

Baseball Books from Left Field  
By Laura Stoll, Assistant to the Director

The Kirkland Town Library is in the middle of a Spring Training Reading Challenge. Just like Major League Baseball's pre-season training, we're helping our patrons get in shape for the upcoming summer reading challenges. You can stop by the Library to pick up a reading log and then keep track of your reading time. For every three hours read, you get a reward as well as a raffle ticket that you can use to win even bigger prizes. The fun ends on baseball's opening day, March 27.

As we planned this challenge, there was a lot of talk about baseball around the Library. Aside from a painfully awkward season playing softball in 7th grade, I don't know much about the game. It's not that I don't like softball or baseball, I just prefer some of America's other great pastimes like reading, snacking, and watching Instagram Reels.

Even though I'm not a baseball fan, when I think back on some of the books I've read, baseball actually appears in quite a few of them! From a public proposal at Dodger Stadium to friends and boyfriends who play the game, baseball adds to the plotline of a lot of good books. Here are some baseball-adjacent books for all the non-sports fans out there.

In my last column, I mentioned rereading "A Prayer for Owen Meany" by John Irving. When I wrote that, I had forgotten about baseball's pivotal role in the plot. I won't give any spoilers if you haven't read the book but one of the main characters lives is forever changed at a Little League game. Then, in one of the final scenes, John Wheelwright throws a baseball that restores someone's faith. There is a lot of symbolism in "A Prayer for Owen Meany;" as Irving writes in chapter three, "There were no accidents; there was a reason for that baseball."

"The Proposal" by Jasmine Guillory begins with a public proposal. To be honest, before I read this book, I didn't have a strong opinion about public proposals, but when Nikole has to say "no" in front of 45,000 Dodgers fans, I can see why it's a pressure-filled situation. In the book, the proposal gone wrong leads to a new romance for Nikole with a handsome doctor. This is the second book in Guillory's series "The Wedding Date," a fun trilogy that will make you laugh and warm your heart.

In "Catch Us When We Fall" by Juliette Fay, a woman in need turns to her ex's brother, a major league baseball player, for help. From the publisher, "Cass and Ben partied their way through their twenties, slowly descending into a bleak world of binge-drinking and broken promises, inebriated for most of a decade. Now Ben is dead, and Cass is broke, homeless, scared...and pregnant. Determined to have a healthy pregnancy and raise Ben's baby, Cass turns to the only person with the means to help her: Ben's brother Scott, third basemen for the Boston Red Sox, a man with a temper and problems of his own."

"Evvie Drake Starts Over" by Linda Holmes is another book about a woman who finds support from a major league player but this book is more lighthearted and funny than "Catch Us When We Fall." From the publisher, "In a sleepy seaside town in Maine, widow Evvie Drake is derailed by grief. Meanwhile, in New York City, Dean Tenney, former Major League pitcher and Andy's childhood best friend, is wrestling with what miserable athletes living out their worst nightmares call the 'yips': he can't throw straight anymore, and, even worse, he can't figure out why. When he moves into an apartment at the back of Evvie's house, an unexpected friendship soon turns into something more."