

Reading Group Guides To Books

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The Reading List Flatiron Books

An absorbing novel of romance and revolution, loyalty and family, sacrifice and undying love We have three souls, or so I'd been told. But only in death could I confirm this... So begins the haunting and captivating tale, set in 1935 China, of the ghost of a young woman named Leiyin, who watches her own funeral from above and wonders why she is being denied entry to the afterlife. Beside her are three souls—stern and scholarly yang; impulsive, romantic yin; and wise, shining hun—who will guide her toward understanding. She must, they tell her, make amends. As Leiyin delves back in time with the three souls to review her life, she sees the spoiled and privileged teenager she once was, a girl who is concerned with her own desires while China is fractured by civil war and social upheaval. At a party, she meets Hanchin, a captivating left-wing poet and translator, and instantly falls in love with him. When Leiyin defies her father to pursue Hanchin, she learns the harsh truth—that she is powerless over her fate. Her punishment for disobedience leads to exile, an unwanted marriage, a pregnancy, and, ultimately, her death. And when she discovers what she must do to be released from limbo into the afterlife, Leiyin realizes that the time for making amends is shorter than she thought. Suffused with history and literature, *Three Souls* is an epic tale of revenge and betrayal, forbidden love, and the price we are willing to pay for freedom.

A Monthly Guide for Hosting Your Own Reading Group : Menus & Recipes, Featured Authors, Suggested Readings, and Topical Questions Harper Collins

"What are you reading?" That's the question Will Schwalbe asks his mother, Mary Anne, as they sit in the waiting room of the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. In 2007, Mary Anne returned from a humanitarian trip to Pakistan and Afghanistan suffering from what her doctors believed was a rare type of hepatitis. Months later she was diagnosed with a form of advanced pancreatic cancer, which is almost always fatal, often in six months or less. This is the inspiring true story of a son and his mother, who start a "book club" that brings them together as her life comes to a close. Over the next two years, Will and Mary Anne carry on conversations that are both wide-ranging and deeply personal, prompted by an eclectic array of books and a shared passion for reading. Their list jumps from classic to popular, from poetry to mysteries, from fantastic to spiritual. The issues they discuss include questions of faith and courage as well as everyday topics such as expressing gratitude and learning to listen. Throughout, they are constantly reminded of the power of books to comfort us, astonish us, teach us, and tell us what we need to do with our lives and in the world. Reading isn't the opposite of doing; it's the opposite of dying. Will and Mary Anne share their hopes and concerns with each other—and rediscover their lives—through their favorite books. When they read, they aren't a sick person and a well person, but a mother and a son taking a journey together. The result is a profoundly moving tale of loss that is also a joyful, and often humorous, celebration of life: Will's love letter to his mother, and theirs to the printed page. This eBook edition includes a Reading Group Guide.

The Paris Library Restless Books

"A bold and subversive retelling of the goddess's story," this #1 New York Times bestseller is "both epic and intimate in its scope, recasting the most infamous female figure from the Odyssey as a hero in her own right" (Alexandra Alter, *The New York Times*). In the house of Helios, god of the sun and mightiest of the Titans, a daughter is born. But Circe is a strange child -- not powerful, like her father, nor viciously alluring like her mother. Turning to the world of mortals for companionship, she discovers that she does possess power -- the power of witchcraft, which can transform rivals into monsters and menace the gods themselves. Threatened, Zeus banishes her to a deserted island, where she hones her occult craft, tames wild beasts and crosses paths with many of the most famous figures in all of mythology, including the Minotaur, Daedalus and his doomed son Icarus, the murderous Medea, and, of course, wily Odysseus. But there is danger, too, for a woman who stands alone, and Circe unwittingly draws the wrath of both men and gods, ultimately finding herself pitted against one of the most terrifying and vengeful of the Olympians. To protect what she loves most, Circe must summon all her strength and choose, once and for all, whether she belongs with the gods she is born from, or the mortals she has come to love. With unforgettably vivid characters, mesmerizing language, and page-turning suspense, Circe is a triumph of storytelling, an intoxicating epic of family rivalry, palace intrigue, love and loss, as well as a celebration of indomitable female strength in a man's world. #1 New York Times Bestseller -- named one of the Best Books of the Year by NPR, the Washington Post, People, Time, Amazon, Entertainment Weekly, Bustle, Newsweek, the A.V. Club, Christian Science Monitor, Refinery 29, BuzzFeed, Paste, Audible, Kirkus, Publishers Weekly, Thrillist, NYPL, Self, Real Simple, Goodreads, Boston Globe, Electric Literature, BookPage, the Guardian, Book Riot, Seattle Times, and Business Insider.

