

Director's Book Club Picks 2019

January

Crimson Shore by Douglas Preston & Lincoln Child, 339 pages

A seemingly straightforward private case turns out to be much more complicated-and sinister-than Special Agent A.X.L. Pendergast ever could have anticipated.

February

Every Note Played by Lisa Genova, 307 pages

An accomplished concert pianist, Richard received standing ovations from audiences all over the world in awe of his rare combination of emotional resonance and flawless technique. Every finger of his hands was a finely calibrated instrument, dancing across the keys and striking each note with exacting precision. That was eight months ago.

Richard now has ALS, and his entire right arm is paralyzed. His fingers are impotent, still, devoid of possibility. The loss of his hand feels like a death, a loss of true love, a divorce – his divorce.

He knows his left arm will go next.

Three years ago, Karina removed their framed wedding picture from the living room wall and hung a mirror there instead. But she still hasn't moved on. Karina is paralyzed by excuses and fear, stuck in an unfulfilling life as a piano teacher, afraid to pursue the path she abandoned as a young woman, blaming Richard and their failed marriage for all of it.

When Richard becomes increasingly paralyzed and is no longer able to live on his own, Karina becomes his reluctant caretaker. As Richard's muscles, voice, and breath fade, both he and Karina try to reconcile their past before it's too late.



March

In the Time of the Butterflies by **Julia Alvarez**, 336 pages (Movie date: TBA)

Set during the waning days of the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic in 1960, this extraordinary novel tells the story of the Mirabal sisters, three young wives and mothers who are assassinated after visiting their jailed husbands.

April

The House of Secrets by **Brad Meltzer**, 352 pages

When Hazel Nash was six years old, her father taught her: mysteries need to be solved. He should know. Hazel's father is Jack Nash, the host of America's favorite conspiracy TV show, *The House of Secrets*. Even as a child, she loved hearing her dad's tall tales, especially the one about a leather book belonging to Benedict Arnold that was hidden in a corpse.

Now, years later, Hazel wakes up in the hospital and remembers nothing, not even her own name. She's told she's been in a car accident that killed her father and injured her brother. But she can't remember any of it, because of her own traumatic brain injury. Then a man from the FBI shows up, asking questions about her dad-and about his connection to the corpse of a man found with an object stuffed into his chest: a priceless book that belonged to Benedict Arnold.

Back at her house, Hazel finds guns that she doesn't remember owning. On her forehead, she sees scars from fights she can't recall. Most important, the more Hazel digs, the less she likes the person she seems to have been.

Trying to put together the puzzle pieces of her past and present, Hazel Nash needs to figure out who killed this man-and how the book wound up in his chest. The answer will tell her the truth about her father, what he was really doing for the government-and who Hazel really is.

Mysteries need to be solved. Especially the ones about yourself.





May

Origin by **Dan Brown**, 461 pages

Robert Langdon, Harvard professor of symbology and religious iconology, arrives at the ultramodern Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao to attend a major announcement—the unveiling of a discovery that “will change the face of science forever.” The evening’s host is Edmond Kirsch, a forty-year-old billionaire and futurist whose dazzling high-tech inventions and audacious predictions have made him a renowned global figure. Kirsch, who was one of Langdon’s first students at Harvard two decades earlier, is about to reveal an astonishing breakthrough . . . one that will answer two of the fundamental questions of human existence.

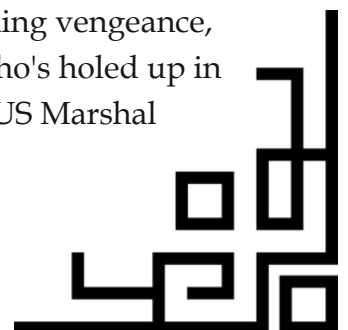
As the event begins, Langdon and several hundred guests find themselves captivated by an utterly original presentation, which Langdon realizes will be far more controversial than he ever imagined. But the meticulously orchestrated evening suddenly erupts into chaos, and Kirsch’s precious discovery teeters on the brink of being lost forever. Reeling and facing an imminent threat, Langdon is forced into a desperate bid to escape Bilbao. With him is Ambra Vidal, the elegant museum director who worked with Kirsch to stage the provocative event. Together they flee to Barcelona on a perilous quest to locate a cryptic password that will unlock Kirsch’s secret.

Navigating the dark corridors of hidden history and extreme religion, Langdon and Vidal must evade a tormented enemy whose all-knowing power seems to emanate from Spain’s Royal Palace itself... and who will stop at nothing to silence Edmond Kirsch. On a trail marked by modern art and enigmatic symbols, Langdon and Vidal uncover clues that ultimately bring them face-to-face with Kirsch’s shocking discovery... and the breathtaking truth that has long eluded us.

June

True Grit by **Charles Portis**, 235 pages (Movie date: TBA)

In the 1870s, young Mattie Ross learns that her beloved father was gunned down by his former handyman. But even though this gutsy 14-year-old is seeking vengeance, she is smart enough to figure out she can't go alone after a desperado who's holed up in Indian territory. With some fast-talking, she convinces mean, one-eyed US Marshal "Rooster" Cogburn into going after the despicable outlaw with her.





July

A Single Shard by **Linda Sue Park**, 152 pages

Tree-ear, an orphan, lives under a bridge in Ch'ulp'o, a potters' village famed for delicate celadon ware. He has become fascinated with the potter's craft; he wants nothing more than to watch master potter Min at work, and he dreams of making a pot of his own someday. When Min takes Tree-ear on as his helper, Tree-ear is elated—until he finds obstacles in his path: the backbreaking labor of digging and hauling clay, Min's irascible temper, and his own ignorance. But Tree-ear is determined to prove himself—even if it means taking a long, solitary journey on foot to present Min's work in the hope of a royal commission . . . even if it means arriving at the royal court with nothing to show but a single celadon shard.

