6 Books, 19 Events

GRReads
Summer Reading All Grown Up!

June 1 – August 31, 2021

616.988.5400 | www.grpl.org/GRReads
QUICK PROGRAM GUIDE

A guide to your summer!

JUNE

June 17, 7:00 pm  A Conversation with Two Eagles Marcus ........... 19
June 19, 1:00 pm  Comic Geek Out ................................. 27
June 21, 7:00 pm  GR Crime Tour ................................. 23
June 24, 4:00 pm  Curator Battle: GRPL v. GRPM ............... 15
June 26, 2:00 pm  African American Live Museum ............... 7
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JULY

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AUGUST

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AVAILABLE ANYTIME

Black History Tour of Downtown Grand Rapids ........... 8
Share Your Library Story ................................. 15
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GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC LIBRARY FOUNDATION

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Cosplay Crusaders
D.A. Blodgett St. John’s
Gaslight Kitchen
The Good Bowl
Grand Rapids African American Museum and Archives (GRAAMA)
Grand Rapids Pride Center
Grand Rapids Public Museum
GR Crime Tours
GRNoir Wine and Jazz
GR Walks
Katie Fox-Webb Photography
Kristen Norman Photography
Lai Thai Kitchen
League of Enchantment
MPWRDX Media Group
New Hope Baptist Church – Drama Ministry
Northern Michigan University
Pho 616
Pho Anh Trang
Pho Soc Trang
The Plant Parlor
The Plant Shop
Saigon Garden
Schuler’s Books and Music
Vertigo Music
We Are LIT

CHOOSE YOUR FAVORITE WAY TO READ

Books are only the beginning! There are also a lot of other ways to read this year’s GR Reads titles.

READING ON THE GO? DOWNLOAD AN EBOOK
Available titles:
Black Bottom Saints
The House in the Cerulean Sea
The Library Book
A Mind Spread Out on the Ground
The 7 1/2 Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle
Sigh, Gone

NEED LARGER PRINT? BORROW A LARGE PRINT EDITION:
Available titles:
Black Bottom Saints
A Mind Spread Out on the Ground

BOOK CLUB WANTS TO READ TOGETHER? CHECK OUT SEVERAL BOOKS BY THE STACK COPIES:
Available titles:
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The House in the Cerulean Sea
The Library Book
The 7 1/2 Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle
Sigh, Gone

LOVE TO LISTEN? TRY AN AUDIOBOOK OR DOWNLOAD AN AUDIOBOOK:
Available titles:
Black Bottom Saints
The House in the Cerulean Sea
The Library Book
The 7 1/2 Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle
Sigh, Gone
Detroit’s Black Bottom neighborhood was brimming with music, culture, and excitement. Joseph “Ziggy” Johnson lived in the heart of it. As a newspaper columnist, he knew what was happening in the city. As an emcee for some of Detroit’s biggest clubs, he made friends with musicians. As dean of his own theatre school, he brought art to Detroit’s children. But in the early 1960s, Black Bottom’s future was being replaced with a freeway, and Ziggy’s health was failing. His last wish was to write a book that shares the spirit and wisdom of his community with the next generation.

Black Bottom Saints is a lively tour through Black Detroit’s history. Filled with struggle and perseverance, a master emcee guides the story. Inspired by the Catholic Saints Day Books, it honors 52 weekly “Saints” of Black Bottom. Ziggy celebrates each Saint with their story and a custom cocktail recipe. You already know names like Joe Louis, Della Reese, and Nat King Cole. Others you will meet for the first time, and their stories are just as compelling. Together, these “Saints” create a vivid picture of old Detroit and a community that suffered but still found a way to thrive.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Alice Randall is a New York Times bestselling author, songwriter, screenwriter, and educator. Born in Detroit, she shares the city’s history through her writing and a course she teaches at Vanderbilt University. Her song, “XXX’s and OOO’s (An American Girl),” recorded by Trisha Yearwood, went to #1 on the Country Music charts. Randall won the NAACP Image Award and the Phillis Wheatley Prize for her writing. She lives in Nashville, Tennessee. Black Bottom Saints is her seventh book.
RELATED EVENTS

AFRICAN AMERICAN LIVE MUSEUM
Saturday, June 26, 2021, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Campau Park – 50 Antoine SW
Rain location: New Hope Baptist Church - 130 Delaware St SW

Watch some of the most important figures in African American history come to life as they share their life stories, struggles, and accomplishments. Portrayed by actors from New Hope Baptist Church, learn more about the notable figures featured in Black Bottom Saints.

