



2026 Book Club for Adults



Embark on a year-long literary adventure with us in 2026 as we explore compelling stories, discover new perspectives, and engage with fellow book lovers at W.H. Walters Free Public Library!



Monthly Meetings: Every last Monday of the month at 4:30-6:00pm.



Book Selections: A thoughtfully curated lineup, featuring a mix of genres, cultures, and time periods – guaranteeing a year of exciting literary exploration.



Why Join?

- Participate in engaging, thought-provoking conversations.
- Connect with fellow book lovers and broaden your literary circle.
- Explore new authors, genres, and perspectives to enrich your reading experience.



Where: W.H. Walters Free Public Library located at: 1001 East Boulevard, Alpha, NJ 08865.



Register Now:

- Email: alphapubliclibrary1@outlook.com
- Call: (908)454-1445
- Message us on Facebook: *W.H. Walters Free Public Library*
- Stop in the library and talk to the Library Director.

Don't miss out on a year of captivating reads and lively discussions. Let's make 2026 a year to remember at W.H. Walters Free Public Library!



Book List



- January –
 - *The Battle of the Bookshops* by Poppy Alexander
- February –
 - *The Jackal's Mistress* by Chris Bohjalian
- March –
 - *Long Time Gone* by Charlie Donlea
- April –
 - *Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker* by Jennifer Chiaverini
- May –
 - *The Last Dress from Paris* by Jade Beer
- June –
 - *The Little French Bistro* by Nina George
- July –
 - *The Peculiar Gift of July* by Ashley Ream
- August –
 - *The Final Wish of Mr. Murray McBride* by Joe Siple
- September –
 - *The Librarian of Auschwitz* by Antonio Iturbe
- October –
 - *The Hunting Party* by Lucy Foley
- November –
 - *Out of the Clear Blue Sky* by Kristan Higgins
- December –
 - *The Secret Christmas Library* by Jenny Colgan

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to the library.

Meeting Dates

The last Monday of the month at 4:30-6:00pm. (besides May, as the 25th is Memorial Day & we are closed that day).

- January 26th
- February 23rd
- March 30th
- April 27th
- May 18th
- June 29th
- July 27th
- August 31st
- September 28th
- October 26th
- November 30th
- December 28th

BOOK CLUB FOR ADULTS

JANUARY 2026 BOOK:

The Battle of the Bookshops by Poppy Alexander



January

Book: *The Battle of the Bookshops* by Poppy Alexander

1. What did you think of the book?
2. Which was the most interesting scene(s), in your opinion?
3. Were there any characters that you felt, you can relate to in any way?
4. What were your expectations before reading *The Battle of the Bookshops*?
5. Jules returns from London to help her great-aunt's bookshop. How do you feel about her decision to leave her career and move back home?
6. The rivalry between the Capelthorne and Montbeau families is central to the story. What role does that rivalry play in shaping the characters and their actions?
7. The setting of the seaside town of Portneath and the old bookshop are described in a nostalgic, cozy way. How did the setting influence your enjoyment of the novel? Did it feel real?
8. The bookish details – the dust, the shelves, the history of the shop – are quite prominent. What value do you think those details add? Did you feel a connection to the world of books and bookshops?
9. If you were in Jules's shoes: what would you do to try to save the bookshop?
10. The novel is at its heart a romance, but it also deals with family, legacy, and business. Which of these themes resonated most with you, and why?

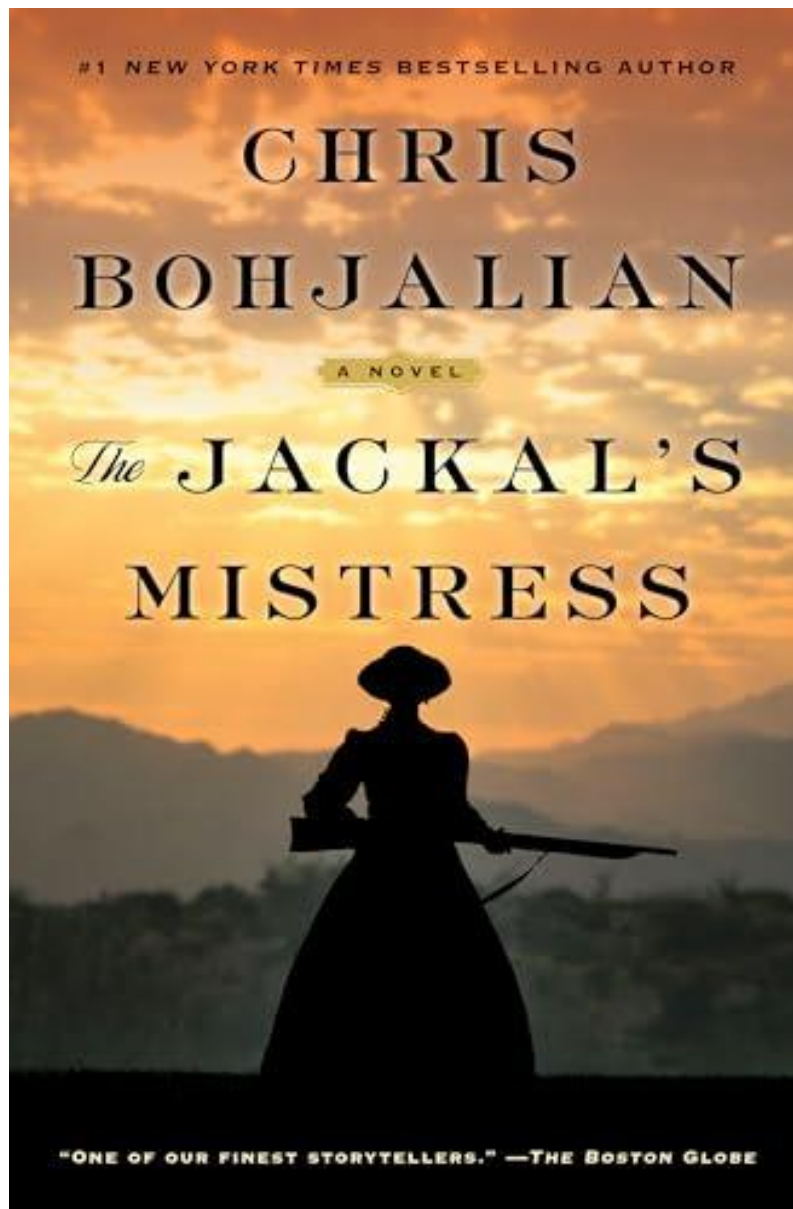
11. What did you think of the ending? Were you satisfied with how things wrapped up?
12. The title “The Battle of the Bookshops” suggests competition, contrast, maybe even war. Did the story deliver on that idea in the way you expected? Why or why not?

