

2023 – 2024 Book Discussion Group

Second Thursday of the month unless marked* at 10 am in the Clubrooms

September 14 *Celestial Bodies* by Jokha Alharthi

This is the story of an Omani family through several generations, also the family who are their traditional slaves and the Bedouin Tribes who surround them. Three girls, Asma, Khawla and Mayya represent the old and new in Oman from birth practices to education and marriage.

October 12 *Trust* by Hernan Diaz

Even through the roar and effervescence of the 1920s, everyone in New York has heard of Benjamin and Helen Rask. He is a legendary Wall Street tycoon; she is the daughter of eccentric aristocrats. Together, they have risen to the very top of a world of seemingly endless wealth-all as a decade of excess and speculation draws to an end. But at what cost have they acquired their immense fortune?

November 9 *Home Fire* by Kamila Shamsie

The novel, set in the USA, UK and Pakistan is a modern version of Sophocles' Antigone, bringing it into today's world and exploring the question of how people become radicalised. It was the 2018 winner of the Women's Prize for Fiction and the London Hellenic Prize.

December 14 *Christmas Days* by Jeanette Winterson

A collection of twelve short stories, varying in style and setting, on the theme of Christmas along with twelve recipes for the 12 days of Christmas. From jovial spirits to a donkey with a golden nose, a haunted house to a SnowMama, Winterson's innovative stories encompass the childlike and spooky wonder of Christmas.

January 11 *Small Things Like These* by Claire Keegan

Set in a small Irish town and following a coal and timber merchant confronted by the past, this magnetic tale of determination and quiet heroism is a moving, eloquent story based on the scandal of Ireland's Magdalen laundries run by Roman Catholic institutions. Through thoughtful, elegant writing Keegan explores moral choice when confronted with difficult reality.

February 8 ***Money* by Martin Amis**

The novel tells the story of jet-setting John Self who rolls between London and New York indulging his insatiable appetite for alcohol, fast food, drugs, pornography and more. This is a tale of money and the disasters it can precipitate. Martin Amis, who died in May 2023, was famed for his bleakly comic novels.

March 14 ***The Fear Index* by Robert Harris**

A contemporary thriller set in the Geneva financial world. Alex Hoffmann has developed a method of playing the financial markets that generates billions of pounds, but then his life is threatened when an intruder breaches the elaborate security of his home. This novel gives an interesting insight into the advantages and dangers of using artificial intelligence.

April 11 ***Summerwater* by Sarah Moss**

A bittersweet portrait of modern Britain, presented through the microcosm of a drab Scottish cabin park and told over twenty-four hours. Twelve people on holiday with their families look on as the skies remain resolutely grey. There are the retired couple, young families and sulky teenagers. But there are newcomers too, a mother and daughter with the wrong clothes and the wrong manners. Who are they? Where are they from? Should they be here at all?

***May 16** ***Inheritance* by Nicholas Shakespeare**

What would you do if you suddenly and unexpectedly inherited £17 million? This is what happens to Andy Larkham. Recently jilted and down on his luck, he sets out to attend the funeral of an old school teacher, but instead finds himself at the funeral of a stranger, a certain Christopher Madigan. Mr Madigan has stipulated that his fortune should pass to whoever shows up at his funeral.

June 13 ***Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus**

Chemist Elizabeth Zott is not your average woman. In fact she would be the first to point out that there is no such thing as an average woman. But it's the early 1960s and her all-male team at Hastings Research Institute takes a very unscientific view of equality. Forced to resign, she reluctantly signs on as the host of a cooking show. Her revolutionary approach to cooking grabs the attention of a nation.

Leaders: Sue Garland: sue@geoharmony.com
and Vicky Maltby: vickymaltby@bluewin.ch