The Age of Innocence Macmillan

Based on the true World War II story of the American Library in Paris, an unforgettable novel about the power of books and the bonds of friendship—and the ordinary heroes who can be found in the most perilous times and the quietest places. Paris, 1939. Young, ambitious, and tempestuous, Odile Souchet has it all: Paul, her handsome police officer beau; Margaret, her best friend from England; Remy, her twin brother who she adores; and a dream job at the American Library in Paris, working alongside the library's legendary director, Dorothy Reeder. When World War II breaks out, Odile stands to lose everything she holds dear—including her beloved library. After the Nazi army marches into the City of Light and declares a war on words, Odile and her fellow librarians join the Resistance with the best weapons they have: books. Again

and again, they risk their lives to help their fellow Jewish readers, but by war's end, Odile tastes the bitter sting of unspeakable betrayal. Montana, 1983. Odile's solitary existence in gossipy small-town Montana is unexpectedly interrupted by her neighbor Lily, a lonely teenager craving adventure. As Lily uncovers more about Odile's mysterious past, they find they share not only a love of language but also the same lethal jealousy. Odile helps Lily navigate the troubled waters of adolescence by always recommending the right book at the right time, never suspecting that Lily will be the one to help her reckon with her own terrible secret. Based on the true story of the American Library in Paris, *The Paris Library* is a mesmerizing and captivating novel about the people and the books that make us who we are, for good and for bad, and the courage it takes to forgive.

Morningside Heights Thorndike Press Large Print

Furnishes a comprehensive guide to hosting a reading group get-together in which good eating and reading are combined, providing a reading theme for each month, seasonal book selections and favorite authors, and a menu and recipes to go with it.

The Spare Room Algonquin Books

A deeply-reported examination of why "doing what you love" is a recipe for exploitation, creating a new tyranny of work in which we cheerily acquiesce to doing jobs that take over our lives. You're told that if you "do what you love, you'll never work a day in your life." Whether it's working for "exposure" and "experience," or enduring poor treatment in the name of "being part of the family," all employees are pushed to make sacrifices for the privilege of being able to do what we love. In *Work Won't Love You Back*, Sarah Jaffe, a preeminent voice on labor, inequality, and social movements, examines this "labor of love" myth—the idea that certain work is not really work, and therefore should be done out of passion instead of pay. Told through the lives and experiences of workers in various industries—from the unpaid intern, to the overworked teacher, to the nonprofit worker and even the professional athlete—Jaffe reveals how all of us have been tricked into buying into a new tyranny of work. As Jaffe argues, understanding the trap of the labor of love will empower us to work less and demand what our work is worth. And once freed from those binds, we can finally figure out what actually gives us joy, pleasure, and satisfaction.

