

# MANCHESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY MYSTERY BOOK CLUB READING LIST 2025-2026 CALENDAR

## Table 1: FAST REFERENCE!

The group usually meets on the last Friday of the month at 10:30 AM - (except in October, November, and December this year) when the date is adjusted for convenience. Club meeting locations may vary.

So, stay up to date by subscribing to our email list:

<http://www.mysterybookfan.com/subscribe/>

[Scroll down to Table 2 for detailed book information]

Meet Day	Book Title	Author
Sep 26, <b>2025</b>	The Violin Conspiracy	Brendan Slocum
Oct 24*	The Keeper of Lost Causes	Jussi Adler-Olsen
Nov 21*	The Paris Express	Emma Donoghue
Dec 19*	The Woman in the Library	Sulari Gentill
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Jan 30, <b>2026</b>	All the Colors of the Dark	Chris Whitaker
Feb 27	Everyone in My Family Has Killed Someone	Benjamin Stevenson
Mar 27	The Oligarch's Daughter	Joseph Finder
Apr 24	Nightshade	Michael Connelly
May 29	Here One Moment	Liane Moriarty
June 26	The Talented Mr. Ripley	Patricia Highsmith
July 31	The God of the Woods	Liz Moore
Aug 28	The Cutting Season	Attica Locke
* These 3 Meetings are on the <b>Friday before</b> the last Friday of the month!		

# MANCHESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY MBC READING LIST 2025-2026 CALENDAR

## Table 2: MORE DETAILS AND BLURBS!

**Sep 26, 2025**

Last Friday of the month as usual!

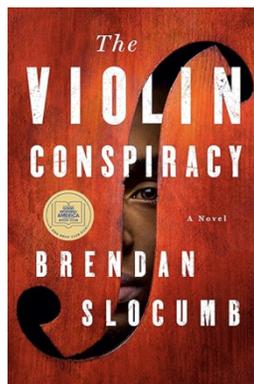
***The Violin Conspiracy***

by Brendan Slocum (2022)

**Non-Series**  
**342 pages**

**PLACE:** NY City and Rural North Carolina

**TYPE:** Literary mystery; mystery thriller; coming-of-age story



Growing up Black and poor in rural North Carolina, **Ray McMillian's** life has a gift and a dream— to become a world-class professional violinist, and nothing will stand in his way. Not his mother, who wants him to stop making such a racket; not the fact that he can't afford a violin suitable to his talents; not even the racism inherent in the world of classical music.

The story begins with the theft of Ray's violin from a New York hotel room, a few weeks before his entry in a prestigious world-wide Tchaikovsky Competition.

Flashbacks fill in the story of the last six years. Like how Ray's mother pressured him to drop out of school and get a job at Popeyes so he can help pay rent. But music class is part of school, and Ray loves playing the battered school violin, planning to audition for a regional competition. When he visits and plays for his grandmother at Thanksgiving, she tells him her grandfather played the fiddle. Turns out, it's in her attic and he can have it.

Ray is thrilled to have his own instrument and auditions for the State Regional Orchestra. A Black judge in the auditions is so impressed, she offers him a college scholarship where she is the professor of violin, giving Ray hope for his life-dream.

But when she takes him to a violin showroom to look into getting a better violin, Ray discovers it is a \$10m Stradivarius! Immediately most of Ray's family begins pressuring him to sell the violin and split the money. Then comes New York and the theft of the violin.

**Oct 24, 2025**

NOT the last Friday of October!

***The Keeper of Lost Causes***

by Jussi Adler-Olsen (2011)

**Series: #1 of 10**  
**400 pages**

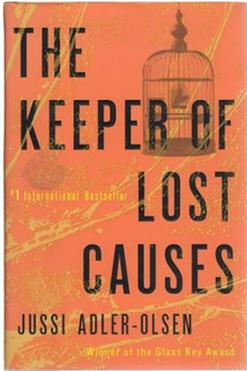
**PLACE:** Copenhagen

Jussi Adler-Olsen, is Denmark's premier crime writer. His books routinely top the bestseller lists in northern Europe, and he's won just about every Nordic crime-writing award.

*The Keeper of Lost Causes*, the first installment of Adler- Olsen's translated **Department Q series**, features the deeply flawed chief detective Carl Mørck, who used to be a good homicide detective-one of Copenhagen's best. Then a bullet almost took his life. Two of his colleagues weren't so lucky, and Carl, who didn't draw his weapon, blames himself.

