

Mohawk Valley Library System

Best of the Best

Fiction 2019

Brandes, Nadine, **Romanov** The fate of the Romanov family may depend on safeguarding a Matryoshka doll of spells in this fantasy retelling of the survival of Anastasia.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi **The Water Dancer** A slave on his father's plantation, Hiram Walker remembers nothing of his mother, but an accident reveals a unique gift she has left him, a gift that may save him and others from a life of slavery.

Conklin, Tara **The Last Romantics** A question from an lecture audience member triggers famed poet Fiona Skinner to recount her inspiration for her most famous work, a reminiscence of family.

Gilbert, Elizabeth **City of Girls** Expelled from Vassar, Vivian Morris is sent by her wealthy parents to live with her aunt, owner of a down at the heels NYC theater company and becomes part of a 'family' of unconventional and flamboyant characters where she thrives until she makes a costly mistake.

Griffiths, Elly **The Stranger Diaries** High school teacher Clare Cassidy specializes in teaching Gothic writer, RM Holland at the private school where he once lived. When a friend is found dead with a quote from his most famous story left by the body, Clare's life begins to collide with the storyline.

Grunwald, Lisa **Time After Time** Railroad worker Joe Reynolds meets a mysterious woman in Grand Central Station who disappears when he tries to walk her home. Infatuated and puzzled by her appearance, Joe searches for her only to discover her secret, she died years before in a train accident.

Harper, Jane **The Lost Man** In the desolate and hot Australian outback, two ranchers find the body of their brother and seek the person responsible for his death.

Hoffman, Alice **The World That We Knew** In 1941, as conditions for Jews in Berlin worsen, Hanni Kohn looks for a way to get her daughter Lea out of danger. Desperate, she asks a rabbi for help, but is refused, but his daughter, Ettie, offers hope by conjuring a golem, Ava, sworn to protect Lea and bring her to safety.

Holmes, Linda **Evvie Drake Starts Over** It's not grief keeping new widow Evvie Drake a recluse in her home but secrets she has revealed to no one. When she rents a room to former baseball player Dean Tenney, who has lost his pitching ability, she learns she is not the only one keeping secrets.

Lalami, Laila **The Other Americans** A Moroccan immigrant is killed in a suspicious hit and run accident in California, bringing together a diverse group of characters, daughter Nora, widow Maryam, undocumented witness Effrain, Iraq war veteran Jeremy, and Coleman the detective pursuing the case.

Lippman, Laura **Lady in the Lake** Maddy Schwartz leaves her affluent husband taking a clerical job at a newspaper but her ambition is to be a reporter, difficult for a woman in 1960s Baltimore, but she cleverly finds a way to get human interest stories published. Intrigued by the disappearance of Cleo Sherwood, an African American waitress who disappeared and whose body is found in a lake in a city park, she investigates to find the truth.

McCracken, Elizabeth **Bowlaway** Three generations of an eccentric family operate the candlepin bowling alley established by mysterious Bertha Truitt.

Moyes, Jojo **The Giver of Stars** Five very different women answer the call for volunteers to deliver books in the mountains of Kentucky, as part of Eleanor Roosevelt's traveling library program.

Nellums, Eliza **All That's Bright and Gone** Six year old Aiofe understands that her brother is dead and that her mother is often unwell and confused, but when her mother breakdowns in a busy intersection and is hospitalized, no one answers her questions about her family or when her mother will return.. Aiofe enlists her eight year old neighbor and an imaginary friend to figure out her family secrets.

Orringer, Julie **The Flight Portfolio** In 1940's Marseille, Varian Fry works to rescue European artists and intellectuals from the Nazis.

Owens, Delia **Where the Crawdads Sing** Abandoned by every member of her family, Kya raises and educates herself in the marshes of the North Carolina coast and becomes a murder suspect.

Patchett, Ann **The Dutch House** When their stepmother exiles Danny and Maeve Conroy from the family estate on the death of their father, the two create their own family as they cope with the transition from wealth to poverty.

Pike, Signe **The Lost Queen** In sixth century Scotland, Languoreth and her twin Lailoken are raised in the old ways of their ancestors, Languoreth longs to follow her twin brother as a Wisdom Keeper, but her destiny is to make an advantageous marriage. The old ways clash with the rise of Christianity and Languoreth finds herself in the middle of the conflict.

Prescott, Lara **The Secrets We Kept** Two secretaries are pulled out of the typing pool at the Agency to smuggle Boris Pasternak's **Dr. Zhivago** out of Russia for publication in the West to undermine the Russian Communist regime.

Reid, Taylor Jenkins **Daisy Jones & The Six** The rise to fame and sudden breakup of seventies rock group, the Six, and its talented lead singer Daisy Jones.

Robson, Jennifer **The Gown: A Novel of the Royal Wedding** Post World War II England is suffering with continued rationing and shortages so the news of the Princess Elizabeth's impending wedding is a welcome diversion, fostering interest in the every detail, including information on the secret wedding gown. Ann Hughes and Miriam Dassin, embroiderers at the Mayfair fashion house of Norman Hartwell are honored to be selected to help craft the dress and it changes their lives.

Russo, Richard **Chances Are...** Considering the sale of his Martha's Vineyard home, Lincoln invites his three closest college friends, Teddy, and Mickey, for a final weekend stay, causing each to recollect a connection to Jacy who disappeared forty-four years ago, as well as their own histories.

Sansom, C.J. **Tombland** In Spring 1549, Matthew Shardlake is working as a lawyer in the service of Lady Elizabeth. When Elizabeth's distant relation is found dead, he is sent to investigate, embroiling Shardlake in Kett's Rebellion, a peasant uprising.

See, Lisa **The Island of Sea Women** On the Korean island of Jeju, women support their families as haenyeo, sea divers. Mi-ja and Young-sook join the diving collective as young girls and become close friends over many years despite their disparate backgrounds. That relationship is tested over the years through decades of change in Korea.

Simson, Graeme **The Rosie Result** Rosie and Don Tillman are back in Australia with their son, Hudson, who is having trouble adjusting at school. But Don has a plan...

Stewart, Amy **Kopp Sisters on the March** In 1917, no longer a NJ deputy sheriff, Constance Kopp and her sisters join a National Service Camp, in 1917 a military style camp for women who want to serve their country in the days before World War I.

Strout, Elizabeth **Olive Again** Aging and widowed for the second time, Olive Kitteredge still struggles to understand herself and her neighbors in Crosby, Maine

Whitehead, Colson **The Nickel Boys** An innocent mistake shatters Elwood Curtis' bright future and lands him in the notorious Nickel Academy reform school in Florida where corruption and violence challenge his faith in the philosophy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as well as his very survival.

Wilson, Kevin **Nothing to See Here** Despite their estrangement following a scandal in their boarding school days, Lillian and Madison have continued an unlikely friendship in the ensuing years. When Madison sends a letter asking for Lillian's help, Lillian agrees to care for Madison's stepchildren, despite the children's problem: they spontaneously combust when agitated.

Carol Clingan, January 9, 2020