

Book Group Kits

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- discussion questions
- information about the author
- a plastic storage box for easy transport



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Many thanks to the Friends of the Tompkins County Public Library for making this collection possible.



FINGER LAKES
LIBRARY SYSTEM

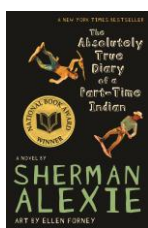
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How Do I Request a Book Group Kit?

1. Go to www.flls.org and click on 'Search the catalog'
2. Choose your home library and click on 'Start PowerPAC'.
3. At the next screen choose 'Search' from the top tabs.
4. Under "Keyword" search for: "Book Group Kit" and choose "Series" from the "Search by" box.
5. Press go to bring up the list of kits, then click "Place hold" for the item you want.
6. Follow the onscreen instructions; the kit will be then held for you at your home library!

Alternate technique: do a keyword search by title, and then restrict the "material type" to "kit"

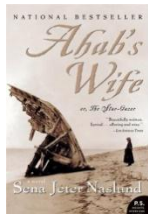
Available Titles (last updated 09/12):



The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

Sherman Alexie

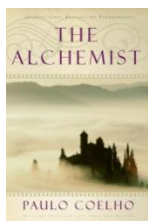
In his first book for young adults, bestselling author Sherman Alexie tells the story of Junior, a budding cartoonist growing up on the Spokane Indian Reservation. Determined to take his future into his own hands, Junior leaves his troubled school on the rez to attend an all-white farm town high school where the only other Indian is the school mascot. Heartbreaking, funny, and beautifully written, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, which is based on the author's own experiences, coupled with poignant drawings by acclaimed artist Ellen Forney, that reflect the character's art, chronicles the contemporary adolescence of one Native American boy as he attempts to break away from the life he was destined to live.



Ahab's Wife

Sena Jeter Naslund

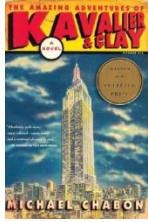
A magnificent, vast, and enthralling saga, Sena Jeter Naslund's *Ahab's Wife* is a remarkable epic spanning a rich, eventful, and dramatic life. Inspired by a brief passage in *Moby Dick*, it is the story of Una, exiled as a child to live in a lighthouse, removed from the physical and emotional abuse of a religion-mad father. It is the romantic adventure of a young woman setting sail in a cabin boy's disguise to encounter darkness, wonder, and catastrophe; the story of a devoted wife who witnesses her husband's destruction by obsession and madness. Ultimately it is the powerful and moving story of a woman's triumph over tragedy and loss through her courage, creativity, and intelligence.



The Alchemist

Paulo Coelho

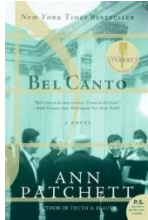
The Alchemist is the magical story of Santiago, an Andalusian shepherd boy who yearns to travel in search of a worldly treasure as extravagant as any ever found. From his home in Spain he journeys to the markets of Tangiers and across the Egyptian desert to a fateful encounter with the alchemist. The story of the treasures Santiago finds along the way teaches us, as only a few stories have done, about the essential wisdom of listening to our hearts, learning to read the omens strewn along life's path, and, above all, following our dreams.



The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay

Michael Chabon

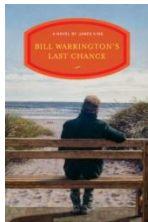
The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay is a triumph of originality, imagination, and storytelling, an exuberant, irresistible novel that begins in New York City in 1939. A young escape artist and budding magician named Joe Kavalier arrives on the doorstep of his cousin, Sammy Clay. While the long shadow of Hitler falls across Europe, these two teenage boys spin comic book tales of the heroic, fascist-fighting Escapist and the beautiful, mysterious Luna Moth, otherworldly mistress of the night. Spanning continents and eras, this superb book by one of America's finest writers remains one of the defining novels of our modern American age. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize.



Bel Canto

Ann Patchett

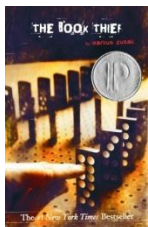
Somewhere in South America at the home of the country's vice president, a lavish birthday party is being held in honor of Mr. Hosokawa, a powerful Japanese businessman. Roxanne Coss, opera's most revered soprano, has mesmerized the guests with her singing. It is a perfect evening until a band of terrorists breaks in, taking the entire party hostage. But what begins as a life-threatening scenario slowly evolves into something quite different. Friendship, compassion, and the chance for great love lead the characters to forget the real danger that has been set in motion and cannot be stopped. Ann Patchett has written a novel that is as lyrical and profound as it is unforgettable. *Bel Canto* is a virtuoso performance by one of our best and most important writers.



