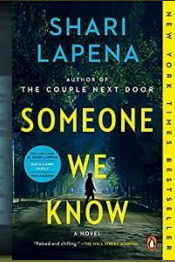
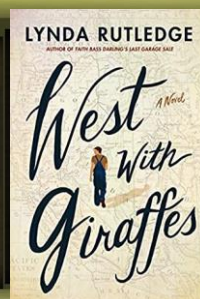
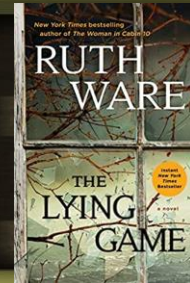
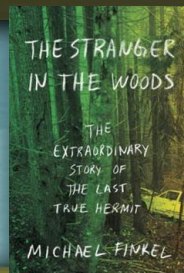
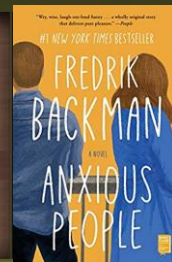
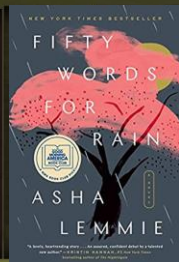
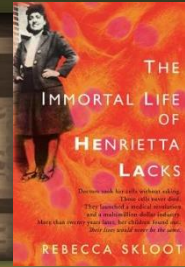
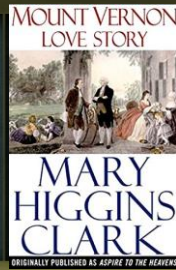


2023 Breakfast Book Club



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January 13, 2023

The Forest of Vanishing Stars by Kristin Harmel

After being stolen from her wealthy German parents and raised in the unforgiving wilderness of eastern Europe, a young woman finds herself alone in 1941 after her kidnapper dies. Her solitary existence is interrupted, however, when she happens upon a group of Jews fleeing the Nazi terror. Stunned to learn what's happening in the outside world, she vows to teach the group all she can about surviving in the forest—and in turn, they teach her some surprising lessons about opening her heart after years of isolation. But when she is betrayed and escapes into a German-occupied village, her past and present come together in a shocking collision that could change everything.

February 10, 2023

Mount Vernon Love Story by Mary Higgins Clark

Always a lover of history, Mary Higgins Clark wrote this extensively researched biographical novel and titled it *Aspire to the Heavens*, after the motto of George Washington's mother. Published in 1969, the book was more recently discovered by a Washington family descendant and reissued as *Mount Vernon Love Story*. Dispelling the widespread belief that although George Washington married Martha Dandridge Custis, he reserved his true love for Sally Carey Fairfax, his best friend's wife, Mary Higgins Clark describes the Washington marriage as one full of tenderness and passion, as a bond between two people who shared their lives—even the bitter hardship of winter in Valley Forge—in every way. In this author's skilled hands, the history, the love, and the man come fully and dramatically alive.

March 10, 2023

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot

Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. She was a poor Southern tobacco farmer who worked the same land as her slave ancestors, yet her cells—taken without her knowledge—became one of the most important tools in medicine: The first “immortal” human cells grown in culture, which are still alive today, though she has been dead for more than sixty years. HeLa cells were vital for developing the polio vaccine; uncovered secrets of cancer, viruses, and the atom bomb's effects; helped lead to important advances like in vitro fertilization, cloning, and gene mapping; and have been bought and sold by the billions.

Yet Henrietta Lacks remains virtually unknown, buried in an unmarked grave.

Henrietta's family did not learn of her “immortality” until more than twenty years after her death when scientists investigating HeLa began using her husband and children in research without informed consent. And though the cells had launched a multimillion-dollar industry that sells human biological materials, her family never saw any of the profits. As Rebecca Skloot so brilliantly shows, the story of the Lacks family—past and present—is inextricably connected to the dark history of experimentation on African Americans, the birth of bioethics, and the legal battles over whether we control the stuff we are made of.

