



Sunriver Books & Music

February 2022

Newsletter

Sunriverbooks.com
541-593-2525



Covid 19 Update

Two years ago, in February 2020, hardly anyone had heard of Covid 19, it seems like a lifetime ago. Yet here we still are, with a variant clogging hospitals, and a divide down the country between those trying to avoid the virus and those seeing it as political.

Sunriver Books & Music has tried to err on the side of caution since the start of this plague. We will continue to do so. Masks will be required at Sunriver Books & Music until health officials indicate it is safe for our families, staff, and community to abandon wearing them, regardless of whatever Governor Brown decides. No one likes wearing masks, at least I don't know anyone who enjoys wearing them. However, if there is a possibility they will help keep people even a little bit safer from catching a virus that to the immune compromised or elderly could be a death sentence, we will wear them and require them for entrance to the bookstore.

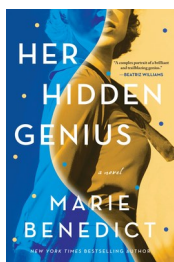
Differences in opinion are part of the human condition. We don't all like exactly the same type of clothing, taste of food, literature, and so forth. I respect people's rights to have differing opinions. People are also fallible, so I can be wrong. Maybe the experts are wrong and the masks do nothing. Maybe those refusing to wear the masks are correct that masks are not needed. Okay. But maybe they are wrong, that is also possible. So if someone believes masks are unnecessary, and they are wrong, they could infect someone with the virus who will not survive, how will they live with the choice they made if it costs a life? Potentially risking someone else's health, for certainty in a belief, puts someone else on the line to possibly pay the cost. Particularly with so many people made ill by the virus. If we are wrong and masks are unnecessary, we will have only caused a slight discomfort or annoyance, that seems a much lower risk than potentially causing illness or death.

An award for the vilest reason for refusing masks I have encountered would be that the people dying are either already ill or old. Boy is that a cold sentiment! So their comfort in not wearing a mask equals a diabetic or a retiree dying? Sad.

Author events and in person Book Club meetings remain on hold until it is safer to gather in groups. We do have a lively Zoom Book Club group, this month's books are listed on the last page. We miss our in person events and hope they can resume soon.

A huge thank you to everyone who has understood our desire to help keep our community safe and worn masks. Thank you for your patience. We understand if people are not comfortable and are happy to deliver books within Sunriver or do curbside service if you prefer.

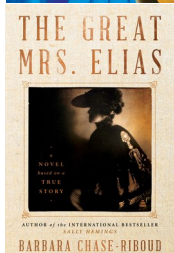
Stay safe, stay hopeful. Eventually we hope Covid-19 will be defeated.



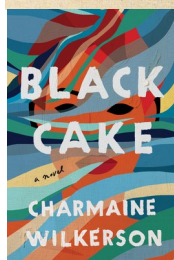
Staff Recommendations, New Releases.

Holly Hendricks recommends.

Her Hidden Genius by Marie Benedict. This story of Dr. Rosalind Franklin had me cheering in support, shaking my fist in anger and ultimately weeping in despair. Dr. Franklin's life was unique – certainly one of a kind. She blazed her own trail, just as much as Lewis and Clark did, with all the hazards a dangerous journey inevitably faces. Her life and legacy teach us what it means to lead a meaningful existence.



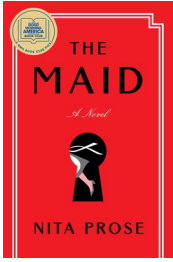
The Great Mrs. Elias by Barbara Chase-Riboud. This book left me feeling strangely uplifted. It describes the life of a unique woman who started out with very few resources. She was subjected to harms and hurts and made choices and chose paths that turned out to be brilliant and stupid. The cultural expectations worked against her most of the time and she suffered greatly because society was one of the challenges she was up against. Hannah, like most of us, wanted security. She found it. Ultimately, she lived her life the way she wanted. She was comfortable with who she was and how she got there. She was at peace with herself. How many people can say that? I very much recommend this book. Not because we should live our lives as Hannah lived hers, but because her story has lessons for us today.



