



NYMBC 2023-2024 READING LIST

October: Murder in the Bayou by Eathan Brown. Between 2005 and 2009, the bodies of eight women were discovered around the murky canals and crawfish ponds of Jennings, Louisiana, a bayou town of 10,000 in the heart of the Jefferson Davis parish. The women came to be known as the Jeff Davis 8, and local law enforcement officials were quick to pursue a serial killer theory, opening a floodgate of media coverage and stirring a wave of panic across Jennings' class-divided neighborhoods. The Jeff Davis 8 had been among society's most vulnerable—impoverished, abused, and mired with mental illness. They engaged in sex work as a means of survival. And their underworld activity frequently occurred at a decrepit no-tell motel called the Boudreaux Inn.

November: How to Sell A Haunted House By Grady Hendrix. When Louise finds out her parents have died, she dreads going home. She doesn't want to leave her daughter with her ex and fly to Charleston. She doesn't want to deal with her family home, stuffed to the rafters with the remnants of her father's academic career and her mother's lifelong obsession with puppets and dolls. She doesn't want to learn how to live without the two people who knew and loved her best in the world.

Most of all, she doesn't want to deal with her brother, Mark, who never left their hometown, gets fired from one job after another, and resents her success. Unfortunately, she'll need his help to get the house ready for sale because it'll take more than some new paint on the walls and clearing out a lifetime of memories to get this place on the market.

December: The Wishing Game By Meg Shaffer. Lucy Hart knows better than anyone what it's like to grow up without parents who loved her. In a childhood marked by neglect and loneliness, Lucy found her solace in books, namely the Clock Island series by Jack Masterson. Now a twenty-six-year-old teacher's aide, she is able to share her love of reading with bright, young students, especially seven-year-old Christopher Lamb, who was left orphaned after the tragic death of his parents. Lucy would give anything to adopt Christopher, but even the idea of becoming a family seems like an impossible dream without proper funds and stability.

But be careful what you wish for. . . .

Just when Lucy is about to give up, Jack Masterson announces he's finally written a new book.

Even better, he's holding a contest at his home on the real Clock Island, and Lucy is one of the four lucky contestants chosen to compete to win the one and only copy.

January: Winter Solstice by Rosamunde Pilcher.

Elfrida Phipps, once of London's stage, moved to the English village of Dibton in hopes of making a new life for herself. Gradually she settled into the comfortable familiarity of village life - shopkeepers knowing her tastes, neighbors calling her by name -- still she finds herself lonely.

Oscar Blundell gave up his life as a musician in order to marry Gloria. They have a beautiful daughter, Francesca, and it is only because of their little girl that Oscar views his sacrificed career as worthwhile.

Carrie returns from Australia at the end of an ill-fated affair with a married man to find her mother and aunt sharing a home and squabbling endlessly. With Christmas approaching, Carrie agrees to look after her aunt's awkward and quiet teenage daughter, Lucy, so that her mother might enjoy a romantic fling in America.

Sam Howard is trying to pull his life back together after his wife has left him for another. He is without home and without roots, all he has is his job. Business takes him to northern Scotland, where he falls in love with the lush, craggy landscape and set his sights on a house.

It is the strange rippling effects of a tragedy that will bring these five characters together in a large, neglected estate house near the Scottish fishing town of Creagan.

February: I Heard the Owl Name by Margret Craven. In a world that knows too well the anguish inherent in the clash of old ways and new lifestyles, Margaret Craven's classic and timeless story of a young man's journey into the Pacific Northwest is as relevant today as ever.

Here amid the grandeur of British Columbia stands the village of Kingcome, a place of salmon runs and ancient totems - a village so steeped in time that, according to Kwakiutl legend, it was founded by two brothers left on earth after the great flood. Yet in this Eden of such natural beauty and richness, the old culture of totems and potlaches is under attack - slowly being replaced by a new culture of prefab houses and alcoholism. Into this world, where an entire generation of young people has become disenchanted and alienated from their heritage, Craven introduces Mark Brian, a young vicar sent to the small isolated parish by his church.

This is Mark's journey of discovery - a journey that will teach him about life, death, and the transforming power of love. It is a journey that will resonate in the mind of readers long after the book is done.

March: Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingslover.

Set in the mountains of southern Appalachia, this is the story of a boy born to a teenaged single

mother in a single-wide trailer, with no assets beyond his dead father's good looks and copper-colored hair, a caustic wit, and a fierce talent for survival. In a plot that never pauses for breath, relayed in his own unsparing voice, he braves the modern perils of foster care, child labor, derelict schools, athletic success, addiction, disastrous loves, and crushing losses. Through all of it, he reckons with his own invisibility in a popular culture where even the superheroes have abandoned rural people in favor of cities.

April: *If You Tell* by Gregg Olsen. After more than a decade, when sisters Nikki, Sami, and Tori Knotek hear the word *mom*, it claws like an eagle's talons, triggering memories that have been their secret since childhood. Until now.

For years, behind the closed doors of their farmhouse in Raymond, Washington, their sadistic mother, Shelly, subjected her girls to unimaginable abuse, degradation, torture, and psychic terrors. Through it all, Nikki, Sami, and Tori developed a defiant bond that made them far less vulnerable than Shelly imagined. Even as others were drawn into their mother's dark and perverse web, the sisters found the strength and courage to escape an escalating nightmare that culminated in multiple murders.