April 14, 2023

Fifty words for Rain by Asha Lemmie

Kyoto, Japan, 1948. “Do not question. Do not fight. Do not resist.”

Such is eight-year-old Noriko “Nori” Kamiza's first lesson. She will not question why her mother abandoned her with only these final words. She will not fight her confinement to the attic of her grandparents' imperial estate. And she will not resist the scalding chemical baths she receives daily to lighten her skin.

The child of a married Japanese aristocrat and her African American GI lover, Nori is an outsider from birth. Her grandparents took her in, only to conceal her, fearful of a stain on the royal pedigree that they are desperate to uphold in a changing Japan. Obedient to a fault, Nori accepts her solitary life, despite her natural intellect and curiosity. But when chance brings her older half-brother, Akira, to the estate that is his inheritance and destiny, Nori finds in him an unlikely ally with whom she forms a powerful bond—a bond their formidable grandparents cannot allow and that will irrevocably change the lives they were always meant to lead. Because now that Nori has glimpsed a world in which perhaps there is a place for her after all, she is ready to fight to be a part of it—a battle that just might cost her everything.

May 12, 2023 *Anxious People* by Fredrik Backman

Looking at real estate isn't usually a life-or-death situation, but an apartment open house becomes just that when a failed bank robber bursts in and takes a group of strangers hostage. The captives include a recently retired couple who relentlessly hunt down fixer-uppers to avoid the painful truth that they can't fix their own marriage. There's a wealthy bank director who has been too busy to care about anyone else and a young couple who are about to have their first child but can't seem to agree on anything. Add to the mix an eighty-seven-year-old woman who has lived long enough not to be afraid of someone waving a gun in her face, a flustered but still-ready-to-make-a-deal real estate agent, and a mystery man who has locked himself in the apartment's only bathroom, and you've got the worst group of hostages in the world.

Each of them carries a lifetime of grievances, hurts, secrets, and passions that are ready to boil over. None of them is entirely whom they appear to be. And all of them—the bank robber included—desperately crave some sort of rescue. As the authorities and the media surround the premises, these reluctant allies will reveal surprising truths about themselves and set in motion a chain of events so unexpected that even they can hardly explain what happens next.

June 9, 2023 *The Stranger in the Woods* by Michael Finkel

Many people dream of escaping modern life. Most will never act on it—but in 1986, twenty-year-old Christopher Knight did just that when he left his home in Massachusetts, drove to Maine, and disappeared into the woods. He would not have a conversation with another person for the next twenty-seven years.

Drawing on extensive interviews with Knight himself, journalist Michael Finkel shows how Knight lived in a tent in a secluded encampment, developing ingenious ways to store provisions and stave off frostbite during the winters. A former alarm technician, he stealthily broke into nearby cottages for food, books, and supplies, taking only what he needed but sowing unease in a community plagued by his mysterious burglaries. Since returning to the world, he has faced unique challenges—and compelled us to reexamine our assumptions about what makes a good life. By turns riveting and thought-provoking, *The Stranger in the Woods* gives us a deeply moving portrait of a man determined to live his own way.

July 14, 2023—TBD

August 11, 2023 *The Lying Game* by Ruth Ware

On a cool June morning, a woman is walking her dog in the idyllic coastal village of Salten, along a tidal estuary known as the Reach. Before she can stop him, the dog charges into the water to retrieve what first appears to be a wayward stick, but to her horror, turns out to be something much more sinister...

The next morning, three women in and around London—Fatima, Thea, and Isa—receive the text they had always hoped would never come, from the fourth in their formerly inseparable clique, Kate, that says only, "I need you." The four girls were best friends at Salten, a second-rate boarding school set near the cliffs of the English Channel. Each different in their own way, the four became inseparable and were notorious for playing the Lying Game, telling lies at every turn to both fellow boarders and faculty. But their little game had consequences, and as the four converge in present-day Salten, they realize their shared past was not as safely buried as they had once hoped...

