

# VCU Libraries Community Zooms: What's Everyone Reading

Led by Kelly Justice

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## Reading List

### Romance

- [Her Night with the Duke](#) (Avon Books, 2020), by Diana Quincy -- first installment of the *Clandestine Affairs* series
- [How to Catch a Queen](#) (Avon Books, 2020), by Alyssa Cole -- first installment of the *Runaway Royals* series
- [Salt Hendon](#) and [Roxton](#) (Springleaf Pty), Lucinda Brant -- two series set during the Regency period in the UK
- Stella Riley -- author who has written [books set around the English Civil War](#)

### Historical Fiction

- [The Paris Library](#) (Atria Books, 2021), by Janet Skeslien Charles -- based on the true story of librarians at the American Library in Paris at the time of WWII
- [Hamnet](#) (Vintage, 2021), by Maggie O'Farrell -- about William Shakespeare's family \*

### Mystery

- [A Man Named Doll](#) (Mulholland Books, 2021), Jonathan Ames -- noir novel about a detective
- [Dolly and the Starry Bird](#) (Cassell, 1973), Dorothy Dunnett -- Scottish novelist best known for historical fiction; part of the Dolly series
- Charles Todd -- mystery writer who writes [novels set against the backdrop of WWI](#)
- Howard Owen -- mystery writer from Richmond who writes [novels set in the area](#) \*\*

### Sci-fi

- [The Murderbot Diaries](#) (Tor, 2017-present), by Martha Wells -- series of books about a retired robot assassin
- [Kindred](#) (Doubleday, 1979), by Octavia Butler -- novel about a young Black woman who time-travels from the 1970s to the pre-Civil War South \*

### General Fiction

- [Breast and Eggs](#) (Europa Editions, 2020), by Mieko Kawakami -- Japanese novelist, also a poet \*
- [Nives](#) (Europa Editions, 2021), by Sacha Naspini -- quirky novel about a woman who relies on a pet chicken for company after her husband dies and who then has to seek help for the chicken when it becomes mysteriously paralyzed while watching TV
- [How to Order the Universe](#) (Tin House, 2021), by María José Ferrada -- Chilean author who also writes children's books

- [\*The Book of Lost Friends\*](#) (Ballantine Books, 2020), by Lisa Wingate -- author of [\*Before We Were Yours\*](#) (Ballantine Books, 2017); inspired by actual “Lost Friends” ads in Southern newspapers after the Civil War, as freed slaves searched for loved ones who had been sold away
- [\*Almost Snow White\*](#) (Alluvion Press, 2013), by Jeffrey Blount -- VCU alum and award-winning television director \*
- [\*The Only Woman in the Room\*](#) (Sourcebooks, 2019), by Marie Benedict -- fictionalized account of the life of Hollywood star Hedy Lamarr
- [\*The Thousand Crimes of Ming Tsu\*](#) (Little, Brown, 2021), by Tom Lin -- contemporary reimagining of the western genre with a Chinese American protagonist
- [\*The Immortalists\*](#) (G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 2019), by Chloe Benjamin -- about several young people in New York City who visit a fortune teller who predicts the dates of their deaths and how those fortunes change how they live their lives
- [\*Other People’s Pets\*](#) (Celadon Books, 2020), by R.L. Maizes -- about a veterinarian who becomes a burglar and ends up taking care of the pets in the homes she breaks into
- [\*The Vanishing Half\*](#) (Riverhead Books, 2020), by Brit Bennett -- about twin sisters, one who chooses to live as white and other Black \*
- [\*Ducks. Newburyport\*](#) (Biblioasis, 2019), by Lucy Ellman \*
- [\*Leave the World Behind\*](#) (Ecco, 2020), by Rumaan Alam \*

### Poetry

- [\*Word Problems\*](#) (Coach House Books, 2020), by Ian Williams -- Canadian poet who also wrote the novel [\*Reproduction\*](#) (Random House, 2019)
- [\*White Blood\*](#) (Sarabande Books, 2019), Kiki Petrosino -- Virginia poet, on the faculty of UVA, writing about her mixed-race heritage, Thomas Jefferson, etc. \*
- [\*Wound from the Mouth of a Would\*](#) (Milkweed Editions, 2019), by Torrin A. Greathouse -- trans disabled woman exploring the changeability and fragility of the bod
- [\*The Sri Lankan Loxodrome\*](#) (New Directions, 2009), by Will Alexander -- African American avant-garde poet specializing in dense, surreal writing with a mystical texture to its language \*