Three Souls Henry Holt and Company

Winner of the Northern California Book Award A New York Times Editors' Choice Pick A Washington Post Notable Book of 2018 A San Francisco Chronicle Best Book of 2018 An NPR Best Book of 2018 National Bestseller "The Winter Soldier brims with improbable narrative pleasures...These pages crackle with excitement... A spectacular success." --Anthony Marra, *New York Times Book Review* "A dream of a novel... Part mystery, part war story, part romance." --Anthony Doerr, author of *All the Light We Cannot See* Vienna, 1914. Lucius is a twenty-two-year-old medical student when World War I explodes across Europe. Enraptured by romantic tales of battlefield surgery, he enlists, expecting a position at a well-organized field hospital. But when he arrives, at a commandeered church tucked away high in a remote valley of the Carpathian Mountains, he finds a freezing outpost ravaged by typhus. The other doctors have fled, and only a single, mysterious nurse named Sister Margarete remains. But Lucius has never lifted a surgeon's scalpel. And as the war rages across the winter landscape, he finds himself falling in love with the woman from whom he must learn a brutal, makeshift medicine. Then one day, an unconscious soldier is brought in from the snow, his uniform stuffed with strange drawings. He seems beyond rescue, until Lucius makes a fateful decision that will change the lives of doctor, patient, and nurse forever. From the gilded ballrooms of Imperial Vienna to the frozen forests of the Eastern Front; from hardscrabble operating rooms to battlefields thundering with Cossack cavalry, *The Winter Soldier* is the story of war and medicine, of family, of finding love in the sweeping tides of history, and finally, of the mistakes we make, and the precious opportunities to atone.

The Reading Group HarperCollins

NATIONAL BOOK CRITICS CIRCLE NOMINEE • A NEW YORK TIMES NOTABLE BOOK OF THE YEAR • NEW YORK TIMES BEST SELLER •

From the two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Underground Railroad* and *The Nickel Boys*, a gloriously entertaining novel of heists, shakedowns, and rip-offs set in Harlem in the 1960s. "Ray Carney was only slightly bent when it came to being crooked..." To his customers and neighbors on 125th street, Carney is an upstanding salesman of reasonably priced furniture, making a decent life for himself and his family. He and his wife Elizabeth are expecting their second child, and if her parents on Striver's Row don't approve of him or their cramped apartment across from the subway tracks, it's still home. Few people know he descends from a line of uptown hoods and crooks, and that his façade of normalcy has more than a few cracks in it. Cracks that are getting bigger all the time. Cash is tight, especially with all those installment-plan sofas, so if his cousin Freddie occasionally drops off the odd ring or necklace, Ray doesn't ask where it comes from. He knows a discreet jeweler downtown who doesn't ask questions, either. Then Freddie falls in with a crew who plan to rob the Hotel Theresa—the "Waldorf of Harlem"—and volunteers Ray's services as the fence. The heist doesn't go as planned; they rarely do. Now Ray has a new clientele, one made up of shady cops, vicious local gangsters, two-bit pornographers, and other assorted Harlem lowlifes. Thus begins the internal tussle between Ray the striver and Ray the crook. As Ray navigates this double life, he begins to see who actually pulls the strings in Harlem. Can Ray avoid getting killed, save his cousin, and grab his share of the big score, all while maintaining his reputation as the go-to source for all your quality home furniture needs? Harlem Shuffle's ingenious story plays out in a beautifully recreated New York City of the early 1960s. It's a family saga masquerading as a crime novel, a hilarious morality play, a social novel about race and power, and ultimately a love letter to Harlem. But mostly, it's a joy to read, another dazzling novel from the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award-winning Colson Whitehead.

Work Won't Love You Back Little, Brown

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. When Rosie and Penn and their four boys

welcome the newest member of their family, no one is surprised it's another baby boy. At least their large, loving, chaotic family knows what to expect. But Claude is not like his brothers. One day he puts on a dress and refuses to take it off. He wants to bring a purse to kindergarten. He wants hair long enough to sit on. When he grows up, Claude says, he wants to be a girl. Rosie and Penn aren't panicked at first. Kids go through phases, after all, and make-believe is fun. But soon the entire family is keeping Claude's secret. Until one day it explodes. Laurie Frankel's *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.

