

# Book Club Books



*Below are this fall'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.*

*Louise Pacholik, Reference Librarian*

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## **AMY & ISABELLE** by Elizabeth Strout

“A lyrical, closely observant first novel, charting the complex, resilient relationship of a mother and daughter... Part of the novel's power derives from Strout's ability to set Amy and Isabelle's painful struggles within the larger context of a small town.” Kirkus Reviews, November, 1998.

## **ESCAPE THROUGH THE PYRENEES** by Lisa Fittko

The spellbinding memoir of the author and her husband's life in France during World War II as Jewish leftists, active in the anti-Fascist German resistance and their heroic work escorting small groups of refugees over the Pyrenees from France to Spain and freedom at a great risk to their own lives.

## **ESPERANZA'S BOX OF SAINTS** by Maria Amparo Escandon

“Widow Esperanza grieves the unexpected loss of her only child during a routine tonsillectomy... She then sees the face of San Judas Tadeo, patron of desperate causes...and hears him say Blanca is not dead... She takes a third class bus to Tijuana in search of Blanca... her picaresque quest is at times unexpectedly hilarious.” Booklist January 1, 1999.

## **EVENING NEWS** by Marly Swick

“Swick's fourth book and second novel is an engrossing domestic melodrama carved from the same vein so successfully mined by writers like Sue Miller and Jane Hamilton. Things begin explosively with the accidental shooting of two year old Trina by her nine year old half brother Teddy. Trina dies and the story of the loss's effect on her survivors is told in the juxtaposed narratives of guilt-ridden Teddy and the children's stricken mother Giselle.” Kirkus Reviews, December 15, 1998.

## **FATAL STORM** by Robert Mundle

“Only 44 of the 115 yachts that started the race [the 1998 Sydney to Hobart Race] finished, 5 yachts sank, 7 were abandoned, 6 sailors died and 57 racers had to be rescued from the hurricane-strength winds and up to 90 foot swells. Mundle, a sailor and journalist who reported the awful tragedy live on Australian TV, relies on 124 interviews with survivors to relive the terror and excitement of a storm every bit as fierce as that described in Sebastian Junger's Perfect Storm.” Library Journal, September 1, 1999.

**GARDENS IN THE DUNES** by Leslie Silko

“There are many wonderful moments in this ambitious tale of Native America in conflict with paternalistic white culture, unquestionably the best fiction yet from Silko. It’s settings are the southwestern and northeastern U.S., England, and Europe near the end of the 19th century and its resonant theme is the imperfect adaptation of a girl of the (Arizona) Sand Lizard Indian tribe and an educated woman seeking independence to each other’s starkly contrasting ‘worlds’.” Kirkus Reviews, February 1, 1999.

**THE LADIES’ MAN** by Elinor Lipman

“A romantic comedy of errors by the novelist whose previous labors in this vineyard (Isabel’s Bid, 1995), have established her as a master hand...Funny, dumb, good-natured, predictable and slick: Lipman knows what to do and does it very well.” Kirkus Reviews, May 1, 1999.

**THE LOVE OF A GOOD WOMAN: STORIES** by Alice Munro

“...Munro packs each paragraph with a wealth of significant details, articulates the thoughts of a wide array of curious characters and captures the mixed signals embedded in exchanges between women friends, husbands and wives, or children and parents.” Booklist, September 1, 1998.

**THE NIGHT INSPECTOR** by Frederick Busch

“This story is set in New York City in 1867, and also in the painfully vivid memories and premonitions experienced by its narrator, Civil War casualty William Bartholomew, a former Northern sniper whose destroyed visage is concealed beneath a specially constructed mask...Another stunning dramatization of Busch’s commanding theme: that the world is a battlefield of chaos and dangers from which the innocent must - and may never - be protected.” Kirkus Reviews, February 15, 1999.

**THE SPIRIT CATCHES YOU AND YOU FALL DOWN** by Anne Fadiman

“...tells the story of a Hmong family’s experience with the American health care system and highlights many of the weaknesses of what some describe as the best health care system in the world. Fadiman writes beautifully and weaves the story of the Lees, their doctors, and the social and political history of the Hmong people and their unwilling immigration to the U.S.A. into a book that is difficult to put down once started.” New England Journal of Medicine.,

**THE SONG OF THE LARK** by Willa Cather

In this most autobiographical of Willa Cather’s novels, Cather exquisitely portrays the artistic development of Thea Kronberg, a talented singer growing up in the unsophisticated West of Colorado, and her ascent as an opera singer on the cultured East coast.

**THE TRAVELLING HORNPLAYER** by Barbara Trapido

“With tenderness and wit, Trapido weaves together a huge cast of characters in contemporary England and tells a story of family love and grief, passionate sex and betrayal, and bleak coincidence.” Booklist, January 1, 1999.