Author Spotlight: Ellen Feldman

Author Ellen Feldman visited the Library on Thursday, February 14 to discuss the writing of her newest release Next to Love. After having discussed Next to Love at our January Afternoon Book discussion, patrons were eager to hear more from the very person who penned the ambitious World War II tale. Ms. Feldman provided historical background and her research methods. She also discussed the inspiration behind her storyline and the creation, as well as the motivations of her characters. It was an entertaining and enlightening afternoon. Luckily, for those of you who have already read Next to Love, Ellen Feldman has three previously released novels perfect for discussion, they are all available at the Library.

Scottsboro “When nine black youths are falsely accused of sexual assault and other crimes in 1931 Alabama, a young journalist struggles to save them from being sentenced to death, an effort that is complicated by the shifting testimony of a key witness and the journalist's own past demons.”

The Boy Who Loved Anne Frank “A fictionalized account of the post-war life of Peter, who was ensconced in a secret annex with Anne Frank and their families, follows his survival of the Holocaust, his relocation to America, his family and career successes, and his embittered memories upon the publication of Anne's diary.”

Lucy “A fictional account of FDR's romance with Eleanor's social secretary, Lucy Mercer, follows their pre-World War I affair, its impact on his marriage, and FDR and Mercer's re-acquaintance years later as he prepared for an unprecedented third term.”

Ms. Feldman is eager to discuss her novels with your own book club. She is willing to have a call-in to your discussion or connect via Skype. You can contact author Ellen Feldman through her website: http://www.ellenfeldman.com/

- Jackie Ranaldo, Head of Readers’ Services
The Book Club Insider

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New Book Club in a Bag

Unorthodox: The Scandalous Rejection of My Hasidic Roots by Deborah Feldman has been added to our Book Club in a Bag collection.

“The child of a mentally disabled father and a mother who abandoned the community while her daughter was still a toddler, Deborah was raised by her strictly religious grandparents, Bubby and Zeidy. Along with a rotating cast of aunts and uncles, they enforced customs with a relentless emphasis on rules that governed everything from what Deborah could wear and to whom she could speak, to what she was allowed to read. As she grew from an inquisitive little girl to an independent-minded young woman, stolen moments reading about the empowered literary characters of Jane Austen and Louisa May Alcott helped her to imagine an alternative way of life. She had no idea how to seize this dream that seemed to beckon to her from the skyscrapers of Manhattan, but she was determined to find a way. It wasn’t until she had a child at nineteen that Deborah realized more than just her own future was at stake, and that, regardless of the obstacles, she would have to forge a path – for herself and her son – to happiness and freedom.” (from the publisher)

“Never trust anyone who has not brought a book with them” — Lemony Snicket (aka Daniel Handler)

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.

Please contact Readers’ Services, 921-7161, ext 241 to reserve this or any other book for your Book Club.

Looking Ahead for Your Next Pick

Do you need a book for your book club to discuss in April? Each month of the year has many designations and holidays within it. Your April book choice could easily be tied into one of these:

April Fool’s Day
Pick a book that is funny and satirical like Catch-22 by Joseph Heller. This now classic is regarded as one of the funniest novels of all time. The story of World War II pilot Yossarian who battles against his own army as well as the enemy is sure to lead to a lively discussion. Or perhaps try Jonathan Tropper’s latest One Last Thing Before I Go, which is a zany yet heartbreaking novel about a broken family’s struggles to come together under very trying circumstances.

Earth Day
Barbara Kingsolver frequently deals with environmental themes. Her newest novel Flight Behavior, set in Appalachia, deals with the effects of global warming. Her memoir Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life tells of the year her family ate only that which they grew themselves or was produced locally. Both would be just the thing for an Earth Day themed discussion.

National Poetry Month
Switch gears by reading a book of poetry. You could try an anthology like Essential Pleasures: A New Anthology of Poems to Read Aloud edited by Robert Pinsky or tackle a classic like Long Island’s own Walt Whitman’s Leaves of Grass. Or your book club members could all pick one or two favorite poems to share with the rest of the group.

- Sonia Grgas, Readers’ Services Librarian