So a promotion is the last thing Carl expects. But it all becomes clear when he sees his assigned office in an abandoned storage room in the police department basement. Carl's been selected to run **Department Q**, a new special investigations division, but relegated to

**TYPE:** Police Procedural; Cold Case (with Quirky Lead Characters)



the basement with no team. Coincidentally, he encounters a Syrian immigrant hired to be a custodian, who turns out to have helpful investigative skills, perhaps better than some with a detective badge.

With a stack of Copenhagen's coldest cases to keep Carl company, he knows he's been put out to pasture. So he's as surprised as anyone when a case actually captures his interest. A missing politician vanished without a trace five years earlier. The world assumes she's dead. His colleagues snicker about the time he's wasting. But Carl may have the last laugh, and redeem himself in the process.

Because she isn't dead . . . yet.

**Nov 21, 2025**

NOT the last Friday of November!

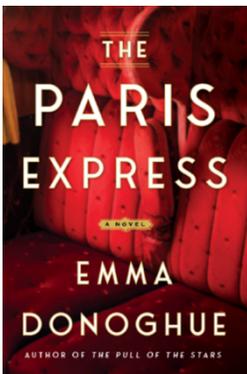
***The Paris Express*** by Emma Donoghue (2025)

**Non-Series**

**280 pages**

**PLACE:** Paris, France in 1895

**TYPE:** Historical novel



Based on an 1895 disaster that went down in history when it was captured in a series of surreal, extraordinary photographs, *The Paris Express* is a propulsive novel set on a train packed with a fascinating cast of characters who hail from as close as Brittany and as far as Russia, Ireland, Algeria, Pennsylvania, and Cambodia. Members of parliament hurry back to Paris to vote; a medical student suspects a girl may be dying; a secretary tries to convince her boss of the potential of moving pictures; two of the train's crew build a life away from their wives; a young anarchist makes a terrifying plan, and much more.



**Dec 19 2025**

NOT the last Friday of December!

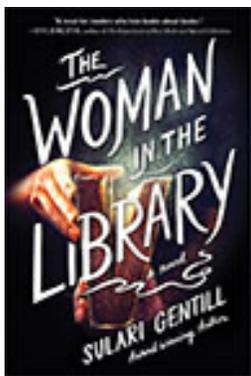
***The Woman in the Library***

by Sulari Gentill (2022)

**Non-Series**  
**265 pages**

**PLACE:** Boston Public Library

**TYPE:** Literary Mystery



*The Woman in the Library* begins when author Winifred "Freddie" Kincaid visits the Reading Room at the Boston Public Library, searching for a quiet place to find inspiration for a mystery novel. She joins a table with three other people, giving each a nickname: Freud Girl, a young woman with full-sleeve tattoos on both arms reading psychology books; Heroic Chin, a young man in a Harvard Law sweatshirt; Handsome Man, typing at full speed on his laptop.

A terrified woman's scream breaks the silence, startling the foursome into conversation and an excursion for coffee at the nearby Map Room Tea Lounge. Freddie is newly arrived from Australia on an author-in-residence scholarship, and is delighted to make some new friends, sheepishly confessing she's a writer when the others see the nicknames in her notebook.

When the body of a woman is discovered in the library later that day, the four new friends band together to solve the crime. Interspersed emails from Leo, an American aspiring author in Boston, to Hannah Tigone, the Australian author really writing the book from Freddie's perspective, give feedback on local color as she sends him each chapter for advice. Hannah had hoped to visit Boston herself, but can't travel because of COVID restrictions. Leo's emails grow progressively darker, and he begins to send pictures of crime scenes to help Hannah get all the bloody details right. This clever literary thriller about Hannah writing the story of Freddie writing the story of the murdered woman in the library is both funny and menacing. [from review on SYKM]

**Jan 30, 2026**

Last Friday of the month as usual!

***All the Colors of the Dark***

by Chris Whitaker (2024)

**Non-Series**  
**608 pages**

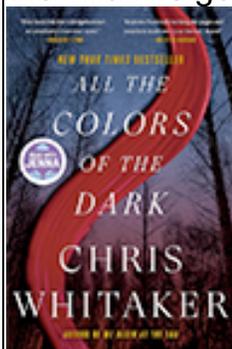
**PLACE:** A small town in Missouri

**TYPE:** Serial killer mystery; a love story; a Literary mystery

It is 1975 in the small town of Monta Clare, Missouri where a 13-year old orphan girl, Saint Brown, befriends **Patch Macauley**, a one-eyed impoverished boy struggling to take care of his depressed mother.

It's also a town where girls are disappearing. When Misty Meyer, daughter of a wealthy family, is targeted, the most unlikely hero emerges—Patch, who saves the girl, but who instead is injured and abducted by the villain and kept in total darkness.

