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Monroe Township Library

April 2025 (Starting Over)

The Year of Pleasures -by Berg, Elizabeth

FIC BERG

Betta Nolan moves to a small town after the death of her husband to try to begin anew. Pursuing a dream of a different kind of life, she is determined to find pleasure in her simply daily routines. Among those who help her in both expected and unexpected ways are the ten-year-old boy next door, three wild women friends from her college days, a twenty-year-old who is struggling to find his place in the world, and a handsome man who is ready for love.

From Strength to Strength -by Brooks, Arthur C

155.67 BRO

Many of us assume that the more successful we are, the less susceptible we become to the sense of professional and social irrelevance that often accompanies aging. But the truth is, the greater our achievements and our attachment to them, the more we notice our decline, and the more painful it is when it occurs.

What can we do, starting now, to make our older years a time of happiness, purpose, and yes, success?

At the height of his career at the age of 50, Arthur Brooks embarked on a seven-year journey to discover how to transform his future from one of disappointment over waning abilities into an opportunity for progress. *From Strength to Strength* is the result, a practical roadmap for the rest of your life.

Drawing on social science, philosophy, biography, theology, and eastern wisdom, as well as dozens of interviews with everyday men and women, Brooks shows us that true life success is well within our reach. By refocusing on certain priorities and habits that anyone can learn, such as deep wisdom, detachment from empty rewards, connection and service to others, and spiritual progress, we can set ourselves up for increased

happiness.

Read this book and you, too, can go from strength to strength.

The Forty Year Kiss -by Butler, Nickolas

FIC BUTLER

Charlie and Vivian parted ways after just four years of marriage. Too many problems, too many struggles. When Charlie returns to Wisconsin forty years later, he's not sure what he'll find. He is sure of one thing--he must try to reconnect with Vivian to pick up the broken pieces of their past. But forty years is a long time. It's forty years of other relationships, forty years of building new lives, and forty years of long-held regrets, mistakes, and painful secrets. An accomplished exploration of starting over and sunset triumph, *A Forty-Year Kiss* is a novel in the tradition of Kent Haruf's *Our Souls at Night*. This is a literary valentine that promises to become a love story for the ages.

Atomic Habit -by Clear, James

155.24 CLE

A leading expert on habit formation reveals practical strategies to form good habits, break bad ones, and master the tiny behaviors that lead to remarkable results.

Year of Magical Thinking -by Didion

B DIDION

Life changes fast. You sit down to dinner and life as you know it ends." These were among the first words Joan Didion wrote in January 2004. Her daughter was lying unconscious in an intensive care unit, a victim of pneumonia and septic shock. Her husband, John Gregory Dunne, was dead. The night before New Year's Eve, while they were sitting down to dinner, he suffered a massive and fatal coronary. The two had lived and worked side by side for nearly 40 years. The weeks and months that followed "cut loose any fixed idea I had about death, about illness, about probability and luck-- about marriage and children and memory-- about the shallowness of sanity, about life itself." In *The Year of Magical Thinking*, Didion explores with electric honesty and passion a private yet universal experience.

Float Plan (Beck Sisters #1) -by Doller, Trish

ROMANCE DOLLER

Critically acclaimed author Trish Doller's unforgettable and romantic adult debut about setting sail, starting over, and finding yourself. Since the loss of her fiancé, Anna has been shipwrecked by grief--until a reminder goes off about a trip they were supposed to take together. Impulsively, Anna goes to the sea on their sailboat, intending to complete the voyage alone. But after a treacherous night's sail, she realizes she can't do it by herself and hires Keane, a professional sailor, to help. Much like Anna, Keane is struggling with a very different future than the one he had planned. As romance rises with the tide, they discover that it's never too late to chart a new course. Trish Doller's unforgettable adult debut, *Float Plan*, reminds readers that starting over doesn't mean forgetting you can build a new home, right alongside the old.

Cold Comfort Farm- by Gibbons, Stella

FIC GIBBONS

In Gibbons's classic tale, a resourceful young heroine finds herself in the gloomy, overwrought world of a Hardy or Bronte novel and proceeds to organize everyone out of their romantic tragedies into the pleasures of normal life. Flora Poste, orphaned at 19, chooses to live with relatives at Cold Comfort Farm in Sussex, where cows are named Feckless, Aimless, Pointless, and Graceless, and the proprietors, the dour Starkadder family, are tyrannized by Flora's mysterious aunt, who controls the household from a locked room. Flora's confident and clever management of an alarming cast of eccentrics is only half the pleasure of this novel. The other half is Gibbons's wicked sendup of romantic cliches, from the mad woman in the attic to the druidical peasants with their West Country accents and mystical herbs.

