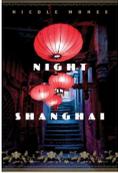


Sarah B.'s blog

Nicole Mones and The Power of Words



It isn't too late to make plans to see award winning author Nicole Mones speak this

Saturday, November 16 at the Buskirk-Chumley theater in downtown Bloomington!

Nicole Mones is the author of three books, *A Cup of Light*, *Lost in Translation*, and *The Last Chinese Chef*. Her setting is always China, but her incorporation of the universal theme of being caught between tradition and modern life makes for really compelling reads. Her unforgettable characters are often on the outside and are struggling to make sense of their place within different cultures, various families and the world.

The Friends of the Library invite you to hear Mones at the Buskirk-Chumley theater for free. She will talk about her work in China, her characters, and her upcoming book due out this spring entitled *Night in Shanghai*.

Her free talk is followed by a meet-the-author reception in the Monroe County Public Library atrium with live jazz, champagne, and gourmet hors d'oeuvres. Premium tickets for the reception are \$50 and include preferred seating at the Buskirk-Chumley. Reception tickets must be purchased in advance.

For more information about Nicole Mones, including videos, interviews, book discussions please visit mcpl.info/powerofwords. There you will also be able to find information about tickets and our sponsors.

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Posted by Sarah B. on Nov 14, 2013 [Add new comment](#)



Emma Approved and Other Jane Austen Inspirations



Last year I blogged about the Lizzie Bennet Diaries, which was a really wonderful and

Emmy winning video series that told the modern day story of Lizzie Bennet and her sisters based on the original characters from *Pride and Prejudice*.

Fans of that series now have something new to watch! Emma Approved is a video series from the same producers and again is a modern day retelling of a classic Austen work. I was able to get caught up on the first five episodes today during lunch. They might be harder to get into because Emma Woodhouse isn't initially as likeable of a character as Elizabeth Bennet, but having read the book (both for school and leisure!) I am feeling confident that she will grow on me with time. It isn't too late to get caught up with either story, no matter if you are an Austen

super fan or just a casual admirer.

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Posted by Sarah B. on Oct 22, 2013 [Add new comment](#)



Award Nominations and Literary Fiction



If we were to believe the media, summer reading is a time for light beachy reads.

Thrillers, romance and other guilty pleasures seem to fall in this category. I fall strictly into the camp that you can read anything you want at any time, but one thing we can agree on? It isn't summer anymore! So maybe it is the perfect time for a literary read. Literary fiction is often denser, more lyrical and the characters spend less time doing things and more time reflecting or reacting to things. They can be beautiful to read, have complex issues, but also sometimes dark and sad. Warning: literary fiction books often have open or ambiguous endings! You will be in for a surprise if you normally read romance or mysteries.

Literary fiction fans often refer to awards lists ? and two of my go-to lists have recently announced their nominees. The [Man Booker prize](#) is awarded to British authors and those from the Commonwealth of Nations. Their recently announced short list is very diverse ? four of the six are women and are from the far reaches of Zimbabwe, New Zealand, India, and Canada.

The entire list:

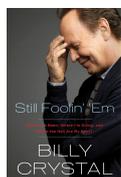
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Posted by Sarah B. on Oct 21, 2013 [Add new comment](#)



Comedy Memoirs for the Boomer Generation



October seems like the perfect time of year for dark, mysterious and brooding books.

But I am still holding on to September! Something light might just be the ticket before the dark fall reads.

New release [Still Foolin? 'em](#) by Billy Crystal has cracked into the top of the New York Times best seller list. After recently turning 65, Crystal tries to relate to the other millions of baby boomers who are also at or near this milestone often by portraying physical ailments through the lens of appealing humor. He also explores his long career starting off with stand up in New York to some beloved movies and stints on Saturday Night Live and hosting the Oscars. Crystal isn't afraid to tackle serious issues, but also presents us with a belly laugh at a life well lived. There are numerous holds on the Crystal book, so while you are waiting for this book to come in you might want to try these other humorous memoirs.

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Posted by Sarah B. on Sep 24, 2013 [Add new comment](#)



[It's in the Bag - Book kits for book groups!](#)



We get asked a lot at the reference desk for multiple copies of a book that several people want to read at once for a book club meeting. It makes sense that the library would want to support readers and local book groups, but due to shelf space and limited resources it is impossible to have multiple copies of every book.

But we certainly can appreciate the benefits of both reading and discussing books! That is why the library has started a new service called [It's in the Bag](#). These book club kits include 8 copies of a single title, discussion questions and other information about the author or topic. Titles range from classics like *Gone with the Wind*, to newer titles like *Arcadia* by Lauren Groff. The kits can be checked out to a single library card for a 6 week period. Call or stop in the Main Library to check one out for your book club today.

