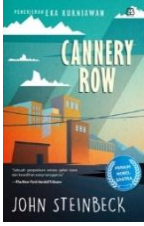


Lodi Library Book Club 2025

January – Thursday 1/9



Cannery Row by John Steinbeck – 191 pages

Unburdened by the material necessities of the more fortunate, the denizens of Cannery Row discover rewards unknown in more traditional society. Henry the painter sorts through junk lots for pieces of wood to incorporate into the boat he is building, while the girls from Dora Flood's bordello venture out now and then to enjoy a bit of sunshine. Lee Chong stocks his grocery with almost anything a man could want, and Doc, a young marine biologist who ministers to sick puppies and unhappy souls, unexpectedly finds true love.

Cannery Row is just a few blocks long, but the story it harbors is suffused with warmth, understanding, and a great fund of human values.

First published in 1945, *Cannery Row* focuses on the acceptance of life as it is--both the exuberance of community and the loneliness of the individual. John Steinbeck draws on his memories of the real inhabitants of Monterey, California, and interweaves their stories in this world where only the fittest survive--creating what is at once one of his most humorous and poignant works. In *Cannery Row*, John Steinbeck returns to the setting of Tortilla Flat to create another evocative portrait of life as it is lived by those who unabashedly put the highest value on the intangibles--human warmth, camaraderie, and love.

February – Thursday 2/13

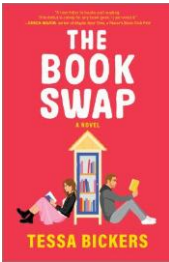


One of Our Kind – Nicole Yoon, 206 pages

Jasmyn and King Williams move their family to the planned Black utopia of Liberty, California hoping to find a community of like-minded people, a place where their growing family can thrive. King settles in at once, embracing the Liberty ethos, including the luxe wellness center at the top of the hill, which proves to be the heart of the community. But Jasmyn struggles to find her place. She expected to find liberals and social justice activists striving for racial equality, but Liberty residents seem more

focused on booking spa treatments and ignoring the world's troubles. Jasmyn's only friends in the community are equally perplexed and frustrated by most residents' outlook. Then Jasmyn discovers a terrible secret about Liberty and its founders. Frustration turns to dread as their loved ones start embracing the Liberty way of life. Will the truth destroy her world in ways she never could have imagined? A gripping thriller with wry, razor-sharp social commentary, *One of Our Kind* explores the ways in which freedom is complicated by the presumptions we make about ourselves and each other.

March – Thursday, 3/13

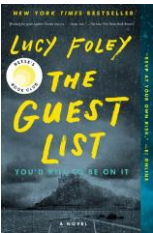


Book Swap – Tessa Bickers, 321 pages

Still reeling from a recent tragedy, Erin Connolly knows she needs to start living, but has no idea how. When she accidentally donates her favorite book—a heavily annotated copy of *To Kill a Mockingbird* containing a memento she can't be without—to a local little community library, she's devastated. But then the book turns up a week later, back in the library with fresh notes in the margins, along with an invitation in a copy of *Great Expectations* to meet her newfound pen pal. A life-changing

conversation, written only in the margins of beloved classic books, begins between Erin and her Mystery Man. Following each other through the pages of their favorite novels as the book exchange continues, they both begin to open up, falling into a friendship...and maybe something more. But Erin and her pen pal have a shared history that neither of them has guessed. Faced with painful reminders of the past—and the one person she swore never to forgive—Erin finds herself at a crossroads. One that could change her life forever.

April – Thursday, 4/10



The Guest List – Lucy Foley, 313 pages

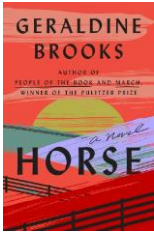
The bride – The plus one – The best man – The wedding planner – The bridesmaid – The body.

On an island off the coast of Ireland, guests gather to celebrate two people joining their lives together as one. The groom: handsome and charming, a rising television star. The bride: smart and ambitious, a magazine publisher. It's a wedding for a magazine, or for a celebrity: the designer dress, the remote location, the luxe party favors, the boutique

whiskey. The cell phone service may be spotty and the waves may be rough, but every detail has been expertly planned and will be expertly executed.

But perfection is for plans, and people are all too human. As the champagne is popped and the festivities begin, resentments and petty jealousies begin to mingle with the reminiscences and well wishes. The groomsmen begin the drinking game from their school days. The bridesmaid not-so-accidentally ruins her dress. The bride's oldest (male) friend gives an uncomfortably caring toast. And then someone turns up dead. Who didn't wish the happy couple well? And perhaps more important, why?

May – Thursday 5/8



Horse – Geraldine Brooks, 401 pages

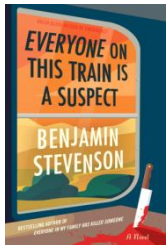
Kentucky, 1850. An enslaved groom named Jarret and a bay foal forge a bond of understanding that will carry the horse to record-setting victories across the South. When the nation erupts in civil war, an itinerant young artist who has made his name on paintings of the racehorse takes up arms for the Union. On a perilous night, he reunites with the stallion and his groom, very far from the glamor of any racetrack.

