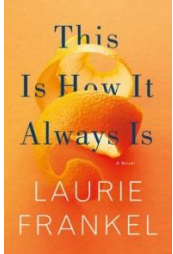


BOOK CLUB SUGGESTIONS 2017

FICTION

THIS IS HOW IT ALWAYS IS BY LAURIE FRANKEL (2017)



This is how a family keeps a secret...and how that secret ends up keeping them.

This is how a family lives happily ever after...until happily ever after becomes complicated.

This is how children change...and then change the world.

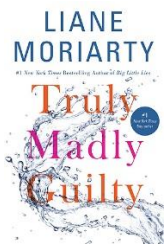
This is Claude. He's five years old, the youngest of five brothers, and loves peanut butter sandwiches. He also loves wearing a dress, and dreams of being a princess.

When he grows up, Claude says, he wants to be a girl.

Rosie and Penn want Claude to be whoever Claude wants to be. They're just not sure they're ready to share that with the world. Soon the entire family is keeping Claude's secret. Until one day it explodes.

This Is How It Always Is is a novel about revelations, transformations, fairy tales, and family. And it's about the ways this is how it always is: Change is always hard and miraculous and hard again, parenting is always a leap into the unknown with crossed fingers and full hearts, children grow but not always according to plan. And families with secrets don't get to keep them forever.

TRULY, MADLY, GUILTY BY LIANE MORIARTY (2016)



Six responsible adults. Three cute kids. One small dog. It's just a normal weekend. What could possibly go wrong?

Sam and Clementine have a wonderful, albeit, busy life: they have two little girls, Sam has just started a new dream job, and Clementine, a cellist, is busy preparing for the audition of a lifetime. If there's anything they can count on, it's each other.

Clementine and Erika are each other's oldest friends. A single look between them can convey an entire conversation.

But theirs is a complicated relationship, so when Erika mentions a last minute invitation to a barbecue with her neighbors, Tiffany and Vid, Clementine and Sam don't hesitate. Having Tiffany and Vid's larger than life personalities there will be a welcome respite.

Two months later, it won't stop raining, and Clementine and Sam can't stop asking themselves the question: What if we hadn't gone?

In *Truly Madly Guilty*, Liane Moriarty takes on the foundations of our lives: marriage, sex, parenthood, and friendship. She shows how guilt can expose the fault lines in the most seemingly strong relationships, how what we don't say can be more powerful than what we do, and how sometimes it is the most innocent of moments that can do the greatest harm.

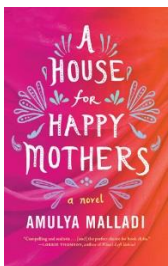
THE ARRANGEMENT BY SARAH DUNN (2017)



Lucy and Owen, ambitious, thoroughly-therapized New Yorkers, have taken the plunge, trading in their crazy life in a cramped apartment for Beekman, a bucolic Hudson Valley exurb. They've got a two hundred year-old house, an autistic son obsessed with the Titanic, and 17 chickens, at last count. It's the kind of paradise where stay-at-home moms team up to cook the school's "hot lunch," dads grill grass-fed burgers, and, as Lucy observes, "chopping kale has become a certain kind of American housewife's version of chopping wood."

When friends at a wine-soaked dinner party reveal they've made their marriage open, sensible Lucy balks. There's a part of her, though—the part that worries she's become too comfortable being invisible—that's intrigued. Why not try a short marital experiment? Six months, clear ground rules, zero questions asked. When an affair with a man in the city begins to seem more enticing than the happily-ever-after she's known for the past nine years, Lucy must decide what truly makes her happy—"real life," or the "experiment?"

A HOUSE FOR HAPPY MOTHERS BY AMULYA MALLADI (2016)



In trendy Silicon Valley, Priya has everything she needs—a loving husband, a career, and a home—but the one thing she wants most is the child she's unable to have. In a Southern Indian village, Asha doesn't have much—raising two children in a tiny hut, she and her husband can barely keep a tin roof over their heads—but she wants a better education for her gifted son. Pressured by her family, Asha reluctantly checks into the Happy Mothers House: a baby farm where she can rent her only asset—her womb—to a childless couple overseas. To the dismay of friends and family, Priya places her faith in a woman she's never met to make her dreams of motherhood come true.

Together, the two women discover the best and the worst that India's rising surrogacy industry has to offer, bridging continents and cultures to bring a new life into the world—and renewed hope to each other.

EVERYONE BRAVE IS FORGIVEN BY CHRIS CLEAVE (2016)



It's 1939 and Mary, a young socialite, is determined to shock her blueblood political family by volunteering for the war effort. She is assigned as a teacher to children who were evacuated from London and have been rejected by the countryside because they are infirm, mentally disabled, or—like Mary's favorite student, Zachary—have colored skin.

