
Kennebecasis Public Library – Book Club Program

Librarian: Madaline Boutilier

Email: Madaline.boutilier@gnb.ca **Phone:** (506) 849-5314 and ask for her.

Please let Kirstin know which book(s) are selected so she can contact Madaline to reserve the book(s) the club wants brought in, when they are needed, and any future titles wanted if it has been decided.

Date of next meeting: Thursday, April 27, 2023, at 1:30PM.

When God Was a Rabbit, by Sarah Winman

About the Author: Sarah Winman is the author of three previous novels, *Tin Man*, *A Year of Marvelous Ways*, and *When God Was a Rabbit*. She grew up in Essex and now lives in London. She attended the Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art and went on to act in theatre, film, and television.

A) Here are 15 discussion questions to help kick-off discussion. Members can take turns reading the question aloud.

- 1.** In the prologue of *When God Was a Rabbit*, Elly recalls a coin trick Jenny Penny showed her when they were children. What does Elly learn about faith, loyalty, and magic from Jenny? How does this scene introduce their friendship, and how does it foreshadow the problems that the girls will face?
- 2.** Discuss Elly's friendship with Abraham Golan, her next-door neighbor. Why does Elly prefer his company to friends her own age? Why doesn't Elly tell her parents her secret about Mr. Golan? How does she react to his death, and how does the secret haunt her in the years to come?
- 3.** Why does Elly name her pet rabbit god? How does this name relate to her father's ambivalence about religion and fate? As an adult, Elly writes in her "Lost and Found" column that her childhood was a time "when sweets were a penny and god was a rabbit" (246). How has Elly's view of the world changed since that magical time?
- 4.** According to Elly, "Jenny Penny's mother was as different from mine as any mother could be" (46). What are the differences between these two mothers? What are some similarities that might not be so apparent to young Elly?

5. Discuss the consequences of Mr. X's case, when Elly's father defended a guilty man against charges of child molestation. Why does the death of Mr. X's accuser continue to haunt Elly's father? Does he ever forgive himself for Mr. X's acquittal? Why or why not?
6. Part Two of the novel picks up fifteen years later, in 1995. How has Elly changed? In what ways has Elly failed to come to terms with her past? How will she mend her two closest relationships --- with her brother and with Jenny --- in Part Two?
7. Although *When God Was a Rabbit* features traumatic events --- child molestation, suicide, kidnapping, murder, illness, and terrorism --- the novel also shines with humor. How does the novel manage to balance tragedy and comedy?
8. Consider the character of Nancy, Elly and Joe's glamorous aunt. How does Nancy support her family in difficult times? How does she help Joe come to terms with his homosexuality?
9. After her move to Cornwall, Elly sends Jenny a fossil she found with Nancy, who says, "Nothing stays forgotten for long, Elly. Sometimes we have to remind the world that we're special and that we're still here" (105). Why does Jenny return the fossil to Elly when she gets out of jail? What does the fossil symbolize to Jenny and Elly?
10. Discuss the high and low points of Elly's parents' relationship. How does a Mercedes almost break up their marriage? Why does Elly's father feel alienated from his wife when she insists that Joe is still alive after 9/11? What role does Nancy play within their marriage, and how does this complicated love triangle seem to work?
11. When Joe suffers from amnesia after 9/11, Elly remembers a phrase from her childhood, when god the rabbit reappeared after his death: "I am here but I am not yours" (267). How does this saying apply to Joe and to the rabbit? What does Elly learn about lasting relationships from each of these losses?
12. Compare Elly and Jenny's friendship to Joe and Charlie's. How do Elly and Joe lose touch with their best friends? How does each sibling cope with the loss? How does each friendship survive long distances and tragic events?

13. Realizing how much she has kept from her parents, Elly thinks, “I knew I’d hurt them with this distance, with this silence, and now they’d understand; but at what price?” (288). What was the price of keeping the secret, and what are the costs and benefits of telling it?

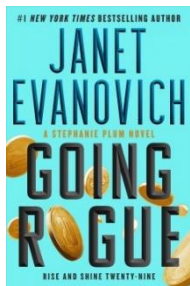
14. When *God Was the Rabbit* incorporates world events into the plot, from John Lennon’s murder to international kidnappings to the tragic losses of 9/11. How does history look through Elly’s eyes? What perspective does she have on tragedy and loss?

15. Consider the ties among family members, friends, and lovers in *When God Was a Rabbit*. Which bond seems strongest for these characters: family, friendship, or romance? Give some examples to explain your answer.

B) Book questions and discussion from Book Club Members.

C) Discussion and choosing of the next book to read (by popular vote).

Here are some of the more popular books with availability from the Public Library:



Title: *Going Rogue: Rise and Shine Twenty-Nine*

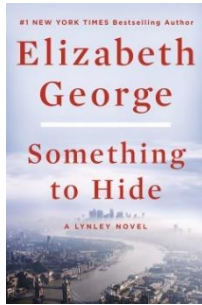
Author: Janet Evanovich

Pages: 324

Call Number: F EVA

Abstract: Monday mornings aren't supposed to be fun, but they should be predictable. However, on this particular Monday,

Stephanie Plum knows that something is amiss when she turns up for work at Vinnie's Bail Bonds to find that longtime office manager Connie Rosolli, who is as reliable as the tides in Atlantic City, hasn't shown up. Stephanie's worst fears are confirmed when she gets a call from Connie's abductor. He says he will only release her in exchange for a mysterious coin that a recently murdered man left as collateral for his bail. Unfortunately, this coin, which should be in the office--just like Connie--is nowhere to be found. The quest to discover the coin, learn its value, and save Connie will require the help of Stephanie's Grandma Mazur, her best pal Lula, her boyfriend Morelli, and hunky security expert Ranger. As they get closer to unraveling the reasons behind Connie's kidnapping, Connie's captor grows more threatening and soon Stephanie has no choice but to throw caution to the wind, follow her instincts, and go rogue.



