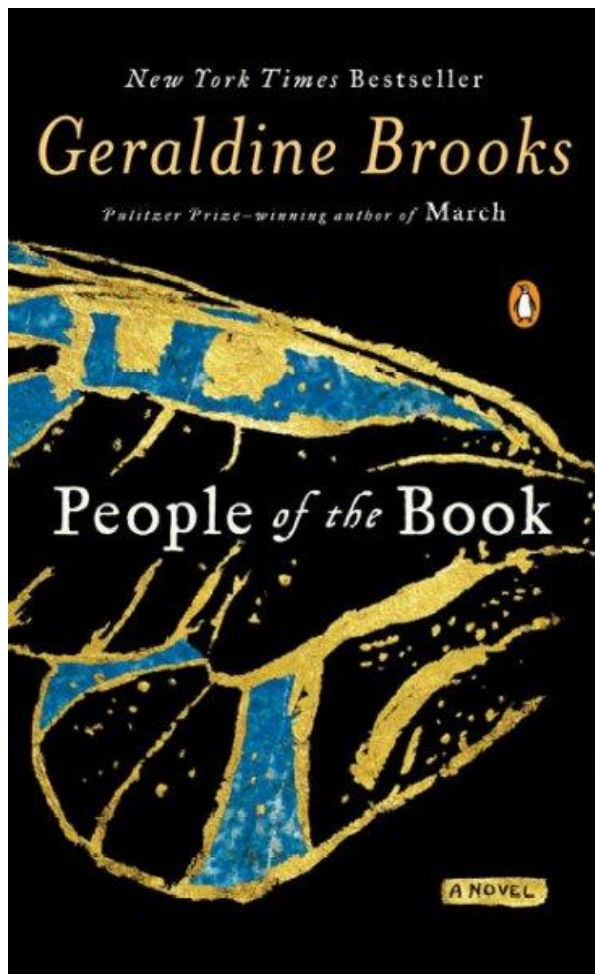


Ann Arbor District Library: Book Club to Go Discussion Guide

<http://www.aadl.org/catalog/record/1336361>

About the Book



From the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *March*, the journey of a rare illuminated manuscript through centuries of exile and war. In 1996, Hanna Heath, an Australian rare-book expert, is offered the job of a lifetime: analysis and conservation of the famed Sarajevo Haggadah, which has been rescued from Serb shelling during the Bosnian war. Priceless and beautiful, the book is one of the earliest Jewish volumes ever to be illuminated with images. When Hanna, a caustic loner with a passion for her work, discovers a series of tiny artifacts in its ancient binding—an insect wing fragment, wine stains, salt crystals, a white hair—she begins to unlock the book's mysteries. The reader is ushered into an exquisitely detailed and atmospheric past, tracing the book's journey from its salvation back to its creation. In Bosnia during World War II, a Muslim risks his life to protect it from the Nazis. In the hedonistic salons of fin-de-siècle Vienna, the book becomes a pawn in the struggle against the city's rising anti-Semitism. In inquisition-era Venice, a Catholic priest saves it from burning. In Barcelona in 1492, the scribe who wrote the text sees his family destroyed by the agonies of enforced exile. And in Seville in 1480, the reason for the Haggadah's extraordinary illuminations is finally disclosed. Hanna's investigation unexpectedly plunges her into the intrigues of fine art forgers and ultra-nationalist fanatics. Her experiences will test her belief in herself and the man she has come to love. Inspired by a true story, *People of the Book* is at once a novel of sweeping historical grandeur and intimate emotional intensity, an ambitious, electrifying work by an acclaimed and beloved author.

About the Author Source: <http://www.geraldinebrooks.com/about.html>



Australian-born Geraldine Brooks is an author and journalist who grew up in the Western suburbs of Sydney, and attended Bethlehem College Ashfield and the University of Sydney. She worked as a reporter for *The Sydney Morning Herald* for three years as a feature writer with a special interest in environmental issues.

In 1982 she won the Greg Shackleton Australian News Correspondents scholarship to the journalism master's program at Columbia University in New York City. Later she worked for *The Wall Street Journal*, where she covered crises in the Middle East, Africa, and the Balkans.