Black Cake by Charmaine Wilkerson. This is a novel about a family that so resonated with me I believed they were my family. Starting in the Caribbean, I felt like I could taste and smell the salt air and feel the warm tropical breeze on my skin. The author magically describes this world. We live the lives of three generations of people – all with their faults. They make choices and are the recipients of other people's choices. They suffer consequences. We are immersed in the power of family recipes and how food can be a connection to both people and place. My background couldn't be more different than those in this novel, but they were so similar to my experience that I was able to connect with their story. Charmaine Wilkerson has written a wonderful book that shows us how a family grounded in love can navigate the slings and arrows life invariably throws our way, growing stronger as individuals and as a family. I just wish she had included a recipe for Black Cake.

Staff Recommendations, New Releases.

Deon recommends.

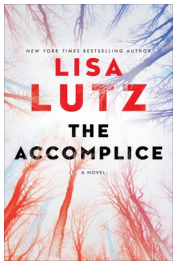


The Maid by Nita Prose is an interesting story that combines unique characters with a clever plot.

Molly Gray has difficulty interpreting the nuances of social interaction, has a tendency to blurt out things obviously true but wholly inappropriate for comment. Until recently her grandmother helped her navigate the ins and outs of human behavior. The two women shared an apartment and were devoted to each other, but her grandmother recently died so Molly is on her own regarding how to comport herself.

She works as a maid in a tony hotel, the Regency Grand, a job she enjoys. Molly likes order, she likes things clean and tidy, she feels accomplishment in returning a messy room to a state of pristine comfort. She has a friend in the kitchen, Juan Manuel, and a crush on Rodney. Molly has surmised that to most of the guests, the maid is almost invisible. She is good at her job; being a maid doesn't call on her to have a lot of sparkling repartee and she enjoys restoring order.

What her job doesn't prepare her for is murder. The Regency Grand has a lot of well-heeled customers. People important in the financial pages and the society pages of leading newspapers. One of them, Mr. Black, is dead in the penthouse, a room Molly routinely cleans. Discovering him in this condition is way outside Molly's normal duties. Once the police get involved it is clear Molly is caught in troubled waters. This is an absolutely charming mystery; Molly is a delightful character intent on putting things right.

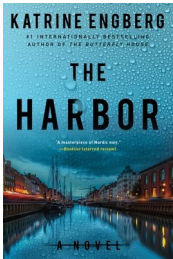


The Accomplice by Lisa Lutz is, like all of her books, vastly entertaining, well written, and a joy to read.

Luna is serious, secretive, and careful about what she reveals. Owen is a golden boy, at least for a time, someone everyone wants to be around, quick witted and inquisitive. In college they have one of the strangest "meet cutes" in literature. Thereafter it is Luna and Owen, inseparable besties. They never move the relationship beyond a solid friendship, although people are prone to wonder. Why can't a man and woman just be really good friends after all? The friendship survives the tragic death of one of their inner circle, although it leaves a lasting mark on both of them.

Years later both are married, their spouses playing second fiddle to their tight friendship. When Owen's wife Irene is murdered, things start to unravel. Luna has always had dark secrets she does her best to keep hidden. Now it turns out Owen may have a few of his own. People they are close to do tend to turn up dead under suspicious circumstances. How well can you truly know another person? Will Owen and Luna keep the friendship they have cherished for so many years? Or is the death of Irene and subsequent revelations about to part them.

Any book by Lisa Lutz is pure fun to read. ***The Accomplice*** is a pleasure, touching on the bonds of friendship while telling a story with so many twists, turns and fun asides that you won't want to put it down until you find out what happens with Luna and Owen.



The Harbor by Katrine Engberg strikes just the right balance between evocative descriptions of Copenhagen, the lives of the detectives, and a crime with a truly inventive plot.

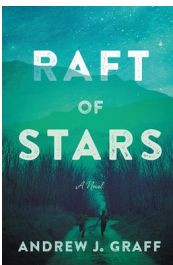
Detective Jeppe Korner is a bit obsessive about germs (boy howdy is this case ever going to give him pause!), he is dating Sara, a fellow detective, and trying to forge some common ground with her two young daughters.

Detective Annette Warner has three cool border collies, and a toddler lovingly watched over by her husband. She loves to take long walks in fields with her dogs gamboling about. She is also a dedicated detective, determined, even at great risk, to bring the bad guys to justice.

They are called in when Oscar, the 15 year old son of a prominent couple in the art world, goes missing. The parents thought he was staying the night with a friend, but no one has seen him since he left school the day before. They discovered him missing when he failed to show up in the morning and a strange note was left in their luxury apartment. The first hours in a case involving a missing child are critical. The chance of finding him alive diminishes with each passing hour.