Bill Warrington's Last Chance

James King

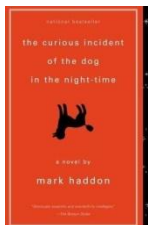
Bill Warrington realizes he has Alzheimer's and his lucid days are numbered. Determined to repair a lifetime of damage to his estranged adult children, Bill takes off with his fifteen-year-old granddaughter April on a cross-country drive, bound for San Francisco, where she dreams of becoming a rock star. As the unlikely pair heads west, Bill leaves clues intended to force his three children-including April's frantic mother-to overcome their mutual distrust and long-held grievances to work together to find them. In this dazzling road trip novel, James King masterfully explores themes of aging, sibling rivalry, family dysfunction, and coming of age, against a backdrop of the American heartland.



The Book Thief

Marcus Zusak

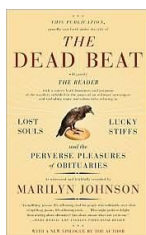
It's just a small story really, about among other things: a girl, some words, an accordionist, some fanatical Germans, a Jewish fist-fighter, and quite a lot of thievery. . . . Set during World War II in Germany, Markus Zusak's groundbreaking new novel is the story of Liesel Meminger, a foster girl living outside of Munich. Liesel scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can't resist—books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement before he is marched to Dachau. This is an unforgettable story about the ability of books to feed the soul



The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

Mark Haddon

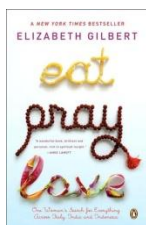
Christopher John Francis Boone knows all the countries of the world and their capitals and every prime number up to 7,057. He relates well to animals but has no understanding of human emotions. He cannot stand to be touched. And he detests the color yellow. This improbable story of Christopher's quest to investigate the suspicious death of a neighborhood dog makes for one of the most captivating, unusual, and widely heralded novels in recent years.



The Dead Beat: Lost Souls, Lucky Stiffs, and the Perverse Pleasures of Obituaries

Marilyn Johnson

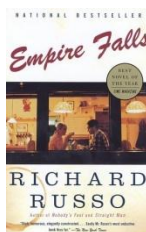
In wry and lucid prose, Johnson takes a mordantly funny look at the history and practice of "the ultimate human-interest story," the obituary. Enthralled by the fascinating lives that were marching out of this world, Marilyn Johnson tumbled into the obits page to find out what made it so lively. She sought out the best obits in the English language and chased the people who spent their lives writing about the dead. The result is a rare combination of scrapbook and compelling read, a trip through recent history and the unusual lives we don't quite appreciate until they're gone.



Eat, Pray, Love

Elizabeth Gilbert

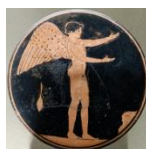
In her early thirties, Elizabeth Gilbert had everything a modern American woman was supposed to want--husband, country home, successful career--but instead of feeling happy and fulfilled, she felt consumed by panic and confusion. This wise and rapturous book is the story of how she left behind all these outward marks of success, and of what she found in their place. Following a divorce and a crushing depression, Gilbert set out to examine three different aspects of her nature, set against the backdrop of three different cultures: pleasure in Italy, devotion in India, and on the Indonesian island of Bali, a balance between worldly enjoyment and divine transcendence.



Empire Falls

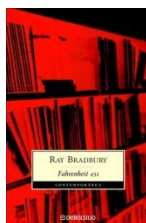
Richard Russo

Miles Roby has been slinging burgers at the Empire Grill for 20 years, a job that cost him his college education and much of his self-respect. What keeps him there? It could be his bright, sensitive daughter Tick, who needs all his help surviving the local high school. Or maybe it's Janine, Miles' soon-to-be ex-wife, who's taken up with a noxiously vain health-club proprietor. Or perhaps it's the imperious Francine Whiting, who owns everything in town--and seems to believe that "everything" includes Miles himself. In *Empire Falls* Richard Russo delves deep into the blue-collar heart of America in a work that overflows with hilarity, heartache, and grace. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize.



Erotica (Genre Kit)

The Erotica Kit is bound to spark conversation like no other, especially since the diverse genre of erotica has been topping many bestseller lists in recent years. This thematic kit contains 13 different works, including selections such as: the steamy bestseller *Fifty Shades of Grey*; the artist Anais Nin's lyrical, surreal classic *Little Birds*; and the memoir *A Round-Heeled Woman* by a retired schoolteacher who, after 30 years of celibate widowhood, decides to place a newspaper ad for "a lot of sex with a man I like."



