

Book Club List 2020-2021

Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No of pages
July 2020			
This Tender Land	William Kent Krueger	Cheri Johnson	Fiction, 444 pages
<p>A magnificent novel about four orphans on a life-changing odyssey during the Great Depression, from the bestselling author of Ordinary Grace.</p> <p>1932, Minnesota—the Lincoln School is a pitiless place where hundreds of Native American children, forcibly separated from their parents, are sent to be educated. It is also home to an orphan named Odie O'Banion, a lively boy whose exploits earn him the superintendent's wrath. Forced to flee, he and his brother Albert, their best friend Mose, and a brokenhearted little girl named Emmy steal away in a canoe, heading for the mighty Mississippi and a place to call their own.</p> <p>Over the course of one unforgettable summer, these four orphans will journey into the unknown and cross paths with others who are adrift, from struggling farmers and traveling faith healers to displaced families and lost souls of all kinds. With the feel of a modern classic, This Tender Land is an en-thralling, big-hearted epic that shows how the magnificent American landscape connects us all, haunts our dreams, and makes us whole.</p>			
Book Club West	Monday July 6, 7PM		Zoom or place TBD
Book Club East	Monday July 20, 6PM		Potesta's Green Bay Road Gurnee or Zoom July 6

Book Club List 2020-2021

Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No of pages
August 2020			
Tidewater	Libbie Hawker	Michael Chatlien	Fiction, 530 pages
<p>A clash of desire and hatred, of friendship and fear, of stark ambition and desperate survival. In 1607, three ships arrive on the coast of Virginia to establish Jamestown Colony. Their only hope of survival lies with the Powhatan tribe. John Smith knows this. He knows, too, that the Powhatans would rather see the English starve to death than yield their homeland to invaders. In the midst of this struggle, Pocahontas, the daughter of the great chief, forges an unlikely friendship with Smith. Their bond preserves a wary peace—but as each seeks to fulfill their own ambitions, their delicate truce begins to crack. Soon the colonists and Powhatans are locked in battle, and Pocahontas must choose between power and servitude—between self and sacrifice—for the sake of her people and her land.</p>			
Book Club West	Monday August 3, 7PM		Zoom or place TBD
Book Club East	Monday August 17, 6PM		Potesta's Green Bay Road Gurnee or Zoom August 3

Book Club List 2020-2021

Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No of pages
September 2020			
Akin	Emma Donoghue	Deb Modde	Fiction, 352 pages
<p>Noah Selvaggio is a retired chemistry professor and widower living on the Upper West Side, but born in the South of France. He is days away from his first visit back to Nice since he was a child, bringing with him a handful of puzzling photos he's discovered from his mother's wartime years. But he receives a call from social services: Noah is the closest available relative of an eleven-year-old great-nephew he's never met, who urgently needs someone to look after him. Out of a feeling of obligation, Noah agrees to take Michael along on his trip.</p> <p>Much has changed in this famously charming seaside mecca, still haunted by memories of the Nazi occupation. The unlikely duo, suffering from jet lag and culture shock, bicker about everything from steak frites to screen time. But Noah gradually comes to appreciate the boy's truculent wit, and Michael's ease with tech and sharp eye help Noah unearth troubling details about their family's past. Both come to grasp the risks people in all eras have run for their loved ones, and find they are more akin than they knew.</p> <p>Written with all the tenderness and psychological intensity that made Room an international bestseller, Akin is a funny, heart-wrenching tale of an old man and a boy, born two generations apart, who unpick their painful story and start to write a new one together.</p>			
Book Club West	Monday September 14, 7PM		Zoom or place TBD
Book Club East	Monday September 21, 6PM		Potesta's Green Bay Road Gurnee or Zoom September 14

