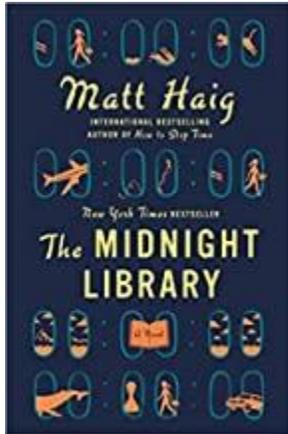


Book Group Selection Ideas

Oct 29, 2021 Edition



Midnight Library by Matt Haig

Genre: Science Fiction,

Selling Points

Popular with book groups
Paperback available.
International bestseller
Suggested by members at October meeting.

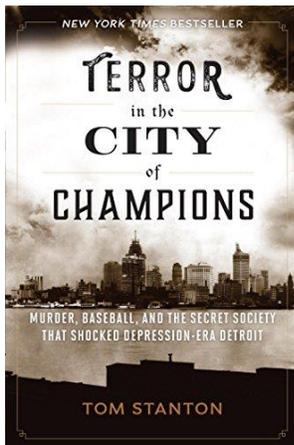
Down side:

Popular, so many may have read already.

Description:

Somewhere out beyond the edge of the universe there is a library that contains an infinite number of books, each one the story of another reality. One tells the story of your life as it is, along with another book for the other life you could have lived if you had made a different choice at any point in your life. While we all wonder how our lives might have been, what if you had the chance to go to the library and see for yourself? Would any of these other lives truly be better?

In *The Midnight Library*, Matt Haig's enchanting blockbuster novel, Nora Seed finds herself faced with this decision. Faced with the possibility of changing her life for a new one, following a different career, undoing old breakups, realizing her dreams of becoming a glaciologist; she must search within herself as she travels through the Midnight Library to decide what is truly fulfilling in life, and what makes it worth living in the first place.



Terror in the City of Champions by Tom Stanton

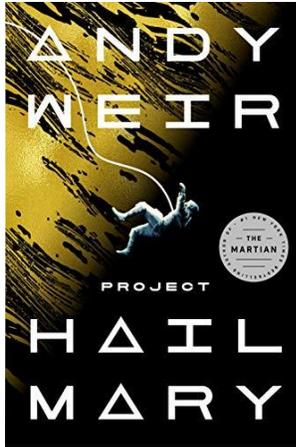
Genre: Nonfiction

Selling Points

NYT Bestseller
Recommended by member at Oct. meeting
local interest.

Description:

Detroit, mid-1930s: In a city abuzz over its unrivaled sports success, gun-loving baseball fan Dayton Dean became ensnared in the nefarious and deadly Black Legion. The secretive, Klan-like group was executing a wicked plan of terror, murdering enemies, flogging associates, and contemplating armed rebellion. The Legion boasted tens of thousands of members across the Midwest, among them politicians and prominent citizens—even, possibly, a beloved athlete.



Project Hail Mary by Andy Weir

Genre: Science Fiction

Selling Points

Popular with book groups

Paperback available.

Critical acclaim

Suggested by member at October meeting.

Down side:

Popular, so many may have read already.

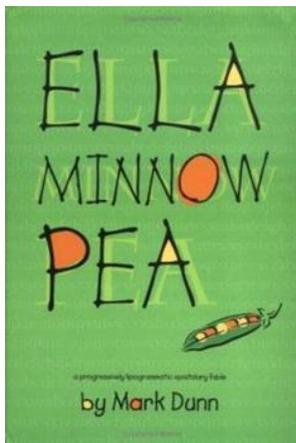
Longer title at 476 pages.

Description:

Ryland Grace is the sole survivor on a desperate, last-chance mission--and if he fails, humanity and the earth itself will perish.

Except that right now, he doesn't know that. He can't even remember his own name, let alone the nature of his assignment or how to complete it.

All he knows is that he's been asleep for a very, very long time. And he's just been awakened to find himself millions of miles from home, with nothing but two corpses for company.



