

Winter 2025 Edition

# Lee Listens

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Newsletter to Lee County Talking Books Users

## Staff:

Librarian: Samantha Burkett

Library Associates: Robin Welch and Lisa Cooke

## Holiday Closings:

Monday, January 20, 2025 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Monday, May 26, 2025 – Memorial Day

Friday, July 4, 2025 – Independence Day

## Hours of Operation:

Monday - Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Phone: (239) 533-4780

Email: [talkingbooks@leegov.com](mailto:talkingbooks@leegov.com)

Address: 1651 Lee Street, Fort Myers, FL 33901

## Helpful Hints for Cartridge Users:

- Return your cartridges as you finish them. Once one is returned, we start your next order so you never run out of books.
- If you find yourself skipping many of the titles you receive, consider adjusting your subject choices. Call or email us so we can update your interests.

## **Selections from Talking Book Topics**

Talking Book Topics is produced bimonthly and lists a selection of titles recently added to the Talking Book catalog. In 2022, the large print version of the publication was discontinued. Thanks to the Braille and Talking Book Library in Daytona Beach, we now are offering Selections from Talking Book Topics. This is a large print, condensed version of the full publication, listing titles from popular genres. There is a fiction and nonfiction version. Please contact us to start receiving this item.

You may find the full version of Talking Book Topics online in PDF or HTML format at [tinyurl.com/talking-book-topics](http://tinyurl.com/talking-book-topics).

## **Introducing the Monthly Book Discussion Online Hooked on Books!**

Online Hooked on Books is scheduled from 2–3 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 23, Feb. 27, March 27, April 24, May 22 and June 26.

Join us for an hour of books and conversation where everyone is welcome to discuss their favorite books. Get recommendations from friends, neighbors and librarians on everything from recent releases to forgotten classics. Join us online by registering at [leelibrary.net/events](http://leelibrary.net/events) or by calling in with just your phone.

To join the Online Hooked on Books program with just your phone:

- Call one of these two numbers:
  - United States (Toll Free): [1-877-309-2073](tel:1-877-309-2073)
  - United States: [1-646-749-3129](tel:1-646-749-3129)
- When asked, type in the access code: 388-316-701
- While on the phone, press \*6 to mute or unmute yourself so that you can share your favorite books with us!

## **Do you need help getting started with BARD?**

Attend a Download Drop-In session at a Lee County Library System branch to receive help getting started with the National Library Service's Braille and Audio Reading Download service (BARD) which is provided through Lee County Talking Books. These sessions are open to all library patrons for help with eBooks, eAudioBooks and more. You can find the schedule online at [leelibrary.net/events](http://leelibrary.net/events). Before attending, contact us to ensure you have an active account for BARD.



## **The BARD Express Player**

Bard Express, version 3.0.0.7, is available for Windows-based computers and is a handy tool to search for titles and download the files for audio or e-braille material. With this update, you can listen to your audiobooks using the BARD Express Player on your computer!

## **My Talking Books on Smart Speaker**

My Talking Books is an Amazon Alexa skill that can be used to access and stream audiobooks from BARD on Echo devices or through the Alexa app on a smartphone. It is currently in Open Beta status, meaning the software is available to only 5000 users who will provide feedback for improvements before its official release. Using the skill's voice-only interface, you can search the BARD catalog, manage your wish lists, book lists, preference settings, reading speed, review your streaming history and so much more. Interested? Sign up to be a tester! Visit [tinyurl.com/talking-books-smart-speaker](http://tinyurl.com/talking-books-smart-speaker)

## **Need a Braille Calendar?**

Let us know! We can provide one for free every year. The large wall calendar has both print and braille. The smaller pocket-sized calendar is braille only.



# Southwest Florida Reading Festival

FREE to the Public!

Saturday, March 1, 2025

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Fort Myers Regional Library

2450 First Street, Fort Myers, FL

Twenty-five acclaimed and best-selling authors are coming to Lee County to talk to fans and sign books at the 26th annual Southwest Florida Reading Festival. The festival brings in internationally recognized authors for adults, teens and children to celebrate the power of reading, promote literacy and library services. This daylong event is filled with diverse author presentations, book signings, fun activities for teens and children, the latest library technology, food trucks and more. Plus, every child and teen attending the event will receive a free book. For more info, visit [www.readfest.org](http://www.readfest.org) or download the app “SWFL ReadFest.”

Check out the following pages for a list of Talking Book titles available by this year’s festival authors.

## **Recommendations – Adult Reading Festival Authors**

### **Gus Murphy series by Reed Farrel Coleman – DB087384**

A gritty, atmospheric series about the other side of Long Island, far from the wealth of the Hamptons, where real people live - and die. Includes *Where it Hurts* (2016) and *What You Break* (2017). Coleman also writes for Robert B. Parker’s *Jesse Stone* series.

### **Close Knit by Jenny Colgan – DB124753**

Follow Gertie MacIntyre from knitting circle to air stewardess in this glorious and romantic summer novel set in Scotland's windswept Northern isles. 2024.