Fahrenheit 451

Ray Bradbury

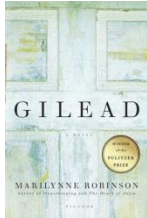
In this classic, frightening vision of the future, firemen don't put out fires--they start them in order to burn books. Guy Montag has worked happily as a fireman for several years, but everything changes when he meets a young girl who makes him question his profession and the values of the society in which he lives. Bradbury's vividly painted society holds up the appearance of happiness as the highest goal--a place where trivial information is good, and knowledge and ideas are bad. Fire Captain Beatty explains it this way, "Give the people contests they win by remembering the words to more popular songs.... Don't give them slippery stuff like philosophy or sociology to tie things up with. That way lies melancholy."



The Friday Night Knitting Club

Kate Jacobs

A charming and moving novel about female friendship and the experiences that knit us together-even when we least expect it. Walker and Daughter is Georgia Walker's little yarn shop, tucked into a quiet storefront on Manhattan's Upper West Side. The Friday Night Knitting Club was started by some of Georgia's regulars, who gather once a week to work on their latest projects and to chat-and occasionally clash-over their stories of love, life, and everything in between.



Gilead

Marilynne Robinson

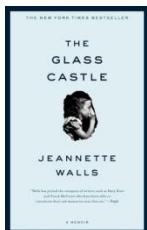
An intimate tale of three generations from the Civil War to the twentieth century, this novel explores the relationship between fathers and sons and the spiritual battles that still rage at America's heart. Writing in the tradition of Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman, Marilynne Robinson's beautiful, spare, and spiritual prose allows "even the faithless reader to feel the possibility of transcendent order" (*Slate*). In the luminous and unforgettable voice of Congregationalist minister John Ames, *Gilead* reveals the human condition and the often unbearable beauty of an ordinary life. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize.



Girl with the Pearl Earring

Tracy Chevalier

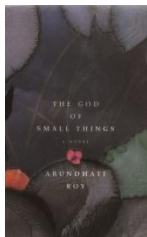
Tracy Chevalier transports readers to a bygone time and place in this richly-imagined portrait of the young woman who inspired one of Vermeer's most celebrated paintings. History and fiction merge seamlessly in this luminous novel about artistic vision and sensual awakening. *Girl with a Pearl Earring* tells the story of sixteen-year-old Griet, whose life is transformed by her brief encounter with genius . . . even as she herself is immortalized in canvas and oil.



The Glass Castle: A Memoir

Jeannette Walls

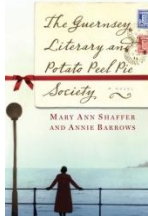
Jeannette Walls grew up with parents whose ideals and stubborn nonconformity were both their curse and their salvation. Rex and Rose Mary Walls had four children. In the beginning, they lived like nomads, moving among Southwest desert towns, camping in the mountains. Rex was a charismatic, brilliant man who, when sober, captured his children's imagination and taught them how to embrace life fearlessly. Rose Mary, who painted and wrote and couldn't stand the responsibility of providing for her family, called herself an "excitement addict." Eventually money ran out, the romance of the wandering life faded and dysfunction escalated. Jeannette and her brother and sisters then had to fend for themselves, supporting one another as they weathered their parents' betrayals and, finally, found the resources and will to leave home.



The God of Small Things

Arundhati Roy

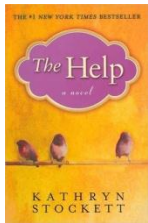
The year is 1969. In the state of Kerala, on the southernmost tip of India, fraternal twins Esthappen and Rahel fashion a childhood for themselves in the shade of the wreck that is their family. Then, when their beloved uncle's English ex-wife brings their daughter for a Christmas visit, the twins learn that Things Can Change in a Day. That lives can twist into new, ugly shapes, even cease forever, beside their river....



The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society

Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows

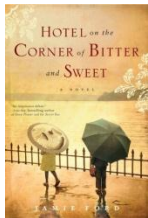
January 1946: London is emerging from the shadow of the Second World War, and writer Juliet Ashton is looking for her next book subject. Who could imagine that she would find it in a letter from a man she's never met, a native of the island of Guernsey. Soon, Juliet is drawn into the world of this man and his friends—and what a wonderfully eccentric world it is. The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society—born as a spur-of-the-moment alibi when its members were discovered breaking curfew by the Germans occupying their island—boasts a charming, funny, deeply human cast of characters, from pig farmers to phrenologists, literature lovers all. Written with warmth and humor as a series of letters, this novel is a celebration of the written word in all its guises, and of finding connection in the most surprising ways.



