

Fiction News

The Ridgefield Library's Fiction Newsletter



July 2015

AUTHOR IN THE SPOTLIGHT

FEATURED MYSTERY SERIES



Karen Joy Fowler

Karen Joy Fowler's intricately developed characters populate contemporary fiction, historical fiction and the mystery genres. While Fowler crafts strong narratives that blend historical fact, fiction, myth and satire, it is her complex female characters that drive her work. Witty and thoughtful, Fowler is as adept at writing comedy as she is drama.

Whether she's exploring the relationship authors have with their fans or having her characters comment upon racism and sexism, Fowler's emphasis upon character make her a compelling read.



Partial list:

We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves (2013)

Coming of age in middle America, 18-year-old Rosemary evaluates how her entire youth was defined by the presence and forced removal of an endearing chimpanzee who was secretly regarded as a family member and who Rosemary loved as a sister.

What I Didn't See (2010)

A collection of stories includes tales about John Wilkes Booth's younger brother, a one-winged man, a California cult, a rebellious teen facing torture in a rehab facility, and a mother who invents a fairy-tale world for her son.

Wit's End (2008)

Rima Lanisell meets her godmother, Addison Early, a best selling mystery writer, and seeks to discover what her godmother's relationship with her father was.

The Jane Austen Book Club (2004)

Six Californians join to discuss Jane Austen's novels. Over the six months they meet, marriages are tested, affairs begin, unsuitable arrangements become suitable, and love happens.

Sister Noon (2001)

A mystery set during San Francisco's Gilded Age chronicles Lizzie Hayes's rebellious odyssey away from the pretensions of the city's social elite and her journey toward liberation and passion, with the help of Mary Ellen Pleasant.

Sarah Canary (1991)

In 1873, Chin Ah Kin finds Sarah Canary on the outskirts of his camp, and since she only speaks nonsense, he tries to take her to an asylum, but on the way she disappears.

The Bruno Courrèges Mystery Series by Martin Walker

Bruno Courrèges serves as chief of police in the idyllic village of St. Denis in the Dordogne region of France. He is a former soldier who has embraced the slow rhythms and pleasures of the country. The flavor of everyday life in a French rural village that is infused into these mysteries is part of what makes this series so captivating. The tension is often lightened by discourses on the local wine, loving accounts of cooking and descriptions of the French countryside.



The series:

Bruno, Chief of Police (2009)

When the murdered body of an elderly French army soldier is found with a swastika carved into his chest, Bruno turns his suspicions toward a tortured period of French history.

The Dark Vineyard (2009)

When a research station for genetically modified crops is burned down outside Saint-Denis. Bruno immediately suspects a group of fervent environmentalists who live nearby.

Black Diamond (2010)

Bruno investigates the possible adulteration of the truffles of France's Périgord region with a cheaper Chinese version.

The Crowded Grave (2011)

An international summit to be held in a local chateau is being threatened by Basque separatists, and animal-rights campaigners have declared war on the beloved local delicacy, foie gras. When a body is found at an archaeological site Bruno senses a connection with the activist groups.

The Devil's Cave (2013)

Investigating an apparent occult murder during the Easter season in St. Denis, Bruno discovers links to a real estate proposal, a suspicious accident and the reappearance of an elderly countess.

The Resistance Man (2014)

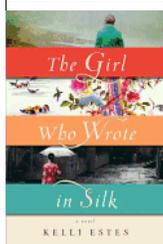
Bruno can't get a moment's peace. He's uncovered a cache of old bank notes and is also dealing with a wave of burglaries. The next burglary ends in murder: the victim's bludgeoned body found by his lover - the prime suspect.

The Children Return (2015)

Bruno must investigate the activities of a terrorist network threatening St. Denis when Sami, a local autistic youth who had been thought lost to Islamic extremism, returns with valuable al-Qaeda intelligence and his former jihadist handlers in pursuit.

NEW FICTION

(Annotations from BookLetters)

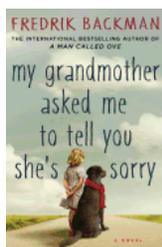


The Girl Who Wrote in Silk by Kelli Esté.

Inara Erickson is exploring her deceased aunt's island estate when she finds an elaborately stitched piece of fabric hidden in the house. As she peels back layer upon layer of the secrets it holds, Inara's life becomes interwoven with that of Mei Lein, a young Chinese girl mysteriously driven from her home a century before. Through the stories Mei Lein tells in silk, Inara uncovers a tragic truth that will shake her family to its core -- and force her to make an impossible choice.

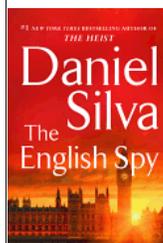
My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry by Fredrik Backman.

From the author of the internationally bestselling *A Man Called Ove*, a charming, warmhearted novel about a young girl whose grandmother dies and leaves behind a series of letters, sending her on a journey that brings to life the world of her grandmother's fairy tales.



