



4/9/19* **Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis** by J. D. Vance (2016, 257 pages)

Hosted by Toni

*Please note another date change

From a former marine and Yale Law School graduate, a powerful account of growing up in a poor Rust Belt town that offers a broader, probing look at the struggles of America's white working class

Hillbilly Elegy is a passionate and personal analysis of a culture in crisis—that of white working-class Americans. The decline of this group, a demographic of our country that has been slowly disintegrating over forty years, has been reported on with growing frequency and alarm, but has never before been written about as searingly from the inside. J. D. Vance tells the true story of what a social, regional, and class decline feels like when you were born with it hung around your neck.

The Vance family story begins hopefully in postwar America. J. D.'s grandparents were "dirt poor and in love," and moved north from Kentucky's Appalachia region to Ohio in the hopes of escaping the dreadful poverty around them. They raised a middle-class family, and eventually their grandchild (the author) would graduate from Yale Law School, a conventional marker of their success in achieving generational upward mobility.

But as the family saga of Hillbilly Elegy plays out, we learn that this is only the short, superficial version. Vance's grandparents, aunt, uncle, sister, and, most of all, his mother, struggled profoundly with the demands of their new middle-class life, and were never able to fully escape the legacy of abuse, alcoholism, poverty, and trauma so characteristic of their part of America. Vance piercingly shows how he himself still carries around the demons of their chaotic family history.

A deeply moving memoir with its share of humor and vividly colorful figures, Hillbilly Elegy is the story of how upward mobility really feels. And it is an urgent and troubling meditation on the loss of the American dream for a large segment of this country.



5/13/19 **The Hundred-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out of the Window and Disappeared** by Jonas Jonasson (2012, 396 pages)

Hosted by Kimm

After a long and eventful life, Allan Karlsson ends up in a nursing home, believing it to be his last stop. The only problem is that he's still in good health. A big celebration is in the works for his 100th birthday, but Allan really isn't interested (and he'd like a bit more control over his alcohol consumption), so he decides to escape.

He climbs out the window in his slippers and embarks on a hilarious and entirely unexpected journey. It would be the adventure of a lifetime for anyone else, but Allan has a larger-than-life backstory: he has not only witnessed some of the most important events of the 20th century, but actually played a key role in them. Quirky and utterly unique, *The 100-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out the Window and Disappeared* has charmed readers across the world.

9/9/19 **Life After Life** by Kate Atkinson (2013, 531 pages)

Hosted by Judy

What if you could live again and again, until you got it right?

On a cold and snowy night in 1910, Ursula Todd is born to an English banker and his wife. She dies before she can draw her first breath. On that same cold and snowy night, Ursula Todd is born, lets out a lusty wail, and embarks upon a life that will be, to say the least, unusual. For as she grows, she also dies, repeatedly, in a variety of ways, while the young century marches on towards its second cataclysmic world war.

Does Ursula's apparently infinite number of lives give her the power to save the world from its inevitable destiny? And if she can - will she?

10/14/19 TBA

Hosted by Dale & Dana



11/11/19 **Where the Crawdads Sing** by Delia Owens(2018, 325 pages)
Hosted by Sheryl

For years, rumors of the “Marsh Girl” have haunted Barkley Cove, a quiet town on the North Carolina coast. So in late 1969, when handsome Chase Andrews is found dead, the locals immediately suspect Kya Clark, the so-called Marsh Girl. But Kya is not what they say. Sensitive and intelligent, she has survived for years alone in the marsh that she calls home, finding friends in the gulls and lessons in the sand. Then the time comes when she yearns to be touched and loved. When two young men from town become intrigued by her wild beauty, Kya opens herself to a new life—until the unthinkable happens.

Perfect for fans of Barbara Kingsolver and Karen Russell, *Where the Crawdads Sing* is at once an exquisite ode to the natural world, a heartbreaking coming-of-age story, and a surprising tale of possible murder. Owens reminds us that we are forever shaped by the children we once were, and that we are all subject to the beautiful and violent secrets that nature keeps.