



## Mary Riley Styles Public Library Senior Book Discussion Series 2018-2019

Tuesday, September 18: ***Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*** by J.D. Vance (*Non-fiction*)

The son of a drug-addict mother and absentee father, Vance was brought up in Ohio by his Kentuckian grandparents, who were steeped in the ways of Appalachia. A pair with a colorful past, they managed to give Vance the support he needed to move forward in life. Over the years, Vance—a Marine and a Yale graduate—conquered the challenges of his upbringing. Now a thriving lawyer, he chronicles his path to achievement in a narrative that delivers an unflinching look at the difficulties of succeeding in contemporary America.

Tuesday, October 30: ***Stay with Me*** by Ayobami Adebayo (*Fiction*)

When Yejide and Akin fall in love, they decide not to have a polygamous relationship. This surprises their Nigerian families, especially when, after four years married, Yejide still hasn't become pregnant. Although everyone recognizes how hard Yejide is trying to conceive, the family secretly brings in a second wife. The story alternates between the late 1980s and 2008, setting Akin and Yejide's marriage against a period of political instability in Nigeria. Adebayo deftly reveals secrets and decisions that set life-altering events in motion.

Tuesday, December 11: ***Jackson, 1964*** by Calvin Trillin (*Non-fiction*)

In this collection of articles he wrote for the *New Yorker* from 1964-2008, Trillin brings us into uncomfortable situations, exposing through observations and humor the insidious nature of discriminatory practices. From revelations about the Mississippi voter registration and education drives of the early 1960s to the treatment of black student protesters in Wisconsin, Louisiana's black-blood laws, and the danger of accepting moderation when it comes to fighting racism, these inquiries expose the headwinds African Americans have faced in gaining equal footing under the law. Each piece is followed by an update.

Tuesday, January 22: ***The Ninth Hour*** by Alice McDermott (*Fiction*)

Alice McDermott's seven previous novels, including the 1998 National Book Award winner, *Charming Billy*, have portrayed with acute perception the many aspects of the Irish-American experience. Her latest is a beautifully crafted depiction of a cloister of nuns in early 20th-century Brooklyn as they move in and out of the lives of a young Irish widow and her daughter.

Tuesday, March 12: ***Promise Me, Dad*** by Joe Biden (*Non-fiction*)

Beau Biden was on a political path that could have taken him to the governor's mansion and, ultimately the White House, when he was diagnosed with brain cancer. His family's future was even more essential to him than his civic responsibilities, and, as the son of the Vice President, Beau's relationship with his father was the epitome of closeness. Biden's memoir of his son's battle with cancer is a spare yet sturdy chronicle of how one very public family coped with the reality of a monumental health crisis as privately and seamlessly as possible.

Tuesday, April 30: ***Prairie Fires: The American Dreams of Laura Ingalls Wilder*** by Caroline Fraser (*Non-fiction*)

Readers of *Little House on the Prairie* believe they know Ingalls—the pioneer girl who survived blizzards and near-starvation on the Great Plains, and the woman who wrote the famous books. Now, drawing on manuscripts, letters, diaries, and land and financial records, Fraser fills in the gaps. Revealing the grown-up story behind the most influential childhood epic of pioneer life, she chronicles Wilder's tumultuous relationship with her journalist daughter, Rose Wilder Lane, setting the record straight regarding charges of ghostwriting.

Tuesday, June 11: ***An Unnecessary Woman*** by Rabih Alameddine (*Fiction*)

In this breathtaking portrait of one reclusive woman's late-life crisis, Alameddine's cranky yet charming septuagenarian protagonist, Aaliya, is a character you "can't help but love." Aaliya's insightful musings on literature, philosophy, and art are invaded by memories of the Lebanese Civil War and her volatile past. As she tries to overcome her aging body and spontaneous emotional upwellings, Aaliya is faced with an unthinkable disaster that threatens to shatter the little life she has left. Alameddine has given us a nuanced rendering of one woman's life in the Middle East.