### **Don't Know Tough by Eli Cranor – DB119399**

Friday Night Lights gone dark with Southern Gothic; Eli Cranor delivers a powerful noir that will appeal to fans of Wiley Cash and Megan Abbott. 2022.

### **The Collective by Alison Gaylin – DB105827**

This novel asks how far a grieving mother will go to right a tragic wrong in this propulsive novel of psychological suspense. 2021. Gaylin also writes for Robert B. Parker's *Sunny Randall* series.

### **Every Note Played by Lisa Genova – DB091562**

A powerful exploration of regret, forgiveness, freedom and what it means to be alive. Concert pianist Richard received standing ovations around the world. Now diagnosed with ALS, he faces the loss of motor control and his musical career. 2018.

### **Not In Love by Ali Hazelwood – DB122038**

A forbidden, secret affair proves that all's fair in love and science. Torn between loyalty and an undeniable attraction, Rue and Eli throw caution out the lab and the boardroom windows. 2024.

### **August Snow by Stephen Mack Jones – DB087398**

Tough, smart, and struggling to stay alive, August Snow is the embodiment of Detroit. Growing up in the city's Mexicantown, August joined the police force only to be drummed out by a conspiracy of corrupt cops and politicians. He has just returned to the house he grew up in after a year away, and quickly learns he has many scores to settle. 2017.

### **The Leftover Woman by Jean Kwok – DB124822**

Kwok writes an evocative family drama and a riveting mystery about the ferocious pull of motherhood for two very different women. 2023

### **Ms. Demeanor by Elinor Lipman – DB112174**

Jane Morgan is a valued member of her law firm—or was, until a prudish neighbor, binoculars poised, observes her having sex on the roof of her NYC apartment building. As she tries to adapt to life within her apartment walls, she discovers she hasn't heard the end of her tattletale neighbor. 2022.

### **Bombshell : A Hell's Belles Novel by Sarah MacLean – DB104924**

After years of living as London's brightest scandal, Lady Sesily Talbot has embraced the reputation and the freedom that comes with the title. No one looks twice when she lures a gentleman into the dark gardens beyond a Mayfair ballroom...and no one realizes those trysts are not what they seem. 2021.

### **Must Love Flowers by Debbie Macomber – DB115385**

Two women at different stages of life find themselves on a journey of renewal after undergoing hardships in this uplifting novel. As Maggie and Joan confront difficult life choices, they draw strength from their new friendship in surprising ways. 2023.

### **Famous in a Small Town by Viola Shipman – DB119247**

A magical tale of destiny and small-town charm based in Good Hart, Michigan. Mary runs the Very Cherry General Store and has been waiting for the arrival of a stranger she's believed since childhood would carry on her legacy. Along comes Becky Thatcher. 2023.

### **Not another love song by Julie Soto – DB122925**

Gwen Jackson is a self-taught professional violinist. Xander Thorne is the exact opposite - a rock star cellist with a bad attitude. When Gwen is offered first chair of the orchestra, she can't help but notice a hostile sense of competition between them...but also an electric chemistry. 2024.

## **The Mango Tree: a Memoir of Fruit, Florida, and Felony by Annabelle Tometich – DB120533**

A memoir of growing up as a mixed-race Filipina "nobody" in suburban Florida. Annabelle traces her upbringing while reckoning with her father's death in a Fort Myers motel, her fiery mother's yearning for the country she left behind, and her own journey in the pursuit of belonging. 2024.

### **Recommendations – Teen Reading Festival Authors**

#### **Dungeons and Drama by Kristy Boyce – DB118520**

A fun YA romcom full of fake dating hijinks! Musical lover Riley aspires to become a director on Broadway. Crucial to this plan is to bring back her school's spring musical, but Riley is grounded and stuck working at her dad's game shop. 2024.

#### **One of Us is Lying by Karen M. McManus – DB088357**

Five students walk into detention, and only four walk out. According to investigators, the last student's death wasn't an accident. He was planning to post juicy reveals about all four of his classmates the next day, which makes them each suspects. Or are they the perfect patsies for a killer who's still on the loose? 2017.

### **Recommendations – Kid Reading Festival Authors**

#### **Cape: The League of Secret Heroes by Kate Hannigan – DB096628**

Soon after being recruited by the mysterious Mrs. Boudica to join a secret military intelligence operation, Josie, Mae and Akiko discover their superhero abilities and use them against a Nazi operation.. For grades 4-7. 2019.

#### **Chirp by Kate Messner – DB098678**

After moving to Vermont, a young gymnast hides a secret as she makes new friends and investigates her grandmother's claim that someone is trying to destroy her cricket farm. For grades 4-7. 2020.

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Featuring:

Join the Discussion, Online Get Hooked on Books!  
Southwest Florida Reading Festival  
Reading Recommendations

Talking Books  
Lee County Library System  
1651 Lee Street.  
Fort Myers, FL 33901

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BLIND OR HANDICAPPED**

