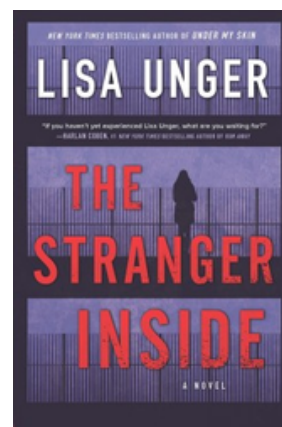
See back page for discussion questions

If you enjoy this book, you might also enjoy:



The Last to Vanish by Megan Miranda

When a journalist investigating a string of unsolved disappearances goes missing, Abigail Lovett, the manager of The Passage Inn in the North Carolina mountain town of Cutter's Pass, decides to investigate and discovers how little she knows about her coworkers, neighbors and even those closest to her.



The Stranger Inside by Lisa Unger

Having barely avoided abduction in her youth (friends Tessa and Hank weren't so fortunate), Rain Winter lives quietly as a stay-at-home mom. Her would-be abductor was murdered upon his release from prison, and now a man acquitted of killing his own wife has been dispatched as well, which draws Rain to investigate.

A graphic of a spiral-bound notebook with a pink cover and a white page. The spiral binding is at the top, with grey loops and brown dots representing the binding holes. The page has a pink border.

Things to ponder while you read...

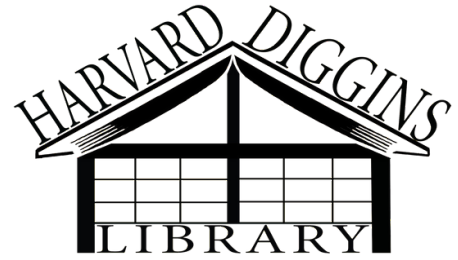
These discussion questions are from the author's book club discussion guide

Leo feels a great deal of resentment toward Delilah when she returns home. Is this anger and resentment justified?

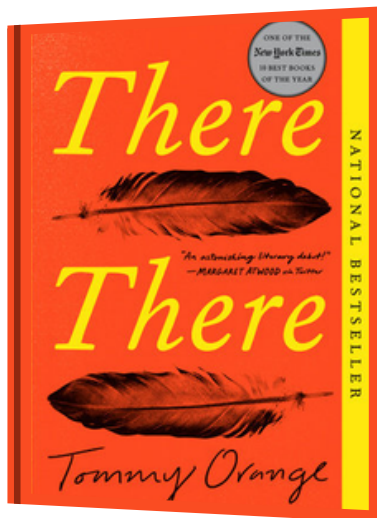
The suburban Chicago weather is as volatile as the story itself. How does the stormy weather add to the atmosphere of *Local Woman Missing*?

At the end of the novel, there are many victims. Who suffered the **most** throughout *Local Woman Missing* and why?

THE *Laid-Back* BOOK CLUB



November 2023 Book Selection: *There There* by Tommy Orange



Tommy Orange's wondrous and shattering novel follows twelve characters from Native communities: all traveling to the Big Oakland Powwow, all connected to one another in ways they may not yet realize. Among them is Jacquie Red Feather, newly sober and trying to make it back to the family she left behind. Dene Oxendene, pulling his life together after his uncle's death and working at the powwow to honor his memory. Fourteen-year-old Orvil, coming to perform traditional dance for the very first time. Together, this chorus of voices tells of the plight of the urban Native American--grappling with a complex and painful history, with an inheritance of beauty and spirituality, with communion and sacrifice and heroism. Hailed as an instant classic, *There There* is at once poignant and unflinching, utterly contemporary and truly unforgettable.

Published June 2018

Genres: Literary Fiction; Contemporary

Setting: Oakland, California

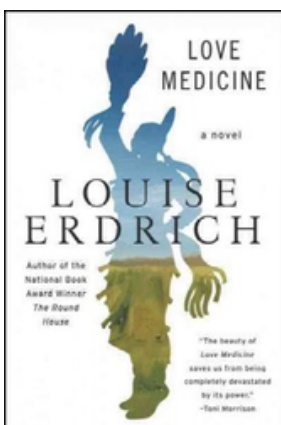
Subjects: Native Voices; Ensemble Casts

Tone: Moving; Dramatic; Character-Driven & Issue-Oriented

"They took everything and ground it down to dust as fine as gunpowder, they fired their guns into the air in victory and the strays flew out into the nothingness of histories written wrong and meant to be forgotten. Stray bullets and consequences are landing on our unsuspecting bodies even now."

