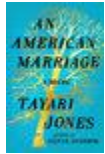


2018 Book Club Suggestions

Fiction Picks



An American Marriage by Tayari Jones

Newlyweds Celestial and Roy are the embodiment of both the American Dream and the New South. He is a young executive, and she is an artist on the brink of an exciting career. But as they settle into the routine of their life together, they are ripped apart by circumstances neither could have imagined. Roy is arrested and sentenced to twelve years for a crime Celestial knows he didn't commit. Though fiercely independent, Celestial finds herself bereft and unmoored, taking comfort in Andre, her childhood friend, and best man at their wedding. As Roy's time in prison passes, she is unable to hold on to the love that has been her center. After five years, Roy's conviction is suddenly overturned, and he returns to Atlanta ready to resume their life together



How to Stop Time by Matt Haig

Tom Hazard has a dangerous secret.

He may look like an ordinary 41-year-old, but owing to a rare condition, he's been alive for centuries. From Elizabethan England to Jazz Age Paris, from New York to the South Seas, Tom has seen a lot, and now craves an ordinary life. Always changing his identity to stay alive, Tom has the perfect cover - working as a history teacher at a London comprehensive. Here he can teach the kids about wars and witch hunts as if he'd never witnessed them first-hand. He can try and tame the past that is fast catching up with him.

The only thing Tom mustn't do is fall in love.

How to Stop Time is a wild and bittersweet story about losing and finding yourself, about the certainty of change and about the lifetimes it can take to really learn how to live.



The Perfect Nanny by Leila Slimani

When Myriam, a mother and brilliant French-Moroccan lawyer, decides to return to work, she and her husband are forced to look for a caretaker for their two young children. They are thrilled to find Louise: the perfect nanny right from the start. Louise sings to the children, cleans the family's beautiful apartment in Paris's upscale tenth arrondissement, stays late whenever asked, and hosts enviable kiddie parties. But

as the couple and the nanny become more dependent on each other, jealousy, resentment, and frustrations mount, shattering the idyllic tableau.



Beartown by Frederik Backman

People say Beartown is finished. A tiny community nestled deep in the forest, it is slowly losing ground to the ever encroaching trees. But down by the lake stands an old ice rink, built generations ago by the working men who founded this town. And in that ice rink is the reason people in Beartown believe tomorrow will be better than today. Their junior ice hockey team is about to compete in the national semi-finals, and they actually have a shot at winning. All the hopes and dreams of this place now rest on the shoulders of a handful of teenage boys.

Being responsible for the hopes of an entire town is a heavy burden, and the semi-final match is the catalyst for a violent act that will leave a young girl traumatized and a town in turmoil. Accusations are made and, like ripples on a pond, they travel through all of Beartown, leaving no resident unaffected.

Beartown explores the hopes that bring a small community together, the secrets that tear it apart, and the courage it takes for an individual to go against the grain. In this story of a small forest town, Fredrik Backman has found the entire world.



The Misfortune of Marion Palm by Emily Culliton

Marion Palm prefers not to think of herself as a thief but rather "a woman who embezzles." Over the years she has managed to steal \$180,000 from her daughters' private school, money that has paid for European vacations, a Sub-Zero refrigerator, and perpetually unused state-of-the-art exercise equipment. But, now, when the school faces an audit, Marion pulls piles of rubber-banded cash from their basement hiding places and flees, leaving her family to grapple with the baffled detectives, the irate school board, and the mother-shaped hole in their house. Told from the points of view of Nathan, Marion's husband, heir to a long-diminished family fortune; Ginny, Marion's teenage daughter who falls helplessly in love at the slightest provocation; Jane, Marion's youngest who is obsessed with a missing person of her own; and Marion herself, on the lam--and hiding in plain sight.



See What I Have Done by Sarah Schmidt

In this riveting debut novel, *See What I Have Done*, Sarah Schmidt recasts one of the most fascinating murder cases of all time into an intimate story of a volatile household and a family devoid of love.

