

# Monday Morning Eye-Opener December 21, 2020

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## MONDAY MORNING EYE-OPENER

FROM THE STATE LIBRARY OF IOWA



December 21, 2020



### BookBrowse

Your guide to exceptional books

### Top Reads From 2020 From BookBrowse

If you're not familiar with **BookBrowse**, it's an "affordable, reader-focused, and user-friendly readers' advisory solution for public libraries. *BookBrowse recommends the best in contemporary fiction and nonfiction, featuring books across a range of genres—mainly for adults with some outstanding young adult titles...*"

**BookBrowse** annual awards are different from other "top lists" because the editors don't simply count raw votes (which favors the most widely read books) Instead, only subscribers can vote from titles on a short list; ballot stuffing is restricted because voting is extended only to subscribers.

### Numbering Among Their Top 20 List For 2020

**Best Nonfiction Book** goes to Erik Larson's *The Splendid and the Vile* "a gripping account of Churchill's political brinkmanship as he united Britain to face the challenge of an apparently unbeatable foe."

**Best Fiction Book Award** goes to **E. Schwab** for *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* "the compelling saga of a woman who sells her soul for a longer life, but with a catch: she'll live precisely as long as she wants to but she will leave no mark of her passage, no proof she existed; she is cursed to be forgotten through all time."

**Best Young Adult title: We Are Not From Here** by Jenny Torres Sanchez “*this novel explores desperation, escape, and survival across the U.S.-Mexico border, and is inspired by current events. It brings a vivid portrait of lives torn apart and the desperate plight of migrants at the U.S. southern border to a young adult audience.*”

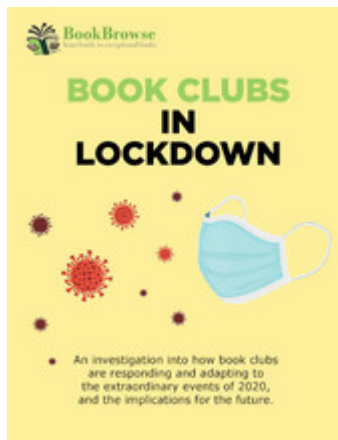
**Best Debut Author Award: The Mountains Sing** by Nguyễn Phan Quế Mai “*a multi-generational tale of the Tran family, set against the backdrop of the Viet Nam War. Nguyen Phan Que Mai is a celebrated poet in Vietnam, and her first novel in English has proven to be very popular, receiving starred reviews from BookBrowse, Publishers Weekly, Library Journal, and Kirkus Reviews.*”

**BookBrowse** offers a free newsletter, with more content accessible to paid subscribers. Click the button below to learn more about what’s available to subscribers and to see the complete list of 2020 award winners

[BookBrowse Top Picks For 2020](#)

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## Book Clubs in Lockdown



### A New Report From BookBrowse

An October research study conducted by BookBrowse has led to a recent publication titled Book Clubs in Lockdown. More than 3,000 book club members connected with BookBrowse took part in the survey. The resulting report Book Clubs in Lockdown includes stories about how book clubs adapted to the challenges of 2020. Most survey participants noted that their adaptations will impact their book discussion groups for the long term, well after a return to normalcy.

From the study: “*The pandemic has been an impetus for clubs and members to embrace technology that they had previously avoided (such as eBooks and virtual meetings) with many groups proactively helping members to master these new skills. Respondents meeting virtually greatly appreciate that technology allows them to stay connected and maintain a sense of community.*”

### A Few Findings

- In general, technology adoption is viewed as a positive, with Zoom described as a “lifeline.” Admittedly, some clubs struggle with technical issues and virtual etiquette, and many groups are temporarily missing members who are unable or unwilling to meet virtually.
- Virtual book discussions tend to be less free-flowing. This is seen as a positive by many, who say their group’s discussions are more focused and inclusive due to fewer side conversations; others miss the organic flow of an in-person discussions.
- The great majority of respondents are looking forward to meeting again in person when conditions allow, but many who are currently meeting virtually expect to retain a virtual component. 29% of respondents expect to continue using video technology to allow absent members to join in-person meetings, or to host entire

meetings virtually when weather conditions are poor. In an earlier study, we found that some former or potential book club members were not in book clubs due to childcare costs, frequent travel, disabilities, and other obstacles. Virtual or hybrid clubs would likely be appealing options for many such people.