She was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in fiction in 2006 for her novel *March*, and her novel *Year of Wonders* is an international bestseller. She is also the author of the nonfiction works *Nine Parts of Desire* and *Foreign Correspondence*.

Brooks married author Tony Horwitz in Tourette-sur-loup, France, in 1984. They have one child and three dogs, and divide their time between homes in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, and Sydney, Australia.

Awards

In 2008, *People of the Book* was named the Australian Book Industry Award (ABIA) Book of the Year and Literary Fiction Book of the Year (http://www.publishers.asn.au/awards.cfm?doc_id=27).

Reviews

Booklist *Starred Review*

With an ingenuity equal to that standing behind her Pulitzer Prize—winning *March* (2005), which was a fictional imagining of the life of the father character in Louisa May Alcott's classic novel *Little Women*, Brooks now fictionalizes the history of an actual book, the Hebrew codex known as the Sarajevo Haggadah, an extremely precious illuminated manuscript originally from medieval Spain. In 1996, as Brooks has it, as a ceasefire is effected to quell the bloody violence in Bosnia, Australian book conservator Hanna Heath is called to restore the famous Sarajevo

Haggadah. The condition of the manuscript, including a stain on a page and certain items clinging to it (among them an insect wing that falls from the binding when Hanna conducts her preliminary review of repair needs), leads her on a search for answers to where the Haggadah has been all its life. This, of course, leads Brooks on a marvelously evocative journey backward in time, to periods of major religious strife and persecution, from the 1940 German occupation of Yugoslavia, to 1894 Vienna, to 1609 Venice, to 1492 Barcelona, and, finally, 1480 Seville. Like a flower growing through a crack in a slab of concrete, the exquisitely beautiful Sarajevo Haggadah remained an artistic treasure throughout the centuries despite always seeming to be caught between opposing sides in skirmishes of greed, intolerance, and bloodlust.

School Library Journal

Hanna Heath, an Australian book conservationist, is thrilled to be chosen to work on the rare illuminated Haggadah created in Spain in the Middle Ages. The book had been protected in a museum in Sarajevo until 1994, when it was rescued from certain plunder during the Bosnian conflict and hidden in a bank vault by a Muslim librarian. Hanna is as eager to learn and preserve the mysterious history of the codex as she is to restore the manuscript. How did it come to be illustrated, a practice believed to have been forbidden by Jewish law? What is the meaning of the wine stain, the hair, the insect wing, and the salt crystals? The author uses these artifacts to weave a thrilling tale of the unusual creation of the Haggadah in Seville in 1480 and its dangerous journey to Tarragona, Venice, Vienna, and finally Sarajevo. It is a story of the Inquisition and wars, and the enlightenment or ignorance of the men and women who would save or destroy this brilliant treasure. Integrated into these compelling vignettes is Hanna's own story: her passion for her work, her unhappy relationship with her mother, and her bittersweet love affair. Sophisticated teens will appreciate Hanna's sarcastic, witty observations, which mask a vulnerable lack of confidence. The mystery of the codex and the forensic examinations are intriguing and will keep readers eagerly awaiting the next revelation. Inspired by the true story of the Sarajevo Haggadah, Brooks has imagined a thrilling mystery and a history that has deep ramifications in our own time.

Publishers Weekly

Reading Geraldine Brooks' remarkable debut novel, *Year of Wonders*, or more recently *March*, which won the Pulitzer Prize, it would be easy to forget that she grew up in Australia and worked as a journalist. Now in her dazzling new novel, *People of the Book*, Brooks allows both her native land and current events to play a larger role while still continuing to mine the historical material that speaks so ardently to her imagination. Late one night in the city of Sydney, Hanna Heath, a rare book conservator, gets a phone call. *The Sarajevo Haggadah*, which