On the morning of August 4, 1892, Lizzie Borden calls out to her maid: Someone's killed Father. The brutal ax-murder of Andrew and Abby Borden in their home in Fall River, Massachusetts, leaves little evidence and many unanswered questions. While neighbors struggle to understand why anyone would want to harm the respected Borden family, those close to the family have a different tale to tell—of a father with

an explosive temper; a spiteful stepmother; and two spinster sisters, with a bond even stronger than blood, desperate for their independence.

As the police search for clues, Emma comforts an increasingly distraught Lizzie whose memories of that morning flash in scattered fragments. Had she been in the barn or the pear arbor to escape the stifling heat of the house? When did she last speak to her stepmother? Were they really gone and would everything be better now? Shifting among the perspectives of the unreliable Lizzie, her older sister Emma, the housemaid Bridget, and the enigmatic stranger Benjamin, the events of that fateful day are slowly revealed through a high-wire feat of storytelling.



Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine by Gail Honeyman

Meet Eleanor Oliphant: She struggles with appropriate social skills and tends to say exactly what she's thinking. Nothing is missing in her carefully timetabled life of avoiding social interactions, where weekends are punctuated by frozen pizza, vodka, and phone chats with Mummy. All this means that Eleanor has become a creature of habit (to say the least) and a bit of a loner.

But everything changes when Eleanor meets Raymond, the bumbling and deeply unhygienic IT guy from her office. When she and Raymond together save Sammy, an elderly gentleman who has fallen on the sidewalk, the three become the kinds of friends who rescue one another from the lives of isolation they have each been living. And it is Raymond's big heart that will ultimately help Eleanor find the way to repair her own profoundly damaged one.



He Said, She Said by Erin Kelly

In the hushed aftermath of a total eclipse, Laura witnesses a brutal attack. She and her boyfriend Kit call the police, and in that moment, it is not only the victim's life that is changed forever. Fifteen years on, Laura and Kit live in fear, and while Laura knows she was right to speak out, the events that follow have taught her that you can never see the whole picture: something, and someone, is always in the dark.



The Party by Robyn Harding

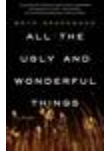
One invitation. A lifetime of regrets.

Sweet sixteen. It's an exciting coming of age, a milestone, and a rite of passage. Jeff and Kim Sanders plan on throwing a party for their daughter, Hannah—a sweet girl with good grades and nice friends. Rather than an extravagant, indulgent affair, they invite four girls over for pizza, cake, movies, and a sleepover. What could possibly go wrong?

But things do go wrong, horrifically so. After a tragic accident occurs, Jeff and Kim's flawless life in a wealthy San Francisco suburb suddenly begins to come apart. In the ugly aftermath, friends become enemies, dark secrets are revealed in the Sanders' marriage, and the truth about their perfect daughter,

Hannah, is exposed.

Harkening to Herman Koch's *The Dinner*, Christos Tsiolkas's *The Slap*, and Liane Moriarty's *Big Little Lies*, *The Party* takes us behind the façade of the picture-perfect family, exposing the lies, betrayals, and moral lapses that neighbors don't see—and the secrets that children and parents keep from themselves and each other.



All The Ugly and Wonderful Things by Bryn Greenwood

As the daughter of a meth dealer, Wavy knows not to trust people, not even her own parents. Struggling to raise her little brother, eight-year-old Wavy is the only responsible "adult" around. She finds peace in the starry Midwestern night sky above the fields behind her house. One night everything changes when she witnesses one of her father's thugs, Kellen, a tattooed ex-con with a heart of gold, wreck his motorcycle. What follows is a powerful and shocking love story between two unlikely people that asks tough questions, reminding us of all the ugly and wonderful things that life has to offer.



The Arrangement by Sarah Dunn

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?"

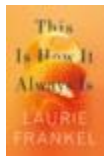


The Break by Katherina Vermette

When Stella, a young Métis mother, looks out her window one evening and spots someone in trouble on the Break — a barren field on an isolated strip of land outside her house — she calls the police to alert them to a possible crime.

