

Annunciation Book Club List – 2018-2019

July 2018

The Spy Who Came in from the Cold by John LeCarre

(fiction, 240 pages)

In the shadow of the newly erected Berlin Wall, Alec Leamas watches as his last agent is shot dead by East German sentries. For Leamas, the head of Berlin Station, the Cold War is over. As he faces the prospect of retirement or worse—a desk job—Control offers him a unique opportunity for revenge. Assuming the guise of an embittered and dissolute ex-agent, Leamas is set up to trap Mundt, the deputy director of the East German Intelligence Service—with himself as the bait. In the background is George Smiley, ready to make the game play out just as Control wants.

Monday July 2, 7PM – Celebuski

Monday July 16, 6PM – Potesta's

August 2018

Mudbound by Hillary Jordan

(fiction, 340 pages)

A gripping and exquisitely rendered story of forbidden love, betrayal, and murder, set against the brutality of the Jim Crow South. When Henry McAllan moves his city-bred wife, Laura, to a cotton farm in the Mississippi Delta in 1946, she finds herself in a place both foreign and frightening. Laura does not share Henry's love of rural life, and she struggles to raise their two young children in an isolated shotgun shack with no indoor plumbing or electricity, all the while under the eye of her hateful, racist father-in-law. When it rains, the waters rise up and swallow the bridge to town, stranding the family in a sea of mud. As the McAllans are being tested in every way, two celebrated soldiers of World War II return home to help work the farm. Jamie McAllan is everything his older brother Henry is not: charming, handsome, and sensitive to Laura's plight, but also haunted by his memories of combat. Ronsel Jackson, eldest son of the black sharecroppers who live on the McAllan farm, comes home from fighting the Nazis with the shine of a war hero, only to face far more personal and dangerous battles against the ingrained bigotry of his own countrymen. It is the unlikely friendship of these two brothers-in-arms, and the passions they arouse in others, that drive this powerful debut novel. *Mudbound* reveals how everyone becomes a player in a tragedy on the grandest scale, even as they strive for love and honor. Jordan's indelible portrayal of two families caught up in the blind hatred of a small Southern town earned the prestigious Bellwether Prize for Fiction, awarded biennially to a first literary novel that addresses issues of social injustice.

Monday August 6, 7PM – Stowell

Monday August 20, 6PM – Potesta's

September 2018

The Muralist by B.A. Shapiro

(fiction, 368 pages)

"Vibrant and suspenseful . . . Like *The Art Forger*, this new story takes us into the heart of what it means to be an artist." —The Washington Post "B. A. Shapiro captivated us in 2012 with her 'addictive' novel *The Art Forger*. Now, she's back with another thrilling tale from the art world." —Entertainment Weekly When Alizée Benoit, an American painter working for the Works Progress Administration (WPA), vanishes in New York City in 1940, no one knows what happened to her. Not her Jewish family living in German-occupied France. Not her artistic patron and political compatriot, Eleanor Roosevelt. Not her close-knit group of friends, including Mark Rothko, Jackson Pollock, and Lee Krasner. And, some seventy years later, not her great-niece, Danielle

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Abrams, who while working at Christie's auction house uncovers enigmatic paintings hidden behind works by those now-famous Abstract Expressionist artists. Do they hold answers to the questions surrounding her missing aunt?

Monday September 10, 7PM – O'Morchoe

Monday September 24, 6PM – Potesta's

October 2018

Before We Were Yours by Lisa Wingate

(fiction, 342 pages)

Two families, generations apart, are forever changed by a heartbreaking injustice in this poignant novel, inspired by a true story, for readers of Orphan Train and The Nightingale.

Memphis, 1939. Twelve-year-old Rill Foss and her four younger siblings live a magical life aboard their family's Mississippi River shantyboat. But when their father must rush their mother to the hospital one stormy night, Rill is left in charge—until strangers arrive in force. Wrenched from all that is familiar and thrown into a Tennessee Children's Home Society orphanage, the Foss children are assured that they will soon be returned to their parents—but they quickly realize that the truth is much darker. At the mercy of the facility's cruel director, Rill fights to keep her sisters and brother together—in a world of danger and uncertainty.

