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The American Library in Paris

ESTABLISHED 1920

e-Libris 19 January 2021

In this message:

- [Book Award winner](#)
- [Visiting Fellowship: now accepting applications](#)
- [New Book Group: Hemingway in Paris](#)
- [Programs for adults](#)
- [Programs for kids and teens](#)
- [New Year's resolutions](#)
- [Reading recommendations from staff](#)
- [Pandemonium U programs](#)
- [Donate to the Library](#)

In the event that this *e-Libris* is cut short by your email service, please click the link at the bottom of the email to see the newsletter in its entirety.



Curfew Updates:

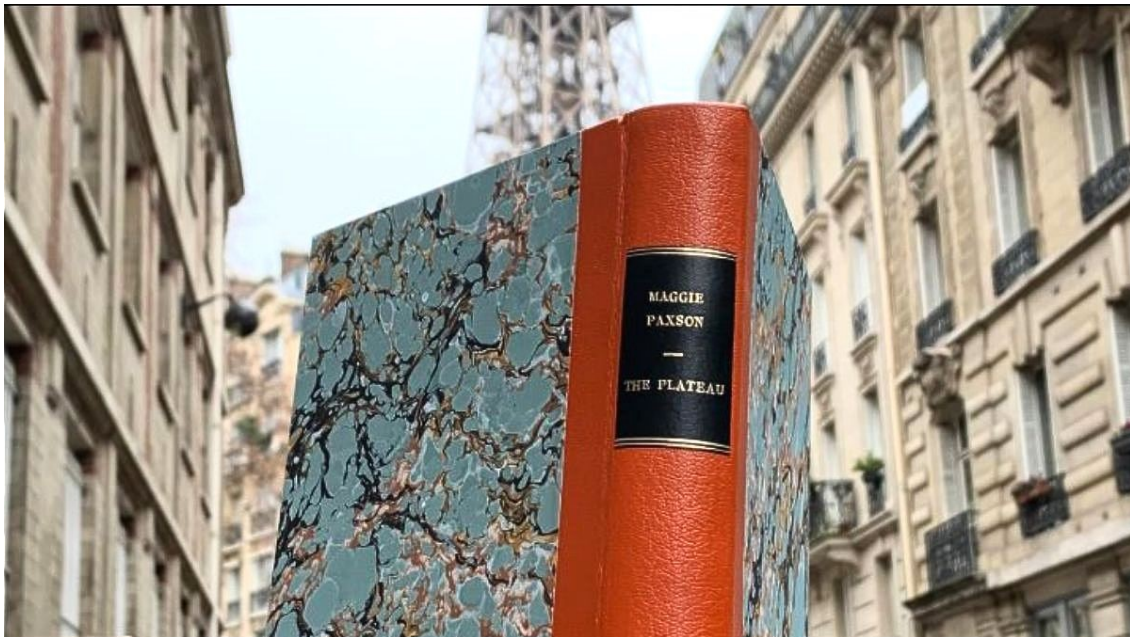
As you know, all of France is currently under curfew starting at 18h00 every evening. The Library will be open earlier on the weekends for your convenience.

Tue–Fri: 10h–18h | Sat: 9h30–18h | Sun: 12h–18h | Mon: Closed

All programs continue virtually.

2020 Book Award Winner:
Maggie Paxson for *The Plateau*

Honoring literature. Interpreting France.



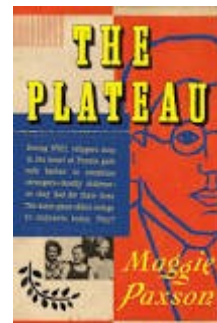
It is with great pleasure that we announce the winner of the 2020 American Library in Paris Book Award. Congratulations to Maggie Paxson for her book *The Plateau*.

Paxson's book is lauded by the Book Award jury as "a work of moral imagination, literary skill, depth, breadth, and passion [that] explores a small pocket of rural Southwest France, the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon, whose community took in Jewish refugees from the 1930s through the Holocaust and which today houses one of France's few centers for asylum seekers."