September 8, 2023 *The Last thing he told Me* by Laura Dave

Before Owen Michaels disappears, he smuggles a note to his beloved wife of one year: Protect her. Despite her confusion and fear, Hannah Hall knows exactly to whom the note refers—Owen's sixteen-year-old daughter, Bailey. Bailey, who lost her mother tragically as a child. Bailey, who wants absolutely nothing to do with her new stepmother.

As Hannah's increasingly desperate calls to Owen go unanswered, as the FBI arrests Owen's boss, as a US marshal and federal agents arrive at her Sausalito home unannounced, Hannah quickly realizes her husband isn't who he said he was. And that Bailey just may hold the key to figuring out Owen's true identity—and why he really disappeared.

Hannah and Bailey set out to discover the truth. But as they start putting together the pieces of Owen's past, they soon realize they're also building a new future—one neither of them could have anticipated.

October 13, 2023

West with Giraffes by Lynda Rutledge

"Few true friends have I known and two were giraffes..."

Woodrow Wilson Nickel, age 105, feels his life ebbing away. But when he learns giraffes are going extinct, he finds himself recalling the unforgettable experience he cannot take to his grave. It's 1938. The Great Depression lingers. Hitler is threatening Europe, and world-weary Americans long for wonder. They find it in two giraffes who miraculously survive a hurricane while crossing the Atlantic. What follows is a twelve-day road trip in a custom truck to deliver Southern California's first giraffes to the San Diego Zoo. Behind the wheel is the young Dust Bowl rowdy Woodrow. Inspired by true events, the tale weaves real-life figures with fictional ones, including the world's first female zoo director, a crusty old man with a past, a young female photographer with a secret, and assorted reprobates as spotty as the giraffes. Part adventure, part historical saga, and part coming-of-age love story, *West with Giraffes* explores what it means to be changed by the grace of animals, the kindness of strangers, the passing of time, and a story told before it's too late.

November 10, 2023

Where the Deer and the Antelope play by Nick Offerman

Nick Offerman has always felt a particular affection for the Land of the Free—not just for the people and their purported ideals but to the actual land itself: the bedrock, the topsoil, and everything in between that generates the health of your local watershed. In his new book, Nick takes a humorous, inspiring, and elucidating trip to America's trails, farms, and frontier to examine the people who inhabit the land, what that has meant to them and us, and to the land itself, both historically and currently. In 2018, Wendell Berry posed a question to Nick, a query that planted the seed of this book, sending Nick on two memorable journeys with pals—a hiking trip to Glacier National Park with his friends Jeff Tweedy and George Saunders, as well as an extended visit to his friend James Rebanks, the author of *The Shepherd's Life* and *English Pastoral*. He followed that up with an excursion that could only have come about in 2020—Nick and his wife, Megan Mullally, bought an Airstream trailer to drive across (several of) the United States. These three quests inspired some "deep-ish" thinking from Nick, about the history and philosophy of our relationship with nature in our national parks, in our farming, and in our backyards; what we mean when we talk about conservation; and the importance of outdoor recreation, all subjects very close to Nick's heart.

December 8, 2023

Someone We Know by Shari Lapena

Maybe you don't know your neighbors as well as you thought you did . . .
"This is a very difficult letter to write. I hope you will not hate us too much. . . My son broke into your home recently while you were out."
In a quiet, leafy suburb in upstate New York, a teenager has been sneaking into houses--and into the owners' computers as well--learning their secrets, and maybe sharing some of them, too. Who is he, and what might he have uncovered? After two anonymous letters are received, whispers start to circulate, and suspicion mounts. And when a woman down the street is found murdered, the tension reaches the breaking point. Who killed her? Who knows more than they're telling? And how far will all these very nice people go to protect their own secrets?
In this neighborhood, it's not just the husbands and wives who play games. Here, everyone in the family has something to hide . . .