In a series of shifting narratives, people who are connected, both directly and indirectly, with the victim — police, family, and friends — tell their personal stories leading up to that fateful night. Lou, a social worker, grapples with the departure of her live-in boyfriend. Cheryl, an artist, mourns the premature death of her sister Rain. Paulina, a single mother, struggles to trust her new partner. Phoenix, a homeless

teenager, is released from a youth detention centre. Officer Scott, a Métis policeman, feels caught between two worlds as he patrols the city. Through their various perspectives a larger, more comprehensive story about lives of the residents in Winnipeg's North End is exposed.



This is How it Always Is by Laurie Frankel

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.

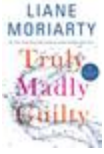


Small Great Things by Jodi Picoult

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.

With incredible empathy, intelligence, and candor, Jodi Picoult tackles race, privilege, prejudice, justice, and compassion—and doesn't offer easy answers. *Small Great Things* is a remarkable achievement from a writer at the top of her game.



Truly Madly Guilty by Liane Moriarty

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?

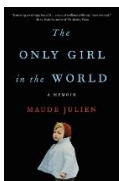


A House for Happy Mothers by Amulya Maladi

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.

Non-Fiction Picks



The Only Girl in the World by Maude Julien

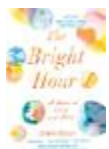
Maude Julien's childhood was defined by the iron grip of her father, who was convinced his daughter was destined for great deeds. His plan began when he adopted Maude's mother and indoctrinated her with his esoteric ideals. Her mission was to give him a daughter as blonde as she was, and then to take charge of

the child's education. That child was Maude, on whom her father conducted his outrageous experiment—to raise the perfect 'super-human' being.

The three lived in an isolated mansion in northern France, where her father made her undergo endless horrifying endurance tests. Maude had to hold an electric fence without flinching. Her parents locked her in a cellar overnight and ordered her to sit still on a stool in the dark, contemplating death, while rats scurried around her feet.

How did this girl, with her loveless and lonely childhood, emerge so unscathed, so full of the empathy that was absent in her childhood? How did she manage to escape?

Maude was sustained by her love of nature and animals and her passion for literature. In writing this memoir, Maude Julien shows that it is possible to overcome severe trauma. She recounts her chilling and deeply moving story in a compelling and compassionate voice.



The Bright Hour by Nina Riggs

An exquisite memoir about how to live—and love—every day with “death in the room,” from poet Nina Riggs, mother of two young sons and the direct descendant of Ralph Waldo Emerson, in the tradition of *When Breath Becomes Air*.

“We are breathless, but we love the days. They are promises. They are the only way to walk from one night to the other.”

Nina Riggs was just thirty-seven years old when initially diagnosed with breast cancer—one small spot. Within a year, the mother of two sons, ages seven and nine, and married sixteen years to her best friend, received the devastating news that her cancer was terminal.

How does one live each day, “unattached to outcome”? How does one approach the moments, big and small, with both love and honesty?

Exploring motherhood, marriage, friendship, and memory, even as she wrestles with the legacy of her great-great-great grandfather, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nina Riggs’s breathtaking memoir continues the urgent conversation that Paul Kalanithi began in his gorgeous *When Breath Becomes Air*. She asks, what makes a meaningful life when one has limited time?



Hunger by Roxanne Gay

In her phenomenally popular essays and long-running Tumblr blog, Roxanne Gay has written with intimacy and sensitivity about food and body, using her own emotional and psychological struggles as a means of exploring our shared anxieties over pleasure, consumption, appearance, and health. As a woman who describes her own body as “wildly undisciplined,” Roxanne understands the tension between desire and denial, between self-comfort and self-care. In *Hunger*, she explores her own past—including the devastating act of violence that acted as a turning point in her young life—and brings readers along on her journey to understand and ultimately save herself.

With the bracing candor, vulnerability, and power that have made her one of the most admired writers of her generation, Roxane explores what it means to learn to take care of yourself: how to feed your hungers for delicious and satisfying food, a smaller and safer body, and a body that can love and be loved—in a time when the bigger you are, the smaller your world becomes.



Evicted by Matthew Desmond

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.