See back page for discussion questions

If you enjoy this book, you might also enjoy:



Love Medicine by Louise Erdrich

This collection of interrelated stories of love, betrayal, mystery, and madness concerns Native men and women bound by blood, legend, tradition, and need.



Ceremony by Leslie Marmon Silko

On a New Mexico reservation, one Navajo family--including Tayo, a World War II veteran deeply scarred by his experiences as a Japanese POW and by the rejection of his own people--struggles to survive in a world no longer theirs in the years just before and after World War II.



Things to ponder while you read...

These discussion questions are from the publisher's book club discussion guide

The prologue of *There There* provides a historical overview of how Native populations were systematically stripped of their identity, their rights, their land, and, in some cases, their very existence by colonialist forces in America. How did reading this section make you feel? How does the prologue set the tone for you as the reader?

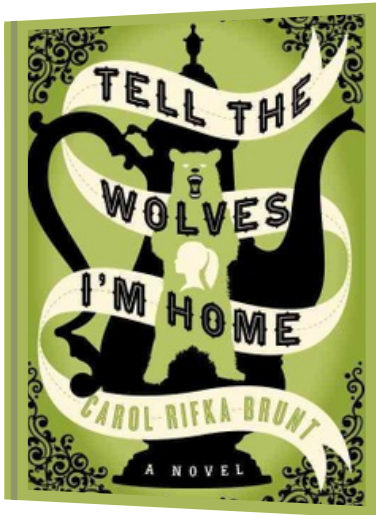
Discuss the development of the “Urban Indian” identity and ownership of that label. How does it relate to the push for assimilation by the United States government? How do the characters in *There There* navigate this modern form of identity alongside their ancestral roots?

Are there generational attitudes toward spirituality in the Native community in *There There*. Which characters embrace their elders’ spiritual practices? Who doubts the efficacy of those efforts? How did you interpret the incident of Orvil and the spider legs?

THE *Laid-Back* BOOK CLUB



December 2023 Book Selection: *Tell the Wolves I'm Home* by Carol Rifka Brunt



It's 1987. There's only one person who has ever truly understood fourteen-year-old June Elbus, and that's her uncle, the renowned painter Finn Weiss. Shy at school and distant from her older sister, June can only be herself in Finn's company; he is her godfather, confidant, and best friend. So when he dies, far too young, of a mysterious illness her mother can barely speak about, June's world is turned upside down. But Finn's death brings a surprise acquaintance into June's life—someone who will help her to heal, and to question what she thinks she knows about Finn, her family, and even her own heart.

At Finn's funeral, June notices a strange man lingering just beyond the crowd. A few days later, she receives a package in the mail. Inside is a beautiful teapot she recognizes from Finn's apartment, and a note from Toby, the stranger, asking for an opportunity to meet. As the two begin to spend time together, June realizes she's not the only one who misses Finn, and if she can bring herself to trust this unexpected friend, he just might be the one she needs the most.

An emotionally charged coming-of-age novel, *Tell the Wolves I'm Home* is a tender story of love lost and found, an unforgettable portrait of the way compassion can make us whole again.

Published June 2012

Genres: Contemporary Fiction

Setting: New York City

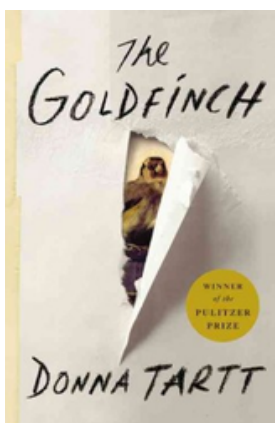
Subjects: Coming of Age; Grief

Tone: Fast-paced; Character-Driven

“Because maybe I don't want to leave the planet invisible. Maybe I need at least one person to remember something about me.”