The Help

Kathryn Stockett

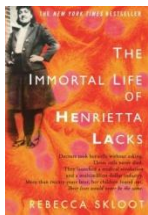
Aibileen is a black maid in 1962 Jackson, Mississippi, who's always taken orders quietly, but lately she's unable to hold her bitterness back. Her friend Minny has never held her tongue but now must somehow keep secrets about her employer that leave her speechless. White socialite Skeeter just graduated college. She's full of ambition, but without a husband, she's considered a failure. Together, these seemingly different women join together to write a tell-all book about work as a black maid in the South that could forever alter their destinies and the life of a small town...



Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet

Jamie Ford

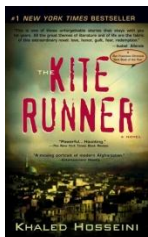
In 1940s Seattle, ethnicities do not mix. Whites, blacks, Chinese and Japanese live in separate neighborhoods, and their children attend different schools. When Henry Lee's staunchly nationalistic father pins an "I am Chinese" button to his 12-year-old son's shirt and enrolls him in an all-white prep school, Henry finds himself friendless and at the mercy of schoolyard bullies. His salvation arrives in the form of Keiko, a Japanese girl with whom Henry forms an instant—and forbidden—bond. Set during one of the most conflicted and volatile times in American history, *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* is an extraordinary story of commitment and enduring hope.



The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks

Rebecca Skloot

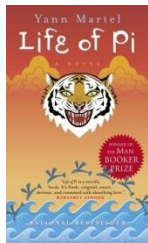
Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. She was a poor Southern tobacco farmer who worked the same land as her slave ancestors, yet her cells—taken without her knowledge—became one of the most important tools in medicine. HeLa cells were vital for developing the polio vaccine; uncovered secrets of cancer, viruses, and the atom bomb's effects. Yet Henrietta Lacks remains virtually unknown, buried in an unmarked grave. As Rebecca Skloot so brilliantly shows, the story of the Lacks family—past and present—is inextricably connected to the dark history of experimentation on African Americans, the birth of bioethics, and the legal battles over whether we control the stuff we are made of.



The Kite Runner

Khaled Hosseini

A novel set mostly in Afghanistan. The introverted and insecure afghan narrator, Amir, grows up in Afghanistan in the closing years of the monarchy and the first years of the short-lived republic. Amir's relatively privileged life in Kabul comes to an end when the communist regime comes to power and his extrovert father, Baba emigrates with him to the U.S. Amir's father dies in the U.S. and Amir receives a letter from his father's most trusted business partner and, for a time, Amir's surrogate father, which makes Amir return, alone, to a Taliban-dominated Afghanistan in search of the truth about himself and his family, and finally, a sort of redemption.



Life of Pi

Yann Martel

A masterful and utterly original novel that is at once the story of a young castaway who faces immeasurable hardships on the high seas, and a meditation on religion, faith, art and life that is as witty as it is profound. 16 year old Pi has a rich life in India, where his family runs the local zoo. Due to a changing political climate the family decides to relocate to Canada, but when their cargo ship sinks only Pi survives, cast adrift in a lifeboat with the unlikelyst of travelling companions: a zebra, an orang-utan, a hyena, and a 450-pound Royal Bengal tiger named Richard Parker. Thus begins Pi Patel's epic, 227-day voyage across the Pacific, and the powerful story of faith and survival at the heart of *Life of Pi*. Winner of the Man Booker Prize.



Living Dead Girl

Elisabeth Scott

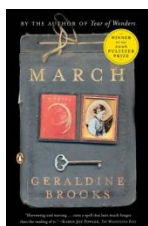
Once upon a time, I was a little girl who disappeared. Once upon a time, my name was not Alice. Once upon a time, I didn't know how lucky I was. When Alice was ten, Ray took her away from her family, her friends -- her life. She learned to give up all power, to endure all pain. She waited for the nightmare to be over. Now Alice is fifteen and Ray still has her, but he speaks more and more of her death. He does not know it is what she longs for. She does not know he has something more terrifying than death in mind for her. This is Alice's story. It is one you have never heard, and one you will never, ever forget.



The Lovely Bones

Alice Sebold

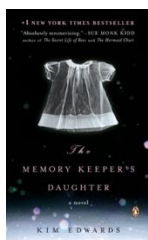
"My name was Salmon, like the fish; first name, Susie. I was fourteen when I was murdered on December 6, 1973." So begins the story of Susie Salmon, who is adjusting to her new home in heaven, a place that is not at all what she expected, even as she is watching life on earth continue without her -- her friends trading rumors about her disappearance, her killer trying to cover his tracks, her grief-stricken family unraveling. Out of unspeakable tragedy and loss, *The Lovely Bones* succeeds, miraculously, in building a tale filled with hope, humor, suspense, even joy.



