From Books to Oscars

On February 24, 2013 the 85th Academy Awards will be broadcast live from the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, California. Of the 9 movies nominated in the Best Picture category, 5 of them are based on books. Your book club may want to select one of the titles below for a monthly book discussion and then compare the book to the Oscar nominated film version.

**Argo:** Seven nominations including Best Picture is based on the book *The Master of Disguise: My Secret Life in the CIA* by Antonio J. Mendez and *Argo: How the CIA and Hollywood Pulled Off the Most Audacious Rescue in History* by Antonio Mendez and Matt Baglio which was published September 2012 to coincide with the movie’s release.

**Les Miserables:** Eight nominations including Best Picture is based on the book of the same title by Victor Hugo.

**Life of Pi:** Eleven nominations including Best Picture is based on the book of the same title by Yann Martel.

**Lincoln:** Twelve nominations including Best Picture is based on the book *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* by Doris Kearns Goodwin.

**The Silver Linings Playbook:** Eight nominations including Best Picture is based on the book of the same title by Matthew Quick.

In addition to the above mentioned titles, 4 additional movies nominated for an Oscar in categories other than Best Picture, were also based on books.

**Anna Karenina:** Four nominations including Best Cinematography is based on the classic of the same title by Leo Tolstoy.

**Hitchcock:** Nominated for Best Makeup and Hairstyling is based on the book *Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of Psycho* by Stephen Rebello.

**The Hobbit: an Unexpected Journey:** Three nominations including Best Visual Effects is based on the book *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien.

**Kon-Tiki:** Nominated for Best Foreign Feature is based on the book *Kon-Tiki: Across the Pacific by Raft* by Thor Heyerdahl.

The Syosset Public Library owns all the above mentioned titles and they are available for patrons to check out or reserve. Here’s to the 85th Academy Awards! Hope your favorite movie (or book) takes home the gold statue.

-Lisa Jones, Readers’ Services Librarian
City of Women by David R. Gillham

Berlin 1943 Kaspar Schroeder spends his days and nights fighting for his life. As the enemy inches closer, Germany pushes on. Kaspar has his orders, while relatively safe at home in Berlin, Frau Sigrid Schroeder secretly negotiates her own battlefield.

City of Women, published by Amy Einhorn Books/Putnam, was released in August of 2012. Immediately receiving starred reviews from both Publishers Weekly and Kirkus Reviews, City of Women quickly gained recognition as one of the best books of 2012. Within its’ nearly 400 pages, author David R. Gillham, engages the reader by creating a soulful illustration of wartime Berlin. Through his vivid descriptions and poetic imagery, readers are able to envision the world around them: the sights of burned out buildings, the acrid smell of smoke, as well as the palpable relief of residents once the enemy bombers have passed.

Gillham introduces characters that are clearly drawn, each and every one harboring their own secrets; thus affecting every action, every movement and every word. The main character, Sigrid Schroder, learns how to cope in the face of tragedy, as well as how to make her life feel worthwhile in the very worst of circumstances. Publisher’s Weekly notes, “…Gillham’s transcendent prose … powerfully drawn characters, and multilayered dilemmas make his first literary effort a powerful revelation.”

The paperback version is slated to be released on May 7, 2013. Mark your calendars. A powerful and dynamic read for book clubs.
- Jackie Ranaldo, Head of Readers’ Services

If your Book Club would like to recommend a book to our readers, please send us an email at Readersservices@syossetlibrary.org and we will share it in a future newsletter.

“When I have a house of my own, I shall be miserable if I have not an excellent library.” - Jane Austen

A Downton Abbey Book Club Meeting
One of the more popular series on television at the moment is Downton Abbey. Viewers have been captivated by the activities of the family upstairs and servants downstairs on this PBS Masterpiece presentation. If several or perhaps all of the members of your book club have been tuning in to watch, why not have a Downton Abbey book discussion?

Downton Abbey is filmed at Highclere Castle, the real life ancestral home of the Earls of Carnarvon. One good book choice might be Lady Almina and the Real Downton Abbey: The Lost Legacy of Highclere Castle by Fiona, The Countess of Carnarvon, which “tells the story behind Highclere Castle, the real-life inspiration for…Downton Abbey, and the life of one of its most famous inhabitants, Lady Almina, the 5th Countess of Carnarvon” and her family.

Your book club could discuss and contrast the fictional on-screen account with the story of what really happened in the lives of the actual inhabitants of the castle.

Perhaps your members are more interested in the “downstairs” side of the story, in which case you might try Below Stairs: the Classic Kitchen Maid’s Memoir That Inspired Upstairs, Downstairs and Downton Abbey. Or, if fiction is your club’s preference, there are many titles available with storylines concerning themes similar to those dealt with in the show. Ask any of the Readers’ Services librarians to help you find and choose one just right for your group.

- Sonia Grgas, Readers’ Services Librarian

A book club meeting would not be complete without refreshments. A Downton Abbey themed discussion would be just the place to have Afternoon Tea - even if your meeting is at another time of day! The Unofficial Downton Abbey Cookbook by Emily Ansara Baines has many appropriate recipes: try the Sweet Cream Scones or the Classic Cucumber Sandwiches.