

## Like what you read?

Read-alikes are suggestions for readers who enjoy the works of a particular author and would like recommendations of other authors that write in a similar style or genre.

### Fiction Read-alikes

- **Miss Benson's Beetle** by Rachel Joyce
- **West With Giraffes** by Lynda Rutledge
- **The Brilliant Life of Eudora Honeysett** by Annie Lyons  
*Unlikely friendship, moving, heartwarming, thoughtful; engaging*
- **The Shell Collector** by Nancy Naigle  
*Nostalgic; Atmospheric; Heartwarming. Relationship fiction; Gentle read*
- **The Dolphin House** by Audrey Schulman  
*Female protagonists, Inspired by real events, Historical fiction*
- **The Lonely Hearts Book Club** by Lucy Gilmore  
*Character-driven, Heartwarming; Upbeat, Unlikely friendships*
- **Gravity is the Thing** by Jaclyn Moriarty  
*Intricately plotted, Sardonic; Offbeat; Moving, Engaging*
- **The Friend** by Sigrid Nunez  
*Coping with death; Human and animal bonds, Reflective; Moving*
- **Death Valley** by Melissa Broder  
*Darkly humorous; Moving; Reflective, Engaging; Lyrical; Witty*

### Nonfiction Read-alikes

- **The Underworld: Journeys to the Depths of the Ocean** by Susan Casey
- **The Soul of an Octopus: A Surprising Exploration into the Wonder of Consciousness** by Sy Montgomery  
*Nature Writing; Upbeat; Thought-provoking*
- **Underwater Wild : My Octopus Teacher's Extraordinary World** by Craig Foster and Ross Frylinck  
*Nature Writing, Thought-provoking*
- **Octopus, Seahorse, Jellyfish** by David Liittschwager; essays by Elizabeth Kolbert, Jennifer Holland, and Olivia Judson

Need a different recommendation? A librarian will provide personalized help through Your Next Read. Visit [thelibrary.org/yournextread](http://thelibrary.org/yournextread).

Springfield-Greene County Library District



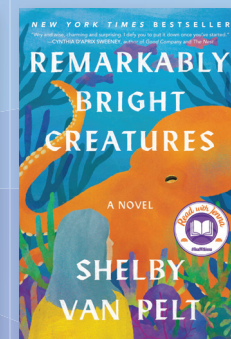
ONE BOOK ~ ONE COMMUNITY  
**ONE READ**



Thursday, March 28, 2024

# “Remarkably Bright Creatures” A Conversation with Shelby Van Pelt

Library Center main floor, 7 p.m. for adults



Charming, witty and deceptively sensitive, Shelby Van Pelt's "Remarkably Bright Creatures" follows an unlikely connection between a widow and a Giant Pacific Octopus residing at the local aquarium.

Written through the lives of this unexpected pair, "Remarkably Bright Creatures" offers a gentle reminder that sometimes, taking a hard look at the past can help uncover a future that once felt impossible. Come together in this annual community read event to hear the author discuss her acclaimed novel — a story of friendship, reckoning and hope. Books will be available for purchase and signing.

The book is available at The Library for checkout in book, digital audiobook and e-book formats at [thelibrary.org/catalog](http://thelibrary.org/catalog).

See a schedule of all the One Read programs and book discussions at [thelibrary.org/oneread](http://thelibrary.org/oneread).



Sponsored  
by Friends of  
the Library

## About “Remarkably Bright Creatures”

After Tova Sullivan’s husband died, she began working the night shift at an aquarium, mopping floors and tidying up. Keeping busy has always helped her cope, which she’s been doing since her eighteen-year-old son mysteriously vanished on a boat over thirty years ago.

Tova becomes acquainted with curmudgeonly Marcellus, a giant Pacific octopus living at the aquarium. Marcellus knows more than anyone can imagine but wouldn’t dream of lifting one of his eight arms for his human captors — until he forms a remarkable friendship with Tova.

Ever the detective, Marcellus deduces what happened the night Tova’s son disappeared. And now Marcellus must use every trick his old invertebrate body can muster to unearth the truth for her before it’s too late.

## About the author

Shelby Van Pelt’s debut novel “Remarkably Bright Creatures” became an instant New York Times bestseller. Born and raised in the Pacific Northwest, she’s now missing the mountains in the Chicago area with her husband and children.

---

## Book Discussions

Want to chat about the book with others? Check out a book discussion group:

- Friday, March 8, 10:30 a.m. for adults age 55 and older at the Northview Center, 305 E. Talmage St.
- Tuesday, March 12, 6:30 p.m. at the Schweitzer Brentwood Branch Library
- Thursday, March 14, 2 p.m. at the Republic Branch Library
- Thursday, March 14, 4 p.m. at the Strafford Branch Library
- Thursday, March 14, 6–7:30 p.m. at the Downtown Springfield

Association, 134 Park Central Square, Suite 120

- Thursday, March 14, 6:30–8 p.m. at the Village Meeple Board Game Cafe, 1570 E. Battlefield Road, Suite F. Board games and books make the perfect pairing! Chat about the title while learning how to play the board game Reef.
- Tuesday, March 19, 1:30 p.m. at the Ash Grove Branch Library
- Thursday, March 28, 1:30 p.m. in the Library Station Frisco Room

## Book discussion questions for “Remarkably Bright Creatures”

1. What kind of person do you think Marcellus would be if he were human? What qualities do Marcellus and Tova both share that make this remarkable friendship a success?
2. On page 9, Tova empathizes with the sharks in the big aquarium tank, musing that she “understands what it means to never be able to stop moving, lest you find yourself unable to breathe.” Why do you think she feels so compelled to keep busy? What would happen if she simply stopped?
3. In contrast to how Tova keeps busy, Cameron emerges as a character who deals with grief by remaining stagnant, refusing to even try to reach his potential, much to the frustration of those who care about him. Why do you think he sabotages himself? Have you ever had someone like this in your life?
4. Marcellus is extremely smart — smarter than any human he encounters. Have you had encounters with animals — octopuses or otherwise — who demonstrated surprising levels of intelligence, emotional or otherwise? Have you felt “seen” by an animal or felt a relationship with an animal deepen upon earning their trust?
5. Marcellus remarks on page 59 that “fingerprints are like keys, with their specific shape. I remember all keys, too.” From the house key Tova loses to the ring of keys Marcellus finds at the bottom of the sea, the novel is filled with various types of keys. What do you think keys symbolize in this novel?
6. Tova’s Swedish Dala Horses are some of her most treasured possessions. Why do you think that is? Are there heirlooms in your family that carry a similar significance?
7. Marcellus’ life in captivity is much different than the life of an octopus in the wild — and eventually, Terry reveals that Marcellus was rescued from the sea after a life-threatening injury. Aquariums play an important role in education and conservation, but some people view keeping animals, especially intelligent ones, in captivity with skepticism. What do you think?
8. In the novel’s last few pages, Tova and Cameron realize how they are truly connected. What do you imagine they are doing a year from the novel’s end?