

Nantucket Island's 2024 One Book One Island Section Is Announced

The selection for this year's 2024 One Book, One Island is the The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store by James McBride.

NANTUCKET, MA, USA, February 2, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Each year the Nantucket Atheneum invites organizations, book clubs, individuals, and businesses to submit their team's candidate for the annual community read. Participants were asked to consider books based on quality, accessibility, and relevance to [our richly diverse island](#). Thanks to all who wrote in suggesting titles for One Book, One Island (OBOI) 2024, staff reviewed the most popular recommendations and narrowed the field to three terrific candidates.



The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store by James McBride was chosen for the 2024 OBOI.

1. The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store by James McBride



Kirkus Reviews declares McBrides's Heaven and Earth Grocery Store, a "boisterous hymn to community, mercy, and karmic justice."

Kirkus Reviews

2. The Starless Sea by Erin Morgenstern

3. How to Say Babylon, by Safiya Sinclair

After putting these three titles out in a community survey and receiving hundreds of votes, the decisive favorite and our selection for this year's 2024 One Book, One Island is The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store by James McBride, award-winning musician, screenwriter, and author of the bestselling Oprah's Book Club pick Deacon King Kong, the National Book Award-winning The Good Lord Bird and his

landmark memoir and American Classic, The Color of Water, read in schools and universities across the United States. Kirkus Reviews declares McBrides's Heaven and Earth Grocery Store, a "boisterous hymn to community, mercy, and karmic justice."

It's June 1972, and the Pennsylvania State Police have some questions concerning a skeleton

found at the bottom of an old well in the ramshackle Chicken Hill section of Pottstown that's been marked for redevelopment. But Hurricane Agnes intervenes by washing away the skeleton and all other physical evidence of a series of extraordinary events that began more than 40 years earlier, when Jewish and African American citizens shared lives, hopes, and heartbreak in that same neighborhood.

At the literal and figurative heart of these events is Chona Ludlow, the forbearing, compassionate Jewish proprietor of the novel's eponymous grocery store, whose instinctive kindness and fairness toward the Black families of Chicken Hill exceed even that of her husband, Moshe, who, with Chona's encouragement, desegregates his theater to allow his Black neighbors to fully enjoy acts like Chick Webb's swing orchestra. Many local White Christians frown upon the easygoing relationship between Jews and Blacks, especially Doc Roberts, Pottstown's leading physician, who marches every year in the local Ku Klux Klan parade.

The ties binding the Ludlows to their black neighbors become even stronger over the years, but that bond is tested most stringently and perilously when Chona helps Nate Timblin, a taciturn Black janitor at Moshe's theater and the unofficial leader of his community, conceal and protect a young orphan named Dodo who lost his hearing in an explosion.

He isn't at all "feeble-minded," but the government wants to put him in an institution promising little care and much abuse.

The interlocking destinies of these and other characters make for tense, absorbing drama and, at times, warm, humane comedy....If it's possible for America to have a poet laureate, why can't James McBride be its storyteller-in-chief? – Kirkus

Many thanks to The Artists Association of Nantucket (AAN) for nominating The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store. The AAN has been a steadfast supporter of OBOI and generally kicks off the event with a OBOI themed art exhibit. AAN, like the Nantucket Book Foundation, which chose 2023's winning title, has been an excellent partner worth recognizing for their shared commitment in enriching our community with inspiring opportunities for creative participation in lifelong learning.

Stay tuned for more details about the AAN's OBOI March exhibit, and from which [Nantucket community organizations](#) readers will be able to pick up a free paperback copy of the community read, along with a schedule of book discussions and related events.

Discover past OBOI selections and other library [services and activities at nantucketatheneum.org](https://www.nantucketatheneum.org)

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