Although only 13, Saint pesters the police for months, but finally finds clues on her own that lead to Patch's location, where he is barely alive. And the villain is gone.



But Patch, once recovered and reaching adulthood, is obsessed with searching for **a young girl** who helped him while he was held for months in captivity, a girl whose face he never saw due to the total darkness, where he was kept.

Chris Whitaker has written a novel about the line between triumph and tragedy and what lurks in the shadows of obsession and the blinding light of hope.

**Feb 27, 2026**

Last Friday of the month as usual!

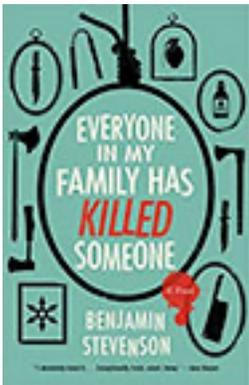
**Everyone in My Family Has Killed Someone** by

Benjamin Stevenson (2023)

Series: #1 of 4  
384 pages

**PLACE:** *Australia - mostly at a ski mountain resort [probably in New South Wales' Snowy Mountains]*

**TYPE:** "Golden Age of Mysteries" style with dark humor thrown in



*Everyone in My Family Has Killed Someone* is narrated by Ernest “Ern” Cunningham, a fan of crime fiction who reluctantly accepts his Aunt Katherine’s command to attend the Cunningham/Garcia Family Reunion at the remote Sky Lodge Ski Resort in Australia. In his narration, Ern promises to adhere to Ronald Knox’s 1926 “10 Commandments of Detective Fiction,” the fair play structure of Golden Age mysteries. Since Ern is serving as both the Watson and the Detective, he promises to faithfully reveal all the clues as well as his thoughts.

Ern begins by describing a murder committed by his brother Michael, which ended with Michael serving time in prison after giving Ern a duffle bag containing \$260,000 in cash to hold for him. Michael has just been released and is due to arrive the following day. Already in attendance are Aunt Katherine and her husband Andy, Ern’s mother Audrey and step-father Marcelo, his step-sister Sofia, and Michael’s wife Lucy.

Ern wakes up to discover the resort guests gathered around the body of a man with frost-bite blackened cheeks lying on the snow. The local policeman looks like he has no idea what to do, and asks if anyone is a doctor. Sofia admits she is, and pronounces the man dead. Once the body has been moved to a shed Sofia points out the blackened face and lips, which is ash, not frostbite — the mark of the Black Tongue, a serial killer who kills by smothering his victims with ash.

Michael arrives in a huge truck along with Erin, Ern’s ex-wife, who picked him up at the prison. When the other guests realize it was murder, they depart, leaving only the Cunningham/Garcia families. A storm shuts down the road and they are trapped. Ern realizes it is up to him to identify the killer, who is likely one of his relatives; since they have all actually murdered someone, Ern has far too many suspects capable of committing murder. This clever murder mystery pokes fun at classic mystery tropes. [from review on SYKM]

**Mar 27, 2026**

Last Friday of the month as usual!

**The Oligarch's Daughter** by

Joe Funder (2025)

Non-Series  
448 pages

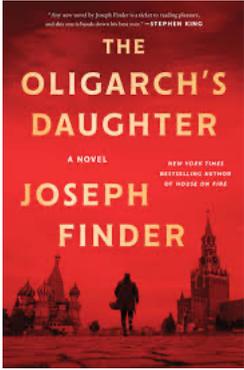
"Any new novel by Joseph Funder is a ticket to reading pleasure, and this one is hands down his best ever." —Stephen King

"This is Funder at his finest—a perfect everyman-in-peril story, first building an ominous drumbeat of menace, then exploding in action and intrigue and triumph. As good as it gets." —Lee Child

From the New York Times bestselling author of *House on Fire*, a breakneck thriller that marries the dynastic opulence of *Succession* with the tense and disorienting spycraft of *The Americans*.

**PLACE:** *New Hampshire and New York City.*

**TYPE:** Domestic thriller with overlay of organized crime and/or spy rings; Wilderness survival story.



Paul Brightman is a man on the run, living under an assumed name in a small New England town with a million-dollar bounty on his head. When his security is breached, Paul is forced to flee into the New Hampshire wilderness to evade Russian operatives who can seemingly predict his every move.

Six years ago, Paul was a rising star on Wall Street who fell in love with a beautiful photographer named Tatyana—unaware that her father was a Russian oligarch and the object of considerable interest from several U.S. intelligence agencies. Now, to save his own life, Paul must unravel a decades-old conspiracy that extends to the highest reaches of the government.