Please note: The cast does not interact with viewers. They are like animated statues. They tell their stories, but do not answer questions or engage in conversations. If a personality stares straight ahead and does not speak, you are not being ignored. The cast member is only waiting until more people gather.

GR READS: THE MOVIES – MA RAINEY’S BLACK BOTTOM
Wednesday, July 21, 2021, 7:00 pm
Wealthy Theatre – 1130 Wealthy St SE

Ma Rainey was one of the most famous and prolific recording artists of the early 20th century. Known as the “Mother of the Blues,” this film follows Ma Rainey as tensions rise with her band, manager, and girlfriend. Featuring performances by Viola Davis and Chadwick Boseman in his award-winning final role.

Please follow COVID safety measures. Tickets are $3 with valid GRPL library card. Buy tickets at the door or online at grcmc.org/theatre/. Use promo code: GRREADS2021.

BLACK HISTORY TOUR OF DOWNTOWN GRAND RAPIDS
Walking tour available on demand using the GR Walks app. Download the app from www.grwalks.com, the Apple Store, or Google Play.

Discover local Black history with this walking tour of downtown Grand Rapids. City Commissioner Joe Jones narrates the tour, which starts in Lyon Square. The self-guided tour is approximately two miles. It stops at eleven points of interest. Learn the history of local African American leadership, culture, and community.

DGRI and GR Walks organized and produced the tour with help from GRPL’s archives.

IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK, YOU MIGHT ALSO ENJOY:

Once in a Great City: A Detroit Story by David Maraniss
Shades: Detroit Love Stories by Esperanza Malavé Cintrón
The World According to Fannie Davis by Bridgett Davis
Black Detroit: A People’s History of Self-Determination by Herb Boyd
Deacon King Kong by James McBride
Go Tell It on the Mountain by James Baldwin
Stateway’s Garden: Stories by Jasmon Drain
A Brief History of Seven Killings by Marlon James
Broke: Hardship and Resilience in a City of Broken Promises by Jodie Adams Kirshner
Motown: Music, Money, Sex and Power by Gerald Posner
When Extremely Upper Management summons Linus Baker, a case worker at the Department in Charge of Magical Youth, a wrench is thrown in his plans. He hoped to skate under the radar and coast through life. Instead, Linus travels to Marsyas Island Orphanage on a strange and classified assignment. He must evaluate how caretaker Arthur Parnassus is controlling the children. Once there, Linus meets his match in the orphanage’s magical children. Talia is a garden gnome; Chauncey, a mysterious blob; and Lucy, the literal Antichrist. Can he stick to the plan and his cold and calculated approach to his job when he gets to know this lovable cast of kids? And can he stop himself from falling for the wacky yet alluring Arthur?

This whimsical tale blends fantasy and romance to create a story of found family. It is like a warm hug from a bizarre cast of characters who burrow themselves into your heart.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
TJ Klune is the New York Times and USA Today bestselling author of The House in the Cerulean Sea. He won the Lambda Literary Award for his book Into This River I Drown. His other novels include the Green Creek series and The Extraordinaries. Being queer himself, Klune believes it’s important—now more than ever—to have accurate, positive queer representation in stories.
RELATED EVENTS

PRIVATE LOVE, PUBLIC SCHOOL: GAY TEACHER UNDER FIRE
Tuesday, June 29, 2021, 6:30 pm
Zoom event

Private Love, Public School by Christine A. Yared recounts the true story of Gerry Crane. Crane, a high school music teacher, was one of the best teachers at his school. In October 1995, Gerry and his partner married in a private commitment ceremony. Word spread that he had married a man and the much loved teacher came under fire from parents and the school board. Crane fought with courage and hope while enduring betrayals, pain, and public humiliation.

This panel discussion will reflect on the events of 1995, and the challenges that still remain today. Fred Stella, host of Common Threads, will moderate the panel. Panelists include author Christine Yared; former student Tammy Lee; and Rev. Doug Van Doren, one of the ministers who started the group Concerned Clergy.

PANEL ON MODERN FAMILIES
Wednesday, August 4, 2021, 7:00 pm
Zoom event

Gone are the days of a “traditional” family featuring a dad, a mom and 2.2 children. Families today come in all shapes and sizes, and all are valid and loving. Join us for a community discussion about what makes a modern family. Hear from local parents Carrie Stratton Burrows, Renee Orr Carr, Chazz Darling, Stephanie Edwards, and Jazz McKinney. They will lead this discussion and share their parenting insights and wisdom. Topics will include gender neutrality, preferred pronouns, myths and stereotypes, inclusivity, and more.

