



Sunriver Books & Music

January 2023 Newsletter

Sunriverbooks.com
541-593-2525



Happy New Year!

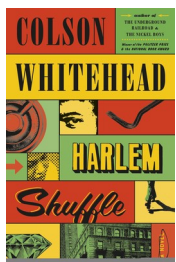
May 2023 be a kinder, gentler year filled with peace, joy, and good health!

Book Clubs are a great way to meet other members of the community who enjoy reading. Friendships are formed, pleasant times are had discussing books. Ideally Book Clubs will introduce you to new authors, different books to discover, and expand the novels you read. Especially in winter, when the cold nights just invite you to snuggle up next to the fire in a favorite chair with a cat on your lap, a dog beside you, and a hot cup of cocoa or a glass of wine reading a book that lets you step into another world for a brief time.

At Sunriver Books we have great Book Club members, friendly, intelligent, fun people, who meet in person and via Zoom. They put together an interesting and diverse group of books to discuss. The lineup for 2023 is up at sunriverbooks.com. Join us to discuss interesting books, everyone is welcome.

In December our Book Clubs vote on their favorite selections of the year. Here are their favorites of the books discussed in 2022.

Winners of the voting in Fiction Book Club.

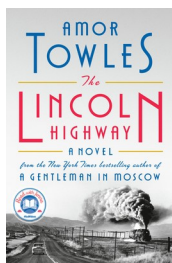


Harlem Shuffle by Colson Whitehead. Ray Carney is a perfect illustration of how family can lead you to trouble just as surely as rain clouds bring rain. Ray runs a business selling low-cost furniture and other assorted items, he is flexible about the provenance of some of his stock.

Ray's father danced on the wrong side of the law pretty regularly, he wasn't going to win father of the year either. Thus, Ray often lived with his aunt and his cousin Freddie. While Ray grew up vowing to be nothing like his father, Freddie was somewhat charmed by his uncle. Ray went to school, then into business, Freddie hung out with the wrong crowd, never settled into a legit job, and made his way as a minor crook.

Ray is a family man with a wife and children, his in-laws think their daughter could have done better. He is determined to be a good husband and father, to do better by his family than his father. He works hard, strives to be a good member of the community, and dreams of moving into nicer digs on a better street. He wants his family to have a good life.

But the ties of family extend to the cousin he grew up with. It is Freddie, who gets Ray involved in all sorts of difficulty, think mob guys and dirty cops. Colson Whitehead has written a caper novel, a lively story of New York in the 1960's. It is infused with humor and action while also examining the big issues of race, family, loyalty, and power.



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.

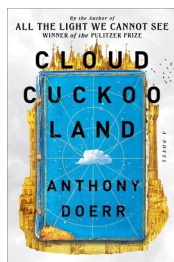
Emmett Watson was just released from juvenile detention where he served time for the serious crime of killing a man. He is driven home to Nebraska by the warden, who sees something he likes in the sober young man, feels he has a good chance of putting the past behind him and being a stand-up citizen. 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.

Winners of the voting in Fiction Book Club.



Cloud Cuckoo Land by Anthony Doerr, author of the Pulitzer Prize winning **All The Light We Cannot See**, is an ambitious novel that reaches back across the ages and into the future.

Lives lived centuries apart are bound together by an ancient book written by Diogenes. In a distant future Konstance sits in isolation in a ship headed for a far-off planet. On scraps of paper, she inscribes passages from the book. In 2020 Zeno, the 86-year-old translator of Diogenes book, is in an Idaho library with a group of children preparing a play based on the story. Meanwhile, unaware of the theatric rehearsal going on within, Seymour plans an act of violence to serve a higher cause. In 1439 in Constantinople Anna sits by her sister, Maria, in the sewing room where a Nun watches over the orphans as they work from dawn to dusk. In 1453 Omeir was plucked from his village along with the two oxen he raised from calves to serve the Sultan in his siege of Constantinople.