March

Geraldine Brooks

From Louisa May Alcott's beloved classic *Little Women*, Geraldine Brooks has animated the character of the absent father, March, and crafted a story "filled with the ache of love and marriage and with the power of war upon the mind and heart of one unforgettable man" (Sue Monk Kidd). Brooks follows March as he leaves behind his family to aid the Union cause in the Civil War. His experiences will utterly change his marriage and challenge his most ardently held beliefs. A lushly written, wholly original tale steeped in the details of another time, *March* secures Geraldine Brooks's place as a renowned author of historical fiction. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize.



The Memory Keeper's Daughter

Kim Edwards

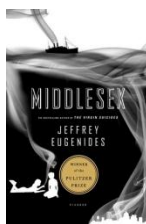
What would happen if you lost your child and she grew up without you? In 1964, when a blizzard forces Dr. David Henry to deliver his own twins, he immediately recognizes that one of them has Down Syndrome and makes a split-second decision that will haunt all their lives forever. He asks his nurse to take the baby away to an institution and to keep her birth a secret. Instead, she disappears into another city to raise the child as her own. Compulsively readable and deeply moving, *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* is an astonishing tale of redemptive love.



The Metamorphosis and other Stories

Franz Kafka

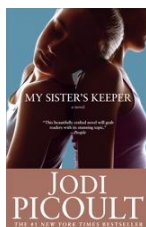
"As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect." So begins Kafka's famous short story, *The Metamorphosis*. It is the story of a young man who, transformed overnight into a giant beetle-like insect, becomes an object of disgrace to his family, an outsider in his own home, a quintessentially alienated man. *The Judgment* explores an enigmatic power struggle between father and son, while *In the Penal Colony* examines questions of power, justice, punishment, and the meaning of pain in a colonial setting. These short stories are among the most widely read and influential works of twentieth-century fiction.



Middlesex

Jeffrey Eugenides

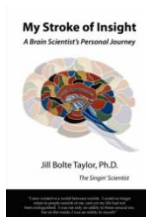
"I was born twice: first, as a baby girl, on a remarkably smogless Detroit day of January 1960; and then again, as a teenage boy, in an emergency room near Petoskey, Michigan, in August of 1974." So begins the breathtaking story of Calliope Stephanides and three generations of the Greek-American Stephanides family who travel from a tiny village overlooking Mount Olympus in Asia Minor to Prohibition-era Detroit, witnessing its glory days as the Motor City, and the race riots of 1967, before they move out to the tree-lined streets of suburban Grosse Pointe, Michigan. To understand why Calliope is not like other girls, she has to uncover a guilty family secret and the astonishing genetic history that turns Callie into Cal, one of the most audacious and wondrous narrators in contemporary fiction. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize.



My Sister's Keeper

Jodi Picoult

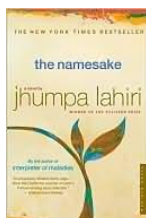
Anna is not sick, but she might as well be. By age thirteen, she has undergone countless surgeries, transfusions, and shots so that her older sister, Kate, can somehow fight the leukemia that has plagued her since childhood. The product of preimplantation genetic diagnosis, Anna was conceived as a bone marrow match for Kate—a life and a role that she has never challenged...until now, when she makes a decision that will tear her family apart and have perhaps fatal consequences for the sister she loves. *My Sister's Keeper* examines what it means to be a good parent, a good sister, a good person.



My Stroke of Insight: A Brain Scientist's Personal Journey

Jill Bolte Taylor

Jill Taylor was a 37-year-old Harvard-trained brain scientist when a blood vessel exploded in her brain. Through the eyes of a curious scientist, she watched her mind deteriorate whereby she could not walk, talk, read, write, or recall any of her life. Because of her understanding of the brain, her respect for the cells in her body, and an amazing mother, Jill completely recovered. In *My Stroke of Insight*, she shares her recommendations for recovery and the insight she gained into the unique functions of the two halves of her brain. Taylor helps others not only rebuild their brains from trauma, but helps those of us with normal brains better understand how we can consciously influence the neural circuitry underlying what we think, how we feel and how we react to life's circumstances.

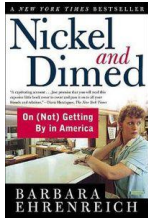


The Namesake

Jhumpa Lahiri

The Namesake takes the Ganguli family from their tradition-bound life in Calcutta, India through their fraught transformation into Americans. Named for a Russian writer by his Indian parents in memory of a catastrophe years before, Gogol Ganguli knows only that he suffers the burden of his heritage as well as his odd, antic name. Lahiri brings great empathy to Gogol as he stumbles along the first-generation path, strewn with conflicting loyalties, comic detours, and wrenching love affairs. With penetrating insight, she reveals not only the defining power of the names and expectations bestowed upon us by our parents, but also the means by which we slowly, sometimes painfully, come to define

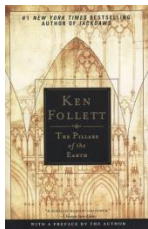
ourselves. The *New York Times* has praised Lahiri as "a writer of uncommon elegance and poise." *The Namesake* is a fine-tuned, intimate, and deeply felt novel of identity.