Answers

BOOK CLUB FOR ADULTS

FEBRUARY 2026 BOOK:

The Jackal's Mistress by Chris Bohjalian



February

Book: *The Jackal's Mistress* by Chris Bohjalian

1. What did you think of the book?
2. Which was the most interesting scene(s), in your opinion?
3. Were there any characters that you felt, you can relate to in any way?
4. What were your expectations before reading *The Jackal's Mistress*?
5. What were your first impressions of Libby Steadman? How did your view of her change (or not) as the story progressed?
6. The novel is set in the American Civil War in Virginia, 1864. How did the setting affect your reading experience?
7. Libby faces a moral choice: help a wounded Union officer or leave him to die. What would you have done in her place?
8. How did you feel about the role of Joseph, Sally, and Jubilee?
9. The title includes "Jackal" – Jubilee calls the wounded officer a "jackal". What meaning did you find in that nickname?
10. The attraction that develops between Libby and Captain Jonathan Weybridge is complicated. What did you think about that relationship? Was it believable?
11. One of the themes is sacrifice: what people do for others in extreme circumstances. Which sacrifice in the book moved you the most?

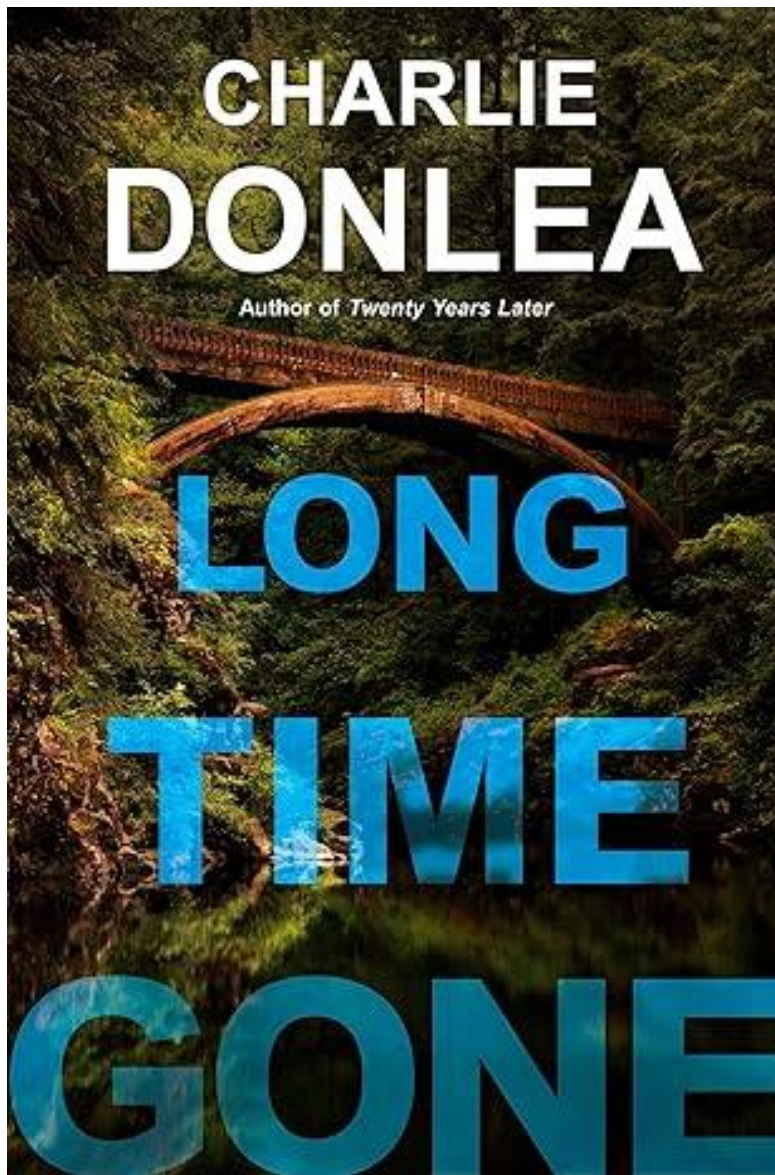
12. After finishing the book, was there anything you wish had been explored further (historical details, characters)?

Answers

BOOK CLUB FOR ADULTS

MARCH 2026 BOOK:

Long Time Gone by Charlie Donlea



March

Book: *Long Time Gone* by Charlie Donlea

1. What did you think of the book?
2. Which was the most interesting scene(s), in your opinion?
3. Were there any characters that you felt, you can relate to in any way?
4. What were your expectations before reading *Long Time Gone*?
5. Sloan Hastings learns shocking information about her identity early in the book. How did you react when that revelation occurred?
6. The story uses both past and present-day threads. How did the movement between time-periods impact your reading experience?
7. The setting of Cedar Creek, Nevada plays a big role. How does the sense of place and power shape the story?
8. Sloan is both professional (in forensic genealogy) and deeply personal (in discovering her origins). How do you feel about the balance between her career and her emotional journey?
9. The book raises issues about adoption, identity, and belonging. What do you think the book is saying about how our origins affect us (or don't)?
10. The Margolis family wields significant influence in the community. What commentary, if any, do you feel the book makes about wealth, power, and justice?

