

# Book Club in a Bag

Saint Paul Public Library



## ***List of Book Club in a Bag Sets currently available at Saint Paul Public Library (summaries provided by NoveList Plus):***

The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay by Michael Chabon. In 1939 New York City, Joe Kavalier, a refugee from Hitler's Prague, joins forces with his Brooklyn-born cousin, Sammy Clay, to create comic-book superheroes inspired by their own fantasies, fears, and dreams.

Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life by Barbara Kingsolver. Follows the author's family's efforts to live on locally- and home-grown foods, an endeavor through which they learned lighthearted truths about food production and the connection between health and diet.

The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao by Junot Diaz. Living with an old-world mother and rebellious sister, an urban New Jersey misfit dreams of becoming *the* next J. R. R. Tolkien and believes that a long-standing family curse is thwarting his efforts to find love and happiness.

Case Histories by Kate Atkinson. Private detective Jackson Brodie finds his own need for resolution sparked by three investigations, including that of two sisters who discover a shocking clue to the disappearance of their third sister thirty years earlier.

The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother by James McBride. A young African American man describes growing up as one of twelve children of a white mother and Black father, and discusses his mother's contributions to his life and his confusion over his own identity.

Copper River by William Kent Krueger. On the run from hitmen, sheriff Cork O'Connor hides out at an

old resort, owned by his cousin Jewell DuBois, on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

Crow Lake by Mary Lawson. In the rural farm country of northern Ontario, the lives of two families--the farming Pye family, and zoologist Kate Morrison and her three brothers--are brought together and torn apart by misunderstanding, resentment, family love, and tragedy.

Cutting for Stone by Abraham Verghese. Twin brothers born from a secret love affair between an Indian nun and a British surgeon in Addis Ababa, Marion and Shiva Stone come of age in an Ethiopia on the brink of revolution, where their love for the same woman drives them apart.

Driftless by David Rhodes. A new work by the physically disabled author of *The Last Fair Deal Going Down* takes place in a sleepy Wisconsin community in which dairy farmers struggle to protect themselves from a scheming co-op, a paraplegic starts to recover only to realize the rage she feels toward others, and a retiree experiences haunting childhood memories.

Dune by Frank Herbert. Set on the desert planet Arrakis, this is the story of the boy Paul Atreides, who would become the mysterious man known as Muad'Dib, avenge the traitorous plot against his noble family, and bring to fruition humankind's most ancient and unattainable dream.

Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything across Italy, India and Indonesia by Elizabeth Gilbert. Traces the author's decision to quit her job and travel the world for a year after suffering a midlife crisis and divorce, a journey that took her to three places in her quest to explore her own nature and learn the art of spiritual balance.

The Elegance of the Hedgehog by Muriel Barbery. The lives of fifty-four-year-old concierge Rene Michel and extremely bright, suicidal twelve-year-old Paloma Josse are transformed by the arrival of a new tenant, Kakuro Ozu.

The Florist's Daughter by Patricia Hampl. Prompted by her mother's death, the author reassesses her Midwestern youth as the daughter

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of a debonair, Czech florist father and an Irish mother with a talent as a storyteller, detailing life during the postwar years and the turbulent sixties.

The Gathering by Anne Enright. As nine members of the Hegarty clan gather for the wake of their drowned brother Liam, his sister Veronica remembers the secret he shared with her about what happened in their grandmother's house thirty years ago, a betrayal that spans three generations.

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo by Stieg Larsson. Forty years after the disappearance of Harriet Vanger from the secluded island owned and inhabited by the powerful Vanger family, her octogenarian uncle hires journalist Mikael Blomqvist and Lisbeth Salander, an unconventional young hacker, to investigate.

The Glass Castle by Jeanette Walls. The child of an alcoholic father and an eccentric artist mother discusses her family's nomadic upbringing, during which she and her siblings fended for themselves while their parents outmaneuvered bill collectors and the authorities.

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society by Mary Ann Shaffer & Annie Barrows. In 1946, writer Juliet Ashton finds inspiration for her next book in her correspondence with a native of Guernsey, who tells her about the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society, a book club born as an alibi during German occupation.

The Hills At Home by Nancy Clark. During the summer of 1989, three generations of the Hill family arrive at the New England home of the family matriarch and maiden aunt, Lily, for a visit, but as the weeks go by, no one shows any signs of leaving.

Hurry Down Sunshine: A Father's Story of Love and Madness by Michael Greenberg. In an unsentimental and provocative account, the author details his young daughter's sudden onset of mental illness and her long and difficult journey back to life.

Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mount Everest Disaster by Jon Krakauer. The author describes his spring 1996 trek to Mt. Everest, a disastrous expedition that claimed the lives of eight climbers, and explains why he survived.

The Latecomer: A Hmong Family Memoir by Kao Kalia Yang. Presents the journey from refugee camp to America and the hardships and joys of a family's struggle to adapt in a strange culture while holding onto traditions that are passed down from her beloved grandmother.

