

Book Club Official Schedule 2023-2024

Title	Author	Number of Pages	Category
The Last Thing He Told Me	Laura Dave	336	Fiction
Monday July 10, 7PM in person and zoom		recommended by Clara	
<p>Before Owen Michaels disappears, he smuggles a note to his beloved wife of one year: <i>Protect her</i>. Despite her confusion and fear, Hannah Hall knows exactly to whom the note refers—Owen’s sixteen-year-old daughter, Bailey. Bailey, who lost her mother tragically as a child. Bailey, who wants absolutely nothing to do with her new stepmother. As Hannah’s increasingly desperate calls to Owen go unanswered, as the FBI arrests Owen’s boss, as a US marshal and federal agents arrive at her Sausalito home unannounced, Hannah quickly realizes her husband isn’t who he said he was. And that Bailey just may hold the key to figuring out Owen’s true identity—and why he really disappeared. Hannah and Bailey set out to discover the truth. But as they start putting together the pieces of Owen’s past, they soon realize they’re also building a new future—one neither of them could have anticipated. With its breakneck pacing, dizzying plot twists, and evocative family drama, <i>The Last Thing He Told Me</i> is a “page-turning, exhilarating, and unforgettable” (PopSugar) suspense novel.</p>			

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Title	Author	Number of Pages	Category
A Year of Yes	Shonda Rhimes	336	Non-Fiction
Monday August 7, 7PM in person and Zoom		recommended by Elizabeth	
<p>She’s the creator and producer of some of the most groundbreaking and audacious shows on television today. Her iconic characters live boldly and speak their minds. So who would suspect that Shonda Rhimes is an introvert? That she hired a publicist so she could avoid public appearances? That she suffered panic attacks before media interviews?</p> <p>With three children at home and three hit television shows, it was easy for Shonda to say she was simply too busy. But in truth, she was also afraid. And then, over Thanksgiving dinner, her sister muttered something that was both a wake up and a call to arms: You never say yes to anything. Shonda knew she had to embrace the challenge: for one year, she would say YES to everything that scared her.</p> <p>This poignant, intimate, and hilarious memoir explores Shonda’s life before her Year of Yes—from her nerdy, book-loving childhood to her devotion to creating television characters who reflected the world she saw around her. The book chronicles her life after her Year of Yes had begun—when Shonda forced herself out of the house and onto the stage; when she learned to explore, empower, applaud, and love her truest self. Yes.</p> <p>“Honest, raw, and revelatory” (The Washington Post), this wildly candid and compulsively readable book reveals how the mega talented Shonda Rhimes finally achieved badassery worthy of a Shondaland character. Best of all, she “can help motivate even the most determined homebody to get out and try something new” (Chicago Tribune).</p>			

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Title	Author	Number of Pages	Category
Lessons in Chemistry	Bonnie Garmus	400	Fiction
Monday September 11, 7PM in person and zoom		recommended by Sue, Clara	
<p>Chemist Elizabeth Zott is not your average woman. In fact, Elizabeth Zott would be the first to point out that there is no such thing as an <i>average</i> woman. But it's the early 1960s and her all-male team at Hastings Research Institute takes a very unscientific view of equality. Except for one: Calvin Evans; the lonely, brilliant, Nobel-prize nominated grudge-holder who falls in love with—of all things—her mind. True chemistry results.</p> <p>But like science, life is unpredictable. Which is why a few years later Elizabeth Zott finds herself not only a single mother, but the reluctant star of America's most beloved cooking show <i>Supper at Six</i>. Elizabeth's unusual approach to cooking ("combine one tablespoon acetic acid with a pinch of sodium chloride") proves revolutionary. But as her following grows, not everyone is happy. Because as it turns out, Elizabeth Zott isn't just teaching women to cook. She's daring them to change the status quo.</p> <p>Laugh-out-loud funny, shrewdly observant, and studded with a dazzling cast of supporting characters, <i>Lessons in Chemistry</i> is as original and vibrant as its protagonist.</p>			

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Title	Author	Number of Pages	Category
Something's Cooking in Chianti	Jennifer Lonoff Schiff	341	Mystery
Monday October 2, 1PM in person, 7PM zoom		recommended by Sue	
<p>Reporter Guinivere Jones was in a rut, professionally and personally, when her colleague and friend Glen Anderson suggested she accompany him to Italy to attend a weeklong cooking course in Chianti. It was a dream assignment. Until murder appeared on the menu. While the Italian police are supposedly on the case, Guin takes it upon herself to investigate. Along the way, she uncovers buried secrets, finds a little romance, and learns how to make a killer torta della nonna.</p> <p>For fans of cozy mysteries, Italy, food and wine, and romance.</p>			