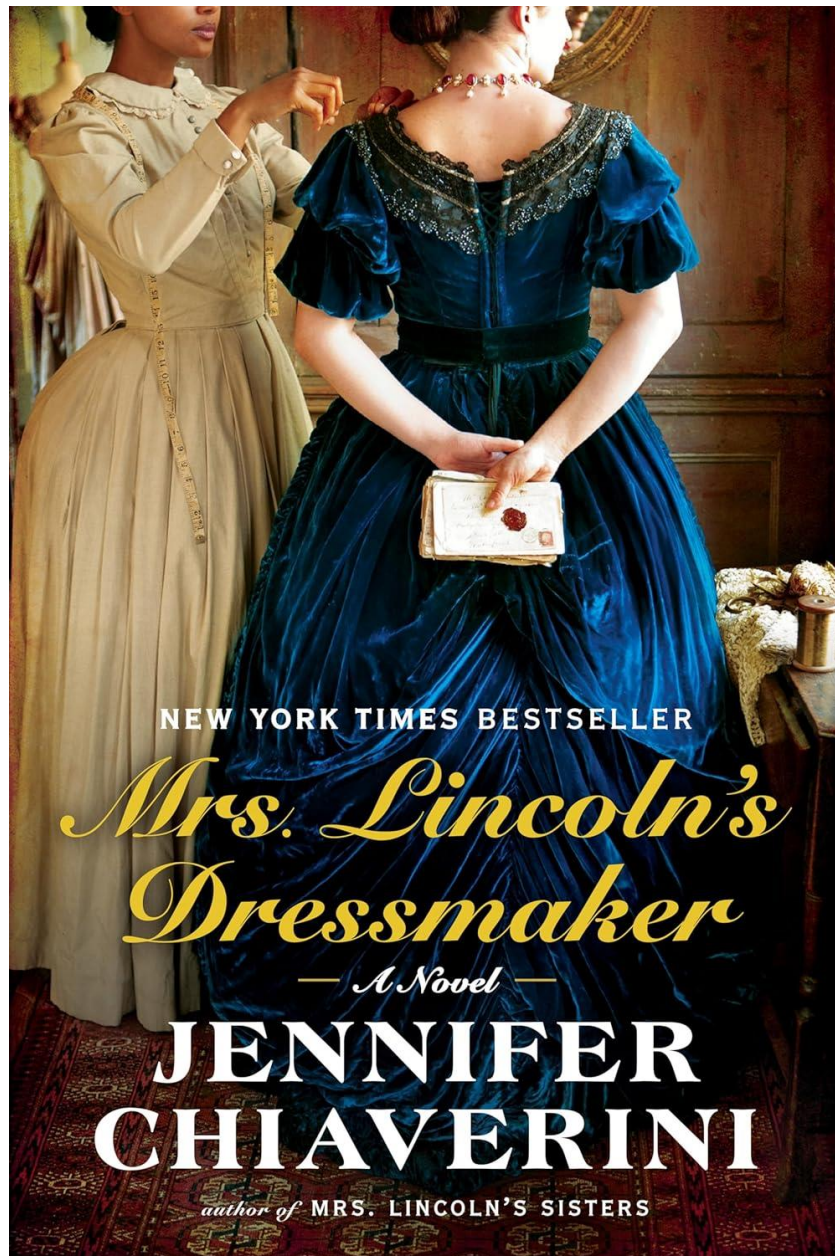
11. What did you think of the end of the book?
12. If you were in Sloan's shoes, would you have pursued the truth in the same way? What might you have done differently?

Answers

BOOK CLUB FOR ADULTS

APRIL 2026 BOOK:

Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker by Jennifer Chiaverini



April

Book: *Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker* by Jennifer Chiaverini

1. What did you think of the book?
2. Which was the most interesting scene(s), in your opinion?
3. Were there any characters that you felt, you can relate to in any way?
4. What were your expectations before reading *Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker*?
5. How did your opinion of Elizabeth change as the story unfolded? What qualities made her stand out to you?
6. How would you describe Mary Todd Lincoln's personality?
7. The friendship between Elizabeth and Mary is at the heart of the book. What made their bond strong – and what strained it?
8. How does Elizabeth's journey from slavery to running her own business inspire you?
9. Did you learn anything new about the Civil War era or life in the White House that surprised you?
10. Elizabeth's decision to write her memoir had serious consequences. Do you think she made the right choice? Why or why not?
11. How does the book portray the challenges Elizabeth faces as a successful Black woman in the 19th century?

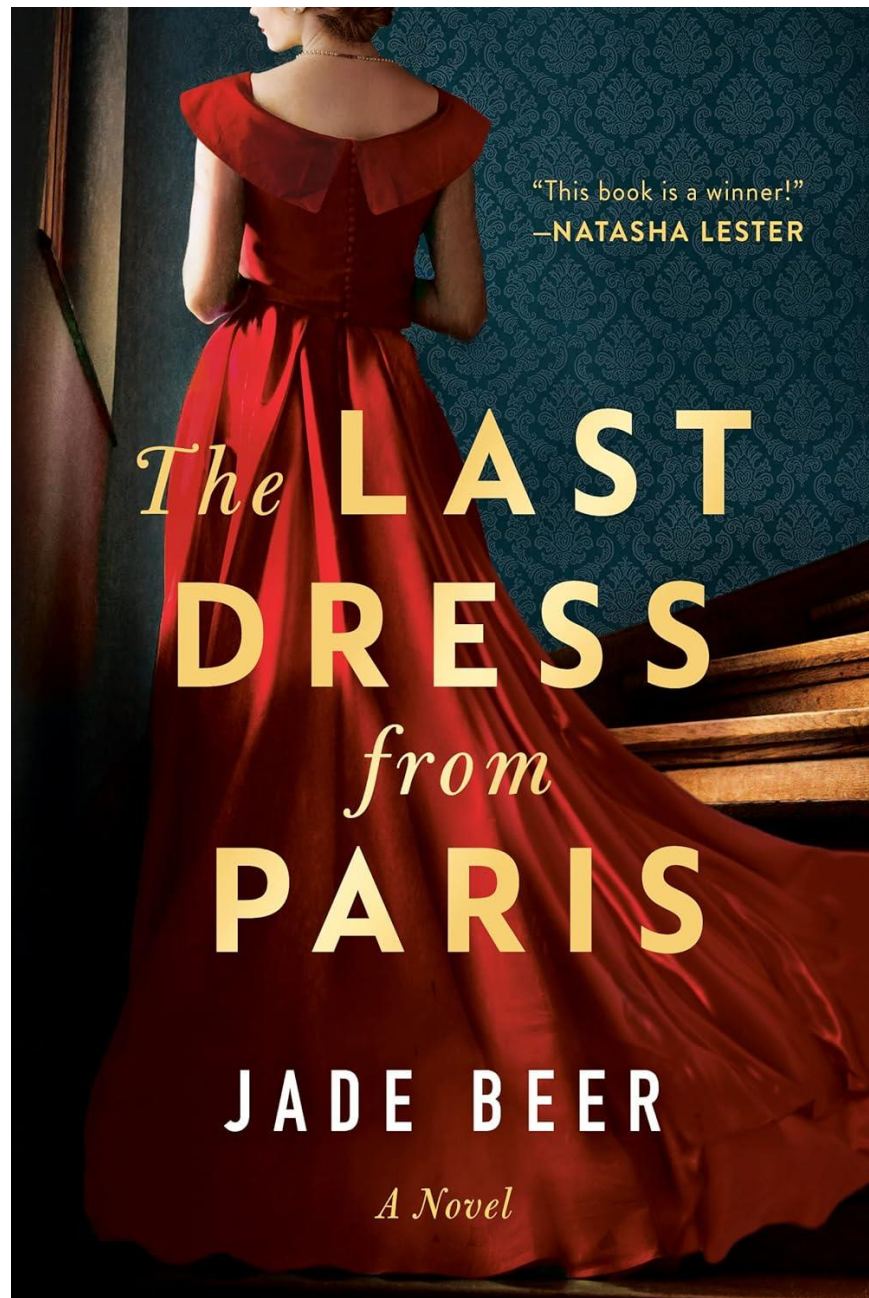
12. Did this novel change the way you think about Abraham Lincoln or his family?