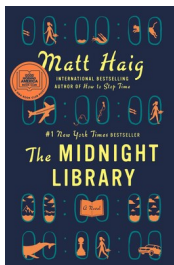
Each of them faces adversity and is comforted by Diogenes story of a young man who yearns to be become a bird to reach the **Cloud Cuckoo Land** in the sky. Doerr takes the reader into a world of infinite possibilities that stretches across time into the dreams that bind us. Anthony Doerr is a remarkably sensitive and talented author, each of the characters is developed with empathy and insight.



The Lacuna by Barbara Kingsolver is generously filled with important historic moments. Harrison William Shepherd's life takes a drastic change when he is 12 and his gorgeous mother, Salome, moves them to her lover's Mexican hacienda on Isla Pixol where the air is rent by the shriek of Howler monkeys. A far cry from the Washington DC life the young lad had enjoyed with his American father. Other than the fright of the Howler monkeys it is a beautiful place. Swimming in the sea, Harrison finds a lacuna, a secret underwater cave. He loves stories and words, keeps track of his days in a journal.

The next move will take the pair to Mexico City where Salome continues her quest for the right man, and Harrison finds employment with the artists Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo. Thus, he comes in contact with their house guest, the Russian Leon Trotsky. This is an association doomed to end in sadness. When Trotsky is assassinated, Harrison flees the howling mob of reporters and at 24 returns to the USA where he writes Mexican historic adventure novels.

He is just in time to come under the scrutiny of McCarthyism. Again attracting the attention of a howling mob of press. The Harrison they create in their reporting is a far cry from the real man. He wants close friends, privacy, and quiet, not notoriety. This is a lovely novel about a kind man that brings the events of history into intimate focus and tells a rousing story.

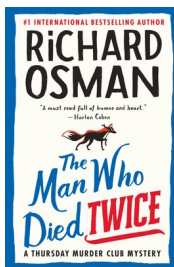


The Midnight Library by Matt Haig. Nora Seed is in a bad way when the story opens. As a young girl her future was full of bright promise, by her mid thirties she is alone, working in a dead-end job and regretting the opportunities not seized, the people she let down. Things are about to get worse. When she is let go from her job and suffers a personal loss, it is just too much, the last straw.

Nora Seed wants to die. She doesn't want to let anyone else down anymore, least of all herself. She takes steps to achieve that goal, but instead of finding herself dead, she arrives at **The Midnight Library**. In this strange place, between life and death, a library is full of books with the lives Nora could have led if she made different choices. She can try them on, see if the choice she didn't make would have been better, or worse. She can try to fix the choices she regrets.

One of my favorite poems is Robert Frost's **The Road Not Taken**. It concludes thusly. *Two roads diverged in a wood, and I – I took the one less travelled by, and that has made all the difference.* What if you could go back to that divergence in the road, go the other way? Nora is about to find out. **The Midnight Library** is a story that leaves you feeling good, glad you read it.

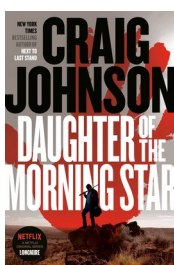
Winners of the voting in Mystery Book Club.



The Man Who Died Twice by Richard Osman continues the exploits of **The Thursday Murder Club** with Elizabeth, Joyce, Ibrahim, and Ron once again in the thick of multiple investigations.

Elizabeth's old life comes calling in the guise of a letter from a dead man. At least the last time she saw him, he was very dead. Now she has a letter requesting a meeting. Strange occurrences are not unknown to Elizabeth, so of course she goes. Someone once close to her needs help, he may have lifted a considerable number of diamonds from a powerful, deadly man. Soon her old shop, MI5, is once again keeping tabs on her as she tries to find a way out of a desperate situation. Of course, if there are diamonds to be found, that could be a pleasant reward.

Meanwhile a member of **The Thursday Murder Club** will face danger, and the gang will come together to take care of one of their own. Good piece of advice, do not mess with a member of **The Thursday Murder Club**! Steven Spielberg's production company will be filming **The Thursday Murder Club**.

