From the Director’s Desk

Choosing a Book to Read Isn’t Always That Easy

For all of my life, I’ve been an avid reader. As a child, I devoured entire series of books - Little House on the Prairie, The Littles, Nancy Drew and The Hardy Boys, The Boxcar Children. As a young mom, I went through years-long phases of Danielle Steel and John Grisham. About three years ago, I saw the newest release of a murder mystery series by Linda Castillo in a book display at the library. It only made sense to me to delve into the life of formerly-Amish-now-police-chief, Kate Burkholder. It’s a series, right? I devoured the first eleven books in about three months and couldn’t wait for the release of subsequent books in the series! I’ve also enjoyed bouts of Emily Giffin, Jodi Picoult, and now Colleen Hoover, who has been really popular at our library for the past year.

I think I’ve always found comfort in reading a series of books or sticking with the same author or genre. Maybe it’s that I’m not adventurous or a risk taker in my reading. Perhaps, I’m simply lazy and don’t take the time to research other possibilities or am too embarrassed to ask fellow readers for recommendations. There have to be thousands of authors and hundreds of thousands of books in our physical and virtual world. Right? So why do I limit myself to specific authors?

I currently lead the adult book club at AML, and it’s been an amazing experience for me. Each month, I choose a book, request multiple copies for club members, read the book, research discussion questions, and meet with the group to talk about it. All of us enjoy the same genres, so it shouldn’t be difficult for me to choose a book that fits within that parameter. But it is! Not only is it difficult to choose a book that everyone will “like”, but, remember, I tend to choose books by the same authors or that are a part of a series. I ask month after month for recommendations from other members or if someone else would simply choose the book for our group, but my requests are always met with the same response. “Nope!”

In the last three years, our group has read almost 30 books and explored an equal number of authors. Yes, we’ve read one by Colleen Hoover, John Grisham, and the first in the Kate Burkholder series. But we’ve ventured into so many other authors, too. We’ve explored other genres as well, including biographies, historical fiction, and, last month, science fiction! I have to admit, and, I’m sure that others will, too, that not all of those chosen have been favorites. And I know that all of us, me included, would even admit that there have been one or two books that each has not finished because it simply didn’t meet our needs. But at least each of us were willing to take a risk and try something new.

If you’re not busy on the last Monday of each month (even on Memorial Day this month) at 6:30 p.m., will you consider joining us as we read and discuss Jodi Picoult’s 19 Minutes? And when you do, perhaps you can recommend a good book!

Albertson Memorial Library

Albany, WI