Ella Minnow Pea by Mark Dunn

Genre: Fictional Fable

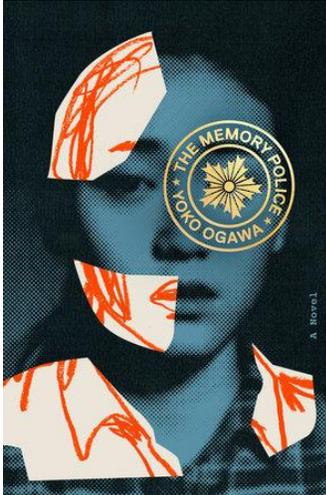
Selling Points

Suggested by member at October meeting.

Renee recommends: charming, unique and well crafted

Description

Ella Minnow Pea is a girl living happily on the fictional island of Nollop off the coast of South Carolina. Nollop was named after Nevin Nollop, author of the immortal pangram,* "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog." Now Ella finds herself acting to save her friends, family, and fellow citizens from the encroaching totalitarianism of the island's Council, which has banned the use of certain letters of the alphabet as they fall from a memorial statue of Nevin Nollop. As the letters progressively drop from the statue they also disappear from the novel. The result is both a hilarious and moving story of one girl's fight for freedom of expression, as well as a linguistic tour de force sure to delight word lovers everywhere.



The Memory Police by Yoko Ogawa (translated by Stephen Snyder, Markus Juslin).

Genre: Science Fiction, Translated from Japanese

Selling Points

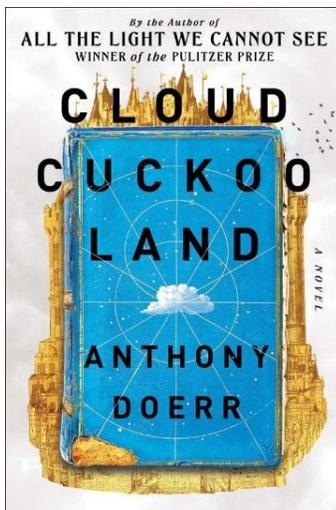
Renee recommends as a companion to *Ella Minnow Pea*.

Description

On an unnamed island off an unnamed coast, objects are disappearing: first hats, then ribbons, birds, roses—until things become much more serious. Most of the island's inhabitants are oblivious to these changes, while those few imbued with the power to recall the lost objects live in fear of the draconian Memory Police, who are committed to ensuring that what has disappeared remains forgotten.

A surreal, provocative fable about the power of memory and the trauma

of loss, *The Memory Police* is a stunning new work from one of the most exciting contemporary authors writing in any language.



Cloud Cuckoo Land by Anthony Doerr

Genre: Literary Fiction

Selling Points

Suggested by Library staff members

Hot off the press this October

On top of Renee's Want to Read List

Down side:

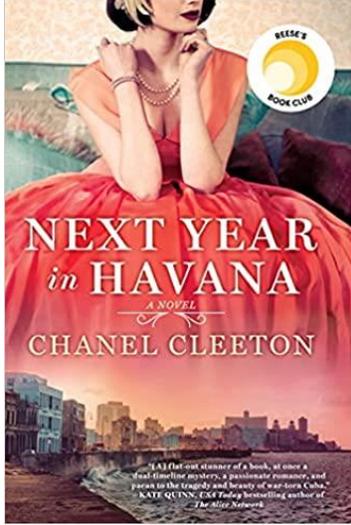
Just published in October to wide acclaim. (So maybe hard to get copies)

Description

Set in Constantinople in the fifteenth century, in a small town in present-day Idaho, and on an interstellar ship decades from now,

Anthony Doerr's gorgeous third novel is a triumph of imagination and compassion, a soaring story about children on the cusp of adulthood in worlds in peril, who find resilience, hope—and a book. In *Cloud Cuckoo Land*, Doerr has created a magnificent tapestry of times and places that reflects our vast interconnectedness—with other species, with each other, with those who lived before us, and with those who will be here after we're gone.

