

Parkdale Book Club

November 2018 – No Time Like the Present

Schedule

Date (10 am on 2nd Saturday)

Dec. 10	<i>The Housekeeper and the Professor</i>	by Yoko Ogawa	-- Ida
Jan. 12 2019	<i>Mao's Last Dancer</i>	by Li Cunxin	-- Beth, Sharon
Feb. 9	<i>A Fatal Grace</i>	by Louise Penny	-- Doreen
March 9	<i>The Mother of All Questions</i>	by Rebecca Solnit	-- Beth
April 13	<i>Medicine Walk</i>	by Richard Wagamese	-- Ruth
May 11	<i>A Rhinestone Button</i>	by Gail Anderson-Dargatz	-- Lindsay
June 8	<i>An Unnecessary Woman</i>	by Rabih Alameddine	-- Lynn

Coming up next month

On December 10, a nice short novel, *The Housekeeper and the Professor*, suggested by Ida. Here is what I learned about it on the library website: First published in Japanese in 2003, this gem won the prestigious 2004 Yomiuri Prize and in 2006 was adapted for film (The Professor's Beloved Equation). The story revolves around a young housekeeper and her ten-year-old son, who have an esoteric link to a retired university professor through "amicable numbers." Ogawa (*The Diving Pool*) deliberately avoids any hint of romance between the two adult protagonists. Instead, she delves into the educational process between the housekeeper, a high school dropout, and the professor, a mathematical genius. With a prose style justly acclaimed as gentle yet penetrating, Ogawa gives mathematical theories from Eratosthenes to Einstein a titanic wink; under her pen, they no longer are solely a topic of conversation among academics but a tool that facilitates conflict resolution, communication between commoner and intellectual, and appreciation for the nobility and individuality of everyday objects; they also help us establish our worth in a chaotic world. This novel evokes the joy of learning, and, with its somewhat eccentric yet lovable protagonists, is a pleasure to read.

January's book

Good idea to get going on seeking out the January book, as it is not available through the library. I encourage you to request at the library that they order the book. Sign in to your account, click on your username in the top right corner, click on My Library Dashboard, and scroll down to "Submit a Suggestion" on the left side. Book title = Mao's Last Dancer. Author = Li Cunxin. ISBN = 978-0-14-132086-1. Meanwhile, we have at least 4 copies. I should get reading!

No Time Like the Present

What a range of reactions to this book!

- It feels like a book to go back to
- A sign of a good book, purchasing it in two forms: Lindsay got the audiobook and then the book; Lynn got the book and then the audiobook
- What would it be like to read this book without having had a meditation practice?
- I've been on this path since I was 45 and hit the wall
- Thank you for suggesting this book – I loved it from the first sentence.
- I've been suggesting it to everyone,
- Author is lovely to hear as a speaker too
- Too much information for me
- I like the stories and the exercises
- The woman who is assigned finding a mustard seed from a household that has not experienced death
- Ponte Vecchio story – Germans did not want to blow it up, so made agreement with Americans to leave it alone if Americans promised not to use it. Imagine if this happened in the time of Trump
- P 147: story of impatient army officer in grocery store – woman ahead of him had only one item but wasn't in the express line. Had a baby with her. How selfish, he thought. Then she and the cashier visited, and she passed baby over to cashier for a cuddle. He remembered his mindfulness so when he got to the cashier he said, "That was a cute little boy." She responded, "Oh, did you like him? That's my baby. His father was in the Air Force, but he was killed last winter. Now I have to work full-time. My mom tries to being my boy in once or twice a day so I can see him."
- I live in this space now
- I should follow this book – have too much on my plate
- Book is designed to be read in bits
- I don't care for this kind of meditation
- I'm not that airy-fairy
- p. 34: "Neuroscience shows how practices of love and compassion can change our nervous system and greatly increase access to these capabilities."
- I like the idea of focusing on joy
- p. 25: "And there is love for no reason, love in being alive, love married to invincible joy, openhearted and overflowing love, free and natural as a spring breeze."
- On Audible, the narrator ≠ the author, and does not do it justice
- Working with Indigenous has made me define who I am
- My starting point = not liking self-help books
- P. 157: "What would happen if you held your perspectives more lightly?"
- This approach would have helped with some difficult meetings
- p. 41: "We are not the small self our worries believe us to be."
- p. 55: Aging: "You can choose to resist or be gracious." Aging with trust.
- p. 72: Andre Gide: "To be utterly happy, the only thing necessary is to refrain from comparing this moment with other moments."
- p. 89: Bertrand Russell: "One should respect public opinion insofar as is necessary to avoid starvation and keep out of prison, but anything that goes beyond this is voluntary submission to an unnecessary tyranny."

