

Book Club Nominees 2021-2022

Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No of pages
The Other Americans	Laila Lalami	Barb McNeill, Cindy Pullinger	Fiction, 320 pages
			Monday June 7, 2021
<p>***2019 NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALIST*** Winner of the Arab American Book Award in Fiction, Winner of the Arab American Book Award in Fiction, Finalist for the Kirkus Prize in Fiction, Finalist for the California Book Award, Longlisted for the Aspen Words Literary Prize, A Los Angeles Times bestseller, Named a Best Book of the Year by The Washington Post, Time, NPR, Minneapolis Star Tribune, Dallas Morning News, The Guardian, Variety, and Kirkus Reviews</p> <p>Late one spring night in California, Driss Guerraoui—father, husband, business owner, Moroccan immigrant—is hit and killed by a speeding car. The aftermath of his death brings together a diverse cast of characters: Guerraoui's daughter Nora, a jazz composer returning to the small town in the Mojave she thought she'd left for good; her mother, Maryam, who still pines for her life in the old country; Efraín, an undocumented witness whose fear of deportation prevents him from coming forward; Jeremy, an old friend of Nora's and an Iraqi War veteran; Coleman, a detective who is slowly discovering her son's secrets; Anderson, a neighbor trying to reconnect with his family; and the murdered man himself.</p> <p>As the characters—deeply divided by race, religion, and class—tell their stories, each in their own voice, connections among them emerge. Driss's family confronts its secrets, a town faces its hypocrisies, and love—messy and unpredictable—is born. Timely, riveting, and unforgettable, <i>The Other Americans</i> is at once a family saga, a murder mystery, and a love story informed by the treacherous fault lines of American culture.</p>			

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No of pages
Flight Patterns	Karen White	Clara Celebuski	Fiction, 432 pages
			Monday July 5, 2021
<p>The <i>New York Times</i> bestselling author of the Tradd Street novels tells the story of a woman coming home to the family she left behind—and to the woman she always wanted to be....</p> <p>Georgia Chambers has spent her life sifting through other people's pasts while trying to forget her own. But then her work as an expert on fine china—especially Limoges—requires her to return to the one place she swore she'd never revisit....</p> <p>It has been ten years since Georgia left her family home on the coast of Florida, and nothing much has changed except that there are fewer oysters and more tourists. She finds solace in seeing her grandfather still toiling away in the apiary where she spent much of her childhood, but encountering her estranged mother and sister leaves her rattled.</p> <p>Seeing them after all this time makes Georgia realize that something has been missing—and unless she finds a way to heal these rifts, she will forever be living vicariously through other people's remnants. To embrace her own life—mistakes and all—she will have to find the courage to confront the ghosts of her past and the secrets she was forced to keep....</p>			

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No of pages
Klara and the Sun	Kazuo Ishiguro	Judi Standford	Fiction, 320 pages
			Monday August 2, 2021
<p>A magnificent new novel from the Nobel laureate Kazuo Ishiguro—author of Never Let Me Go and the Booker Prize-winning The Remains of the Day.</p> <p>Klara and the Sun, the first novel by Kazuo Ishiguro since he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, tells the story of Klara, an Artificial Friend with outstanding observational qualities, who, from her place in the store, watches carefully the behavior of those who come in to browse, and of those who pass on the street outside. She remains hopeful that a customer will soon choose her.</p> <p>Klara and the Sun is a thrilling book that offers a look at our changing world through the eyes of an unforgettable narrator, and one that explores the fundamental question: what does it mean to love?</p> <p>In its award citation in 2017, the Nobel committee described Ishiguro's books as "novels of great emotional force" and said he has "uncovered the abyss beneath our illusory sense of connection with the world."</p>			