Answers

BOOK CLUB FOR ADULTS

MAY 2026 BOOK:

The Last Dress from Paris by Jade Beer



May

Book: *The Last Dress from Paris* by Jade Beer

1. What did you think of the book?
2. Which was the most interesting scene(s), in your opinion?
3. Were there any characters that you felt, you can relate to in any way?
4. What were your expectations before reading *The Last Dress from Paris*?
5. The novel alternates between Lucille's story in the 1950s and Lucille's granddaughters. Which timeline did you enjoy more, and why?
6. How did you feel about the role the dresses played in the story?
7. How did the descriptions of Paris – past and present – add to your enjoyment of the novel?
8. Many characters keep secrets in the story. Which secret surprised you the most?
9. How did you feel about the way the novel explores' relationships between generations?
10. Do you think Lucille made the right decisions in her life and love story?
Why or why not?
11. How does clothing – or the act of preserving these Dior dresses – reflect identity, memory, or status in the book?

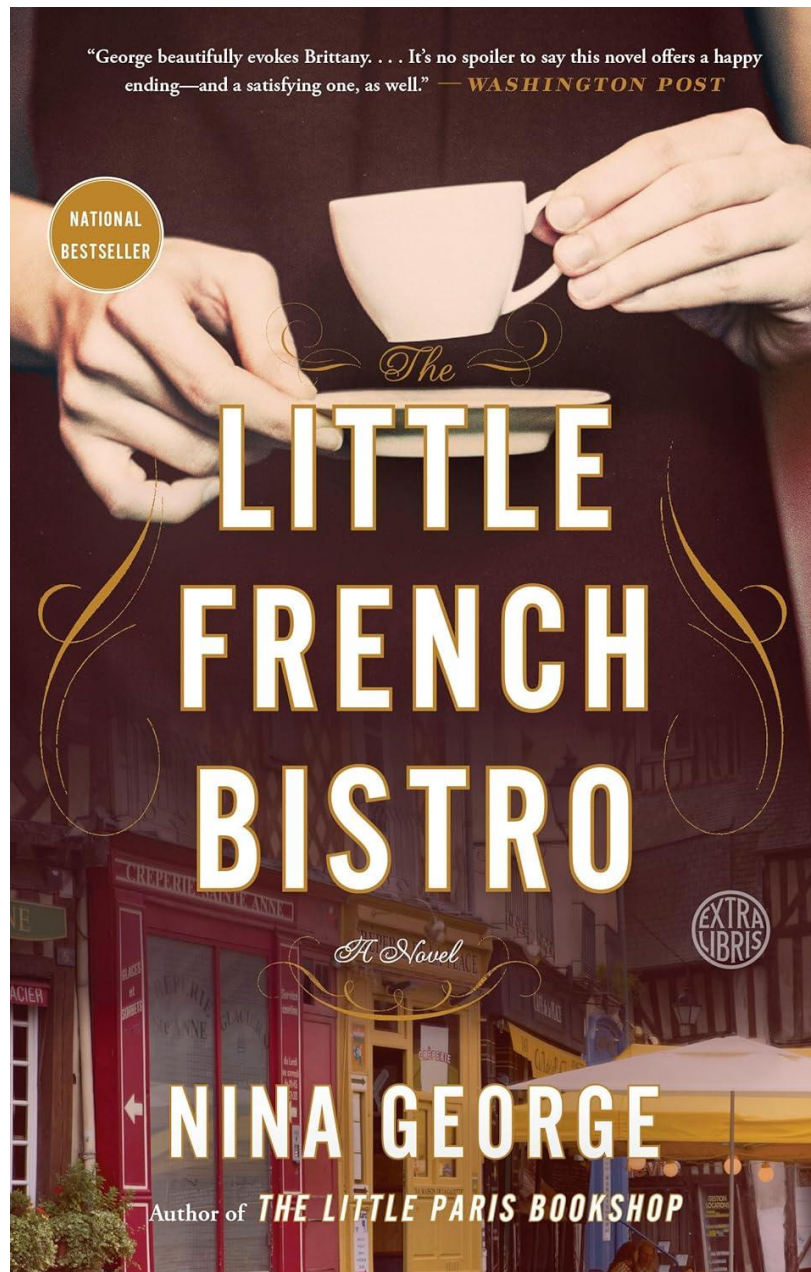
12. Were you satisfied with how the story wrapped up? Did it feel hopeful, sad, or both?