Aiken, South Carolina, present day. Born into wealth and privilege, Avery Stafford seems to have it all: a successful career as a federal prosecutor, a handsome fiancé, and a lavish wedding on the horizon. But when Avery returns home to help her father weather a health crisis, a chance encounter leaves her with uncomfortable questions—and compels her to take a journey through her family's long-hidden history, on a path that will ultimately lead either to devastation or redemption.

Based on one of America's most notorious real-life scandals—in which Georgia Tann, director of a Memphis-based adoption organization, kidnapped and sold poor children to wealthy families all over the country—Wingate's riveting, wrenching, and ultimately uplifting tale reminds us how, even though the paths we take can lead to many places, the heart never forgets where we belong.

Monday October 1, 7PM – Gallinger

Monday October 15, 6PM – Potesta's

November 2018

Reliance, Illinois by Mary Vollmer

(fiction, 368 pages)

Illinois, 1874: With a birthmark covering half her face, thirteen-year-old Madelyn Branch is accustomed to cold and awkward greetings, and expects no less in the struggling town of Reliance. After all, her mother, Rebecca, was careful not to mention a daughter in the Matrimonial Times ad that brought them there. When Rebecca weds, Madelyn poses as her mother's younger sister and earns a grudging berth in her new house. Deeply injured by her mother's deceptions, Madelyn soon leaves to enter the service of Miss Rose Werner, prodigal daughter of the town's founder. Miss Rose is a suffragette and purveyor of black market birth control who sees in Madelyn a project and potential acolyte. Madelyn, though, wants to feel beautiful and loved, and she pins her hopes on William Stark, a young photographer and haunted Civil War veteran.

Monday November 5, 7PM – Pullinger

Monday ~~October~~ 19, 6PM – Potesta's

November

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December 3, 2018

Christmas Potluck

Church

Bring an appetizer or dessert and a wrapped book to exchange. You are also welcome to bring books you no longer want and are willing to give away to other interested readers.

January 2019

The Alice Network by Kate Quinn

(fiction, 510 pages)

1947. In the chaotic aftermath of World War II, American college girl Charlie St. Clair is pregnant, unmarried, and on the verge of being thrown out of her very proper family. She's also nursing a desperate hope that her beloved cousin Rose, who disappeared in Nazi-occupied France during the war, might still be alive. So when Charlie's parents banish her to Europe to have her "little problem" taken care of, Charlie breaks free and heads to London, determined to find out what happened to the cousin she loves like a sister.

1915. A year into the Great War, Eve Gardiner burns to join the fight against the Germans and unexpectedly gets her chance when she's recruited to work as a spy. Sent into enemy-occupied France, she's trained by the mesmerizing Lili, code name Alice, the "queen of spies," who manages a vast network of secret agents right under the enemy's nose.

Thirty years later, haunted by the betrayal that ultimately tore apart the Alice Network, Eve spends her days drunk and secluded in her crumbling London house. That is until a young American barges in uttering a name Eve hasn't heard in decades, and launches them both on a mission to find the truth . . . no matter where it leads.

Monday January 7, 7PM – Johnson

Monday January 21, 6PM – Potesta's

February 2019

Notorious RBG: The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsburg by Irin Carmon and Shana Knizhnik

(nonfiction, 240 pages)

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg never asked for fame—she has only tried to make the world a little better and a little freer. But nearly a half-century into her career, something funny happened to the octogenarian: she won the internet. Across America, people who weren't even born when Ginsburg first made her name as a feminist pioneer are tattooing themselves with her face, setting her famously searing dissents to music, and making viral videos in tribute. *Notorious RBG*, inspired by the Tumblr that amused the Justice herself and brought to you by its founder and an award-winning feminist journalist, is more than just a love letter. It draws on intimate access to Ginsburg's family members, close friends, colleagues, and clerks, as well an interview with the Justice herself. An original hybrid of reported narrative, annotated dissents, rare archival photos and documents, and illustrations, the book tells a never-before-told story of an unusual and transformative woman who transcends generational divides. As the country struggles with the unfinished business of gender equality and civil rights, Ginsburg stands as a testament to how far we can come with a little chutzpah.

