



# 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 2017

### **Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?** by Roz Chast

The beloved *New Yorker* cartoonist uses her considerable talents to tell the story of her parents' decline, as they become too frail to stay in the Brooklyn apartment they've called home for five decades. Chast's poignant graphic memoir is tightly focused on her mother and father and her own not uncommon feelings of guilt as she tries to navigate between their needs and her own. Sometimes laugh-out-loud funny, sometimes heart-rending, but always honest and candid about a very timely topic. (nonfiction)

### **Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race** by Margot Lee Shetterly

The unforgettable true story of the black female mathematicians at NASA whose calculations helped achieve some of America's greatest scientific advances. Before John Glenn orbited the earth, or Neil Armstrong walked on the moon, a group of dedicated female mathematicians known as "human computers" used pencils, slide rules and adding machines to calculate the numbers that would launch rockets, and astronauts, into space. This is the book that inspired the recent film. (nonfiction)

### **Last Bus to Wisdom** by Ivan Doig

The final novel from an award-winning, great American storyteller. Donal Cameron is being raised by his grandmother, the cook at the legendary Double W ranch in the Montana Rockies, a landscape that gives full rein to an eleven-year-old's imagination. But when Gram has to have surgery, all she can think to do is to ship Donal off to her sister in Wisconsin. Thus begins a rollicking adventure across the western territories in the early 1950s. Told with Doig's signature wisdom and humor. (fiction)

### **The Mare** by Mary Gaitskill

Velveteen Vargas is eleven years old, a Fresh Air Fund kid from a crime-ridden Brooklyn neighborhood. Her host family lives in bucolic upstate New York. Ginger is a failed artist and her academic husband, Paul, wonders what it will mean to "make a difference" in such a contrived situation. Their shifting relationship with Velveteen over several years, and Velveteen's bond with an abused, unruly horse named Fiery Girl, fuel this raw and heart-stirring story about different races and classes trying to meet one another honestly. (fiction)

### **The Muralist** by B. A. Shapiro

When Alizée Benoit, who works as a painter for the Works Progress Administration (WPA), vanishes in New York City in 1940, no one knows what happened to her. Not her Jewish family living in occupied France, not her artistic patron, Eleanor Roosevelt, and not her artist friends, including Mark Rothko, Jackson Pollock, and Lee Krasner. Seventy years later, her great-niece uncovers some mysterious paintings hidden behind works by those now-famous Abstract Expressionist artists. Do they hold answers to the questions surrounding her missing aunt? A colorful, riveting historical novel. (fiction)

**The Road to Little Dribbling: Adventures of an American in Britain** by Bill Bryson

Bryson rediscovers the beautiful, eccentric, and endearing country that he both celebrates and devilishly skewers. He describes his trek across the 700 mile island, employing his unerring instinct for the funniest and quirkiest, keeping an eye out for the ridiculous, while offering acute and perceptive insights into all that is best and worst about Britain today. (nonfiction)

**The Sellout** by Paul Beatty

Beatty explores what it's like to be black in "postracial" America with biting satire and absurdist humor. Turning the tables on bigotry, the main character, Me, is coming before the Supreme Court on charges of slave holding and re-instituting segregation. The narrator recounts the events that brought him to this stage, in a case that challenges the United States Constitution, urban life, the civil rights movement, and the holy grail of racial equality—the black Chinese restaurant. Winner of the Man Booker Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award. (fiction)

**The Year of the Runaways** by Sunjeev Sahota

From one of *Granta's* Best of Young British Novelists, a capacious, immersive, contemporary epic. Three young men, and one unforgettable woman, come together in a journey from India to England, where they hope to begin something new—to support their families, build their futures, show their worth, and escape the past. They have almost no idea what awaits them. As their entwined stories unfold over the course of one shattering year, they are forced to rely on one another in ways they never could have foreseen, as they are tested by the punishing realities of immigrant life. Shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize. (fiction)



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