Nickle and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By In America

Barbara Ehrenreich

Millions of Americans work full time, year round, for poverty-level wages. In 1998, Barbara Ehrenreich decided to join them. She was inspired in part by the rhetoric surrounding welfare reform, which promised that a job -- any job -- can be the ticket to a better life. But how does anyone survive, let alone prosper, on \$6 an hour? To find out, Ehrenreich left her home, took the cheapest lodgings she could find, and accepted whatever jobs she was offered. Very quickly, she discovered that no job is truly "unskilled" and that even the lowliest occupations require exhausting mental and muscular effort. She also learned that one job is not enough; you need at least two if you intend to live indoors. *Nickle and Dimed* reveals low-rent America in all its tenacity, anxiety, and surprising generosity -- a land of Big Boxes, fast food, and a thousand desperate stratagems for survival.



The Pillars of the Earth

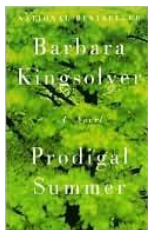
Ken Follett

This book tells the tale of a twelfth-century monk driven to do the seemingly impossible: build the greatest Gothic cathedral the world has ever known. Against this richly imagined and intricately interwoven backdrop, filled with the ravages of war and the rhythms of daily life, this master storyteller draws the reader irresistibly into the intertwined lives of his characters—into their dreams, their labors, and their loves: Tom, the master builder; Aliena, the ravishingly beautiful noblewoman; Philip, the prior of Kingsbridge; Jack, the artist in stone; and Ellen, the woman of the forest who casts a terrifying curse. The building of the cathedral, with the almost eerie artistry of the unschooled stonemasons, is the center of the drama.



Poetry (Genre Kit)

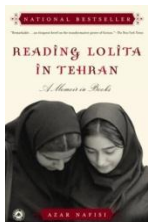
The Poetry Kit explores the world of contemporary American poetry through a thematic lens. This kit includes a selection of 9 different works by Ann Harris, Karen Traynor, Billy Collins, Mary Oliver, Robert Bly, Amy Clampitt, John Ashbery, Sharon Olds, Robert Hass, and Donald Hall.



Prodigal Summer

Barbara Kingsolver

Barbara Kingsolver's fifth novel is a hymn to wildness that celebrates the prodigal spirit of human nature, and of nature itself. It weaves together three stories of human love within a larger tapestry of lives amid the mountains and farms of southern Appalachia. Over the course of one humid summer, this novel's intriguing protagonists face disparate predicaments but find connections to one another and to the flora and fauna with which they necessarily share a place.



Reading Lolita in Tehran

Azar Nafisi

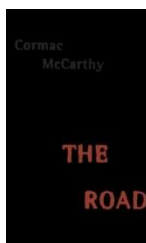
Every Thursday morning for two years in the Islamic Republic of Iran, a bold and inspired teacher named Azar Nafisi secretly gathered seven of her most committed female students to read forbidden Western classics. As Islamic morality squads staged arbitrary raids in Tehran, fundamentalists seized hold of the universities, and a blind censor stifled artistic expression, the girls in Azar Nafisi's living room risked removing their veils and immersed themselves in the worlds of Jane Austen, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Henry James, and Vladimir Nabokov. *Reading Lolita in Tehran* is a remarkable exploration of resilience in the face of tyranny and a celebration of the liberating power of literature.



The Red Tent

Anita Diamant

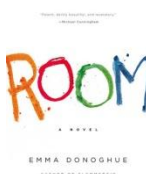
Her name is Dinah. In the Bible, her life is only hinted at in a brief and violent detour within the more familiar chapters of the Book of Genesis that are about her father, Jacob, and his dozen sons. Told in Dinah's voice, this novel reveals the traditions and turmoils of ancient womanhood--the world of the red tent. It begins with the story of her mothers--Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, and Bilhah--the four wives of Jacob. They love Dinah and give her gifts that sustain her through a hard-working youth, a calling to midwifery, and a new home in a foreign land. Deeply affecting, *The Red Tent* combines rich storytelling with a valuable achievement in modern fiction: a new view of biblical women's society.