Book Club List 2020-2021

Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No of pages
October 2020			
News of the World	Paulette Jiles	Elizabeth Danos	Fiction, 240 pages
<p>In the aftermath of the Civil War, an aging itinerant news reader agrees to transport a young captive of the Kiowa back to her people in this exquisitely rendered, morally complex, multilayered novel of historical fiction from the author of <i>Enemy Women</i> that explores the boundaries of family, responsibility, honor, and trust.</p> <p>In the wake of the Civil War, Captain Jefferson Kyle Kidd travels through northern Texas, giving live readings from newspapers to paying audiences hungry for news of the world. An elderly widower who has lived through three wars and fought in two of them, the captain enjoys his rootless, solitary existence.</p> <p>In Wichita Falls, he is offered a \$50 gold piece to deliver a young orphan to her relatives in San Antonio. Four years earlier, a band of Kiowa raiders killed Johanna's parents and sister; sparing the little girl, they raised her as one of their own. Recently rescued by the U.S. army, the ten-year-old has once again been torn away from the only home she knows.</p> <p>Their 400-mile journey south through unsettled territory and unforgiving terrain proves difficult and at times dangerous. Johanna has forgotten the English language, tries to escape at every opportunity, throws away her shoes, and refuses to act "civilized." Yet as the miles pass, the two lonely survivors tentatively begin to trust each other, forming a bond that marks the difference between life and death in this treacherous land.</p> <p>Arriving in San Antonio, the reunion is neither happy nor welcome. The captain must hand Johanna over to an aunt and uncle she does not remember—strangers who regard her as an unwanted burden. A respectable man, Captain Kidd is faced with a terrible choice: abandon the girl to her fate or become—in the eyes of the law—a kidnapper himself.</p>			
Book Club West	Monday October 5, 7PM		Zoom or place TBD
Book Club East	Monday October 19, 6PM		Potesta's Green Bay Road Gurnee or Zoom October 5

Book Club List 2020-2021

Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No of pages
November 2020			
Varina	Charles Frazier	Deb Modde	Fiction, 345 pages
<p>Sooner or later, history asks, which side were you on? In his powerful new novel, Charles Frazier returns to the time and place of Cold Mountain, vividly bringing to life the chaos and devastation of the Civil War. Her marriage prospects limited, teenage Varina Howell agrees to wed the much-older widower Jefferson Davis, with whom she expects the secure life of a Mississippi landowner. Davis instead pursues a career in politics and is eventually appointed president of the Confederacy, placing Varina at the white-hot center of one of the darkest moments in American history—culpable regardless of her intentions. The Confederacy falling, her marriage in tatters, and the country divided, Varina and her children escape Richmond and travel south on their own, now fugitives with “bounties on their heads, an entire nation in pursuit.” Intimate in its detailed observations of one woman’s tragic life and epic in its scope and power, Varina is a novel of an American war and its aftermath. Ultimately, the book is a portrait of a woman who comes to realize that complicity carries consequences.</p>			
Book Club West	Monday November 2, 7PM		Zoom or place TBD
Book Club East	Monday November 16, 6PM		Potesta's Green Bay Road Gurnee or Zoom November 2
December 2020			
Book Club Christmas Pot Luck			
Annunciation Church or Zoom Monday December 7, 2020 6PM			

Book Club List 2020-2021

Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No of pages
January 2021			
A Gentleman in Moscow	Amor Towles	Michael Chatlien	Fiction, 466 pages
<p>In 1922, Count Alexander Rostov is deemed an unrepentant aristocrat by a Bolshevik tribunal, and is sentenced to house arrest in the Metropol, a grand hotel across the street from the Kremlin. Rostov, an indomitable man of erudition and wit, has never worked a day in his life, and must now live in an attic room while some of the most tumultuous decades in Russian history are unfolding outside the hotel's doors. Unexpectedly, his reduced circumstances provide him entry into a much larger world of emotional discovery.</p> <p>Brimming with humor, a glittering cast of characters, and one beautifully rendered scene after another, this singular novel casts a spell as it relates the count's endeavor to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to be a man of purpose.</p>			
Book Club West	Monday January 4, 7PM		Zoom or place TBD
Book Club East	Monday January 18, 6PM		Potesta's Green Bay Road Gurnee or Zoom January 4

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No of pages
February 2021			
The Leavers	Lisa Ko	Barb McNeill	Fiction, 369 pages
<p>One morning, Deming Guo’s mother, Polly, an undocumented Chinese immigrant, goes to her job at a nail salon—and never comes home. No one can find any trace of her.</p> <p>With his mother gone, eleven-year-old Deming is left mystified and bereft. Eventually adopted by a pair of well-meaning white professors, Deming is moved from the Bronx to a small town upstate and renamed Daniel Wilkinson. But far from all he’s ever known, Daniel struggles to reconcile his adoptive parents’ desire that he assimilate with his memories of his mother and the community he left behind.</p> <p>Told from the perspective of both Daniel—as he grows into a directionless young man—and Polly, Ko’s novel gives us one of fiction’s most singular mothers. Loving and selfish, determined and frightened, Polly is forced to make one heartwrenching choice after another.</p> <p>Set in New York and China, The Leavers is a vivid examination of borders and belonging. It’s a moving story of how a boy comes into his own when everything he loves is taken away, and how a mother learns to live with the mistakes of the past.</p>			
Book Club West	Monday February 1, 7PM		Zoom or place TBD
Book Club East	Monday February 15, 6PM		Potesta's Green Bay Road Gurnee or Zoom February 1

