

Director's Book Club Picks 2018

January

A Farewell to Arms by Ernest Hemingway

The best American novel to emerge from World War I, *A Farewell to Arms* is the unforgettable story of an American ambulance driver on the Italian front and his passion for a beautiful English nurse.

February

A House for Mr. Biswas by V. S. Naipaul

The early masterpiece of V.S. Naipaul's brilliant career, *A House for Mr. Biswas* is an unforgettable story inspired by Naipaul's father that has been hailed as one of the twentieth century's finest novels. In his forty-six short years, Mr. Mohun Biswas has been fighting against destiny to achieve some semblance of independence, only to face a lifetime of calamity. Shuttled from one residence to another after the drowning death of his father, for which he is inadvertently responsible, Mr. Biswas yearns for a place he can call home. But when he marries into the domineering Tulsi family on whom he indignantly becomes dependent, Mr. Biswas embarks on an arduous and endless struggle to weaken their hold over him and purchase a house of his own. A heartrending, dark comedy of manners, *A House for Mr. Biswas* masterfully evokes a man's quest for autonomy against an emblematic post-colonial canvas.

March

Gentlemen & Players by Joanne Harris

Harboring dark ties to St. Oswald's past, a young teacher has arrived with one terrible goal: to destroy the school. A veteran teacher faces a formidable opponent - a master player with a bitter grudge and a strategy that has been meticulously planned to the final move, a secret game with very real, very deadly consequences.

April

Manhunt: the 12 Day Chase for Lincoln's Killer by James L. Swanson

The murder of Abraham Lincoln sets off the greatest manhunt in American history. From April 14 to April 26, 1865, the assassin, John Wilkes Booth, led Union cavalry and detectives on a wild twelve-day chase through the streets of Washington, D.C., across

the swamps of Maryland, and into the forests of Virginia, while the nation, still reeling from the just-ended Civil War, watched in horror and sadness. A gripping hour-by-hour account told through the eyes of the hunted and the hunters, this is history as you've never read it before.

May

Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society by Mary Ann Shaffer & Annie Barrows

Juliet Ashton's life changes dramatically when she embarks on a unique writing project that will introduce her to a circle of friends from Guernsey, an island in the English Channel that had been occupied by the Nazis during World War II. These brave men and women had formed the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society as a cover to protect themselves from the Germans.

June

Loving Frank by Nancy Horan

This novel tells the story of the love affair between Mamah Borthwick Cheney and famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

July

Of Human Bondage by W. Somerset Maugham

Of Human Bondage is W. Somerset Maugham's acclaimed semi-autobiographical coming-of-age novel. An orphan, and born with a club foot, Philip Carey is a sensitive young man who at 18 goes in search of adventure and a philosophy of his own. After spending time in Heidelberg and Paris, Philip settles in London and it is there he meets Mildred – for whom he develops an all-consuming, destructive love.

August

The Paris Wife by Paula McLain

Chicago, 1920: Hadley Richardson is a quiet twenty-eight-year-old who has all but given up on love and happiness – until she meets Ernest Hemingway. Following a whirlwind courtship and wedding, the pair set sail for Paris, where they become the golden couple in a lively and volatile group – the fabled “Lost Generation” – that includes Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, and F. Scott Fitzgerald.

September

Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates

In a profound work that pivots from the biggest questions about American history and ideals to the most intimate concerns of a father for his son, Ta-Nehisi Coates offers a powerful new framework for understanding our nation's history and current crisis. Americans have built an empire on the idea of "race," a falsehood that damages us all but falls most heavily on the bodies of black women and men--bodies exploited through slavery and segregation, and, today, threatened, locked up, and murdered out of all proportion. What is it like to inhabit a black body and find a way to live within it? And how can we all honestly reckon with this fraught history and free ourselves from its burden?

October

Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress by Dai Sizie

This novella tracks the lives of two teens, childhood friends who have been sent to a small Chinese village for "re-education" during Mao's Cultural Revolution. Sons of doctors and dentists, their days are now spent hauling buckets of excrement up the mountainside and mining coal. But the boys-Lou and the unnamed narrator-get a reprieve when the villagers discover their talents as storytellers, and on one of their trips into town, Lou meets the seamstress of the title and falls in love.

November

"Hilbert Reads" title selection (TBA)

December

Individual picks and pot luck