To watch the Book Award ceremony, recorded live on 14 January, and hear Paxson's moving and timely acceptance speech, check out the Library's [YouTube channel](#). To find out more about the winning author, as well as the other books shortlisted for the 2020 Award, please visit our [website](#).

The Book Award ceremony is the Library's most significant donor appreciation event of the year. If you haven't donated this year and you would like to join the hundreds of supporters who have made a contribution in 2020, please consider a gift.

The Book Award is supported by generous funding from the Florence Gould Foundation.



[Donate](#)

2021–2022 Visiting Fellowships: Now Accepting Applications

We are now accepting applications for our Visiting Fellowship program for writers wishing to secure a residency in fall 2021 or spring 2022.

The deadline for applications is 1 April 2021.

The Fellowship offers writers and researchers an opportunity to pursue a creative project in Paris for a month or longer while participating actively in the life of the American Library. International applicants are encouraged, and you do not need to be American to apply.

Please visit our [Fellowship page](#) for more information, including our statement about awarding virtual Visiting Fellowships.

New Book Group: Hemingway in Paris

Spots available—sign up now!



Ernest Hemingway, Sylvia Beach (third from left) and others outside Shakespeare and Co. in 1926. Photograph: Collection Lausat / Keystone France / Cam

Much like books, paintings can be read, and, perhaps, they can also be written. Ernest Hemingway wrote of his frequent visits to Paul Cézanne at the Musée du Luxembourg, “I was learning very much from him but I was not articulate enough to explain it to anyone. Besides it was a secret.”

This book group will ignite discussion about the reciprocal relationship between Hemingway’s writing and the art he was exposed to in Paris. Weather and health regulations permitting, the group will visit several of Hemingway’s haunts.

Dates: Saturdays 16h00–17h30

Led by Precious Brown

For more information about this and other book groups, visit our website's [book groups page](#). Please [fill out our form](#) to sign up for groups currently accepting members.

Programs for Adults

All programs, including book groups, workshops, and *Evenings with an Author* sponsored by GRoW @ Annenberg, will continue virtually for the present time.

JOIN US TONIGHT

Evenings with an Author: Richard Layard

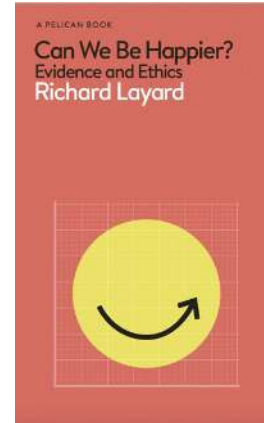
Tuesday 19 January at 19h30

Join our very special *Evening* with labor economist Professor Lord Richard Layard. His book *Can We Be Happier? Evidence and Ethics* argues that economic growth, however desirable, will not solve all our problems. Instead, we need a philosophy and a science which encompasses a much fuller range of human need and experience. Layard asserts that the goal for a society must be the greatest possible all-round happiness, and shows how each of us can become more effective creators of happiness, both as citizens and in our own organizations.

As one of the first economists to work on happiness, Professor Lord Layard is currently studying how better mental health could improve our social and economic life. We are honored to virtually welcome him to the Library this evening.

Free and open to the public via Zoom.

[RSVP required](#) to receive meeting details and password.



Evenings with an Author: Fiona Sze-Lorrain

Tuesday 26 January at 19h30

Fiona Sze-Lorrain is a poet who works across genres and artistic expressions, as well as more than three languages and cultures. In this reading, she will present poems from her latest collection, *Rain in Plural*, and her new translations of contemporary Chinese-language and American poets. She will also discuss the role and aesthetics of poetry beyond language/culture in a seemingly globalized yet politically fragile world, and the relationship between her writing, music, art, and life.

Free and open to the public via Zoom.

[RSVP required](#) to receive meeting details and password.



Evenings with an Author: V. E. Schwab

Wednesday 27 January at 19h30

V. E. Schwab is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of more than twenty books, including the internationally acclaimed *Shades of Magic* series, the *Villains* series, and the *Cassidy Blake* series. Her latest novel, *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*, set to be adapted into a feature film, follows the title character across centuries and continents, history and art, as she learns how far she will go to leave her mark on the world.

