Book Club Kits

Book Club Kits are created from the Ransom Library’s Book Discussion Group’s previous book talks. After a book has been discussed by the group, its multiple copies become a book kit.

In each Book Club Kit, you will find:

- 6 to 10 copies of the book
- One copy of "Good books lately"
- One page of questions for discussion
- One page of guidelines

Borrowing Guidelines:

- Book Club Kits are open to all Ransom District Library cardholders.
- Book Club Kits may be reserved.
- A Book Club Kit may be checked out for eight weeks.
- Kits may NOT be renewed.
- A patron may check out only one kit at a time.
- The person who checks out the Book Club Kit is financially responsible for returning the entire kit.
- Please check the number of books before borrowing.

Returning Guidelines:

- Please check the number of books before returning kit to the library.
- Book Club Kits must be returned inside the library. They may not go into the drop box.
- Borrowers will be charged $1.00 per day for an overdue Book Club Kit.
- Replacement cost of an entire Book Club Kit is $100.00
- Replacement cost of individual parts of the bag will depend on the cost of each particular item.
### Utilizing the Catalog to find these items:
- A list of all book kit records can be found by searching “Book Kit” under Subject.
- A list of all formats (book, kit form, DVD, audiobook, etc.) in which the item is available can be found by searching the title.
- A list of all items relating to an author can be found by searching the author’s “Last Name, First Name.”

Check item availability at [www.ransomlibrary.org](http://www.ransomlibrary.org) by searching our catalog.

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<tr>
<th>Kit 1 – 10 copies</th>
<th>The Kite Runner</th>
<th>Hosseini, Khaled</th>
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<td>Kit 1 – 10 copies</td>
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<td><strong>Amir returns to his ravaged homeland to rescue the son of his childhood friend after the boy's parents are shot during the Taliban takeover in the mid '90s. Amir is the first-person narrator, who marries, moves to California and becomes a successful novelist. But he remains haunted by a childhood incident in which he betrayed the trust of his best friend, a Hazara boy named Hassan, who receives a brutal beating from local bullies. Amir learns that the Taliban have murdered Hassan and his wife, raising questions about the fate of his son, Sohrab. Amir makes the difficult journey to Kabul, only to learn the boy has been enslaved by a former childhood bully who has become a prominent Taliban official. The price Amir must pay to recover the boy is just one of several brilliant, startling plot twists that make this book memorable both as a political chronicle and a deeply personal tale about how childhood choices affect our adult lives.</strong></td>
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<th>Kit 2 – 10 copies</th>
<th>One Thousand White Women</th>
<th>Fergus, Jim</th>
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<td>Kit 2 – 10 copies</td>
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<td>Fergus, Jim</td>
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<td><strong>This American western is an imaginative fictional account of the participation of May Dodd and others in the controversial &quot;Brides for Indians&quot; program, a clandestine U.S. government-sponsored program intended to instruct &quot;savages&quot; in the ways of civilization and to assimilate the Indians into white culture through the offspring of these unions. May's personal journals, loaded with humor and intelligent reflection, describe the adventures of some very colorful brides, their marriages to Cheyenne warriors, and the natural abundance of life on the prairie before the final press of the white man's civilization. Fergus writes with tremendous insight and sensitivity about the individual community and the political and religious issues of the time. This book is artistically rendered with meticulous attention to small details that bring to life the daily concerns of a group of hardy souls at a pivotal time in U.S. history.</strong></td>
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<th>Kit 3 – 10 copies</th>
<th>A Woman of Independent Means</th>
<th>Hailey, Elizabeth Forsythe</th>
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<td>Kit 3 – 10 copies</td>
<td>A Woman of Independent Means</td>
<td>Hailey, Elizabeth Forsythe</td>
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<td><strong>A bestselling sensation when it was first published by Viking in 1978, A Woman of Independent Means has delighted millions of readers. At a time when women had few choices, Bess Steed Garner inherits a legacy--not only of wealth but of determination and desire, making her truly a woman of independent means. From the early 1900s through the 1960s, we accompany Bess as she endures life's trials and triumphs with unfailing courage and indomitable spirit: the sacrifices love sometimes requires of the heart, the flaws and rewards of marriage, the often-tested bond between mother and child, and the will to defy a society that demands conformity. Now, with this beautiful trade paperback edition, Penguin will introduce a new generation of readers to this richly woven story. . .and to Bess Steed Garner, a woman for all ages.</strong></td>
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<th>Kit 4 – 8 copies</th>
<th>Memoirs of a Geisha</th>
<th>Golden, Arthur</th>
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<td>Kit 4 – 8 copies</td>
<td>Memoirs of a Geisha</td>
<td>Golden, Arthur</td>
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<td><strong>Nitta Sayuri tells the story of her life as a geisha. Appearances are paramount; a girl's virginity is auctioned to the highest bidder; women are trained to beguile the most powerful men; and where love is scorned as illusion. &quot;Sayuri's story begins in a poor fishing village in 1929, when, as a 9-year-old with unusual blue-gray eyes, she is taken from her home and sold into slavery to a renowned geisha house. She learns the rigorous arts of the geisha: dance and music; wearing kimono, elaborate makeup and hair; competing with a jealous rival for men's solicitude and the money that goes with it. But as World War II erupts and the geisha houses are forced to close, Sayuri, with little money and even less food, must reinvent herself all over again to find a rare kind of freedom on her own terms.&quot;</strong></td>
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<th>Kit 5 – 10 copies</th>
<th>House of the Spirits</th>
<th>Allende, Isabel</th>
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<td>Kit 5 – 10 copies</td>
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<td>Allende, Isabel</td>
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<td><strong>Here, in an astonishing debut by a gifted storyteller, is the magnificent saga of proud and passionate men and women and the turbulent times through which they suffer and triumph. And theirs is a world you will not want to leave, and one you will not forget. Wonderfully written, Allende takes us by the hand to lead us through the wonderfully hilarious, sometimes awkward and often times quirky situations of her family's lives. Yet she does not spare the villainous escapades of one of her family's patriarch. This book is a gem.</strong></td>
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### Kit 6 – 10 copies
**The Color of Water**
*McBride, James*

