

BOOKS & BEANS BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Location: Kinni View Deli, 127 N Main St, River Falls, WI 54022

Time: 10:30 AM

Contact Information: Heather Johnson, Adult Services and Circulation Librarian

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Date: January 16, 2018

THE BOOK THAT MATTERS MOST by Ann Hood

"Ava's twenty-five-year marriage has fallen apart, and her two grown children are pursuing their own lives outside of the country. Ava joins a book group, not only for her love of reading but also out of sheer desperation for companionship. The group's goal throughout the year is for each member to present the book that matters most to them. Ava rediscovers a mysterious book from her childhood--one that helped her through the traumas of the untimely deaths of her sister and mother. Alternating with Ava's story is that of her troubled daughter Maggie, who, living in Paris, descends into a destructive relationship with an older man. Ava's mission to find that book and its enigmatic author takes her on a quest that unravels the secrets of her past and offers her and Maggie the chance to remake their lives"-- Provided by publisher.

Date: February 27, 2018

THE RADIUM GIRLS: THE DARK STORY OF AMERICA'S SHINING WOMEN by Kate Moore

As World War I raged across the globe, hundreds of young women toiled away at the radium-dial factories, where they painted clock faces with a mysterious new substance called radium. Assured by their bosses that the luminous material was safe, the women themselves shone brightly in the dark, covered from head to toe with the glowing dust. With such a coveted job, these "shining girls" were considered the luckiest alive--until they began to fall mysteriously ill. As the fatal poison of the radium took hold, they found themselves embroiled in one of America's biggest scandals and a groundbreaking battle for workers' rights. The Radium Girls explores the strength of extraordinary women in the face of almost impossible circumstances and the astonishing legacy they left behind.-- Provided by publisher.

Date: March 20, 2018

HILLBILLY ELEGY: A MEMOIR OF A FAMILY AND CULTURE IN CRISIS by J.D. Vance

This book shares the story of the author's family and upbringing, describing how they moved from poverty to an upwardly mobile clan that included the author, a Yale Law School graduate, while navigating the demands of middle class life and the collective demons of the past.--Provided by publisher.

Date: April 17, 2018 ~ NEA BIG READ in the ST. CROIX VALLEY

INTO THE BEAUTIFUL NORTH: A NOVEL by Luis Alberto Urrea

"Nineteen-year-old Nayeli works at a taco shop in her Mexican village and dreams about her father, who journeyed to the U.S. when she was young. Recently, it has dawned on her that he isn't the only man who has left town. In fact, there are almost no men in the village--they've all gone north. While watching *The Magnificent Seven*, Nayeli decides to go north herself and recruit seven men--her own "Siete Magníficos"--to repopulate her hometown and protect it from the bandidos who plan on taking it over."--Provided by publisher.

Date: May 15, 2018

THE BEEKEEPER'S APPRENTICE: OR ON THE SEGREGATION OF THE QUEEN by Laurie King

In 1914, a young woman named Mary Russell meets a retired beekeeper on the Sussex Downs. His name is Sherlock Holmes. The great detective is no fool, and can spot a fellow intellect even in a fifteen-year-old woman. So, at first informally, then consciously, he takes Mary Russell as his apprentice. -- From the publisher.

Date: June 19, 2018

FUTURE HOME OF THE LIVING GOD: A NOVEL by Louise Erdrich

A tale set in a world of reversing evolution and a growing police state follows pregnant thirty-two-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. -- From the publisher.

Date: July 17, 2018

EVERYBODY'S SON: A NOVEL by Thrity Umrigar

"During a terrible heat wave in 1991--the worst in a decade--ten-year-old Anton has been locked in an apartment in the projects, alone, for seven days, without air conditioning or a fan. With no electricity, the refrigerator and lights do not work. Hot, hungry, and desperate, Anton shatters a window and climbs

out. Cutting his leg on the broken glass, he is covered in blood when the police find him. Juanita, his mother, is discovered in a crack house less than three blocks away, nearly unconscious and half-naked. When she comes to, she repeatedly asks for her baby boy. She never meant to leave Anton--she went out for a quick hit and was headed right back, until her drug dealer raped her and kept her high. Though the bond between mother and son is extremely strong, Anton is placed with child services while Juanita goes to jail. The Harvard-educated son of a US senator, Judge David Coleman is a scion of northeastern white privilege. Desperate to have a child in the house again after the tragic death of his teenage son, David uses his power and connections to keep his new foster son, Anton, with him and his wife, Delores--actions that will have devastating consequences in the years to come. Following in his adopted family's footsteps, Anton, too, rises within the establishment. But when he discovers the truth about his life, his birth mother, and his adopted parents, this man of the law must come to terms with the moral complexities of crimes committed by the people he loves most" -- provided by publisher.