The days roll on, Korner and Warner are following up every lead, frantic to find the boy. As they investigate, the case becomes stranger and stranger, heading in dark and disturbing directions. Esther from *The Tenant* is in the story, she is an interesting character and makes a contribution, her pages are good. I hope she is involved in future books.

Now Available in Paperback.

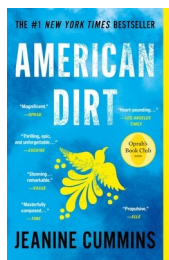


Raft of Stars by Andrew J. Graff is set in Wisconsin. Ten year old Fisher "Fish" Branson and Dale "Bread" Breadwin have a close friendship forged over summers Fish spends with his Grandfather, Teddy. They hang out together, riding bikes, doing boy stuff, but Fish doesn't come into Bread's home. Until one day, knowing his friend is facing another beating, he steps inside with tragic consequences.

Not knowing what to do, the two boys flee, heading into the dark forest that stretches all the way to the Canadian border. Fish tells Bread they need to go to the Army post where his father will take care of them, a plan surely doomed to failure, as Fish is well aware. With a raft, they take to the river, but the wilderness is, well, wild. Their escape route is not without it's terrors, ahead lies white water and a deep gorge. Not to mention the denizens of the forest, armed with tooth and claw.

Fish's grandfather who knows every inch of the wilderness, his mother Miranda, the town Sheriff, Cal, who is not altogether certain of his future in law enforcement, the ancient deputy, the Sheriff's might be girlfriend, Tiffany, all set out to find the boys. All these people clamber about in the wilderness, with differing degrees of bushcraft, desperate to find the boys. Meanwhile the escapees continue to elude capture.

This is a story with a lot of heart, darkness but humor too. Graff's writing makes you feel like you are right there in the woods, occasionally laughing, urging the gang of unlikely rescuers on to save the boys.



American Dirt by Jeanine Cummins is the story of a woman's desperate attempt to seek refuge with her child in the USA, it packs an emotional wallop. And this is only one story, each of the refugees seeking a better life is fleeing serious danger or deprivation to make them face the hardships of the long trek to freedom.

Lydia is a middle-class woman, happily married with a beloved son, Luca. She enjoys her work, a bookshop where she can share the pleasure in reading with others. Her husband, Sebastian, is a journalist. When through a story he writes, they run afoul of a drug cartel, the violence is terrible. Sebastian and their extended family are slaughtered. Lydia and Luca flee. There is no time to prepare, they just run. The reach of sadistic cartels is incredible, no place is safe.

This is the story of their journey, of the people they meet along the way, and the desperation that propels them toward the USA border. It brings home the humanity, need, and dignity of those seeking shelter. It is also an edge of your seat thriller told with heart.. Cummins has created a plethora of characters the reader will care about, complex, human, and worthy of note.

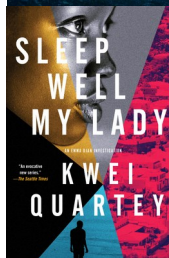
Publishers bid on the rights to this story. Amy Einhorn won, she is one of the best editors in publishing, if Amy finds merit in a book, that merit is real. Oprah selected it for her Book Club. Yet the Hispanic community has railed against the story. Some believe it should have been written by a Hispanic, that Cummins sensationalized the story, that it does not reflect their personal journey and that publishers should publish more authors who have experienced being a refugee. While I sympathize with the Hispanic community wanting to control their narrative, I continue to believe **American Dirt** is an excellent novel.

If authors must write only about their ethnic group or gender, and only stories about events they personally experienced, the limits on creativity would be enormous. Women would not be able to write stories where the protagonist was a man. Authors of historical fiction would have to give up writing as they could not have personally experienced WWI or ancient Rome. And science fiction authors would have to give up as none of them are space aliens or have experienced travel in space (at least I think none of them are space aliens!).

American Dirt is fiction. That said, there are many articles on the violence of the drug cartels, the refugees fleeing them. Don Winslow wrote a trilogy about the cartels culminating in **The Border**. To have been a refugee, to experience that danger and deprivation, must affect the rest of a person's life. They may not see their individual experience in **American Dirt**. It is also true that authors who write using another gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, etc. should absolutely do so respectfully. Craig Johnson, author of the New York Times Bestselling Sheriff Walt Longmire series, Jane Kirkpatrick author of many historic fictions, and David Heska, Wanbli Weiden author of **Winter Counts** had a Zoom event with us; **A Conversation on Writing Native** discussing the use of Native American characters, history, and culture in writing. You can watch a video of the event at sunriverbooks.com.