James McBride explores his mother's past, as well as his own upbringing and heritage, in a poignant and powerful debut, *The Color Of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother*. The son of a black minister and a woman who would not admit she was white, James McBride grew up in "orchestrated chaos" with his eleven siblings in the poor, all-black projects of Red Hook, Brooklyn. As a young man, McBride saw his mother as a source of embarrassment, worry, and confusion—and reached thirty before he began to discover the truth about her early life and long-buried pain. McBride retraces his mother's footsteps and, through her searing and spirited voice, recreates her remarkable story. "God is the color of water," Ruth McBride taught her children, firmly convinced that life's blessings and life's values transcend race.

### Kit 7 – 10 copies
**Nickel and Dimed**
*Ehrenreich, Barbara*

Millions of Americans work full-time, year-round, for poverty-level wages. In 1998, Barbara Ehrenreich decided to join them. She was inspired in part by the rhetoric surrounding welfare reform, which promised that a job - any job - could be the ticket to a better life. But how does anyone survive, let alone prosper on six to seven dollars an hour? To find out, Ehrenreich left her home, took the cheapest lodgings she could find, and accepted whatever jobs she was offered as a woefully inexperienced homemaker returning to the workforce. So began a grueling, hair-raising, and darkly funny odyssey through the underside of working America. *Nickel and Dimed* reveals low-wage America in all its tenacity, anxiety, and surprising generosity - a land of Big Boxes, fast food, and a thousand desperate stratagems for survival.

### Kit 8 – 8 copies
**Girl Named Zippy**
*Kimmel, Haven*

In this first book, Kimmel has written a love letter to her hometown of Mooreland, IN, a town with an unchanging population of 300 in America's heartland. Nicknamed "Zippy" for her energetic interpretation of a circus monkey, she could not be bothered to speak until she was three years old, and her first words involved bargaining with her father about whether or not a baby bottle was still appropriate. Born in 1965, Zippy lived in a world filled with a loving family, peculiar neighbors, and multitudes of animals, including a chicken she loved and treated like a baby. Her story is filled with good humor, fine storytelling, and acute observations of small town life.