Free and open to the public via Zoom.

[RSVP required](#) to receive meeting details and password.



[Evenings with an Author: Stephen Clarke](#)

Tuesday 2 February at 19h30

Join us as local favorite Stephen Clarke presents his latest novel, *The Spy Who Inspired Me*. It is April 1944, just before D-Day. A young woman spy, Margaux Lynd, has to go undercover into occupied France to find missing agents in the Resistance. Unfortunately she is lumbered with a male sidekick, a suave naval officer called Ian Lemming. He thinks occupied France is dirty and dangerous and wants to go back to his office in the Admiralty, but she has to drag him along while teaching him all the tricks of real wartime spy craft.

Free and open to the public via Zoom.

[RSVP required](#) to receive meeting details and password.



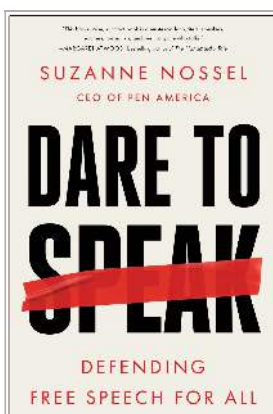
[Evenings with an Author: Susan Herrmann Loomis](#)

Wednesday 3 February at 19h30

Attend a virtual talk with chef and author Susan Herrmann Loomis as she introduces her new book, *Plat du Jour*. The spirit of the *plat du jour*, the dish of the day, is all about simplicity, seasonal ingredients, and joyful time at the table. It's also about the history of France, and there are historical tidbits sprinkled throughout the book which illuminate and anchor the recipes. Whether it's boeuf bourguignon, poule au pot, or a simple salade niçoise, the French classics in *Plat du Jour* are made for the home cook.

Free and open to the public via Zoom.

[RSVP required](#) to receive meeting details and password.



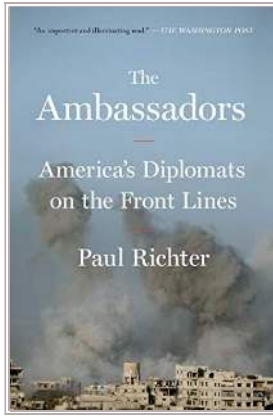
[Evenings with an Author: Suzanne Nossel](#)

Tuesday 9 February at 19h30

Online trolls and fascist chat groups. Controversies over campus lectures. Cancel culture versus censorship. The daily hazards and debates surrounding free speech dominate headlines and fuel social media storms. In *Dare To Speak*, Suzanne Nossel, a leading voice in support of free expression, delivers a vital, necessary guide to maintaining democratic debate that is open, free-wheeling, but at the same time respectful of the rich diversity of backgrounds and opinions in a changing country.

Free and open to the public via Zoom.

[RSVP required](#) to receive meeting details and password.



Evenings with an Author: Paul Richter

Wednesday 10 February at 19h30

Join us for an evening with Paul Richter as he introduces his new book, *The Ambassadors*, the story of a small circle of career U.S. Ambassadors who served as Washington's top troubleshooters in the greater Middle East in the tumultuous decade and a half after the 9/11 attacks. Thrust into war and upheaval, these diplomats took on far more than most envoys, organizing new governments, brokering political deals between warring blocs, and overseeing military operations. They served as another line of national defense, often at the risk of their own lives.

Free and open to the public via Zoom.

[RSVP required](#) to receive meeting details and password.



Past programs are on YouTube, including the 2020 American Library in Paris Book Award Ceremony, Rachel Mesch, a panel on technology and ethics, Deyan Sudjic, and Amor Towles.



Listen to our podcast, Evenings with an Author, available wherever you get your podcasts.



Visit our Facebook page for information about upcoming virtual events and Evenings with an Author sponsored by GRoW @ Annenberg.

Programming for Kids and Teens



Young readers are invited to stop in and preview the expanded Children's Library on the ground floor. Our Children's and Teens' Services librarians and volunteers have been preparing for months, and while there are still finishing touches to be put in place, we welcome you to discover this beautiful new space. Be one of the first to nestle in for a cozy read!

