

Great New Reads

April Ide, Assistant Library Director

We've added some great new titles at New Ulm Public Library in the past few months. Here are a few I've enjoyed.

Scarlet Clark is a great professor. She's also a great killer. When she's not teaching literature classes at Gorman University, she's planning her next kill. Each year she finds the most awful man on campus and makes sure he pays for his sins. But the administration is beginning to find the number of campus deaths suspicious. Meanwhile, student Carly Schiller is just trying to survive her freshman year. She is relieved to be away from her emotionally abusive father, but can't seem to find her place on campus. Her new roommate, Allison, takes Carly under her wing and they forge a friendship. But when Allison is assaulted at a party, Carly begins to obsess over keeping Allison safe and making her attacker pay. Layne Fargo's "They Never Learn" is a fun, fast-paced thriller sure to keep you turning pages.

Anna is a low level hench, making her way from temp job to temp job doing data entry for minor villains. When she finally gets an interesting assignment, she is injured after a run-in with Supercollider, the world's most powerful superhero. While her shattered femur heals, Anna is unemployed, stuck at home, and fuming. No one is sympathetic to the plight of a villain's lackey. Anna, a data analyst wiz, does extensive research and finds that her situation is not unique and the human cost of superhero destruction far outweighs their benefit to society. She shares her research publicly and soon finds herself in the employ of the world's most powerful supervillain, whose hate for Supercollider far outweighs her own and may cost her much more than simple physical pain. "Hench" by Natalie Zina Walschots is a gripping twist on the comic book superhero/supervillain story, especially from the view of a henchwoman.

Arie and Diana are in love. While on tour, Diana has just made up her mind to accept Arie's proposal when she is lost to him forever, leaving behind the remnant of a love song she wrote just for him. This song travels around the world, eventually making its way back to Arie two years later, in the form of Evie. Evie has found her way home to Australia after spending years traveling the world and trying to make it as a poet. She and Arie have an instant connection, but Diana's memory and Evie's restlessness lie between them. This was a bittersweet but tender story of two lost souls bravely trying to make new connections. I thoroughly enjoyed "The Lost Love Song," but not quite as much as author Minnie Darke's first book, "Star-Crossed."

Jane's broke and sick of looking over her shoulder, sick of being scared that her past will catch up to her. She takes a job walking dogs for residents of an affluent neighborhood in Birmingham, Alabama, and looks for ways to insinuate herself in their very comfortable lives. She gets her chance when she meets Eddie, a recent widower who just happens to live in the most beautiful (and largest) house on the block. But Eddie's wife is still very much alive in the memories of the other neighborhood residents, and not everyone is sure that her death was an accident. I raced through "The Wife

Upstairs” by Rachel Hawkins. If you don't remember how Jane Eyre ends, do yourself a favor and brush up on it *after* you read this modern retelling.

Adam Neumann was the cofounder of WeWork, a coworking company that set up sites where smaller companies could take advantage of shared offices and common areas with other companies in order to save money. But Adam saw WeWork as more than a landlord: he saw WeWork as a creator of professional and social connection. Adam's outsized personality and ambitious dreams appealed to many venture capitalists and WeWork grew quickly and chaotically with the influx of their investments, until it all came crashing down around WeWork's 2019 IPO. “Billion Dollar Loser: The Epic Rise and Spectacular Fall of Adam Neumann and WeWork” by Reeves Wiedeman looks at an interesting example of how the cult of personality surrounding founders can often be more influential than the actual work their company does. There are several recent podcast series that explore WeWork and Adam Neumann. I found “Foundering” by Bloomberg Technology to be a good companion to this book.

Josh Clark and Chuck Bryant are the creators of the hit podcast “Stuff You Should Know.” In this book, much like on their podcast, they dive into a wide range of topics and illuminate why they are fascinating, important, or just strange. They make each topic accessible and engaging, and cover a wide variety of topics that will appeal to many. I skipped around and read the chapters that fascinated me most, including the story of how one man may have cheated his way into correctly guessing the exact price of his showcase on the “Price is Right” Showcase Showdown, winning him both showcase packages and truly shocking host Drew Carey. Check out “Stuff You Should Know: An Incomplete Compendium of Mostly Interesting Things” by Josh Clark and Chuck Bryant with Nils Parker for more interesting topics.