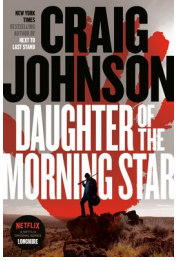


Daughter of the Morning Star by Craig Johnson has Sheriff Walt Longmire and Henry Standing Bear traveling from Wyoming to Lame Deer Montana. Tribal Police Chief Lolo Long is a tough woman, a combat veteran of the Middle East, with a hair trigger temper. She is also the first woman to be immune to Henry Standing Bear's considerable charms (read **As The Crow Flies**). She is concerned for the safety of her niece, Jaya.

About a year ago, Jaya's older sister disappeared driving home from Billings Montana. Jaya is a star player on the Lame Deer High School Basketball team. College and a bright future beckons, if she can keep it together. Since her sister disappeared, Jaya has been getting into trouble and receiving death threats. Lolo worries the death threats may be connected to her sister's disappearance. She asks Sheriff Walt Longmire and Henry Standing Bear for help.

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Winners of the voting in Mystery Book Club.

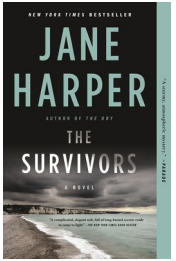


Once Longmire starts investigating, the action heats up! Dead bodies accrue, Longmire even takes over coaching when the basketball coach is attacked. Delving into the goings on around Jaya, he runs afoul of some seriously dangerous bad guys, landing himself in mortal danger.

Native American women have been disappearing. In 2021 the FBI National Crime Information Center reported 5203 missing Native American girls and women. Craig Johnson writes with heart bringing attention to this tragic situation.

The Longmire series is great fun to read, the characters come to feel like good friends, each new novel an opportunity to check in and see what they have been up to since the previous book. Wyoming is central to the stories, Craig Johnson lives in the land he so eloquently writes about, he sees the wide open spaces and lonesome beauty of the Wyoming landscape on a daily basis.

Craig Johnson's Longmire series was filmed, becoming a hugely successful drama with Robert Taylor, Lou Diamond Phillips, and Katee Sackhoff in starring roles. Fans still yearn for a return of the popular series.

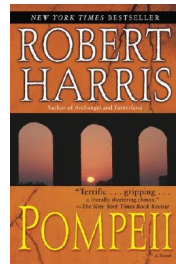


The Survivors by Jane Harper. Evelyn Bay is a small community on the coast of Tasmania. Always the murmur or crash of the sea, as its moods shift, swiftly changing from calm to catastrophic. It is the sea that on a stormy night takes the life of two young men, sending Kieran into exile over his role in the death of his brother Finn. Gabby, went missing that night, leaving a community to wonder what fate befell her.

Over the years Kieran builds a life in Sydney. Mia, he loves with all his heart, and they have a new baby, Audrey. But the demands of family responsibility call him back to Tasmania. His father is sinking into dementia, so Kieran returns to help his mother pack up the family home. Kieran is barely in Evelyn Bay again, when Bronte, a young waitress and aspiring artist, is found drowned. She was an attractive young woman with a bright future, drawn to photographing the coast, especially **The Survivors**, a memorial sculpture of a shipwreck.

Mia observes the cracks in Kieran as he encounters people from the past, faces too many memories. Ash and Sean, were his friends, they knew him his whole life, until he left. Olivia, Gabby's big sister, works as a waitress and is dating Ash. There will be repercussions from this trip through memory lane.

Moody and atmospheric, Harper makes the wild sea and coastal landscape a character in her tale of what happened on that fateful night a dozen years ago and how it has echoed down the years.

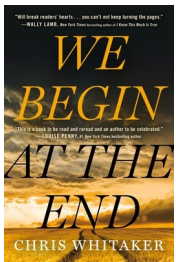


Pompeii by Robert Harris, an author known for excellent historic fiction. August 24, 79 AD Mount Vesuvius rained down rocks, fire, and death on the city of **Pompeii**. The story begins two days before the cataclysmic destruction of the city.

