



Not Your Mother's Book Club 2024/2025 Reading List

October: *The Case of the Murderous Dr. Cream: The Hunt for a Victorian Era Serial Killer*, by Dean Jobb

In the span of fifteen years, Dr. Thomas Neill Cream poisoned at least ten people in the United States, Britain, and Canada, a death toll with almost no precedents. Structured around Cream's London murder trial in 1892, when he was finally brought to justice, *The Case of the Murderous Dr. Cream* exposes the blind trust given to medical practitioners, as well as the flawed detection methods, bungled investigations, corrupt officials, and stifling morality of Victorian society that allowed Cream to prey on vulnerable and desperate women, many of whom had turned to him for medical help.

November: *The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry*, by Gabrielle Zevin

A.J. Fikry's life is not at all what he expected it to be. His wife has died, his bookstore is experiencing the worst sales in its history, and now his prized possession, a rare collection of Poe poems, has been stolen. Slowly but surely, he is isolating himself from all the people of Alice Island—from Lambiase, the well-intentioned police officer who's always felt kindly toward Fikry; from Ismay, his sister-in-law who is hell-bent on saving him from his dreary self; from Amelia, the lovely and idealistic (if eccentric) Knightley Press sales rep who keeps on taking the ferry over to Alice Island, refusing to be deterred by A.J.'s bad attitude. Even the books in his store have stopped holding pleasure for him. These days, A.J. can only see them as a sign of a world that is changing too rapidly.

December: No book club this month.

January: The Frozen River, by Ariel Lawhon

Maine, 1789: When the Kennebec River freezes, entombing a man in the ice, Martha Ballard is summoned to examine the body and determine cause of death. As a midwife and healer, she is privy to much of what goes on behind closed doors in Hallowell. Her diary is a record of every birth and death, crime and debacle that unfolds in the close-knit community. Months earlier, Martha documented the details of an alleged rape committed by two of the town's most respected gentlemen—one of whom has now been found dead in the ice. But when a local physician undermines her conclusion, declaring the death to be an accident, Martha is forced to investigate the shocking murder on her own.

February: Somewhere Beyond the Sea, by T.J. Klune

A magical house. A secret past. A summons that could change everything. Arthur Parnassus lives a good life built on the ashes of a bad one. He's the master of a strange orphanage on a distant and peculiar island, and he hopes to soon be the adoptive father to the six dangerous and magical children who live there. But when Arthur is summoned to make a public statement about his dark past, he finds himself at the helm of a fight for the future that his family, and all magical people, deserve. And when a new magical child hopes to join them on their island home—one who finds power in calling himself monster, a name that Arthur worked so hard to protect his children from—Arthur knows they're at a breaking point: their family will either grow stronger than ever or fall apart. Welcome back to Marsyas Island. This is Arthur's story.

March: The Invisible Life Of Addie Larue, by V.E. Schwab

France, 1714: in a moment of desperation, a young woman makes a Faustian bargain to live forever and is cursed to be forgotten by everyone she meets. Thus, begins the extraordinary life of Addie LaRue, and a dazzling adventure that will play out across centuries and continents, across history and art, as a young woman learns how far she will go to leave her mark on the world. But everything changes when, after nearly 300 years, Addie stumbles across a young man in a hidden bookstore and he remembers her name.

April: The Boys in the Boat, by Daniel James Brown

For readers of *Unbroken*, out of the depths of the Depression comes an irresistible story about beating the odds and finding hope in the most desperate of times—the improbable, intimate account of how nine working-class boys from the American West showed the world at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin what true grit really meant.

May: The Measure, by Nikki Erlick

Eight ordinary people. One extraordinary choice. It seems like any other day. You wake up, pour a cup of coffee, and head out. But today, when you open your front door, waiting for you is a

small wooden box. This box holds your fate inside: the answer to the exact number of years you will live.

June: All the Colors of the Dark, by Chris Whitaker

1975 is a time of change in America. The Vietnam War is ending. Mohammed Ali is fighting Joe Frazier. And in the small town of Monta Clare, Missouri, girls are disappearing. When the daughter of a wealthy family is targeted, the most unlikely hero emerges—Patch, a local boy with one eye, who saves the girl, and, in doing so, leaves heartache in his wake. Patch and those who love him soon discover that the line between triumph and tragedy has never been finer. And that their search for answers will lead them to truths that could mean losing one another.

July: The Berry Pickers, by Amanda Peters

July 1962. A Mi'kmaq family from Nova Scotia arrives in Maine to pick blueberries for the summer. Weeks later, four-year-old Ruthie, the family's youngest child, vanishes. She is last seen by her six-year-old brother, Joe, sitting on a favorite rock at the edge of a berry field. Joe will remain distraught by his sister's disappearance for years to come.

In Maine, a young girl named Norma grows up as the only child of an affluent family. Her father is emotionally distant, her mother frustratingly overprotective. Norma is often troubled by recurring dreams and visions that seem more like memories than imagination. As she grows older, Norma slowly comes to realize there is something her parents aren't telling her. Unwilling to abandon her intuition, she will spend decades trying to uncover this family secret.

August: Other Birds, by Sarah Addison Allen

Between the real and the imaginary, there are stories that take flight in the most extraordinary ways. Right off the coast of South Carolina, on Mallow Island, The Dellawisp sits—a stunning old cobblestone building shaped like a horseshoe, and named after the tiny turquoise birds who, alongside its human tenants, inhabit an air of magical secrecy. When Zoey comes to claim her deceased mother's apartment at the Dellawisp she meets her quirky and secretive neighbors, including a young woman with a past, two estranged middle-aged sisters, and a lonely chef, and three ghosts. The sudden death of one of Zoey's new neighbors sets off a search that leads to the island's famous author and to a long-estranged relative of the sisters. Each of them has a story, and each story has an ending which hasn't yet been written.

September: A Tale of Two Murders, by Laura Thompson

A Tale of Two Murders is an engrossing examination of the Ilford murder, which became a legal cause célèbre in the 1920s, and led to the hanging of Edith Thompson and her lover, Freddy Bywaters. On the night of October 3, 1922, as Edith and her husband, Percy, were walking home from the theatre, a man sprang out of the darkness and stabbed Percy to death. The assailant was none other than Bywaters. When the police discovered his relationship with Edith, she—who had denied knowledge of the attack—was arrested as his accomplice. Her passionate love letters to Bywaters, read out at the ensuing trial, sealed her fate, even though Bywaters insisted Edith had no part in planning the murder. They were both hanged. Freddy was demonstrably guilty, but was Edith truly so?