The Husbands -by Gramazio, Holly

FIC GRAMAZIO

When Lauren returns home to her flat in London late one night, she is greeted at the door by her husband, Michael. There's only one problem—she's not married. She's never seen this man before in her life. But according to her friends, her much-improved decor, and the photos on her phone, they've been together for years.

As Lauren tries to puzzle out how she could be married to someone she can't remember meeting, Michael goes to the attic to change a lightbulb and abruptly disappears. In his place, a new man emerges, and a new, slightly altered life re-forms around her. Realizing that her attic is creating an infinite supply of husbands, Lauren confronts the question: If swapping lives is as easy as changing a lightbulb, how do you know you've taken the right path? When do you stop trying to do better and start actually living?

The Christie Affair- by Gramont, Nina de

FIC GRAMONT

Nina de Gramont's *The Christie Affair* is a beguiling novel of star-crossed lovers, heartbreak, revenge, and murder-and a brilliant re-imagining of one of the most talked-about unsolved mysteries of the twentieth century. Every story has its secrets. Every mystery has its motives. "A long time ago, in another country, I nearly killed a woman. It's a particular feeling, the urge to murder. It takes over your body so completely, it's like a divine force, grabbing hold of your will, your limbs, your psyche. There's a joy to it. In retrospect, it's frightening, but I daresay in the moment it feels sweet. The way justice feels sweet." The greatest mystery wasn't Agatha Christie's disappearance in those eleven infamous days, it's what she discovered. London, 1925: In a world of townhomes and tennis matches, socialites and shooting parties, Miss Nan O'Dea became Archie Christie's mistress, luring him away from his devoted and well-known wife, Agatha Christie. The question is, why? Why destroy another woman's marriage, why hatch a plot years in the making, and why murder? How was Nan O'Dea so intricately tied to those eleven mysterious days that Agatha Christie went missing?

The Life Impossible -by Haig, Matt

FIC HAIG

When retired math teacher Grace Winters is left a run-down house on a Mediterranean island by a long-lost friend, curiosity gets the better of her. She arrives in Ibiza with a one-way ticket, no guidebook and no plan. Among the rugged hills and golden beaches of the island, Grace searches for answers about her friend's life, and how it ended. What she uncovers is stranger than she could have dreamed. But to dive into this impossible truth, Grace must first come to terms with her past. Filled with wonder and wild adventure, this is a story of hope and the life-changing power of a new beginning.

The Great Alone -by Hannah, Kristin

FIC HANNAH

It is 1974 when Leni Allbright's impulsive father Ernt decides the family is moving to Alaska. But the Alaskan winter is just as unforgiving as Ernt, and life quickly becomes a struggle for survival.

The Painter- by Heller, Peter

FIC HELLER

Peter Heller, the celebrated author of the breakout best-seller *The Dog Stars*, returns with an achingly beautiful, wildly suspenseful second novel about an artist trying to outrun his past. Years ago, a well-known expressionist painter named Jim Stegner shot a man in a bar. The man lived, Jim served his time, and he has learned to live with the dark impulses that sometimes overtake him. Jim enjoys a quiet life in the valleys of Colorado. He works with a lovely model, he doesn't drink, he goes fly fishing in the evenings. His paintings fetch excellent prices at a posh gallery in Santa Fe. He is--if he can admit it--almost happy. One day, driving down a dirt road, Jim sees a man beating a small horse. Jim leaps out of the truck, tackles the man, and bloodies his nose. The man is Dell, a cruel hunting outfitter notorious among locals. Jim cannot shake his rage over the little horse. The next night, under a full moon, telling himself he is just going night fishing, he returns to the creek where Dell has his camp and kills him. As Jim tries to come to terms with what he has done, he must evade the police, navigate his own conscience, and escape the members of Dell's clan set on revenge. And he paints the whole time; trying to make sense of his actions. Traveling from the rough adobe cottages and rivers of Colorado to the bright streets and galleries of Santa Fe, aching with grief and transcendent with beauty, *The Painter* is a story about art and love and violence, and using the remnants of hardship to create a rich life.