CHILDREN'S EVENTS

Story Hour

(ages 3–5)

Wednesday 20 January at 14h30

Join us for an interactive story time featuring reading, songs, and rhymes in English.

For Library members. [RSVP required.](#)

Animals in Danger

(ages 6–12)

Saturday 23 January at 14h00

Learn about endangered animals, and find out what we can do to help protect them and our planet. Show off your knowledge of things furry, scaly, and feathery in our fun animal trivia quiz covering creatures great and small!

For Library members. [RSVP required.](#)

Story Hour

(ages 3–5)

Wednesday 27 January at 14h30

Join us for an interactive story time featuring reading, songs, and rhymes in English.

Once Upon a Time—Writing Workshop

(ages 6–12)

Saturday 30 January at 14h00

Begin your own original short story during this interactive writing workshop. Start writing just for fun, or get started on a submission for the [2021 Young Authors Fiction Festival \(YAFF\)](#).

For Library members. [RSVP required.](#)

YAFF: Submissions Open 1 February!

(ages 5–18)

The American Library in Paris is proud to be the organizer of the Young Authors Fiction Festival (YAFF). Young writers are welcome to submit original short stories written in English.

For Library members. [RSVP required](#).

TEEN EVENTS

We are preparing to open the expanded Teen Mezzanine for browsing, so stay tuned!

Upcoming Event Highlight

[Junk Kouture with Rebecca Devaney](#)

(ages 12–18)

Friday 22 January at 19h00

Join us for an interactive workshop with Rebecca Devaney of Junk Kouture and brainstorm ways to turn everyday objects into fashion. During this interactive event, Rebecca will show participants examples of fashion made from 100% recycled materials, and then workshop participants will get help creating their own fashion pieces using items found at home.

For Library members. [RSVP required](#).

[Fantasy Book Club: New Releases](#)

(ages 12–adult)

Saturday 23 January at 14h00

Bring along your current or most recent fantasy read and join us for a dynamic discussion of fantasy worlds. For this January meeting, participants are encouraged to read one of the recommended new releases on our event page.

For Library members. [RSVP required](#).

[Evenings with an Author: V. E. Schwab](#)

(ages 12–adult)

Wednesday 27 January at 19h30

This *Evenings with an Author* event with V. E. Schwab is highly recommended for teens. Schwab is the author of more than twenty books, including the *Shades of Magic* series, *This Savage Song*, and *City of Ghosts*. Her latest novel, *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*, is set to be adapted into a feature film. During this virtual event, Children's and Teens' Services Librarian Kirsty McCulloch Reid will interview Schwab about her work and her writing process.

Free and open to the public. [RSVP required](#).

[Teens in AI with Elena Sinel](#)

(ages 12–18)

Friday 29 January at 19h00

As robots become ever-more-present in our daily lives, questions of how to control and modify their behavior come up more often. Join us for an interactive discussion on ethics in AI with Elena Sinel, founder of Teens in AI.

For Library members. [RSVP required](#).

[YAFF: Submissions Open 1 February!](#)

(ages 5–18)

The American Library in Paris is proud to be the organizer of the Young Authors Fiction Festival (YAFF). Young writers are welcome to submit original short stories written in English.

[Youth Leadership Program \(FULL\)](#)

(ages 14–18)

Friday 5 February at 19h00

Meet fellow bookworms and Library members, share your ideas, get the inside scoop on the Library, and earn community service hours.

For Library members. By application—FULL.

[Teen Writing Group\(FULL\)](#)

(ages 12–18)

Saturday 6 February at 17h00

Join fellow aspiring writers in a relaxed and creative setting where you can share your ideas, get feedback, and work on your technique. For

Library members. By application—FULL.

