

## Oliver Wolcott Library Fiction Book Group 2020-21

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*

October 8, 2020	Lost Children Archive	Valeria Luiselli
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A mother and father set out with their two children, a boy and a girl, driving from New York to Arizona in the heat of summer. On the radio, there is news about an "immigration crisis": thousands of kids trying to cross the southwestern border into the United States, but getting detained – or lost in the desert along the way. The family is led to a grand, harrowing adventure – both in the desert landscape and within the chambers of each member's own imagination. *Moderated by Dick*

November 12	A Man for All Seasons <i>The play and the movie to be discussed</i>	Robert Bolt
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Sir Thomas More was a nobleman, lawyer, humanist, author, and a long-time friend and favorite of Henry VIII. Yet he was also a staunch Catholic, and when Henry broke with the Church after the Pope refused to grant him a divorce from Catherine of Aragon, More resigned as Lord Chancellor. Then Parliament passed a bill requiring all subjects to take an oath acknowledging the supremacy of England's king over all foreign sovereigns, including the Pope. More refused. *Moderated by Laura*

December 10	Kindred <i>Pair with Non-Fiction: White Rage</i>	Octavia Butler
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The visionary author's masterpiece pulls us – along with her Black female hero – through time to face the horrors of slavery and explore the impacts of racism, sexism, and white supremacy then and now. A modern Black woman is snatched abruptly from her home in California and is transported to the antebellum South. The white son of a plantation owner is drowning, and she is summoned repeatedly to save him. *Moderated by Frances*

January 14, 2021	Like Water for Chocolate: A Novel in Monthly Installments, with Recipes, Romances, and Home Remedies <i>Movie discussed also</i>	Laura Esquivel
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Earthy, magical, and utterly charming, this tale of family life in turn-of-the-century Mexico blends poignant romance and bittersweet wit. On a ranch the tyrannical owner chops onions at the kitchen table in her final days of pregnancy, and little Tita slips out amid the spices and fixings for noodle soup. After this early encounter with food, Tita grows up to be a master chef. She shares special points of her favorite preparations with readers throughout the story. *Moderated by Diane*

February 11	This Tender Land <i>Pair with Non-Fiction: Indigenous Peoples</i>	William Kent Krueger
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Four orphans confined to the Lincoln Indian Training School steal away in a canoe and travel the Mississippi River on a life-changing odyssey during the Great Depression. Over the course of one summer, these four children journey into the unknown and cross paths with others who are adrift, from struggling farmers and traveling faith healers to displaced families and lost souls of all kinds. *Moderated by Dick*

March 11	Wide Sargasso Sea	Jean Rhys
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In *Jane Eyre*, Mr. Rochester cannot marry Jane because of his mad wife locked in the attic. But what is her story? And if she is “mad,” how did she get that way? Whether or not *Jane Eyre* is one of your favorite novels, you will be fascinated by the story from the point of view of the madwoman in the attic. A young woman is sold into marriage to the prideful Mr. Rochester. A society driven by hatred and skewed in its sexual relations can drive a woman out of her mind. *Moderated by Nancy*

April 8	The Power	Naomi Alderman
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The status quo is disrupted when young women develop immense electrical powers embedded in their bodies. This dystopian novel encompasses many current issues – religion, the media, crime, and politics – through an alternate reality. *Moderated by Cindy*

May 13	Home Fire	Kamila Shamsie
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The old Greek myth about Antigone underpins a very modern story following a British Pakistani family based in London. The novel explores the dilemma faced by British Muslims, and it is a moving account of tragedy working itself out in the heart of two families. Social tensions and cultural conflicts are explored. The radicalization of a young man has many ramifications, especially for the novel’s strong and intelligent women. *Moderated by Margaret*

June 10	Where the Crawdads Sing	Delia Owens
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The main storyline spans 1952 to 1970, following Kya from ages 6 to 25 as she grows up alone in a shack in the swamp lands of North Carolina after being abandoned by her family. The story is a mystery, a heartbreaking coming-of-age story, a survival story, an exquisite ode to the natural world, and a surprising tale of possible murder. *Moderated by Curry*

July 8	On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous	Ocean Vuong
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The novel is a letter from a son to a mother who cannot read. Written when the speaker is in his late twenties, the letter unearths a family’s history that began before he was born – a history whose epicenter is rooted in Vietnam – and serves as a doorway into parts of his life his mother has never known. Asking questions central to our American moment, this poet-turned novelist explores race, class, and masculinity. *Moderated by Kathy*

*List as of September 10, 2020*