

Local librarians recommend their favorite books

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FULL TEXT

This year was another banner year in the world of publishing, and even the Fox Cities felt a touch of that luster with local author and Kaukauna Public Library Assistant Sarah Read releasing "Out of Water," a collection of short stories in the horror and dark fantasy genre.

Read's book received a starred review in Publishers Weekly, an honor that librarians and booksellers recognize as high achievement in the literary world. The author's co-worker Gavin Schmitt, who recommends her book, says his favorite story in the collection is "The Eyes of Salton Sea."

Steve Thiry, director of the Kimberly-Little Chute Public Library, recommends Jo Nesbo's "The Knife." According to Thiry, the book takes its reader on an emotional roller coaster and is even wilder than some of his earlier work including "The Son."

"If you have let Nesbo's Harry Hole into your life as I have," said Thiry, "you will find yourself in tears as our hero struggles through what it is to be Harry Hole."

The year was a great one for mystery and suspense readers with books that left you guessing, shocked, disturbed, and thrilled, according to Adult Services Librarian Aubrey Laux at the Kimberly-Little Chute Public Library.

Laux recommends "Lock Every Door" by Riley Sager, which she says is a thrill-ride with a twist that no one will see coming. She says that "Turn of the Key," a thriller by Ruth Ware, is the author's best work, leaving its reader guessing, spooked and unable to predict the ending —a great read for anyone looking for a realistic ghost story.

"The Latehomecomer" by Kao Kalia Yang is the book recommended by Ashley Thiem-Menning, director of the Kaukauna Public Library and president of the Fox Cities Book Festival/Reads. The book is this year's Fox Cities Reads selection.

She highly recommends listening to the audiobook because it is read by the author, saying, "Listening to Ms. Yang narrate her own experiences made the title resonate with me further than any nonfiction audiobook I have ever listened to. This book should be required reading for every American. It helps us to understand the journey of refugees and what our history books have failed to teach us about the Hmong and the Hmong American experience." The author and her father will visit the Fox Cities this April.

"Permanent Record" by Edward Snowden is my pick this year. Whether you consider him a true patriot and valuable whistleblower who in 2013 informed American citizens of the National Security Agency's mass collection of our phone and email records or a traitor who divulged U.S. government secrets, Snowden is credited for sparking the 2015 U.S.A. Freedom Act, which outlaws bulk collection of our phone records.

Stepping back, it's nice to realize that we live in a country where a book is available to read for free from our public libraries by an author living in exile for alleged crimes against our own government.

Snowden's memoir brings to mind George Orwell's "1984," which has recently enjoyed renewed interest due to technology's boundless invasion into our lives. You can never go wrong revisiting the classics.

Vicki Lenz is the director of the Elisha D. Smith Public Library in Menasha.

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