**Book Club 2023**

**January 25: Ryan, Jennifer. *The Kitchen Front*** (2021)

Two years into World War II, Britain is feeling her losses--the Nazis have won battles, the Blitz has destroyed cities and U-boats have cut off the supply of food. In an effort to help housewives with food rationing, a BBC radio program called The Kitchen Front is holding a cooking contest--and the grand prize is a job as the program's first-ever female co-host.

**February 22: Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid’s Tale***(1985)

A gripping vision of our society radically overturned by a theocratic revolution, Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale has become one of the most powerful and most widely read novels of our time. Offred is a Handmaid in the Republic of Gilead (what was once the United States), serving in the household of the enigmatic Commander and his bitter wife.

**March 22: Ronan, Kelsey. *Chevy in the Hole.***(2022) - Michigan Notable Books 2022

When we meet August "Gus" Molloy on the opening pages of Chevy in the Hole, he's just overdosed at the Detroit restaurant where he works. Shortly after, he packs it in and returns home to his family for another shot at sobriety. There, he meets and falls quickly in love with Monae Livingston, an urban farmer trying to coax a tenuous rebirth from the damaged land. As Gus and Monae begin dreaming up an oasis together in Flint, the city's water supply is being quietly poisoned. Woven throughout their story are the stories of Gus's and Monae's families--Gus's white and Monae's Black--members of which have had their own triumphs and devastating setbacks trying to survive and thrive in their troubled city.

**April 26: Larson, Erik.** Choose one!

* [*The Naked Consumer: How Our Private Lives Become Public Commodities*](https://archive.org/details/nakedconsumerhow00lars)*. (1992)*
* [*Lethal Passage*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lethal_Passage)*: How the Travels of a Single Handgun Expose the Roots of America's Gun Crisis. (1994*)
* [*Isaac's Storm: A Man, a Time, and the Deadliest Hurricane in History*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac%27s_Storm%3A_A_Man%2C_a_Time%2C_and_the_Deadliest_Hurricane_in_History)*. (1999)*
* [*The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic and Madness at the Fair That Changed America*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Devil_in_the_White_City%3A_Murder%2C_Magic_and_Madness_at_the_Fair_That_Changed_America)*. (2002)*
* [*Thunderstruck*](https://archive.org/details/isbn_9780739326763)*: A True Story of Love, Murder, and the End of the World’s “Great Hush.” (2006)*
* [*In the Garden of Beasts: Love, Terror, and an American Family in Hitler's Berlin*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/In_the_Garden_of_Beasts)*. (2011)*
* [*Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dead_Wake%3A_The_Last_Crossing_of_the_Lusitania)*. (2015)*
* *The Splendid and the Vile. (2020)*

**May 24: Benedict, Marie. *The Only Woman in the Room: a Novel*** (2019)

Her beauty almost certainly saved her from the rising Nazi party and led to marriage with an Austrian arms dealer. Underestimated in everything else, she overheard the Third Reich's plans while at her husband's side and understood more than anyone would guess. She devised a plan to flee in disguise from their castle, and the whirlwind escape landed her in Hollywood. She became Hedy Lamar, screen star.

But she kept a secret more shocking than her heritage or her marriage: she was a scientist.

**June 28: Harmel, Kristen. *The Book of Lost Names*** (2020)

Eva Traube Abrams, a semi-retired librarian in Florida, is shelving books one morning when her eyes lock on a photograph in a magazine lying open nearby. She freezes; it's an image of a book she hasn't seen in sixty-five years--a book she recognizes as The Book of Lost Names. The accompanying article discusses the looting of libraries by the Nazis across Europe during World War II--an experience Eva remembers well--and the search to reunite people with the texts taken from them so long ago.

**July 26: Munro, Alice. *Dear Life: Stories*** (2012)

In story after story in this brilliant new collection, Alice Munro pinpoints the moment a person is forever altered by a chance encounter, an action not taken, or a simple twist of fate. Her characters are flawed and fully human: a soldier returning from war and avoiding his fiancée, a wealthy woman deciding whether to confront a blackmailer, an adulterous mother and her neglected children, a guilt-ridden father, a young teacher jilted by her employer. Illumined by Munro’s unflinching insight, these lives draw us in with their quiet depth and surprise us with unexpected turns. And while most are set in her signature territory around Lake Huron, some strike even closer to home: an astonishing suite of four autobiographical tales offers an unprecedented glimpse into Munro’s own childhood. Exalted by her clarity of vision and her unparalleled gift for storytelling, Dear Life shows how strange, perilous, and extraordinary ordinary life can be.

**August 23: Abe, Shana. *The Second Mrs. Astor*** (2021)

After losing her husband on the RMS Titanic, Madeleine Astor, who is constantly surrounded by scandal, finds her status elevated to that of a virtuous, tragic heroine and must decide whether to accept the role assigned to her or carve out her own extraordinary path.

**September 27: Penner, Sarah. *The Lost Apothecary*** (2022)

Hidden in the depths of eighteenth-century London, a secret apothecary shop caters to an unusual kind of clientele. Women across the city whisper of a mysterious figure named Nella who sells well-disguised poisons to use against the oppressive men in their lives. But the apothecary’s fate is jeopardized when her newest patron, a precocious twelve-year-old, makes a fatal mistake, sparking a string of consequences that echo through the centuries.

**October 25: Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*** (1897)

Dracula is an epistolary novel, written as a collection of realistic but completely fictional diary entries, telegrams, letters, ship’s logs, and newspaper clippings, all of which add a level of detailed realism to Stoker’s story. At the time of its publication, Dracula was considered a ‘straightforward horror novel’ based on imaginary creations of supernatural life. Dracula has been assigned to many literary genres including vampire literature, horror fiction, the gothic novel, and invasion literature. The novel touches on themes such as the role of women in Victorian culture, sexual conventions, immigration, colonialism, and post-colonialism. Although Stoker did not invent the vampire, he defined its modern form through this novel.

**November 15: Garmus, Bonnie. *Lessons in Chemistry*** (2022)

Set in 1960s California, this blockbuster debut is the hilarious, idiosyncratic and uplifting story of a female scientist whose career is constantly derailed by the idea that a woman's place is in the home, only to find herself starring as the host of America's most beloved TV cooking show

**December 20: Lamb, Wally.** ***Wishin’ and Hopin’: A Christmas Story*** (2009)

Wally Lamb, the beloved #1 New York Times bestselling author of The Hour I First Believed, I Know This Much Is True, and She’s Come Undone, delivers a holiday treat with Wishin’ and Hopin’—an unforgettable novella that captures the warmth and joy of the holiday season. Poignant and hilarious, in a vein similar to Jean Shepherd’s A Christmas Story and David Sedaris’s The Santaland Diaries, Lamb’s Christmas tale focuses on a feisty parochial school fifth grader named Felix Funicello—a distant cousin of the iconic Annette!