Monday February 4, 7PM – Hibbard

Monday February 18, 6PM – Potesta's

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March 2019

The Other Einstein by Marie Benedict

(fiction, 336 pages)

"*The Other Einstein* takes you into Mileva's heart, mind, and study as she tries to forge a place for herself in a scientific world dominated by men."-Bustle

In the tradition of *The Paris Wife* and *Mrs. Poe*, *The Other Einstein* offers us a window into a brilliant, fascinating woman whose light was lost in Einstein's enormous shadow. It is the story of Einstein's wife, a brilliant physicist in her own right, whose contribution to the special theory of relativity is hotly debated and may have been inspired by her own profound and very personal insight.

Mitza Maric has always been a little different from other girls. Most twenty-year-olds are wives by now, not studying physics at an elite Zurich university with only male students trying to outdo her clever calculations. But Mitza is smart enough to know that, for her, math is an easier path than marriage. And then fellow student Albert Einstein takes an interest in her, and the world turns sideways. Theirs becomes a partnership of the mind and of the heart, but there might not be room for more than one genius in a marriage.

Monday March 4, 7PM – Danos

Monday March 18, 6PM – Potesta's

April 2019

The Last Days of Night by Graham Moore

(fiction, 368pages)

New York, 1888. Gas lamps still flicker in the city streets, but the miracle of electric light is in its infancy. The person who controls the means to turn night into day will make history--and a vast fortune. A young untested lawyer named Paul Cravath, fresh out of Columbia Law School, takes a case that seems impossible to win. Paul's client, George Westinghouse, has been sued by Thomas Edison over a billion-dollar question: Who invented the light bulb and holds the right to power the country?

The case affords Paul entry to the heady world of high society--the glittering parties in Gramercy Park mansions, and the more insidious dealings done behind closed doors. The task facing him is beyond daunting. Edison is a wily, dangerous opponent with vast resources at his disposal--private spies, newspapers in his pocket, and the backing of J. P. Morgan himself. Yet this unknown lawyer shares with his famous adversary a compulsion to win at all costs. How will he do it?

In obsessive pursuit of victory, Paul crosses paths with Nikola Tesla, an eccentric, brilliant inventor who may hold the key to defeating Edison, and with Agnes Huntington, a beautiful opera singer who proves to be a flawless performer on stage and off. As Paul takes greater and greater risks, he'll find that everyone in his path is playing their own game, and no one is quite who they seem.

Monday April 1, 7PM – Standford

Monday April 15, 6PM – Potesta's

May 6, 2019

Spring Potluck

Church

Bring an appetizer or dessert. You are also welcome to bring books you no longer want and are willing to give away to other interested readers. We hope to have the ballot for the next year's book selections at the potluck.

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June 2019

Lilac Girls by Martha Hall Kelly

(fiction, 496 pages)

New York socialite Caroline Ferriday has her hands full with her post at the French consulate and a new love on the horizon. But Caroline's world is forever changed when Hitler's army invades Poland in September 1939—and then sets its sights on France.

An ocean away from Caroline, Kasia Kuzmerick, a Polish teenager, senses her carefree youth disappearing as she is drawn deeper into her role as courier for the underground resistance movement. In a tense atmosphere of watchful eyes and suspecting neighbors, one false move can have dire consequences.

For the ambitious young German doctor, Herta Oberheuser, an ad for a government medical position seems her ticket out of a desolate life. Once hired, though, she finds herself trapped in a male-dominated realm of Nazi secrets and power.

The lives of these three women are set on a collision course when the unthinkable happens and Kasia is sent to Ravensbrück, the notorious Nazi concentration camp for women. Their stories cross continents—from New York to Paris, Germany, and Poland—as Caroline and Kasia strive to bring justice to those whom history has forgotten.

Monday June 3, 7PM – DePietro

Monday June 17, 6PM – Potesta's