New York City, 1954. Martha Jackson, a gallery owner celebrated for taking risks on edgy contemporary painters, becomes obsessed with a nineteenth-century equestrian oil painting of mysterious provenance.

Washington, DC, 2019. Jess, a Smithsonian scientist from Australia, and Theo, a Nigerian-American art historian, find themselves unexpectedly connected through their shared interest in the horse—one studying the stallion’s bones for clues to his power and endurance, the other uncovering the lost history of the unsung Black horsemen who were critical to his racing success.

Based on the remarkable true story of the record-breaking thoroughbred Lexington, *Horse* is a novel of art and science, love and obsession, and our unfinished reckoning with racism.

June – Thursday 6/12



Everyone on This Train is a Suspect by Benjamin Stevenson - 320 pages

When the Australian Mystery Writers’ Society invited me to their crime-writing festival aboard the Ghan, the famous train between Darwin and Adelaide, I was hoping for some inspiration for my second book. Fiction, this time: I needed a break from real people killing each other. Obviously, that didn’t pan out.

The program is a who’s who of crime writing royalty: --the debut writer (me!) --the forensic science writer --the blockbuster writer --the legal thriller writer --the literary writer --the psychological suspense writer

But when one of us is murdered, the remaining authors quickly turn into five detectives. Together, we should know how to solve a crime. Of course, we should also know how to commit one. How can you find a killer when all the suspects know how to get away with murder?

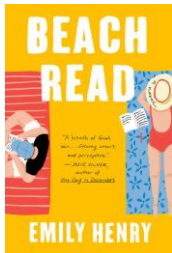
July – Thursday 7/10



The Island of Missing Trees – Elif Shafak, 353 pages

Two teenagers, a Greek Cypriot and a Turkish Cypriot, meet at a taverna on the island they both call home. In the taverna, hidden beneath garlands of garlic, chili peppers and creeping honeysuckle, Kostas and Defne grow in their forbidden love for each other. A fig tree stretches through a cavity in the roof, and this tree bears witness to their hushed, happy meetings and eventually, to their silent, surreptitious departures. The tree is there when war breaks out, when the capital is reduced to ashes and rubble, and when the teenagers vanish. Decades later, Kostas returns. He is a botanist looking for native species, but really, he's searching for lost love. Years later a Ficus carica grows in the back garden of a house in London where Ada Kazantzakis lives. This tree is her only connection to an island she has never visited--- her only connection to her family's troubled history and her complex identity as she seeks to untangle years of secrets to find her place in the world. A moving, beautifully written, and delicately constructed story of love, division, transcendence, history, and eco-consciousness, *The Island of Missing Trees* is Elif Shafak's best work yet.

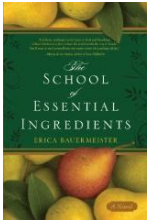
August – Thursday 8/14



Beach Read by Emily Henry - 361 pages

A romance writer who no longer believes in love and a literary writer stuck in a rut engage in a summer-long challenge that may just upend everything they believe about happily ever afters. Augustus Everett is an acclaimed author of literary fiction. January Andrews writes bestselling romance. When she pens a happily ever after, he kills off his entire cast. They're polar opposites. In fact, the only thing they have in common is that for the next three months, they're living in neighboring beach houses, broke, and bogged down with writer's block. Until, one hazy evening, one thing leads to another and they strike a deal designed to force them out of their creative ruts: Augustus will spend the summer writing something happy, and January will pen the next Great American Novel. She'll take him on field trips worthy of any rom-com montage, and he'll take her to interview surviving members of a backwoods death cult (obviously). Everyone will finish a book and no-one will fall in love. Really.

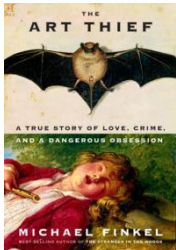
September – Thursday 9/11



School of Essential Ingredients – Erica Bauermeister, 258 pages

Once a month on a Monday night, eight students gather in Lillian's restaurant for a cooking class. Among them is Claire, a young woman coming to terms with her new identity as a mother; Tom, a lawyer whose life has been overturned by loss; Antonia, an Italian kitchen designer adapting to life in America; and Carl and Helen, a long-married couple whose union contains surprises the rest of the class would never suspect. The students have come to learn the art behind Lillian's soulful dishes, but it soon becomes clear that each seeks a recipe for something beyond the kitchen. And soon they are transformed by the aromas, flavors, and textures of what they create....

October – Thursday 10/9



The Art Thief: A True Story of Love, Crime, and a Dangerous Obsession by Michael Finkel - 224 pages

In this spellbinding portrait of obsession and flawed genius, the best-selling author of *The Stranger in the Woods* brings us into Breitwieser's strange world—unlike most thieves, he never stole for money, keeping all his treasures in a single room where he could admire them. For centuries, works of art have been stolen in countless ways from all over the world, but no one has been quite as successful at it as the master thief Stéphane Breitwieser. Carrying out more than two hundred heists over nearly eight years—in museums and cathedrals all over Europe—Breitwieser, along with his girlfriend who worked as his lookout, stole more than three hundred objects, until it all fell apart in spectacular fashion.