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No of pages
Caste	Isabel Wilkerson	Ruth Chatlien	Non-Fiction, 496 pages
			Monday September 13, 2021
<p>The Pulitzer Prize–winning, bestselling author of <i>The Warmth of Other Suns</i> examines the unspoken caste system that has shaped America and shows how our lives today are still defined by a hierarchy of human divisions.</p> <p><i>“As we go about our daily lives, caste is the wordless usher in a darkened theater, flashlight cast down in the aisles, guiding us to our assigned seats for a performance. The hierarchy of caste is not about feelings or morality. It is about power—which groups have it and which do not.”</i></p> <p><i>In this brilliant book, Isabel Wilkerson gives us a masterful portrait of an unseen phenomenon in America as she explores, through an immersive, deeply researched narrative and stories about real people, how America today and throughout its history has been shaped by a hidden caste system, a rigid hierarchy of human rankings.</i></p> <p><i>Beyond race, class, or other factors, there is a powerful caste system that influences people’s lives and behavior and the nation’s fate. Linking the caste systems of America, India, and Nazi Germany, Wilkerson explores eight pillars that underlie caste systems across civilizations, including divine will, bloodlines, stigma, and more. Using riveting stories about people—including Martin Luther King, Jr., baseball’s Satchel Paige, a single father and his toddler son, Wilkerson herself, and many others—she shows the ways that the insidious undertow of caste is experienced every day. She documents how the Nazis studied the racial systems in America to plan their out-cast of the Jews; she discusses why the cruel logic of caste requires that there be a bottom rung for those in the middle to measure themselves against; she writes about the surprising health costs of caste, in depression and life expectancy, and the effects of this hierarchy on our culture and politics. Finally, she points forward to ways America can move beyond the artificial and destructive separations of human divisions, toward hope in our common humanity.</i></p> <p><i>Beautifully written, original, and revealing, <i>Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents</i> is an eye-opening story of people and history, and a reexamination of what lies under the surface of ordinary lives and of American life today.</i></p>			

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No of pages
American Kingpin	Nick Bilton	Lynn DePietro	Non-Fiction, 368 pages
			Monday October 4, 2021
<p>The unbelievable true story of the man who built a billion-dollar online drug empire from his bedroom - and almost got away with it</p> <p>In 2011, a 26-year-old libertarian programmer named Ross Ulbricht launched the ultimate free market: the Silk Road, a clandestine website hosted on the Dark Web where anyone could trade anything - drugs, hacking software, forged passports, counterfeit cash, poisons - free of the government's watchful eye.</p> <p>It wasn't long before the media got wind of the new website where anyone - not just teenagers and weed dealers but terrorists and black hat hackers - could buy and sell contraband detection-free. Spurred by a public outcry, the federal government launched an epic two-year manhunt for the site's elusive proprietor, with no leads, no witnesses, and no clear jurisdiction. All the investigators knew was that whoever was running the site called himself the Dread Pirate Roberts.</p> <p>The Silk Road quickly ballooned into a \$1.2 billion enterprise, and Ross embraced his new role as kingpin. He enlisted a loyal crew of allies in high and low places, all as addicted to the danger and thrill of running an illegal marketplace as their customers were to the heroin they sold. Through his network he got wind of the target on his back and took drastic steps to protect himself - including ordering a hit on a former employee. As Ross made plans to disappear forever, the feds raced against the clock to catch a man they weren't sure even existed, searching for a needle in the haystack of the global Internet.</p> <p>Drawing on exclusive access to key players and two billion digital words and images Ross left behind, Vanity Fair correspondent and New York Times best-selling author Nick Bilton offers a tale filled with twists and turns, lucky breaks, and unbelievable close calls. It's a story of the boy next door's ambition gone criminal, spurred on by the clash between the new world of libertarian-leaning, anonymous, decentralized web advocates and the old world of government control, order, and the rule of law. Filled with unforgettable characters and capped by an astonishing climax, American Kingpin might be dismissed as too outrageous for fiction. But it's all too real.</p>			

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No of pages
The Readers of Broken Wheel Recommend	Katarina Bivald	Deb Modde	Fiction, 400 pages
			Monday November 1, 2021
<p>Katarina Bivald's <i>The Readers of Broken Wheel Recommend</i> is a sweet, smart, and uplifting story about how books find us, change us, and connect us.</p> <p>Once you let a book into your life the most unexpected things can happen: Like the bestselling historical novel and Netflix film <i>The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society</i>, <i>The Readers of Broken Wheel Recommend</i> is a heartwarming reminder of why we love books.</p> <p>Broken Wheel, Iowa, has never seen anyone like Sara: Sara traveled all the way from Sweden just to meet her book-loving pen pal Amy, but when she arrives she finds Amy's funeral guests just leaving. The residents of Broken Wheel are happy to look after their bewildered visitor—there's not much else to do in a dying small town that's almost beyond repair. You certainly wouldn't open a bookstore. And definitely not with Sara the tourist in charge.</p> <p>You'd need a vacant storefront (Main Street is full of them), books (Amy's house is full of them), and...customers. The bookstore might be a little quirky. Then again, so is Sara. But Broken Wheel's own story might be funnier, more eccentric and surprising than she thought.</p>			

