



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 2014

The Dinner by Herman Koch

Over the course of one agonizing meal at a chic restaurant in the Netherlands, two families struggle to make some of the hardest decisions they've ever had to face, involving their teenage children and a criminal act. A highly suspenseful international bestseller. (fiction)

The Distancers: An American Memoir by Lee Sandlin

Down seven generations, beginning with the nineteenth century German immigrants who settled on a small Midwestern farm, Sandlin reaches back to tell his family's stories. He recalls his happy childhood in Edwardsville, Illinois, finds inspiration in the joys and heartaches that early settlers encountered, and discovers the rewards in understanding how we are tied to the past and our roots. (nonfiction)

Elsewhere by Richard Russo

The Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist has written a bittersweet, poignant account of his lifelong bond with his high-strung, larger than life mother and the small town in upstate New York from which she longed to escape. She couldn't drive, lived upstairs from her parents most of her life, and followed her son to Arizona when he left for college, yet considered herself an independent woman. Russo sees her clearly, flaws and strengths, and his compassionate tribute to her is truly astounding. (nonfiction)

Me Before You by Jojo Moyes

Will Traynor used to be a highly successful, adventure-seeking top executive. Now he's confined to a wheelchair. Then his mother hires twentysomething Lou to be his caretaker. As Will's spirits spiral down, Lou proves equally determined to prove to him that there's still plenty to live for. Moyes elevates a potential "weepie" into a much more profound story of moral complexity with both comic and tragic elements. (fiction)

My Beloved World by Sonia Sotomayor

The Supreme Court justice's candid memoir reveals much about her early upbringing in a Bronx housing project, her extended Puerto Rican immigrant family, and the contrasts with her years at Princeton and Yale. Rather than offering clues to her judicial thinking, Sotomayer here provides an honest, winning look at her extraordinary struggle out of poverty and the triumphs she cherishes. (nonfiction)

The Round House by Louise Erdrich

Winner of the 2012 National Book Award, Erdrich once again brilliantly chronicles life on an Ojibwe reservation in North Dakota. Quiet, endearing young Joe is forced into an early adulthood following a brutal, racist assault on his mother. This rich, surprisingly uplifting novel untangles our nation's history of moral and judicial failure, but also offers a portrait of a community sustained by its traditions, values, faith, and stories. Critics have hailed it as a Native American "To Kill a Mockingbird". (fiction)

A Tale for the Time Being by Ruth Ozeki

An author living in British Columbia suffering from writer's block, a bullied Japanese teenager's desire to commit suicide, her great-grandmother's life as a Buddhist nun, and Tokyo pop culture are all interconnected in this unusually structured novel. There are mysteries to be solved, ideas to explore, and characters to truly care about. Shortlisted for the 2013 Man Booker Prize. (fiction)

Tell the Wolves I'm Home by Carol Rifka Brunt

The late 1980s AIDS epidemic transforms teenager June Elbus and her family. When her beloved uncle, a cultured, erudite artist, dies of the disease, June begins a secret friendship with his partner Toby who shares her grief. But their bond opens many bitter tensions with her sister and parents. Filled with compassion, suspense, heartbreak, and redemption, Brunt has created a wise and surprisingly fresh take on the universal story of the transformative power of love. (fiction)



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