



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 2018

Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body by Roxane Gay

A brave, bracingly honest memoir of food, weight, self-image, and finding the power to face down shame. Gay is an insightful writer who understands the tension between desire and denial, and the complicated road to self-care. She casts a critical eye on her childhood, teens, and twenties, including the devastating act of violence that was a turning point in her young life. As she brings readers into the present and the pains and joys of her daily life, we are thoroughly engaged in her remarkable story. A National Book Critics Circle Award finalist. (nonfiction)

Less by Andrew Sean Greer

Arthur Less is a mediocre novelist about to turn fifty. When he receives an invitation to his former lover's wedding, he can't say yes but he can't say no either—it would signal defeat. So he decides to skip town by attending every half-baked literary event he can, anywhere in the world. What could possibly go wrong? A hilarious satire of the American abroad, a bittersweet rumination on love and the human heart, and an elegy to chances lost and perhaps regained. *Less* won the Pulitzer Prize. (fiction)

Manhattan Beach by Jennifer Egan

Set in New York City from the depression era through WWII, Egan's powerful family saga sucks the reader in with historical details and the pace of a thriller. It begins with Eddie Kerrigan and his struggles to provide for his family, leading his daughter Anna to eventually work in the Brooklyn Naval Yard. She dreams of becoming a repairer of ships going to war, not your usual "women's work." When her father disappears, Anna enters another world populated by gangsters, bankers, sailors, and union men. Winner of the Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction. (fiction)

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness by Arundhati Roy

Roy takes us on an astonishing journey across the Indian subcontinent as she weaves together stories that explore themes of gender, India's caste system, corruption, and terrorism. Each of the characters in this tapestry is vividly, tenderly rendered. Its heroes are people who have been broken by the world they live in and then rescued, joined together by acts of love—and by hope. Longlisted for the Man Booker Prize. (fiction)

The Purple Swamp Hen and Other Stories by Penelope Lively

A luminous collection of short fiction from this Booker Prize winning author. Lively writes with wit and wisdom while taking the long view of life. One story is about a purple swamp hen in ancient Pompeii who escapes the lava from an erupting Vesuvius, while in another the narrator is having lunch with the woman for whom her recently deceased ex-husband left her, years earlier. Each exquisitely crafted story finds the importance in even trivial moments that impact relationships and lives. (fiction)

(over)

Sing, Unburied, Sing by Jesmyn Ward

This majestic and stirring novel tells the story of three generations of a poor family in rural Mississippi. Young Jojo is trying to understand what it means to be a man. Chief among the men he is influenced by is his black grandfather, Pop. But there are others who complicate his understanding: his absent father, Michael, who is being released from prison; his absent other grandfather who is white and who won't acknowledge Jojo's existence; and the memories of his dead uncle, Given, who died as a teenager. This is a classic road novel set in rural twenty-first-century America, examining the ugly truths at the heart of the American story and the power of love and hope. Winner of the National Book Award. (fiction)

Where the Water Goes: Life and Death Along the Colorado River by David Owen

An eye-opening investigation into how one of our major American water sources is in peril. Drought, climate change, and overuse are draining this majestic river, once a verdant wetland. Owen takes readers on an adventure downriver, along reservoirs, power plants, farms, fracking sites, and dried up mud flats. By taking a close look, he reveals a vast man-made ecosystem that is far more complex than we realize. He shows how a patchwork of engineering marvels, murky legal agreements, aging infrastructure, and neighborly cooperation enables life to flourish in the desert —and the disastrous consequences if any part of this fragile system fails. (nonfiction)



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