Event Guide
2020 Community-Wide Reading Program
About the Book

In 1922, a Bolshevik tribunal sentences Count Alexander Rostov to house arrest in the luxurious Hotel Metropol. For the next 30 years, the Count experiences his country’s upheaval and transformation from the confines of his attic room, the building’s grand public spaces and the behind-the-scenes domains of hotel employees-turned-friends. While Rostov cannot go out into the world, the world comes to him in the form of Nina, a bureaucrat’s precocious daughter; the film actress Anna Urbanova; American intelligence officer Richard Vanderwhile; and even political leaders like Nikita Khrushchev. This novel is a lightly drawn, episodic portrait of Russia’s 20th century political history, as well as a charming tale of one man’s dedication to family, memory and home.

About the Author

Born and raised in the Boston area, Amor Towles graduated from Yale College and received an MA in English from Stanford University. Having worked as an investment professional for over twenty years, Mr. Towles now devotes himself full time to writing in Manhattan, where he lives with his wife and two children.

Mr. Towles’ first novel, “Rules of Civility,” which was published in 2011, was a New York Times bestseller and was named by the Wall Street Journal as one of the best books of 2011. The book has been translated into over 20 languages, its French translation receiving the 2012 Prix Fitzgerald.

Mr. Towles’ second novel, “A Gentleman in Moscow,” which was published in 2016, was on the New York Times bestseller list for over a year in hardcover and was named one of the best books of 2016 by the Chicago Tribune, the Washington Post, the Philadelphia Inquirer, the San Francisco Chronicle, and NPR. The book has been translated into over 35 languages including Russian. In the summer of 2017, the novel was optioned by EOne and the British director Tom Harper to be made into a 16-hour miniseries starring Kenneth Branagh.

About the Program

One Read, coordinated by the Daniel Boone Regional Library, is a community-wide reading program sponsored by a task force of local media, educational institutions and community agencies. It is designed to encourage adults of all ages to read one book and participate in discussions and activities.

Suggestions for each year’s book come from the community in the fall and winter. In January, a panel of community members reviews the suggestions, narrows the list down to 10 titles and then chooses two or three books to present for a public vote. We’ll be accepting suggestions for next year during the month of November at our libraries or at www.oneread.org.

Author’s Talk

Amor Towles

Tuesday, September 22 • 7 p.m.

Live event via Zoom, register at www.oneread.org/events

Join author Amor Towles for a live conversation with KFRU’s David Lile about his bestselling book “A Gentleman in Moscow.”

Submit your questions for Mr. Towles through September 18 via oneread.org or by mail to: DBRL, Attn: One Read, PO Box 1267, Columbia, MO 65205.

The audio of this event will be rebroadcast on September 29 at 7 p.m. on 89.5 KOPN.
One Read in the Columbia Daily Tribune

Each Sunday September 6-27, the Ovation section of the Columbia Daily Tribune will feature an article by Library Associate Ida Fogle reflecting on a topic or theme in this year’s One Read selection. Keep up with year’s One Read events on the Ovation calendars.

Museum of Art & Archaeology Virtual Tour

Sunday, September 20 • 2-3 p.m.

Live event via Zoom, register at www.oneread.org/events

Join Museum of Art and Archaeology docent Valerie Hammons for a virtual tour of artwork in the museum highlighting works of art from Russia as well as works that reflect Count Rostov’s experience in the Metropol Hotel.

One Read Panel Discussion

Tuesday, September 15 • 7-8 p.m.

Live event via Zoom, register at www.oneread.org/events.

Join us for this annual event as David Lile of KFRU moderates a panel of local experts, each discussing the novel “A Gentleman in Moscow” from their perspective. Dr. Chris Lawrence, a licensed clinical psychologist, will talk about her work on psychological trauma and its relationship to isolation and confinement. Dr. Martha Kelly, associate professor of Russian studies, will share her knowledge and research on Russia. Mataka Askari, a certified peer specialist, will discuss his experience being incarcerated and his life after his release. Columbia City Council member Mike Trapp will talk about his work with the CoMo Crisis Shelter, an initiative to provide shelter and health monitoring to those experiencing homelessness in our community during the Covid-19 pandemic. The audio of this event will be broadcast live on 89.5 KOPN. Registration is limited.

Book Discussion With Kate Berneking Kogut

Thursday, September 24 • 6-7 p.m.

Live event via Zoom, register at www.oneread.org/events

Join Dr. Kate Berneking Kogut, associate professor and chair of the English and Creative Writing program at Stephens College, for a virtual discussion of “A Gentleman in Moscow” by Amor Towles. Registration is limited.

Runner-Up Book Discussion With Matt Dube

Thursday, October 1 • Noon-1 p.m.

Live event via Zoom, register at www.oneread.org/events

Join Dr. Matt Dube, professor of English and director of online education at William Woods University to discuss “The Last Days of Night” by Graham Moore, the One Read runner-up book. In this historical legal thriller set in the 1890s, rivals Thomas Edison and George Westinghouse, both racing to be the one to electrify America, are locked in the so-called “War of the Currents.” Registration is limited.
Flash Fiction Writing Contest: Nostalgia

September 1-25

Taking inspiration from “A Gentleman in Moscow,” we invite you to tell a nostalgic tale in 250 words or less. Your story can be about anything and anyone, but make sure it evokes longing, explores a memory or reflects on better days past. The tone can be bittersweet, celebratory or anywhere in between.

Winning entries and honorable mentions will be published online and in the Columbia Missourian, and the winners will receive bookstore gift cards.

See full rules and submit entries September 1-25 at www.oneread.org or at any library or bookmobile. Participants must be age 16 or older and residents of Boone or Callaway Counties.

Confinement: A Virtual Art Exhibit

View the exhibit online September 1-26 at www.orrstreetstudios.com

Mid-Missouri artists ages 16 and older were invited to contribute works that explore the experiences of isolation and confinement. The exhibit will be displayed online. Cash prizes will be awarded for three winners, courtesy of Columbia’s Office of Cultural Affairs along with a one-year membership to the Columbia Art League for the first place winner.

One Read Window Display

September 21-October 2

The Callaway Bank, Court St., Fulton

Stop by this Court Street window display to view images of Moscow as it appeared during the early 1900s.