November – Thursday 11/13



Vera Wong's Unsolicited Advice for Murderers by Jesse Q. Sutanto - 339 pages

Put the kettle on, there's a mystery brewing...

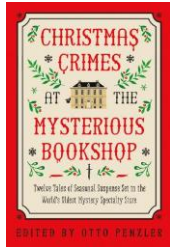
Tea-shop owner. Matchmaker. Detective?

Sixty-year-old self-proclaimed tea expert Vera Wong enjoys nothing more than sipping a good cup of Wulong and doing some healthy 'detective' work on the internet (AKA checking up on her son to see if he's dating anybody yet).

But when Vera wakes up one morning to find a dead man in the middle of her tea shop, it's going to take more than a strong Longjing to fix things. Knowing she'll do a better job than the police possibly could – because nobody sniffs out a wrongdoing quite like a suspicious Chinese mother with time on her hands – Vera decides it's down to her to catch the killer.

Nobody spills the tea like this amateur sleuth.

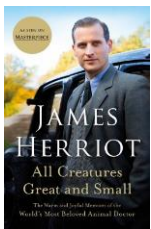
December – Thursday 12/11



Christmas Crimes at the Mysterious Bookshop – short stories - 320 pages

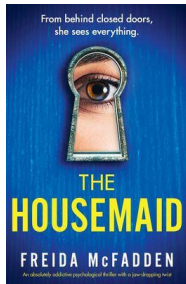
The oldest mystery specialty bookstore in the world, The Mysterious Bookshop, has for most of its forty-five-year history commissioned an original short story as a holiday gift for its customers. Written exclusively for the store and never published elsewhere, the stories were given as a holiday gift to its customers as a thank you for their business, handed out or mailed between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. The prompt for the story requires three elements: that it be set at Christmastime, that it involve a crime of some kind, or the suspicion of one, and that it be set at least partially in the bookstore. And from these loose structural guidelines, diverse tales took flight. The dozen tales included in this volume are among the finest to be produced in this annual tradition, sure to charm any reader looking for a holiday-themed escape. Included herein are the ingenious "Snowflake Time" by Laura Lippman; Lyndsay Faye's tale of vengeance "A Midnight Clear"; the challenging brainteaser, "A Christmas Puzzle," by Ragnar Jónasson; "Hester's Gift," an impossible crime story by Tom Mead; the suspenseful "The Christmas Party" by Jeffery Deaver; Thomas Perry's hilarious comedy of errors, "Here We Come A-Wassailing;" and other tales appropriate for the season, collected and introduced by Otto Penzler. The result is, objectively speaking, the finest "stocking stuffer" that a mystery fan could hope to find.

January 2026 – Thursday 1/8



All Creatures Great and Small – James Herriot, 442 pages

For over forty years, generations of readers have thrilled to Herriot's marvelous tales, deep love of life, and extraordinary storytelling abilities. For decades, Herriot roamed the remote, beautiful Yorkshire Dales, treating every patient that came his way from smallest to largest, and observing animals and humans alike with his keen, loving eye. In All Creatures Great and Small, we meet the young Herriot as he takes up his calling and discovers that the realities of veterinary practice in rural Yorkshire are very different from the sterile setting of veterinary school. Some visits are heart-wrenchingly difficult, such as one to an old man in the village whose very ill dog is his only friend and companion, some are lighthearted and fun, such as Herriot's periodic visits to the overfed and pampered Pekinese Tricky Woo who throws parties and has his own stationery, and yet others are inspirational and enlightening, such as Herriot's recollections of poor farmers who will scrape their meager earnings together to be able to get proper care for their working animals. From seeing to his patients in the depths of winter on the remotest homesteads to dealing with uncooperative owners and critically ill animals, Herriot discovers the wondrous variety and never-ending challenges of veterinary practice as his humor, compassion, and love of the animal world shine forth. James Herriot's memoirs have sold 80 million copies worldwide, and continue to delight and entertain readers of all ages.



The Housemaid – Freida McFadden, 325 pages

Every day I clean the Winchesters' beautiful house top to bottom. I collect their daughter from school. And I cook a delicious meal for the whole family before heading up to eat alone in my tiny room on the top floor. I try to ignore how Nina makes a mess just to watch me clean it up. How she tells strange lies about her own daughter. And how her husband Andrew seems more broken every day. But as I look into Andrew's handsome brown eyes, so full of pain, it's hard not to imagine what it would be like to live Nina's life. The walk-in closet, the fancy car, the perfect husband. I only try on one of Nina's pristine white dresses once. Just to see what it's like. But she soon finds out... and by the time I realize my attic bedroom door only locks from the outside, it's far too late. But I reassure myself: the Winchesters don't know who I really am. They don't know what I'm capable of...