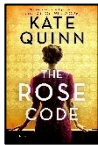


Cynthia Swanson's Book Club Picks

I often get asked by book clubs for recommendations. Here are a few books that generated great discussions in my own book club – and others that I simply found to be thought-provoking reads. I update this list periodically with new favorites!

Fiction



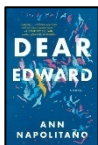
The Rose Code by Kate Quinn: A unique and fascinating story. Quinn took a little-known facet of WWII and turned it into a page-turning, heartfelt tale of three very believable and compelling women.



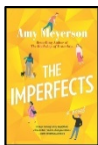
Winter Counts by David Heska Wanbli Weiden: Beautiful prose, combined with a compelling cast of characters, unforgettable settings, and a solid mystery, bring together (in my mind) all the aspect of great fiction.



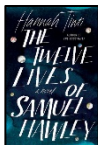
The Vanishing Half by Brit Bennett: A provocative tale about identical twin sisters, light-skinned Black women who choose radically different paths in life.



Dear Edward by Ann Napolitano: Edward's coming of age, incited by his survival of a plane crash that kills everyone else on board, is all the more poignant as he attempts to navigate a world he didn't ask for and would never have expected to live in.



The Imperfects by Amy Meyerson: The matriarch of a perfectly imperfect family bequeaths them the perfect diamond -- but is it a family heirloom or stolen treasure?



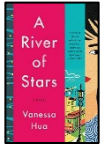
The Twelve Lives of Samuel Hawley by Hannah Tinti: This father-daughter story gripped me from page one and never let go. I was turned inside out by the story of Loo and her father, especially by the intensity of their love for one another.



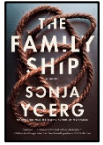
Station Eleven by Emily St. John Mandel: This pandemic-world novel (published in 2014), sucked me in – not because it parallels the Covid-19 pandemic, but more because it helped me realize how much worse things could be.

(continued on back)

Fiction (continued)



A River of Stars by Vanessa Hua: An engaging read, coupled with an unusual setup and a level of moral ambiguity I could sink my teeth into. Scarlett is fierce and resourceful, and I felt sympathy for the complex cast of secondary characters.

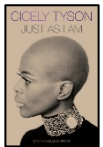


The Family Ship by Sonja Yoerg: An absorbing family and coming-of-age tale, told via the lens of numerous members of the large (9 children!) Vergennes family.



Orange Mint and Honey by Carleen Brice: A lovely story about a daughter and mother struggling with the aftermath of addiction. I was rooting for all of the characters in this beautifully woven tale.

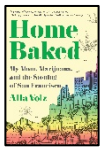
Nonfiction/Memoir



Just As I Am by Cicely Tyson: A deeply personal memoir by the iconic actress. I learned much about Tyson, her relationships, her work, and the impacts of race, family, and principle on a life well lived.



Soles of a Survivor: A Memoir by Nhi Aronheim: Using candid, courageous language, Aronheim weaves a narrative of perseverance and fortitude against the backdrop of a country torn apart by war and a mother's dreams for her children.



Home Baked: My Mom, Marijuana, and the Stoning of San Francisco by Alia Volz: This tale of San Francisco in the 1970s and 1980s portrays the devastation AIDS brought to the gay community, and the relief Volz's mother brought to sufferers.

Cynthia Swanson, author of *The Bookseller* (Harper, March 2015) & *The Glass Forest* (Simon & Schuster, February 2018), and editor of forthcoming *Denver Noir* (Akashic, May 2022)

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