



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.

SUMMER 2015

The Distant Marvels by Chantel Acevedo

Long ago Maria Sirena had been a popular storyteller in the Cuban cigar factory where she worked. Now it's 1963 and the elderly Maria is evacuated with other women as Hurricane Flora bears down on Castro's new Cuba. Once again Maria finds herself entertaining, this time her fellow refugees, with both richly imagined stories and her own epic family saga, ending with a heartbreaking confession. Enthralling moments of rebellion and bravery define this sweeping Scheherazade-style account of Cuban history. (fiction)

Euphoria by Lily King

Lily King's bestselling finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award tells of three young, gifted anthropologists in the 1930s, caught in a passionate love triangle that threatens their relationships, their careers, and ultimately, their lives. Inspired by events in the life of revolutionary anthropologist Margaret Mead, this taut, fiercely intelligent story of competing egos and desires in a landscape of exotic menace leads to a shocking outcome. King excels at taut pacing and fully realized characters. (fiction)

Everything I Never Told You by Celeste Ng

A gripping page-turner and a sensitive portrait of a Chinese American family living in 1970s small-town Ohio. Lydia is the favorite child in the Lee family and the one they hope will fulfill all their dreams. But when her body is found floating in the local lake, the precarious balancing act that has kept the family together tumbles into chaos, forcing them to confront long-held secrets that have been slowly pulling them apart. This moving story explores the divisions between cultures and the rifts within a family, and uncovers the ways in which mothers and daughters, fathers and sons, and husbands and wives struggle to understand one another. (fiction)

Factory Man by Beth Macy

"How one furniture maker battled offshoring, stayed local - and helped save an American town" is how the publisher describes this colorful true story. The Bassett Furniture Company was once the world's biggest wood furniture manufacturer. Owned by the same family for generations, it was hit hard in the 1980s by cheap Asian competition and was forced to send its production overseas. That is until John Bassett III, a shrewd and determined third-generation factory man, decided to fight back. Macy shows how Bassett used legal maneuvers, factory efficiencies, and sheer grit to save hundreds of jobs. (nonfiction)

In the Kingdom of Ice by Hampton Sides

This spellbinding tale of heroism and determination in one of the most unforgiving places on Earth is as suspenseful as a first rate thriller. James Gordon Bennett, the eccentric and stupendously wealthy owner of The New York Herald during the Gilded Age, decided to finance a risky expedition to explore the North Pole. Disaster struck as the crew found itself marooned a thousand miles north of Siberia with only the barest supplies, thus necessitating a long march across a frozen hell. They faced everything from snow blindness to polar bears in a desperate bid for survival. (nonfiction)

The Invention of Wings by Sue Monk Kidd

Hetty "Handful", a slave in Charleston in the early 1800s, yearns for life beyond the suffocating walls that trap her within the wealthy Grimke household. The Grimke's daughter, Sarah, has always known that she is meant to achieve great things, but she is hemmed in by the limits imposed on women. Kidd's generous novel is set in motion on Sarah's eleventh birthday, when she is given ownership of ten-year-old Handful, who is to be her handmaid. As we follow their remarkable journeys over the next thirty five years, we root for them both to find satisfying lives of their own as each shapes the other's destiny in a complex relationship marked by guilt, defiance, courage, and the quest for love. (fiction)

Lady in Gold by Anne-Marie O'Connor

The remarkable true story of Gustav Klimt's 1907 painting of the beautiful Viennese Jewish socialite, Adele Bloch-Bauer, which the Nazis stole and the Austrian government refused to return to the rightful owners. Adele's heirs eventually brought the case all the way to the U. S. Supreme Court. The Court's decision would have ramifications throughout the art world. The author gives a stunning and heartbreaking depiction of pre-World War II Vienna and the terrible crimes that ensued. (nonfiction)

The Narrow Road to the Deep North by Richard Flanagan

Alwyn "Dorrigo" Evans, the haunted protagonist of Richard Flanagan's Man Booker Prize-winning novel, is the subject of television documentaries and talk shows because of what he endured years ago in a faraway teak jungle, in a country that no longer exists. But Dorrigo has always been very uncomfortable with his public persona as the Anzac war hero surgeon who tried to save men in a Japanese POW camp working on the Thailand-Burma "Death Railway". His guilt over a love affair with his uncle's wife also consumes him. Flanagan probes the perennial human desire for recognition, friendship, love and hope. (fiction)

The Remedy for Love by Bill Roorbach

Eric, a small-town lawyer in Maine, finds himself uncertainly helping a vagrant-looking young woman after he has an odd encounter with her in a grocery store. As the snowstorm of the century barrels down on them, they seek shelter in an isolated cabin in the woods. Roorbach is adept at teasing out the subtlest nuances in the truths we reveal when there is no time for artifice while creating a tale that is as gripping as any adventure story. Tender, funny and terrifying all at once. (fiction)

Spare Parts: Four Undocumented Teenagers, One Ugly Robot, and the Battle for the American Dream by Joshua Davis

This powerful underdog story mixes current hot-button issues like immigration with an inspiring human interest angle. We come to root for these marginalized Latino high school kids who have nothing going for them, yet manage to make a robot out of scavenged parts and end up at the prestigious University of California Robotics Competition. Davis has raised the bar with a complex investigation of how teamwork, perseverance and good teachers can make a big difference. (nonfiction)

Station Eleven by Emily St. John Mandel

A famous actor has a heart attack onstage during a production of *King Lear*. EMT Jeevan Chaudhary is in the audience and leaps to his aid. Others watch in horror as Jeevan performs CPR, pumping Arthur's chest as the curtain drops, but Arthur is dead. As Jeevan walks home from the theater, a terrible flu begins to spread. Hospitals are flooded and Jeevan and his brother barricade themselves inside an apartment, watching out the window as cars clog the highways, gunshots ring out, and life disintegrates around them. So begins this audacious, darkly brilliant novel that spans decades, moving back and forth in time, and vividly depicting life before and after the pandemic and civilization's collapse. *Station Eleven* tells the spellbinding story of a Hollywood star, his would-be savior, and a nomadic group of actors roaming the scattered outposts of the Great Lakes region, risking everything for art and humanity. A National Book Award finalist. (fiction)

Us by David Nicholls

One night, Douglas Petersen, a beleaguered biochemist, is woken by his artist wife of almost a quarter of a century, Connie, and informed that she thinks their marriage may be over. This is bad news for Douglas – not only because he still loves Connie madly, but because they have recently booked an expensive grand tour of Europe as a final family holiday before Albie, their sullen son, heads off to college. So he resolves to make their possibly last family holiday into the trip of a lifetime: one that will make Connie fall in love with him all over again and his son gain renewed respect for his brilliant father. What could possibly go wrong? As it turns out in this hilarious and big hearted story, almost everything. Longlisted for the Man Booker Prize and sure to appeal to anyone interested in how families do and don't work. (fiction)



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