Their Eyes Were Watching God -by Hurston, Zora Neale

FIC HURSTON

One of the most important and enduring books of the twentieth century, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* brings to life a Southern love story with the wit and pathos found only in the writing of Zora Neale Hurston. Out of print for almost thirty years—due largely to initial audiences' rejection of its strong black female protagonist—Hurston's

classic has since its 1978 reissue become perhaps the most widely read and highly acclaimed novel in the canon of African American literature.

If you lived here you'd be home by now : why we traded the commuting life for a little house on the prairie - by Ingraham, Christopher **070.92 ING**

The hilarious, charming, and candid story of Ingraham's decision to uproot his life and move his family to Red Lake Falls, Minnesota, population 1,400--the community he made famous as "the worst place to live in America" in a story he wrote for the Washington Post.

The Remains of the Day -by Ishiguro, Kazuo **FIC ISHIGURO**

This is Kazuo Ishiguro's profoundly compelling portrait of a butler named Stevens. Stevens, at the end of three decades of service at Darlington Hall, spending a day on a country drive, embarks as well on a journey through the past in an effort to reassure himself that he has served humanity by serving the "great gentleman," Lord Darlington. But lurking in his memory are doubts about the true nature of Lord Darlington's "greatness," and much graver doubts about the nature of his own life.

The Exiles -by Kline, Christina Baker **FIC KLINE**

Seduced by her employer's son, Evangeline, a naïve young governess in early nineteenth-century London, is discharged when her pregnancy is discovered and sent to the notorious Newgate Prison. After months in the fetid, overcrowded jail, she learns she is sentenced to "the land beyond the seas," Van Diemen's Land, a penal colony in Australia. Though uncertain of what awaits, Evangeline knows one thing: the child she carries will be born on the months-long voyage to this distant land. During the journey on a repurposed slave ship, the Medea, Evangeline strikes up a friendship with Hazel, a girl little older than her former pupils who was sentenced to seven years transport for stealing a silver spoon. Canny where Evangeline is guileless, Hazel—a skilled midwife and herbalist—is soon offering home remedies to both prisoners and sailors in return for a variety of favors. Though Australia has been home to Aboriginal people for more than 50,000 years, the British government in the 1840s considers its fledgling colony uninhabited and unsettled, and views the natives as an unpleasant nuisance. By the time the Medea arrives, many of them have been forcibly relocated, their land seized by white colonists. One of these relocated people is Mathinna, the orphaned daughter of the Chief of the Lowreenne tribe, who has been adopted by the new governor of Van Diemen's Land.

Nice Work, Nora November -by London, Julia **FIC LONDON**

Now that Nora is not dead, only one question remains: What does she want to do with her life? Nora November is alive-but she wasn't always. She was once clinically dead,

having spent several minutes underwater after a terrible surfing accident she doesn't remember. What she does remember from her time in a coma is her grandfather, who passed away over a year ago. And a beautiful garden. And the most delicious tomato she ever tasted. Now that she's awake again her life has been cleaved in two. In the Before, Nora lived like a ghost, drowning under the weight of her parents' expectations. In the After, she's determined to accomplish the things she left undone before she died. Her reverse bucket list is simple: She wants to learn to cook and to be a better older sister to Lacey. She wants to quit her terrible job as a personal injury lawyer at her dad's firm. She wants to bring Grandpa's now-neglected garden back to life. And she wants to find the guy she met in a corner store months ago—the one she never called but never stopped thinking about. As Nora's attempts at a new life prove disastrous at best, her mission to fulfill her reverse bucket list leads her to a reckoning with the truth she almost hid from herself.

Behold the Dreamers -by Mbue, Imbolo

FIC MBUE

Jende Jonga, a Cameroonian immigrant living in Harlem, has come to the United States to provide a better life for himself, his wife, Neni, and their six-year-old son. In the fall of 2007, Jende can hardly believe his luck when he lands a job as a chauffeur for Clark Edwards, a senior executive at Lehman Brothers. Clark demands punctuality, discretion, and loyalty—and Jende is eager to please. Clark's wife, Cindy, even offers Neni temporary work at the Edwardses' summer home in the Hamptons. With these opportunities, Jende and Neni can at last gain a foothold in America and imagine a brighter future.

However, the world of great power and privilege conceals troubling secrets, and soon Jende and Neni notice cracks in their employers' façades.