Little Heathens: Hard Times and High Spirits on an Iowa Farm During The Great Depression by Mildred Armstrong Kalish. A memoir from a schoolteacher of growing up in the heart of the Midwest during the Great Depression describes life on an Iowa farm during a time of endless work, resourcefulness, no tolerance for idleness or waste, family, and kinship.

A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier by Ishmael Beah. In a heart-wrenching, candid autobiography, a human rights activist offers a firsthand account of war from the perspective of a former child soldier, detailing the violent civil war that wracked his native Sierra Leone and the government forces that transformed a gentle young boy into a killer as a member of the army.

Loving Frank by Nancy Horan. Fact and fiction blend in a historical novel that chronicles the relationship between seminal architect Frank Lloyd Wright and Mamah Cheney, from their meeting, when they were each married to another, to the clandestine affair that shocked Chicago society.

Lush Life by Richard Price. Still living on the Lower East Side and waiting tables, thirty-five-year-old Eric Cash has every reason to be jealous of Ike Marcus, an ambitious young man on the way to the top, until he is supposedly gunned down by street thugs while walking one night with Eric.

March by Geraldine Brooks. In a story inspired by the father character in "Little Women" and drawn

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from the journals and letters of Louisa May Alcott's father, a man leaves behind his family to serve in the Civil War and finds his beliefs challenged by his experiences.

Mountains Beyond Mountains by Tracy Kidder. A portrait of infectious disease expert Dr. Paul Farmer follows the efforts of this unconventional Harvard genius to understand the world's great health, economic, and social problems and to bring healing to humankind.

My Life in France by Julia Child with Alex Prud'homme. Here is the captivating story of Julia Child's years in France, where she fell in love with French food and found "her true calling."

Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America by Barbara Ehrenreich. In an attempt to understand the lives of Americans earning near-minimum wages, Ehrenreich works as a waitress in Florida, a cleaning woman in Maine, and a sales clerk in Minnesota.

Olive Kitteridge by Elizabeth Strout. At the edge of the continent, in the small town of Crosby, Maine, lives Olive Kitteridge, a retired schoolteacher who deplores the changes in her town and in the world at large but doesn't always recognize the changes in those around her.

The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals by Michael Pollan. What should we have for dinner? When you can eat just about anything nature (or the supermarket) has to offer, deciding what you should eat will inevitably stir anxiety, especially when some of the foods might shorten your life.

Out Stealing Horses by Per Petterson. After a meeting with his only neighbor, sixty-seven-year-old Trond is forced to reflect upon a long-ago incident that marks the beginning of a series of losses for Trond and his childhood friend, Jon.

The Painted Drum by Louise Erdrich. Discovering a cache of valuable Native American artifacts while appraising an estate in New Hampshire, Faye

Travers investigates the history of a ceremonial drum, which possesses spiritual powers and changes the lives of people who encounter it.

Peace Like a River by Leif Enger. The quiet 1960s midwestern life of the Land family--father Jeremiah, and children, Reuben, Davy and Swede--is upended when Davy kills two teenage boys who have come to harm the family.

The Perfect Storm: A True Story of Men Against the Sea by Sebastian Junger. Presents a vivid account of a history-making storm that hit the New England coast in October 1991 and the lives it changed, weaving together the history of the fishing industry, the science of storms, and personal accounts.

Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi. The great-granddaughter of Iran's last emperor and the daughter of ardent Marxists describes growing up in Tehran in a country plagued by political upheaval and vast contradictions between public and private life.

The Plague of Doves by Louise Erdrich. Unaware of a violent event that marked the beginning of her mixed ancestry, ambitious young Evelina Harp, a part-Ojibwe, part-white girl prone to falling hopelessly in love, learns disturbing truths from her gifted storyteller grandfather.

The Post-Birthday World by Lionel Shriver. A tale told from the parallel perspectives of two possible timelines considers the life of American expatriate Irena McGovern, who in one reality stays faithful to her disciplined American intellectual partner, and in the other runs off with an exuberant British long-time friend.

Push by Sapphire. A courageous and determined young teacher opens up a new world of hope and redemption for sixteen-year-old Precious Jones, an abused young African American girl living in Harlem who was raped and left pregnant by her father.

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Reservation Blues by Sherman Alexie. Legendary blues guitarist Robert Johnson appears on an Indian reservation to lead a Catholic rock band.

The River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey by Candace Millard. Chronicles the 1914 expedition of Theodore Roosevelt into the unexplored heart of the Amazon basin to explore and map the region surrounding a tributary called the River of Doubt, detailing the perilous conditions they faced.

A Romantic Education by Patricia Hampl. A thoughtful meditation on the contrasting cultures of East and West follows a contemporary young woman's travels to Czechoslovakia where she explores her personal history, identity, and homeland.

Say You're One of Them by Uwem Akpan. A collection of tales about modern African children in crisis includes "An Ex-Mas Feast," in which an eight-year-old child shares in his family's sacrifices to obtain enough food and enable his education.

