**CHAPTER & VERSE**

Our book for April was ‘The Return – Father, Sons and the Land In-between’ by Hisham Matar, winner of the 2016 Pulitzer Prize in biography. The author, a Libyan exile tells of his personal quest to find out what became of his father following his kidnapping from their home in Cairo and imprisonment in Libya by the Gadaffi regime. We gradually learn about the family structure, the leadership and importance of his father, and having completed his education in England and America and become a writer, the author devotes all his energies to discovering the truth. He seeks assistance from the British Government and various International bodies and even manages to contact Seif el Islam one of Gadaffi’s sons who does enable the release of his uncle and several cousins but fails to provide the vital information. Throughout this book, which is beautifully written, the love expressed and pain and frustration is palpable and perhaps the writing has gone someway to assuage his grief. The recent historical facts concerning Libya, that we all remember, are all there, culminating in the Arab Spring which enabled his return to the country. A serious book giving insight to the complexities of the Arab world.

‘Any Human Heart’ by William Boyd tells of a very different world. Written in journal form we follow the life story of Logan Mountstuart, writer, WW2 spy, art dealer and womaniser. Born in 1906 he enjoys a privileged upbringing and after male

dominated school and Oxford finds success as a writer. He marries unsuitably to an Earl’s daughter, they have a son and soon after an acrimonious divorce he marries his mistress Freya with whom he has a daughter. His life is very happy but the Second World War looms. Without spoiling it, as for many people after the war, his life changes radically leading him to New York, London, Nigeria and eventually France where he dies aged 85. The book had a mixed reception by the group with some objection to his attitude and bad treatment of women. However, it is a fascinating history of the 20th century, convincingly written with many references to his associations with real authors and artists and it was easy to be fooled into thinking it was a biography and not, in fact, a novel. It has humour, sadness, tragedy and adventure and some found it difficult to put down.

In future we plan to read:-

‘Station Eleven’ by Emily St. John Mandel Monday 30 July

‘Memoirs of a Geisha’ by Arthur Golden Mon/Tues 10/11 September

Both Rolleston book groups are running a second hand book stall at the Village Gala on August Bank Holiday Monday. If you have any books you would like to donate please contact Maggie Gawthorpe 812621