



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 2015

Family Life by Akhil Sharma

Growing up in Delhi in 1978, eight-year-old Ajay Mishra and his older brother Birju play cricket on the streets, eagerly waiting for the day they can join their father in America. When they do, America opens up a joyous, exciting world for them —until tragedy strikes. As the family spirals down, it is left to one of the brothers to search for a new direction amid the ruins. Compassionate, unflinching, and darkly funny, this is a universal story of a boy torn between duty and his own survival. (fiction)

Five Came Back: A Story of Hollywood and the Second World War by Mark Harris

The dramatic story of how Hollywood changed the war and the war changed Hollywood, told through the prism of five legendary film directors who went off to fight in the only ways they knew how. Artfully cutting between their private and professional lives, with scenes ranging from the Oscar ceremonies to the fighting in Europe to the battles in the South Pacific, Harris vividly describes the production of the movies that were essential to how Americans perceived the war, and still do. (nonfiction)

My Brilliant Friend: Childhood, Adolescence by Elena Ferrante

Growing up on the tough streets of Naples, Italy in the 1950s, Elena and Lila learn to rely on each other ahead of anyone or anything else. They remain best friends whose respective destinies are a reflection of their nation as it undergoes momentous changes. With this novel, the first in a trilogy, Ferrante proves herself to be one of Italy's great storytellers. A modern masterpiece that's also a page-turner, richly portraying girlhood and the nature of friendship. (fiction)

Redeployment by Phil Klay

A debut collection of stories that won the National Book Award. In precise prose with an astounding depth of feeling, Klay plumbs the human cost of the Iraq war from multiple viewpoints. Whether giving us a window into how a returning vet feels coming home or the frustration of a Foreign Officer forced to provide baseball shirts to kids whose needs are far from that, the author, an Iraq war vet himself, writes with compassion and honesty but never with platitudes or knee-jerk politics. (fiction)

Shotgun Lovesongs by Nickolas Butler

Lee is an indie rocker who makes it big but is pulled back to his small Wisconsin home town and the circle of friends he's really never left behind. Chapters are told alternately through the voices of the five longtime friends, each wrestling with life issues big and small. In this beautifully written novel, Butler examines what it means to belong to a deep-rooted community and the small-town heartland with all its flaws and charm. (fiction)

The Sixth Extinction by Elizabeth Kolbert

Kolbert writes from the front lines of the collision between civilization and our planet's ecosystem. From the endangered coral reefs to changes she can see in her own backyard, she examines how man-

made climate upset is threatening to kill off a large percentage of all living species. In engaging, richly detailed prose that reads like a thriller, Kolbert combines scientific analysis with personal stories to help us understand her compelling call to action. (nonfiction)

The Storied Life of A. J. Fikry by Gabrielle Zevin

Cantankerous A. J. Fikry, owner of Island Books, has tragically lost his wife. Now his most prized possession, a rare book, has been stolen under strange circumstances. One night, while closing up the bookshop, he discovers a toddler in the children's section with a note from her mother saying she can no longer care for her. Before long the neighbors are noticing that both bookstore and owner have undergone a transformation as the baby steals Fikry's heart, and a second chance at all kinds of love becomes a real possibility. A sweet, endearing story with strong characters and a touch of mystery. (fiction)

Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth by Reza Aslan

Two thousand years ago, an itinerant Jewish preacher walked across Galilee gathering followers to establish what he called the "Kingdom of God." Thus a revolutionary movement was launched that threatened those in power, leading them to torture and execute Jesus. This new meticulously researched biography challenges long-held assumptions about Jesus Christ, examining him through the lens of the turbulent era in which he lived and giving us a fully fleshed out man of convictions and contradictions. (nonfiction)



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1242 Wilmette Avenue
Wilmette, IL 60091
(847)256-5025
<http://www.wilmette.lib.il.us>