

# MORSELS FOR THE MIND BOOK GROUP

**Date:** February 20, 2017      **Hostess:** Laura

**Book Title:** **A Gentleman in Moscow**

**Author:** **Amor Towles**

**Book Synopsis:** In June 1922 the charming Count Alexander Ilyich Rostov is tried in Moscow and found guilty. Rather than being sentenced to death as an anti-revolutionary, ostensibly for having written a poem deemed a call to arms, the count is made a non-person by the Soviets and sentenced to life imprisonment in the Metropol Hotel. He will be summarily shot if he exits the premises. Thus begins the reader's long and enchanting acquaintance with the count over four decades, during which Rostov does not leave the hotel.

**Our Review:** We found the book to be a delightful story! Each of the characters was so colorful – from the precocious little Nina, to the villainous Bishop. So many visuals – the Count and young Nina with the key to the hotel, the closet transformation, the desk full of gold coins! We loved the games – hide the thimble, ZUT! and the elaborate plot at the end. And oh the descriptions of the food served in the dining room. I couldn't wait to get my hands on a Mille-feuille! We loved both the audio and written versions of the book, but felt the book had more detail, as the footnotes were often 2-3 pages apiece.

**Food Served:** Russian tea (a blend of black tea, orange juice and spices), blini served with sour cream and either salmon or strawberry jam. Dinner was a Latvian stew (pork with apricots, prunes and onion) over rice, roasted beets served with a tangy dill sauce, homemade black bread accompanied by lots of fresh butter and lavender honey, and our choice of either a red or a white wine. Labels removed as per Communist rules! Dessert was an elegant Mille-feuille on a doily lined crystal plate.

**Highlights of Discussion:** Laura's mother loaned her an authentic Russian Art quilt that was hanging on the wall. She read the story that accompanied the quilt to the group. We were also treated to maps, pamphlets and Russian music. Each guest received a pouch full of gold coins to take home with them (chocolate of course!)

**Attendance:** Laura, Ann, Ginny, Julie, Nancy D, Nancy M and Nancy S

**Business/Suggestions:** Next month we will be meeting at Nancy S to discuss *When Breath Becomes Air*, by Paul Kalanithi