

Fiction News

The Ridgefield Library's Fiction Newsletter



June 2011

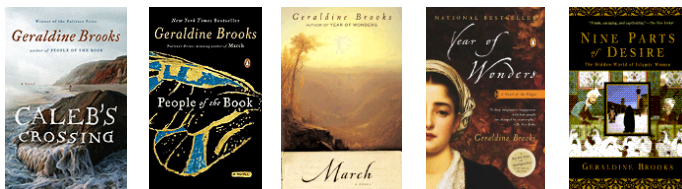
AUTHORS IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Geraldine Brooks

Pulitzer Prize-winning author Geraldine Brooks distills sweeping historical events, such as the Civil War and the Plague, into personal, human experiences. With her rich prose, she recreates life in other eras, using the precise detail of an expert researcher and former reporter. Capturing the drama of history, Brooks crafts

unlikely heroes who are made that way through circumstances that are often beyond their control.



Caleb's Crossing (2011)

Forging a deep friendship with a Wampanoag chieftain's son on the Great Harbor settlement where her minister father is working to convert the tribe, Bethia follows his subsequent ivy league education and efforts to bridge cultures among the colonial elite. (See Staff Picks)

People of the Book (2008)

Offered a coveted job to analyze and conserve a priceless Sarajevo Haggadah, Australian rare-book expert Hanna Heath discovers a series of tiny artifacts in the volume's ancient binding that reveal its historically significant origins.

March (2005)

In a story inspired by the father character in *Little Women* and drawn from the journals and letters of Louisa May Alcott's father, a man leaves behind his family to serve in the Civil War and finds his beliefs challenged by his experiences.

Year of Wonders: A Novel of the Plague (2001)

Young Anna Frith, a vicar's maid, is faced with the loss of her family, the disintegration of her local community, and a passionate, illicit love as she and her village confront the horrors of the plague, in a historical novel based on real-life events in seventeenth-century England.

Non-Fiction Titles

Foreign Correspondence (1998)

After finding her childhood pen pals' letters, the foreign correspondent for the *Wall Street Journal* embarks on a treasure hunt to locate distant friends and memories.

Nine Parts of Desire: the Hidden World of Islamic Women (1995)

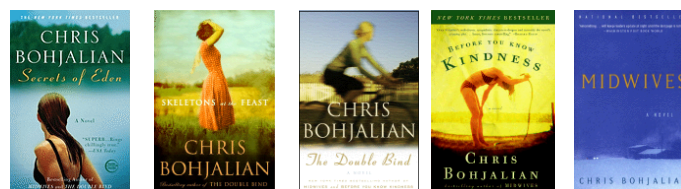
An intimate portrait of the lives of modern Muslim women reveals how male pride and power have distorted the message of Islam to justify the subjugation of women and how a feminism of sorts has flowered in spite of repression.



Chris Bohjalian

Bohjalian's character-centered novels might fit in a variety of genres from literary fiction and mystery to historical fiction and horror, all raise provocative issues played out on a domestic stage. In lyrical, haunting prose, this elegant stylist tells engrossing stories, empathetically viewed through

the eyes of his diverse characters. Both critics and fans praise his elegant style as well as the sensitive handling of characters and the controversial issues they face.



Partial List of Titles

Secrets of Eden (2010)

Haunted by the final words of a newly baptized congregation member who was subsequently murdered by her husband, the Reverend Stephen Drew abandons his pulpit to spend time with an author who writes best-selling books about angels.

Skeletons at the Feast (2008)

During the final months of World War II, a small group of people make their way westward across a ravaged Europe in a desperate attempt to reach British and American lines.

The Double Bind (2007)

Working at a homeless shelter, student Laurel Estabrook encounters Bobbie Crocker, a man with a history of mental illness and a box of secret photos, but when Bobbie dies suddenly, Laurel embarks on an obsessive search for the truth behind the photos.

Before You Know Kindness (2004)

After a decade of spending a delightful summer week at their country house in New Hampshire, the members of the extended Seton family are confronted by a terrible accident, testing the values and relationships that hold them together.

The Buffalo Soldier (2002)

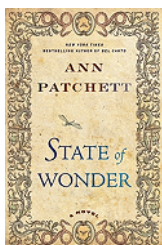
The devastating loss of their twin daughters in a flash flood turns the lives of Terry and Laura Sheldon upside down as their marriage is tested by grief, Terry's brief love affair, and their growing relationship with their foster child, a ten-year-old African American boy..

Midwives (1997)

A seasoned midwife in rural Vermont faces the antagonism of the law, the hostility of traditional doctors, and the accusations of her own conscience.

NEW FICTION

(Annotations from BookLetters)



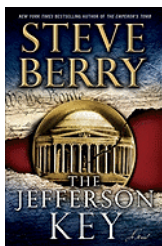
State of Wonder by Ann Patchett. Award-winning *New York Times*-bestselling author Patchett (*Bel Canto*) returns with a provocative novel of morality and miracles, science and sacrifice set in the Amazon rainforest—a gripping adventure story and a profound look at the difficult choices we make in the name of discovery and love.