Book Club List 2020-2021

Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No of pages
March 2021			
Bookwoman of Troublesome Creek	Kim Michele Richardson	Barbara Crowe, Cheri Johnson	Fiction, 320 pages
<p>The hardscrabble folks of Troublesome Creek have to scarp for everything—everything except books, that is. Thanks to Roosevelt's Kentucky Pack Horse Library Project, Troublesome's got its very own traveling librarian, Cussy Mary Carter. Cussy's not only a book woman, however, she's also the last of her kind, her skin a shade of blue unlike most anyone else. Not everyone is keen on Cussy's family or the Library Project, and a Blue is often blamed for any whiff of trouble. If Cussy wants to bring the joy of books to the hill folks, she's going to have to confront prejudice as old as the Appalachias and suspicion as deep as the holler.</p> <p>In their youth, Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza fall passionately in love. When Fermina eventually chooses to marry a wealthy, well-born doctor, Florentino is devastated, but he is a romantic. As he rises in his business career he whiles away the years in 622 affairs--yet he reserves his heart for Fermina. Her husband dies at last, and Florentino purposefully attends the funeral. Fifty years, nine months, and four days after he first declared his love for Fermina, he will do so again.</p>			
Book Club West	Monday March 1, 7PM		Zoom or place TBD
Book Club East	Monday March 15, 6PM		Potesta's Green Bay Road Gurnee or Zoom March 1

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April 2021			
The Magic Strings of Frankie Presto	Mitch Albom	Cindy Hibbard	Fiction, 368 pages
<p>Frankie becomes a pop star himself. He makes records. He is adored. But his gift is also his burden, as he realizes that through his music he can actually affect people's futures - with one string turning blue whenever a life is altered. But Frankie's talent is touched by the gods, and his amazing journey weaves him through the musical landscape of the 20th century, from classical to jazz to rock and roll, with his stunning talent affecting numerous stars along the way, including Hank Williams, Elvis Presley, Carole King, Wynton Marsalis, and even KISS. At the height of his popularity, Frankie Presto vanishes. His legend grows. Only decades later does he reappear - just before his spectacular death - to change one last life.</p>			
Book Club West	Monday April 5, 7PM		Zoom or place TBD
Book Club East	Monday April 19, 6PM		Potesta's Green Bay Road Gurnee or Zoom April 5
May 2021			
Book Club Selection Pot Luck			
Annunciation Church or Zoom Monday May 3, 2021 6PM			

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No of pages
June 2021			
The Last Thing You Surrender	Leonard Pitts Jr.	Ruth Chatlien	Fiction, 464 pages
<p>Pulitzer-winning journalist and bestselling novelist (<i>Freeman</i>) Leonard Pitts, Jr.'s new historical page-turner is a great American tale of race and war, following three characters from the Jim Crow South as they face the enormous changes World War II triggers in the United States.</p> <p>An affluent white marine survives Pearl Harbor at the cost of a black messman's life only to be sent, wracked with guilt, to the Pacific and taken prisoner by the Japanese . . . a young black woman, widowed by the same events at Pearl, finds unexpected opportunity and a dangerous friendship in a segregated Alabama shipyard feeding the war . . . a black man, who as a child saw his parents brutally lynched, is conscripted to fight Nazis for a country he despises and discovers a new kind of patriotism in the all-black 761st Tank Battalion.</p> <p>Set against a backdrop of violent racial conflict on both the front lines and the home front, <i>The Last Thing You Surrender</i> explores the powerful moral struggles of individuals from a divided nation. What does it take to change someone's mind about race? What does it take for a country and a people to move forward, transformed?</p>			
Book Club West	Monday June 7, 7PM		Zoom or place TBD
Book Club East	Monday June 21, 6PM		Potesta's Green Bay Road Gurnee or Zoom June 7