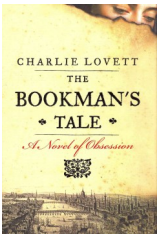


# Recommended Reads from Library Staff



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It's that time of year again when lots of publications and websites publish their recommended books of the year. This year I polled library staff to see what some savvy readers had discovered in 2013. MCPL folks had lots of nifty recommendations. So whether you are looking for books to help you through the long dark nights of winter or searching for that perfect gift for a loved one or friend, here are some suggestions from some local book people. We do have paper copies of this list and other 2013 favorite book lists available at the Information Desk at the main library.

## FICTION

***And Everyday Was Overcast*** by Paul Kwiatkowski FICITION Kwiatkow

Described on the cover as an illustrated novel, this work is more a scrapbook interspersed with stories detailing the author's coming of age in southern Florida. The photos don't match the stories exactly and are stronger as a result. They cover drug use, adolescent violence, and teenage sexuality.

***The Bookman's Tale: a novel of obsession*** by Charles C. Lovett FICITION Lovett

Anyone who loves the hunting, buying and selling of rare and old books should read this. Filled with emotion, intrigue, mystery, suspense, and tragedy, it also covers love lost and gained as well as the quest for Shakespeare and his writings. Very well written and hard to put down!

***Cutting for Stone*** by Abraham Verghese FICITION Verghese

This book tells the story of two twins who were conjoined when born and who lost their mother in childbirth. As young men, they both fall in love with the same woman, Genet. Set in modern Ethiopia and a New York City hospital, its themes center on family, betrayal, and forgiveness.

***Dead I Well May Be*** by Adrian McKinty FICITION McKinty

Michael Forsythe leaves Northern Ireland at nineteen to work construction in New York but instead embarks on a life of brutal crime. While listening to Tolstoy's books, this immigrant plots his next attack on Dominican gangs who are trying to usurp turf from those of the Irish.

***The Family Fang: a novel*** by Kevin Wilson FICITION Wilson

Ever wonder what it would be like to be the offspring of performance artists? To live a madcap childhood and then try to settle into a normal life? As adults, Buster and Annie Fang try to adapt but soon must decide whether to be part of their parent's final performance.

***Ghosting*** by Kirby Gann FICITION Gann

Very creepy but not in a ghost says "boo" sort of way. A sometimes gruesome story of murder, drugs, missing people, and people who aren't what they appear to be. Not a "whodunit"--more like an in-depth crime story, like those reported on television news magazines. Reads like real life, messy with lots of loose ends.

***Let Him Go*** by Larry Watson FICITION Watson

The American West of the 1950s is the setting for this gripping story of George Blackledge, a retired sheriff, and his wife Margaret who set out on a journey to reclaim their young grandson Jimmy from his brutal stepfather's family. Watson's vividly described places and characters will haunt you long after you finish the book.

***Life after Life*** by Kate Atkinson FICION Atkinson

This novel is the rare literary book about time travel. On a winter night in 1910, Ursula Todd is born and dies in England. On that same night, Ursula is born again. And so on and so on. Will she save the world from a final cataclysmic war? Read this comic and unique novel to find out.

***Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*** by Ransom Riggs FICION Riggs

An abandoned orphanage on an island on the coast of Wales is filled with old photographs. While exploring there, Jacob discovers a bizarre past for the children who once lived there.

***Mr. Penumbra's 24-Hour Book Store*** by Robin Sloan FICION Sloan

Clay Jannon is forced to take the night shift at a used bookstore in San Francisco with very few visitors. And the visitors he does see only borrow strange books from "The Way Back." Part mystery, part rollicking fantasy driven adventure, this book surprises at every turn.

***Narcopolis*** by Jeet Thayil FICION Thayil

This is one of the best books I've ever read and I believe it was short listed for the Booker Prize this year. A New Yorker becomes obsessed with the Bombay opium culture of the 1970s.

***Snapper*** by Brian Kimberling FICION Kimberling

A great coming of age tale that takes place in and around Bloomington. Nathan Lochmueller ekes out a living as a birdwatcher for IU while he tries to come to terms with a variety of eccentric Hoosiers, including the free-spirited Lola.

***13th Hour: a thriller*** by Richard Doetsch FICION Doetsch

A man literally is racing the clock as he rushes to prevent his wife's murder. A gripping, suspenseful page turner.

***We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*** by Karen Jay Fowler FICION Fowler

Twenty-two -year-old Rosemary recounts her childhood in Bloomington, Indiana; she gradually discloses events that lead to the disappearance of her sister, Fern, and the long-term effects this tragedy had on her family.

***We Need New Names*** by NoViolet Bulawayo FICION Bulawayo

Bulawayo's literary debut tells the story of ten-year-old Darling and her friends as they navigate a chaotic, poverty-stricken and brutal childhood in a shanty town in Zimbabwe. They steal guavas to keep from staving an dplay gamles like "find Bin Laden." Bulawayo's finely-drawn characters bring humor to a dark and violent world.

