

BOOK CLUB IN A BAG
Haverford Township Free Library
2016 & 2017 NEW SELECTIONS

Astrophysics for People in a Hurry – Neil DeGrasse Tyson

America's most approachable astrophysicist distills the past, present, and (theoretical) future of the cosmos into a quick and thoroughly enjoyable read for a general audience.

NONFICTION; SPACE SCIENCE

Behold the Dreamers – Imbolo Mbue

A compulsively readable debut novel about marriage, immigration, class, race, and the trapdoors in the American Dream – the unforgettable story of a young Cameroonian couple making a new life in New York just as the Great Recession upends the economy.

LITERARY FICTION; FAMILY LIFE

Between the World and Me – Ta-Nehisi Coates

National Book Award Winner. Ta-Nehisi Coates offers a powerful new framework for understanding our nation's history and current crisis.

PERSONAL MEMOIRS

Circling the Sun – Paula McLain

Set against the majestic landscape of early-twentieth-century Africa, McLain's powerful tale reveals the extraordinary adventures of a woman before her time, the exhilaration of freedom and its cost, and the tenacity of the human spirit.

LITERARY FICTION; CONTEMPORARY WOMEN

Cold Mountain – Charles Frazier

2016 One, Book, One Philadelphia Selection

A Civil War soldier and a lonely woman embark on parallel journeys of danger and discovery. Environment, events, and the empathy of others transform the protagonists spiritually as well as physically.

HISTORICAL FICTION

Commonwealth – Ann Patchett

An enthralling story of how an unexpected romantic encounter irrevocably changes two families' lives.

LITERARY FICTION; FAMILY LIFE; COMING OF AGE

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time – Mark Haddon

2017 One, Book, One Philadelphia Selection

This improbable story of an autistic boy'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.

MYSTERY; COMING OF AGE; FAMILY LIFE

Dark Matter – Blake Crouch

A relentlessly surprising science fiction thriller about choices, paths not taken, and how far we'll go to claim the lives we dream of.

SCIENCE FICTION; ALTERNATE REALITIES; FAMILY

Darktown – Blake Crouch

A riveting and elegant police procedural set in Atlanta, a ripped-from-the-headlines depiction of a world on the cusp of great change involving race relations, city politics, and police corruption.

POLICE PROCEDURAL; HISTORICAL FICTION; AFRICAN AMERICAN

Dr. Mutter's Marvels – Cristin O'Keefe Aptowicz

Award-winning writer Cristin O'Keefe Aptowicz interweaves an eye-opening portrait of 19th-century medicine with the riveting biography of a man once described as the "P. T. Barnum of the surgery room."

BIOGRAPHY; HISTORY; MEDICINE; NONFICTION

A Gentleman in Moscow – Amor Towles

A transporting novel about a man who is ordered to spend the rest of his life inside a luxury hotel.

HISTORICAL FICTION

The Girls – Emma Cline

Northern California, during the violent end of the 1960s. At the start of summer, a lonely and thoughtful teenager, Evie Boyd, sees a group of girls in the park. Soon, Evie is drawn into the circle of a soon-to-be infamous cult and the man who is its charismatic leader.

PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLERS; COMING OF AGE

H is for Hawk – Helen Macdonald

Helen Macdonald's story of adopting and raising one of nature's most vicious predators has soared into the hearts of millions of readers worldwide.

SCIENCE; NATURE WRITING AND ESSAYS

The Handmaid's Tale – Margaret Atwood

A gripping vision of our society radically overturned by a theocratic revolution, Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* has become one of the most powerful and widely read novels of our time.

FICTION; FANTASY

Hillbilly Elegy – J. D. Vance

The story of the author's family and upbringing. Vance describes how they moved from poverty to an upwardly mobile clan while navigating the demands of middle class life and the collective demons of the past.