Rivaling the classic spy novels of the Cold War, *The Oligarch's Daughter* is built for the frightening world we live in now.

Interesting discussion of corrupt Russian oligarchs. Once you are pulled in and suspen disbelief, it is a true "page-turner."

**April 24, 2026**

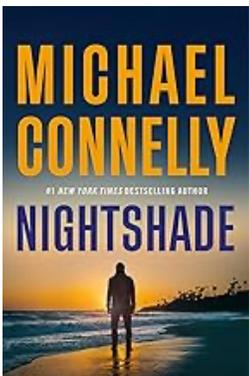
Last Friday of the month as usual!

***Nightshade*** by Michael Connelly (2025)

**Series: #1 of 1**  
**347 pages**

**PLACE:** *Catalina Island, Los Angeles County, CA*

**TYPE:** Police Procedural



***Introducing Detective Stilwell: a cop relentlessly following his mission in the seemingly idyllic setting of Catalina Island.***

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Detective Stilwell has been "exiled" to a low-key post, policing rustic Catalina Island, after department politics drove him off a homicide desk on the mainland. But while following up the usual drunk-and-disorderlies and petty thefts that come with his new territory, Detective Stilwell gets a report of a body found weighed down at the bottom of the harbor—a Jane Doe identifiable at first only by a streak of purple dye in her hair. At the same time, a report of poaching on a protected reserve turns into a case fraught with violence and danger as Stilwell digs into the shady past of an island bigwig.

Crossing all lines of protocol and jurisdiction, Stilwell doggedly works both cases. Though hampered by an old beef with an ex-colleague determined to thwart him at every turn, he is convinced he is the only one who can bring justice to the woman known as "Nightshade." Soon, his investigation uncovers closely guarded secrets and a dark heart to the serene island that was meant to be his escape from the evils of the big city.

Propulsive and atmospheric, *Nightshade* launches a brand new character into the Connelly universe, and proves without question that Michael Connelly is "the undisputed master of the modern crime novel" (Real Book Spy).

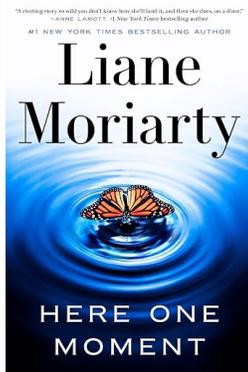
May 29, 2026

**Here One Moment** by Liane Moriarty (2024)

Non-Series  
512 pages

**PLACE:** Australia;  
Book begins with an airplane's short flight from Hobart, Tasmania.

**TYPE:**  
Psychological thriller with some supernatural aspects; Literary mystery.



**Life is full of twists and turns you never see coming. *But what if you did?***

Flight attendant Allegra Patel loves her job, but today is her twenty-eighth birthday and she'd rather not be placating a plane full of passengers unhappy about a long delay. There's the well-dressed man in seat 4C desperate not to miss his daughter's musical. A harried mother frantically tries to keep her toddler and baby quiet. Honeymooners still in their wedding finery dream of their new lives, while a chatty emergency room nurse dreams of retirement.

Suddenly a woman traveling alone stands. She walks down the aisle making predictions about how and when passengers will die. Some dismiss her, they don't believe in psychics. Some are delighted with her prophecies! Their lives will supposedly be long. Others are appalled.

Then: a few months later, the first prediction comes true: one passenger dies exactly as she predicted. Then two more passengers die, again, as she said they would. **If you were told you only had a certain amount of time left to live, would you do things differently?**

Intricately plotted, with the wonderful wit Liane Moriarty has become famous for, *Here One Moment* brilliantly looks at friends, lovers, and family and how we manage to hold onto them in our harried modern lives.

June 26, 2026

**The Talented Mr. Ripley** by Patricia Highsmith (1955)

Series: #1 of 5  
490 pages

**PLACE:** Starts in USA, but mainly in Italian resort towns

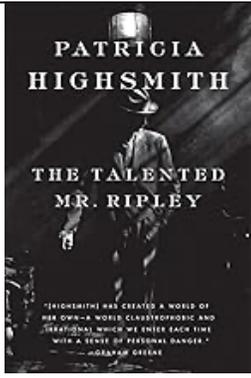
**TYPE:** A Classic mystery;  
Psychological Suspense

This is the first of five books that features **Tom Ripley**, a charming forger who becomes a psychopathic killer. The book was made into an English TV show or movie 4 times, including the 1999 version with Matt Damon and Gwyneth Paltrow. A new version with other actors is currently on Netflix.