## MYSTERIES

***A Place of Secrets*** by Rachel Hore MYS Hore

Can dreams be passed down through the family? Weaving back and forth from contemporary times to over one hundred years ago, the stories of two women and a young girl are intertwined in this book about guilt and old secrets.

***Police*** by Jo Nesbo MYS Nesbo

This dark, taut mystery was translated from the Norwegian. In Oslo, someone is brutally killing detectives at the sites of crimes that they could not solve. Detective Harry Hole has saved many people, but can he save himself?

***An Unmarked Grave*** by Charles Todd MYS Todd

One of the Bess Crawford mystery series, this is set during WWI in England. Bess is a nurse and gets into all kinds of situations. This one covers the 1918 influenza outbreak. In it, Bess discovers a family friend's body and works hard to find his elusive killer. Great reading.

## SCIENCE FICTION

**All Clear** by Connie Willis SF Willis

This book is about time travel and the London Blitz. There is a previous book that probably should be read first called **Blackout**. You might have to have some acquaintance with World War II and England's role in it to really enjoy this book, but it kept my interest.

**Constellation Games: a space opera space opera** by Leonard Richardson SF Richardson

A very advanced, anarchistic, multi-species alien civilization lands on the moon and starts building *stuff*. Bored, snarky, pony-game developer/blogger Ariel contacts them; after all, if a civilization invented computers, then they must have games to play on them.

**Damnation for Beginners: a novella of the deepgate codex** by Alan Campbell SF Campbell

This novella kept me up far past my bedtime. In the city of Cog, Jack works for the profit-hungry Henry Sill Banking Corporation. After an everyday corrupt business transaction destroys his marriage and personal life, Jack lands in Hell and plots his revenge.

**The End of Mr Y** by Scarlett Thomas SF Thomas

A mysterious book reportedly not read by anyone alive transports Ariel Manto through space and time by using the thoughts of others. An intriguing read.

## GRAPHIC NOVELS

**March: Book One** by Congressman John Lewis **Graphic Novels NF 921 Lewis Lew**

This phenomenal graphic novel memoir by U.S. Congressman and civil rights icon John Lewis was illustrated by local graphic artist Nate Powell. It describes his life under segregation and his early battles to issue in an era of civil rights.

**The Nao of Brown** by Glyn Dillon GRAPHIC NOVELS Dillon

Dillon's graphic novel has some of the best artwork I've seen in recent memory. That coupled with an engaging and honest story that deals with overcoming the mental obstacles that greatly affect our lives, what more could one ask?

## NONFICTION

**Daily Rituals: How Artists Work** by Mason Currey NF 700.922 Cur

Which authors, composers, and painters worked late at night, which followed a schedule religiously, and which mixed adultery and alcohol liberally with their creative output? It's fun to know the nitty gritty of artists' lives. This well-researched collection offers lots of cool tidbits.

**Garbology: Our Dirty Love Affair with Trash** by Edward Humes NF 363.728 Hum

What happens when we throw something away? Where does it go? At what cost? Humes answers these questions. This book won't help you create a plan to eliminate extraneous garbage from your life, but it does start the discussion of want, need, waste, and our impact on this world. Completely fascinating and often shocking!

**How Music Works** by David Byrne NF 781.1 Byr

An all-encompassing history and listener's guide from one of America's most inspiring creative weirdoes who co-founded the *Talking Heads*. An insider's guide to what makes music music.

**I am Malala: The Girl who Stood Up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban** by Malala Yousafzai NF 921 Yousafzai You

When the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley, one girl spoke out against their decision to outlaw the education of girls. Malala Yousafzai refused to be silenced and fought for her right to an education. On October 9, 2012, she was shot by the Taliban. Fortunately, Malala survived the attack and now tells her powerful story.

**Stories from Jonestown** by Leigh Fondakowski NF 988.1032 Fon

This is a collection of interviews and stories from survivors, family members, and friends who were involved in the mass suicide at Jonestown. It came out recently, so it has a lot of new information and many people were interviewed who have never really spoken on the subject.

***Tiny Beautiful Things: Advice on Love and Life*** by Cheryl Strayed NF 070.444 Str  
Writing anonymously for the website *The Rumpus*, Strayed offers advice for complex personal problems. Part memoir, part autobiography, this book offers a modern take on interpersonal relationships in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

***The World without Us*** by Alan Weisman NF 304.2 Wei

This book covers many aspects of history, culture, and geography. It asks the question?what would the world look like if humans disappeared. A hopeful story and also riveting.

***Would You Kill the Fat Man? The Trolley Problem and What Your Answer Tells Us about Right and Wrong*** by David Edmonds NF 150 Edm

This book achieves something impressive-- it makes complex moral dilemmas and the philosophers and scientists who study them, enjoyable, understandable, and engaging.

Posted by Dory L. on December 10, 2013

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