Legends of the North Cascades by Jonathan Evison. Dave Cartwright was a high school football legend, the best player in his coach's long career. But Dave was too small for the big time, the college offers didn't come. He joined the Marine Corp, married his high school sweetheart, and spent three tours of duty in Iraq, tours that fundamentally changed him. Out of the Marine Corp, he is unsettled, hates his job, and his marriage is falling apart. The one bright spot in his life is his 7 year old daughter, Bella. When tragedy strikes, Dave takes Bella away from a society he no longer finds admirable, to live a more authentic life. He discovered a sheltered cave to call home, high up in the jagged mountains of the Pacific Northwest, miles away from the trailhead. Once there, Bella starts to experience another world, she retreats into the lives of a mother and son in the harsh, unforgiving era of the ice age. The two stories play out in the grandeur of the wilderness of the Pacific Northwest

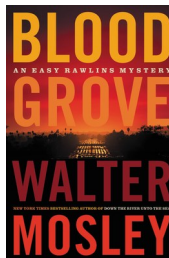


Sleep Well My Lady by Kwei Quartey. Emma Djan always wanted to follow in her father's footsteps as a homicide cop. Circumstances denied her that ambition, now she is a PI and glad to have the job. Lady Araba learned to sew from her Aunt Dele, she took that knowledge and a love of art into fashion design, becoming successful and wealthy. The money was possibly part of the attraction when talk show host Augustus Seeza courted her. Hard living and free spending were rumored to be causing him financial issues. It was not a match made to succeed, Lady Araba's family was deeply religious and set against the match. Shortly after their breakup, Lady Araba was murdered, her driver the suspect in the crime. A year passes before Aunt Dele, not satisfied with the driver as the killer and suspicious of Augustus, contacts Emma to find out the truth. Quartey's series shows an interesting view of Ghana with a strong female protagonist.



The House on Vesper Sands by Paraic O'Donnell is set in 1893 and brings together a group of interesting characters. Octavia Hillingdon is a young journalist, sort of a Nellie Bly type of gal. Inspector Cutter is intelligent and insightful, he does not suffer fools gladly (actually doesn't suffer them at all!). Gideon Bliss is a Cambridge student summoned to London by a message pleading for help from his uncle, a clergyman.

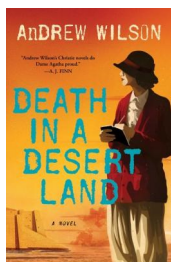
A seamstress jumps from the second story window of the home of a wealthy man, a message has been sewn into her skin. Octavia is determined to get the story. Gideon's uncle and a young woman he tried to assist are both missing. There have been other missing young women. Could there be a connection? The threads of their stories come together with just a wee dash of paranormal and a bit of gothic flavor.



Blood Grove by Walter Mosley is set in 1969. Easy Rawlins is helping out a Vietnam vet who was camping in the hills around the citrus groves just outside LA when he heard a disturbance and discovered a man beating a woman. The young man intervened and fears he may have killed someone. He wants Rawlins to find out what happened. It isn't a lot to go on, but Easy Rawlins has sympathy for a fellow veteran.

Life has been treating Rawlins better of late, he is in the chips, able to afford an office and staff, living in nice digs, and his adopted daughter, Feather, is growing up to be a lovely young woman. Complications ensue when her white uncle shows up wanting to meet her.

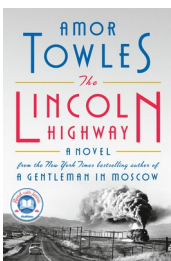
February is a great month for reading! It is still dark early and cold too. Spend the evenings in a comfortable chair with a good book then discuss the story with other passionate readers. Our Book Clubs meet via Zoom on Monday's at 6 PM. If you would like to join a discussion, email sunriverbooks@sunriverbooks.com and I will send you a link the weekend before the Book Club meeting.



February 7 Mystery Book Club discusses ***Death in a Desert Land*** by Andrew Wilson. Dame Agatha Christie knew a thing or two about murder, after all she wrote 66 murder mysteries and 14 short stories. In Wilson's excellent series, the Foreign Office recognized young Agatha's talents and has been putting her to good use solving murders.

