

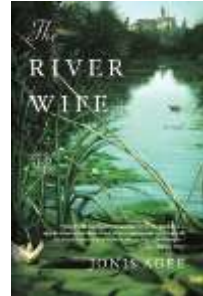
Recent Reads

A BooksTalk by Mindy P.

Gere Branch Library – January 30, 2017

[The River Wife](#) by Jonis Agee

When Annie Lark is left to die after a devastating earthquake does terrible damage up and down the mighty Mississippi in 1811, she is rescued by French river pirate and fur trapper Jacques Ducharme. The gentle man who lovingly tends to his “River Wife” over the following years is a far cry from the greedy desperado who obsesses over building Jacques Landing, a haven for river travelers. Hoarding his treasures to dole out to wives and lovers, many women pass through Jacques’ life, but none as significant as Annie, his first real passion until a horrendous event that tears their marriage apart. By then Jacques’ deeds have changed him, his soul too scarred for Annie ever to heal, years passed in bitterness. Generations of the Ducharme family are cursed with hardship and grief with no way of escaping.



[We Have Always Lived in the Castle](#) by Shirley Jackson

Two young women and their elderly uncle live in an isolated, grand old estate after the rest of the family was poisoned by arsenic six years previously. The uncle is disabled now because of the effects of the arsenic, and the older sister Constance takes care of him. The younger sister, Mary Katherine, is eighteen years old, and she is the narrator of the story. Constance and Uncle Julian never leave the property, so Mary Katherine, also known as Merricat, walks into the village every week to buy supplies. She knows she is not welcome in the village and she quietly tolerates the taunting received from children and adults alike. It's clear from Merricat's thoughts that she is a very strange girl. When others tease her she imagines them dead on the floor and she is very superstitious. Merricat buries relics all over their property and nails items to trees in order to protect their property. Distant relatives and the towns people think they are mad and will only tolerate them for so long.



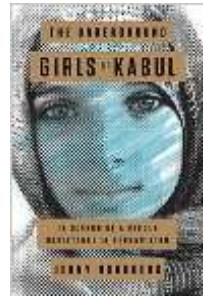
[The Memory Keeper's Daughter](#) by Kim Edwards

In 1964, Dr. David Henry is forced to deliver his wife Norah's twins with the help of a nurse, Caroline Gill. Their first child, a boy they name Paul, is born a healthy perfect child, but when the second baby is born, David notices she has Down's syndrome. David, recalling the possibility of a heart defect and early death and decides that the baby girl will be placed in an institution. Caroline was given the baby to take to the institution, but simply didn't like the conditions. She decides to keep and raise the baby, who is named, Phoebe. While Caroline is at the store, her car battery dies and she is stranded in the snow with Phoebe. She is picked up by a truck driver, Al Simpson, who drives them to Caroline's home. Meanwhile, David tells Norah that their daughter died at birth. After hearing that Caroline had kept Phoebe rather than take her to the institution, David bids her to do what she thinks is right. Caroline leaves for Pittsburg to make a fresh start with Phoebe.



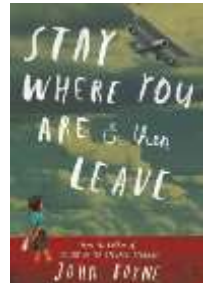
[The Underground Girls of Kabul](#) by Jenny Nordberg

In Afghanistan, a culture ruled almost entirely by men, the birth of a son is cause for celebration and the arrival of a daughter is often mourned as misfortune. A *bacha posh* (literally translated from Dari as “dressed up like a boy”) is a third kind of child – a girl temporarily raised as a boy and presented as such to the outside world. Jenny Nordberg, the reporter who broke the story of this phenomenon for the *New York Times*, constructs a powerful and moving account of those secretly living on the other side of a deeply segregated society where women have almost no rights and little freedom.



[Stay Where You Are Then Leave](#) by John Boyne

The day the First World War broke out, Alfie Summerfield's father promised he wouldn't go away to fight - but he broke that promise the following day. Four years later, Alfie doesn't know where his father might be, other than that he's away on a special, secret mission. Then, while shining shoes at King's Cross Station, Alfie unexpectedly sees his father's name - on a sheaf of papers belonging to a military doctor. Bewildered and confused, Alfie realizes his father is in a hospital close by - a hospital treating soldiers with an unusual condition. Alfie is determined to rescue his father from this strange, unnerving place .



[Kabul Beauty School](#) by Deborah Rodriguez

Soon after the fall of the Taliban, in 2001, Deborah Rodriguez went to Afghanistan as part of a group offering humanitarian aid to this war-torn nation. Surrounded by men and women whose skills—as doctors, nurses, and therapists—seemed eminently more practical than her own, Rodriguez, a hairdresser and mother of two from Michigan, despaired of being of any real use. Yet she soon found she had a gift for befriending Afghans, and once her profession became known she was eagerly sought out by Westerners desperate for a good haircut and by Afghan women, who have a long and proud tradition of running their own beauty salons. Thus an idea was born. With the help of corporate and international sponsors, the Kabul Beauty School welcomed its first class in 2003. Well-meaning but, sometimes brazen, Rodriguez stumbled through language barriers, overstepped cultural customs, and constantly juggled the challenges of a postwar nation even as she learned how to empower her students to become their families' breadwinners by learning the fundamentals of coloring techniques, haircutting, and makeup.

