

Happy Bookers Book Club 2019

January



A charming, clever, and quietly moving debut novel of endless possibilities and joyful discoveries that explores the promises we make and break, losing and finding ourselves, the objects that hold magic and meaning for our lives, and the surprising connections that bind us.

Lime green plastic flower-shaped hair bobbles—Found, on the playing field, Derrywood Park, 2nd September.

Bone china cup and saucer—Found, on a bench in Riviera Public Gardens, 31st October.

Anthony Peardeu is the keeper of lost things. Forty years ago, he carelessly lost a keepsake from his beloved fiancée, Therese. That very same day, she died unexpectedly. Brokenhearted, Anthony sought consolation in rescuing lost objects—the things others have dropped, misplaced, or accidentally left behind—and writing stories about them. Now, in the twilight of his life, Anthony worries that he has not fully discharged his duty to reconcile all the lost things with their owners. As the end nears, he bequeaths his secret life's mission to his unsuspecting assistant, Laura, leaving her his house and all its lost treasures, including an irritable ghost.

Recovering from a bad divorce, Laura, in some ways, is one of Anthony's lost things. But when the lonely woman moves into his mansion, her life begins to change. She finds a new friend in the neighbor's quirky daughter, Sunshine, and a welcome distraction in Freddy, the rugged gardener. As the dark cloud engulfing her lifts, Laura, accompanied by her new companions, sets out to realize Anthony's last wish: reuniting his cherished lost objects with their owners.

Long ago, Eunice found a trinket on the London pavement and kept it through the years. Now, with her own end drawing near, she has lost something precious—a tragic twist of fate that forces her to break a promise she once made.

As the Keeper of Lost Objects, Laura holds the key to Anthony and Eunice's redemption. But can she unlock the past and make the connections that will lay their spirits to rest?

February



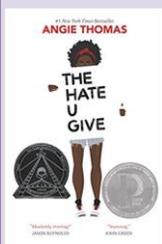
After the death of her beloved grandmother, a Cuban-American woman travels to Havana, where she discovers the roots of her identity--and unearths a family secret hidden since the revolution...

Havana, 1958. The daughter of a sugar baron, nineteen-year-old Elisa Perez is part of Cuba's high society, where she is largely sheltered from the country's growing political unrest--until she embarks on a clandestine affair with a passionate revolutionary...

Miami, 2017. Freelance writer Marisol Ferrera grew up hearing romantic stories of Cuba from her late grandmother Elisa, who was forced to flee with her family during the revolution. Elisa's last wish was for Marisol to scatter her ashes in the country of her birth.

Arriving in Havana, Marisol comes face-to-face with the contrast of Cuba's tropical, timeless beauty and its perilous political climate. When more family history comes to light and Marisol finds herself attracted to a man with secrets of his own, she'll need the lessons of her grandmother's past to help her understand the true meaning of courage.

March

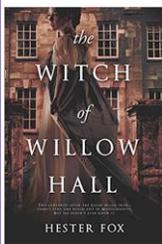


Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed.

Soon afterward, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil's name. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What everyone wants to know is: what really went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr.

But what Starr does—or does not—say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life.

April



Two centuries after the Salem witch trials, there's still one witch left in Massachusetts. But she doesn't even know it.

Take this as a warning: if you are not able or willing to control yourself, it will not only be you who suffers the consequences, but those around you, as well.

New Oldbury, 1821

In the wake of a scandal, the Montrose family and their three daughters—Catherine, Lydia and Emeline—flee Boston for their new country home, Willow Hall.

The estate seems sleepy and idyllic. But a subtle menace creeps into the atmosphere, remnants of a dark history that call to Lydia, and to the youngest, Emeline.

All three daughters will be irrevocably changed by what follows, but none more than Lydia, who must draw on a power she never knew she possessed if she wants to protect those she loves. For Willow Hall's secrets will rise, in the end...

May

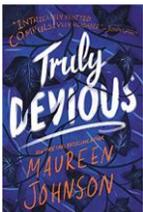


Everywhere Katie Brenner looks, someone else is living the life she longs for, particularly her boss, Demeter Farlowe. Demeter is brilliant and creative, lives with her perfect family in a posh townhouse, and wears the coolest clothes. Katie's life, meanwhile, is a daily struggle—from her dismal rental to her oddball flatmates to the tense office politics she's trying to negotiate. No wonder Katie takes refuge in not-quite-true Instagram posts, especially as she's desperate to make her dad proud.

Then, just as she's finding her feet—not to mention a possible new romance—the worst happens. Demeter fires Katie. Shattered but determined to stay positive, Katie retreats to her family's farm in Somerset to help them set up a vacation business. London has never seemed so far away—until Demeter unexpectedly turns up as a guest. Secrets are spilled and relationships rejiggered, and as the stakes for Katie's future get higher, she must question her own assumptions about what makes for a truly meaningful life.