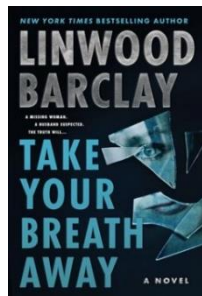
Title: Something to hide

Author: Elizabeth George

Pages: 691

Call Number: F GEO

Abstract: When a police detective is taken off life support after falling into a coma, only an autopsy reveals the murderous act that precipitated her death. She'd been working on a special task force within North London's Nigerian community, and Acting Detective Superintendent Thomas Lynley is assigned to the case, which has far-reaching cultural associations that have nothing to do with life as he knows it. In his pursuit of a killer determined to remain hidden, he's assisted by Detective Sergeants Barbara Havers and Winston Nkata. They must sort through the lies and the secret lives of people whose superficial cooperation masks the damage they do to one another.



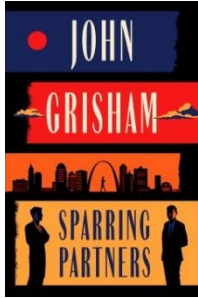
Title: Take your Breath Away

Author: Linwood Barclay

Pages: 354

Call Number: F BAR

Abstract: One weekend, while Andrew Mason was on a fishing trip, his wife, Brie, vanished without a trace. Most everyone assumed Andy had got away with murder--it's always the husband, isn't it?--but the police could never build a strong case against him. For a while, Andy hit rock bottom--he drank too much to numb the pain, was abandoned by all his friends save one, nearly lost his business, and became a pariah in the place he once called home. Now, six years later, Andy has finally put his life back together. He sold the house he once shared with Brie and moved away. To tell the truth, he wasn't sad to hear that the old place was razed and a new house built on the site. He's settled down with a new partner, Jayne, and life is good. But Andy's peaceful world is about to shatter. One day, a woman shows up at his old address, screaming, "Where's my house? What's happened to my house?" And then, just as suddenly as she appeared, the woman--who bears a striking resemblance to Brie--is gone. The police are notified and old questions--and dark suspicions--resurface. Could Brie really be alive after all these years? If so, where has she been? It soon becomes clear that Andy's future and the lives of those closest to him depend on discovering what the hell is going on. The trick will be whether he can stay alive long enough to unearth the answers.



Title: Sparring Partners

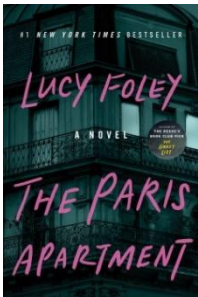
Author: John Grisham

Pages: 306

Call Number: F GRI

Abstract: "Homecoming" takes us back to Ford County, the fictional setting of many of John Grisham's unforgettable stories. Jake Brigance is back, but he's not in the courtroom. He's called upon to help an old friend, Mack Stafford, a former lawyer in Clanton, who three years earlier became a local legend when he stole money from

his clients, divorced his wife, filed for bankruptcy, and left his family in the middle of the night, never to be heard from again--until now. Now Mack is back, and he's leaning on his old pals, Jake and Harry Rex, to help him return. His homecoming does not go as planned. In "Strawberry Moon," we meet Cody Wallace, a young death row inmate only three hours away from execution. His lawyers can't save him, the courts slam the door, and the governor says no to a last-minute request for clemency. As the clock winds down, Cody has one final request. The "Sparring Partners" are the Malloy brothers, Kirk and Rusty, two successful young lawyers who inherited a once prosperous firm when its founder, their father, was sent to prison. Kirk and Rusty loathe each other, and speak to each other only when necessary. As the firm disintegrates, the resulting fiasco falls into the lap of Diantha Bradshaw, the only person the partners trust. Can she save the Malloys, or does she take a stand for the first time in her career and try to save herself?



Title: The Paris Apartment

Author: Lucy Foley

Pages: 360

Call Number: F FOL

Abstract: Jess needs a fresh start. She's broke and alone, and she's just left her job under less than ideal circumstances. Her half-brother Ben didn't sound thrilled when she asked if she could crash

with him for a bit, but he didn't say no, and surely everything will look better from Paris. Only when she shows up to find a very nice apartment -- could Ben really have afforded this? -- he's not there. The longer Ben stays missing, the more Jess starts to dig into her brother's situation, and the more questions she has. Ben's neighbors are an eclectic bunch, and not particularly friendly. Jess may have come to Paris to escape her past, but it's starting to look like it's Ben's future that's in question. The socialite. The nice guy. The alcoholic. The girl on the verge. The concierge. Everyone's a neighbor. Everyone's a suspect. And everyone knows something they're not telling.