It's a wildly inventive novel that teems with life, straddles an enormous range of experience and learning, and embodies the storytelling gifts that it celebrates. It also pulls off a resolution that feels both surprising and inevitable, and that compels you back to the opening of the book with a head-shake of admiration at the Swiss-watchery of its construction. – NYT Review.



Next Year in Havana by Chanel Cleeton

Genre: Historical Fiction, Romance.

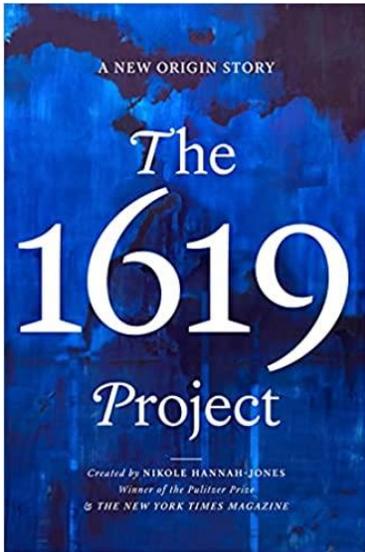
Selling Points

Recommended by member at October Meeting
 Reese Witherspoon Book Club pick
 A good “Summer Read”

Description

After the death of her beloved grandmother, a Cuban-American woman travels to Havana, where she discovers the roots of her identity—and unearths a family secret hidden since the revolution...

Havana, 1958. The daughter of a sugar baron, nineteen-year-old Elisa Perez is part of Cuba's high society, where she is largely sheltered from the country's growing political unrest—until she embarks on a clandestine affair with a passionate revolutionary..



The 1619 Project by Nikole Hannah Jones

Genres: Nonfiction, History & Politics, Journalism

Selling Points

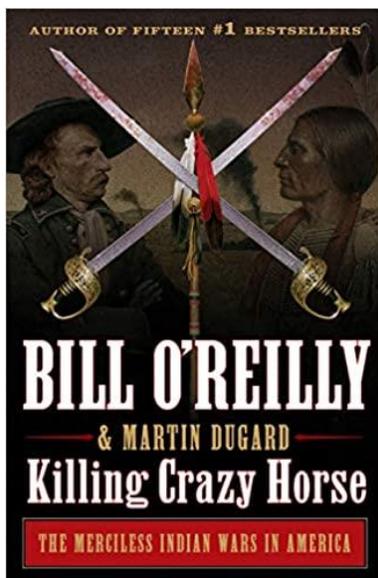
Controversial New Book based on the NY times publication.
 Best-selling Liberal Author
Renee wants to read.
 New in November

Down Side:

Long at 624 pages, but probably could read portions instead of whole text.

Description

The New York Times Magazine’s award-winning and controversial “1619 Project” issue reframed our understanding of American history by placing slavery and its continuing legacy at the center of our national narrative. This new book substantially expands on that work, weaving together eighteen essays that explore the legacy of slavery in present-day America with thirty-six poems and works of fiction that illuminate key moments of oppression, struggle, and resistance. The essays show how the inheritance of 1619 reaches into every part of contemporary American society, from politics, music, diet, traffic, and citizenship to capitalism, religion, and our democracy itself.



Killing Crazy Horse

Genres: Nonfiction, History & Politics

Selling Points:

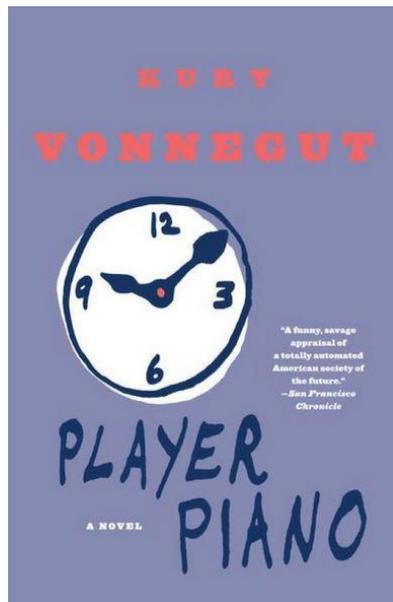
Best-selling conservative author
Group member suggestion from October

Description

The latest installment of the multimillion-selling *Killing* series is a gripping journey through the American West and the historic clashes between Native Americans and settlers.