Answers

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JUNE 2026 BOOK:

The Little French Bistro by Nina George



June

Book: *The Little French Bistro* by Nina George

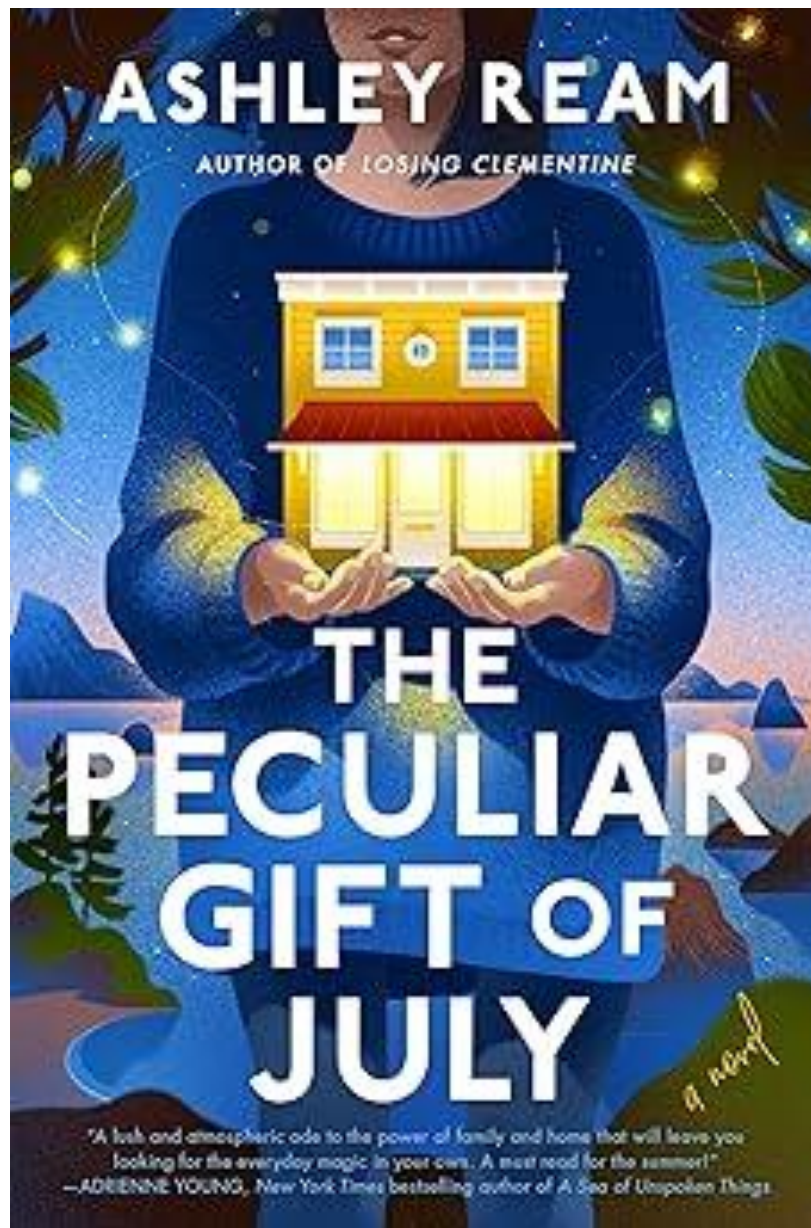
1. What did you think of the book?
2. Which was the most interesting scene(s), in your opinion?
3. Were there any characters that you felt, you can relate to in any way?
4. What were your expectations before reading *The Little French Bistro*?
5. How did you feel about Marianne at the start of the novel? Did your opinion of her change as the story unfolded?
6. The book is about starting over later in life. What does Marianne's journey say about second chances?
7. How did the author's descriptions of the French countryside and seaside towns make you feel? Did it transport you there?
8. How does Marianne's understanding of love change from the beginning to the end of the novel?
9. Which of the people Marianne meets in Kerdruc stood out to you the most?
10. Food plays an important role in the story. Did any particular meal or scene involving food stay with you?
11. Do you think you would have had the courage to make the same choices Marianne did? Why or why not?
12. How did the book make you feel?

Answers

BOOK CLUB FOR ADULTS

JULY 2026 BOOK:

The Peculiar Gift of July by Ashley Ream



July

Book: *The Peculiar Gift of July* by Ashley Ream

1. What did you think of the book?
2. Which was the most interesting scene(s), in your opinion?
3. Were there any characters that you felt, you can relate to in any way?
4. What were your expectations before reading *The Peculiar Gift of July*?
5. At the start, Anita Odom lives a quiet, solitary life in the island grocery.
How did you feel about her when we first meet her? How did your view of her change by the end?
6. When fourteen-year old July arrives unexpectedly, Anita is sure it's a mistake. Did you sympathize with Anita's reaction or with July's? Why?
7. July seems to have an uncanny knack for knowing what people need – even if they don't know it themselves. What did you think of this gift?
8. The setting – Ebey's End, a remote island town reachable only by ferry – is quirky and tight-knit. How did the setting contribute to the story? Would the same story feel different in a big city?
9. Many characters in the town carry secrets or live with assumptions. Which secret or revelation surprised you the most? Why?
10. How did you feel about the relationships that developed in the book?