NONFICTION; AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Homegoing – Yaa Gyasi

A *New York Times* 2016 Notable Book, One of Oprah’s 10 Favorite Books of 2016, NPR’s Debut Novel of the Year, One of *Time*’s Top 10 Novels of 2016. *Homegoing* traces the generations of family who follow, as destiny leads two half-sisters through two continents and three hundred years of history, each life indelibly drawn, as the legacy of slavery is fully revealed in light of the present day.

FICTION; AFRICAN AMERICAN, HISTORICAL

Hunger – Roxane Gay

The *New York Times* bestselling author writes a searingly honest memoir of food, weight, self-image, and learning how to free your hunger while taking care of yourself.

MEMOIR

The Japanese Lover – Isabel Allende

An exquisitely crafted love story and multigenerational epic that sweeps from San Francisco in the present-day to Poland and the United States during the Second World War.

HISTORICAL FICTION; FAMILY SAGA

Kitchen House– Kathleen Grissom

Orphaned during her passage from Ireland, young, white Lavinia arrives on the steps of the kitchen house and is placed, as an indentured servant, under the care of Belle, the master’s illegitimate slave daughter. In time, Lavinia is accepted into the world of the big house but as she attempts to straddle the worlds of the kitchen and big house, her skin color will forever set her apart from Belle and the other slaves. Through the unique eyes of Lavinia and Belle, Grissom’s debut novel unfolds in a heartbreaking and ultimately hopeful story of class, race, dignity, deep-buried secrets, and familial bonds.

HISTORICAL FICTION

Kitchens of the Great Midwest – J. Ryan Stradel

An unexpected mother-daughter story about the bittersweet nature of life--its missed opportunities and its joyful surprises. Each chapter tells the story of a single dish and character, at once capturing the zeitgeist of the Midwest, the rise of foodie culture, and delving into the ways food creates community and a sense of identity.

LITERARY FICTION; FAMILY LIFE; QUIRKY; VIVIDLY SENSORY

Lilac Girls: A Novel – Martha Hall Kelly

Inspired by the life of a real World War II heroine, this debut novel reveals the power of unsung women to change history in their quest for love, freedom, and second changes.

HISTORICAL FICTION; LITERARY FICTION; WOMEN’S FICTION

The Life We Bury – Allen Eskens

The Life We Bury tells the story of Joe Talbert, a junior at the University of Minnesota, who receives a class assignment to write a biography of someone who has lived an interesting life. At a nursing home he meets Carl Iverson, a man dying of cancer who has been medically paroled after spending thirty years in prison for the murder of a fourteen-year-old girl. Carl

agrees to tell Joe his story, and Joe sets out to unravel the tapestry of the thirty-year-old murder.

PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER; MYSTERY

A Man Called Ove: A Novel – Fredrik Backman

Backman's novel about the angry old man next door is a thoughtful exploration of the profound impact one life has on countless others.

HUMOROUS; CONTEMPORARY FICTION

Mischling– Affinity Konar

A story told in a voice as exquisite as it is boundlessly original, *Mischling* traverses one of the darkest moments in human history to show us the way toward ethereal beauty, moral reckoning, and soaring hope.

HISTORICAL FICTION, JEWISH, WWII

Moshi Moshi – Banana Yoshimoto

With the lightness of touch and surreal detachment that are the hallmarks of her writing, Banana Yoshimoto turns a potential tragedy into a poignant coming-of-age ghost story and a life-affirming homage to the healing powers of community, food, and family.

LITERARY FICTION

The Mothers: A Novel– Brit Bennett

The Mothers is a surprising story about young love, a big secret in a small community – and the things that ultimately haunt us most.

WOMEN'S FICTION; COMING OF AGE; LITERARY FICTION; AFRICAN AMERICAN

My Brilliant Friend – Elena Ferrante

An intense, and generous-hearted story about two friends. Through the lives of 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 protagonists, the unforgettable 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.

CONTEMPORARY FICTION; FRIENDSHIP

My Life with Bob – Pamela Paul

Imagine keeping a record of every book you've ever read. What would this reading trajectory say about you? With passion, humor, and insight, the editor of *The New York Times Book Review* share the stories that have shaped her life as she added to Bob, her Book of Books.

