

Great New Reads

April Ide, Assistant Library Director

I recently enjoyed these new releases and think you might, too!

In “The Turnout” by Megan Abbott, sisters Marie and Dara, and Dara’s husband Charlie have been a unit since they were teenagers. They run a small and crumbling ballet studio and live in the sisters’ childhood home, inherited when their parents died. When Marie suddenly and unexpectedly moves out of the house and into the attic of the ballet studio, Dara is confused and concerned. Marie is acting erratically, and when she accidentally sets a small fire in the school with a space heater and gets romantically involved with the contractor hired to fix the studio, things begin to escalate. Abbott’s writing is dark and lush and her characters are layered. She builds tension and leaves you uneasy as you discover the secrets lurking in her characters’ pasts.

Jacob Finch Bonner’s career is languishing. He had a mildly successful first novel, followed by two that didn’t perform, forcing him to teach fiction writing at a low residency program that is not well-known. He’s gotten used to the slog of trying to coach wannabe writers who will never amount to much. That is until he meets Evan, an aspiring writer with a perfect plot that is guaranteed to be a best seller. Jacob can barely contain his jealousy. Three years later, Jacob finds out that Evan has died without selling his perfectly plotted book. Jacob decides that a story like that shouldn’t go to waste. The book revives his career and makes him a best-selling novelist. Everything seems perfect until the first note arrives, accusing Jacob of stealing the plot and threatening to expose his plagiarism. I think most thriller readers will be able to figure out the big reveal before it happens. For me, that knowledge only intensified the building dread I felt as I got to the end of “The Plot” by Jean Hanff Korelitz.

Long-distance best friends Emily and Kristen have made it an annual tradition to travel to far-flung destinations together. This was the highlight of Emily’s year until a violent altercation with a backpacker in Cambodia ruined last year’s trip. When something frighteningly similar happens the next year in Chile, Emily is shocked. She tries to bury the harrowing memories back home in Milwaukee, until Kristen shows up for a visit just weeks after they departed Chile. As Kristen insinuates herself into Emily’s daily life, Emily grows more worried about the cavalier way Kristen brushes off their shared trauma and is increasingly suspicious of Kristen’s motives for infiltrating her life. “We Were Never Here” by Andrea Bartz is a tense and atmospheric thriller that might make you question your understanding of your closest friends!

David Sedaris has long been one of my favorite authors, and “A Carnival of Snackery,” his latest collection of selected journal entries from 2003-2020, does not disappoint. Whether he’s describing his frequent odd encounters with strangers or exploring his and his family’s eccentricities, he does so with humor and humanity and without sugar-coating. This collection was a bright spot in my week and delivered many laughs. It’s also great for those who love short chapters!

Gerald's consciousness has been uploaded to his PR firm's internal Slack channels. He's not sure how it happened, and his coworkers are convinced it's all an elaborate ruse to continue working from home. Their firm is swamped helping a boutique dog food company manage a PR nightmare after several Pomeranians are poisoned by contaminated food and Gerald's boss doesn't care where he is, as long as he's productive. As Gerald ventures further into the void he comes face to ... interface with the Slackbot, who has been reading everyone's private messages and gathering information. But why? "Several People Are Typing" by Calvin Kasulke is a fast-paced and absurd tale that made me laugh out loud.

If you'd like to request any of these books, visit www.newulmlibrary.org and click on Library Catalog or give us a call at 507-359-8331. We'd be happy to place these or any other books on hold for you.

The library is located at 17 N. Broadway and is open to the public Monday to Thursdays 9:30 a.m.-8 p.m. and Friday and Saturdays 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. The library will close at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, November 24 and be closed on Thursday, November 25 and Friday, November 26 for the Thanksgiving holiday. It will be reopen on Saturday, November 27.