disappeared during the siege in 1992, has been found, and Hanna has been invited by the U.N. to report on its condition. Missing documents and art works (as Dan Brown and Lev Grossman, among others, have demonstrated) are endlessly appealing, and from this inviting premise Brooks spins her story in two directions. In the present, we follow the resolutely independent Hanna through her thrilling first encounter with the beautifully illustrated codex and her discovery of the tiny signs: a white hair, an insect wing, missing clasps, a drop of salt, a wine stain. These will help her to discover its provenance. Along with the book she also meets its savior, a Muslim librarian named Karaman. Their romance offers both predictable pleasures and genuine surprises, as does the other main relationship in Hanna's life: her fraught connection with her mother. In the other strand of the narrative we learn, moving backward through time, how the codex came to be lost and found, and made. From the opening section, set in Sarajevo in 1940, to the final section, set in Seville in 1480, these narratives show Brooks writing at her very best. With equal authority she depicts the struggles of a young girl to escape the Nazis, a duel of wits between an inquisitor and a rabbi living in the Venice ghetto, and a girl's passionate relationship with her mistress in a harem. Like the illustrations in the Haggadah, each of these sections transports the reader to a fully realized, vividly peopled world. And each gives a glimpse of both the long history of anti-Semitism and of the struggle of women toward the independence that Hanna, despite her mother's lectures, tends to take for granted. Brooks is too good a novelist to belabor her political messages, but her depiction of the Haggadah bringing together Jews, Christians and Muslims could not be more timely. Her gift for storytelling, happily, is timeless.

Library Journal

When Australian rare-books author Hanna Heath travels to Sarajevo to restore the legendary Sarajevo Haggadah, she gets a lot more than she bargained for. The beautiful book was rescued during a Serb bombing by Muslim librarian Ozren Karaman, and Hanna ends up deeply humbled by his suffering after their too easily launched affair. Eventually, she's led into her own past, where she unearths the truth about the father she never knew. What the reader gets in the meantime is an intriguing history of the Haggadah itself, revealed through artifacts accumulated over time and things the book has lost--its silver clasps, which were turned into earrings for a Viennese doctor's mistress in the late 1880s. From an insect wing, we learn that the book was saved from the Nazis by Partisan fighter Lola and a Muslim family friend; wine stains recall the Inquisition in early 1600s Venice and saltwater droplets the Jews' expulsion from Spain in 1492. A single cat hair returns us to the book's creation in 1480 Seville and the unexpected story behind its illustrator. Each story is engrossing and deftly woven into the narrative, though the telling is sometimes facile or cloying. Nevertheless, this latest from

Pulitzer Prize winner Brooks (*March*) is a good addition to most libraries and excellent for discussion groups.

Kirkus Reviews

From 1480 Seville to 1996 Sarajevo, a priceless scripture is chased by fanatics political and religious. Its recovery makes for an enthralling historical mystery.

In Sydney, ace (and gorgeous) old-book conservator Hannah Heath gets a 2 a.m. phone call. She's summoned to Sarajevo to check out a 15th-century Spanish-made Haggadah, a codex gone missing in Bosnia during a 1992 siege. The document is a curiosity, its lavish illuminations appearing to violate age-old religious injunctions against any kind of illustration. Remarkably, it's Muslim museum librarian Ozren Karaman who rescued the Hebrew artifact from furious shelling. Questioning (and bedding) Ozren, Hannah examines the Haggadah binding and from clues embedded there—an insect's wings, wine stains, white hair—reconstructs the book's biography. And it's an epic. Chapter by chapter, each almost an independent story, the chronicle unwinds—of the book's changing hands from those of anti-Nazi partisans dreaming of departing for Palestine from war-torn Croatia, from schemers in 1894 Vienna, home, despite Freud and Mahler, of virulent anti-Semitism. Perhaps the best chapter takes place in 1609 Venice. There, not-so-grand Inquisitor Domenico Vistorini, a heretic hunter with a drinking problem, contends in theological disputation with brilliant rabbinical star Judah Aryeh. The two strike up an unlikely alliance to save the book, even while Vistorini at first blanches at its art—a beautiful depiction of the glowing sun, prophesying, the hysterical priest assumes, Galileo's heliocentric blasphemy. Tracing those illustrations back to their origin point, Hannah unkinks a series of fascinating conundrums—and learns, even more fiercely, to prize the printed page.