Attilius is delighted when he is offered the position of Aquarius in charge of the Aqua Augusta. He comes from a line of distinguished aqueduct engineers and is please to accept this opportunity, requiring that he head toward the Bay of Neapolis immediately, as in that minute, to begin the duties of supervising this most challenging aqueduct. The Augusta carries water from the Apennines around Mount Vesuvius to the cities dotting the bay. It traverses difficult terrain over a long distance carrying water to thirsty cities with no other source.

On arrival the young man is presented with more difficulties than the length and terrain of the aqueduct. What happened to the prior Aquarius? Exomnius just vanished. One day he was at work, as usual, the next he was gone without giving any notice. Leaving the aqueduct with no one in charge, hence the need for Attilius to immediately undertake his new duties. And why does the overseer. Corax, take such an instant dislike to Attilius? Before he has time to settle in, a crisis occurs, something wrong with the aqueduct. Somewhere along the line there is a break. If it isn't fixed within the next two days, the reservoir will run dry and the city will be without water.

He needs assistance. He was warned before leaving Rome that the admiral could be difficult. Admiral Pliny is a learned man, the author of many books on the natural world. Attilius will need his help. Of course, little do they know, the condition of the aqueduct will be dwarfed with in a couple days by the fury of the mountain.



We Begin At the End by Chris Whitaker. Meet the Outlaw Duchess Day Radley, she is 13 and fierce in the protection of her little brother Robin and gorgeous damaged mother Star. She will stay with you, much as I have remembered another young girl, Scout, from Harper Lee's **To Kill A Mockingbird**. Powerful is way too small a word for this amazing novel where even the villains break your heart with their tortured humanity.

Duchess holds her head up and gets on with the business of caring for her little clan, defending Robin from the casual cruelty of children, trying to mend her fragile, broken mother. Walker, the local cop, keeps watch over the little family. He remembers Star from better times, when they were high school students and the world seemed big and wide, flush with possibilities. That was 30 years ago, before Vincent King killed Sissy, Star's little sister. Now Vincent is being released from prison, and the past is about to come calling in this small coastal California town.

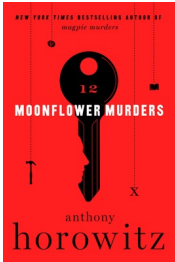
As her world unravels, Duchess does her best to fiercely protect her family. But she is only a child, filled with rage at the injustice of her situation, trying her best to navigate decisions that would be thorny for an adult and are way beyond the ken of a child. She makes mistakes, but dusts herself off, get up and keeps trying.

Tragedy and humor blend, in the best of ways in this beautifully written novel. The Outlaw Duchess Day Radley will have your heart.

Happy New Year! May 2023 be a year filled with peace, wellbeing, and happiness! Our Book Clubs vote on their favorites of the year and each January we release the winners in our newsletter.

January begins a new year, with new hopes and beginnings, the days start to lengthen giving more time to be outside in the sun. The evenings are still long and cold, the best place to be is in a snug chair, preferably with a cat on your lap and a dog by your side, reading a book. Then get together with a Book Club for a rousing discussion. It is fun to hear how others have responded to a book, to hear other viewpoints. Our Book Clubs have a great group of people. Everyone is welcome.

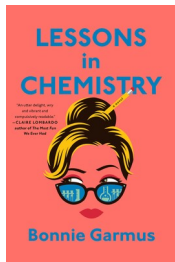
If you would like to attend a discussion, email me at sunriverbooks@sunriverbooks.com. We have Book Club discussions in person at Sunriver Books and via Zoom. Book Clubs meet on Mondays, via Zoom at 6 PM and in person at 4:30 PM. The in-person Book Clubs are meeting at a new time. With winter evenings being icy and cold after dark, Book Club members felt an earlier meeting time would be preferable. We may or may not go back to 6 PM, or something in between once Daylight Savings Time starts.



