

# 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 2004**

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### **The Book of Illusions** by Paul Auster

David Zimmer is trying to rebuild his life, with little success, after a terrible tragedy leaves him without family. When he stumbles on the strange case of a 1920s silent film star who disappeared without a trace, very unexpected things start to happen. A many-layered, complex novel, suffused with warmth and wisdom.

### **Caramelo** by Sandra Cisneros

Stories from three generations of the Reyes family are woven together in this Mexican-American saga. Narrated by young "Lala", a shrewd observer of every aspect of life, the annual trip from Chicago to grandmother's house in Mexico City becomes the inspiration for a novel rich in characters, action, love and humor.

### **The Devil in the White City** by Erik Larson

This thriller-like true history tells the story of two extraordinary men during one of Chicago's shining moments, the World's Fair of 1893. Daniel Burnham, the fair's architect, had to deal with incredible challenges, including the death of his partner, on his way to ensuring the fair's success. Meanwhile, H.H. Holmes was equally creative as a serial killer masquerading as a charming doctor. Both the magic and the horrifying dark side of 19<sup>th</sup> century Chicago come alive for the reader.

### **My Name is Red** by Orhan Pamuk

This tale is set amid the opulence and religious intrigue of sixteenth-century Istanbul. It is part murder mystery, part novel of ideas, and part love story. The sultan has commissioned the best artists of Turkey to create a great book with illuminations in the European Renaissance style. But Islam deems figurative art an affront, and thus this undertaking is fraught with danger. When one of the miniaturist artists disappears, the pictures themselves hold the clues to the mystery. Pamuk won the IMPAC Dublin Award for this jewel of a novel.

### **Reading Lolita in Tehran** by Azar Nafisi

During the Ayatollah's strict regime in Iran, the author secretly met with seven female students to read and discuss prohibited works from "decadent" Western Literature. At first shy and intimidated, slowly the women "shed their mandatory veils and robes and burst into color". Over two years, the sessions expanded to discussions of love, marriage, the indignities of living in such a repressive society, and other issues. This memoir is a testament to the power of literature to change lives.