The Road

Cormac McCarthy

A searing, postapocalyptic novel destined to become Cormac McCarthy's masterpiece. A father and his son walk alone through burned America. Nothing moves in the ravaged landscape save the ash on the wind. It is cold enough to crack stones, and when the snow falls it is gray. The sky is dark. Their destination is the coast, although they don't know what, if anything, awaits them there. They have nothing; just a pistol to defend themselves against the lawless bands that stalk the road, the clothes they are wearing, a cart of scavenged food—and each other.



Room

Emma Donoghue

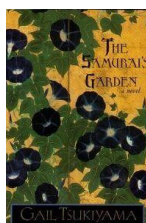
To five-year-old Jack, Room is the entire world. It is where he was born and grew up; it's where he lives with his Ma as they learn and read and eat and sleep and play. At night, his Ma shuts him safely in the wardrobe, where he is meant to be asleep when Old Nick visits. Room is home to Jack, but to Ma, it is the prison where Old Nick has held her captive for seven years. Through determination, ingenuity, and fierce motherly love, Ma has created a life for Jack. But she knows it's not enough...not for her or for him. She devises a bold escape plan, one that relies on her young son's bravery and a lot of luck. Told entirely in the language of the energetic, pragmatic five-year-old Jack, *Room* is a celebration of resilience and the limitless bond between parent and child.



The Rules of Survival

Nancy Werlin

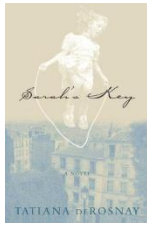
It all starts when Matthew observes a heroic scene in a convenience store: A man named Murdoch puts himself between an abusive father and his son. Matt is determined to get to know this man. And when, amazingly, Murdoch begins dating Matt's mother, it seems as if life may become peaceful for the first time. Matt and his sisters have never before known a moment of peace in a household ruled by their unpredictable, vicious mother. And so, after Murdoch inevitably breaks up with her and the short period of family calm is over, Matt sees that he needs to take action...but what might his desperation lead him to do? A thought-provoking exploration of self-reliance and the nature of evil and a heart-wrenching portrait of a family in crisis, this is Nancy Werlin's most compulsively readable novel yet.



The Samurai's Garden

Gail Tsukiyama

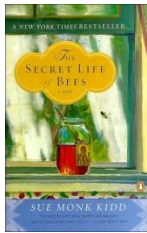
The Japanese invasion of China during the late 1930s provides a somber backdrop for this unusual story about a 20-year-old Chinese painter named Stephen who is sent to his family's summer home in a Japanese coastal village to recover from a bout with tuberculosis. Here he is cared for by Matsu, a reticent housekeeper and a master gardener. Over the course of a remarkable year, Stephen learns Matsu's secret and gains not only physical strength, but also profound spiritual insight. Matsu is a samurai of the soul, a man devoted to doing good and finding beauty in a cruel and arbitrary world, and Stephen is a noble student, learning to appreciate Matsu's generous and nurturing way of life and to love Matsu's soulmate, gentle Sachi, a woman afflicted with leprosy.



Sarah's Key

Tatiana de Rosnay

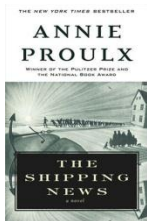
Paris, July 1942: Sarah, a ten year-old girl, is brutally arrested with her family by the French police in the Vel' d'Hiv' roundup, but not before she locks her younger brother in a cupboard in the family's apartment, thinking that she will be back within a few hours. Paris, May 2002: On Vel' d'Hiv's 60th anniversary, journalist Julia Jarmond is asked to write an article about this black day in France's past. Through her contemporary investigation, she stumbles onto a trail of long-hidden family secrets that connect her to Sarah. Julia finds herself compelled to retrace the girl's ordeal, from that terrible term in the Vel d'Hiv', to the camps, and beyond. As she probes into Sarah's past, she begins to question her own place in France, and to reevaluate her marriage and her life.



The Secret Life of Bees

Sue Monk Kidd

Set in South Carolina in 1964, *The Secret Life of Bees* tells the story of Lily Owens, whose life has been shaped around the blurred memory of the afternoon her mother was killed. When Lily's fierce-hearted "stand-in mother," Rosaleen, insults three of the town's fiercest racists, Lily decides they should both escape to Tiburon, South Carolina—a town that holds the secret to her mother's past. There they are taken in by an eccentric trio of black beekeeping sisters who introduce Lily to a mesmerizing world of bees, honey, and the Black Madonna who presides over their household. This is a remarkable story about divine female power and the transforming power of love.



