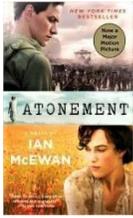


Book Club Corner



In March, we discussed *Atonement* by Ian McEwan. A novel essentially in three acts, we begin on a hot summer day in 1935 where we meet Briony Tallis, 13 years old and a budding author. We also meet her older sister Cecilia, Robbie (the son of their housemaid), mother Emily (made remote from her family by savage migraines) and young cousins (Lola – older, ambitious and sexy, and her 2 young brothers) along with other assorted characters. Briony cannot interpret the things that she sees on this fateful day into context and accuses Robbie of raping her cousin Lola which results in a prison term. Part 2 takes us through a day with Robbie, now released from prison, in the midst of the confusion of escaping France with his comrades during the debacle of Dunkirk. In part 3, Briony is now an aging woman, an author and facing the advance of dementia. This reveals the previous 2 parts as a novel written by Briony based on her guilt over the false accusation and is her act of atonement. Members of the book club had a mixed reception to the book. Most found the first part slow to develop. Another commented that the second part made the experience of the soldiers vividly real. We agreed that it was difficult to follow the story and tell what had actually happened and what was Briony's rewriting of the story. One member complained that she felt she had been jerked around by the author.

And here are some recommended reads available from the Hamilton Public Library. Visit the Bookmobile at Bennetto Recreation Centre on Tuesday (2:30 to 4:00) and Thursday (6:30 to 8:00) or go online at hpl.ca to reserve a copy.

Five Wives by Joan Thomas. Based real events in the mid-fifties, a group of evangelical Christians go to Ecuador to find a remote tribe of natives, who have no experience or knowledge of the outside world, and to convert them to Christianity. The 5 men venture into the jungle and are all killed. The story imagines the impact on the wives and their children as they struggle with grief and belief. A gripping story and examination of colonialism and the impact of imposing an alien culture and belief system on others. Beautifully written, this author has been compared to Alice Munro by one reviewer.
Kit Darling

Conquistador by Buddy Levy. Historian Levy takes us into the worlds of Hernán Cortez & Aztec King Montezuma; the clash of cultures, the brutality of war, the relentlessness of Cortez, and the tragedy of Montezuma. The last days of the once great Aztec empire are racked with smallpox and bewilderment of the Spanish cannons & firearms. Cortez sees power and great riches and glory within his grasp. This book reads like an adventure thriller with twists and turns, but with an outcome that is known by all.
Paige Turner

Have you read any of our recommendations? Liked any of the same books we talked about or disagreed totally? Let us know at bayareabookclub@bell.net.

We have been asked whether anyone can join the book club. Our books are supplied by the Hamilton Public Library and come in a bag of 12. This obviously limits us to 12 members at a time. We currently have 12 members, but if you wish to be put on a waiting list, email us at the above address. Alternatively, check out the many book clubs run by the Hamilton Public Library.

Submitted by Kit Darling and the members of the Bay Area Book Club