



BOOK CLUB BOOKS

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 2012

The All of It by Jeanette Haien

Father Declan is a world-weary priest who tries to find solace while salmon fishing near his tiny Irish village. But he can't stop dwelling on the deathbed confession of one of his parishioners, Kevin Dennehy, who refused to the end to marry Enda, even though they lived together for almost fifty years without anyone suspecting the truth. Unorthodox lives intersect in a tender story told with lyricism and humor. (fiction)

The American Heiress by Daisy Goodwin

An antidote for Downton Abbey withdrawal symptoms. Cora Cash is a Gilded Age American heiress with brains, beauty, and an interfering mother determined to have her daughter marry into the British aristocracy. When Cora actually falls head over heels for the Duke of Wareham, it seems like the perfect ending. But the aloof and mysterious Duke is harboring some dark secrets that Cora must use all her talents to unearth. Goodwin borrows elements from many beloved classics like *Jane Eyre* and *Rebecca* to fashion a suspenseful and fun historical romance. (fiction)

The Art of Fielding by Chad Harbach

At a small college on the shores of Lake Michigan, baseball prodigy Henry Skrimshander suddenly loses his confidence, throwing a ball that hits another player. This one misstep sets off a cascade of consequences that upend five lives. Harbach's big-hearted, intelligent, and engrossing novel explores the transformative effects of love and friendship. (fiction)

Before I Go to Sleep by S. J. Watson

Christine wakes up each morning having to relearn who she is, the result of a rare form of amnesia brought on by a terrible accident. Her long-time husband Ben tries to help her, while her doctor encourages her to keep a secret journal. But when she sees the words "don't trust Ben" written in her journal, the frightening truth about what really happened starts to emerge. A mesmerizing psychological thriller that delves into the elusive nature of memory. (fiction)

Doc by Mary Doria Russell

19th century Dodge City comes vividly alive in Russell's reimagining of the life of "Doc" Holliday and other famous characters of the Wild West. After growing up in Civil War-torn Georgia, Doc ends up in Kansas, having contracted tuberculosis. This fateful move brings him together with Wyatt Earp and the love of his life, a Hungarian-born prostitute with a fierce intellect and a cultured background. A spectacular story of a legendary character whose loyalty to friends and love of music prove to be greater than his illness and the violence of frontier life. (fiction)

The Family Fang by Kevin Wilson

The subversive Fang family are art world darlings who make "strange and memorable things" through performance art. Needless to say, Annie and Buster, having grown up in this environment, are not exactly well-adjusted adults. When their parents disappear under bizarre circumstances, their first thought is that it must be another one of their stunts. But is it? Wilson mixes humor with hard truths in this satirical exploration of the lines separating life and art, and the Baby Boomer generation's parenting approach. (fiction)

The Good Daughter by Jasmin Darznik

When the author discovers an old photo of her mother as a child bride marrying a man who is not Darznik's father, a secret history of life in Iran is revealed. Through tapes made by her mother, Darznik recovers the lives of three generations of women who dealt with the harsh cultural restrictions of their native land in unique ways. This is a richly detailed memoir that is inspirational in its depiction of hard-won endurance in the face of great adversity. (nonfiction)

I'm Feeling Lucky: the confessions of Google employee number 59 by Douglas Edwards

An inside look at Google's early years from a former director of consumer marketing and brand management. He describes the meteoric rise of a company where all established wisdom was challenged, employees were treated as equals and given free reign for creative thought, convictions rather than egos led to disagreements, and the corporate culture included in-house massages, doctors, health food, and extravagant parties. An entertaining business memoir told with warmth and respect. (nonfiction)

The Man in the Rockefeller Suit by Mark Seal

Reinvention may be the American way, but German immigrant Christian Gerhartsreiter took the concept to a new level of audacity. He became "Clark Rockefeller", fooling members of the Boston elite for many years until the breakup of his marriage and the kidnapping of his own daughter revealed his incredible deceptions. Seal makes this true story as suspenseful as a Hitchcock movie. (nonfiction)

Rules of Civility by Amor Towles

At a Greenwich Village jazz bar in 1937, roommates Katey and Eve are charmed by the handsome, wealthy Tinker Grey. The three become close friends, sharing many glittering escapades during the days leading up to WWII. But a tragic car accident changes everything with unexpected consequences for all three. The undercurrent of unease as Towles depicts how the upper classes can use their money and influence to manipulate others makes for a haunting story with unforgettable characters. (fiction)

The Sense of an Ending by Julian Barnes

A middle-aged man who thought he'd left his past behind must confront events from 40 years ago. When Tony is bequeathed a journal that belonged to his brilliant school friend who committed suicide as a young man, everything he thought he knew about his life is turned upside down. This Booker Prize-winning author has created a haunting story of loss and betrayal with a surprising twist at the end. (fiction)

The Submission by Amy Waldman

When a Muslim American architect wins a blind competition for a Ground Zero memorial, reactions run wild. Claire, a jury member and 9/11 widow, presses ahead with the winning design, becoming embroiled in the growing furor. Waldman has a keen eye for the political and social conflicts inherent in this all too plausible scenario. With empathy she explores messy moral issues and ironies while also revealing the connections between art, politics and religion. (fiction)

Train Dreams by Denis Johnson

A haunting look back at America's expansionist era. At the turn of the century, Robert Grainier, orphaned as a young boy, was put on a train to travel alone to distant relatives. He ends up in Idaho and in time becomes an itinerant railroad laborer and witness to both the mysteries of the western landscape and the havoc of the twentieth century's radical technological transformations. An ode to the vanished American West. (fiction)

Turn Right at Machu Picchu by Mark Adams

Journalist Adams was no outdoorsman adventurer, but deciding that he needed to challenge himself, he undertakes a trek through the Peruvian Andes to the mysterious ancient city of Machu Picchu, "discovered" by Hiram Bingham III in 1911. His companions on this difficult journey include a rugged Australian survivalist and some local mule tenders. The result is an amusing and insightful travelogue that culminates with a stunning vision of the city. (nonfiction)



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