- As an added benefit to meeting online, groups have discovered how easy it is to invite authors to join them on Zoom.

[Book Clubs in Lockdown](#) marks the second research study from BookBrowse; in 2019, they published the [Inner Lives of Book Clubs](#). Anyone can download a free copy of [Book Clubs in Lockdown](#) at the button below. You're welcome to share the national findings locally within your library, in newsletters, via social media, and certainly with your own book discussion groups.

Free Download: [Book Clubs in Lockdown](#)

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## State Library 2020 Highlights

If the words 2020 and highlights can go together in the same sentence, then this space offers up some proud accomplishments this year!

### IAShares One-Year Anniversary

**IAShares**, the statewide delivery service that launched last November, celebrated its one year anniversary this November. 2020 led to rough roads for the delivery drivers, winter weather challenges should have given way to an easier spring. But by March, libraries began closing due to COVID concerns, shutting down the delivery service until mid-June. But the vans are rolling again and 2021 will surely lead to happier trails.



### CARES Act Funding

Thanks to our share of federal **CARES Act** money, the State Library provided **PPE kits** to every public library in Iowa. By using the IAShares delivery system, those kits were delivered in July and August.

Also thanks to **CARES Act** funding came **Bold360 Chat Service**. In August, public libraries were signing up for this new service. For most Iowa libraries, **Bold360 Chat** offers a new touchpoint between staff and patrons, especially the younger crowd who are very adept at texting. The State Library is paying for this service for the next two years, so if you haven't yet requested **Bold360 Chat** for your library, contact your [District Consultant](#) to get started.

### IALearns: Learning Management System

September boasted the debut of a modern new education catalog that we named **IALearns**. Combining a course catalog with a learning management system, library staff and trustees can register for live classes, take self-paced courses, and enjoy software that keeps the tally of c.e. credits earned--tally ho 🎉

### Education & Conversation

State Library staff produced a crazy amount of classes in 2020, as we all turned to online teaching and learning in record numbers. State Library staff worked to help Iowa libraries respond to the pandemic by reshaping services around it. In the spring, we produced ten “**Crisis Conversations**” over ten consecutive weeks. In addition, last spring each District started “**Office Hours**” in our ZOOM rooms--informal gatherings for staff to ask questions of each other, share solutions, and stay connected. Office hours by any other name have proven popular, so these will continue in the new year.

### And More Education

Adding to our education menu this year, State Library staff conducted four **Big Ideas Book Discussions**, four **Friday Tech Focus** sessions, five **Boardroom** webinars, and many ZOOM sessions for **youth services staff** tasked with coordinating children and teen programming in a virtual world.

*Safe to say we're all tired 😊 We're proud of these accomplishments and even more proud of our association with Iowa's library directors, staff, and boards. You've shown resilience, heart, and patience through an incredibly difficult year, proving that libraries are indeed essential services.*

**Thank You For Your Dedication  
Throughout 2020!**



### Concrete 5 PLOW Classes

This **Wednesday December 23**, Marie Harms continues instructional sessions on using the new Concrete5 PLOW websites. 2:00-3:00PM this Wednesday and next, register for one or more inside IALearns

[IALearns Catalog](#)

This is a short work week for us: State Library offices will be **closed for the holidays on December 24 and 25**, also **January 1**. With Christmas vacation ahead, look for the next **Monday Morning Eye-Opener** on January 4th

**From all of us at the State Library,  
wishing you a Merry Christmas  
and a much brighter and healthier New Year!**



## Monday Morning Eye-Opener

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