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**Summer Series: Lisa**

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Johneen: Welcome everyone, to Recently Returned, and thank you for joining us for this episode of the Summer Series 2022. My name is Johneen and I’m a member of the Adult Program and Services Team. Today we are visited by Lisa, a member of the Library Team. Lovely to see you today, Lisa, thank you so much for joining us.

To commence our chat, we have three quick questions to start us thinking about what we read, how we read, and the impact reading can have. First off, Lisa, what is your worst reading habit?

Lisa: My worst reading habit, I think, would probably be leaving it until the end of the day. I do love to try and read as much as I can and steal as many moments as I can to read throughout the day, but that doesn’t always happen. So, I usually leave it until I’m going to bed, and then no matter how fantastic the book is, my eyes will close after a couple of pages and then I haven’t had much reading time at all for the day. So that’s probably my worst, I can think of, is leaving it till the end of the day when I’m tired.

Johneen: Thank you so much. A lot of people leave it to the end of the day, and a lot of people fall to sleep. Our next question is one of reflection; can you tell us which book you wish you could experience again for the first time, and why?

Lisa: Well, I have read this book several times throughout my life, so I have experienced it a couple of times, but not for a long time. It’s been many years since I’ve read it. And that’s *To Kill A Mockingbird*, Harper Lee. It has to be my all-time favourite novel. I guess, because it was life changing for me when I first read it at the age of 16, and it’s one of those books that, since then, for the rest of my life, I’ve always been drawn to, or looking for books that are like it. So, when I read *Jasper Jones*, for example, or *Where the Crawdads Sing*, they really resonated with me because it took me back to the time, the first time that I read *To Kill A Mockingbird* and just those amazing themes. Just the setting, the writing, just everything about it was just an amazing book that I’ll, yeah, I’ll always remember it and I’ll always recommend it to other people.

Johneen: I would say you’re very brave. I know lots of readers who don’t want to risk losing their first special relationship with that book. So, what a wonderful choice.

 And finally, some books are really easy to read and grab us from the first word, and others are a little more difficult. Can you share a book that you read this year, which for you, was really challenging?

Lisa: Yeah, I guess, the one that sticks out to me most is *Three Sisters* by Heather Morris. So, I had read *The* *Tattooist of Auschwitz* when it first was released, and then of course, the second, *Cilka’s Journey.* I followed up with that. And both of those were incredibly difficult to read for obvious reasons, so yeah, one that I’ve read this year was *Three Sisters.* And again, challenging because of the themes of course, you know, you’re reading a book about death camps and struggle and just extreme hardship. And whilst it isn’t something that I’m familiar with, it can be really difficult to read, those sorts of stories. So , I’d have to say the themes, of course, and the depiction of the events of those times was why I found it so challenging.

Johneen: It’s been a very popular book but, again, I’m going to commend you on your bravery. I couldn’t go to the place that you’ve been to with that book, so well done.

Lisa: Yeah, and look it was challenging but I persisted with it because the story is just so fantastic. It’s just a story of overcoming hardship. And in some ways, it’s uplifting when you see how people, just what people can go through and survive through. I did listen to *Cilka’s Journey* on audiobook which was, I think a little bit easier than actually reading it, which was interesting. But anyway, well worth the read, for sure.

Johneen: And a great reminder to us of the extraordinary nature of human beings to be inspiring and to persevere. Now we’ve come to your Summer Reading Recommendation. So, with the longer days of summer, books can play a great part in our summer relaxation and recharge. Lisa, what’s your Summer Reading Recommendation for our listeners?

Lisa: This was a difficult one, because making recommendations for other people is always tough. But I went by a book that I felt was un-put-downable for me and one that I’m still thinking about months after finishing. So, one of my favourite authors that I’ve discovered over the last year or so, is Taylor Jenkins Reid. She’s an American author, quite prolific. I’ve read all of her books and loved all of them, but I recently read one that had been on my shelf for a while, and that’s *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*.

I just can’t say enough about how fabulous this book was. My love of old Hollywood movies and Hollywood stars is probably one reason why I was drawn to it, and the overtones of fashion and a bit of scandal and that sort of thing. But it was beautifully constructed. It was a beautifully constructed novel. It was extremely well written. It had likeable and unlikeable characters which is always good in a book. It was a back-in-time style which I really love, that flipping backwards and forwards through time. And just, you know, the themes of race, sexuality, misogyny, conforming to society’s norms especially in the ‘50s and ‘60s. It’s a real historical romance with a difference, I think. And one that really captivated me and kept me reading page after page, and really made me think really deeply about some of these themes and my reaction to some of the themes as well. So just loved it, loved everything about it and would highly recommend it to anybody.

Johneen: Thank you so much. Some people would suggest that those themes are still very strong in literature, set in a contemporary world.

Lisa: Yes, yes, definitely. And you know, you’re talking about power and greed and forbidden love and all those things that really make a great novel. But this one was just, just had something different about it. Something magical, I think.

Johneen: Thank you so much for that recommendation. Now all the books that Lisa has recommended today are available for you to borrow from your local Wyndham Library.

 Just a reminder to everyone to join the Summer Reads Just For You program so we can send you a personalised list of reading recommendations. Check this out on our library website.

 Also, please let us know your thoughts on today’s books, and share your favourite reads on recentlyreturned@wyndham.vic.gov.au or drop us a line on the library Facebook page at Libraries Wyndham.

 Thank you so much for joining us today, and we look forward to hearing your recommendations. Thank you again, Lisa.

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