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No of pages
The Remains of the Day	Kazuo Ishiguro	Judi Standford	Fiction, 245 pages
			Monday December 6, 2021
<p>From the winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, here is the universally acclaimed novel—winner of the Booker Prize and the basis for an award-winning film.</p> <p>This is Kazuo Ishiguro's profoundly compelling portrait of Stevens, the perfect butler, and of his fading, insular world in post-World War II England. Stevens, at the end of three decades of service at Darlington Hall, spending a day on a country drive, embarks as well on a journey through the past in an effort to reassure himself that he has served humanity by serving the "great gentleman," Lord Darlington. But lurking in his memory are doubts about the true nature of Lord Darlington's "greatness," and much graver doubts about the nature of his own life.</p>			

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No of pages
The Book of Lost Friends	Lisa Wingate	Cindy Pullinger	Fiction, 400 pages
			Monday January 3, 2022
<p>Bestselling author Lisa Wingate brings to life startling stories from actual “Lost Friends” advertisements that appeared in Southern newspapers after the Civil War, as newly freed slaves desperately searched for loved ones who had been sold away.</p> <p>Louisiana, 1875: In the tumultuous era of Reconstruction, three young women set off as unwilling companions on a perilous quest: Hannie, a freed slave; Lavinia, the pampered heir to a now destitute plantation; and Juneau Jane, Lavinia’s Creole half sister. Each carries private wounds and powerful secrets as they head for Texas, following roads rife with vigilantes and soldiers still fighting a war lost a decade before. For Lavinia and Juneau Jane, the journey is one of stolen inheritance and financial desperation, but for Hannie, torn from her mother and siblings before slavery’s end, the pilgrimage west reignites an agonizing question: Could her long-lost family still be out there? Beyond the swamps lie the limitless frontiers of Texas and, improbably, hope.</p> <p>Louisiana, 1987: For first-year teacher Benedetta Silva, a subsidized job at a poor rural school seems like the ticket to canceling her hefty student debt—until she lands in a tiny, out-of-step Mississippi River town. Augustine, Louisiana, is suspicious of new ideas and new people, and Benny can scarcely comprehend the lives of her poverty-stricken students. But amid the gnarled live oaks and run-down plantation homes lie the century-old history of three young women, a long-ago journey, and a hidden book that could change everything.</p>			

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No of pages
Northern Lights	Michael Chatlien	The club	Fiction, 308 pages
			Monday February 7, 2022
<p>"Watch out for the creaking." An Inuit woman gives Greg Walsh this warning before he heads on a wilderness trek in the Canadian Rockies with his friend Dean, Sarah Brandt, and their guide. In the wild, Greg and Dean—conservative, blue-collar workers—soon conflict with Sarah, a liberal, career woman. Then Greg hears creaking and pulls Sarah away from a landslide that kills Dean and Ben and sweeps away all their supplies except a knife and a canteen. Greg and Sarah argue, but soon cooperate to survive. They find they have unexpected similarities, and each comes in touch with unresolved pain. A friendship forms, then grows into love. They face dangers, forging a deep trust that neither of them have ever experienced. Greg and Sarah survive the wild, but back home, their social groups sow discord. Yet they don't want to lose the most profound relationship in their lives. Will they survive together?</p>			

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No of pages
Midnight at the Blackbird Café	Heather Webber	Ruth Chatlien	Fiction, 336 pages
			Monday March 7, 2022
<p>THE USA TODAY BESTSELLER Heather Webber's <i>Midnight at the Blackbird Cafe</i> is a captivating blend of magical realism, heartwarming romance, and small-town Southern charm.</p> <p>Nestled in the mountain shadows of Alabama lies the little town of Wicklow. It is here that Anna Kate has returned to bury her beloved Granny Zee, owner of the Blackbird Café.</p> <p>It was supposed to be a quick trip to close the café and settle her grandmother's estate, but despite her best intentions to avoid forming ties or even getting to know her father's side of the family, Anna Kate finds herself inexplicably drawn to the quirky Southern town her mother ran away from so many years ago, and the mysterious blackbird pie everybody can't stop talking about.</p> <p>As the truth about her past slowly becomes clear, Anna Kate will need to decide if this lone blackbird will finally be able to take her broken wings and fly.</p>			