May: *The Night Circus* by Erin Morgenstein. The circus arrives without warning. No announcements precede it. It is simply there, when yesterday it was not. Within the black-and-white striped canvas tents is an utterly unique experience full of breathtaking amazements. It is called *Le Cirque des Rêves*, and it is only open at night.

But behind the scenes, a fierce competition is underway—a duel between two young magicians, Celia and Marco, who have been trained since childhood expressly for this purpose by their mercurial instructors. Unbeknownst to them, this is a game in which only one can be left standing, and the circus is but the stage for a remarkable battle of imagination and will. Despite themselves, however, Celia and Marco tumble headfirst into love—a deep, magical love that makes the lights flicker and the room grow warm whenever they so much as brush hands.

True love or not, the game must play out, and the fates of everyone involved, from the cast of extraordinary circus performers to the patrons, hang in the balance, suspended as precariously as the daring acrobats overhead.

Written in rich, seductive prose, this spell-casting novel is a feast for the senses and the heart.

June: *Chalk Man* by C.J. Tudor. In 1986, Eddie and his friends are just kids on the verge of adolescence. They spend their days biking around their sleepy English village and looking for any taste of excitement they can get. The chalk men are their secret code: little chalk stick figures they leave for one another as messages only they can understand. But then a mysterious chalk man leads them right to a dismembered body, and nothing is ever the same.

In 2016, Eddie is fully grown, and thinks he's put his past behind him. But then he gets a letter in the mail, containing a single chalk stick figure. When it turns out that his friends got the same message, they think it could be a prank . . . until one of them turns up dead.

That's when Eddie realizes that saving himself means finally figuring out what really happened all those years ago.

July: In the Lives of Puppets by T.J. Klune: In a strange little home built into the branches of a grove of trees, live three robots--fatherly inventor android Giovanni Lawson, a pleasantly sadistic nurse machine, and a small vacuum desperate for love and attention. Victor Lawson, a human, lives there too. They're a family, hidden and safe.

The day Vic salvages and repairs an unfamiliar android labelled "HAP," he learns of a shared dark past between Hap and Gio-a past spent hunting humans.

When Hap unwittingly alerts robots from Gio's former life to their whereabouts, the family is no longer hidden and safe. Gio is captured and taken back to his old laboratory in the City of Electric Dreams. So together, the rest of Vic's assembled family must journey across an unforgiving and otherworldly country to rescue Gio from decommission, or worse, reprogramming.

Along the way to save Gio, amid conflicted feelings of betrayal and affection for Hap, Vic must decide for himself: Can he accept love with strings attached?

August: Into Thin Air by Jon Krakauer When Jon Krakauer reached the summit of Mt. Everest in the early afternoon of May 10, 1996, he hadn't slept in fifty-seven hours and was reeling from the brain-altering effects of oxygen depletion. As he turned to begin his long, dangerous descent from 29,028 feet, twenty other climbers were still pushing doggedly toward the top. No one had noticed that the sky had begun to fill with clouds. Six hours later and 3,000 feet lower, in 70-knot winds and blinding snow, Krakauer collapsed in his tent, freezing, hallucinating from exhaustion and hypoxia, but safe. The following morning, he learned that six of his fellow climbers hadn't made it back to their camp and were desperately struggling for their lives. When the storm finally passed, five of them would be dead, and the sixth so horribly frostbitten that his right hand would have to be amputated.

Into Thin Air is the definitive account of the deadliest season in the history of Everest by the acclaimed journalist and author of the bestseller Into the Wild. On assignment for Outside Magazine to report on the growing commercialization of the mountain, Krakauer, an accomplished climber, went to the Himalayas as a client of Rob Hall, the most respected high-altitude guide in the world. A rangy, thirty-five-year-old New Zealander, Hall had summited Everest four times between 1990 and 1995 and had led thirty-nine climbers to the top. Ascending the mountain in close proximity to Hall's team was a guided expedition led by Scott Fischer, a forty-year-old American with legendary strength and drive who had climbed the peak without supplemental oxygen in 1994. But neither Hall nor Fischer survived the rogue storm that

struck in May 1996.

Krakauer examines what it is about Everest that has compelled so many people -- including himself -- to throw caution to the wind, ignore the concerns of loved ones, and willingly subject themselves to such risk, hardship, and expense. Written with emotional clarity and supported by his unimpeachable reporting, Krakauer's eyewitness account of what happened on the roof of the world is a singular achievement.

September: Weyward by Emilia Hart

2019: Under cover of darkness, Kate flees London for ramshackle Weyward Cottage, inherited from a great aunt she barely remembers. With its tumbling ivy and overgrown garden, the cottage is worlds away from the abusive partner who tormented Kate. But she begins to suspect that her great aunt had a secret. One that lurks in the bones of the cottage, hidden ever since the witch-hunts of the 17th century.

1619: Altha is awaiting trial for the murder of a local farmer who was stampeded to death by his herd. As a girl, Altha's mother taught her their magic, a kind not rooted in spell casting but in a deep knowledge of the natural world. But unusual women have always been deemed dangerous, and as the evidence for witchcraft is set out against Altha, she knows it will take all of her powers to maintain her freedom.

1942: As World War II rages, Violet is trapped in her family's grand, crumbling estate. Straitjacketed by societal convention, she longs for the robust education her brother receives—and for her mother, long deceased, who was rumored to have gone mad before her death. The only traces Violet has of her are a locket bearing the initial W and the word *weyward* scratched into the baseboard of her bedroom.

Weaving together the stories of three extraordinary women across five centuries, Emilia Hart's *Weyward* is an enthralling novel of female resilience and the transformative power of the natural world.