Want to learn more? Join us on Tuesday, September 24 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in Program Room 2B. Staff who regularly lead the library's Books Plus discussions will be available to answer questions about the book club kits, provide discussion ideas, and talk about other ways to support local book groups. [Registration](#) is appreciated, but drop ins are also welcome.

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Posted by Sarah B. on Sep 12, 2013 [Add new comment](#)



[Fall Books!](#)



Even though the days are still hot and it technically isn't fall yet, the students are back so we know summer is on its last legs. Fall book previews are out and I am excited to see that some of my favorite authors have new titles coming out in the next few months.

One of my favorite nonfiction authors, Malcolm Gladwell has a new book out this fall called *David and Goliath*. His previous books include [Outliers](#) (my favorite), [Blink](#) and [The Tipping Point](#). Gladwell is a journalist who has turned some pop and academic research on the social sciences on its head. The chapters usually are distinct journalistic pieces unto themselves and make for some unexpectedly fascinating reading.

Dave Eggers has a new thriller coming out in early October called *The Circle*. I didn't love his most recent novel, [A Hologram for a King](#). I liked the story and found the Saudi Arabian setting interesting but I found the main character too unsympathetic. I did love the characterization, setting and unique narrative voice of 2007's [What is the What](#) so much that I might possibly have to read everything he ever writes.

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Posted by Sarah B. on Aug 27, 2013 [Add new comment](#)



Rosie Nominations Clean and Bitter End



What I like about the [Rosie nominations](#), is that there are books that cover a wide

variety of subjects and vary in feel from light to pretty dark. Two books on the list deal realistically with the tough topics of dating violence and drug addiction.

In *Bitter End*, Alex is a typical teenager. She struggles with family issues, works a job she mostly enjoys and hangs out with her two best friends Zach and Bethany. Things change when the new boy at school, Cole, begins to show interest. Things are rosy at the beginning, but then Cole's interest becomes increasingly demanding, jealous and violent.

The path from rosy to violent is the crux of this story and is often difficult to read. Early on in the relationship, they becoming very close very quickly and share their deepest secrets. Alex feels that Cole loves her and is able to initially overlook some of Cole's dark moods. The transition from overlooking the dark moods to blaming herself for them is gradual and terrifying. And even when the moods switch from being petty and sarcastic to physical violence Alex still is able to forgive Cole and the cycle continues.

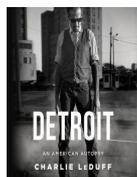
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Posted by Sarah B. on Jul 30, 2013 [Add new comment](#)



Detroit: An American Autopsy



Leading the news today is the announcement that Detroit filed for bankruptcy. They

aren't the first municipality to file, but they are the largest. What this means for residents, city workers, retirees and the state of Michigan remains to be seen. 20 billion dollars is hard to wrap my mind around, and is a figure without names and faces.

Hoping to personalize this story is native son Charlie LeDuff. His recent nonfiction work is called *Detroit: An American Autopsy*. LeDuff is a journalist who left Detroit at an early age and traveled the world covering international conflicts and won a Pulitzer for his contributions at the New York Times. He returns to Detroit to work for The Detroit News.

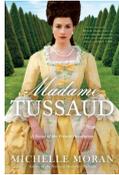
This book covers a variety of stories, including the fall of ex-Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, city council corruption, the crumbling auto industry implications, and the struggles of a local fire station. You also meet LeDuff's family and follow them while they are coping (or not) with living in and near Detroit.

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[Detroit : an American autopsy In The News](#) [Nonfiction](#)
Posted by Sarah B. on Jul 19, 2013 [Add new comment](#)



Madame Tussaud and Read Alikes



Madame Tussaud is a historical fiction book by Michelle Moran based on the real Marie Tussaud, a sculpturess and museum owner in Paris. Apprenticed by her uncle, Marie learns the art of wax sculpting amid the politics, court intrigue, and massacres leading up to and during the French Revolution. Marie needs the museum to be profitable, but is often torn by personal loyalties and her desire for success. It was really refreshing to read a historical book with a strong female character who does more than sit around in fancy dresses and flirt with famous men. With a little digging, I uncovered a few more books that fit this description - historical fiction with strong women who earn income, love to learn, and are passionate about their careers!

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Rosie Nominations and Romance Books



In a traditional romance, the heroine meets the hero and sparks fly. And often even though there is attraction, the hero and heroine don't always like each other very much at first. Of course in a romance, they are able to work out their differences and end up happily ever after. While in many ways *Love and Leftovers* was a traditional romance, the hero and heroine are already dating when you first meet them! Marcie and Lionel are dating but there aren't any sparks. Marcie's family falls apart and she is forced to move across country with her mother. She struggles to keep her relationship going long distance, but is distracted by her mother's depression and making friends at her new school. When sparks start to fly with a new local boy, Marcie gets even more confused.

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