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No of pages
The Great Alone	Kristen Hannah	Elizabeth Danos	Fiction, 448 pages
			Monday April 4, 2022
<p>Ernt Allbright, a former POW, comes home from the Vietnam war a changed and volatile man. When he loses yet another job, he makes an impulsive decision: He will move his family north, to Alaska, where they will live off the grid in America's last true frontier. Thirteen-year-old Leni, a girl coming of age in a tumultuous time, caught in the riptide of her parents' passionate, stormy relationship, dares to hope that a new land will lead to a better future for her family. She is desperate for a place to belong. Her mother, Cora, will do anything and go anywhere for the man she loves, even if means following him into the unknown.</p> <p>At first, Alaska seems to be the answer to their prayers. In a wild, remote corner of the state, they find a fiercely independent community of strong men and even stronger women. The long, sunlit days and the generosity of the locals make up for the Allbrights' lack of preparation and dwindling resources. But as winter approaches and darkness descends on Alaska, Ernt's fragile mental state deteriorates and the family begins to fracture. Soon the perils outside pale in comparison to threats from within. In their small cabin, covered in snow, blanketed in 18 hours of night, Leni and her mother learn the terrible truth: They are on their own. In the wild, there is no one to save them but themselves.</p> <p>In this unforgettable portrait of human frailty and resilience, Kristin Hannah reveals the indomitable character of the modern American pioneer and the spirit of a vanishing Alaska - a place of incomparable beauty and danger.</p>			

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No of pages
The Lost Vintage	Ann Mah	Ruth Chatlien	Fiction, 400 pages
			Monday May 2, 2022
<p><i>Sweetbitter</i> meets <i>The Nightingale</i> in this page-turning novel about a woman who returns to her family's ancestral vineyard in Burgundy and unexpectedly uncovers a lost diary, an unknown relative, and a secret her family has been keeping since World War II. To become one of only a few hundred certified wine experts in the world, Kate must pass the notoriously difficult Master of Wine examination. She's failed twice before; her third attempt will be her last chance. Suddenly finding herself without a job and with the test a few months away, she travels to Burgundy to spend the fall at the vineyard estate that has belonged to her family for generations. There she can bolster her shaky knowledge of Burgundian vintages and reconnect with her cousin Nico and his wife, Heather, who now oversee day-to-day management of the grapes. The one person Kate hopes to avoid is Jean-Luc, a talented young winemaker and her first love. At the vineyard house, Kate is eager to help her cousin clean out the enormous basement that is filled with generations of discarded and forgotten belongings. Deep inside the cellar, behind a large armoire, she discovers a hidden room containing a cot, some Resistance pamphlets, and an enormous cache of valuable wine. Piqued by the secret space, Kate begins to dig into her family's history—a search that takes her back to the dark days of World War II and introduces her to a relative she never knew existed, a great-half aunt who was a teenager during the Nazi occupation.</p> <p>As she learns more about her family, the line between resistance and collaboration blurs, driving Kate to find the answers to two crucial questions: Who, exactly, did her family aid during the difficult years of the war? And what happened to six valuable bottles of wine that seem to be missing from the cellar's collection?</p>			

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No of pages
Miss Benson's Beetle	Rachel Joyce	Deb Modde	Fiction, 368 pages
			Monday June 6, 2022
<p>NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • “A beautifully written, extraordinary quest in which two ordinary, overlooked women embark on an unlikely scientific expedition to the South Seas.”—Helen Simonson, author of <i>Major Pettigrew's Last Stand</i></p> <p>She's going too far to go it alone.</p> <p>It is 1950. London is still reeling from World War II, and Margery Benson, a schoolteacher and spinster, is trying to get through life, surviving on scraps. One day, she reaches her breaking point, abandoning her job and small existence to set out on an expedition to the other side of the world in search of her childhood obsession: an insect that may or may not exist—the golden beetle of New Caledonia. When she advertises for an assistant to accompany her, the woman she ends up with is the last person she had in mind. Fun-loving Enid Pretty in her tight-fitting pink suit and pom-pom sandals seems to attract trouble wherever she goes. But together these two British women find themselves drawn into a cross-ocean adventure that exceeds all expectations and delivers something neither of them expected to find: the transformative power of friendship.</p>			