

Oliver Wolcott Library Fiction Book Group 2024-25

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

New members welcome – join one or all discussions

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.*

August 8	Small Mercies		Dennis Lehane
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Set against the hot, tumultuous months when Boston's desegregation of its public schools exploded in violence, this book is a superb thriller, a brutal depiction of criminality and power, and an unflinching portrait of the dark heart of American racism. *Moderated by Cindy*

September 12	Corelli's Mandolin	<i>Movie to be discussed also</i>	Louis de Bernieres
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This mixture of history and romance is set on a Greek island. During World War II, the Italian army occupies the island. Caught in the occupation are a young woman and her two suitors: a fisherman turned guerilla, and the mandolin-playing Captain Corelli, a reluctant Italian officer on the island. Loyalties and betrayals are featured, and the use of duplicity and disinformation to sway events and thus history resonates with events today. *Moderated by Audrey*

October 10	Eileen		Otessa Moshfegh
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A lonely young woman works in a boys' prison outside Boston in the early 1960s while also caring for an alcoholic father. Decades later she narrates the events of her last week in her home town, where she had stagnated. She has an unusual personality, and she also has an unusual relationship with her workplace, where she is pulled into a very strange crime. *Moderated by Tricia*

November 14	The Arsonists' City		Hala Alyan
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One family's tale becomes the story of a nation. A Syrian mother, a Lebanese father, and three American children: all have lived a life of migration. They've always had their ancestral home in Beirut as a constant touchstone, but a family patriarch decides to sell. That man's decision brings the family to Beirut in a fight to save the house. Their own secrets ignite in a city smoldering with the legacy of war, refugees, religious tension, and political protest. *Moderated by Corinne*

December 12	Childhood's End		Arthur C. Clarke
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The Overlords appeared suddenly over every city – intellectually, technologically, and militarily superior to humankind. Benevolent, they made few demands: unify earth, eliminate poverty, and end war. With little rebellion, humankind agreed, and a golden age began. But at what cost? As civilization approaches the crossroads, will the Overlords spell the end for humankind ... or the beginning? A classic of science fiction, this book raises fresh questions in this dawn of the use of artificial intelligence. *Moderated by Jeff*

January 9, 2025	If We Were Villains	M. L. Rio
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This is an unorthodox take on rivalry, friendship, and truth. Seven young Shakespearean actors and friends play the same roles onstage and off: hero, villain, tyrant, temptress, ingénue, extras. But good-natured rivalries turn ugly, and real violence invades the world of make-believe. The actors find themselves facing their very own tragedy, and their greatest acting challenge yet: convincing the police, each other, and themselves that they are innocent. *Moderated by Olivia*

February 13	Birnam Wood	Eleanor Catton
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A New Zealand farm is abandoned, presenting an opportunity for Birnam Wood, a sometimes-criminal, sometimes-philanthropic gardening collective that plants crops where no one will notice. But an American billionaire also has an interest in the place. They're poles apart politically, but the billionaire and the group might have enemies in common. Can Birnam Wood trust him? *Moderated by Margaret*

March 13	One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest <i>Movie also. Pair with Non-Fiction</i>	Ken Kesey
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In this classic novel, a fun-loving rebel named McMurphy swaggers into the world of a mental hospital. He rallies the other patients around him by challenging the dictatorship of Nurse Ratched. His defiance turns into an all-out war between two relentless opponents: Nurse Ratched, backed by the full power of authority, and McMurphy, with his own indomitable will. *Moderated by Nancy*

April 10	Switchboard Soldiers	Jennifer Chiaverini
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In 1917, General John Pershing established American forces in Europe but needed telephone operators who could help him communicate with troops in the field. American telephone operators were women, and the U.S. Army Signal Corps recruited them. They were among the first women sworn into the U.S. Army under the Articles of War. The male soldiers they had replaced had needed one minute to connect each telephone call. The switchboard soldiers could do it in ten seconds. *Moderated by Curry*

May 8	Acts of Forgiveness <i>Pair with Non-Fiction</i>	Maura Cheeks
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Will the country's first female president pass the Forgiveness Act, giving Black families \$175,000 if they are the descendants of slaves? For an ambitious single mother, the bill could be a long-awaited form of redemption. She's living with her parents and daughter while trying to help run her father's struggling construction company from going into bankruptcy. Could the Forgiveness Act uncover her forgotten roots while also helping save their beloved home and her father's life's work? *Moderated by Frances*

June 12, 2025	Case Histories	Kate Atkinson
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Three cases: a little girl goes missing in the night, a woman falls victim to a maniac's apparently random attack, and a new mother is trapped until a bloody escape. Decades after the first incident, private detective Jackson Brodie investigates all three cases as connections emerge among the three. Not your typical crime novel, the book is a series of family sagas, with alternating points of view and postmodern literary references throughout. *Moderated by Laura*

July 10, 2025	The Substitution Order	Martin Clark
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A high-flying attorney hits rock bottom. Short on cash, he lands a job at SUBstitution, the world's saddest sandwich shop. He's determined to set his life right again, but the troubles keep coming. And when a mysterious stranger wanders into the shop armed with a threatening "invitation," he will need his legal savvy to use the law's tricks and avoid hidden trapdoors. *Moderated by Banjie as of June 15, 2024*