

Book Club Selection 2025-2026

- 13 Aug ***Into the Raging Sea, Thirty-Three Mariners, One Megastorm, and the Sinking of El Faro*** by Rachel Slade, nonfiction, 544 pages, 2018, [Suzanne Judas](#)
- 10 Sep ***Theo of Golden*** by Allen Levi, fiction, Christian fiction, 399 pages, 2023, [Sally Dosier](#)
- 8 Oct ***Cloistered: My Years As a Nun*** by Catherine Coldstream, memoir, 328 pages, 2024, [Jody Fidler](#)
- 12 Nov ***My Brilliant Friend*** by Elena Ferrante, historical fiction, translated from the Italian, 331 pages, 2011, [Theresa Sanford](#)
- 10 Dec ***Crossing to Safety*** by Wallace Stegner, fiction, classic, 335 pages, 1987
- 14 Jan ***The Husbands*** by Holly Gramazio, fiction, magical realism, 352 pages, 2024
- 11 Feb ***33 Place Brugmann*** by Alice Austen, historical fiction, 368 pages, 2025, [Elizabeth Walker](#)
- 11 Mar ***Camino Island*** by John Grisham, mystery thriller, 290 pages, 2017, [Laurie Johnson](#)
- 8 Apr ***Out of My Life and Thought*** by Albert Schweitzer, autobiography, 296 pages, 1931, [Kathy Martin](#)
- 13 May ***The Stolen Queen*** by Fiona Davis, historical fiction, 352 pages, 2025, [Beth Eckford](#)

Into the Raging Sea: Thirty-Three Mariners, One Megastorm, and the Sinking of El Faro by Rachel Slade

On October 1, 2015, Hurricane Joaquin barreled into the Bermuda Triangle and swallowed the container ship El Faro whole, resulting in the worst American shipping disaster in thirty-five years. No one could fathom how a vessel equipped with satellite communications, a sophisticated navigation system, and cutting-edge weather forecasting could suddenly vanish—until now.

Relying on hundreds of exclusive interviews with family members and maritime experts, as well as the words of the crew members themselves—whose conversations were captured by the ship's data recorder—journalist Rachel Slade unravels the mystery of the sinking of El Faro. As she recounts the final twenty-four hours onboard, Slade vividly depicts the officers' anguish and fear as they struggled to carry out Captain Michael Davidson's increasingly bizarre commands, which, they knew, would steer them straight into the eye of the storm. Taking a hard look at America's aging merchant marine fleet, Slade also reveals the truth about modern shipping—a cut-throat industry plagued by razor-thin profits and ever more violent hurricanes fueled by global warming.

Theo of Golden by Allen Levi

Questions linger about Theo, a pleasant but mysterious stranger, after his arrival in the southern city of Golden. Who is he, and why is he here?

He arrives early one spring and by chance - or is it? - he visits a coffee shop where 92 framed pencil portraits are on display. Inspired, Theo sets out on a mission of purchasing all the portraits one at a time and quietly bestowing them on their 'rightful owners.'

Stories are told; friendships are born; and lives are changed. Theo of Golden is a beautifully crafted story about the power of creative generosity, the importance of wonder to a purposeful life, and the far-reaching possibilities of anonymous kindness.

Cloistered: My Years as a Nun by Catherine Coldstream

Cloistered takes the reader deep into the hidden world of a traditional Carmelite monastery as it approaches the third Millennium and tells the story of an intense personal journey into and out of an enclosed life of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Finding an apparently perfect world at Akenside Priory, in Northumberland, Catherine trusts herself to a group of twenty silent women, believing she is trusting herself to God. As the beauty and mystery of an ancient way of life enfold her, she surrenders herself wholly to its power, quite unaware of the complexity and dangers that lie ahead.

Cut off from the wider world for decades, the community has managed to evade accountability to any authority beyond itself. When Sister Catherine realises that a mesmerising cult of the personality, with the distortions it entails, has replaced the ancient ideal of religious obedience, she is faced with a dilemma. Will she submit to this, or will she be forced to speak out?

My Brilliant Friend by Elena Ferrante

A modern masterpiece from one of Italy's most acclaimed authors, *My Brilliant Friend* is a rich, intense and generous-hearted story about two friends, Elena and Lila. Ferrante's inimitable style lends itself perfectly to a meticulous portrait of these two women that is also the story of a nation and a touching meditation on the nature of friendship. Through the lives of these two women, Ferrante tells the story of a neighborhood, a city and a country as it is transformed in ways that, in turn, also transform the relationship between her two protagonists.