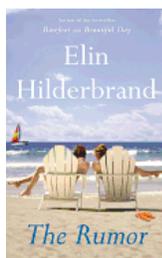
The English Spy by Daniel Silva.

She is an iconic member of the British Royal Family, beloved for her beauty and charitable works, resented by her former husband and his mother, the Queen of England. But when a bomb explodes aboard her holiday yacht, British intelligence turns to one man to track down her killer: legendary spy and assassin Gabriel Allon.



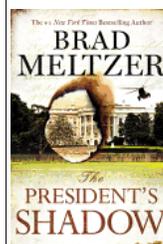
The Rumor by Elin Hilderbrand.

Nantucket writer Madeline King couldn't have picked a worse time to have writer's block. Her deadline is looming, her bills are piling up, and inspiration is in short supply. Madeline's best friend Grace, is hard at work transforming her garden into the envy of the island with the help of a ruggedly handsome landscape architect. Before she realizes it, Grace is on the verge of a decision that will irrevocably change her life.



The President's Shadow by Brad Meltzer.

To most, it looks like Beecher White has an ordinary job as a young staffer with the National Archives in Washington, D.C. But Beecher is also a member of the Culper Ring, a 200-year-old secret society founded by George Washington and charged with protecting the Presidency.



Summer Secrets by Jane Green.

When a shocking family secret is revealed, twenty-something journalist Cat Coombs finds herself falling into a dark spiral. Told with Jane Green's keen eye for detailing the emotional landscape of the heart, *Summer Secrets* is at once a compelling drama and a beautifully rendered portrait of relationships, betrayals, and forgiveness.



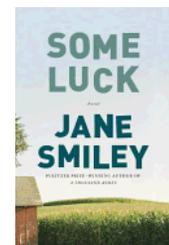
For a more extensive list of new fiction, mystery, and science fiction and fantasy titles, visit our website at www.ridgefieldlibrary.org.

STAFF PICKS

Elise's Picks

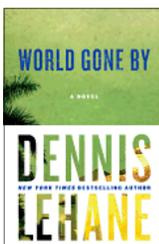
Some Luck by Jane Smiley.

In the first volume of her new trilogy, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jane Smiley follows the fortunes of an Iowa farming family, the Langdons, from the end of World War I to the start of the Cold War. Fusing the epic with the domestic, she paints a vivid picture of the arduous demands and quiet rewards of the farming life. As the outside world encroaches on their isolated life, some of the Langdon children abandon their hometown and spread out across the country to become soldiers, academics and even CIA spies, while others faithfully remain, tending and improving their barely-making-it farm. Known for her realistic, observant writing, Smiley's 14th novel has been hailed as "a Midwestern tour de force" (*Booklist*), a continuing saga that takes a sympathetic look at the impact of a tumultuous time on one tenacious farming family.



World Gone By by Dennis Lehane.

Ten years after enemies gunned down his Cuban wife and destroyed his criminal empire, Joe Coughlin has reinvented himself as the indispensable man. Able to mingle easily in the upper echelons of Tampa society, he's a behind the scenes fixer for the Florida mob and Meyer Lansky's right hand man in Cuba. A devoted father, loyal friend, and sage advisor, Coughlin is liked and respected by everyone, so it comes as a great shock, when an informer reveals that someone has taken out a contract on his life.



World Gone By is the powerful conclusion of Dennis Lehane's psychologically complex gangster series. Filled with colorful characters, treacherous turf wars, and surprising twists and turns, this tense thriller features a fascinating anti-hero. *New York Times*' critic, Marilyn Stasio, described Coughlin as "a moral man working at an immoral profession in a corrupt world."

Dorothy's Picks

Miss Emily by Nuala O'Connor.

Combining fact with fiction, this novel imagines a friendship between the poet Emily Dickinson and her family's Irish maid. When she begins working for the Dickinson's, Ada Colcannon is a spirited, hard-working young woman fresh off the boat from Dublin. As Emily becomes more consumed by her writing and unwilling to leave the confines of home, her attachment to Ada grows. So when Ada faces a personal crisis, Emily is forced to engage with the outside world to come to the aid of her friend. This American debut of Nuala O'Connor, an acclaimed Irish author, beautifully captures Dickinson's poetic sensibility and creates an unforgettable voice for her fictional counterpart.



The Little Paris Bookshop by Nina George.

Jean Perdu owns a bookstore lodged on a barge moored on the Seine. He considers himself a "literary apothecary," matching books to the individual needs of his clientele. After reading a lost love's letter that has gone unopened for 20 years, he embarks on a journey down the Seine to come to terms with the past and to open himself to the possibility of embracing life and love again. Along the way, he dispenses his literary magic to those he meets. Infused with literary references and just the right amount of food for thought, this is the perfect summer read for book lovers.