### Non-fiction

- [\*Broken \(in the Best Possible Way\)\*](#) (Henry Holt, 2021), by Jenny Lawson -- author of [\*Furiously Happy\*](#) (Flatiron Books, 2017); honest but funny memoir about depression and mental health in the spirit of David Sedaris
- [\*The Lady’s Handbook for Her Mysterious Illness\*](#) (Anchor Books, 2021), by Sarah Ramey -- humorous memoir about undiagnosed illness, recommend for fans of Jenny Lawson
- [\*Killer Triggers\*](#) (Blackstone Publishing, 2021), by Joe Kenda -- true crime written by the star of the true crime documentary series Homicide Hunter
- [\*Savage Appetites: Four True Stories of Women. Crime. and Obsession\*](#) (Scribner, 2019), by Rachel Monroe -- A Friends of VCU Libraries Book Club pick, about women invested in true crime \*

- [\*Unacceptable: Privilege, Deceit & the Making of the College Admissions Scandal\*](#) (Portfolio, 2020), by Melissa Korn and Jennifer Levitz -- about the Operation Varsity Blues college admissions scandal \*
- [\*Who Gets in and Why: A Year Inside College Admissions\*](#) (Scribner, 2020), by Jeff Selingo
- [\*The Organ Thieves\*](#) (Gallery/Jeter Publishing, 2020), by Chip Jones -- about the first heart transplant in Virginia, in which a heart was taken from a Black man without his or his family's consent; \* see also the [VCU Libraries Community Zooms session featuring the author](#)
- [\*What I Talk About When I Talk About Running\*](#) (Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), by Haruki Murakami -- Japanese author best known for his surreal, sci-fi-inflected novels; memoir exploring how taking up long-distance running shaped his life and his career as a novelist \*

### **Children and Young Adult**

- [\*Itty-bitty Kitty-corn\*](#) (Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2021), by Shannon Hale and LeUyen Pham (illust.) -- children's book about a cat that wants to become a unicorn
- [\*Tales from Outer Suburbia\*](#) (Tundra Books, 2019), by Shaun Tan -- young adult short stories illustrated by the author \*
- [\*Redwall\*](#), by Brian Jacques -- beloved fantasy series featuring anthropomorphic mice
- [\*The Wind in the Willows\*](#) (Methuen, 1908), by Kenneth Grahame -- classic, often adapted Edwardian children's book featuring anthropomorphic animal characters living in the UK countryside \*

### **Graphic Novels**

- [\*Unsolved Case Files: Escape at 10,000 Feet: D.B. Cooper and the Missing Money\*](#) (Balzer + Bray, 2021), by Tom Sullivan -- first in a new young adult graphic novel series about true crime cases
- [\*The Thud\*](#) (Fantagraphics, 2021), Mikaël Ross -- German young adult graphic novel about a young autistic man whose mother has a stroke and who has to learn to live without her
- [\*Wonder Cat Kyuu-chan, vol. 1\*](#) (Seven Seas, 2021), by Sasami Nitori -- light graphic novel about a young man and his precocious cat who wears a bowtie and wants to help with the chores
- [\*The Eternaut 1969\*](#) (Fantagraphics, 2020), by Héctor Germán Oesterheld and Alberto Breccia (adapt. and illust.) -- Argentinian graphic novel with dramatic black-and-white expressionist art, a sci-fi story about an alien invasion of South America \*\*

[Hoopladigital.com](#) is a recommended source for finding graphic novels.

## **Bonus Podcast Recommendations**

- [\*Whale, Whale, Whale\*](#) -- a guided read-through of *Moby Dick*

- [Marlon and Jake Read Dead People](#) -- hosted by the Man Booker Prize-winning and internationally bestselling author Marlon James and his editor, Jake Morrissey, Executive Editor at Riverhead Books. In each episode Marlon and Jake talk about authors—specifically dead authors. Authors they like. Authors they hate. Great books, terrible books, and books they love that you'd never expect them to.
- [Obscure with Michael Ian Black](#) -- comedian Michael Ian Black reading *Jude the Obscure* and commenting on it as he reads

\* Available at VCU Libraries. Alumni can sign up for borrowing privileges [here](#) (note: it is a two step process) and community members may join as [Friends](#) for access (for a tax deductible gift of \$100 or more.)

\*\* Non-circulating materials available in Special Collections and Archives

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