



# BOOK CLUB BOOKS

*Below are this summer'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.*

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## SUMMER 2011

### **Being Wrong: Adventures in the Margin of Error** by Kathryn Schulz

This journalist author has written a thoughtful and persuasive celebration of human fallibility that examines what it means to be right or wrong--and why it matters so much to us. She claims that "error is both a given and a gift—one that can transform our worldviews, our relationships, and most profoundly, ourselves." (nonfiction)

### **The Big Short: Inside the Doomsday Machine** by Michael Lewis

The always entertaining Lewis (*The Blind Side*) writes about the financial meltdown of recent times. This book is a history of how we got there from the perspective of several people who foresaw it, tried to warn about it, and/or made a fortune from it. The information he presents is easier to understand than many other treatments of the subject, but it's also an edge of your seat expose of heroes and villains. (nonfiction)

### **Faithful Place** by Tana French

French's emotionally searing mystery is her best yet, showcasing brilliant dialogue and mordant humor. In 1985, young Frank Mackey and his girlfriend, Rosie, made secret plans to elope to England and start a new life together far away from their crazy families. But when Rosie doesn't meet Frank the night they're meant to leave, and he finds a note, Frank assumes she's left him behind. That is until twenty-five years later when Rosie's suitcase is discovered in an abandoned house. (fiction)

### **The Imperfectionists** by Tom Rachman

Set against the beauty of Rome, Rachman's wry, astute novel follows the whirlwind private lives of the reporters, editors, and executives of an international English language newspaper as they struggle to keep it - and themselves - afloat. A former editor for the Paris branch of the International Herald Tribune, Rachman makes wonderful use of his credentials to bring to life for readers the center of a newsroom. (fiction)

### **The Invisible Bridge** by Julie Orringer

This is a breath-taking love story combined with a nail-biting historical epic. Set in Paris and Budapest during the late 1930's and into the war years, the author weaves her tale through the political events that were taking place in Europe over these years. A young Hungarian student comes to Paris to study architecture. He meets and falls in love with the mysterious Claire. As Europe erupts around them, hardships and injustices ensue. But their love for each other, as well as many other characters that become intertwined with their story, acts as a beacon through the terrible dark years. In the end, this is a triumphant novel about the redemptive power of goodness and love. (fiction)

### **Lord of Misrule** by Jaimy Gordon

In the early 1970s, a horse racing trainer attempts a scam at a small, backwater track in West Virginia, but nothing goes according to his plan when the horses refuse to cooperate. When his beautiful, flawed girlfriend, Maggie, shows up, she attracts the attentions of a sadistic gangster and things really heat up among this group of grifters and misfits. Gordon embraces the racing track's lingo and down-at-heel romance, and how bets never really come in the way you think they will. Winner of the National Book Award, this is both a comic and heartbreaking wonder. (fiction)

### **A Mountain of Crumbs** by Elena Gorokhova

In this perceptive memoir about growing up in Russia during the Cold War, the author's wry, present-tense narrative is both humorous and anguished, not about government repression, but about the daily universal teen struggles at home and at school. The problems of a crushing political regime are ever-present, but as her overbearing, protective mother explains, the official rules are simple: they lie to us, we know they're lying, they know we know . . . Eventually Elena ends up in New Jersey, and in her dual perspective she finds hope and opportunity. (nonfiction)

**Operation Mincemeat: How a Dead Man and a Bizarre Plan Fooled the Nazis and Assured an Allied Victory**

by Ben Macintyre

In 1943, the body of a supposed British soldier washed ashore off the coast of Spain carrying falsified intelligence documents designed to convince the German army that the Allies would invade Greece and Sardinia rather than Sicily. This outlandish ruse, code named "Operation Mincemeat," is the subject of Macintyre's astounding, true spy thriller that reads like a well-plotted adventure novel. (nonfiction)

**Packing For Mars: the Curious Science of Life in the Void** by Mary Roach

With humor and aplomb, Roach explores the strange and fascinating world of space travel and life without gravity. She is especially entertaining and informative when it comes to the problems of bodily functions, such as the horrors of space motion sickness, the challenges of space hygiene, sex in space, or space food. This is popular science at its best. (nonfiction)

**Super Sad True Love Story** by Gary Shteyngart

In this vision of a near future America, monitors display your credit rating as you hurry by and a gadget worn around your neck monitors your biochemistry while rating the sex appeal of everyone in sight. New Yorker Lenny Abramov, the endearingly romantic son of Russian Jewish immigrants, works for an avaricious life-extension business and is madly in love with young, hip, and shallow Eunice Park, of Korean parentage. Satirist Shteyngart is in fine form as he expands today's obsessive information age concerns into a hilarious, soul battering, and all too plausible portrait of a crass digital dystopia in which self-consumed humans are still humbled by love and death. (fiction)

**The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet** by David Mitchell

In this grand historical romance set in turn-of-the-19th-century Japan, the young Dutchman Jacob arrives on the manmade island of Dejima in Nagasaki Harbor as part of a contingent of Dutch East Indies officials charged with cleaning up the trading station's entrenched culture of corruption. Though engaged to be married in the Netherlands, he quickly falls hopelessly in love with Orito, a scarred but fiercely intelligent Japanese midwife and student of the station's resident doctor. But she is in love with a talented Japanese translator for the Dutch occupiers. With many turns of events stacked against him, Jacob persists in an honorable course, with fateful consequences. Mitchell interweaves colorful characters with illuminating details about feudal Japan as tensions build to a riveting climax. (fiction)

**The Tiger: A True Story of Vengeance and Survival** by John Vaillant

At the heart of this enthralling narrative is the ancient relationship between man and nature. In 1997, an injured, hungry, man-eating tiger seems to be choosing his victims carefully, creating panic and fear in a remote area of Russia. Time is running out on finding him before he kills again, so a team of hunters and dogs track the magnificent beast on foot through a vast range of forest and mountain, to a final, spectacular showdown. This is an amazing tale of spiritual and physical adventure that will give the reader a deeper understanding of the endangered Siberian tiger and the people whose history is so inextricably linked with it. (nonfiction)

**A Visit From the Goon Squad** by Jennifer Egan

Strong character development and inventive storytelling helped this novel win both the National Book Critics Circle Award and the Pulitzer Prize. Featuring former punk rocker Bennie, now a recording exec with a kleptomaniac assistant, aging and how it changes us and our relationships is the main theme of the book. A savvy, fascinating exploration of the music business, the digital age, and the ravages of time. (fiction)



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