### Kit 9 – 8 copies
**Rice Mother**
*Manicka, Rani*

Manicka's novel is an absorbing multigenerational saga set in Malaysia. At age 14, Lakshmi is married off to Ayah, who is more than twice her age. Led to believe Ayah is rich, Lakshmi is surprised to learn he is actually a clerk wholly lacking any sort of ambition. Lakshmi makes the best of her situation, bearing 6 children, including a set of twins, in 5 years. But Lakshmi is dogged by a prophecy that predicts heartbreak from her oldest son and the loss of one other child. She is a ferociously protective mother, and when the Japanese invade Malaysia during World War II, she hides her daughters away. Manicka tells her story from many of the characters' point of views; they tell each other's stories as often as they tell their own. Graceful, engrossing and peopled with memorable characters, this novel is sure to attract a wide audience.

### Kit 10 – 10 copies
**The Glass Castle: A Memoir**
*Walls, Jeannette*

Walls grew up with parents whose ideals and stubborn nonconformity were both their curse and salvation. Rex and Rose Mary had four children. In the beginning, they lived like nomads, moving among Southwest desert towns, camping in the mountains. Rex was a charismatic, brilliant man who, when sober, captured his children's imagination. Rose Mary, who painted and wrote, couldn't stand the responsibility of providing for her family, called herself an "excitement addict." Later, as the dysfunction of the family escalated, Jeannette and her siblings had to fend for themselves until they finally left home. Walls' story is one of triumph against all odds, but also a tender, moving tale of unconditional love in a family that despite its profound flaws gave her the fiery determination to carve out a successful life on her own terms.

### Kit 11 – 8 copies
**Girl with a Pearl Earring**
*Chevalier, Tracy*

*Girl with a Pearl Earring* centers on Vermeer's prosperous Delft household during the 1660s. When Griet, the novel's quietly perceptive heroine, is hired as a servant, turmoil follows. First, the 16-year-old narrator becomes increasingly intimate with her master. Then Vermeer employs her as his assistant—and ultimately has Griet sit for him as a model. Chevalier vividly evokes the complex domestic tensions of the household, ruled over by the painter's jealous, eternally pregnant wife and his taciturn mother-in-law. At times the relationship between servant and master seems a little anachronistic. Still, *Girl with a Pearl Earring* does contain a final delicious twist.
Kit 12 – 6 copies To Kill a Mockingbird Lee, Harper
One of the best-loved stories of all time, *To Kill a Mockingbird* has been translated into more than forty languages, sold more than thirty million copies worldwide, served as the basis of an enormously popular motion picture, and was voted one of the best novels of the twentieth century by librarians across the country. A gripping, heart-wrenching, and wholly remarkable tale of coming-of-age in a South poisoned by virulent prejudice, it views a world of great beauty and savage inequities through the eyes of a young girl, as her father -- a crusading local lawyer -- risks everything to defend a black man unjustly accused of a terrible crime.

Kit 13 – 10 copies Fahrenheit 451 Bradbury, Ray
In *Fahrenheit 451*, Ray Bradbury's classic, frightening vision of the future, firemen don't put out fires--they start them in order to burn books. Bradbury's vividly painted society holds up the appearance of happiness as the highest goal--a place where trivial information is good, and knowledge and ideas are bad.

Kit 14 – 10 copies The Memory Keepers Daughter Edwards, Kim
Edwards' assured but schematic novel hinges on the birth of fraternal twins, a healthy boy and a girl with Down syndrome, resulting in the father's disavowal of his newborn daughter. A snowstorm immobilizes Lexington, Ky., in 1964, and when young Norah Henry goes into labor, her husband, orthopedic surgeon Dr. David Henry, must deliver their babies himself, aided only by a nurse. Seeing his daughter's handicap, he instructs the nurse, Caroline Gill, to take her to a home and later tells Norah, who was drugged during labor that their son Paul's twin died at birth. Instead of institutionalizing Phoebe, Caroline absconds with her to Pittsburgh. David's deception becomes the defining moment of the main characters' lives, and Phoebe's absence corrodes her birth family's core over the course of the next 25 years.

Kit 15 – 10 copies The Divide Evans, Nicholas
When the frozen body of a young woman is discovered in a remote creek in the Rocky Mountains, the heartrending story of a family in crisis begins to unfold. Reaching back in time, members of the seemingly perfect Cooper family present their version of the events, emotions, and twists of fate that forever altered the benign course of their collective lives. After the unanticipated divorce of Sarah and Benjamin Cooper, their daughter, Abbie, becomes involved with a dangerous ecoterrorist group, while their son, Josh, drifts along in a marijuana-fueled haze. As they all move inexorably toward the ultimate tragedy, their individual perspectives coalesce, providing the reader with an opportunity to fully understand the toxic intersection of expectations, needs, and desires that inevitably caused their family unit to implode.