Sophie Kinsella is celebrated for her vibrant, relatable characters and her great storytelling gifts. Now she returns with all of the wit, warmth, and wisdom that are the hallmarks of her bestsellers to spin this fresh, modern story about presenting the perfect life when the reality is far from the truth.

June



Ellingham Academy is a famous private school in Vermont for the brightest thinkers, inventors, and artists. It was founded by Albert Ellingham, an early twentieth century tycoon, who wanted to make a wonderful place full of riddles, twisting pathways, and gardens. "A place," he said, "where learning is a game."

Shortly after the school opened, his wife and daughter were kidnapped. The only real clue was a mocking riddle listing methods of murder, signed with the frightening pseudonym "Truly, Devious." It became one of the great unsolved crimes of American history.

True-crime aficionado Stevie Bell is set to begin her first year at Ellingham Academy, and she has an ambitious plan: She will solve this cold case. That is, she will solve the case when she gets a grip on her demanding new school life and her housemates: the inventor, the novelist, the actor, the artist, and the joker. But something strange is happening. Truly Devious makes a surprise return, and death revisits Ellingham Academy. The past has crawled out of its grave. Someone has gotten away with murder.

The two interwoven mysteries of this first book in the Truly Devious series dovetail brilliantly, and Stevie Bell will continue her relentless quest for the murderers in books two and three.

July

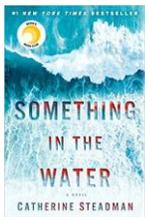


Two Chinese-American sisters—Miranda, the older, responsible one, always her younger sister's protector; Lucia, the headstrong, unpredictable one, whose impulses are huge and, often, life changing. When Lucia starts hearing voices, it is Miranda who must find a way to reach her sister. Lucia impetuously plows ahead, but the bitter constant is that she is, in fact, mentally ill. Lucia lives life on a grand scale, until, inevitably, she crashes to earth.

Miranda leaves her own self-contained life in Switzerland to rescue her sister again—but only Lucia can decide whether she wants to be saved. The bonds of sisterly devotion stretch across oceans—but what does it take to break them?

Everything Here Is Beautiful is, at its heart, an immigrant story, and a young woman's quest to find fulfillment and a life unconstrained by her illness. But it's also an unforgettable, gut-wrenching story of the sacrifices we make to truly love someone—and when loyalty to one's self must prevail over all.

August



If you could make one simple choice that would change your life forever, would you?

Erin is a documentary filmmaker on the brink of a professional breakthrough, Mark a handsome investment banker with big plans. Passionately in love, they embark on a dream honeymoon to the tropical island of Bora Bora, where they enjoy the sun, the sand, and each other. Then, while scuba diving in the crystal blue sea, they find something in the water. . . .

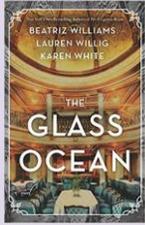
Could the life of your dreams be the stuff of nightmares?

Suddenly the newlyweds must make a dangerous choice: to speak out or to protect their secret. After all, if no one else knows, who would be hurt? Their decision will trigger a devastating chain of events. . . .

Have you ever wondered how long it takes to dig a grave?

Wonder no longer. Catherine Steadman's enthralling voice shines throughout this spellbinding debut novel. With piercing insight and fascinating twists, *Something in the Water* challenges the reader to confront the hopes we desperately cling to, the ideals we're tempted to abandon, and the perfect lies we tell ourselves.

September



The lives and loves of three remarkable women—two in the past, one in the present—and the tragic final voyage of the HMS Lusitania.

May 2013

Her finances are in dire straits and bestselling author Sarah Blake is struggling to find a big idea for her next book. Desperate, she breaks the one promise she made to her Alzheimer's-stricken mother and opens an old chest that belonged to her great-grandfather, who died when the RMS Lusitania was sunk by a German U-Boat in 1915. What she discovers there could change history. Sarah embarks on an ambitious journey to England to enlist the help of John Langford, a recently disgraced Member of Parliament whose family archives might contain the only key to the long-ago catastrophe. . . .

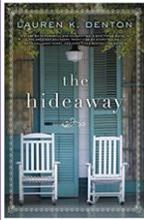
April 1915

Southern belle Caroline Telfair Hochstetter's marriage is in crisis. Her formerly attentive industrialist husband, Gilbert, has become remote, pre-occupied with business . . . and something else that she can't quite put a finger on. She's hoping a trip to London in Lusitania's lavish first-class accommodations will help them reconnect—but she can't ignore the spark she feels for her old friend, Robert Langford, who turns out to be on the same voyage. Feeling restless and longing for a different existence, Caroline is determined to stop being a bystander, and take charge of her own life. . . .