The MBC read Highsmith's "break out" 1950 novel *Strangers on a Train* in December, 2021, giving it an average score of 86. It was not a Ripley novel.

Tom Ripley is a young striver seeking to leave behind his past as an orphan bullied for being a "sissy." Newly arrived in the heady world of Manhattan, Ripley meets a wealthy industrialist who hires him to bring his playboy son, Dickie Greenleaf, back from gallivanting in Italy.

Soon Ripley's fascination with Dickie's debonair lifestyle turns obsessive as he finds himself enraged by Dickie's ambivalent affections for Marge, a charming American dilettante, and Ripley



begins a deadly game. “Sinister and strangely alluring” (Mark Harris, Entertainment Weekly) *The Talented Mr. Ripley* is an unforgettable introduction to this smooth confidence man, whose talent for self-invention is as unnerving—and unnervingly revealing of the American psyche—as ever.

This and other Highsmith books have influenced writers to this day.

**July 31, 2026**

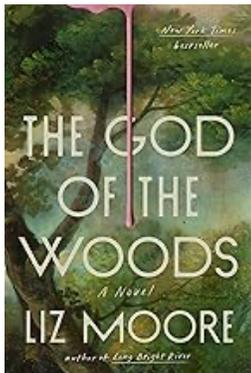
***The God of the Woods***

by Liz Moore  
(2024)

**Non-Series**  
490 pages

**PLACE:** NY  
Adirondecks

**TYPE:** Extended  
domestic thriller



Early morning, August 1975: a camp counselor discovers an empty bunk. Its occupant, Barbara Van Laar, has gone missing. Barbara isn't just any 13-year-old: she's the daughter of the family that owns the summer camp and employs most of the region's residents. And this isn't the first time a Van Laar child has disappeared. Barbara's older brother, Bear, similarly vanished fourteen years ago, never to be found.

As a panicked search begins, a thrilling drama unfolds. Chasing down the layered secrets of the Van Laar family and the blue-collar community working in its shadow.

Judyta Luptack, a new investigator for the New York State Bureau of Criminal Investigation, discovers that the Van Laar servants and the townspeople are willing to talk to her, sharing a unanimous conviction that an innocent man was framed for Bear's disappearance. Narrated from various perspectives — including Barbara's mother, a camp counselor in training, Barbara's shy camp bunkmate, and Judyta — this compelling thriller examines the negative effect of wealth and privilege.

**Aug 28, 2026**

***The Cutting Season***

by Attica Locke  
(2012)

**Non-Series**  
384 pages

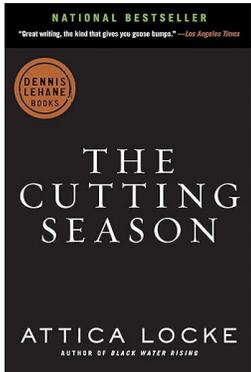
**PLACE:** the middle  
of Louisiana's Sugar  
Cane country

Caren Gray is the general manager of Belle Vie, a sprawling antebellum plantation where the past and the present coexist uneasily. The estate's owners have turned the place into an eerie tourist attraction complete with full-dress reenactments and carefully restored slave quarters. Outside the gates, an ambitious corporation has been busy snapping up land from struggling families who have grown sugar cane for generations, replacing local employees with illegal laborers.

Tensions mount when the body of a female migrant worker is found in a shallow grave on the edge of the property, her throat cut clean. The list of suspects is long, but when the cops zero in on a person of interest, Caren has a feeling they're chasing the wrong leads. Putting herself at risk, she unearths startling new facts about an old mystery—the long-ago disappearance of a former slave—that has unsettling ties

**TYPE:**

Contemporary plot with historical connections; traditional mystery; Literary mystery.



to the modern-day crime. In pursuit of the truth about Belle Vie's history—and her own—Caren discovers secrets about both cases that an increasingly desperate killer will do anything to keep hidden.

Taut, hauntingly resonant, and beautifully written, *The Cutting Season* is at once a thoughtful meditation on how America reckons its past with its future and a high-octane page-turner that unfolds with tremendous skill and vision, demonstrating once again that Locke is “a writer wise beyond her years” (Los Angeles Times).

**BONUS BOOK IDEAS (from Dick):**



**Authors:**

- Bianca Marais (Interactive for the reader.)
- Chris Pavone (Character driven story.)
- Hank Phillippi Ryan (A thriller about a writer on a book tour.)
- Brendan Slocumb (A coming of age story where classical music and love of comic book super heros help a bullied kid become the "Dark Maestro" super hero in a crime infested neighborhood.)