I am doomed to remember a boy with a wrecked voice—not because of his voice, or because he was the smallest person I ever knew, or even because he was the instrument of my mother’s death, but because he is the reason I believe in God; I am a Christian because of Owen Meany.

In the summer of 1953, two eleven-year-old boys—best friends—are playing in a Little League baseball game in Gravesend, New Hampshire. One of the boys hits a foul ball that kills the other boy's mother. The boy who hits the ball doesn't believe in accidents; Owen Meany believes he is God's instrument. What happens to Owen after that 1953 foul ball is extraordinary.

Recommended by Dr. Miron

Originally self-published in 1978, Once a Runner captures the essence of competitive running—and of athletic competition in general—and has become one of the most beloved sports novels ever published.

Inspired by the author’s experience as a collegiate champion, the story focuses on Quenton Cassidy, a competitive runner at fictional Southeastern University whose lifelong dream is to run a four-minute mile. He is less than a second away when the turmoil of the Vietnam War era intrudes into the staid recesses of his school’s athletic department. After he becomes involved in an athletes’ protest, Cassidy is suspended from his track team. Under the tutelage of his friend and mentor, Bruce Denton, a graduate student and former Olympic gold medalist, Cassidy gives up his scholarship, his girlfriend, and possibly his future to withdraw to a monastic retreat in the countryside and begin training for the race of his life against the greatest miler in history.

A rare insider’s account of the incredibly intense lives of elite distance runners, Once a Runner is an inspiring, funny, and spot-on tale of one man’s quest to become a champion.

Recommended by Mr. Kaye

In Elon Musk: Tesla, SpaceX, and the Quest for a Fantastic Future, veteran technology journalist Ashlee Vance provides the first inside look into the extraordinary life and times of Silicon Valley's most audacious entrepreneur. Written with exclusive access to Musk, his family and friends, the book traces the entrepreneur's journey from a rough upbringing in South Africa to the pinnacle of the global business world. Vance spent more than 30 hours in conversation with Musk and interviewed close to 300 people to tell the tumultuous stories of Musk's world-changing companies: PayPal, Tesla Motors, SpaceX and SolarCity, and to characterize a man who has renewed American industry and sparked new levels of innovation while making plenty of enemies along the way.

Vance uses Musk's story to explore one of the pressing questions of our time: can the nation of inventors and creators which led the modern world for a century still compete in an age of fierce global competition? He argues that Musk—one of the most unusual and striking figures in American business history—is a contemporary amalgam of legendary inventors and industrialists like Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, Howard Hughes, and Steve Jobs. More than any other entrepreneur today, Musk has dedicated his energies and his own vast fortune to inventing a future that is as rich and far-reaching as the visionaries of the golden age of science-fiction fantasy.

Recommended by Mr. Yi
On May 1, 1915, with WWI entering its tenth month, a luxury ocean liner as richly appointed as an English country house sailed out of New York, bound for Liverpool, carrying a record number of children and infants. The passengers were surprisingly at ease, even though Germany had declared the seas around Britain to be a war zone. For months, German U-boats had brought terror to the North Atlantic. But the Lusitania was one of the era’s great transatlantic “Greyhounds”—the fastest liner then in service—and her captain, William Thomas Turner, placed tremendous faith in the gentlemanly strictures of warfare that for a century had kept civilian ships safe from attack.

Germany, however, was determined to change the rules of the game, and Walther Schwieger, the captain of Unterseeboot-20, was happy to oblige. Meanwhile, an ultra-secret British intelligence unit tracked Schwieger’s U-boat, but told no one. As U-20 and the Lusitania made their way toward Liverpool, an array of forces both grand and achingly small—hubris, a chance fog, a closely guarded secret, and more—all converged to produce one of the great disasters of history.

It is a story that many of us think we know but don’t, and Erik Larson tells it thrillingly, switching between hunter and hunted while painting a larger portrait of America at the height of the Progressive Era. Full of glamour and suspense, Dead Wake brings to life a cast of evocative characters, from famed Boston bookseller Charles Lauriat to pioneering female architect Theodate Pope to President Woodrow Wilson, a man lost to grief, dreading the widening war but also captivated by the prospect of new love.

Recommended by Mr. Porges

They had nothing in common until love gave them everything to lose . . .

Louisa Clark is an ordinary girl living an exceedingly ordinary life—steady boyfriend, close family—who has barely been farther afield than their tiny village. She takes a badly needed job working for ex-Master of the Universe Will Traynor, who is wheelchair bound after an accident. Will has always lived a huge life—big deals, extreme sports, worldwide travel—and now he’s pretty sure he cannot live the way he is.

Will is acerbic, moody, bossy—but Lou refuses to treat him with kid gloves, and soon his happiness means more to her than she expected. When she learns that Will has shocking plans of his own, she sets out to show him that life is still worth living.

A love story for this generation and perfect for fans of John Green’s The Fault in Our Stars, Me Before You brings to life two people who couldn’t have less in common—a heartbreaking-ly romantic novel that asks, What do you do when making the person you love happy also means breaking your own heart?

Recommended by Ms. Metzgar

A city is hit by an epidemic of “white blindness” which spares no one. Authorities confine the blind to an empty mental hospital, but there the criminal element holds everyone captive, stealing food rations and raping women. There is one eyewitness to this nightmare who guides seven strangers among them a boy with no mother, a girl with dark glasses, a dog of tears-through the barren streets, and the procession becomes as uncanny as the surroundings are harrowing. A magnificent parable of loss and disorientation and a vivid evocation of the horrors of the twentieth century, Blindness has swept the reading public with its powerful portrayal of man’s worst appetites and weaknesses—and man’s ultimately exhilarating spirit. The stunningly powerful novel of man’s will to survive against all odds, by the winner of the 1998 Nobel Prize for Literature.

Recommended by Srta. Mauricio

Check out the teen summer reading program and teen programs happening at the library this summer!

millburnlibrary.org/teens/teen_events