2014 National Book Award for Fiction Finalists

October 15, 2014 was an exciting day in the literary world. The 2014 National Book Award finalists were announced. As noted on their website, www.nationalbook.org, “The mission of the National Book Foundation and the National Book Awards is to celebrate the best of American literature, to expand its audience, and to enhance the cultural value of great writing in America.”

Of particular interest to me is the fiction category, as I am mostly a fiction reader, only occasionally perusing a biography or narrative nonfiction work. I was excited to learn which of the five titles originally compiled on the Longlist would advance to the final round. Below are the top 5 Fiction titles. A winner in each of the four categories: Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry, and Young People’s Literature, will be announced on November 19, 2014 and a $10,000.00 prize awarded to each.

An Unnecessary Woman – Rabih Alameddine
“An obsessive introvert in Beirut, eschewed by her family and neighbors for her divorced status and lack of religious reverence, quietly translates favorite books into Arabic while struggling with her aging body, until an unthinkable disaster threatens what little life remains to her.”

All the Light We Cannot See – Anthony Doerr
“A blind French girl on the run from the German occupation and a German orphan-turned-Resistance tracker struggle with respective beliefs after meeting on the Brittany coast.”

Redeployment – Phil Klay
“A collection of short stories by a former Marine captain and Iraq veteran focuses on the complexities of life for soldiers on the front lines and after, exploring themes ranging from brutality and faith to guilt and survival.”

Station Eleven – Emily St. John Mandel
“The sudden death of a Hollywood actor during a production of "King Lear" marks the beginning of the world's dissolution in a story told at various past and future times from the perspectives of the actor and four of his associates.”

Lila – Marilynne Robinson
“Abandoning her homeless existence to become a minister’s wife, Lila reflects on her hardscrabble life on the run with a canny young drifter and her efforts to reconcile her painful past with her husband’s gentle Christian worldview.”

*All summaries provided by the Publisher.

If your Book Club would like to recommend a book to our readers, please send us an email at Readersservices

www.syossetlibrary.org

“Read the best books first, or you may not have a chance to read them at all.”
— Henry David Thoreau
**New Additions to our Book Club in a Bag Collection**

**Americanah** - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie  
*One of The New York Times's Ten Best Books of the Year*  
*Winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction*  
*An NPR "Great Reads" Book, a Chicago Tribune Best Book, a Washington Post Notable Book*

Ifemelu and Obinze are young and in love when they depart military-ruled Nigeria for the West. Beautiful, self-assured Ifemelu heads for America, where despite her academic success, she is forced to grapple with what it means to be black for the first time. Quiet, thoughtful Obinze had hoped to join her, but with post-9/11 America closed to him, he instead plunges into a dangerous, undocumented life in London. Fifteen years later, they reunite in a newly democratic Nigeria, and reignite their passion—for each other and for their homeland.

**The Art Forger** - B.A. Shapiro

Almost twenty-five years after the infamous art heist at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum—still the largest unsolved art theft in history—one of the stolen Degas paintings is delivered to the Boston studio of a young artist. Claire Roth has entered into a Faustian bargain with a powerful gallery owner by agreeing to forge the Degas in exchange for a one-woman show in his renowned gallery. But as she begins her work, she starts to suspect that this long-missing masterpiece—the very one that had been hanging at the Gardner for one hundred years—may itself be a forgery. *The Art Forger* is a thrilling novel about seeing—and not seeing—the secrets that lie beneath the canvas.

**The Rosie Project** - Graeme Simsion

A socially awkward genetics professor who has never been on a second date sets out to find the perfect wife, but instead finds Rosie Jarman, a fiercely independent barmaid who is on a quest to find her biological father.

Let us provide everything you need for a successful book discussion. We can supply you with 10 copies of the book and a discussion binder. The binder contains discussion questions, biographical information and critical material. Please contact Readers’ Services, 921-7161, ext 239 to reserve a book for your Book Club.

All summaries from the publishers.  
— Evelyn Hershkowitz, Readers’ Services Librarian

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**Veterans Day...Honoring All Those Who Served**

Tuesday, November 11th is Veterans Day. Here is a list of fiction books that explore different aspects of war that your book club may want to explore.

- *Sand Queen* by Helen Benedict
- *All the Light we cannot See* by Anthony Doerr
- *Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk* by Ben Fountain
- *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway
- *Unbroken* by Laura Hillenbrand
- *The Things They Carried* by Tim O’Brien
- *The Yellow Birds* by Kevin Powers
- *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque
- *The Lotus Eaters* by Tatjana Soli

“Our debt to the heroic men and valiant women in the service of our country can never be repaid. They have earned our undying gratitude. America will never forget their sacrifices.”

— Harry S. Truman

— Lisa Jones Readers’ Services Librarian