August

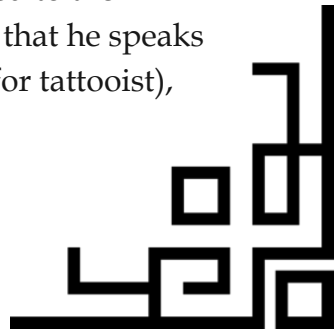
The Alchemist by **Paulo Coelho**, 182 pages

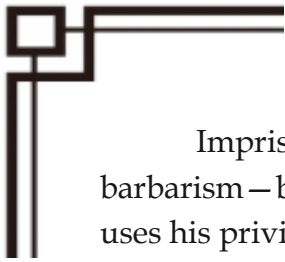
Paulo Coelho's masterpiece tells the mystical story of Santiago, an Andalusian shepherd boy who yearns to travel in search of a worldly treasure. His quest will lead him to riches far different—and far more satisfying—than he ever imagined. Santiago's journey teaches us about the essential wisdom of listening to our hearts, of recognizing opportunity and learning to read the omens strewn along life's path, and, most importantly, to follow our dreams.

September

The Tattooist of Auschwitz by **Heather Morris**, 288 pages

In April 1942, Lale Sokolov, a Slovakian Jew, is forcibly transported to the concentration camps at Auschwitz-Birkenau. When his captors discover that he speaks several languages, he is put to work as a Tätowierer (the German word for tattooist), tasked with permanently marking his fellow prisoners.





Imprisoned for over two and a half years, Lale witnesses horrific atrocities and barbarism – but also incredible acts of bravery and compassion. Risking his own life, he uses his privileged position to exchange jewels and money from murdered Jews for food to keep his fellow prisoners alive.

One day in July 1942, Lale, prisoner 32407, comforts a trembling young woman waiting in line to have the number 34902 tattooed onto her arm. Her name is Gita, and in that first encounter, Lale vows to somehow survive the camp and marry her.

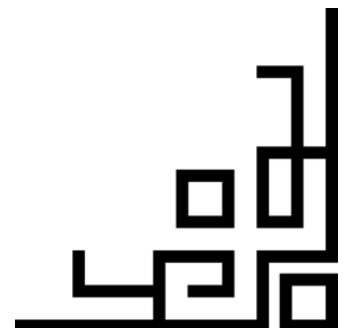
A vivid, harrowing, and ultimately hopeful re-creation of Lale Sokolov's experiences as the man who tattooed the arms of thousands of prisoners with what would become one of the most potent symbols of the Holocaust, *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* is also a testament to the endurance of love and humanity under the darkest possible conditions.

October

Elevation by Stephen King, 146 pages

Although Scott Carey doesn't look any different, he's been steadily losing weight. There are a couple of other odd things, too. He weighs the same in his clothes and out of them, no matter how heavy they are. Scott doesn't want to be poked and prodded. He mostly just wants someone else to know, and he trusts Doctor Bob Ellis.

In the small town of Castle Rock, the setting of many of King's most iconic stories, Scott is engaged in a low grade – but escalating – battle with the lesbians next door whose dog regularly drops his business on Scott's lawn. One of the women is friendly; the other, cold as ice. Both are trying to launch a new restaurant, but the people of Castle Rock want no part of a gay married couple, and the place is in trouble. When Scott finally understands the prejudices they face—including his own—he tries to help. Unlikely alliances, the annual foot race, and the mystery of Scott's affliction bring out the best in people who have indulged the worst in themselves and others.





November

Spark of Light by Jodi Picoult, 369 pages

The warm fall day starts like any other at the Center – a women’s reproductive health services clinic – its staff offering care to anyone who passes through its doors. Then, in late morning, a desperate and distraught gunman bursts in and opens fire, taking all inside hostage.

After rushing to the scene, Hugh McElroy, a police hostage negotiator, sets up a perimeter and begins making a plan to communicate with the gunman. As his phone vibrates with incoming text messages he glances at it and, to his horror, finds out that his fifteen-year-old daughter, Wren, is inside the clinic.

But Wren is not alone. She will share the next and tensest few hours of her young life with a cast of unforgettable characters: A nurse who calms her own panic in order to save the life of a wounded woman. A doctor who does his work not in spite of his faith but because of it, and who will find that faith tested as never before. A pro-life protester disguised as a patient, who now stands in the cross hairs of the same rage she herself has felt. A young woman who has come to terminate her pregnancy. And the disturbed individual himself, vowing to be heard.

Told in a daring and enthralling narrative structure that counts backward through the hours of the standoff, this is a story that traces its way back to what brought each of these very different individuals to the same place on this fateful day.

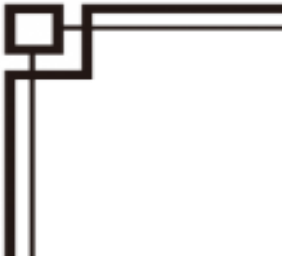
December

The Bridges of Madison County by Robert James Waller, 177 pages (Movie date: TBA)

The story of Robert Kincaid, the photographer and free spirit searching for the covered bridges of Madison County, and Francesca Johnson, the farm wife waiting for the fulfillment of a girlhood dream, *The Bridges of Madison County* gives voice to the longings of men and women everywhere-and shows us what it is to love and be loved so intensely that life is never the same again.

Potluck luncheon to follow!!





Page to Screen

We will be having Page to Screen Movies for the following book titles in the following months, and the dates will be announced at the Book Club Meeting for that book:

March: *In the Time of Butterflies*

June: *True Grit*

December: *The Bridges of Madison County*