Rich suspense based on a true-life literary puzzle, from the Pulitzer Prize–winning Brooks.

Literary Criticism

Following the code

People of the Book, a work of fiction which deals with a series of real and documented human tragedies, spanning a half-millennium across the Mediterranean, comes to us with a blurb from *USA Today*, favorably equating it with *The Da Vinci Code* of 2003, that despicable libel against the Catholic church based entirely on absurd speculation. What are we to make of this? Has the genre of the historical novel really declined so precipitately that any fantasy about the past, once committed to print, is considered respectable literature?

A less favorable parallel between the two books was drawn by the London *Jewish Chronicle* in its issue of February 22, 2008. Readers were warned of the possibility that the invented and nonsensical details in Geraldine Brooks' production would become accepted as veridical: "people remember things like this, like with *The Da Vinci Code*," said Helen Walasek, a British art editor and expert on cultural heritage.

The Australian-born Brooks is best known as the author of the 1995 volume *Nine Parts of Desire: The Hidden World of Islamic Women*, a travelogue through the Middle East. *People of the Book* has been a success, if on a scale somewhat less massive than Dan Brown's *Da Vinci* contrivance. Its impact was of the sort that guarantees the inclusion of a clueless "Readers' Guide," with risible book club questions, bound at its end. (Sample: "There is an amazing array of 'people of the book'--both base and noble--whose lifetimes span some remarkable periods in human history. Who is your favorite and why?") Given the situation, a review of authentic events and scrutiny of Brooks' work seem necessary.

People of the Book is a declared work of imagination centered around the *Sarajevo Haggadah*, a Hebrew illuminated manuscript considered by many to be the most beautiful and valuable Jewish book in the world. The *Sarajevo Haggadah* is, like any *haggadah* (a Hebrew word meaning "the telling"), a relatively short text to be read aloud during a Passover seder. *Haggadot* (the plural form) are among the commonest Jewish books in the world, but the *Sarajevo Haggadah* stands alone. It was discovered in Habsburg-occupied Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1894, rescued from the Nazis by a Muslim librarian in 1941, and saved a second time, by yet another Muslim librarian, in 1992, when Serbian rockets were fired at its home, the National Museum in Sarajevo.

That much is presented correctly in *People of the Book*, but much more is told in a deliberately errant fashion. Geraldine Brooks has done something worse than merely exploit the still vivid horrors of the late Bosnian war, the epic of Sephardic survival, and the jewel of all Jewish book art in concocting a tale about invented protagonists. Her use, or, more accurately, misuse, of the *Sarajevo Haggadah* and its history places her book almost in the "counter-factual" category, alongside chronicles in which the Confederacy won the American Civil War, but with a repellently factitious aspect. The untruths found in this book are *willful* misrepresentations of historical fact, presented in a work of fiction to achieve obscure ends of the author, beyond legitimate narrative invention. Brooks may appeal to poetic license, but a kind of vandalism against history remains visible. Given that she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 2006 for her novel, *March*, this irresponsibility appears even more shameful.

The real *Sarajevo Haggadah*, on its appearance in the Balkans at the end of the nineteenth century, revolutionized the understanding of Jewish art, for it includes more than thirty lovely likenesses, in a notable palette of colors and gold leaf, of Adam and Eve, Abraham, Moses, and other biblical figures. Such portraiture was a violation of the ban embodied in the Mosaic commandments and long observed by Jews: "Thou shalt not make any image, whether in the form of that which is in heaven, or on the earth, or in the waters." The *Sarajevo Haggadah* does not, however, depict the Creator--represented only as emanations of light and, in one place, a hand extended from a cloud--and, since Islam also bars anthropomorphic conceptions of God, the Jewish scholar Cecil Roth detected a Spanish Muslim influence on it. The *Sarajevo Haggadah* was most certainly not created either in the Balkans or in any other Muslim land. Rather, scholars agree that it was probably calligraphed and painted in Catalonia or Provence, under Christian rule, around 1350. Presumably, some time after the expulsion of believing Jews from Spain in 1492, it was taken to Italy, where a Catholic censor inserted a hand-inscribed guarantee that it was inoffensive to Christian order, in 1609. Its original creators, owners, and possessors are unknown.

