

Summer Reading Book Recommendations
Kris Wiley
The News-Review

As I work my way through Roseburg Public Library's Summer Reading Program reading log, I am discovering new authors and great books worth sharing.

"Murder at Gulls Nest" by Jess Kidd is a satisfying whodunit that introduces Nora Breen, a former nun-turned-amateur detective in 1950s England. Nora left her order, ostensibly to track down a missing friend but also for reasons that don't completely reveal themselves.

Nora arrives at Gore-on-Sea and settles in at Gulls Nest, a boarding house full of characters and the last place her friend was seen. It soon becomes more than a missing persons case when a couple of the residents die, testing Nora's ability to unravel complicated motivations.

Fans of character-driven mysteries by Ann Cleeves, Louise Penny and Kate Atkinson may enjoy this first entry in a planned series. Nora is a complex, likeable protagonist, and I especially look forward to her burgeoning partnership – professional and personal – with Detective Inspector Rideout.

The audiobook, narrated by Siobhan McSweeney and available on the CloudLibrary and Libby digital platforms, was especially good.

I always look forward to a new book from Emma Donoghue, author of "Room" and "The Pull of the Stars" among many other novels and collections, and her latest is another winner.

"The Paris Express" is a historical novel based on an 1895 train crash at Paris' Montparnasse station. Donoghue infuses the story with people who were on the train, other real-life folks who could have been on the train and made-up characters to fill in the plot. (She explains her research and literary license in an author's note.)

The narrative begins on the Normandy coast, and the reader is treated to an assortment of perspectives – from railroad employees to politicians on their way to the seat of government to the young woman who has a bomb in her lunchbox and anarchy on her mind – as the train journeys to its dramatic conclusion.

Finally, I'm a Fredrik Backman super fan. The Swede's translated novels often feature characters who live on the margins, have the biggest hearts and navigate circumstances aligned against them. Every book is an emotional rollercoaster, and I can't get enough.

His latest, "My Friends," is about art and friendship. A famous artist is dying, and his last wish is to buy his first painting, which is up for sale at auction. While the artist's friend

Ted makes the purchase, the artist meets a teenager named Louisa, sees her drawings and recognizes her talent. The artist's dying wish is that Ted give her the famous painting because Louisa is "one of us."

Ted and Louisa have an eventful train trip to Ted's hometown, and those chapters are interspersed with Ted's recollections of the year he turned 15 and all that happened with his three best friends.

If you like TJ Klune, Rachel Joyce or Mike Gayle, you might want to give Backman a chance. I don't think you can go wrong with any of his books, but my favorite is "Beartown."

This Week's Library Events

Monday, July 7-Saturday, July 12, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. - StoryWalk® at Micelli Park

Tuesday, July 8, 10 a.m. – Grab-and-go kids craft kits while supplies last

Tuesday, July 8, 1 p.m. - Comedy for the Kids/Comedia para los niños presented by Angel Ocasio

Tuesday, July 8, 6:30 p.m. – Online Book Group (email kwiley@roseburgor.gov for the Zoom link)

Wednesday, July 9, 10:30 a.m. at Stewart Park Pavilion – Storytime with Aurora

Thursday, July 10, 1-2:30 p.m. – Teen program: melty beads

Friday, July 11, 10:30 a.m. at Stewart Park Pavilion – Children's program: nature journals