Kit 16 – 10 copies Year of Wonders Brooks, Geraldine
Brooks's describes the 17th-century plague carried from London to a small Derbyshire village by an itinerant tailor. As villagers begin to die, the rest face a choice: do they flee in hope of outrunning the plague or do they stay? Rector, Michael Mompellion, argues forcefully that the villagers should stay put, isolate from neighboring towns, and prevent the contagion from spreading. Cocooned from the outside world and ravaged by the disease, its inhabitants struggle to retain their humanity in the face of the disaster. Narrator, young widow Anna Frith, is one of the few who succeeds. With Mompellion and his wife, she tends to the dying and battles to prevent her fellow villagers from descending into drink, violence, and superstition. Here ordinary people struggle to cope with extraordinary circumstances.

Kit 17 – 6 copies The Quality of Life Report Daum, Meghan
Lucinda Trout, a New York TV producer who, while on assignment, falls in love with the town of Prairie City. Her real motivations for moving to the country: she wants to be a better person, and believes the Midwest will do the trick. Lucinda soon discovers that she's not immune to the less-than-perfect aspects of Prairie City living, and acquires a boyfriend of questionable hygiene and judgement; a rambling, isolated farmhouse that looks like the set to a Sam Shepard movie but is impossible to heat; and a tanning-bed tan and a set of false nails that are the region's signature style. Daum has given her heroine a voice that is prickly, a little ruthless, and lovably vulnerable all at once. We don't always respect Lucinda, but we're pretty sure we'd be friends with her.
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<th>Kit 18 – 8 copies</th>
<th>The Breakdown Lane</th>
<th>Mitchard, Jacquelyn</th>
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<td>Leo Steiner epitomizes a middle-aged man undergoing a midlife crisis, and deserves a high rank on anyone's list of low-life losers. Leo abandons his 20-year marriage to Julianne, parentage of two teenagers and a toddler, and a lackluster legal career in favor of a utopian existence on a commune with some erstwhile hippies. His departure comes just as Julie is diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. It is how Julie deals with this despicable lout, the dissolution of her marriage, the disruption of her family, and the deterioration of her health that showcases Mitchard at her relationship-defining best. The eldest, Gabe, a learning-disabled teen outcast, is both his mother's rock and the novel's heart, his journal entries revealing a preternaturally wise and sensitive young man. An astute observer of family dynamics, Mitchard renders her characters flawlessly, endowing them with a humanity that is both accessibly grounded and astonishingly deep.</td>
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<th>Kit 19 – 8 copies</th>
<th>Catch 22</th>
<th>Heller, Joseph</th>
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<td>There was a time when reading Joseph Heller's classic satire on the murderous insanity of war was nothing less than a rite of passage. Echoes of Yossarian, the wise-ass bombardier who was too smart to die but not smart enough to find a way out of his predicament, could be heard throughout the counterculture. As a result, it's impossible not to consider Catch-22 to be something of a period piece. But 40 years on, the novel's undiminished strength is its looking-glass logic. Again and again, Heller's characters demonstrate that what is commonly held to be good, is bad; what is sensible, is nonsense.</td>
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<th>Kit 20 – 10 copies</th>
<th>The Great Gatsby</th>
<th>Fitzgerald, F. Scott</th>
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<td>In 1922, F. Scott Fitzgerald announced his decision to write &quot;something new--something extraordinary and beautiful and simple + intricately patterned.&quot; That extraordinary, beautiful, intricately patterned, and above all, simple novel became The Great Gatsby, arguably Fitzgerald's finest work and certainly the book for which he is best known. A portrait of the Jazz Age in all of its decadence and excess, Gatsby captured the spirit of the author's generation and earned itself a permanent place in American mythology. Self-made, self-invented millionaire Jay Gatsby embodies some of Fitzgerald's--and his country's--most abiding obsessions: money, ambition, greed, and the promise of new beginnings. Gatsby's rise to glory and eventual fall from grace becomes a kind of cautionary tale about the American Dream.</td>
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<th>Kit 21 – 10 copies</th>
<th>Dead Man Walking</th>
<th>Prejean, (Sister) Helen</th>
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<td>Dead Man Walking: An eyewitness account of the death penalty in the United States by Sister Helen Prejean, a Catholic nun, is a compelling polemic against capital punishment. This story was later made into a movie starring Susan Sarandon and Sean Penn.</td>
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<th>Kit 22 – 10 copies</th>
<th>The Bean Trees</th>
<th>Kingsolver, Barbara</th>
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<td>This debut novel follows the gritty, outspoken Taylor Greer, who leaves her native Kentucky to head west. She becomes mother to an abandoned baby and, when her jalopy dies in Tucson, is forced to work in a tire garage and to room with a young, battered divorcée who also has a little girl. With sisterly counsel and personal honesty, the two face their painful lot (told in ponderous detail). The blue-collar setting, described vibrantly, often turns violent, with baby beatings, street brawls, and drug busts. Despite the hurt and rage, themes of love and nurturing emerge. The Bean Trees is a refreshingly upbeat debut novel.</td>