Geraldine Brooks fictionalizes this slender corpus of knowledge, most notably by inventing an identity for the artist responsible for the manuscript's magnificent illustrations: a black female slave of a Jewish family--and a Muslim, no less--based on a single depiction of an African female in the manuscript's image of a seder. It is not enough that, in real life, virtuous Muslims preserved the book; they must also be credited with its creation!

That is not the sole item of bizarre invention to be found in *People of the Book*. The novel begins and ends with outrageous lies. At its outset, when we are introduced to the protagonist Hanna Heath, a tedious, narcissistic, and ethically deficient Australian expert on manuscript restoration, Hanna is informed that the priceless Jewish book had "turned up" after "four years" of the Sarajevo siege. Brooks thus legitimizes wild wartime rumors that the manuscript had been destroyed, lost, or sold.

In reality, the Jewish Community of Bosnia-Herzegovina and those in contact with them during the Bosnian war (myself included) were informed after the conflict began in 1992 that the *Sarajevo Haggadah* had been preserved and was under protection in the vault of the country's National Bank. The exquisite volume was exhibited to the Bosnian and international public during a seder, at Sarajevo's working synagogue, in April 1995, *three*, not four years after war commenced in that country. (The chronological error is reminiscent of Hillary Clinton's ludicrous claim that she faced sniping in the Bosnian city of Tuzla in 1996, a year after the Bosnian war ended, but also four years from its outbreak.) The Muslim Bosnian leader, president Alija Izetbegovic, was present at the 1995 wartime seder, as

were Muslim, Catholic, and Orthodox Christian religious representatives. Izetbegovic appealed to Sarajevo's surviving Jews--numbering a thousand--to "stay in this country, because this is your country."

Brooks skips over the historic showing of the manuscript by the city's Jewish community, and devotes little attention to today's Bosnian Jews, who feature prominently in the life of contemporary Sarajevo. She is far more eager to dwell on the double conservation of the *Sarajevo Haggadah*, in 1941 and 1992, by Muslims, as if that alone were something spectacularly unusual. To Western minds accustomed to Islamist defiance of the rest of the world, such acts might seem odd, but the Sephardic Jews transplanted to the Balkans by the Turkish sultans after their expulsion from Spain had been a small but significant element in the local landscape for centuries. The *Sarajevo Haggadah* was and remains prized as a symbol of Bosnia's past, in which a long, if occasionally resentful, coexistence has been maintained between Bosnian Muslims, Serbs, Croats, and the Sephardic Jews, who are considered "the fourth Bosnian nation."

The manuscript, as an emblem of Bosnian pluralism, is now on permanent view in a special facility at the National Museum in Sarajevo, but on this point *People of the Book* concludes with another lie. It is bad enough Brooks got it in her head to describe an invented inscription in the *Haggadah*, claiming the manuscript as the handiwork of the black woman portrayed at the seder table. But much worse, she ascribes to Israelis, with the complicity of an ex-Nazi and a fictional, pathologically embittered Bosnian Muslim museum director, the theft of the original manuscript and its transportation to the Jewish state.

The *Sarajevo Haggadah* has indeed been the object of covetousness by others aside from the Nazis. At one point after the Bosnian war concluded, Serbian politicians, asserted that it was a tri-national, Serbian/Bosnian/ Croatian treasure. With no mention of Jewish wishes about its fate, they demanded that it be displayed in a museum in Bosnia's Serbian occupation zone for a third of each year. But nobody had ever before Brooks suggested that the manuscript in Sarajevo today was counterfeited or spirited abroad. Such an eventuality would create a devastating scandal. As Helen Walasek told the *Jewish Chronicle* with exceptional understatement:

Having the head of the national museum steal books is a bit offensive to Bosnians who are trying to keep their heritage. Bosnia is a country desperately trying to preserve itself, and to take this important, real object and make up a fictional account ... I don't think it's a good thing.

