

We had our first afternoon Book Chat at the Lingonberry Llama on Tuesday, November 12th at 2:00 p.m.

Here are the books we talked about:

All Souls by Deborah Harkness which includes "Discovery of Witches", "Shadow of Night", and "The Book of Life." Here's from Amazon: "Diana Bishop, a young scholar and descendant of witches, discovers a long-lost and enchanted alchemical manuscript deep in Oxford's Bodleian Library. Its reappearance summons a fantastical underworld, which she must navigate with a vampire, Matthew Clairmont." This was also made into a television series on AMC.

"Darius the Great is Not Okay" by Adib Khorram is Belleville's Community Read. It's a young adult novel about an American born, Iranian/American boy with depression whose family travels to Iran to visit his mother's family. The reader learns a lot about Iranian culture, religions, and friendship, as well as living with depression. The author was at Belleville High School last week. A sequel is coming out.

"The Huntress" by Kate Quinn is a fascinating historical novel about a battle-haunted English journalist and a Russian female bomber pilot who join forces to track the Huntress, a Nazi war criminal gone to ground in America."

"A Better Man: a Chief Inspector Gamache novel" by Louise Penny- "It's Gamache's first day back as head of the homicide department, a job he temporarily shares with his previous second-in-command, Jean-Guy Beauvoir. Flood waters are rising across the province. In the middle of the turmoil a father approaches Gamache, pleading for help in finding his daughter. As crisis piles upon crisis, Gamache tries to hold off the encroaching chaos, and realizes the search for Vivienne Godin should be abandoned. But with a daughter of his own, he finds himself developing a profound, and perhaps unwise, empathy for her distraught father. Increasingly hounded by the question, *how would you feel...*, he resumes the search. As the rivers rise, and the social media onslaught against Gamache becomes crueler, a body is discovered. And in the tumult, mistakes are made."

Jeff Shaara writes great novels about American wars from the American revolution to Korea. "In *Rise to Rebellion* he captures the origins of the American Revolution as brilliantly as he depicted the Civil War in *Gods and Generals* and *The Last Full Measure*. Now he continues the amazing saga of how thirteen colonies became a nation, taking the conflict from kingdom and courtroom to the bold and bloody battlefields of war." His father wrote the Civil War Trilogy: "Gods and Generals", "The Killer Angels", and "The Last Full Measure."

"The Gilded Hour" by Sarah Donati -Historical fiction novel of two women physicians in 1890's New York. Fascinating portrayal of the times. The main plot is the doctors searching for an immigrant orphan in a city filled with poor and homeless children. The book is long but a great read. There is a sequel out now "Where the Light Enters."

"The Bear and the Nightingale" by Katherine Arden is based on Russian folk tales with a twist of magic. "Winter lasts most of the year at the edge of the Russian wilderness, and in the long nights, Vasilisa and her siblings love to gather by the fire to listen to their nurse's fairy tales. Above all, Vasya loves the story

of Frost, the blue-eyed winter demon. Wise Russians fear him, for he claims unwary souls, and they honor the spirits that protect their homes from evil. Then Vasya's widowed father brings home a new wife from Moscow. Fiercely devout, Vasya's stepmother forbids her family from honoring their household spirits, but Vasya fears what this may bring. And indeed, misfortune begins to stalk the village." This novel is the first of a trilogy.

"Oryx and Crake" by Margaret Atwood. "It is at once an unforgettable love story and a compelling vision of the future. Snowman, known as Jimmy before mankind was overwhelmed by a plague, is struggling to survive in a world where he may be the last human, and mourning the loss of his best friend, Crake, and the beautiful and elusive Oryx whom they both loved. In search of answers, Snowman embarks on a journey—with the help of the green-eyed Children of Crake—through the lush wilderness that was so recently a great city, until powerful corporations took mankind on an uncontrolled genetic engineering ride. Margaret Atwood projects us into a near future that is both all too familiar and beyond our imagining." This is the first of a trilogy but, this is far the best book. Atwood is famous for writing "A Handmaid's Tale" which now has a sequel "The Testaments."

In a similar vein is "The Sparrow" by Mary Doria Russell. "A visionary work that combines speculative fiction with deep philosophical inquiry, "The Sparrow" tells the story of a charismatic Jesuit priest and linguist, Emilio Sandoz, who leads a scientific mission entrusted with a profound task: to make first contact with intelligent extraterrestrial life. The mission begins in faith, hope, and beauty, but a series of small misunderstandings brings it to a catastrophic end." But never fear, there is a sequel, "Children of God." This novel is not for the faint of heart, it is quite graphic, but so moving.

Anne Patchett has a new book out, "The Dutch House." Several of us loved her "Bel Canto" and "State of Wonder" both set in South America.

We talked about Georgette Heyer who writes romance novels set in the Regency Period in England. The Regency was a period at the end of the [Georgian era](#), when [King George III](#) was deemed unfit to rule due to his illness, and his son [ruled as his proxy](#), as [prince regent](#). Upon George III's death in 1820, the prince regent became [King George IV](#). The term Regency (or Regency era) can refer to various stretches of time; some are longer than the decade of the formal Regency which lasted from 1811 to 1820. The period from 1795 to 1837, which includes the latter part of George III's reign and the reigns of his sons George IV and [William IV](#), is sometimes regarded as the Regency era, characterized by [distinctive trends in British architecture](#), [literature](#), [fashions](#), politics, and culture. It ended in 1837 when [Queen Victoria](#) succeeded William IV." Heyer's novels are fascinating because the women of that era were so restricted and yet they wielded power for themselves and their children. Her Regency titles include, "Cotillions" "The Reluctant Widow," and "Bluestocking Bride."

"Sisters: How the Personal Became Political in the Fight to Grant Women Civil Rights" by Jean Baker.

"They forever changed America: Lucy Stone, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Frances Willard, Alice Paul. At their revolution's start in the 1840s, a woman's right to speak in public was questioned. By its conclusion in 1920, the victory in woman's suffrage had also encompassed the most fundamental rights of citizenship: the right to control wages, hold property, to contract, to sue, to testify in court.

Their struggle was confrontational (women were the first to picket the White House for a political cause) and violent (women were arrested, jailed, and force-fed in prisons). And like every revolutionary before them, their struggle was personal.

For the first time, the eminent historian Jean H. Baker tellingly interweaves these women's private lives with their public achievements, presenting these revolutionary women in three dimensions, humanized, and marvelously approachable."

"A Gentleman in Moscow" by Amor Towles. "From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Rules of Civility*—a transporting novel about a man who is ordered to spend the rest of his life inside a luxury hotel. In 1922, Count Alexander Rostov is deemed an unrepentant aristocrat by a Bolshevik tribunal, and 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 entry 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." It is amazing that a 500-page novel about a man in a small room can be so engrossing.

"The Presidents Plane is Missing" by James Patterson and former president Bill Clinton. "The President Is Missing" confronts a threat so huge that it jeopardizes not just Pennsylvania Avenue and Wall Street, but all of America. Uncertainty and fear grip the nation. There are whispers of cyberterror and espionage and a traitor in the Cabinet. Even the President himself becomes a suspect, and then he disappears from public view . . . Set over the course of three days, *The President Is Missing* sheds a stunning light upon the inner workings and vulnerabilities of our nation. Filled with information that only a former Commander-in-Chief could know, this is the most authentic, terrifying novel to come along in many years." This was a recommendation submitted via email.