The Shipping News

Annie Proulx

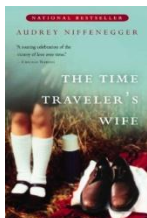
When Quoye's two-timing wife meets her just desserts, he retreats with his two daughters to his ancestral home on the starkly beautiful Newfoundland coast, where a rich cast of local characters and family members all play a part in Quoye's struggle to reclaim his life. As Quoye confronts his private demons -- and the unpredictable forces of nature and society -- he begins to see the possibility of love without pain or misery. A vigorous, darkly comic, and at times magical portrait of the contemporary North American family, *The Shipping News* shows why Annie Proulx is recognized as one of the most gifted and original writers in America today.



Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace ... One School at a Time

Greg Mortenson

Anyone who despairs of the individual's power to change lives has to read the story of Greg Mortenson, a homeless mountaineer who, following a 1993 climb of Pakistan's treacherous K2, was inspired by a chance encounter with impoverished mountain villagers and promised to build them a school. Over the next decade he built fifty-five schools—especially for girls—that offer a balanced education in one of the most isolated and dangerous regions on earth. As it chronicles Mortenson's quest, which has brought him into conflict with both enraged Islamists and uncomprehending Americans, *Three Cups of Tea* combines adventure with a celebration of the humanitarian spirit.



The Time-Traveler's Wife

Audrey Niffenegger

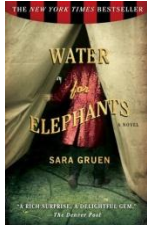
When Henry meets Clare, he is twenty-eight and she is twenty. Henry has never met Clare before; Clare has known Henry since she was six. Impossible but true, because Henry finds himself periodically displaced in time, pulled to moments of emotional gravity from his life, past and future. Henry and Clare's attempts to live normal lives are threatened by a force they can neither prevent nor control, making their passionate love story intensely moving and entirely unforgettable. *The Time Traveler's Wife* is a story of fate, hope and belief, and more than that, it's about the power of love to endure beyond the bounds of time.



Twilight

Stephenie Meyer

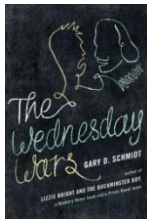
Isabella Swan's move to Forks, a small, perpetually rainy town in Washington, could have been the most boring move she ever made. But once she meets the mysterious and alluring Edward Cullen, Isabella's life takes a thrilling and terrifying turn. Up until now, Edward has managed to keep his vampire identity a secret in the small community he lives in, but now nobody is safe, especially Isabella, the person Edward holds most dear. The lovers find themselves balanced precariously on the point of a knife-between desire and danger. Deeply romantic and extraordinarily suspenseful, *Twilight* captures the struggle between defying our instincts and satisfying our desires. This is a love story with bite.



Water for Elephants

Sara Gruen

An atmospheric, gritty, and compelling novel of star-crossed lovers, set in the circus world circa 1932. Told in flashback by nonagenarian Jacob Jankowski, this novel recounts the wild and wonderful period he spent with the Benzini Brothers Most Spectacular Show on Earth, a traveling circus he joined during the Great Depression. When 23-year-old Jankowski learns that his parents have been killed in a car crash, leaving him penniless, he drops out of Cornell veterinary school and parlays his expertise with animals into a job with the circus, where he cares for a menagerie of exotic creatures. He also falls in love with Marlena, one of the show's star performers—a romance complicated by Marlena's husband, the unbalanced, sadistic circus boss who beats both his wife and the animals Jankowski cares for.



The Wednesday Wars

Gary D. Schmidt

A wonderfully witty and compelling novel about a teenage boy's mishaps and adventures over the course of the 1967–68 school year. Meet Holling Hoodhood, a seventh-grader at Camillo Junior High, who must spend Wednesday afternoons with his teacher, Mrs. Baker, while the rest of the class has religious instruction. Mrs. Baker doesn't like Holling—he's sure of it. Why else would she make him read the plays of William Shakespeare outside class? But everyone has bigger things to worry about, like Vietnam. His father wants Holling and his sister to be on their best behavior: the success of his business depends on it. But how can Holling stay out of trouble when he has so much to contend with? As fate sneaks up on him again and again, Holling finds Motivation—the Big M—in the most unexpected places and musters up the courage to embrace his destiny, in spite of himself.



The Year of Magical Thinking

Joan Didion

From one of America's iconic writers, a stunning book of electric honesty and passion. Joan Didion explores an intensely personal yet universal experience: a portrait of a marriage--and a life, in good times and bad--that will speak to anyone who has ever loved a husband or wife or child. Didion's husband, the writer John Gregory Dunne, died of a heart attack, just after they had returned from the hospital where their only child, Quintana, was lying in a coma. This book is a memoir of Dunne's death, Quintana's illness, and Didion's efforts to make sense of a time when nothing made sense.

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