Brooks's novel, supposedly celebrating Muslims saving a Jewish artifact, becomes a smear against Muslims and Jews alike, as alleged looters of cultural patrimony. To emphasize: what the Nazis and terrorist Serbs could not do, thanks to conscientious Muslims and Jews, is fictionally achieved by an avaricious Jew in league with a Nazi and a self-loathing Muslim--what is the message here?

People of the Book is a novel that, under the cover of being a work of fiction, begins and ends with gross lies, includes many more falsehoods--really, too many to catalogue in a review--and also embodies other bad qualities ubiquitous in contemporary writing. Although she sets her narrative in three of the most picturesque and intact historic environments in Mediterranean Europe--Spain, Italy, and the Balkans--she appears incapable of evoking any of their compelling features. Further, Brooks perhaps imagines that even well-informed readers will have forgotten the real events of the Bosnian war and have no idea that her knowledge of Spanish Jewish, Muslim, and Christian cultures, as well as of Ottoman, Bosnian, and Italian history and society over the past five hundred years, is superficial and askew.

Geraldine Brooks does not even bother to capably describe the illustrations and illuminated Hebrew letters that make the *Sarajevo Haggadah* the wonder that it is and that cause visitors in Bosnia to imagine a past of nearly unknown but great cultural achievements. Perhaps, to her, the horrors of the expulsions from Spain and the Bosnian war are significant only as backdrops for subcerebral meanderings by an Australian woman, mostly in an irritatingly impenetrable local slang, about herself and her professional ambitions. Perhaps, unfortunately, she was correct to imagine these things, given the depths to which the ways of study, reading, and the appreciation of art have fallen in today's world.

Source: Schwartz, Stephen Alfred. "Following the code." *New Criterion* 27.7 (2009): 67+. *Literature Resource Center*.

<http://www.aadl.org/research/browse/books>

Discussion Questions Source:

http://us.penguinroup.com/static/rguides/us/people_of_the_book.html

1. When Hanna implores Ozren to solicit a second opinion on Alia's condition, he becomes angry and tells her, "Not every story has a happy ending." (p. 37) To what extent do you believe that their perspectives on tragedy and death are cultural? To what extent are they personal?
2. Isak tells Mordechai, "At least the pigeon does no harm. The hawk lives at the expense of other creatures that dwell in the desert." (p.50) If you were Lola, would

you have left the safety of your known life and gone to Palestine? Is it better to live as a pigeon or a hawk? Or is there an alternative?

3. When Father Vistorni asks Rabbi Judah Ayreh to warn the printer that the Church disapproves of one of their recently published texts, Ayreh tells him, “better you do it than to have us so intellectually enslaved that we do it for you.” (p. 156) Do you agree or disagree with his argument? With the way he handled Vistorni’s request?

4. What was it, ultimately, that made Father Vistorini approve the haggadah? Since Brooks leaves this part of the story unclear, how do you imagine it made its way from his rooms to Sarajevo?

5. Several of the novel’s female characters lived in the pre-feminist era and certainly fared poorly at the hands of men. Does the fact that she was pushing for gender equality—not to mention saving lives—justify Sarah Heath’s poor parenting skills? Would women’s rights be where they are today if it weren’t for women like her?

6. Have you ever been in a position where your professional judgment has been called into question? How did you react?

7. Was Hanna being fair to suspect only Amitai of the theft? Do you think charges should have been pressed against the culprits?

8. How did Hanna change after discovering the truth about her father? Would the person she was before her mother’s accident have realized that she loved Ozren? Or risked the dangers involved in returning the codex?

9. There is an amazing array of “people of the book”—both base and noble—whose lifetimes span some remarkable periods in human history. Who is your favorite and why?