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<th>Kit 23 – 8 copies</th>
<th>All Over But the Shoutin'</th>
<th>Bragg, Rick</th>
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<td>Bragg brings alive his childhood of Southern poverty--his absentee father dead at 40, one brother scavenging coal for the family at nine, the other in and out of jail. Someone advised Bragg, &quot;[T]o tell a story right you have to lean the words against each other so that they don't all fall down,&quot; and his gift for language shines through every scene of violence and deprivation.</td>
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<td>Kit 24 – 10 copies</td>
<td><strong>The Good Earth</strong></td>
<td>Buck, Pearl</td>
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<td><em>The Good Earth</em> is a novel written by Pearl S. Buck. The book, set in the time of turn of the century China, is about the fifty year fraction of the life span of the main character, Wang Lung, and how his life and his ever-growing family drastically changes throughout the years. Wang Lung starts off as a poor farmer and gradually evolves into a rich dynasty with money coming from every angle.</td>
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<th>Kit 25 – 8 copies</th>
<th><strong>Beach Music</strong></th>
<th>Conroy, Pat</th>
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<td>Jack McCall, a food and travel writer, fled with his toddler daughter, Leah, to Rome in 1982 in the wake of his wife Shyla's suicidal jump from a bridge in Charleston, S.C., and her parents' subsequent lawsuit to deny him custody of Leah. He returns home years later because his mother is dying of leukemia. In addition to becoming embroiled in family tension, he begins reconciliation with Shyla's parents, with his first love, Ledare Ashley. He witnesses the return to Waterford of another friend, Jordan Elliot, who has been presumed dead for 18 years after he was accused of murder during a protest against the Vietnam War. In the end, of course, as Jack understands that everybody in his life carries a tragic secret equal to the anguish he bears, he achieves healing in the very community, and the very South, he had been determined to leave forever.</td>
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<th>Kit 26 – 6 copies</th>
<th><strong>I Know This Much is True</strong></th>
<th>Lamb, Wally</th>
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<td>Some may be daunted by the novel’s length, its seemingly obsessive inclusion of background details and its many digressions. The topics it explores (mental illness, dysfunctional families, domestic abuse) are rendered with candor. But thanks to well-sustained dramatic tension, funky gallows humor and some shocking surprises, this sinuous story of one family's dark secrets and recurring patterns of behavior largely succeeds in its ambitious reach.</td>
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<th>Kit 27 – 8 copies</th>
<th><strong>Water for Elephants</strong></th>
<th>Gruen, Sara</th>
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<td>Memories dwell inside Jacob Jankowski's ninety-something-year-old mind. Memories of himself as a young man, tossed by fate onto a rickety train that was home to the Benzini Brothers Most Spectacular Show on Earth. It was the early part of the Great Depression, and everyone in this third-rate circus was lucky to have any job at all. Marlena, the star of the equestrian act, was there because she fell in love with the wrong man, a handsome circus boss with a wide mean streak. And Rosie the elephant was there because she was the great gray hope, the new act that was going to be the salvation of the circus; the only problem was, Rosie didn't have an act - in fact, she couldn't even follow instructions. The bond that grew among this unlikely trio was one of love and trust, and ultimately, it was their only hope for survival.</td>
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<th>Kit 28 – 8 copies</th>
<th><strong>John Adams</strong></th>
<th>McCullough, David</th>
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<td>Left to his own devices, John Adams might have lived out his days as a Massachusetts country lawyer, devoted to his family and friends. Events swiftly overtook him and Adams—who was not fond of politics—came to greatness as the second president, and one of the most distinguished of a generation of revolutionary leaders. Overshadowed by the lustrous presidents Washington and Jefferson, Adams emerges from McCullough's brilliant biography as a truly heroic figure—not only for his significant role in the American Revolution but also for maintaining his personal integrity in its strife-filled aftermath. McCullough spends much of his narrative examining the troubled friendship between Adams and Jefferson, who had in common a love for books and ideas but differed on almost every other imaginable point.</td>
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<th>Kit 29 – 8 copies</th>
<th><strong>Nick Adams Stories</strong></th>
<th>Hemingway, Ernest</th>
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<td>The famous &quot;Nick Adams&quot; stories show a memorable character growing from child to adolescent to soldier, veteran, writer, and parent -- a sequence closely paralleling the events of Hemingway's life.</td>
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Kit 30 – 8 copies  
A Walk in the Woods  
Bryce, Bill

