



## MPL 2024 Reading List

- January:** **The Woman They Could Not Silence, by Kate Moore**  
1860: As the clash between the states rolls slowly to a boil, Elizabeth Packard, housewife and mother of six, is facing her own battle. The enemy sits across the table and sleeps in the next room. Her husband of twenty-one years is plotting against her because he feels increasingly threatened - by Elizabeth's intellect, independence, and unwillingness to stifle her own thoughts. So Theophilus makes a plan to put his wife back in her place. One summer morning, he has her committed to an insane asylum.
- February:** **The Music of Bees, by Eileen Garvin**  
A heartwarming debut novel for readers of *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine*, following three lonely strangers in a rural Oregon town, each working through grief and life's curveballs, who are brought together by happenstance on a local honeybee farm where they find surprising friendship, healing--and maybe even a second chance--just when they least expect it.
- March:** **Just the Nicest Couple, by Mary Kubica**  
Jake Hayes is missing. This much is certain. At first, his wife, Nina, thinks he is blowing off steam at a friend's house after their heated fight the night before. But then a day goes by. Two days. Five. And Jake is still nowhere to be found.
- April:** **The Art of Hearing Heartbeats, by Jan-Philipp Sendker**  
The first book in the Art of Hearing Heartbeats series, this is a passionate love story, a haunting fable, and an enchanting mystery set in Burma.  
  
When a successful New York lawyer suddenly disappears without a trace, neither his wife nor his daughter Julia has any idea where he might be...until they find a love letter he wrote many years ago, to a Burmese woman they have never heard of. Intent on solving the mystery and coming to terms with her father's past, Julia decides to travel to the village where the woman lived. There she uncovers a tale of unimaginable hardship, resilience, and passion that will reaffirm the reader's belief in the power of love to move mountains.

**May:**

**The Lessons in Chemistry, by Bonnie Garmus**

Chemist Elizabeth Zott is not your average woman. In fact, Elizabeth Zott would be the first to point out that there is no such thing as an average woman. But it's the early 1960s and her all-male team at Hastings Research Institute takes a very unscientific view of equality. Except for one: Calvin Evans; the lonely, brilliant, Nobel-prize nominated grudge-holder who falls in love with—of all things—her mind. True chemistry results.

But like science, life is unpredictable. Which is why a few years later Elizabeth Zott finds herself not only a single mother, but the reluctant star of America's most beloved cooking show *Supper at Six*. Elizabeth's unusual approach to cooking ("combine one tablespoon acetic acid with a pinch of sodium chloride") proves revolutionary. But as her following grows, not everyone is happy. Because as it turns out, Elizabeth Zott isn't just teaching women to cook. She's daring them to change the status quo.

**June:**

**The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store, by James McBride**

In 1972, when workers in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, were digging the foundations for a new development, the last thing they expected to find was a skeleton at the bottom of a well. Who the skeleton was and how it got there were two of the long-held secrets kept by the residents of Chicken Hill, the dilapidated neighborhood where immigrant Jews and African Americans lived side by side and shared ambitions and sorrows.

**July:**

**The Last Thing He Told Me, by Laura Dave**

Before Owen Michaels disappears, he manages to smuggle a note to his beloved wife of one year: *Protect her*. Despite her confusion and fear, Hannah Hall knows exactly to whom the note refers: Owen's sixteen-year-old daughter, Bailey. Bailey, who lost her mother tragically as a child. Bailey, who wants absolutely nothing to do with her new stepmother.

As Hannah's increasingly desperate calls to Owen go unanswered; as the FBI arrests Owen's boss; as a US Marshal and FBI agents arrive at her Sausalito home unannounced, Hannah quickly realizes her husband isn't who he said he was. And that Bailey just may hold the key to figuring out Owen's true identity—and why he really disappeared.

Hannah and Bailey set out to discover the truth, together. But as they start putting together the pieces of Owen's past, they soon realize they are also building a new future. One neither Hannah nor Bailey could have anticipated.

**August:**

**The Paris Wife, by Paula McLain**

Chicago, 1920: Hadley Richardson is a quiet twenty-eight-year-old who has all but given up on love and happiness—until she meets Ernest Hemingway and her life changes forever. Following a whirlwind courtship and wedding, the pair set sail for

Paris, where they become the golden couple in a lively and volatile group—the fabled “Lost Generation”—that includes Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, and F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald.

**September: West with Giraffes, by Linda Rutledge**

Woodrow Wilson Nickel, age 105, feels his life ebbing away. But when he learns giraffes are going extinct, he finds himself recalling the unforgettable experience he cannot take to his grave.

Part adventure, part historical saga, and part coming-of-age love story, *West with Giraffes* explores what it means to be changed by the grace of animals, the kindness of strangers, the passing of time, and a story told before it's too late.

**October: Keeper of Lost Things by Ruth Hogan**

A charming, clever, and quietly moving debut novel of 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.

**November: Homecoming, by Kate Morton**

Adelaide Hills, Christmas Eve, 1959: At the end of a scorching hot day, beside a creek on the grounds of the grand and mysterious mansion, a local delivery man makes a terrible discovery. A police investigation is called and the small town of Tambilla becomes embroiled in one of the most shocking and perplexing murder cases in the history of South Australia.

**December: No, I Don't Want to Join a Book Club, by Virginia Ironside**

**A delightful novel about letting go of youth and embracing the sassy curmudgeon within**

Don't harass her about parasailing or taking Italian language courses. Forget about suggesting she join a gym. Marie Sharp may be a little creaky in the bones as she heads toward the big 6-0, but she's fine with it. She would rather do without all the moving-to-Florida-bicycling-across-Mongolia-for-the-hell-of-it hoopla that her friends insist upon. She's already led an exciting life: She came of age in the 1960s, after all. Now, with both a new grandchild and a new man on the horizon, all she wants to do is make the most of what she considers the most interesting stage of her life. In this wonderfully astute novel based on the author's own experiences, *No! I Don't Want to Join a Book Club* is the funny--and often poignant--fictionalized diary of an older woman . . . a decade or two past her prime and content to leave it all behind her. So don't tell her to take a gourmet cooking class, and whatever you do, don't you dare tell her to join a book club. Fresh and truly unique, moving gracefully on in years has never been more hilarious than in this forthright grandma's take on the "third phase" of life.