

Dear Stranger

A Salem Reads Project

Dear Salem Public Library Patron,

You are invited to participate in a special project which is a part of our 2022 Salem Reads: One Book, One Community. In honor of the theme of connection between strangers that is a part of our 2022 book—***A Tale for the Time Being*** by Ruth Ozeki—you are asked to consider being a part of this project, modeled on a statewide project organized by Oregon Humanities. Here is how:

1. Write a letter. Address it “Dear Stranger.” Fill a page or two, or more if you feel inspired. If you’d like, feel free to include a photo or a drawing or a recipe—anything that will fit in an envelope. You can write about anything you like. Here’s a prompt to get you started:

A Tale for the Time Being is, among other things, about the importance of memory and remembering. What do you hope people might remember about you? What is a memory you find particularly meaningful?

2. Complete the Dear Stranger release form. We cannot exchange letters without a release.
3. Bring your letter to any Ask Me Desk at Salem Public Library or mail it by February 28, 2022:
Dear Stranger c/o Salem Public Library
585 Liberty St. SE
Salem, OR 97301

Be sure to write your name and return address on your envelope so we can match your letter with your release form.

When you write to Dear Stranger, your letter will be swapped with one from another writer. They will get your letter; you will get theirs. The exchange is anonymous, and you can share as little or as much information about yourself as you like. Please keep in mind that photos, even ones without people in them, may contain information that could be used to identify you.

Dear Stranger is open to everyone, though writers under the age of 18 must have parental consent to participate. Letters from writers under the age of 18 will be sent to other writers under the age of 18. Letters from adult writers will be exchanged with other adults.

Salem Public Library Foundation volunteers read all letters before they are exchanged.



Dear Stranger

Release Form

Thank you for participating in Dear Stranger as part of the 2022 Salem Reads. Please complete and sign this form and bring/send it along with your letter. Letters must be received by Monday, February 28 to be exchanged. You do not have to include your return address in the body of your letter. We will not share any of your information without your explicit permission.

Name _____

Email Address _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ ZIP Code _____

By signing below, I grant the Salem Public Library Foundation to share my letter with another participant in Dear Stranger and acknowledge that the Salem Public Library Foundation and Salem Public Library accept no responsibility for the content of the correspondence exchanged through Dear Stranger.

Signature _____ Date _____

We post images and excerpts from some Dear Stranger letters to Salem Public Library social media.

Please check this box if you **do not** want us to post content from your letter.

If you are 17 years old or younger, please have your parents or guardian complete the following:

I grant permission for my child (named above) to participate in Dear Stranger.

Parent or Guardian Name _____

Parent or Guardian Signature _____