By sentence three of four, Bill Bryson's clearly articulated, slightly adenoidal, British/American-accented speech pattern begins to grow on you and becomes quite engaging. You immediately get a hint of the humor that lies ahead, such as one of the innumerable reasons he longed to walk as many of the 2,100 miles of the Appalachian Trail as he could. By the time our storyteller recounts his trip to the Dartmouth Co-op, suffering serious sticker shock over equipment prices, you'll be hooked. Bryson's telling is a knee-slapping, laugh-out-loud funny trek through the woods, with a touch of science and history thrown in for good measure.

Kit 31 – 8 copies  
The Daughter of Time  
Tey, Josephine

Josephine Tey is often referred to as the mystery writer for people who don't like mysteries. Her skills at character development and mood setting, and her tendency to focus on themes not usually touched upon by mystery writers, have earned her a vast and appreciative audience. In Daughter of Time, Tey focuses on the legend of Richard III, the evil hunchback of British history accused of murdering his young nephews. While at a London hospital recuperating from a fall, Inspector Alan Grant becomes fascinated by a portrait of King Richard. A student of human faces, Grant cannot believe that the man in the picture would kill his own nephews. With an American researcher's help, Grant delves into his country's history to discover just what kind of man Richard Plantagenet was and who really killed the little princes.

Kit 32 – 6 copies  
A Confederacy of Dunces  
Toole, John Kennedy

Meet Ignatius J. Reilly, the hero of the tragicomic tale, this 30-year-old medievalist lives at home with his mother, and relays to anyone who will listen the traumatic experience he once had on a Greyhound Scenicruiser. But Ignatius's quiet life of tyrannizing his mother and writing his endless comparative history screeches to a halt when he is almost arrested by the overeager Patrolman Mancuso—who mistakes him for a vagrant—and then involved in a car accident with his tipsy mother behind the wheel. Ignatius loves to hate. The many subplots that weave through the story are as complicated as anything you'll find in a Dickens novel, and just as beautifully tied together in the end. But it is Ignatius—selfish, domineering, and deluded, tragic and comic and larger than life—who carries the story. Author Toole never saw the publication of his novel. Ignatius Reilly is what he left behind, a fitting memorial to a talented and tormented life.

Kit 33 – 6 copies  
Snow Flower and the Secret Fan  
Lee, Lisa

See's engrossing novel set in remote 19th-century China details the deeply affecting story of lifelong, intimate friends, Lily and Snow Flower, their imprisonment by rigid codes of conduct for women and their betrayal by pride and love. Her in-depth research into women's ceremonies and duties in China's rural interior brings fascinating revelations about arranged marriages, women's inferior status in both their natal and married homes, and the Confucian proverbs and myriad superstitions that informed daily life. Most impressive is See's incorporation of *nu shu*, a secret written phonetic code among women—here between Lily and Snow Flower—that dates back 1,000 years in the southwestern Hunan province. As both a suspenseful and an absorbing historical chronicle, this novel should become a reading group favorite.

