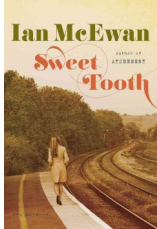


Next Booksplus Discussion: This Sunday-- September 8th--at 2 p.m.



[view in catalog](#)

Our next book to be discussed is a thrilling read about early 70's Britain. I always enjoy novels set in the author's youth. In an interview, McEwan describes this period of rock and roll and changing mores as the time of his life, "when it was very bliss to be alive." Rent was cheap even in London. For only three pounds a month, McEwan scored a large apartment, and could live off writing a few reviews and articles each month. He spent the rest of his time, reading, writing, and socializing.

This novel combines a spy novel, a love story, and a journey into the literary world of early 70s England. McEwan, who has won many prizes, could have titled it a spy in the house of literature. "The role of women has always been undervalued in the spy world, always undermined in terms of recognition. Unfairly so. It's a world that needs women," Helen Mirren once said. Enter Serena Frome (rhymes with Plume), the lead character in this novel set when the world was rapidly changing especially for women. High-ups in the British intelligence service decided that they need to enlist the support of writers who were not on the political left. Serena, who is beautiful and smart as a whip (she studied "maths" at Cambridge), entices a struggling writer, Tom Haley, to take a government grant. What could be better for them both? Serena gets to leave the secretarial pool behind for more intellectual work while Haley secures money to write his next book. But alas, they fall in love.

Is it possible to have a spy novel without poisoned-tip umbrellas, car chases, and murders? Remember this was the cold war, where cultures were also colliding. Adding to the complexity of this tale, the author includes plot synopses from his own stories and books from the 70s in this novel.

This novel also examines the motives of writers. How ruthless must they be to achieve greatness? Tom Haley writes about love scenes with Serena even as she spies on him. Is either at fault? Both? One more than the other? These are just a few of the questions we will tackle on Sept. 8th. Hope you will come and join the conversation about this complex, intriguing book. For more information about this and future book discussion programs, please see below.

September 8

Sweet Tooth by Ian McEwan

Discussion Leader: Dory Lynch

"Serena Frome is a smart, attractive, Cambridge-educated young woman who is recruited by her older lover for the MI5 intelligence agency. Spycraft is, of course, fraught with betrayal, and Serena is not immune to that common pitfall. McEwan readers can rest assured that this novel has a greatly compelling story line braced by the author's formidable wisdom about the world." --BookList

October 6

Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children by Ransom Riggs

Discussion Leader: Luann Dillon

"Riggs's atmospheric novel concerns 16-year-old Jacob, a tightly wound but otherwise ordinary teenager... When Jacob's grandfather, Abe, a WWII veteran, is savagely murdered, Jacob has a nervous breakdown, in part because he believes that his grandfather was killed by a monster that only they could see. It's an enjoyable, eccentric read, distinguished by well-developed characters, a believable Welsh setting, and some very creepy monsters."?Publisher's Weekly

November 3

Last Chinese Chef by Nicole Mones

Discussion Leader: Sarah Bowman

?A dazzling journey, which unlocks the deepest mysteries of legendary Chinese culinary arts, to produce a feast for the human heart. Nicole Mones has written a page-turner both exciting and wise, one to nourish the head, the stomach, and the soul.? ?David Henry Hwang, author of M.

Butterfly

Posted by Dory L. on September 4, 2013

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