January 9 via Zoom and January 16 in person Mystery Book Club discusses **Moonflower Murders** by Anthony Horowitz. **Maggie Murders** was absolutely brilliant! **Moonflower Murders** is the second in this clever series and does not disappoint.

Susan Ryeland is living the good life, albeit without much free time and little recompense. But what is there to complain about? She is on Crete! With all that luminous green-blue water and a handsome Greek, Andreas. Of course, working round the clock at their small hotel is not so much fun. She misses her London life in publishing.

A well to do couple approach her about their missing daughter, explaining that there might be clues in one of Alan Conway's Atticus Pund mysteries, a series she edited. They are willing to pay major dollars for Susan to return to England, re-read the book, and help in the search for the missing woman. Susan thought she was finished with Alan Conway, after all the man is dead, but she is easily persuaded to return to London and dig into the mystery. Perhaps she should have reflected on how much trouble and chaos anything related to Conway could involve. But never mind, it is to our benefit that she took the case, thus giving the reader another great book to enjoy

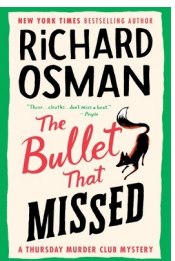


January 23 via Zoom and January 30 in person, Fiction Book Club discusses **Lessons in Chemistry** by Bonnie Garmus. Comedy and chemistry mix and the sparks fly for a spirited romp of a novel, pure fun to read. In the 1960's it was rare for a woman to be a successful chemist, the men firmly held the reins of power and didn't plan on relinquishing anytime soon. Elizabeth Zott's attempt at a successful career is stymied early, before she even achieves the doctorate degree necessary to be taken seriously in the field.

She never planned on children, but in 1961 that is where she finds herself, a single mother putting notes in her little girl's lunch. Although these are not necessarily the regular sort of mommy notes. Such as "*Play sports at recess but do not automatically let the boys win.*" Then again, she hadn't planned on falling in love either. Calvin Evans is every bit as eccentric as Elizabeth, a brilliant scientist with an international reputation. Until he meets Elizabeth, his twin passions were science and rowing. He didn't think he would ever meet a woman with the same passion for chemistry, Elizabeth was a shock to his system. They both worked at Hastings Research Institute. Calvin the star of the establishment, Elizabeth the woman given zippo respect.

Life can be topsy turvy, taking unexpected turns both good and bad. Thus, she finds herself alone with her child and an extremely intelligent dog she has taught quite an extensive vocabulary (the dog is major cool!). Trying to make ends meet is difficult, she is not paid well or even nearly equal to the men at Hastings and is given no recognition for her work. Her whole life has been focused on being a scientist. However, needs must. So, when the opportunity arises, she takes the job of a TV personality, a celebrity chef. Elizabeth justifies her new job by the rational that cooking is chemistry. She eschews any of the usual TV frippery, giving serious presentations on preparing healthy meals while causing the TV execs, who believe all that frippery essential, heartburn. The show, to the surprise of the aforementioned execs, is a success.

Can a woman whose heart and soul are involved with serious science find happiness as a TV celebrity? I don't know, but the book sure takes the reader on a wild ride discovering how things will sort out for Elizabeth Zott! What a great character and entertaining novel



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

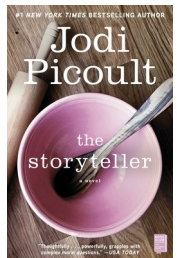
Everyone is welcome, Meetings are held in person at 4:30 & via Zoom at 6 PM on Mondays.
Times and dates are tentative due to current situation.

Hooray for 2023, A New Year brings new possibilities!

February

Feb 6 via Zoom & Feb 13 in person, **The Bullet That Missed** by Richard Osman, Mystery Book Club.
February 20 via Zoom & February 27 in person, **The Storyteller** by Jodi Picoult, Fiction Book Club.

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



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