Death in a Desert Land opens with Davison of the Foreign Office sending Agatha off to Iraq to investigate the death of Gertrude Bell (if you haven't read about Gertrude Bell, she was a fascinating woman much involved in the creation of Iraq). It seems a letter has been found that suggests Gertrude Bell may have been poisoned, rather than an accidental overdose of sleeping pills. Agatha is well versed in poisons (she passed the Examination of the Society of Apothecaries while working in a Red Cross Hospital during WWI). The letter mentioned UR where Leonard Woolley and his wife Katherine are in the midst of a dig. It is a good place to start, Bell was involved in procuring items from the dig for the Museum in Baghdad. They don't want to raise suspicions, so Agatha is sent as a tourist whose interest in archeology was piqued by reading a recent article featuring the dig. Of course, by 1928 she is well known and will be received without question.

When Agatha arrives, she finds the camp filled with tensions. Mr. and Mrs. Archer, a deeply religious American couple, with their beautiful daughter Sarah, are there to decide on donating money to the Woolleys to continue their work in the hopes they find something of religious significance. Katherine is mercurial, prone to wild swings of mood and dramatics. She is also quite attractive and does not enjoy being upstaged by the younger woman, Sarah. Harry Miller, the dig photographer, is a good-looking charmer whose presence throws fuel on the jealousy smoldering between the two women. Cynthia Jones works as Woolley's assistant, trying to be everywhere at once calming trouble as it crops up. Father Burrows is an expert on cuneiform tablets, spending his days translating. Lawrence McRae, the architect, is there with his troubled nephew Cecil who has quite a crush on Sarah. It is a volatile mixture, in an exotic location cut off by hours from any authority. Mayhem is sure to follow bringing new dangers. A clever mystery using real figures from history



February 21 Fiction Book Club discusses ***The Lincoln Highway*** by Amor Towles, author of ***A Gentleman in Moscow***. His new book is a road trip, a swashbuckling adventure, and a lot fun to read! Four young men set out on a blazing Odyssey along the Lincoln Highway in June 1954. Traveling along the historic highway, their journeys are all different, propelled by hopes, dreams, and tragedies.

Emmett Watson was just released from juvenile detention where he served time for the serious crime of killing a man. He is driven home to Nebraska by the warden, who sees something he likes in the sober young man, feels he has a good chance of putting the past behind him and being a stand-up citizen. While Emmett was locked up his father died and the family farm is being foreclosed. Emmett wants a fresh start, somewhere else, somewhere he can walk down the street unrecognized. Billy is a precocious 8-year-old, bright beyond his years, with dreams as big as the sky. He is packed and ready to go when his big brother Emmett arrives. Billy, a determined child, easily persuades Emmett their new home should be in the golden state of California. He has a plan.

Duchess and Woolly hid in the warden's car, Emmett is taken by surprise when they show up on his father's farm with a whole new set of plans and dreams. They have business they want to take care of in New York. Duchess is long on good intentions and short on successful long-term planning. He means well, but complications generally ensue. Woolly marches to the beat of a different drummer, a kind soul whose lack of understanding how the world works can lead to trouble, such as a stay in juvenile detention.

I double dare you not to feel for all four of the boys, as life tosses them thither and yon. Towles lovely prose and ready wit makes this a novel you will want to keep and reread often. The characters will stay with you long after the last page.

Upcoming Book Club Dates for Monday Evenings at 6:00 PM

Everyone is welcome, Meetings are held via Zoom Mondays at 6 PM.

Times and dates are tentative due to current situation.

March

March 7 ***The Delightful Life of a Suicide Pilot*** by Colin Cotterell **Mystery Book Club.**

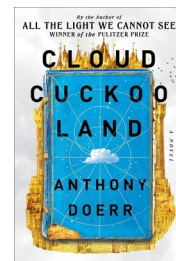
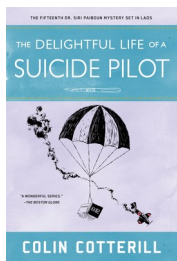
March 28 ***Cloud Cuckoo Land*** by Anthony Doerr **Fiction Book Club.**

April

April ***The Satapur Moonstone*** by Sujata Massey **Mystery Book Club.**

April ***The Seed Keeper*** by Diana Wilson the 2022 **Novel Idea** selection by the Deschutes County Library **Fiction Book Club.**

Comment on book clubs, look up future book clubs, or find more information at Sunriverbooks.com



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