[Recipe for a Book Club](#) Penguin UK

"Warm-hearted, clear-minded, and unexpectedly spellbinding, *Meet Me at the Museum* is a novel to savor." —Annie Barrows, #1 New York Times bestselling co-author of *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* In Denmark, Professor Anders Larsen, an urbane man of facts, has lost his wife and his hopes for the future. On an isolated English farm, Tina Hopgood is trapped in a life she doesn't remember choosing. Both believe their love stories are over. Brought together by a shared fascination with the Tollund Man, subject of Seamus Heaney's famous poem, they begin writing letters to one another. And from their vastly different worlds, they find they have more in common than they could have imagined. As they open up to one another about their lives, an unexpected friendship blooms. But then Tina's letters stop coming, and Anders is thrown into despair. How far are they willing to go to write a new story for themselves?

Little, Brown

As Newland Archer prepares to marry docile May Welland, the return of the mysterious Countess Olenska turns his life upside down

The Dutch House Sarah Crichton Books

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER A TODAY Show Read with Jenna Book Club Pick A New York Times Notable Book, and Chosen by Oprah Daily, Time, NPR, The Washington Post and Barack Obama as a Best Book of the Year "Wise and wildly entertaining . . . permeated with light, wit, youth." —The New York Times Book Review "A classic that we will read for years to come." —Jenna Bush Hager, Read with Jenna book club "A real joyride . . . elegantly constructed and compulsively readable." —NPR The bestselling author of *A Gentleman in Moscow* and *Rules of Civility* and master of absorbing, sophisticated fiction returns with a stylish and propulsive novel set in 1950s America In June, 1954, eighteen-year-old Emmett Watson is driven home to Nebraska by the warden of the juvenile work farm where he has just served fifteen months for involuntary manslaughter. His mother long gone, his father recently deceased, and the family farm foreclosed upon by the bank, Emmett's intention is to pick up his eight-year-old brother, Billy, and head to California where they can start their lives anew. But when the warden drives away, Emmett discovers that two friends from the work farm have hidden themselves in the trunk of the warden's car. Together, they have hatched an altogether different plan for Emmett's future, one that will take them all on a fateful journey in the opposite direction—to the City of New York. Spanning just ten days and told from multiple points of view, *Towles's* third novel will satisfy fans of his multi-layered literary styling while providing them an array of new and richly imagined settings, characters, and themes.

Reading Group Choices Vintage

"Extraordinary." --Stephen King "This book is not simply the great American novel; it's the great novel of las Americas. It's the great world novel! This is the international story of our times. Masterful." --Sandra Cisneros *También de este lado hay sueños*. On this side too, there are dreams. Lydia Quixano Pérez lives in the Mexican city of Acapulco. She runs a bookstore. She has a son, Luca, the love of her life, and a wonderful husband who is a journalist. And while there are cracks beginning to show in Acapulco because of the drug cartels, her life is, by and large, fairly comfortable. Even though she knows they'll never sell, Lydia stocks some of her all-time favorite books in her store. And then one day a man enters the shop to browse and comes up to the register with a few books he would like to buy--two of them her favorites. Javier is erudite. He is charming. And, unbeknownst to Lydia, he is the jefe of the newest drug cartel that has gruesomely taken over the city. When Lydia's husband's tell-all profile of Javier is published, none of their lives will ever be the same. Forced to flee, Lydia and eight-year-old Luca soon find themselves miles and worlds away from their comfortable middle-class existence. Instantly transformed into migrants, Lydia and Luca ride *la bestia*--trains that make their way north toward the United States, which is the only place Javier's reach doesn't extend. As they join the countless people trying to reach *el norte*, Lydia soon sees that everyone is running from something. But what exactly are they running to? *American Dirt* will leave readers utterly changed. It is a literary achievement filled with poignancy, drama, and humanity on every page. It is one of the most important books for our times. Already being hailed as "a *Grapes of Wrath* for our times" and "a new American classic," Jeanine Cummins's *American Dirt* is a rare exploration into the inner hearts of people willing to sacrifice everything for a glimmer of hope.