CERULEAN SEA FAMILY CELEBRATION
Saturday, August 21, 2021, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
Riverside Park Bandshell – 3060 Monroe NE

Come celebrate families of all kinds! Enjoy crafts, lawn games and refreshments. Local photographers will take free family portraits. Listen to special storytimes about diverse families like LGBTQ+, adoptive, and foster families. This program will be held rain or shine. Please follow COVID safety measures.

IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK, YOU MIGHT ALSO ENJOY:

Every Heart a Doorway by Seanan McGuire
A Series of Unfortunate Events: The Bad Beginning by Lemony Snicket
The Long Way to a Small, Angry Planet by Becky Chambers
Savvy by Ingrid Law
Sourdough by Robin Sloan
Howl’s Moving Castle by Diana Wynne Jones
Not Your Sidekick by C.B. Lee
Red, White & Royal Blue by Casey McQuiston
Before the Coffee Gets Cold by Toshikazu Kawaguchi
The Monster of Elendhaven by Jennifer Giesbrecht
On April 29, 1986 the Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL) went up in flames for more than seven hours. The fire destroyed four hundred thousand books and damaged seven hundred thousand more. The library shut down for years in the aftermath. The Library Book investigates the mystery surrounding the infamous fire.

Beyond the LAPL fire, the book is a beautiful homage to our most beloved institution. Susan Orlean emphasizes the essential role that libraries play in our society. She takes us on a journey through the stacks of libraries across the country and around the world. She demonstrates the evolution of libraries through time. From their humble beginnings as charitable organizations, to being cornerstones of civic identity today, libraries are more than the collections they house. They are an integral part of their community’s heart, mind, and soul.

This book was selected as a part of GRPL’s 150 anniversary in 2021.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Susan Orlean has been a staff writer at The New Yorker since 1992. She has contributed articles to many magazines including Vogue, Rolling Stone, Esquire, and Outside. She is the author of seven books, including Rin Tin Tin, Saturday Night, and The Orchid Thief, which was made into the Academy Award–winning film Adaptation. She lives with her family and her animals in upstate New York.
RELATED EVENTS
CURATOR BATTLE: GRPL VS. GRPM
Thursday, June 24, 2021, 4:00 pm
GRPM Facebook Page
Librarian vs. Curator. Who will win? Watch as a GRPL librarian goes head to head with a Grand Rapids Public Museum curator. This Curator Battle will showcase unique items in both institution’s collections. This friendly competition is sure to educate and entertain.

SHARE YOUR LIBRARY STORY
Public libraries have a special place in people’s hearts. From childhood memories to transformational experiences, each story is unique. In celebration of our 150 anniversary, we want to hear your GRPL story! Share your memories through our online submission form and attach photographs, videos, and/or drawings. We’ll post responses on our website and social media channels throughout the year. Visit www.grpl.org/150 to get started. #MyGRPLStory

IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK, YOU MIGHT ALSO ENJOY:

Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life by Eric Klinenberg
Burning the Books: A History of the Deliberate Destruction of Knowledge by Richard Ovenden
The Bad-Ass Librarians of Timbuktu: And Their Race to Save the World’s Most Precious Manuscripts by Joshua Hammer
I Work at a Public Library: A Collection of Crazy Stories from the Stacks by Gina Sheridan
Running the Books: The Adventures of an Accidental Prison Librarian by Avi Steinberg
What We Talk About When We Talk About Books: The History and Future of Reading by Leah Price
The World’s Strongest Librarian: A Memoir of Tourette’s, Faith, and the Power of Family by Joshua Hanagarne
Librarian Tales: Funny, Strange, and Inspiring Dispatches from the Stacks by William Ottens
The Library: A Catalogue of Wonders by Stuart Kells
The Public Library: A Photographic Essay by Robert Dawson
A MIND SPREAD OUT ON THE GROUND
BY ALICIA ELLIOTT

Named for the Mohawk phrase for depression, A Mind Spread Out on the Ground is a light shined on darkness.

Haudenosaunee author Alicia Elliott looks at many serious subjects in this essay collection. She has lived with depression from a very early age. She grew up poor in a family that struggled with both alcohol and mental illness. Learning she was pregnant in high school shook her dreams of becoming a writer. As the daughter of a white mother and a Native American father, she saw the tension of race and existing between two worlds.