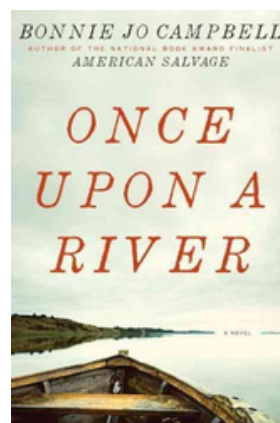
See back page for discussion questions

If you enjoy this book, you might also enjoy:



The Goldfinch by
Donna Tartt

Taken in by a wealthy family friend after surviving an accident that killed his mother, thirteen-year-old Theo Decker tries to adjust to life on Park Avenue.



Once Upon a River by
Bonnie Jo Campbell

Margo Crane, a beautiful and uncanny marksman takes to the Stark River after being complicit in the death of her father and embarks on an odyssey in search of her vanished mother.

A decorative graphic at the top of the page resembling a spiral-bound notebook. It features a series of grey loops on the left side, with a green horizontal band running through them. The entire page is framed by a thick green border.

Things to ponder while you read...

These discussion questions are from the publisher's book club discussion guide

Every relationship in the book is tinged with jealousy and/or envy. How is this played out in each of the relationships? Can jealousy ever be a positive thing? Does loving someone too much always lead to jealousy?

How do you feel about Danni, June's mother? How much is she to blame for the events in the book?

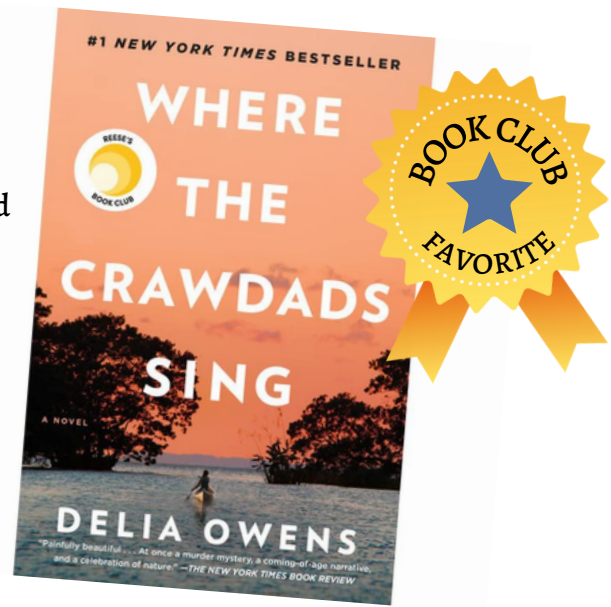
June would like to escape to the Middle Ages. All her favorite places are escapist in nature. Would June actually be happy if her wish of time travel were granted? How does that wish change over the course of the story?



Past LBBC Book Selections:

2022

January – *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens
February – *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* by Taylor Jenkins Reid
March – *An Absolutely Remarkable Thing* by Hank Green
April – *Beartown* by Fredrik Backman
May – *Circe* by Madeline Miller
June – *Recursion* by Blake Crouch
July – *How to Walk Away* by Katherine Center
August – *Radium Girls* by Kate Moore
September – *The Immortalists* by Chloe Benjamin
October – *Then She Was Gone* by Lisa Jewell
November – *The Husband's Secret* by Liane Moriarty
December – *An American Marriage* by Tayari Jones



2021

January – *The Great Alone* by Kristin Hannah
February – *Confess* by Colleen Hoover
March – *Garden Spells* by Sarah Addison Allen
April – *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood* by Trevor Noah
May – *The Dry* by Jane Harper
June – *Song of a Captive Bird* by Jasmin Darznik
July – *The Intuitionist* by Colson Whitehead
August – *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* by Rachel Joyce
September – *The Escape Room* by Megan Goldin
October – *The Cabin at the End of the World* by Paul Tremblay
November – *The Unseen World* by Liz Moore
December – *Blackberry Winter* by Sarah Jio



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