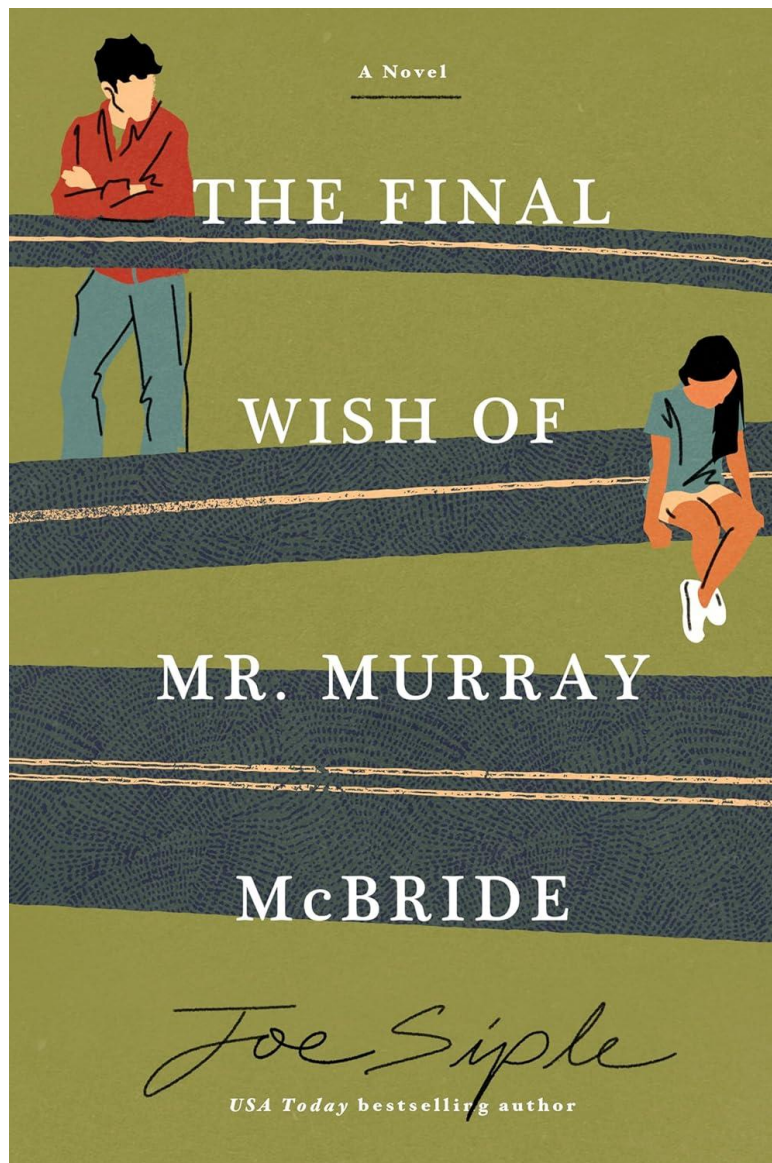
11. Although there are serious themes (grief, change, loneliness), the book also has a warm, humorous tone. Did you find a balance between the serious and the light?
12. What did you think of the end of the book?

Answers

BOOK CLUB FOR ADULTS

AUGUST 2026 BOOK:

The Final Wish of Mr. Murray McBride by Joe Siple



August

Book: *The Final Wish of Mr. Murray McBride* by Joe Siple

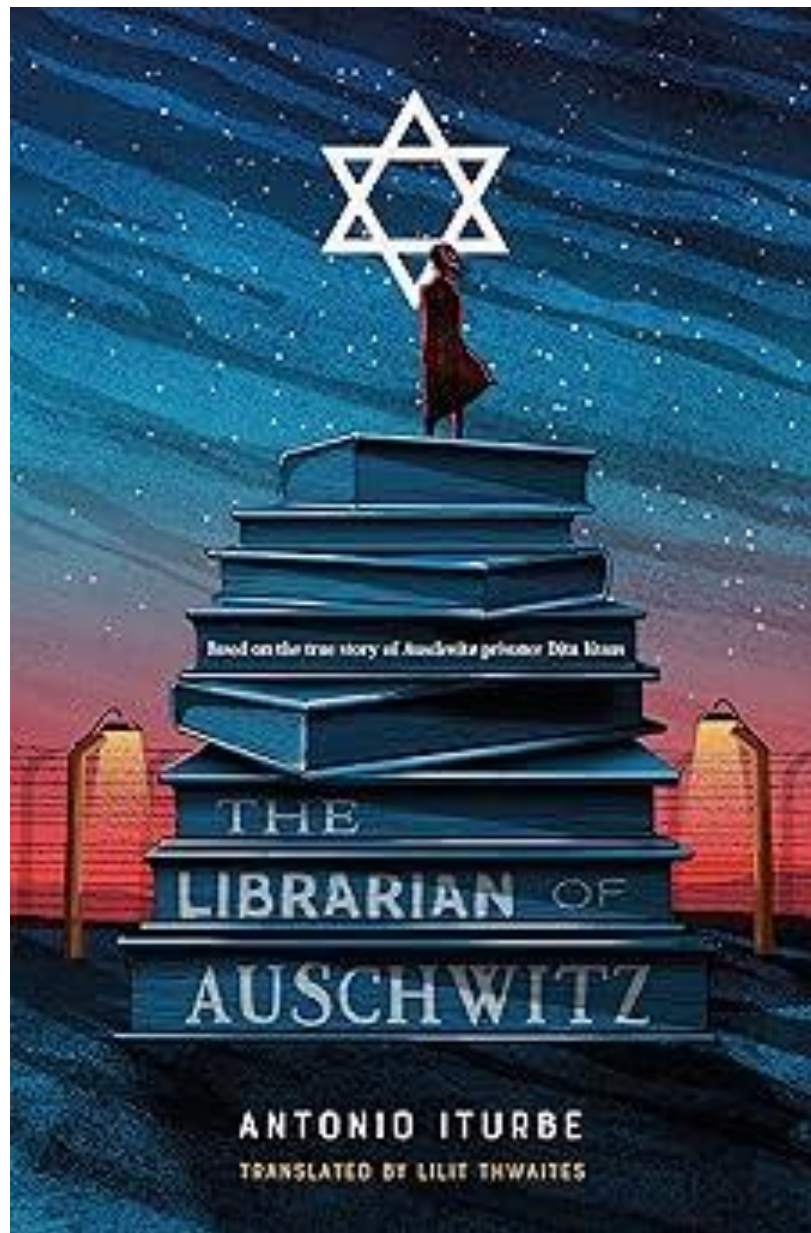
1. What did you think of the book?
2. Which was the most interesting scene(s), in your opinion?
3. Were there any characters that you felt, you can relate to in any way?
4. What were your expectations before reading *The Final Wish of Mr. Murray McBride*?
5. Do you think the setting (the small town, the interactions between characters) was important to the story?
6. Do you think Mr. McBride made the right decision to help someone fulfill their final wish? Why or why not?
7. What was your favorite part of the story?
8. What was the main message or lesson of the story?
9. If you had a chance to grant a final wish for someone, what would you do?
10. What do you think Mr. McBride learned about himself by the end of the book?
11. Was there any part of the book that made you smile or feel emotional?
12. Would you recommend this book to a friend?