For everything she has been through, Elliott doesn’t dwell on her own hardship. Her past is something she wants to learn and move on from. She uses her memories as a starting point to study these topics on a bigger scale. The pain she sees in the people she loves has deep roots. Many of these essays bounce between the personal and historical to get to its source. She speaks with sensitivity on issues that affect millions of people. They do not have easy solutions, and looking for answers only leads to more questions. Looking in the dark takes courage, and seeing light encourages others to search for it too.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
RELATED EVENTS

THE GOOD LIFE IS OUR BIRTHRIGHT: INDIGENOUS FOODS RESEARCH IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION
Tuesday, August 3, 2021, 7:00 pm
Zoom event
Minobimaadiz (the good life) is something that Anishinaabe people learn as part of their education. It assumes that they will strive to live their lives in a way that is in balance and harmony with nature. Dr. Martin Reinhardt will discuss the relationship the Anishinaabe have with spirit beings that they often think of as food. These relationships with food were nearly destroyed through colonization and neglect. Dr. Reinhardt is a professor of Native American Studies at Northern Michigan University and serves as the interim director of the Center for Native American Studies. He will share research on Indigenous food relationships in the Great Lakes Region.

A CONVERSATION WITH TWO EAGLES MARCUS
Thursdays, June 17, July 22, and August 26
Virtual Event | Podcast
MPWRDX Media Group (Pronounced Empowered X) is a content platform that centers on Black, Hispanic, Asian Pacific, and Indigenous Native Americans. It seeks to amplify their voices and experiences in business, entrepreneurship, and social justice. Join founder Two Eagles Marcus as he chats with Indigenous entrepreneurs who are leading the way and changing the narrative in their respective fields.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, YOU MIGHT ALSO ENJOY:

You Don’t Have to Say You Love Me by Sherman Alexie

There There by Tommy Orange

Heart Berries: A Memoir by Terese Marie Mailhot

An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz

The Body Keeps the Score by Bessel van der Kolk

American Daughter by Stephanie Thornton Plymale

It Didn’t Start with You by Mark Wolynn

The Deepest Well: Healing the Long-term Effects of Childhood Adversity by Nadine Burke Harris
THE 7½ DEATHS OF EVELYN HARDCASTLE
BY STUART TURTON

Stuart Turton’s debut novel is a Groundhog Day story, with a macabre and mysterious twist. Every day, Evelyn Hardcastle will die at 11:00 pm unless the cycle can end. Every day, amnesiac Aiden Bishop will wake up as a different party guest at Blackheath House. The loops always play out the same, and jumping among the guests gives him new perspectives on the murder. To save Evelyn, Aiden will have to uncover the guests’ secrets as he finds out not everyone is who they seem. Will he solve the mystery? Or will every day end with a ringing gunshot?

Winner of the Best Debut Novel at the 2019 British Book Awards, The 7½ Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle reads like an Agatha Christie novel. It is a modern take on the classic whodunit. The everlasting twists, turns, and murders make this a white-knuckle read through to the stunning conclusion.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Stuart Turton is a freelance journalist who lives in West London with his wife. Stuart is not to be trusted—in the nicest possible way. He is the author of The 7½ Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle and The Devil and the Dark Water.
RELATED EVENTS

GR CRIME TOURS
Monday, June 21, 2021, 7:00 pm
Wednesday, July 14, 2021, 7:00 pm
Thursday, August 19, 2021, 7:00 pm
Meet at the flagpole at the Main Library – 111 Library St NE
Learn about some of the most infamous crimes in Grand Rapids on this 1-hour walking tour. Led by comedian Eirann Betka-Pope, explore the streets of downtown Grand Rapids. You will visit local sites known for their historical crime and lore. Limit of 15 participants—first come first served.

GR READS: THE MOVIES — CLUE
Wednesday, August 25, 2021, 7:00 pm
Wealthy Theatre – 1130 Wealthy St SE
Based on the popular board game, this comedy begins at a dinner party hosted by Mr. Boddy (Lee Ving), where he admits to blackmailing his visitors. These guests, who have aliases, are: Mrs. Peacock (Eileen Brennan), Miss Scarlet (Lesley Ann Warren), Mr. Green (Michael McKean), professor Plum (Christopher Lloyd), Mrs. White (Madeline Kahn) and Col. Mustard (Martin Mull). When Boddy turns up murdered, all are suspects, and together they try to figure out who is the killer.

Please follow COVID safety measures. Tickets are $3 with valid GRPL library card. Buy tickets at the door or online at grcmc.org/theatre/. Use promo code: GRREADS2021.

IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK, YOU MIGHT ALSO ENJOY:

The Broken Girls by Simone St. James
The Craftsman by Sharon Bolton
The Cuckoo’s Calling by Robert Galbraith
The Death of Mrs. Westaway by Ruth Ware
The Gentleman by Forrest Leo
The Lake House by Kate Morton
Life After Life by Kate Atkinson
Man in the Empty Suit by Sean Ferrell
Murder in Three Acts by Agatha Christie
The Word is Murder by Anthony Horowitz
SIGH, GONE: A MISFIT’S MEMOIR OF GREAT BOOKS, PUNK ROCK, AND THE FIGHT TO FIT IN

BY PHUC TRAN

In Carlisle, PA during the ‘80s, the Tran family “blended right into the mix like proverbial flies in the ointment, which is to say, they didn’t.” As refugees from Vietnam, the Trans struggled to navigate small-town America. At Carlisle High School, Phuc Tran was the only Asian student, the token refugee kid.

Grade by grade, Phuc clawed his way toward acceptance. He absorbed racist taunts, fended off bullies, and even tried Americanizing his name to Peter. Through literature and punk rock he learned to accept himself. In the classics, Phuc found solace and kinship in the wisdom of their pages. In the subculture of punk rock, he found affirmation and echoes of his disaffection. He began to understand the meaning of place in his family’s displacement.

In telling his assimilation story, Phuc holds a mirror to what’s happening today, bearing witness to the lives of the people this country has, until recently, welcomed with open arms.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Phuc Tran has been a high school Latin teacher for over twenty years while also establishing himself as a highly sought-after tattoo artist. Tran graduated Bard College in 1995 with a BA in Classics and received the Callanan Classics Prize. His 2012 TEDx talk “Grammar, Identity, and the Dark Side of the Subjunctive” was featured on NPR’s TED Radio Hour. His acclaimed memoir, Sigh, Gone: A Misfit’s Memoir of Great Books, Punk Rock, and The Fight To Fit In, received the 2020 New England Book Award for Nonfiction. He tattoos and lives with his family in Portland, Maine.
RELATED EVENTS

COMIC GEEK OUT
Saturday, June 19, 2021, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Yankee Clipper Branch – 2025 Leonard NE
Virtual (Facebook) and in-person events
Discover your inner hero at the library’s comic event. Celebrate the comic books you love, and geek out on your favorite fandom. Join us for hands-on activities, free books, a comic workshop, and other fun events! For more information on event location and times visit our website at www.grpl.org/comic-geek-out

GR READS: THE MOVIES – MINARI
Wednesday, August 11, 2021, 7:00 pm
Wealthy Theatre – 1130 Wealthy St SE
A tender and sweeping story about what roots us, Minari follows a Korean-American family that moves to a tiny Arkansas farm in search of their own American Dream. The family home changes completely with the arrival of their sly, foul-mouthed, but incredibly loving grandmother. Amidst the instability and challenges of this new life in the rugged Ozarks, Minari shows the undeniable resilience of family and what really makes a home.
Please follow COVID safety measures. Tickets are $3 with a valid GRPL library card. Buy tickets at the door or online at grcmc.org/theatre/. Use promo code: GRREADS2021.

MASTERING THE ART OF PHO
Thursday, August 12, 2021, 6:00 pm
Zoom event
Join The Good Bowl restaurant for a fun and interactive cooking class with Executive Chef and co-owner Tony Vu. He will walk you through how to master the art of Vietnam’s national homemade pho virtually in the comfort of your own kitchen. You’ll learn about the iconic dish’s origins, its healthful benefits, and how to make and serve pho. You will also gain insights and history about Vietnamese culture. Space is limited and on a first come, first served basis.

IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK, YOU MIGHT ALSO ENJOY:

Interior Chinatown by Charles Yu
Homeland Elegies by Ayad Akhtar
Floating in A Most Peculiar Way by Louis Onuorah Chude-Sokei
The Book of Unknown Americans by Cristina Henriquez
Patriot Number One: American Dreams in Chinatown by Lauren Hilgers
Born A Crime: Stories From A South African Childhood by Trevor Noah
Beautiful Music by Michael Zadoorian
The Hundred Secret Senses by Amy Tan
The Magic Fish by Trung Le Nguyen
6 Books and 19 Events

GRREADS BINGO

Up for an extra challenge? Fill out a BINGO card for your chance to win a gift certificate to local businesses. You can pick up a BINGO card at any GRPL location or download and print one from www.grpl.org/grreads. Drop off your finished BINGO card at any GRPL location.
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