See also *A Path With Heart* by Kornfield

See also Kornfield's Youtube videos

See also *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness* by Jon Kabat-Zinn

See also *The Sacred Art of Lovingkindness* by Rabbi Shapiro

Nomination for next year – no new nominations this month

Other reading *(Send me yours, please...)*

Lee says: Books I'm reading or have read recently

Those who save us. Jenna Blum

The houseguest Kim Brooks

Both depressing but interesting

Sister of mine. Not finished so not sure. So far I don't like it.

Insidious Intent, by Val McDermid: If you've ever read an alert that you should start at the beginning of a series before reading the current book, multiply that by 100 for this novel. I've read the previous novels, but had not read one in this series recently enough to be really tuned in the way that Hill's neuroticisms fit with Jordan's neuroticisms, like one broken Lego with another. Being steeped in that relationship for the previous 9 in the series will make this one much more readable. A personal reaction -- I have a low tolerance for the destructive rumination Jordan subjects herself to, but then, novels with characters who are mentally and emotionally solid and self-actualized would probably be dull as dishwater. So, read this, AFTER you've read the previous 9. Enjoy.

The Girl Who Takes An Eye for An Eye: A Lisbeth

Salander Novel by David Lagercrantz. It takes a certain kind of confidence and significant skill and heart to take on the challenge of continuing a series like the Millennium series. In my opinion, Lagercrantz manages the job competently. I enjoyed this book, and found myself reading faster and faster because I wanted to find out what was happening. It was good to learn some background on the dragon tattoo. Lisbeth Salander is a tremendous hero figure. I think if one liked Stieg Larsson's books, this book will be enjoyable and satisfying. I look forward to the next.

Veronica Mars: The Thousand-dollar Tan Line by

Rob Thomas and Jennifer Graham: I've enjoyed the Veronica Mars series and I'm happy to encounter the characters again, especially narrated by Kristen Bell. I think the authors have done a good job of aging the characters. I'll listen to the other one in the series, and hope for future additions.

And Another Thing: Douglas Adams's Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy : Part Six of Three by Eoin Colfer: I have loved Douglas Adams' work since the BBC radio broadcast of *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* was played in instalments on CBC in the late 70s. HGTTG has been my road-trip companion since recordings were available. It is a considerable challenge to add to that canon without making a complete hash of things, and I think Colfer manages not to make a complete hash of things in ***And Another Thing***. I enjoyed the subplot of the son of Prostetnic Vogon Jeltz, Constant Mown (listening, of course this arrives in the head as Constant Moan), a manifestation of the beginning of Vogon evolution, who has to hide his greater agility and empathy in order to survive inside The Business End, Jeltz's ship. And the Norse Gods are reliable characters...

When the Flood Falls, by J.E. Barnard: The main appeals of this book are the local (to Bragg Creek/Calgary) setting and the female protagonist. I wasn't quite convinced by the characters or the connections between them. This may appeal to hockey fans, and it was good that the author exposed the vulnerability of young hockey players.

Heartburn by Nora Ephron: Meryl Streep as narrator -- superb! I did not connect much to the story itself, but enjoyed my time in the kitchen with this book CD as company. I enjoyed the recipes blended in to the tale.

Nerve Damage by Peter Abrahams: *Nerve Damage* is one of those books about which David McCord's quotation was written: "Books fall open, you fall in." I stayed up much too late reading this. I like Abrahams' writing as Spencer Quinn, and so was motivated to stretch credulity enough to enjoy this book. One example: Roy climbs up to a mountain cabin in the dark, while ill, with a broken arm, after fainting at Janet Habib's, driving home from Cape Cod to Vermont through the night, calling Freddy at 3 am, and, understandably, feeling worn out. And then he wrestles with Lenore, makes it back down the mountain, and digs up a coffin. Wow, what a guy. I was looking forward to another adventure from Abrahams, but *Delusion* was disappointing after reading *Nerve Damage*.