The bloody Battle of Tippecanoe was only the beginning. It's 1811 and President James Madison has ordered the destruction of Shawnee warrior chief Tecumseh's alliance of tribes in the Great Lakes region. But while General William Henry Harrison would win this fight, the armed conflict between Native Americans and the newly formed United States would rage on for decades.

Bestselling authors Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugard venture through the fraught history of our country's founding on already occupied lands, from General Andrew Jackson's brutal battles with the Creek Nation to President James Monroe's epic "sea to shining sea" policy, to President Martin Van Buren's cruel enforcement of a "treaty" that forced the Cherokee Nation out of their homelands along what would be called the Trail of Tears. O'Reilly and Dugard take readers behind the legends to reveal never-before-told historical moments in the fascinating creation story of America.



Player Piano by Kurt Vonnegut

Genre: Modern literature

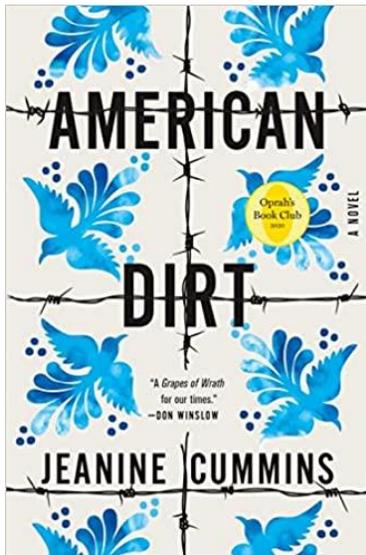
Selling Points

Members suggest "something by Vonnegut"
Les well know but an acclaimed early work

Description

Vonnegut's vision of an America restructured by industrial technocrats whose robotics in the workplace result in a devaluing of human participation. Vonnegut poses the question of human purpose in the face of a world commercially and institutionally driven to automate life.

This is Vonnegut's first novel. It is unlike most of his other novels in which the nature of authorship and/or narrative flow has been characterized as *Vonnegutian*. This is his most straight-ahead narrative, but the pithy societal observations and questions one comes to expect from Vonnegut are all here.



American Dirt by Jeanine Cummins

Genre: Contemporary Literature

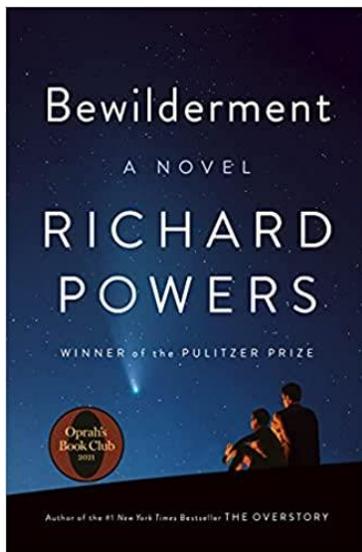
Selling Points

Popular book group title
Oprah book club pick
Renee's Mom recommends!

Description

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.



Bewilderment by Richard Powers

Genre: contemporary, literary

Selling Points

Pulitzer Prize Winning Author
Hot off the press this October
On top of Renee's Want to Read List

Description

The astrobiologist Theo Byrne searches for life throughout the cosmos while single-handedly raising his unusual nine-year-old, Robin, following the death of his wife. Robin is a warm, kind boy who spends hours painting elaborate pictures of endangered animals. He's also about to be expelled from third grade for smashing his friend in the face. As his son grows more troubled, Theo hopes to keep him off psychoactive drugs. He learns of an experimental neurofeedback treatment to bolster Robin's emotional control, one

that involves training the boy on the recorded patterns of his mother's brain...

With its soaring descriptions of the natural world, its tantalizing vision of life beyond, and its account of a father and son's ferocious love, *Bewilderment* marks Richard Powers's most intimate and moving novel. At its heart lies the question: How can we tell our children the truth about this beautiful, imperiled planet?