

## Books for Summer Travel

by Dennis May, Patron Services

You may remember that this time of year I typically spend a week in Wells, Maine with my wife's family. We eat copious amounts of lobster, spend way too much time on the beach, and read as many books written by the same author as I can. Last year's author was Dennis Lehane. As I was getting my heart ripped to shreds by *Mystic River*, my wife and in-laws were reading books by Emily Henry and Tom Clancy.

This year, however, is quite different. Brenna and I decided to go down to Blue Ridge, Georgia to spend the week with my family. Let me repeat, it's *quite* different, but still relaxing. Brenna is currently reading Hallie Hill's *Good Women: Stories* as I am typing. (She's liking it, by the way.) My relaxing time is being spent either watching a random movie with my dad or going for walks with my mom. My brother and I have been playing video games or having a contest to see who can make the funniest joke at each other's expense. Brenna and I have been able to get away for quiet time by going to trivia nights. Oh, did I mention that this week is leading up to my family reunion? This all means that I haven't had much time for reading. I did bring Stephen King's *Doctor Sleep*, but I haven't been able to make it past the title page.

My recommendations this time of year are usually chock full of beach reads from the likes of Emily Henry and Erin Hildebrand. This year, however, my focus is on the mountains and my home state of Georgia. I hope these reads will bring some peace and quiet.

From one of our most quintessential travel authors, *A Walk in the Woods* might be Bill Bryson's best. Following Bryson and his not-so-athletic hiking partner as they attempt the Appalachian Trail, the memoir is full of inspiring nature descriptions, hiking travails, and hilarious anecdotes about scaring away bears with nail clippers and throwing essential hiking supplies off the trail. Although (spoiler alert) Bryson doesn't come close to hiking the whole Appalachian Trail, you'll be inspired to find some nature after this mountain read escape.

You're probably expecting *Gone with the Wind* to make this list, but I'll only give a bit of column space to this controversial story: read *Gone with the Wind* or watch the movie. That's all that will say. If you're looking for a more updated novel from the Peach State, Beth Hoffman's *Saving Cece Honeycutt* is a coming of age novel set in Savannah, and it will not take you nearly as long to read as Margaret Mitchell's Civil War epic. It's much more lighthearted, too. The main character is sent to live with her widowed and childless aunt after her mother dies, and critics have called it a cross between *The Help* and *Steel Magnolias*.

If non-fiction is more your speed, check out *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* by John Berendt, following one of Georgia's most famous murder trials of the 20th century. Later adapted into a Clint Eastwood movie in 1997, the book has been called "atmospherically Deep South coastal and Southern Gothic."

Although I went south for vacation this year instead of north, there are still so many good books to read in every genre. Stop by the Kirkland Town Library after July 1 to find a new favorite book and ask me how far into *Doctor Sleep* I made it during my family vacation. I'm sure the answer will be "I have finally finished the first page."