Multimedia

Geraldine Brooks ‘People of the Book’ (Radio Broadcast)

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=18088926>

Further Reading

Caleb’s Crossing by Geraldine Brooks

<http://www.aadl.org/catalog/record/1376940>

(Call number: Fiction Brooks)

In 1665, a young man from Martha's Vineyard became the first Native American to graduate from Harvard College. Upon this slender factual scaffold, the author of the "New York Times" bestseller "*People of the Book*" has created a luminous tale of love and faith, magic and adventure.

Year of Wonders: a Novel of the Plague by Geraldine Brooks

<http://www.aadl.org/catalog/record/1179597>

(Call number: Fiction Brooks)

When an infected bolt of cloth carries plague from London to an isolated village, a housemaid named Anna Frith emerges as an unlikely heroine and healer. Through Anna's eyes we follow the story of the fateful year of 1666, as she and her fellow villagers confront the spread of disease and superstition. As death reaches into every household and villagers turn from prayers to murderous witch-hunting, Anna must find the strength to confront the disintegration of her community and the lure of illicit love. As she struggles to survive and grow, a year of catastrophe becomes instead *annus mirabilis*, a "year of wonders." Inspired by the true story of Eyam, a village in the rugged hill country of England, *Year of Wonders* is a richly detailed evocation of a singular moment in history.

Book Club To Go! ***March*** by Geraldine Brooks

<http://www.aadl.org/catalog/record/1235833>

(Call number: Fiction Brooks)

From Louisa May Alcott's beloved classic *Little Women*, Geraldine Brooks has animated the character of the absent father, March, and crafted a story "filled with the ache of love and marriage and with the power of war upon the mind and heart of one unforgettable man" (Sue Monk Kidd). With "pitch-perfect writing" (*USA Today*), Brooks follows March as he leaves behind his family to aid the Union cause in the Civil War. His experiences will utterly change his marriage and challenge his most ardently held beliefs. A lushly written, wholly original tale steeped in the details of another time, *March* secures Geraldine Brooks' place as a renowned author of historical fiction.

Author's official website

<http://geraldinebrooks.com/>

Information, news, and resources from the author.

Read-Alikes

The Sixteen Pleasures by Robert Hellenga

<http://www.aadl.org/catalog/record/1088489>

(Call number: Fiction Hellenga)

Margot Harrington, book conservator, travels to Florence in 1966 to help rescue precious documents damaged after the Arno floods the city. She is surprised both by a series of erotic drawings and poems tucked into a convent manuscript and her involvement with a married man.

Quattrocento by James McKean

<http://www.aadl.org/catalog/record/1192922>

(Call number: Fiction McKean)

Discovering a centuries-old portrait in the basement of the Metropolitan Museum, painting restorer Matt O'Brien experiences urgent feelings of déjà vu that result in his transportation to the time of the model, where he is challenged to save her from a fortune-seeking Machiavellian knight.

Unveiling: A Novel by Suzanne Wolfe

<http://www.aadl.org/catalog/record/1225085>

(Call number: Fiction Wolfe)

When Rachel Piers is given the dream assignment of restoring a mysterious medieval painting in a church in Rome, she jumps at the chance to advance her career and leave behind painful memories, but as she carefully restores the damaged artwork and slowly discovers the true origins of the painting, she uncovers layers of her soul that she would rather be kept hidden.

Book Club To Go! *The Shadow of the Wind* by Carlos Ruiz Zafon

<http://www.aadl.org/catalog/record/1221962>

(Call number: Fiction Zafon)

Set in 1950's Spain, the main character, Daniel, discovers a rare, obscure book of the same name. Daniel is so intrigued by the life by the life of the author that he takes on his persona and becomes involved in political and romantic scenarios he never could have imagined.

Headlong by Michael Frayn

<http://www.aadl.org/catalog/record/1157585>

(Call number: Fiction Frayn)

An art historian discovers a priceless Bruegel painting in a run down house and wants to sell it to England but some unsavory types want it for themselves.

Summaries from AADL.org Catalog

Extra!

For the fun of it, discuss as a group if anyone has ever entrusted them to hide or otherwise protect a document or possession for them so that it would not come to harm. This could be as innocent as a toy or as serious as a will. Have fun learning about each other!