[A Novel](#) Simon and Schuster

A fully realized portrait of one woman's life in all its complexity, by the National Book Award-winning author An ordinary life—its sharp pains and unexpected joys, its bursts of clarity and moments of confusion—lived by an ordinary woman: this is the subject of *Someone*, Alice McDermott's extraordinary return, seven years after the publication of *After This*. Scattered recollections—of childhood, adolescence, motherhood, old age—come together in this transformative narrative, stitched into a vibrant whole by McDermott's deft, lyrical voice. Our first glimpse of Marie is as a child: a girl in glasses waiting on a Brooklyn stoop for her beloved father to come home from work. A seemingly innocuous encounter with a young woman named Pegeen sets the bittersweet tone of this remarkable novel. Pegeen describes herself as an "amadan," a fool; indeed, soon after her chat with Marie, Pegeen tumbles down her own basement stairs. The magic of McDermott's novel lies in how it reveals us all as fools for this or that, in one way or another. Marie's first heartbreak and her eventual marriage; her brother's brief stint as a Catholic priest, subsequent loss of faith, and eventual breakdown; the Second World War; her parents' deaths; the births and lives of Marie's children; the changing world of her Irish-American enclave in Brooklyn—McDermott sketches all of it with sympathy and insight. This is a novel that speaks of life as it is daily lived;

a crowning achievement by one of the finest American writers at work today. A Publishers Weekly Best Fiction Book of the Year A Kirkus Reviews Best Fiction Book of 2013 A New York Times Notable Book of 2013 A Washington Post Notable Fiction Book of 2013 An NPR Best Book of 2013

A Novel HarperCollins

WINNER of the Best International Fiction Book Award, Sharjah International Book Fair 2019 The lives of two Nigerian women divided by class and social inequality intersect when they're kidnapped, held captive, and forced to await their fate together. In the Nigerian city of Enugu, young Nwabulu, a housemaid since the age of ten, dreams of becoming a typist as she endures her employers' endless chores. She is tall and beautiful and in love with a rich man's son. Educated and privileged, Julie is a modern woman. Living on her own, she is happy to collect the gold jewellery lovestruck Eugene brings her, but has no intention of becoming his second wife. When a kidnapping forces Nwabulu and Julie into a dank room years later, the two women relate the stories of their lives as they await their fate. Pulsing with vitality and intense human drama, Cheluchi Onyemelukwe-Onuobia's debut is set against four decades of vibrant Nigeria, celebrating the resilience of women as they navigate and transform what remains a man's world.

[A Novel](#) Henry Holt and Company

"We walked toward the part of the library where the air smelled as if it had been interred for years.... Finally, we got to the hallway where the wooden floor was the creakiest, and we sensed a strange whiff of excitement and fear. It smelled like a creature from a bygone time. It smelled like a dragon." Thirteen-year-old Juan's favorite things in the world are koalas, eating roast chicken, and the summer-time. This summer, though, is off to a terrible start. First, Juan's parents separate and his dad goes to Paris. Then, as if that wasn't horrible enough, Juan is sent away to his strange Uncle Tito's house for the entire break! Uncle Tito is really odd: he has zigzag eyebrows; drinks ten cups of smoky tea a day; and lives inside a huge, mysterious library. One day, while Juan is exploring the library, he notices something inexplicable and rushes to tell Uncle Tito. "The books moved!" His uncle drinks all his tea in one gulp and, sputtering, lets his nephew in on a secret: Juan is a Princeps Reader — which means books respond magically to him — and he's the only person capable of finding the elusive, never-before-read Wild Book. Juan teams up with his new friend Catalina and his little sister, and together they delve through books that scuttle from one shelf to the next, topple over unexpectedly, or even disappear altogether to find *The Wild Book* and discover its secret. But will they find it before the wicked, story-stealing *Pirate Book* does?