10 Library-inspired New Year's Resolutions

1. **Join a [book group](#)** or a reading challenge.
2. **Learn a new language.** Or dust off one you've forgotten with [Mango](#).
3. **Manage the news deluge.** Instead of doom-scrolling, visit the Library to read daily newspapers in print.
4. **Start that writing project.** For young authors, submit your piece to the [Young Authors Fiction Festival](#) or take part in a writing workshop. Adults—join one of our many workshops for writers of all levels of experience throughout the year.
5. **Explore new territory.** Browse aisles where you normally don't roam. A history buff? Browse Sci-Fi. A mystery fan? Wander over to Philosophy. Explore hundreds of digital magazines on our [Libby](#) app.
6. **Discover new authors.** Attend *Evenings with an Author* to hear from speakers on the economics of happiness, poetry, French cuisine, and the current discourse on free speech. Ask a librarian for recommendations. Check out our reader's advisory database, [NoveList](#).
7. **Personal development.** See Library of Congress subjects: "Self-help techniques", "Self management", and "Self realization". Browse "Self-improvement" in [Overdrive e-books](#).
8. **Professional development.** Check out [ProQuest Ebook Central](#) and browse the subject heading, "Education/ Professional Development".
9. **Get to know your community.** [Volunteer](#) at the Library to meet fellow bibliophiles.
10. **Never stop learning.** [Join the Library](#).

Favorite Books of 2020: Reading Recommendations from Library Staff

If you, like Library staff, are always on the hunt for books to add your reading list, look no further than our staff favorites of 2020. These are the books that moved, comforted, challenged, transported, and just plain entertained us throughout the last twelve months. All are in the Library's collection.

[Conflicted: How Productive Disagreements Lead to Better Outcomes](#) by Ian Leslie

Last year I was lucky to get my hands on an advance reader's copy of Leslie's new book. He weaves insights from diverse domains, including diplomacy and hostage negotiation, to explore practical, innovative approaches to conflict; it's perhaps never been so urgent. Recommended by Audrey.

[A Children's Bible: A Novel](#) by Lydia Millet

I'm not alone in declaring this one of the best novels I read all year. It's an allegory featuring precocious kids and their palpable disdain for their floundering parents that offers a glimpse of apocalyptic repercussions of climate change in bible-story-style vignettes. The story is clever, terrifying, and hilarious, all at once. Recommended by Abigail.

[On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous](#) by Ocean Vuong

Harrowing in places and hauntingly poetic throughout, Vuong's debut novel juxtaposes the trauma of physical parental abuse, bullying, and the Vietnam War with maternal love, a coming-of-age love story, and familial bonds. Framed as a letter to his illiterate mother, the narrator writes with brutal honesty about his formative years growing up as a gay immigrant in Hartford, Connecticut, where OxyContin overdoses are rampant. A social commentary on race, addiction, and homophobia in contemporary America, the novel also manages to capture the moments of tenderness and connection the narrator experienced growing up, moments when he felt gorgeous, if only briefly. Recommended by Orlene.

[How the South Won the Civil War](#) by Heather Cox Richardson

This timely book explores the American paradox, and the competing claims of equality and subordination that are woven into the nation's fabric and identity. It looks into the soul of the country and its ongoing struggle to provide equal opportunity to all, and debunks the myth that the Civil War released the nation

from the grip of oligarchy or expunged the sins of its founding. It reveals how and why the South not only survived, but thrived. Recommended by Kati.

[A Little Life](#) by Hanya Yanagihara

This utterly absorbing novel grabs your heart from the very first pages and doesn't let go. The story follows a group of four college friends into middle age, allowing the reader to watch as the individual and group dynamics shift following life's events, big and small. Main character Jude's arc is especially gut-wrenching and unforgettable. The book will leave you hoping, laughing, and yes, even sobbing. Read at your own risk! (But do read!) Recommended by Catherine.

[The Midnight Library](#) by Matt Haig

"Between life and death, there is a Library..."

As a librarian, I love books about books and reading and was very excited about this one. I was *not* disappointed. Matt Haig's own experience with the darkness of depression and suicidal feelings enriches his storytelling, creating a beautifully written, heartbreaking, and unputdownable tale about grief, the choices we make, regrets, and coping with life. A devastating but hopeful read that stayed with me long after I finished the book. Recommended by Kirsty.