MEMOIR

The Nest – Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney

A warm, funny and acutely perceptive debut novel about four adult siblings and the fate of the shared inheritance that has shaped their choices and their lives. Every family has its problems.

FICTION; FAMILY DYSFUNCTION

News of the World – Paulette Jiles

In the wake of the Civil War, a seventy-year-old retired army captain does live readings to paying audiences hungry for news of the world. He is offered a \$50 gold piece to deliver a young orphan, raised by Kiowa raiders who killed her family, to relatives she doesn't remember 400 miles away. This morally complex novel explores the boundaries of family, responsibility, honor and trust.

HISTORICAL FICTION

Night – Elie Wiesel

A candid, horrific, and deeply poignant autobiographical account of Wiesel's survival as a teenager in the Nazi death camps. *Night* offers much more than a litany of the daily terrors, everyday perversions, and rampant sadism at Auschwitz and Buchenwald; it also eloquently addresses many of the philosophical as well as personal questions implicit in any serious consideration of what the Holocaust was, what it meant, and what its legacy is and will be.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY; HISTORICAL; HOLOCAUST

The Nightingale – Kristin Hannah

The *Nightingale* tells the stories of two sisters, separated by years and experience, by ideals, passion and circumstance, each embarking on her own dangerous path toward survival, love, and freedom in German-occupied, war-torn France--a heartbreakingly beautiful novel that celebrates the resilience of the human spirit and the durability of women. It is a novel for everyone, a novel for a lifetime.

LITERARY FICTION; FAMILY LIFE

Normal: A novel – Warren Ellis

In a small, insightful and thrilling volume, Ellis offers a view into a world where technology had irrevocably become intertwined into our lives.

FICTION; THRILLER; TECHNOLOGICAL

Our Souls at Night – Kent Haruf

In Holt, Colorado, widower Louis Waters is initially thrown when the widowed Addie Moore suggests that they spend time together, in bed, to stave off loneliness. They are soon exchanging the confidences and memories of lives now empty of family, and their hopes for the imminent future.

FICTION; FAMILY LIFE; ROMANCE

The River at Night – Erica Ferencik

Four friends take a white water rafting trip then must fight to survive in the aftermath of an accident. "*The River at Night* is a nonstop and unforgettable thriller by a stunning new voice in fiction." - LitLovers

FICTION; THRILLER

The Scribe of Siena – Melodie Winawer

After Beatrice Trovato's brother dies unexpectedly, she travels to Siena to take care of his estate. Upon finding the journal and paintings of Gabriele Accorsi, the fourteenth-century

artist, Beatrice sees a startling image of her own face in his work and is suddenly transported to Siena in the year 1347. After falling in love she must decide in which century she belongs.
HISTORICAL FICTION; FAMILY

Secret Keeper – Kate Morton

During a summer party at the family farm in the English countryside, sixteen-year-old Laurel Nicolson has escaped to her childhood tree house and is happily dreaming of the future. She spies a stranger coming up the long road to the farm and watches as her mother speaks to him. Before the afternoon is over, Laurel will witness a shocking crime. A crime that challenges everything she knows about her family.
HISTORICAL FICTION; MYSTERY

The Shark Club – Ann Kidd Taylor

A shark-whispering marine scientist was “literally bitten by the object of her obsession,” at age 12. Now as an adult Maeve must return to her childhood home where she finds unresolved family and romantic relationships waiting for her.
WOMEN’S FICTION

Small Great Things – Jodi Picoult

With richly layered characters and a gripping moral dilemma that will lead readers to question everything they know about privilege, power, and race, *Small Great Things* is a page turner.
FICTION SAGAS; CONTEMPORARY WOMEN; LITERARY FICTION

Sound of Gravel – Ruth Wariner

Ruth Wariner was born her mother’s fourth child and her father’s thirty-ninth. This memoir is her coming-of-age story set in a belief system so fanatical that life beyond its clutches seems impossible to imagine – until Ruth realizes it would be more impossible to stay. The path she chooses is an affirmation of her mother’s limitless love; and the bond she forges with her sisters one fateful night propels them toward a new life that will leave readers awed and inspired.