The Shack by William P. Young. Four years after his daughter is abducted and evidence of her murder is found in an abandoned shack, Mackenzie Allen Philips returns to the shack in response to a note claiming to be from God, and has a life-changing experience.

Snow Flower And The Secret Fan by Lisa See. In seventeenth-century China, three women become emotionally involved with "The Peony Pavilion," a famed opera rumored to cause lovesickness and even death.

So Brave, Young and Handsome by Leif Enger. The story of an aging train robber on a quest to reconcile the claims of love and judgment on his life, and the failed writer who goes with him.

The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures by Anne Fadiman. Discusses a sick child of Laotian immigrants whose beliefs conflict with Western medicine.

A Spot of Bother by Mark Haddon. The descent into madness of sixty-one-year-old George Hall goes largely unnoticed due to his family members' preoccupations with their own individual relationship crises.

The Story of Edgar Sawtelle by David Wroblewski. A tale reminiscent of "Hamlet" that also celebrates the alliance between humans and dogs follows speech-disabled Wisconsin youth Edgar, who bonds with three yearling canines and struggles to prove that his sinister uncle is responsible for his father's death.

Suite Française by Irène Némirovsky. A story of life in France under the Nazi occupation includes two parts--"Storm in June," set amid the chaotic 1940 exodus from Paris, and "Dolce," set in a German-occupied village rife with resentment, resistance, and collaboration.

The Sweet Hereafter by Russell Banks. Four narrators--bus driver Dolores, upright Bill, shrewd Mitchell, and teenaged Nichole--address agonizing questions as they describe an accident that killed fourteen children and the effects of the tragedy on themselves and their town.

The Tender Bar by J.R. Moehringer. In a memoir of growing up with a single mother, the author describes how he received valuable life lessons and friendship from an assortment of characters at the neighborhood bar, who provided him with a kind of fatherhood by committee.

The Things They Carried: A Work of Fiction by Tim O'Brien. Heroic young men carry the emotional weight of their lives to war in Vietnam in a patchwork account of a modern journey into the heart of darkness.

The Thirteenth Tale by Diane Setterfield. When her health begins failing, the mysterious author Vida Winter decides to let Margaret Lea, a biographer, write the truth about her life, but Margaret needs to verify the facts since Vida has a history of telling outlandish tales.

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Those Who Save Us by Jenna Blum. A professor of German history begins a long journey back into a past she has pushed aside, returning to Germany to reopen the wounds of her own life--as well as that of her mother--as a child living in Nazi Germany.

Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace--One School at a Time by Greg Mortenson And David Oliver Relin. One man's campaign to build schools in the most dangerous, remote, and anti-American reaches of Asia..

The Time Traveler's Wife by Audrey Niffenegger. Passionately in love, Clare and Henry vow to hold onto each other and their marriage as they struggle with the effects of Chrono-Displacement Disorder, a condition that casts Henry involuntarily into the world of time travel.

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith. A young girl in a shabby neighborhood lives with dreams in an innocent time before the war.

Tree of Smoke by Denis Johnson. The lives of Skip Sands, a spy-in-training engaged in psychological operations against the Vietcong, and brothers Bill and James Houston, young men who drift out of the Arizona desert into a war, intertwine in a novel of America during the Vietnam War.

Truck: A Love Story by Michael Perry. The author chronicles a year during which he struggled to grow his own food, live peaceably with volatile neighbors, and fix his pickup truck, at a time when he also fell in love and befriended a paraplegic and quadriplegic biker team.

Unaccustomed Earth by Jhumpa Lahiri. Exploring the secrets and complexities lying at the heart of family life and relationships, a collection of eight stories includes the title work, about a young mother in a new city whose father tends her garden while hiding a secret love affair.

An Unquiet Mind by Kay Redfield Jamison. The personal story of a manic depressive and an authority on the subject describes the onset of the illness during her teenage years and her

determined journey through the realm of available treatments.

Water for Elephants by Sara Gruen. Ninety-something-year-old Jacob Jankowski remembers his time in the circus as a young man during the Great Depression, and his friendship with Marlena, the star of the equestrian act, and Rosie, the elephant, who gave them hope.

We Need To Talk About Kevin by Lionel Shriver. "That neither nature nor nurture bears exclusive responsibility for a child's character is self-evident."

Whatever It Takes: Geoffrey Canada's Quest to Change Harlem and America by Paul Tough. Portrait of African-American activist Geoffrey Canada describes his radical approach to eliminating inner-city poverty, one that proposes to transform the lives of poor children by changing their schools, their families, and their neighborhoods at the same time.

The White Tiger by Aravind Adiga. Over the course of seven nights, by the scattered light of a preposterous chandelier, Balram tells the terrible and transfixing story of how he came to be a success in life-- having nothing but his own wits to help him along.

Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West by Gregory Maguire. Set in an Oz where a morose Wizard battles suicidal thoughts, the story of the green-skinned Elphaba, otherwise known as the Wicked Witch of the West, profiles her as an animal rights activist striving to avenge her dear sister's death.