

## Oliver Wolcott Library Fiction Book Group 2023-24

Meets the second Thursday of the month at 3:30 pm (860) 567-8030 [www.owlibrary.org](http://www.owlibrary.org)

*New members welcome – join one or all discussions*

July 13, 2023	Blackbird House	Alice Hoffman
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This work traces the lives of various occupants of an old Cape Cod farmhouse over the span of 200 years. In interconnected narratives, from the time of the British occupation of Massachusetts to modern time, family after family's lives are inexorably changed, not only by the people they love but by the lives they lead inside Blackbird House. *Moderated by Laura S*

August 10	Four Treasures of the Sky	Jenny Tinghui Zhang
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This story is set during the persecution of Chinese immigrants in the Western US in the 19th century. A girl is kidnapped and smuggled across an ocean from China to America, where she keeps reinventing herself to survive. From a calligraphy school, to a San Francisco brothel, to a shop tucked into the Idaho mountains, she is trying to outrun the tragedy that chases her, while anti-Chinese sentiment sweeps across the country in a wave of violence. *Moderated by Frances*

September 14	The Liar's Dictionary	Eley Williams
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You wouldn't expect a comic novel about a dictionary to be a thriller too, but this one is. In fact, it is also a mystery, love story (two of them) and cliffhanging melodrama. The book chronicles the charming misadventures of a lovelorn Victorian lexicographer and the young woman put on his trail a century later to root out his misdeeds while confronting questions of her own sexuality and place in the world. *Moderated by Sharon*

October 12	The Nurse's Secret	Amanda Skenandore
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Based on Florence Nightingale's nursing principles, Bellevue prizes discipline, intellect, and moral character. A young female grifter in 1880s New York evades the police by conning her way into Bellevue Hospital's training school for nurses, America's first nursing school. A spate of murders continues to follow her as she tries to leave the gritty streets of the city behind. *Moderated by Linda*

November 9	The One Hundred Years of Lenni and Margot	Marianne Cronin
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A teenager, told she's dying, meets an old woman who transforms her in ways she never imagined. Between them, they have been alive for one hundred years. Though their days are dwindling, both are determined to leave their mark on the world. They devise a plan to create one hundred paintings showcasing the stories of the century they have lived. Though the end is near, life isn't quite done with these women. *Moderated by Laura Alexi*

December 14	The Mercies	Kiran Millwood Hargrave
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The women in an Arctic village must survive a sinister threat after all the men are wiped out by a catastrophic storm in the early 1600s. For the women left behind, survival means they fish, hunt, and butcher reindeer, which they never did while the men were alive. But the foundation of this new feminine frontier begins to crack with the arrival of a man sent from Scotland to root out alleged witchcraft. *Moderated by Margaret*

January 11, 2024	The Hours	<i>Movie to be discussed also</i>	Michael Cunningham
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The life and work of Virginia Woolf influences a group of contemporary characters struggling with love and inheritance, hope and despair. Woolf's last days are a counterpoint to the fictional stories of a famous poet whose life has been shadowed by his talented and troubled mother, and of his lifelong friend Clarissa, who strives to have a rewarding life in spite of the demands of friends, lovers, and family. *Moderated by Cathy*

February 8	South of Broad		Pat Conroy
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His own family shadowed by tragedy, a man searches for something to sustain him and finds it among a tightly knit group of outsiders. These friendships span two turbulent decades. There are happy and troubled marriages, unrequited loves and unspoken longings, hard-won successes and devastating breakdowns, as well as Charleston, South Carolina's dark legacy of racism and class divisions. *Moderated by Jeff*

March 14	The Language of Flowers		Vanessa Diffenbaugh
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A child alone in the world has a talent that saves her. In the foster-care system, she is unable to get close to anybody, and her only connection to the world is through flowers and their meanings. Now 18, she has a gift for helping others through the flowers she chooses for them. But an encounter with a stranger has her questioning what's been missing in her life. *Moderated by Nancy*

April 11	10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World		Elif Shafak
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In the pulsating moments after she has been murdered, a woman remembers her life – and the lives of others, outcasts like her. Her memories bring us back to her childhood in the provinces and to a dark world in a big city. In her death, the secrets and wonders of modern Istanbul come to life, painted vividly by the captivating tales of how she came to know and be loved by her friends. *Moderated by Corinne*

May 9	Joan Is Okay		Weike Wang
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Joan is a thirty-something ICU doctor at a busy New York City hospital. Her parents were originally from China. She is intensely devoted to her work and happily solitary, but family, neighbors and co-workers try to shape her life according to their cultural and social expectations. *Moderated by Cindy*

June 14	The Seven Sisters		Margaret Drabble
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When circumstances compel her to start over, an older woman moves to a run-down building in central London – and begins to pour her soul into a diary. She is not exactly destitute. So, is the move perversity, she wonders, a survival test, or is she punishing herself? How will she adjust to this curiously appealing city? What can happen, at her age, to change her life? She describes her social circle and her attempts at risk-taking in her new life. *Moderated by Curry*

July 11, 2024	Trust	<i>Pair with Non-Fiction</i>	Hernan Diaz
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You can't "trust" this novel – and that's a very good thing. The story is primarily about a very rich man and the stock market crash of 1929. *Trust* contains four distinct books in which different characters provide conflicting accounts of the financier and his wife. The couple are secretive; the husband has new money, the wife has an old name. Their fortune grows in spite of – or perhaps because of – the 1929 stock market crash. *Moderated by Laura S.* *as of June 9, 2023*