

# MVAH ZOOM BOOK CLUB

April 21, 2022

**Next MVAH ZOOM Book Club May 19, 3PM**

<p><b>Attendees:</b> Host: Barbara Brennan Cher Terry Betsy Stephens (in absentia) Carol Mattaino Sarah Tatum</p>	<p>Louise McLean Norma Brodsky</p>
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*NOTE: I think in the beginning we decided to limit the books discussed to one or maybe two, but no more. It was suggested to expand a bit more on the book, the author – at least a paragraph about it and why you are recommending it. Thank you!*

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1. **Cher Terry – VANDERBILT by Anderson Cooper, Katherine Howe. 2021 368 pages. Biography.**

Anderson Cooper begins his and Katherine Howe's splendid book with a vignette about his father taking him, age 6, to see the statue of his great-great-great-grandfather "Commodore" Cornelius Vanderbilt outside New York's Grand Central Terminal. Young Cooper's takeaway was "that all grandparents turned into statues when they died."

Until the death in 2019 of his mother, Gloria Vanderbilt, Cooper spent most of his life downplaying his Vanderbilt-ness. When people asked him what it was like to be a scion of the famous clan, he would reply that he wasn't a Vanderbilt, he was a Cooper. His father, Wyatt, Gloria's fourth husband, grew up on a small farm in Mississippi and imbued his talented and able son with a quality not in overabundance among his maternal ancestors: down-to-earthiness. Thank you, Dad.

It probably helped that by the time Cooper fils came of age, the Vanderbilt fortune, once among the greatest in American plutocracy, had pretty much gone pfft. His mother was a serial spendthrift who burned through an inheritance that came to her in 1945 of about \$4 million, the equivalent today of nearly \$60 million. "No one can make money evaporate into thin air like a Vanderbilt," Cooper and Howe observe.

2. **Carol Mattaino – The Ginger Tree by Oswald Wynd. 2003. 312 pages. Miniseries on Masterpiece Theatre PBS.**

In 1903, a young Scotswoman named Mary Mackenzie sets sail for China to marry her betrothed, a military attaché in Peking. But soon after her arrival, Mary falls into an adulterous affair with a young Japanese nobleman, scandalizing the British community. Casting her out of the European community, her compatriots tear her away from her small daughter. A woman abandoned and alone, Mary learns to survive over forty tumultuous years in Asia, including two world wars and the cataclysmic Tokyo earthquake of 1923.

**3. Sarah Tatum – The Daughters of Yalta: The Churchills, Roosevelts, and Harriman’s: A Story of Family, Love, and War. by Catherine Grace Katz. 2020. 416 pages. nonfiction.**

The untold story of the three intelligent and glamorous young women who accompanied their famous fathers to the Yalta Conference in February 1945, and of the conference’s fateful reverberations in the waning days of World War II

Tensions at Yalta threatened to tear apart the wartime alliance of Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin just as victory was close at hand. Catherine Grace Katz uncovers the dramatic story of the three young women who were chosen by their fathers to travel with them to Yalta, each bound by fierce family loyalty, political savvy, and intertwined romances that powerfully colored these crucial days.

**4. Louise McLean – The Thursday Murder Club by Richard Osman. 2021 -384 pages. A New York Times bestseller soon to be a major motion picture from Steven Spielberg. Book 1 or 3.**

The Thursday Murder Club is a mystery fiction novel focused around a murder at a retirement home called Coopers Chase. It was written by Richard Osman in 2020 and published by Penguin. Osman is a British television show producer, and the chosen style of narrative reflects this in the novel; the chapters are often left on cliffhangers and switch to follow different characters as a television show would when compiling several plot threads together. The novel alternates between a first-person narrative told through the perspective of the protagonist Joyce and her diary entries, and a third-person narrative focusing on all the characters. The story follows Joyce and her friends as they attempt to solve a series of murders happening at Coopers Chase. Together, the group works with the police and proves their worth by racing to solve the murders before the detectives assigned the case do.

**5. Norma Brodsky – The Horse Woman by James Patterson and Mike Lupica. 2022. 448 pages. Fiction\* suspense/thriller by James Patterson and Mike Lupica**  
Emotions rule us all --- and turn two women’s lives into a ride they can barely control in this “hugely entertaining, riveting page-turner.” —#1 bestselling author Louise Penny

Maggie Atwood and Becky McCabe, mother and daughter, both champion riders, vowed to never, ever, go up against one another.

Until the tense, harrowing competitions leading to the Paris Olympics.

Mother and daughter share a dream: to be the best horsewoman in the world

Coronado is Maggie's horse. An absolutely top-tier Belgian warmblood.

Sky is Becky's horse. A small, speedy Dutch warmblood.

Only James Patterson could bring you such breakneck speed, hair-raising thrills and spills.

Only hall of fame sportswriter Mike Lupica could make it all so real.

**6. Betsy Stephens – Namesake by Jhumpa Lahiri. 2003. 291 pages. Fiction. Movie version came out in 2006.**

The Namesake (2003) is the debut novel by American author Jhumpa Lahiri. It was originally published in The New Yorker and was later expanded to a full-length novel. It explores many of the same emotional and cultural themes as Lahiri's Pulitzer Prize-winning short story collection Interpreter of Maladies. The novel moves between events in Calcutta, Boston, and New York City, and examines the nuances involved with being caught between two conflicting cultures with distinct religious, social, and ideological differences.

**7. Barbara Brennan – House of Names by Colm Toibin. 2017. 288 pages.**

A retelling of the ancient Greek play-cycle the Oresteia, Toibin's eleventh novel follows the cursed family of Agamemnon, King of Mycenae. When Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter Iphigenia to appease the gods, his wife Clytemnestra swears revenge. After she succeeds in murdering her husband, her son Orestes murders her to avenge his father. Publishers' Weekly hailed House of Names as "a dramatic, intimate chronicle of a family implosion set in unsettling times as gods withdraw from human affairs."