When the financial world is rocked by the collapse of Lehman Brothers, the Jongas are desperate to keep Jende's job—even as their marriage threatens to fall apart. As all four lives are dramatically upended, Jende and Neni are forced to make an impossible choice.

The Flatshare -by O'Leary, Beth

ROMANCE OLEARY

Entering a flatshare arrangement with a man on an opposite work shift, a heartbroken woman begins exchanging notes with the roommate she has never met and becomes his best friend, and possibly soulmate, through their correspondence.

When We Believed in Mermaids- by O'Neal, Barbara

FIC ONEAL

Josie Bianci was killed years ago on a train during a terrorist attack. Gone forever. It's what her sister, Kit, an ER doctor in Santa Cruz, has always believed. Yet all it takes is a few heart-wrenching seconds to upend Kit's world. Live coverage of a club fire in Auckland has captured the image of a woman stumbling through the smoke and debris. Her resemblance to Josie is unbelievable. And unmistakable. With it comes a flood of

emotions, grief, loss, and anger, that Kit finally has a chance to put to rest: by finding the sister who's been living a lie.

The Thursday Murder Club- by Osman, Richard MYS OSMAN

In a peaceful retirement village, four unlikely friends meet weekly in the Jigsaw Room to discuss unsolved crimes; together they call themselves The Thursday Murder Club. When a local developer is found dead with a mysterious photograph left next to the body, the friends suddenly find themselves in the middle of their first live case. They might be senior citizens, but they are cleverer than most. As the bodies begin to pile up, can our unorthodox but brilliant gang catch the killer, before it's too late?"

Where the Crawdads Sing -by Owens, Delia FIC OWENS

For years, rumors of the "Marsh Girl" have haunted Barkley Cove, a quiet town on the North Carolina coast. So, in late 1969, when handsome Chase Andrews is found dead, the locals immediately suspect Kya Clark, the so-called Marsh Girl. But Kya is not what they say. Sensitive and intelligent, she has survived for years alone in the marsh that she calls home, finding friends in the gulls and lessons in the sand. Then the time comes when she yearns to be touched and loved. When two young men from town become intrigued by her wild beauty, Kya opens herself to a new life—until the unthinkable happens.

Where the Crawdads Sing is at once an exquisite ode to the natural world, a heartbreaking coming-of-age story, and a surprising tale of possible murder. Owens reminds us that we are forever shaped by the children we once were, and that we are all subject to the beautiful and violent secrets that nature keeps.

Definitely Better Now -by Robinson, Ava FIC ROBINSON

A touching and deeply funny debut about starting over sober only to discover life's biggest messes are still waiting right where you left them.

The very last person anyone should worry about is Emma. Yes, hi, she's an alcoholic. But she's officially been sober for one entire year. That's twelve months of better health. Fifty-two whole weeks of focusing on nothing but her nine-to-five office job, group meetings, and avoiding the kind of bad decisions that previously left her awash in shame and regret. It's also been 365 days of not dating. And with her new dating profile, Emma, 26, of New York is ready to put herself back out there.

Except, was dating always this complicated? And did Emma's mother really have to choose now to move in with her new boyfriend? Being assigned to plan her office's holiday party feels like icing on the suddenly very overwhelming cake until her estranged father reappears with devastating news. Icing, meet cherry on top. But then there's Ben, the charming IT guy who, despite Emma's awkwardness and shortcomings, seems to maybe actually get her? Sobriety is turning out to be far from the flawless future Emma had once envisioned for herself, but as she allows herself to open up to

Ben and confront difficult past relationships, she's beginning to realize that taking things one day at a time might just be the perfectly imperfect path she's meant to be on. Bittersweet and darkly hilarious, Ava Robinson's debut novel about navigating sobriety and complicated family dynamics is witty, heartbreaking, and profoundly relatable.

Ladder of Years -by Tyler, Anne

FIC TYLER

The headlines are all the same: Beloved mother and wife Delia Grinstead was last seen strolling down the Delaware shore, wearing only a bathing suit and carrying a beach tote with five hundred dollars tucked inside. To the best of her family's knowledge, she has disappeared without a trace. But Delia didn't disappear. She ran.

Exhausted with her routine and everyone else's plans for her, Delia needed an out, a chance to make a new life for herself and to become a different person. The new Delia can let go of all the hurt and resentment that left her stuck in her past. As she eagerly sheds the pieces of herself, she no longer needs, Delia discovers feelings of passion and wonder she'd long since forgotten. The thrill of walking away from it all leads to a newfound sense of self and the feeling that she is, finally, the star of her own life story.