Tessa Fairweather is traveling second-class on the Lusitania, returning home to Devon. Or at least, that's her story. Tessa has never left the United States and her English accent is a hasty fake. She's really Tennessee Schaff, the daughter of a roving con man, and she can steal and forge just about anything. But she's had enough. Her partner has promised that if they can pull off this one last heist aboard the Lusitania, they'll finally leave the game behind. Tess desperately wants to believe that, but Tess has the uneasy feeling there's something about this job that isn't as it seems.

As the Lusitania steams toward its fate, three women work against time to unravel a plot that will change the course of their own lives . . . and history itself.

October



After her last remaining family member dies, Sara Jenkins goes home to The Hideaway, her grandmother Mags's ramshackle B&B in Sweet Bay, Alabama. She intends to quickly tie up loose ends then return to her busy life and thriving antique shop in New Orleans. Instead, she learns Mags has willed The Hideaway to her and charged her with renovating it—no small task considering her grandmother's best friends, a motley crew of senior citizens, still live there. Rather than hurrying back to New Orleans, Sara stays in Sweet Bay and begins the biggest house-rehabbing project of her career. Amid drywall dust, old memories, and a charming contractor, she discovers that slipping back into life at The Hideaway is easier than she expected.

Then she discovers a box Mags left in the attic with clues to a life Sara never imagined for her grandmother. With help from Mags's friends, Sara begins to piece together the mysterious life of bravery, passion, and choices that changed her grandmother's destiny in both marvelous and devastating ways.

When an opportunistic land developer threatens to seize The Hideaway, Sara is forced to make a choice—stay in Sweet Bay and fight for the house and the people she's grown to love or leave again and return to her successful but solitary life in New Orleans.

November



It's winter in the Catskills and the weather outside is frightful, but Mitchell's Inn is so delightful! The cozy lodge nestled deep in the woods is perfect for a relaxing--maybe even romantic--weekend away. The Inn boasts spacious old rooms with huge wood-burning fireplaces, a well-stocked wine cellar and opportunities for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing or just curling up with a book and someone you love.

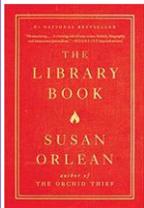
So when the weather takes a turn for the worse and a blizzard cuts off the electricity--and all contact with the outside world--the guests settle in for the long haul. The power's down but they've got candles, blankets and firewood--a genuine rustic experience!

Soon, though, a body turns up--surely an accident. When a second body appears, they start to panic. Then they find a third body.

Within the snowed-in paradise, something--or someone--is picking off the guests one by one. They can't leave, and with no cell service, there's no prospect of getting the police in until the weather loosens its icy grip.

The weekend getaway has turned deadly. For some couples, it's their first time away. For others, it will be their last. And there's nothing they can do about it but huddle in and hope they can survive the storm.

December



On the morning of April 29, 1986, a fire alarm sounded in the Los Angeles Public Library. As the moments passed, the patrons and staff who had been cleared out of the building realized this was not the usual fire alarm. As one fireman recounted, "Once that first stack got going, it was 'Goodbye, Charlie.'" The fire was disastrous: it reached 2000 degrees and burned for more than seven hours. By the time it was extinguished, it had consumed four hundred thousand books and damaged seven hundred thousand more. Investigators descended on the scene, but more than thirty years later, the mystery remains: Did someone purposefully set fire to the library—and if so, who?

Weaving her lifelong love of books and reading into an investigation of the fire, award-winning *New Yorker* reporter and *New York Times* bestselling author Susan Orlean delivers a mesmerizing and uniquely compelling book that manages to tell the broader story of libraries and librarians in a way that has never been done before.

In *The Library Book*, Orlean chronicles the LAPL fire and its aftermath to showcase the larger, crucial role that libraries play in our lives; delves into the evolution of libraries across the country and around the world, from their humble beginnings as a metropolitan charitable initiative to their current status as a cornerstone of national identity; brings each department of the library to vivid life through on-the-ground reporting; studies arson and attempts to burn a copy of a book herself; reflects on her own experiences in libraries; and reexamines the case of Harry Peak, the blond-haired actor long suspected of setting fire to the LAPL more than thirty years ago.

Along the way, Orlean introduces us to an unforgettable cast of characters from libraries past and present—from Mary Foy, who in 1880 at eighteen years old was named the head of the Los Angeles Public Library at a time when men still dominated the role, to Dr. C.J.K. Jones, a pastor, citrus farmer, and polymath known as "The Human Encyclopedia" who roamed the library dispensing information; from Charles Lummis, a wildly eccentric journalist and adventurer who was determined to make the L.A. library one of the best in the world, to the current staff, who do heroic work every day to ensure that their institution remains a vital part of the city it serves.