Tom, an education administrator, is distraught when his best friend, Alastair, enlists. Alastair, an art restorer, has always seemed far removed from the violent life to which he has now condemned himself. But Tom finds distraction in Mary, first as her employer and then as their relationship quickly develops in the emotionally charged times. When Mary meets Alastair, the three are drawn into a tragic love triangle and—while war escalates and bombs begin falling around them—further into a new world unlike any they've ever known.

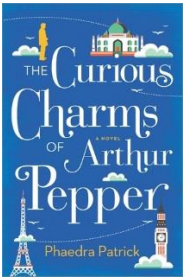
SMALL GREAT THINGS BY JODI PICOULT (2016)



Ruth Jefferson is a labor and delivery nurse at a Connecticut hospital with more than twenty years' experience. During her shift, Ruth begins a routine checkup on a newborn, only to be told a few minutes later that she's been reassigned to another patient. The parents are white supremacists and don't want Ruth, who is African American, to touch their child. The hospital complies with their request, but the next day, the baby goes into cardiac distress while Ruth is alone in the nursery. Does she obey orders or does she intervene?

Ruth hesitates before performing CPR and, as a result, is charged with a serious crime. Kennedy McQuarrie, a white public defender, takes her case but gives unexpected advice: Kennedy insists that mentioning race in the courtroom is not a winning strategy. Conflicted by Kennedy's counsel, Ruth tries to keep life as normal as possible for her family—especially her teenage son—as the case becomes a media sensation. As the trial moves forward, Ruth and Kennedy must gain each other's trust, and come to see that what they've been taught their whole lives about others—and themselves—might be wrong.

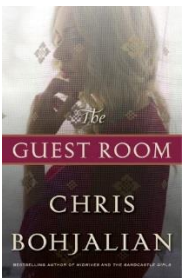
THE CURIOUS CHARMS OF ARTHUR PEPPER BY PHAEDRA PATRICK



Sixty-nine-year-old Arthur Pepper lives a simple life. He gets out of bed at precisely 7:30 a.m., just as he did when his wife, Miriam, was alive. He dresses in the same gray slacks and mustard sweater vest, waters his fern, Frederica, and heads out to his garden.

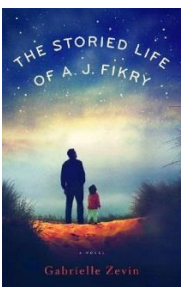
But on the one-year anniversary of Miriam's death, something changes. Sorting through Miriam's possessions, Arthur finds an exquisite gold charm bracelet he's never seen before. What follows is a surprising and unforgettable odyssey that takes Arthur from London to Paris and as far as India in an epic quest to find out the truth about his wife's secret life before they met--a journey that leads him to find hope, healing and self-discovery in the most unexpected places.

THE GUEST ROOM BY CHRIS BOHJALIAN (2016)



When Richard Chapman offers to host his younger brother's bachelor party, he expects a certain amount of debauchery. He sends his wife, Kristin, and young daughter off to his mother-in-law's for the weekend, and he opens his Westchester home to his brother's friends and their hired entertainment. What he does not expect is this: bacchanalian drunkenness, a dangerously intimate moment in his guest bedroom, and two naked women stabbing and killing their Russian bodyguards before driving off into the night. In the aftermath, Richard's life rapidly spirals into a nightmare. The police throw him out of his home, now a crime scene; his investment banking firm puts him on indefinite leave; and his wife finds herself unable to forgive him for the moment he shared with a dark-haired girl in the guest room. But the dark-haired girl, Alexandra, faces a much graver danger. In one breathless, violent night, she is free, running to escape the police who will arrest her and the gangsters who will kill her in a heartbeat.

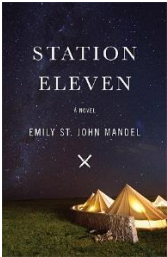
THE STORIED LIFE OF A.J. FIKRY BY GABRIELLE ZEVIN (2014)



A.J. Fikry's life is not at all what he expected it to be. His wife has died, his bookstore is experiencing the worst sales in its history, and now his prized possession, a rare collection of Poe poems, has been stolen. Even the books in his store have stopped holding pleasure for him. These days, A.J. can only see them as a sign of a world that is

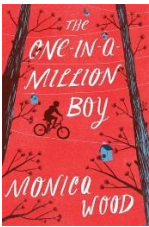
changing too rapidly. And then a mysterious package appears at the bookstore. It's a small package, but large in weight. It's that unexpected arrival that gives A.J. the opportunity to make his life over, the ability to see everything anew. It doesn't take long for the locals to notice the change overcoming him or for a determined sales rep named Amelia to see her curmudgeonly client in a new light. The wisdom of all those books again become the lifeblood of A.J.'s world and everything twists into a version of his life that he didn't see coming. As surprising as it is moving, *The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry* is an unforgettable tale of transformation and second chances, an irresistible affirmation of why we read and why we love.