Beginners: The Joy and Transformative Power of Lifelong Learning.

-by Vanderbilt, Tom

158.1 VAN

Why do so many of us stop learning new skills as adults? Are we afraid to be bad at something? Have we forgotten the sheer pleasure of beginning from the ground up? Inspired by his young daughter's insatiable curiosity, Tom Vanderbilt embarks on a yearlong quest of learning—purely for the sake of learning. Rapturously singing Spice Girls songs in an amateur choir, losing games of chess to eight-year-olds, and dodging scorpions at a surf camp in Costa Rica, Vanderbilt tackles five main skills but learns so much more. Along the way, he interviews dozens of experts about the fascinating psychology and science behind the benefits of becoming an adult beginner and shows how anyone can get better at beginning again—and, more important, why they should take those first awkward steps. Funny, uplifting, and delightfully informative, *Beginners* is about how small acts of reinvention, at any age, can make life seem magical.

The Enchanted April- by Von Armin, Elizabeth

FIC VON ARNIM

Dedicated to all who ""appreciate wisteria and sunshine,"" *The Enchanted April* is Elizabeth Von Armin's dreamlike celebration of womanhood, friendship, and love. Published in 1922 to critical acclaim, *The Enchanted April* follows the story of four strangers: Mrs. Wilkins and Mrs. Arbuthnot, two housewives whose marriages have lost their spark; Mrs. Fisher, an elderly widow who longs for the days of her youth; and the beautiful socialite, Lady Caroline. Seeking a vacation and a desperately needed change of scenery, each woman answers an ad in the *Times* to rent a medieval castle for the month of April. Arriving at their beautiful temporary home in the picturesque country of

Italy, the women—both individually and apart—go on journeys of self-discovery, growing as friends and learning the joy and value of having a room of one's own. An immediate bestseller upon its initial publication and never out of print since, *The Enchanted April* has charmed and delighted readers for over a century with its lyrical prose and endearing characters. Since our inception in 2020, Mint Editions has kept sustainability and innovation at the forefront of our mission. Each and every Mint Edition title gets a fresh, professionally typeset manuscript and a dazzling new cover, all while maintaining the integrity of the original book. With thousands of titles in our collection, we aim to spotlight diverse public domain works to help them find modern audiences. Mint Editions celebrates a breadth of literary works, curated from both canonical and overlooked classics from writers around the globe.

Black Cake -by Wilkerson, Charmine

FIC WILKERSON

In present-day California, Eleanor Bennett's death leaves behind a puzzling inheritance for her two children, Byron and Benny: a black cake, made from a family recipe with a long history, and a voice recording. In her message, Eleanor shares a tumultuous story about a headstrong young swimmer who escapes her island home under suspicion of murder. The heartbreaking tale Eleanor unfolds, the secrets she still holds back, and the mystery of a long-lost child challenge everything the siblings thought they knew about their lineage and themselves.

Can Byron and Benny reclaim their once-close relationship, piece together Eleanor's true history, and fulfill her final request to "share the black cake when the time is right"? Will their mother's revelations bring them back together or leave them feeling more lost than ever?

Charmaine Wilkerson's debut novel is a story of how the inheritance of betrayals, secrets, memories, and even names can shape relationships and history. Deeply evocative and beautifully written, *Black Cake* is an extraordinary journey through the life of a family changed forever by the choices of its matriarch.

The Rainfall Market -by Yu, Yǒng-gwang

SF YU

If you could swap your life for a better one, which would you choose? On the outskirts of Rainbow Town, there is an old, abandoned house. They say that if you send a letter detailing your misfortunes there, you could receive a ticket. If you bring this ticket to the house on the first day of the rainy season, you'll be granted entrance into the mysterious Rainfall Market—where you can choose to completely change your life. No one is more surprised than Serin when she receives a ticket. Lonely and with no real prospects for a future, Serin ventures to the market, determined to create a better life for herself. There, she meets a magical cat companion named Issha and they search through bookstores, perfumeries, and magical realms while Serin tries to determine what her perfect life will look like. The catch? Serin only has one week to find her happiness or be doomed to vanish into the market forever. And all the while, a shadow follows quietly behind them...