Answers

BOOK CLUB FOR ADULTS

SEPTEMBER 2026 BOOK:

The Librarian of Auschwitz by Antonio Iturbe



September

Book: *The Librarian of Auschwitz* by Antonio Iturbe

1. What did you think of the book?
2. Which was the most interesting scene(s), in your opinion?
3. Were there any characters that you felt, you can relate to in any way?
4. What were your expectations before reading *The Librarian of Auschwitz*?
5. How would you describe Dita Adlerova? What qualities helped her survive and stay strong in such terrible circumstances?
6. The novel centers on a secret library inside Auschwitz. Why do you think books and reading were so important to the prisoners?
7. In what ways does the characters show bravery? Did any particular moment stand out to you?
8. How do the relationships between the prisoners help them hold on to their humanity?
9. Was there anything in the book that shocked or taught you something new about life in the concentration camps?
10. Some characters keep their faith, while others lose it. How does the book handle questions of faith, morality, and survival?
11. Why do you think the Nazis feared education and books so much?

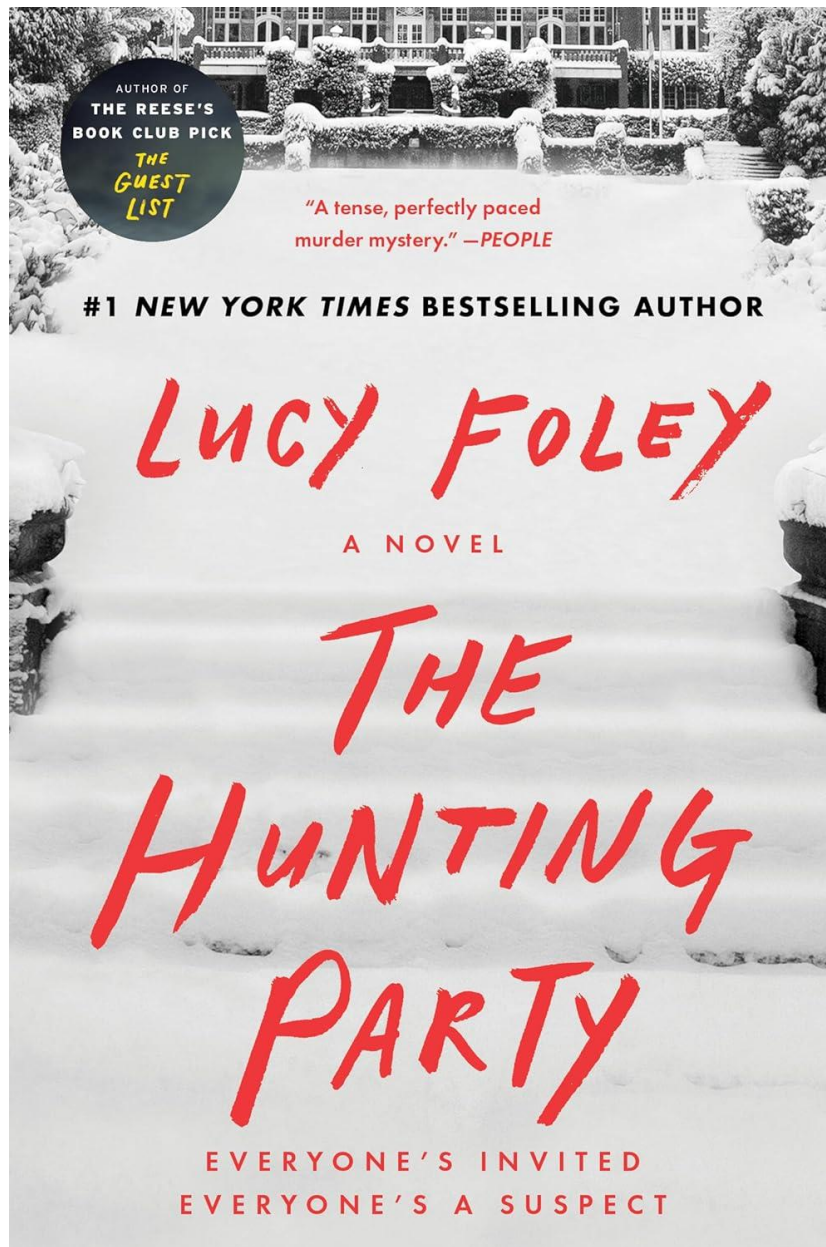
12. Despite the setting, there are moments of hope and kindness. Did the book feel more tragic, inspiring, or both to you?

Answers

BOOK CLUB FOR ADULTS

OCTOBER 2026 BOOK:

The Hunting Party by Lucy Foley



October

Book: *The Hunting Party* by Lucy Foley

1. What did you of the book?
2. Which was the most interesting scene(s), in your opinion?
3. Were there any characters that you felt, you can relate to in any way?
4. What were your expectations before reading *The Hunting Party*?
5. How did the remote Scottish estate contribute to the story's tension and atmosphere? Could this story have worked in another setting?
6. How would you describe the dynamics among the friends? Did their relationships feel realistic?
7. The story is told from multiple perspectives. Did you enjoy that format, or did it make it harder to follow?
8. Everyone in the group seems to be hiding something. Which secret surprised you the most?
9. Did you guess who the victim was before the reveal?
10. What does the novel suggest about old friendships and how people change over time?
11. How did you feel about the pacing of the mystery? Did it keep you turning pages, or did it unfold more slowly than you expected?
12. Were you satisfied with how the mystery was resolved?