STATION ELEVEN BY EMILY ST. JOHN MANDEL



One snowy night a famous Hollywood actor slumps over and dies onstage during a production of *King Lear*. Hours later, the world as we know it begins to dissolve. Moving back and forth in time—from the actor's early days as a film star to fifteen years in the future, when a theater troupe known as The Travelling Symphony roams the wasteland of what remains—this suspenseful, elegiac, spellbinding novel charts the strange twists of fate that connect five people: the actor, the man who tried to save him, the actor's first wife, his oldest friend, and a young actress with the Traveling Symphony, caught in the crosshairs of a dangerous self-proclaimed prophet. Sometimes terrifying, sometimes tender, *Station Eleven* tells a story about the relationships that sustain us, the ephemeral nature of fame, and the beauty of the world as we know it.

THE ONE-IN-A-MILLION BOY BY MONICA WOOD



The story of your life never starts at the beginning. Don't they teach you anything at school?

So says 104-year-old Ona to the 11-year-old boy who's been sent to help her out every Saturday morning. As he refills the bird feeders and tidies the garden shed, Ona tells him about her long life, from first love to second chances. Soon she's confessing secrets she has kept hidden for decades.

Ona is set to discover that even at her age the world can surprise you, and that sometimes sharing a loss is the only way to find yourself again.

THE SUMMER BEFORE THE WAR BY HELEN SIMONSON

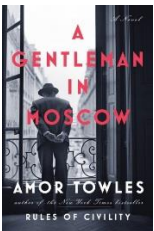


The bestselling author of *Major Pettigrew's Last Stand* returns with a breathtaking novel of love on the eve of World War I that reaches far beyond the small English town in which it is set.

East Sussex, 1914. It is the end of England's brief Edwardian summer, and everyone agrees that the weather has never been so beautiful. Hugh Grange, down from his medical studies, is visiting his Aunt Agatha, who lives with her husband in the small, idyllic coastal town of Rye. Agatha's husband works in the Foreign Office, and she is certain he will ensure that the recent sabre rattling over the Balkans won't come to anything. And Agatha has more immediate concerns; she has just risked her carefully built reputation by pushing for the appointment of a woman to replace the Latin master.

When Beatrice Nash arrives with one trunk and several large crates of books, it is clear she is significantly more freethinking — and attractive — than anyone believes a Latin teacher should be. For her part, mourning the death of her beloved father, who has left her penniless, Beatrice simply wants to be left alone to pursue her teaching and writing.

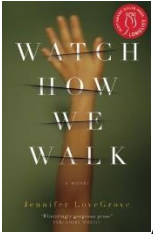
A GENTLEMAN IN MOSCOW BY AMOR TOWLES



A *Gentleman in Moscow* immerses us in another elegantly drawn era with the story of Count Alexander Rostov. When, in 1922, he is deemed an unrepentant aristocrat by a Bolshevik tribunal, the count 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 a doorway into a much larger world of emotional discovery.

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.

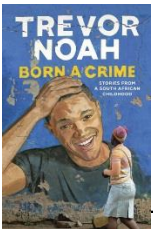
WATCH HOW WE WALK BY JENNIFER LOVEGROVE (2013)



Alternating between a woman's childhood in a small town and as an adult in the city, this novel traces a Jehovah Witness family's splintering belief system, their isolation, and the erosion of their relationships. As Emily becomes closer to her closeted Uncle Tyler, she begins to challenge her upbringing. Her questions about the Jehovah's Witnesses' insular lifestyle, rigid codes of conduct, and tenets of their faith haunt her older sister Lenora too. When Lenora disappears, everything changes and Emily becomes obsessed with taking on her sister's identity, believing that Lenora is controlling her actions. Ultimately, Emily finds release through self-mutilation. The narrative offers a haunting, cutting exploration of the Jehovah's Witness practice and practical impact of "disfellowshipping," proselytization, and cultural abstinence, as well as their attitude toward the "worldlings" outside of their faith. Sparse, vivid, menacingly suspenseful, and darkly humorous, *Watch How We Walk* simultaneously engages on emotional, visceral, and intellectual levels.

NON-FICTION

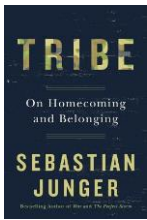
BORN A CRIME BY TREVOR NOAH (2017)



Trevor Noah's unlikely path from apartheid South Africa to the desk of *The Daily Show* began with a criminal act: his birth. Trevor was born to a white Swiss father and a black Xhosa mother at a time when such a union was punishable by five years in prison. Living proof of his parents' indiscretion, Trevor was kept mostly indoors for the earliest years of his life, bound by the extreme and often absurd measures his mother took to hide him from a government that could, at any moment, steal him away. Finally liberated by the end of South Africa's tyrannical white rule, Trevor and his mother set forth on a grand adventure, living openly and freely and embracing the opportunities won by a centuries-long struggle.