Crossing to Safety by Wallace Stegner

Crossing to Safety has, since its publication in 1987, established itself as one of the greatest and most cherished American novels of the twentieth century. Tracing the lives, loves, and aspirations of two couples who move between Vermont and Wisconsin, it is a work of quiet majesty, deep compassion, and powerful insight into the alchemy of friendship and marriage.

The Husbands by Holly Gramazio

When Lauren returns home to her flat in London late one night, she is greeted at the door by her husband, Michael. There's only one problem—she's not married. She's never seen this man before in her life. But according to her friends, her much-improved decor, and the photos on her phone, they've been together for years.

As Lauren tries to puzzle out how she could be married to someone she can't remember meeting, Michael goes to the attic to change a lightbulb and abruptly disappears. In his place, a new man emerges, and a new, slightly altered life re-forms around her. Realizing that her attic is creating an infinite supply of husbands, Lauren confronts the question: If swapping lives is as easy as changing a lightbulb, how do you know you've taken the right path? When do you stop trying to do better and start actually living?

33 Place Brugmann by Alice Austen

On the eve of the occupation, in the heart of Brussels, life for the residents of eight apartments at 33 Place Brugmann is about to change forever.

Art student Charlotte Sauvin, daughter of a prominent architect in apartment 4L, knows all the details of the building and its people: how light falls and voices echo, the distinct knock of her dearest friend, Julian Raphaël, the eldest son of an art collector's family across the hall in 4R. But all that's familiar for Charlotte and the other residents of 33 starts to fracture as whispers of Nazi occupation become reality. The Raphaëls disappear—becoming refugees, nurses, soldiers, reluctant heroes. Masha, the seamstress on the 5th floor, deepens a dangerous affair with a wartime compatriot of Colonel Warlemont in 3R, a man far less feckless than he'd have his neighbors believe. In the face of a perilous new reality, every member of this accidental community will discover they are not the person they believed themselves to be. When confronted with a cruel choice—submit to the regime or risk their lives to resist—each discovers the truth about what, and who, matters to them the most.

Camino Island by John Grisham

A gang of thieves stage a daring heist from a secure vault deep below Princeton University's Firestone Library. Their loot is priceless, but Princeton has insured it for twenty-five million dollars.

Bruce Cable owns a popular bookstore in the sleepy resort town of Santa Rosa on Camino Island in Florida. He makes his real money, though, as a prominent dealer in rare books. Very few people know that he occasionally dabbles in the black market of stolen books and manuscripts.

Mercer Mann is a young novelist with a severe case of writer's block who has recently been laid off from her teaching position. She is approached by an elegant, mysterious woman working for an even more mysterious company. A generous offer of money convinces Mercer to go undercover and infiltrate Bruce Cable's circle of literary friends, ideally getting close enough to him to learn his secrets.

But eventually Mercer learns far too much, and there's trouble in paradise.

Out of My Life and Thought by Albert Schweitzer

Of the many highly esteemed books Albert Schweitzer penned in his life, he valued his autobiography the most. He had become a legend and he wanted to remind readers that he was just a man, and a man who had learned from many others. He had been fortunate to be in the right places at the right times, to meet people of thought and sympathy. He wanted to report his debts to them. He wanted to clarify his reasons and methods for his undertakings and to respond to some of his critics. And, he wished to honor something greater than he was—reverence for life.

Reverence for Life became his life's motto, and it brought him pain as well as joy as he sought to respect how precious and unique each life is. Schweitzer believed there was a way to live in the world, accept it, take joy from it—and who could know this better than a man who had placed himself so much in it, given so much for it, and had been ready to receive experience as a gift to be thankful for.

The Stolen Queen by Fiona Davis

Egypt, 1936: When anthropology student Charlotte Cross is offered a coveted spot on an archaeological dig in Egypt's Valley of the Kings, she leaps at the opportunity. But after an unbearable tragedy strikes, Charlotte knows her future will never be the same.

New York City, 1978: Eighteen-year-old Annie Jenkins is thrilled when she lands an opportunity to work for iconic former Vogue fashion editor Diana Vreeland, who's in the midst of organizing the famous Met Gala, hosted at the museum and known across the city as the "party of the year." Though Annie soon realizes she'll have her work cut out for her, scrambling to meet Diana's capricious demands and exacting standards.

Meanwhile, Charlotte, now leading a quiet life as the associate curator of the Met's celebrated Department of Egyptian Art, wants little to do with the upcoming gala. She's consumed with her research on Hathorkare—a rare female pharaoh dismissed by most other Egyptologists as unimportant.

That is, until the night of the gala. When one of the Egyptian art collection's most valuable artifacts goes missing . . . and there are signs Hathorkare's legendary curse might be reawakening.