



BOOK CLUB BOOKS

Below are this winter'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 2017

Before the Fall by Noah Hawley

On a foggy summer night ten wealthy vacationers and one down-on-his-luck painter depart Martha's Vineyard on a private jet headed for New York. Minutes later, the plane plunges into the ocean. The only survivors are the painter Scott Burroughs and a young boy, who is now the last remaining member of an immensely wealthy and powerful mogul's family. Was it by chance or was something more sinister behind the accident? A storm of media attention brings Scott fame that quickly morphs into accusations, and he scrambles to find the truth. A complex, compulsively readable page turner. (fiction)

Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City by Matthew Desmond

Eight families in Milwaukee struggle to keep a roof over their heads in this astonishing exploration of poverty and exploitation, economic policy, and the psychological toll on those who are caught in a never ending cycle of hurt. Desmond writes with the vividness of a novel and makes each family's story come alive. Winner of the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for General Nonfiction. (nonfiction)

Homegoing by Yaa Gyasi

Two half sisters are born into different villages in Ghana in the 1700s. Each is unaware of the other, and their paths are very different. One will lead a life of comfort in the palatial rooms of a local castle while the other will be captured in a raid on her village and sold into slavery. The story of their descendants through eight generations ranges from the African Gold Coast to the plantations of Mississippi, from the American Civil War to Jazz Age Harlem. An extraordinary novel that illuminates slavery's troubled legacy both for those who were taken and those who stayed. Winner of the Pen/Hemingway Award. (fiction)

The House at the Edge of Night by Catherine Banner

The perfect summer read about four generations who live on an enchanting island. Esposito is a doctor desperate for work, and the only place that will take him is a tiny, rocky place off the coast of Sicily. There he starts a family, and the story of the dynasty and the island bar they own is central to the history of the generations as they experience major events, including the Allied invasion of Sicily and the 2008 financial crisis. (fiction)

The Last Days of Night by Graham Moore

In 1888, an inexperienced but capable lawyer finds himself defending George Westinghouse in a patent lawsuit against Thomas Edison. These two giants of invention are fighting for control of the generation of electrical current and the rewards that go with it. Taking place against a backdrop rich with period details of the heady world of high society and the more sinister dealings going on behind closed doors, Moore explores the nature of genius, the cost of ambition, and how America became electrified. A thrilling novel based on actual historical events. (fiction)

Lily and the Octopus by Steven Rowley

Lily is a short, happy 12-year-old who loves mint chocolate-chip ice cream and happens to be a dachshund. Ted is a fortyish writer who's been in therapy since he split with his last boyfriend. He also loves his dog Lily with all his heart, and can't bear that a brain tumor is slowly killing her. He decides he must take action to save his sanity and thus engages the tumor in a battle of wills that takes on epic proportions. By turns heartbreaking and hilarious, Rowley's endearing portrait of a sensitive man facing a pet owner's worst nightmare brims with the emotional complications that come with unconditional love. (fiction)

The Return by Hisham Matar

An eloquent memoir and detective story told with a reporter's sense of precision and a novelist's eye for emotional detail. After Qaddafi was toppled in 2011, Mr. Matar, who had been living abroad in exile, traveled back to his family's homeland to try to find out what happened to his father who had been a leading Libyan dissident. In 1990, he was kidnapped by agents working for Qaddafi. Friends and political supporters risked their lives smuggling out the occasional letter from him, but after a couple of years those letters stopped and no one knew why. Winner of the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for Biography. (nonfiction)



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