Kit 34 – 6 copies  
Marley and Me  
Grogan, John

Labrador retrievers are generally considered even-tempered, calm and reliable; and then there's Marley, the subject of this delightful tribute to one Lab who doesn't fit the mold. Grogan, a columnist for the Philadelphia Inquirer, and his wife, Jenny, were newly married and living in West Palm Beach when they decided that owning a dog would give them a foretaste of the parenthood they anticipated. Marley was a sweet, affectionate puppy who grew into a lovably naughty, hyperactive dog. With a light touch, the author details how Marley was kicked out of obedience school after humiliating his instructor and swallowed an 18-karat solid gold necklace. Grogan's chronicle of the adventures parents and children enjoyed with the overly energetic but endearing dog is delivered with great humor.

Kit 35 – 6 copies  
Some Danger Involved  
Thomas, Will

Modeled after the adventures of Sherlock Holmes, but with a verve all its own, this debut mystery introduces a likable pair of sleuths and explores the Jewish quarter of Victorian London. Fresh, self-effacing Thomas Llewelyn is a plucky lad down on his luck when he becomes the unlikely assistant to idiosyncratic Cyrus Barker, a patently Holmesian private detective with an enigmatic background in China. Hardly has Llewelyn settled into his new quarters in his employer's residence when he is called upon to assist Barker in an investigation of the crucifixion death of a young Jewish scholar. The convoluted tale leads through the tightly circumscribed Jewish ghetto, as it appears that the murder may be the overture to a pogrom by vicious anti-Semitic factions.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Kit 36 – 6 copies</th>
<th>A Midwife’s Tale</th>
<th>Ulrich, Laurel Thatcher</th>
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<tr>
<td>This book is a model of social history at its best. An exegesis of Ballard's diary, it recounts the life and times of this obscure Maine housewife and midwife. Using passages from the diary as a starting point for each chapter division, Ulrich, a professor at the University of New Hampshire, demonstrates how the seemingly trivial details of Ballard's daily life reflect and relate to prominent themes in the history of the early republic: the role of women in the economic life of the community, the nature of marriage and sexual relations, the scope of medical knowledge and practice. Speculating on why Ballard kept the diary as well as why her family saved it, Ulrich highlights the document's usefulness for historians.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Kit 37 – 6 copies</th>
<th>Having Our Say</th>
<th>Delany, Sarah &amp; Elizabeth w/ Amy Hill Hearth</th>
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<tr>
<td>In this remarkable and charming oral history, two perspicacious sisters, aged 101 and 103, reflect on their family life and their careers as pioneering African American professionals. Brief chapters capture Sadie's warm voice and Bessie's feistiness. The unmarried sisters, who live together, tell of growing up on the campus of a black college, where their father was an Episcopal priest, and of being too independent for the men who courted them. With parental influence far stronger than that of Jim Crow, they joined professions--Sadie teaching domestic science, Bessie practicing dentistry. In 1920s Harlem they mixed with black activists and later were among the first to integrate the New York City suburb of Mount Vernon. While their account of the last 40 years is sketchy, their observations make them worthwhile company.</td>
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<th>Kit 38 – 6 copies</th>
<th>Seabiscuit</th>
<th>Hillenbrand, Laura</th>
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<td>Seabiscuit didn't <em>look</em> like much. With his smallish stature, knobby knees, and slightly crooked forelegs, he looked more like a cow pony than a thoroughbred. But looks aren't everything; his quality, an admirer once wrote, &quot;was mostly in his heart.&quot; Seabiscuit rose to prominence with the help of an unlikely triumvirate. Hillenbrand details the ups and downs from early training sessions to record-breaking victories, and from serious injury to &quot;Horse of the Year&quot;--as well as the Biscuit's fabled rivalry with War Admiral. She also describes the world of horseracing in the 1930s, from the snobbery of Eastern journalists regarding Western horses and public fascination with the great thoroughbreds to the jockeys' torturous weight-loss regimens. Hillenbrand paints wonderful images, Seabiscuit happily posing for photographers for several minutes on end; other horses refusing to work out with Seabiscuit because he teased and taunted them with his speed.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Kit 39 – 6 copies</th>
<th>A New Earth</th>
<th>Tolle, Eckhart</th>
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<td>According to Tolle, who assumes the role of narrator as well, humans are on the verge of creating a new world by a personal transformation that shifts our attention away from our ever-expanding egos. This idea is well realized through Tolle's remarkably well-paced narration. Naturally, the author understands his material so thoroughly that he is able to convey it in an enjoyable manner, but Tolle's gentle tone and dialect begs his audience's attention simply through its straightforward approach. Something about this reading just seems profoundly important, whether one agrees with the material or not, and attention is sure to be captured within seconds of reading Tolle's take on the universe.</td>
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<th>Kit 40 – 6 copies</th>
<th>The Turn of the Screw</th>
<th>James, Henry</th>
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<td>This novella by Henry James was published serially in Collier's Weekly in 1898 and published in book form later that year. One of the world's most famous ghost stories, the tale is told mostly through the journal of a governess and depicts her struggle to save her two young charges from the demonic influence of the eerie apparitions of two former servants in the household. The story inspired critical debate over the question of the &quot;reality&quot; of the ghosts and of James's intentions. James himself, in his preface to volume XII of The Novels and Tales of Henry James, called the tale a &quot;fable&quot; and said that he did not specify details of the ghosts' evil deeds because he wanted readers to supply their own vision of terror.</td>
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<th>Kit 41 – 6 copies</th>
<th>My Sister's Keeper</th>
<th>Picoult, Jodi</th>
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<td>The difficult choices a family must make when a child is diagnosed with a serious disease are explored with pathos and understanding in <em>My Sister's Keeper</em>. Kate Fitzgerald has a rare form of leukemia. Her sister, Anna, was conceived to provide a donor match for procedures that become increasingly invasive. At 13, Anna hires a lawyer so that she can sue her parents for the right to make her own decisions about how her body is used when a kidney transplant is planned. Meanwhile, Jesse, the neglected oldest child of the family, is out setting fires, which his firefighter father, Brian, inevitably puts out. Picoult uses multiple viewpoints to reveal each character's intentions and observations. Picoult ably explores a complex subject with bravado and clarity, and comes up with a heart-wrenching, unexpected plot twist.</td>
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### Kit 42 – 6 copies
**Three Cups of Tea**
**Mortenson, Greg**