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Title	Author	Number of Pages	Category
Between Two Kingdoms: A Memoir of a Life Interrupted	Suleika Jaouad	368	Memoir
Monday November 6, 1PM in person, 7PM Zoom		recommended by Lynn	
<p>In the summer after graduating from college, Suleika Jaouad was preparing, as they say in commencement speeches, to enter “the real world.” She had fallen in love and moved to Paris to pursue her dream of becoming a war correspondent. The real world she found, however, would take her into a very different kind of conflict zone. It started with an itch—first on her feet, then up her legs, like a thousand invisible mosquito bites. Next came the exhaustion, and the six-hour naps that only deepened her fatigue. Then a trip to the doctor and, a few weeks shy of her twenty-third birthday, a diagnosis: leukemia, with a 35 percent chance of survival. Just like that, the life she had imagined for herself had gone up in flames. By the time Jaouad flew home to New York, she had lost her job, her apartment, and her independence. She would spend much of the next four years in a hospital bed, fighting for her life and chronicling the saga in a column for The New York Times.</p> <p>When Jaouad finally walked out of the cancer ward—after countless rounds of chemo, a clinical trial, and a bone marrow transplant—she was, according to the doctors, cured. But as she would soon learn, a cure is not where the work of healing ends; it’s where it begins. She had spent the past 1,500 days in desperate pursuit of one goal—to survive. And now that she’d done so, she realized that she had no idea how to live.</p> <p>How would she reenter the world and live again? How could she reclaim what had been lost? Jaouad embarked—with her new best friend, Oscar, a scruffy terrier mutt—on a 100-day, 15,000-mile road trip across the country. She set out to meet some of the strangers who had written to her during her years in the hospital: a teenage girl in Florida also recovering from cancer; a teacher in California grieving the death of her son; a death-row inmate in Texas who’d spent his own years confined to a room. What she learned on this trip is that the divide between sick and well is porous, that the vast majority of us will travel back and forth between these realms throughout our lives. <i>Between Two Kingdoms</i> is a profound chronicle of survivorship and a fierce, tender, and inspiring exploration of what it means to begin again.</p>			

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Monday December 4, 6PM

Book Exchange and appetizer-dessert Potluck

Place TBD

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Title	Author	Number of Pages	Category
84 Charing Cross Road	Helene Hanff	112	Fiction
Monday January 8, 1PM in person, 7PM Zoom		recommended by Deb Modde	
A heartwarming love story about people who love books for readers who love books			
This funny, poignant, classic love story unfolds through a series of letters between Helene Hanff, a freelance writer living in New York City, and a used-book dealer in London at 84, Charing Cross Road. Through the years, though never meeting and separated both geographically and culturally, they share a charming, sentimental friendship based on their common love for books. Discover the relationship that has touched the hearts of thousands of readers around the world, and was the basis for a film starring Anthony Hopkins and Anne Bancroft.			

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Title	Author	Number of Pages	Category
Mary Jane	Jessica Anya Blau	336	Fiction
Monday February 5, 1PM in person, 7PM Zoom		recommended by Barb	
<p>In 1970s Baltimore, fourteen-year-old Mary Jane loves cooking with her mother, singing in her church choir, and enjoying her family’s subscription to the Broadway Showtunes of the Month record club. Shy, quiet, and bookish, she’s glad when she lands a summer job as a nanny for the daughter of a local doctor. A respectable job, Mary Jane’s mother says. In a respectable house. The house may look respectable on the outside, but inside it’s a literal and figurative mess: clutter on every surface, Impeachment: Now More Than Ever bumper stickers on the doors, cereal and takeout for dinner. And even more troublesome (were Mary Jane’s mother to know, which she does not): the doctor is a psychiatrist who has cleared his summer for one important job—helping a famous rock star dry out. A week after Mary Jane starts, the rock star and his movie star wife move in.</p> <p>Over the course of the summer, Mary Jane introduces her new household to crisply ironed clothes and a family dinner schedule, and has a front-row seat to a liberal world of sex, drugs, and rock and roll (not to mention group therapy). Caught between the lifestyle she’s always known and the future she’s only just realized is possible, Mary Jane will arrive at September with a new idea about what she wants out of life, and what kind of person she’s going to be.</p>			