Dreams of Joy by Lisa See.

Devastated after discovering the shocking truth about her mother and father, Joy (from the *New York Times* bestseller *Shanghai Girls*) flees to China to find a new life (and her real father)—and Pearl, realizing what has happened, sets out for Mao's China, resolved to find her daughter.



The Jefferson Key by Steve Berry. Former Justice Department operative Cotton Malone has hunted priceless treasures and confronted ruthless adversaries around the world. Now, a grave threat to the very foundation of our country has summoned him home to America.



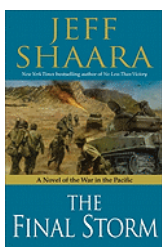
The Story of a Beautiful Girl by Rachel Simon. **BookPage Notable Title**

In 1968, Lynn, a young white woman with a developmental disability, and Homan, an African-American deaf man, are locked away in an institution. Deeply in love, they escape, and find refuge in the farmhouse of a retired schoolteacher and widow. But the couple is not alone—Lynn has just given birth to a baby girl. And so begins the 40-year epic journey of Lynn, Homan, Martha, and baby Julia—lives divided by seemingly insurmountable obstacles, yet drawn together by a secret pact and extraordinary love.

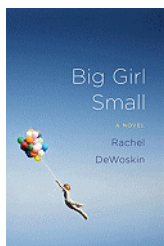


The Final Storm: A Novel of the War in the Pacific by Jeff Shaara.

With a narrative dexterity befitting his status as a master storyteller, Shaara relates the story of the struggle for Okinawa through the eyes of combatants on both sides: Private Clay Adams, Admiral Chester Nimitz, General Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., and General Mitsura Ushijima, the Japanese general in charge of defending the island.



Big Girl Small by Rachel DeWoskin. The acclaimed author of *Repeat After Me* presents a scathingly funny and moving novel about a 16 year-old girl who becomes caught in a controversy that might bring down her whole school—a scandal that has something to do with the fact Judy is three feet nine inches tall.



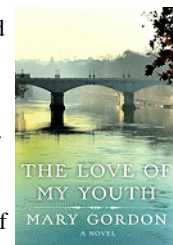
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STAFF PICKS

Elise's Picks

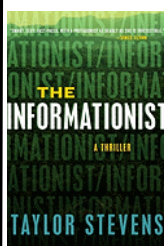
The Love of My Youth by Mary Gordon.

Reunited in Rome after nearly 40 years apart, Adam and Miranda, two former lovers cautiously reexamine their youthful romance and try to make peace with who they were and who they have become. Guilty about the painful breakup, Adam asks Miranda if he can show her the hidden Rome that his mother loved. As they travel around the city, we get to both eavesdrop on Adam's insider tour and listen to the gradually unfolding story of what sabotaged their affair long ago. Esteemed author Mary Gordon's latest novel provides many pleasures. It is a wise, bittersweet book that contrasts the idealism (and frailty) of young love with the mature compromises of later life, but it is also a lyrical celebration of the lasting beauty of The Eternal City.



The Informationist by Steven Taylor.

Hired by international corporations to ferret out valuable information on developing countries, multilingual Vanessa Munroe is at the top of her game, but when she accepts a seven figure assignment to track down an oil tycoon's missing daughter, the long cold trail leads her back to Central Africa and an incredibly dangerous country she barely escaped nine years earlier. Drawing on her own experience of living in



Equatorial Guinea, debut novelist Taylor Stevens has created an atmospheric and exhilarating thriller that introduces one of the most remarkable (and lethal) characters since Stieg Larsson's Lisbeth Salander.

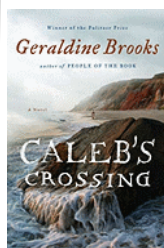
Mary's Pick

Ghost Light by Joseph O'Connor.

O'Connor's novel moves back and forth through the life of Molly Allgood, a Dublin actress, in a building montage of scenes, settings and styles. Stream-of-consciousness sections are reminiscent of that other famous literary Molly of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, while passages of dialogue are as seamless as the drama of Irish playwright J.M. Synge, Molly's lover. This is rich fare, both stylistically and emotionally, and Marcella Riordan's narration of the audiobook is an extraordinary additional treat.



Dorothy's Pick



Caleb's Crossing by Geraldine Brooks.

Brooks has based her novel on the barebones historical facts known about Caleb, a Wampanoag from Massachusetts, who became the first Native American to graduate from Harvard in 1665. Through the voice of Bethia Mayfield, the author deftly weaves a tale of the bonds between this minister's daughter and Caleb. Drawn together by their love of nature and curiosity, both face seemingly insurmountable obstacles barring them from intellectual pursuits.

In Bethia, Brooks has created an unforgettable character who brings to life the world of the early settlers. This is Geraldine Brooks at her best.