Answers

BOOK CLUB FOR ADULTS

NOVEMBER 2026 BOOK:

Out of the Clear Blue Sky by Kristan Higgins



November

Book: *Out of the Clear Blue Sky* by Kristan Higgins

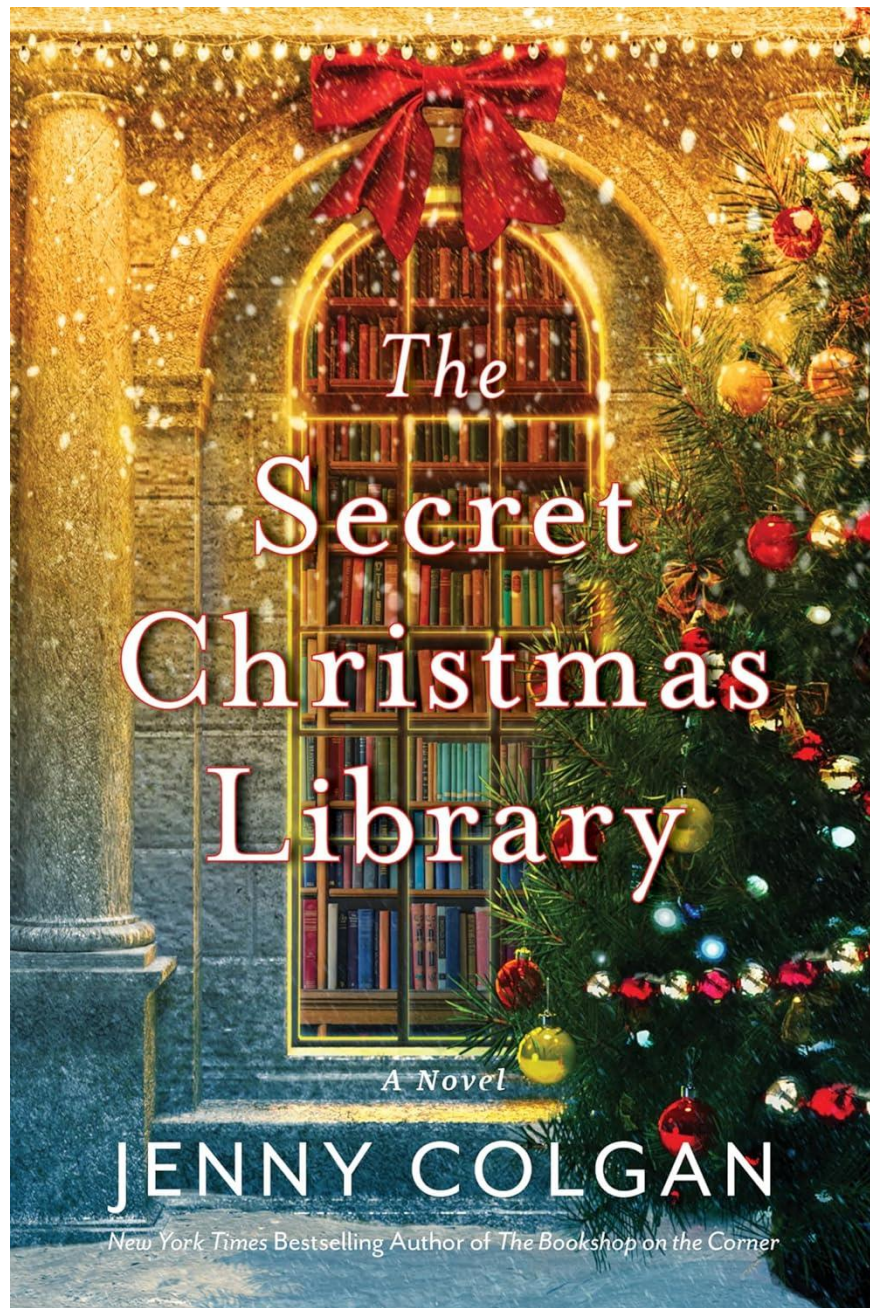
1. What did you of the book?
2. Which was the most interesting scene(s), in your opinion?
3. Were there any characters that you felt, you can relate to in any way?
4. What were your expectations before reading *Out of the Clear Blue Sky*?
5. What was your reaction to the way Lillie's marriage ended at the beginning of the story?
6. What did you think about Brad's actions? Could you understand Lillie's anger and hurt, or did any part of you feel sympathy for him?
7. How does Lillie's relationship with her parents influence how she handles her divorce and fresh start? Did you like how her family supported her? Why or why not?
8. How do you think Lillie changes from the beginning to the end of the book?
9. How did the author balance humor with emotional moments?
10. What did you think of the ending of the book?
11. What message do you think the author wanted readers to take away?
12. Would you recommend this book to a friend?

Answers

BOOK CLUB FOR ADULTS

DECEMBER 2026 BOOK:

The Secret Christmas Library by Jenny Colgan



December

Book: *The Secret Christmas Library* by Jenny Colgan

1. What did you of the book?
2. Which was the most interesting scene(s), in your opinion?
3. Were there any characters that you felt, you can relate to in any way?
4. What were your expectations before reading *The Secret Christmas Library*?
5. How did you feel about Mirren Sutherland's career as an antiquarian book hunter and her personality?
6. The story takes place in a crumbling Highland castle, just before Christmas, with a snowstorm cutting off the outside world. How did the setting impact your reading experience?
7. The book centers on finding a rare hidden book in the castle's collection. Did you enjoy the puzzle aspect? Which clue or twist surprised you the most?
8. How do you feel about the relationships in the book between characters?
9. Many characters are facing change. What do you think the novel says about belonging, home, or second chances?
10. Given that books and libraries figure prominently, what do you think the story suggests about the value of books, of preserving history, or of legacy?

11. Being a Christmas-set novel, did you find the tone “holiday-cozy”, romantic, and uplifting? Did it meet your expectations for a seasonal read?
12. What did you think of the end of the book? Was there enough resolution? Would you have preferred a different outcome for any character? If yes, why?

Answers

Subject: Reflecting on a Fantastic Book Club Year – Thank You!

Thank you all for making 2026 Book Club for Adults year truly special! Your insightful conversations, varied perspectives, and shared passions for reading made every meeting memorable and fun.

From our discussions of *The Battle of the Bookshops*, *The Little French Bistro*, or got lost in the world of *The Secret Christmas Library*, your contributions made each discussion unique and enjoyable. From laughing over quirky characters to diving deep into meaningful themes, each session was made richer by your involvement.

I'm excited for another year of great books, conversations, and connection in 2027! If you have any book recommendations or ideas for the upcoming year, I'd love to hear them.

Thanks again for being such an amazing part of our book-loving community!

Warm regards,

Holly ☺