



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.

WINTER 2006

The Children's Blizzard by David Laskin

This is the true story of the upper Great Plains blizzard of 1888 that claimed between 250 and 500 lives among the pioneers in Nebraska, the Dakota Territory, and Minnesota. Many of them were children, for schools were in session when the tempest roared across the plain, and the varied decisions that teachers made sealed the fate of their students. An adroit, perceptively told tale made personal by the details of the plight of five of these families.

How To Be Lost by Amanda Eyre Ward

It's been fifteen years since the day the three Winters sisters packed their most precious belongings in their mother's Oldsmobile and planned to run away from home just as soon as school was out. Then 5-year-old Ellie disappeared, and the family never recovered. Now, armed with a grainy magazine photo of a young woman who might be a 20-year-old version of her beloved sister, Caroline begins a quest to find her. Ward's smart novel is a satisfying blend of humor, poignant longing, and the power of love over loss.

Kafka On the Shore by Haruki Murakami

Teenager Kafka Tamura runs away from his home in Tokyo to escape from his famous sculptor father, while elderly Satoru Nakata wanders his way through each day after a mysterious childhood accident turns his mind into a blank slate. The fate of these two strangers and how they intertwine is told in this imaginative, fantastical tale that blurs the lines between the real and surreal, while plumbing the depths of love, loneliness, and friendship.

The Plot Against America by Philip Roth

A stunning novel in which Roth creates a mesmerizing alternate world. Charles Lindbergh defeats FDR in the 1940 presidential election, and Philip, his parents and his brother weather the isolationist, anti-Semitic political fallout. It is a story as suspenseful as the best thrillers and adept at illustrating how easily people can be persuaded by self-interest to abandon morality. Yet it is also a moving family drama, at times both touching and hilarious.

Small Island by Andrea Levy

Levy's award winning novel deftly brings two families in the bleak England of 1948 into sharp focus. One is Jamaican and the other English, but both groups struggle with class, race, sex, and the everyday pain that people inflict on one another. We see events from each character's perspective, thus highlighting the subjectivity of truth and the rationalizations that people tell themselves to be able to live with their weaknesses. A cinematic treatment with characters that are flawed but achingly human.

A Tale of Love and Darkness by Amos Oz

The only child of multilingual, literature-loving parents, Oz was destined to be a writer, even though he harbored fantasies of a more heroic life. In a memoir as splendid as his fiction, he unfurls the complex story of his family history, one that encompasses the heartbreaks of the Diaspora and the Holocaust, and brings to vivid life the violence, fury, fear, determination, and sorrow that brought Israel into being. It is also an eventful, gently funny, often magical reminiscence that revolves most around Oz's mother and her tragic death. A powerful story of the making of a writer.



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