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Title	Author	Number of Pages	Category
Diamond Eye	Kate Quinn	448	Fiction - based on true story
Monday March 4, 1PM in person, 7PM Zoom		recommended by Ruth	
<p>The bestselling author of The Rose Code returns with an unforgettable World War II tale of a quiet bookworm who becomes history’s deadliest female sniper. Based on a true story. In 1937 in the snowbound city of Kyiv, wry and bookish history student Mila Pavlichenko organizes her life around her library job and her young son—but Hitler’s invasion of Ukraine and Russia sends her on a different path. Given a rifle and sent to join the fight, Mila must forge herself from studious girl to deadly sniper—a lethal hunter of Nazis known as Lady Death. When news of her three hundredth kill makes her a national heroine, Mila finds herself torn from the bloody battlefields of the eastern front and sent to America on a goodwill tour. Still reeling from war wounds and devastated by loss, Mila finds herself isolated and lonely in the glittering world of Washington, DC—until an unexpected friendship with First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and an even more unexpected connection with a silent fellow sniper offer the possibility of happiness. But when an old enemy from Mila’s past joins forces with a deadly new foe lurking in the shadows, Lady Death finds herself battling her own demons and enemy bullets in the deadliest duel of her life. Based on a true story, The Diamond Eye is a haunting novel of heroism born of desperation, of a mother who became a soldier, of a woman who found her place in the world and changed the course of history forever.</p>			

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Title	Author	Number of Pages	Category
Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow	Gabrielle Zevin	416	Fiction
Monday April 1, 1PM in person, 7PM Zoom		recommended by Barb	
<p>From the best-selling author of <i>The Storied Life of A. J. Fikry</i>: On a bitter-cold day, in the December of his junior year at Harvard, Sam Masur exits a subway car and sees, amid the hordes of people waiting on the platform, Sadie Green. He calls her name. For a moment, she pretends she hasn't heard him, but then, she turns, and a game begins: a legendary collaboration that will launch them to stardom.</p> <p>These friends, intimates since childhood, borrow money, beg favors, and, before even graduating college, they have created their first blockbuster, Ichigo. Overnight, the world is theirs. Not even twenty-five years old, Sam and Sadie are brilliant, successful, and rich, but these qualities won't protect them from their own creative ambitions or the betrayals of their hearts.</p> <p>Spanning thirty years, from Cambridge, Massachusetts, to Venice Beach, California, and lands in between and far beyond, Gabrielle Zevin's <i>Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow</i> examines the multifarious nature of identity, disability, failure, the redemptive possibilities in play, and above all, our need to connect: to be loved and to love.</p>			

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Title	Author	Number of Pages	Category
Horse	Geraldine Brooks	416	Fiction - based on true story
Monday May 6, 1PM in person, 7PM Zoom		recommended by Deb Modde	
<p>A discarded painting in a junk pile, a skeleton in an attic, and the greatest racehorse in American history: from these strands, a Pulitzer Prize winner braids a sweeping story of spirit, obsession, and injustice across American history</p> <p>Kentucky, 1850. An enslaved groom named Jarret and a bay foal forge a bond of understanding that will carry the horse to record-setting victories across the South. When the nation erupts in civil war, an itinerant young artist who has made his name on paintings of the racehorse takes up arms for the Union. On a perilous night, he reunites with the stallion and his groom, very far from the glamor of any racetrack.</p> <p>New York City, 1954. Martha Jackson, a gallery owner celebrated for taking risks on edgy contemporary painters, becomes obsessed with a nineteenth-century equestrian oil painting of mysterious provenance.</p> <p>Washington, DC, 2019. Jess, a Smithsonian scientist from Australia, and Theo, a Nigerian-American art historian, find themselves unexpectedly connected through their shared interest in the horse—one studying the stallion’s bones for clues to his power and endurance, the other uncovering the lost history of the unsung Black horsemen who were critical to his racing success.</p> <p>Based on the remarkable true story of the record-breaking thoroughbred Lexington, Horse is a novel of art and science, love and obsession, and our unfinished reckoning with racism.</p>			

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Title	Author	Number of Pages	Category
West with Giraffes	Lynda Rutledge	371	Fiction
Monday June 3, 7PM in persom and Zoom		recommended by Barb	
<p>Woodrow Wilson Nickel, age 105, feels his life ebbing away. But when he learns giraffes are going extinct, he finds himself recalling the unforgettable experience he cannot take to his grave.</p> <p>It's 1938. The Great Depression lingers. Hitler is threatening Europe, and world-weary Americans long for wonder. They find it in two giraffes who miraculously survive a hurricane while crossing the Atlantic. What follows is a twelve-day road trip in a custom truck to deliver Southern California's first giraffes to the San Diego Zoo. Behind the wheel is the young Dust Bowl rowdy Woodrow. Inspired by true events, the tale weaves real-life figures with fictional ones, including the world's first female zoo director, a crusty old man with a past, a young female photographer with a secret, and assorted reprobates as spotty as the giraffes.</p> <p>Part adventure, part historical saga, and part coming-of-age love story, West with Giraffes explores what it means to be changed by the grace of animals, the kindness of strangers, the passing of time, and a story told before it's too late.</p>			