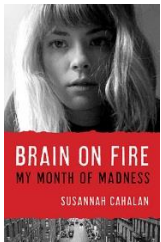
Born a Crime is the story of a mischievous young boy who grows into a restless young man as he struggles to find himself in a world where he was never supposed to exist. It is also the story of that young man's relationship with his fearless, rebellious, and fervently religious mother: his teammate, a woman determined to save her son from the cycle of poverty, violence, and abuse that would ultimately threaten her own life.

TRIBE: ON HOMECOMING AND BELONGING BY SEBASTIAN JUNGER



There are ancient tribal human behaviors—loyalty, inter-reliance, cooperation—that flare up in communities during times of turmoil and suffering. These are the very same behaviors that typify good soldiering and foster a sense of belonging among troops, whether they’re fighting on the front lines or engaged in non-combat activities away from the action. Drawing from history, psychology, and anthropology, bestselling author Sebastian Junger shows us just how at odds the structure of modern society is with our tribal instincts, arguing that the difficulties many veterans face upon returning home from war do not stem entirely from the trauma they’ve suffered, but also from the individualist societies they must reintegrate into.

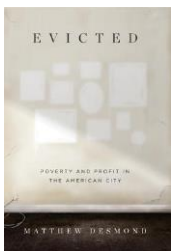
BRAIN ON FIRE: MY MONTH OF MADNESS BY SUSANNAH CAHALAN



When twenty-four-year-old Susannah Cahalan woke up alone in a hospital room, strapped to her bed and unable to move or speak, she had no memory of how she’d gotten there. Days earlier, she had been on the threshold of a new, adult life: at the beginning of her first serious relationship and a promising career at a major New York newspaper. Now she was labeled violent, psychotic, a flight risk. What happened?

In a swift and breathtaking narrative, Cahalan tells the astonishing true story of her descent into madness, her family’s inspiring faith in her, and the lifesaving diagnosis that nearly didn’t happen.

EVICTED: PROPERTY AND PROFIT IN THE AMERICAN CITY BY MATTHEW DESMOND (2016)

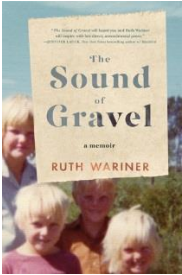


In this brilliant, heartbreaking book, Matthew Desmond takes us into the poorest neighborhoods of Milwaukee to tell the story of eight families on the edge. Arleen is a single mother trying to raise her two sons on the \$20 a month she has left after paying for their rundown apartment. Scott is a gentle nurse consumed by a heroin addiction. Lamar, a man with no legs and a neighborhood full of boys to look after, tries to work his way out of debt. Vanetta participates in a botched stickup after her hours are cut. All are spending almost everything they have on rent, and all have fallen behind.

The fates of these families are in the hands of two landlords: Sherrena Tarver, a former schoolteacher turned inner-city entrepreneur, and Tobin Charney, who runs one of the worst trailer parks in Milwaukee. They loathe some of their tenants and are fond of others, but as Sherrena puts it, “Love don’t pay the bills.” She moves to evict Arleen and her boys a few days before Christmas.

Even in the most desolate areas of American cities, evictions used to be rare. But today, most poor renting families are spending more than half of their income on housing, and eviction has become ordinary, especially for single mothers. In vivid, intimate prose, Desmond provides a ground-level view of one of the most urgent issues facing America today. As we see families forced into shelters, squalid apartments, or more dangerous neighborhoods, we bear witness to the human cost of America’s vast inequality—and to people’s determination and intelligence in the face of hardship.

THE SOUND OF GRAVEL BY RUTH WARINER (2016)



Ruth Wariner was the thirty-ninth of her father’s forty-two children. Growing up on a farm in rural Mexico, where authorities turned a blind eye to the practices of her community, Ruth lives in a ramshackle house without indoor plumbing or electricity. At church, preachers teach that God will punish the wicked by destroying the world and that women can only ascend to Heaven by entering into polygamous marriages and giving birth to as many children as possible. After Ruth’s father--the man who had been the founding prophet of the colony--is brutally murdered by his brother in a bid for church power, her mother remarries, becoming the second wife of another faithful congregant.

In need of government assistance and supplemental income, Ruth and her siblings are carted back and forth between Mexico and the United States, where her mother collects welfare and her step-father works a variety of odd jobs. Ruth comes to love the time she spends in the States, realizing that perhaps the community into which she was born is not the right one for her. As Ruth begins to doubt her family’s beliefs and question her mother’s choices, she struggles to balance her fierce love for her siblings with her determination to forge a better life for herself.