[Say Nothing](#) by Patrick Radden Keefe

One of the 10 Best Books of 2019 according to *The New York Times Book Review*, this book by *New Yorker* staff writer Keefe is an inquiry into the bitter conflict in Northern Ireland and its aftermath. Beautifully written and thoroughly researched, this account of the Troubles delves into the heart of the IRA and tells the intimate story of young men and women consumed by radical political violence. Twenty years after the Good Friday Agreement, the author brilliantly demonstrates how this violent past still haunts its protagonists and the people of Northern Ireland. Recommended by Nathalie.

[The Lying Life of Adults](#) by Elena Ferrante, translated by Ann Goldstein

Elena Ferrante once again graces us with her ability to transcend borders and delivers a novel that captures the universal truths of adolescence against the irregular pulse of Naples. Like *The Neapolitan Novels*, Ferrante's curt chapters and unapologetic characters glued me to my seat and forced me to ask myself, "When and why do we stop telling the truth?" Recommended by Gabby.

[The Prague Cemetery](#) by Umberto Eco

The best book I've read about anti-Semitism. A fictional forger with a split personality allies with the secret groups behind 19th-century Europe's revolutionary movements, then drafts a fraudulent eyewitness account of the world's most powerful rabbis conspiring in Prague's Old Jewish Cemetery. Hilarious, horrifying, and a brain-rearranging work of satire. Recommended by Elliot.

[Black Girl Unlimited: The Remarkable True Story of a Teenage Wizard](#) by Echo Brown

I always have high expectations for books written by authors who have hosted events at the Library, but this autobiographical tale, infused with magical realism, surpassed all of my expectations. The brilliant book tells of Echo Brown's coming of age on the East Side of Cleveland and the beginnings of her young adulthood at Dartmouth College. While Echo (and her on-page protagonist) must deal with abuse, depression, poverty, and misogyny, the story is ultimately uplifting and hopeful, and the tale is well-deserving of the praise it has received. Recommended by Celeste.

[Man's Search for Meaning](#) by Viktor E. Frankl

This book is life-changing! In this memoir, the psychiatrist Viktor Frankl writes about his experiences in Nazi death camps and lessons he learned about spiritual survival. He explains how we cannot avoid suffering, but we can choose how to cope with it, find meaning in it, and move forward with purpose. There is so much beauty in Mr. Frankl's story and words. Recommended by Bojan.

[Black Snow](#) by Mikhail Bulgakov, translated by Michael Glenny

This unfinished novel by the author of *The Master and Margarita* is pure Bulgakov. Even when his writer protagonist is gripped by the deepest despair and personal failure, he retains his wicked sense of humor and hawk-eyed perception into the politics, hypocrisy, and bureaucracy that swirl around him. This novel takes aim at Stanislavsky, Method Acting, and the famed Moscow Arts Theatre, for which Bulgakov wrote in the 1930's. A must for any student of theater history. Recommended by Carolyn.

Medieval Bodies: Life and Death in the Middle Ages by Jack Hartnell

The author shows us how different medicine was back in the Middle Ages, as physicians compounded science, superstition, and mysticism into a system of beliefs that was at times startling, at times revolutionary. The book is beautifully illustrated and cleverly structured, with each chapter featuring a different body part. Recommended by David.

Station Eleven by Emily St. John Mandel

While many readers might not be interested in a novel that takes place during a global pandemic, I loved the way Mandel wove this multilinear story, connecting characters to one another in both the pre- and post-pandemic worlds. A finalist for the 2014 National Book Award, this was a book I could not put down and have been recommending to all my friends—even those wary of post-apocalyptic plague fiction! Recommended by Morgan.

Pandemonium U



Upcoming virtual events by the Library's partner Pandemonium U:

"The French-American journeys of Josephine Baker," with Ilana Navaro, director of the documentary *Josephine Baker: The Story of an Awakening*. In conversation with Pamela Druckerman.
Friday January 22 @ 9am Pacific/Noon NY/17:00 London/18:00 Paris

George Blake, the Happy Traitor, with Simon Kuper, author of a new biography of Blake.
Friday February 5 @ 9am Pacific/Noon NY/17:00 London/18:00 Paris

"Coco Chanel: The woman who dressed the world," with Rhonda Garelick. In conversation with Pamela Druckerman.
Friday February 12 @ 9am Pacific/Noon NY/17:00 London/18:00 Paris

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