



Below are this summer's Book Club selections. Chosen to represent a range of interests, it is hoped these books will stimulate thought and discussion among our diverse group of readers. As always, your comments and suggestions are welcome.

Summer 2003

The Caprices by Sabina Murray

Amazon.com wrote, "With none of the nostalgia that mars so many books about World War II, ...this short story collection covers the unfamiliar territory of the Pacific Campaign - Malaysia, the Philippines, New Guinea - and the all-too-familiar territory of human suffering ... brilliant and affecting".

Crow Lake by Mary Lawson

Kate is a successful Canadian zoologist, used to dissecting and analyzing. When she narrates the story of the tragedy that changed her family twenty years earlier, and that she must now come to terms with, the result is a beautifully crafted novel that will leave readers fascinated.

Desirable Daughters by Bharati Mukherjee

Indian tradition meets the American way of life for three daughters. Tara, the narrator of the story, now lives in San Francisco and is a single parent. Her world suddenly changes when a stranger comes to her door claiming to be a member of her family. To determine the truth, she must get beyond the traditions and taboos of India and the immigrant communities in the U.S.

Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight: An African Childhood by Alexandra Fuller

Born in England and now living in Wyoming, Fuller lived in Rhodesia during that country's civil war (1971-1979). "With a unique and subtle sensitivity to racial issues, Fuller describes her parents' racism and the wartime relationships between blacks and whites through a child's watchful eyes" according to *Publishers Weekly*.

Embers by Sandor Marai

Two old men, once best friends, meet after 41 years apart. The setting, an old Hungarian castle, evokes dark fairy tales and the magical realism of many Latin American novelists. But the book really captures the glamour of the fin de siecle era before the wars, and the twisted bonds of friendship and betrayal.

Everything is Illuminated by Jonathon Safran Foer

A young Jewish American writer searches in the Ukraine for the woman who might have saved his grandfather from the Nazis. This novel is full of charm and humor at the same time it reveals the dark forces of family and history.

Fast Food Nation: the Dark Side of the All-American Meal by Eric Schlosser

A frightening expose of the ubiquitous and seemingly lawless food industry that dominates the American diet. Similar to Upton Sinclair's classic, *The Jungle*, this sociocultural investigation will make all of us more careful eaters.

Life of Pi by Yann Martel

After a terrible shipwreck, Pi, the son of a zookeeper, finds himself adrift in the Pacific Ocean with a zebra, a hyena, an orangutan, and a Bengal tiger for company. "A fabulous romp... 'a story that will make you believe in God' as one character says" wrote *Publishers Weekly*. The 2002 winner of the Booker Prize.

Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd

Lily Owen grows up motherless and neglected on a S. Carolina peach farm. When her beloved nanny must leave town in a hurry after insulting some belligerent white men, Lily flees with her. This novel, about the search for a mother and the need to mother oneself, does a wonderful job of depicting the crucial elements of character building.

A Simple Habana Melody by Oscar Hijuelos

Hijuelos addresses the question, can there be, after Buchenwald, any more rumbas? However, set just after World War II when the aging composer Israel Levis returns to his childhood home of Havana after many years in Europe, this is not primarily a war novel. Rather, it is about the richness of memory, and music, after much suffering.

Three Junes by Julia Glass

The setting shifts from Greece to Scotland, Greenwich Village and the Hamptons, during three important summers for the members of the McLeod family. "Alternately joyful and sad, this exploration of modern relationships and the families people both inherit and create for themselves is highly recommended" wrote *Library Journal*.

Unless by Carol Shields

A Canadian writer is happily married with three children. Suddenly, her eldest daughter becomes a "street person". How did this beautiful, caring, sweet young lady turn into a filthy, mute beggar with a sign reading "goodness" around her neck? Shields uses this central conundrum and a mother's grief to reflect on writing, modern womanhood, power, family, and love. A story that grabs the reader on many levels.