The Origins of Our Discontents HarperCollins

"The Bestselling Hardcover Novel of the Year."--Publishers Weekly From the number-one bestselling author of *The Nightingale* and *The Great Alone* comes a powerful American epic about love and heroism and hope, set during the Great Depression, a time when the country was in crisis and at war with itself, when millions were out of work and even the land seemed to have turned against them. "My land tells its story if you listen. The story of our family." Texas, 1921. A time of abundance. The Great War is over, the bounty of the land is plentiful, and America is on the brink of a new and optimistic era. But for Elsa Wolcott, deemed too old to marry in a time when marriage is a woman's only option, the future seems bleak. Until the night she meets Rafe Martinelli and decides to change the direction of her life. With her reputation in ruin, there is only one respectable choice: marriage to a man she barely knows. By 1934, the world has changed; millions are out of work and drought has devastated the Great Plains. Farmers are fighting to keep their land and their livelihoods as crops fail and water dries up and the earth cracks open. Dust storms roll relentlessly across the plains. Everything on the Martinelli farm is dying, including Elsa's tenuous marriage; each day is a desperate battle against nature and a fight to keep her children alive. In this uncertain and perilous time, Elsa—like so many of her neighbors—must make an agonizing choice: fight for the land she loves or leave it behind and go west, to California, in search of a better life for her family. *The Four Winds* is a rich, sweeping novel that stunningly brings to life the Great Depression and the people who lived through it—the harsh realities that divided us as a nation and the enduring battle between the haves and the have-nots. A testament to hope, resilience, and the strength of the human spirit to survive adversity, *The Four Winds* is an indelible portrait of America and the American dream, as seen through the eyes of one indomitable woman whose courage and sacrifice will come to define a generation.

Caste (Oprah's Book Club) Doubleday

INSTANT NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER! "If you liked *Where the Crawdads Sing*, you'll love *This Tender Land*...This story is as big-hearted as they come." —Parade The unforgettable story of four orphans who travel the Mississippi River on a life-changing odyssey during the Great Depression. In the summer of 1932, on the banks of Minnesota's Gilead River, Odie O'Banion is an orphan confined to the Lincoln Indian Training School, a pitiless place where his lively nature earns him the superintendent's wrath. Forced to flee after committing a terrible crime, he and his brother, Albert, their best friend, Mose, and a brokenhearted little girl named Emmy steal away in a canoe, heading for the mighty Mississippi and a place to call their own. Over the course of one summer, these four orphans journey into the unknown and cross paths with others who are adrift, from struggling farmers and traveling faith healers to displaced families and lost souls of all kinds. With the feel of a modern classic, *This Tender Land* is an enthralling, big-hearted epic that shows how the magnificent American landscape connects us all, haunts our dreams, and makes us whole.

[The Night Watchman](#) Knopf

A powerful, witty, and taut novel about a complex friendship between two women—one dying, the other called to care for her—from an internationally acclaimed and award-winning author How much of ourselves must we give up to help a friend in need? Helen has little idea what lies ahead—and what strength she must muster—when she offers her spare room to an old friend, Nicola, who has arrived in the city for cancer treatment. Skeptical of the medical establishment, and placing all her faith in an alternative health center, Nicola is determined to find her own way to deal with her illness, regardless of the advice Helen offers. In the weeks that follow, Nicola's battle for survival will turn not only her own life upside down but also those of everyone around her. *The Spare Room* is a magical gem of a book—gripping, moving, and unexpectedly funny—that packs a huge punch, charting a friendship as it is tested by the threat of death.

Great Circle Simon & Schuster

From her place in the store, Klara, an Artificial Friend with outstanding observational qualities, watches carefully the behaviour of those who come in to browse, and of those who pass in the street outside. She remains hopeful a customer will soon choose her, but when the possibility emerges that her circumstances may change for ever, Klara is warned not to invest too much in the promises of humans. In 'Klara and the Sun', Kazuo Ishiguro looks at our rapidly-changing modern world through the eyes of an unforgettable narrator to explore a fundamental question: what does it mean to love?