

Book Talk Program

“A Room of My Own” by Ann Tatlock

Introduction

Hello everyone, my name is Cherie Bronkar and I am from the Muskingum County Library System. I deliver books to your location once a month. I would like to show you some of the items that I can bring when I deliver to your location.

Hold up display items and explain what each item is.

We offer large print titles from all the popular authors for those of you who have difficulty reading the smaller print that is normally found in those titles. There is also a large selection of books on tape for those of you who have difficulty reading any size of print or if you have trouble holding books for long periods of times.

Hold up a Talking Book machine and tapes.

The library also offers Talking Book Machines provided through the State Library for those of you who cannot read print of any kind. The State Library provides machines free of charge. They also provided a catalog with a large selection of titles for you to choose from. The tapes are mailed to you, again free of charge, and all you need to do to send them back is flip the address card and give them back to the nurses to mail out.

I would like to get a feel for the types of book you read here. I have been bringing a varied selection of titles, so that I cover each genre. What types of books do you prefer? What authors do you prefer? Is there anyone who would like me to bring books on tape? Would anyone like to get started with a Talking Book machine?

Book Talk

The book that I will be talking about today is “A Room of My Own” by Ann Tatlock. What I would like to do today is tell you about the book and then have an open discussion of the issues and time period of this book.

This story takes place during the depression and is told by a young girl named Virginia. Virginia’s father is a physician. Virginia enjoys working with her father and often goes on visits with him. Her father is a gentle man who has often been known to take a chicken or a bushel of apples as pay for his services. Her mother is a strict and proper woman. As a young girl Virginia thinks she knows what life and love is all about, but she will discover that her parents have a kind of love for each other that she never knew existed.

The depression has just started to affect Virginia's family. Her uncle Jim has recently lost his job and his family has been forced to move into Virginia's home. She relinquished her room to her aunt and uncle and moves into the room of her young sister and cousins.

We come to find out that uncle Jim has lost his job because he was part of the union movement. Uncle Jim continues to work with the union organizers hoping that the mill will decide to recognize the union.

A group of transients set up camp by the railroad tracks in the town. Virginia's father had gone to the camp to provide medical care. Her mother worried that her father's involvement with the transients would be frowned on by the people in the town. Virginia accompanied her father on a trip to the camp one afternoon. She was shocked to see the conditions that the transients lived in. Virginia describes the camp and its residents in great detail and you can see that she is deeply touched by what has happened to these people. She never imagined that there would be families and children of her own age that had been living lives similar to hers just a year ago.

Much to her mother's dismay, Virginia continues to accompany her father to the transient camp. She starts a blanket drive for the people at the camp and becomes even more drawn to them and their stories of how they came to be here.

The situation of Uncle Jim worsens with trouble on the picket lines. The striking workers are attacked by the sheriff and his deputies for halting deliveries to the plant and Uncle Jim is injured. Although he makes it home to tell the story there are some who did not live to tell theirs.

Virginia becomes curious about the picketers, but she is too afraid to see what is going on. Her cousin decides that he needs to go there and see for himself what his father is doing. He convinces Virginia to join him and she reluctantly does. She soon finds her self right in the middle of the turmoil.

This story looks at many aspects of the depression, from the kidnapping of the Lindberg baby to the plight of the transients by the railroad. Although I did not grow up during the depression I believe that this author has done her homework and come up with a factual and intriguing look at life during the depression. Her use of young Virginia as your storyteller brings this story to life, as she learns that there is more hardship in the lives of those around her than most young girls can understand.

Virginia is a witty and soulful girl who brings a certain lighthearted twist to the tough issues that she and her family face.

If you would like to read this book, I have brought several copies with me today. I also have brought a book on tape version.

Questions for discussion

Did anyone in your family lose their job during the depression?

Did your doctor make house calls?

What were your hobbies and interests as a young woman/man?

Did you share a room with brothers or sisters?

Did you have any extended family live with you?

Was anyone you knew in a union during the depression?

Do you remember anyone doing a food drive or a blanket drive like Virginia did?

Were there any transient camps in your town?

Did the women in your family work outside of the home?

How did your family make the best of the hard times during the depression?

What types of games did the children play?

Materials used for this program

“A Room of My Own”, by Ann Tatlock (10 copies of the book and 3 copies of the book on tape)

Talking Book program flyers and applications.

Easy as 1,2,3 handout.