MEMOIR; FAMILY; COMING OF AGE

The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane – Lisa See

The story of a Chinese mother and her daughter, who has been adopted by an American couple, tracing very different cultural factors that compel them to consume a rare native tea that has shaped their family’s destiny for generations.

LITERARY FICTION; FAMILY

Thirteen Reasons Why – Jay Asher

When high school student Clay Jenkins receives a box in the mail containing the thirteen cassette tapes recorded by his classmate Hannah, who committed suicide, he spends a bewildering and heartbreaking night crisscrossing their town, listening to Hannah’s voice recounting the events leading up to her death.

SUICIDE; YOUNG ADULT FICTION

Truly Madly Guilty – Liane Moriarty

IF ONLY THEY'D SAID NO... Clementine is haunted by regret. It was just a barbeque. They didn't even know their hosts that well, they were friends of friends. They could so easily have said no.

CONTEMPORARY FICTION; DOMESTIC LIFE

Turner House – Angela Flournoy

For over fifty years the Turners have lived on Yarrow Street. Their house has seen thirteen children get grown and gone—and some return; it has seen the arrival of grandchildren, the fall of Detroit's East Side, and the loss of a father. But when their powerful mother falls ill, the Turners are called home to decide their house's fate and to reckon with how their past haunts—and shapes—their future. *The Turner House* is a striking examination of the price we pay for our dreams, and the ways in which our families bring us home.

LITERARY FICTION; AFRICAN AMERICAN; FAMILY LIFE

Underground Railroad- Colson Whitehead

A story of Cora and Caesar, two slaves who make a bid for freedom from their Georgia plantations by following the Underground Railroad. Winner: National Book Award for Fiction, 2017 Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction.

HISTORICAL FICTION

The Unseen World- Liz Moore

The moving story of a daughter's quest to discover the truth about her beloved father's hidden past. What Ada discovers on her journey into a virtual universe will keep the reader riveted until *The Unseen World's* fascinating conclusion.

DOMESTIC FICTION; DETECTIVE AND MYSTERY

Vanessa and Her Sister- Priya Parmar

London, 1905: The city is alight with change, and the Stephen siblings are at the forefront. The work of exciting young newcomer Priya Parmar, *Vanessa and Her Sister* exquisitely captures the champagne-heady days of prewar London and the extraordinary lives of sisters Vanessa Bell and Virginia Woolf.

HISTORICAL FICTION

A Walk in the Woods – Bill Bryson

Bill Bryson introduces us to the history and ecology of the trail and to some of the other hardy (or just foolhardy) folks he meets along the way—and a couple of bears. Already a classic, *A Walk in the Woods* will make you long for the great outdoors (or at least a comfortable chair to sit and read in).

TRAVEL; HIKING AND CAMPING

War and Turpentine– Stefan Hertmans

A novel about a Flemish man who reconstructs his grandfather's story – his hopes, loves and art, all disrupted by the First World War – from the unflinching notebooks he filled with pieces of his life.

FICTION; WWI

What Was Mine – Helen Klein Ross

Simply told but deeply affecting, this urgent novel unravels the heartrending yet unsentimental tale of a woman who kidnaps a baby in a superstore—and gets away with it for twenty-one years.

PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER

Wilde Lake – Helen Klein Ross

As Luisa “Lu” Brant prepares for her first trial as newly elected state’s attorney, the case dredges up painful memories, reminding her family of the night when her brother, AJ, saved his best friend at the cost of another man’s life. Now Lu wonders if the events of 1980 happened as she remembers them. If there is such a thing as the whole truth, Lu realizes – possibly too late – that she would be better off not knowing what it is.

PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER; SUSPENSE