

Brenna's Recommendations

Book Group Extravaganza
Bellevue Regional Library
King County Library System
November 15, 2008

Fiction

Sonnet Lover by Carol Goodman

The death of a troubled student and the discovery of a mysterious manuscript, purportedly written by Shakespeare's Dark Lady, send Renaissance professor Rose Asher back to the Florentine villa where the poems were written. (Paperback forthcoming)

Ghost Orchid by Carol Goodman

Novelist Ellis Brooks travels to Bosco, an artists' retreat in upstate New York, to work on her first novel, which features the infamous 19th century owners of the estate, lumber-baron Milo Latham and his wife Aurora. The murders and abduction that brought about the downfall of the Lathams were never solved and as Ellis researches her book, she is drawn into the estate's sinister past.

Interred with their Bones by Jennifer Lee Carrell

Kate Stanley's mentor, Roz Howard, bequeaths a mysterious box to her just hours before she's murdered in a setup that mimics a Shakespearean scene. Prompted by Roz's gift, Kate begins to search for a lost Shakespearean play, but the murderer is following in her footsteps.

Book of Air and Shadows by Michael Gruber

The hidden, coded letters of a 17th century spy reveal the existence of a lost, controversial Shakespearean play and soon Albert Crosetti, the rare bookstore clerk who discovered them, and Jake Mishkin, the property-rights lawyer hired to help research them, are on a race against others, including the Russian mafia, who want to claim the play first.

Firemaster's Mistress by Christie Dickason

Firemaster Francis Quoynt, recruited by the British government to infiltrate Guy Fawkes' group of traitors, knows that he must do everything in his power to stop them enacting their plot, but his mission takes on unforeseen risks when he discovers that his lost lover, Kate, is one of the conspirators.

Cassandra and Jane by Jill Pitkeathley

Jane Austen and her sister Cassandra traded correspondence throughout the writer's life, most of which Cassandra burnt after Jane's death, presumably by Jane's request. Re-imagined here is the relationship between these famously devoted sisters and the lost chapters of their lives.

Snow Flower and the Secret Fan by Lisa See

In 19th century China, Lily and Snow Flower are matched as laotong, or “old sames”. Their youthful friendship grows via messages recorded on a fan and written in nu shu, the secret women’s writing, but soon the pressures of marriage, motherhood and changing social positions test their bond.

Peony in Love by Lisa See

In 17th century China, a tragic opera inspires Peony, a privileged, isolated young woman, to starve herself to death, but once she passes into the afterlife and learns the consequences of her decision, Peony tries to make amends as a “hungry ghost”, haunting those she left behind.

Beneath a Marble Sky by John Shors

The death of Mumtaz Mahal, the beloved wife of Shah Jahan, throws their country into strife as the grieving sultan abandons his duties to build her a monument, his sons fight for power and his daughter, trapped in a loveless marriage and in love with an unsuitable man, tries to keep everything together.

Nefertiti by Michelle Moran

As Amunhotep and Nefertiti attempt to overthrow the powerful priests of Amun, Mutnodjmet, Nefertiti’s younger sister, watches from the sidelines and hopes that their ambitions won’t lead to her family’s doom and the destruction of Egypt.

Nonfiction

Dreams of Trespass: tales of a harem girlhood by Fatima Mernissi

Mernissi, a Moroccan sociologist, explores the power of words, the boundaries of gender and the limitless reaches of imagination in this memoir of her childhood in 1940s Fez.

Will in the World: how Shakespeare became Shakespeare by Stephen Greenblatt

Shakespearean scholar Greenblatt explores the Bard’s life and times in vivid and meticulous detail, blending fact and speculation to fill in the missing gaps in Shakespeare’s life.