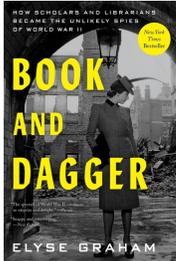


Book Discussion Group 2026

Lester Public Library • Wednesdays, 4:00 PM • Ages 18+

This group meets the first Wednesday of every month. No registration is required; you may attend as few or as many meetings as you wish. Stop at the front desk to pick up current selection.



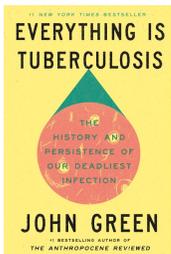
January 7: **Book and Dagger: How Scholars and Librarians Became the Unlikely Spies of World War II** by Elyse Graham

During World War II, the newly formed Office of Strategic Services turned to scholars and librarians as recruits when the U.S. needed an intelligence network fast. Literature professors, historians, and archivists were suddenly trained in analysis, document gathering, and undercover work. Drawing on letters, personal accounts, and declassified files, Graham shows how these academics shaped the war effort and later influenced American research institutions.



February 4: **The Reading List** by Sara Nisha Adams

Working at the local library, Aleisha discovers a secret reading list that offers an escape from the difficulties in her own life. Each book she reads transports her away from the challenges at home and opens new perspectives on the world. When she learns of a lonely widower struggling to connect with his book-loving granddaughter, Aleisha decides to pass the list along, hoping it will help bridge the gap between them. As the story unfolds, the characters and the books they read reveal unexpected ways lives can intersect.



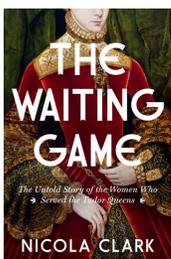
March 4: **Everything Is Tuberculosis: The History and Persistence of Our Deadliest Infection** by John Green

In 2019, John Green met Henry, a young tuberculosis patient in Sierra Leone, and the encounter inspired his advocacy for better access to treatment and awareness of global healthcare inequities. Tuberculosis, though curable, remains the deadliest infectious disease, killing 1.5 million people annually. Green weaves Henry's story with the scientific, social, and historical impact of the disease, tracing how it has shaped societies and how human choices continue to influence its persistence.



April 1: **The Last Chance Library** by Freya Sampson

Lonely librarian June Jones has never left her small English village and prefers books to people. When the local library faces closure, she is forced to step out of her comfort zone to save the place that holds her most cherished memories. With the help of a group of dedicated and eccentric patrons, June rallies to protect the library, discovering unexpected friendships along the way. She also reconnects with her old school friend, Alex, whose feelings for her are clear. As June fights to preserve the library, she begins to open herself to life, community, and change.



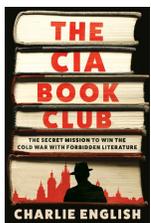
May 6: **The Waiting Game: The Untold Story of the Women Who Served the Tudor Queens** by Nicola Clark

Every Tudor queen was surrounded by ladies-in-waiting who dressed her, guarded her privacy, and subtly steered the rhythms of court life. Their days were filled with intimate access and quiet influence—managing secrets, timing favors, and negotiating shifting alliances in a world where a whisper could matter as much as a decree. Together, their stories reveal how power often flowed through the hands of women working behind the scenes.



June 3: **The Wedding People** by Alison Espach

Phoebe Stone arrives at the Cornwall Inn in Newport, Rhode Island, expecting a romantic getaway with her husband, only to find herself alone and mistaken for a member of a wedding party. Determined to enjoy one last indulgent escape, she navigates the luxurious setting on her own terms. Meanwhile, the bride has planned every detail of her weekend wedding, leaving little room for surprises—until Phoebe arrives. The two women form an unexpected connection, confiding in each other as they navigate the chaos and emotions of the weekend.



July 1: **The CIA Book Club: The Secret Mission to Win the Cold War with Forbidden Literature** by Charlie English

During the Cold War, George Minden led a covert operation to smuggle banned literature into Eastern Europe, challenging Soviet censorship and control and using underground reading networks to spread forbidden ideas. By providing access to books that were otherwise prohibited, the operation sought to influence hearts and minds, undermining totalitarian authority through culture and literature. English explores the risks taken by those involved, the impact of ideas on societies under oppression, and the role of literature as a subtle but powerful weapon.



August 5: **Bog Queen** by Anna North

A significant archaeological discovery sets off a clash between past and present over the ownership and use of a stretch of bogland. As the find becomes public, communities and individuals confront competing claims, historical legacies, and differing ideas about the land's value. North follows those caught in the conflict, showing how decisions about preservation, development, and heritage affect both the environment and the people connected to it.



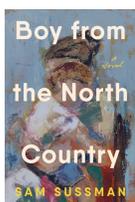
September 2: **The Rarest Fruit** by Gaëlle Bélem

Edmond Albius, a Creole boy born into slavery in 19th-century La Réunion whose skill with plants leads him to develop a method for hand-pollinating vanilla orchids, transforms the global vanilla industry. Orphaned early, Edmond is raised by a botanist and defies the limitations imposed by his society. The story traces his discovery and its impact on the island, France, and beyond, while situating his life within the broader context of colonial exploitation.



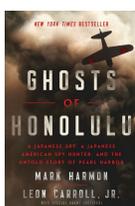
October 7: **What We Can Know** by Ian McEwan

In 2014, poet Francis Blundy reads a new poem, *A Corona for Vivien*, at his wife's birthday dinner. Over a century later, much of the western world has been flooded following a nuclear catastrophe. Thomas Metcalfe, a scholar living in the submerged remains of southern England, becomes fascinated by the poem and the lives of those who created it. As he follows clues to its origins, he uncovers a story of love, betrayal, and a brutal crime that challenges his assumptions about the past.



November 4: **Boy from the North Country** by Sam Sussman

Evan, 26, is suddenly called home to the remote farmhouse where he was raised by his mother, June. He discovers she is dying and learns there are long-held secrets about his past, including the identity of his biological father. As Evan pieces together her life before he was born, including an emotionally turbulent relationship with Bob Dylan, he confronts family mysteries, artistic legacy, and the complexities of love and identity.



December 2: **Ghosts of Honolulu: A Japanese Spy, a Japanese American Spy Hunter, and the Untold Story of Pearl Harbor** by Mark Harmon

Before the attack on Pearl Harbor, a U.S. naval counterintelligence officer worked to protect the American fleet while a Japanese spy was sent to Hawaii to gather intelligence. Their covert activities unfolded in the tense months leading up to December 7 when the surprise attack exposed their efforts and altered the course of history.