



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.

Winter 2003

American Chica: two worlds, one childhood by Marie Arana

This memoir and love story is full of the tension wrought by two cultures colliding. The author's North American mother fostered independent self-reliance and her South American father emphasized tradition and family loyalty. Arana, the editor of the Washington Post Book World, combines her journalistic eye with an endearingly humorous style.

Atonement by Ian McEwan

An English country estate in 1935 is the opening setting for this award-winning novel. The events of one scorching summer afternoon change forever the lives of the Tallis family. But what actually did happen? Through the coming years, including the tragedy of World War II, themes of injustice, responsibility, guilt, and atonement are masterfully explored.

Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress by Dai Sijie

Two friends stave off despair during the Cultural Revolution in China through their discovery of a cache of books written by classic European authors. They weave wonderful stories from their forbidden reading, enchanting other villagers and a charming peasant girl.

The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit by Sloan Wilson

The 1955 bestseller has been reissued with a new introduction by Jonathan Franzen. Capturing the mood of a generation, here is the story of Tom and Betsy Rath, a young couple with everything going for them in the optimistic post-war era. Tom finds himself caught up in the corporate rat race, and his voyage through that world eventually leads to the realization of the importance of responsibility and integrity. A story that seems especially appropriate for our current time.

The Pickup by Nadine Gordimer

Julie Summer is one of South Africa's privileged minority. But she longs to be bohemian, and takes up with an illegal immigrant from a poor Arab country. As their relationship deepens, Nobel Prize-winner Gordimer eloquently explores the psychological nuances and the broader impact of racism, economic chaos, and the world's desperate outcasts.

Year of Wonders by Geraldine Brooks

A small town in Derbyshire becomes a target for the horrific 17th century plague. As the population succumbs, the survivors choose to stay put and prevent the contagion from spreading, while helping each other as best they can. A skillful construction of how ordinary people cope with extraordinary circumstances.