Date: August 21, 2018

CAROLINE: LITTLE HOUSE, REVISITED by Sarah Miller

In the frigid days of February, 1870, Caroline Ingalls, her husband Charles, and their little girls, Mary and Laura, leave the familiar comforts of the Big Woods of Wisconsin and head west to settle in a beautiful, unpredictable land full of promise and peril--the Kansas Indian Territory. The pioneer life is a hard one, especially for a pregnant woman with no friends or kin to turn to for comfort or help. The burden of work must be shouldered alone, sickness tended without the aid of doctors, and babies birthed without the accustomed hands of mothers or sisters. But Caroline's world is also full of tender joys. In adapting to this strange new place and transforming a rough log house built by Charles into a home, Caroline must draw on untapped wells of strength she does not know she possesses. For more than eighty years, generations of readers have been enchanted by the adventures of the American frontier's most famous child, Laura Ingalls Wilder, in the Little House books. Now, that familiar story is retold in this captivating tale of family, fidelity, hardship, love, and survival that vividly reimagines our past. -- From the publisher.

AND/OR

PRAIRIE FIRES: THE AMERICAN DREAMS OF LAURA INGALLS WILDER by Caroline Fraser

This book, written by the editor of the Library of America edition of the Little House books, is a thoroughly researched biography of not only Laura Ingalls Wilder, but of her daughter, Rose. Using unpublished manuscripts, letters, financial records, and more, Fraser gives fresh insight into the life of a woman beloved to many. --Novelist.

Date: September 18, 2018

Pachinko / Min Jin Lee

"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."-- Provided by publisher.

Date: October 16, 2018

A GENTLEMAN IN MOSCOW by Amor Towles

A Gentleman in Moscow immerses us in another 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"-- Provided by publisher.

Date: November 20, 2018

THE WOMEN IN THE CASTLE by Jessica Shattuck

"Three women, haunted by the past and the secrets they hold Set at the end of World War II, in a crumbling Bavarian castle that once played host to all of German high society, a powerful and propulsive story of three widows whose lives and fates become intertwined. Amid the ashes of Nazi Germany's defeat, Marianne von Lingenfels returns to the once-grand castle of her husband's ancestors, an imposing stone fortress now fallen into ruin following years of war. The widow of a resister murdered in the failed July 20, 1944, plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler, Marianne plans to uphold the promise she made to her husband's brave conspirators: to find and protect their wives, her fellow resistance widows. First Marianne rescues six-year-old Martin, the son of her dearest childhood friend, from a Nazi reeducation home. Together, they make their way across the smoldering wreckage of their homeland to Berlin, where Martin's mother, the beautiful and naive Benita, has fallen into the hands of occupying Red Army soldiers. Then she locates Ania, another resister's wife, and her two boys, now refugees languishing in one of the many camps that house the millions displaced by the war. As Marianne assembles this makeshift family from the ruins of her husband's resistance movement, she is certain their shared pain and circumstances will hold them together. But she quickly discovers that the black-and-white, highly principled world of her privileged past has become infinitely more complicated, filled with secrets and dark passions that threaten to tear them apart. Eventually, all three women must come to terms with the choices that have defined their lives before, during, and after the war--each with their own unique share of challenges."--Publisher description.

Date: December 18, 2018

THE BEAR AND THE NIGHTINGALE: A NOVEL by Katherine Arden

"In a village at the edge of the wilderness of northern Russia, where the winds blow cold and the snow falls many months of the year, a stranger with piercing blue eyes presents a new father with a gift--a precious jewel on a delicate chain, intended for his young daughter. Uncertain of its meaning, Pytor hides the gift away and Vasya grows up a wild, willful girl, to the chagrin of her family. But when mysterious forces threaten the happiness of their village, Vasya discovers that, armed only with the necklace, she may be the only one who can keep the darkness at bay."-- Provided by publisher.

COMING IN 2019....

Date: January 15, 2019

THE LEAVERS: A NOVEL by Lisa Ko

"One morning, Deming Guo's mother, an undocumented Chinese immigrant named Polly, goes to her job at the nail salon and never comes home. With his mother gone, eleven-year-old Deming is left with no one to care for him. He is eventually adopted by two white college professors who move him from the Bronx to a small town upstate. Set in New York and China, the Leavers is the story of how one boy comes into his own when everything he's loved has been taken away--and how a mother learns to live with the mistakes of her past"-- Provided by publisher.

Date: February 19, 2019

**THE GIRLS OF ATOMIC CITY: THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE WOMEN WHO HELPED WIN WORLD WAR II
by Denise Kiernan**

The New York Times bestseller is an incredible true story about the top-secret World War II town of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and the young women brought there unknowingly to help build the atomic bomb.