Some failures lead to phenomenal successes, and this American nurse's unsuccessful attempt to climb K2, the world's second tallest mountain, is one of them. Dangerously ill when he finished his climb in 1993, Mortenson was sheltered for seven weeks by the small Pakistani village of Korphe; in return, he promised to build the impoverished town's first school, a project that grew into the Central Asia Institute. Coauthor Relin recounts Mortenson's efforts in fascinating detail, presenting compelling portraits of the village elders, con artists, philanthropists, mujahideen, Taliban officials, ambitious school girls and upright Muslims Mortenson met along the way. Captivating and suspenseful, with engrossing accounts of both hostilities and unlikely friendships, this book will win many readers' hearts.

### Kit 43 – 6 copies
**Loving Frank**
**Horan, Nancy**

It's a rare treasure to find a historically imagined novel that is at once fully versed in the facts and unafraid of weaving those truths into a story that dares to explore the unanswered questions. Frank Lloyd Wright and Mamah Cheney's love story is--as many early reviews of *Loving Frank* have noted--little-known and often dismissed as scandal. In Nancy Horan's skillful hands, however, what you get is two fully realized people, entirely, irrepressibly, in love. Together, Frank and Mamah are a wholly modern portrait, and while you can easily imagine them in the here and now, it's their presence in the world of early 20th century America that shades how authentic and, ultimately, tragic their story is.

### Kit 44 – 6 copies
**The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society**
**Shaffer, Mary Ann**

The letters comprising this small charming novel begin in 1946, when single, 30-something author Juliet Ashton writes to her publisher to say she is tired of covering the sunny side of war and its aftermath. When Guernsey farmer Dawsey Adams finds Juliet's name in a used book and invites articulate and not-so-articulate neighbors to write Juliet with their stories, the book's epistolary circle widens, putting Juliet back in the path of war stories. The letters jump from incident to incident including the formation of the GLPPP Society while Guernsey was under German. Juliet finds in the letters not just inspiration for her next work, but also for her life as will readers.

### Kit 45 – 6 copies
**The Last Lecture**
**Pausch, Randy**

A lot of professors give talks titled "The Last Lecture." Professors are asked to consider their demise and to ruminate on what matters most to them. If we had to vanish tomorrow, what would we want as our legacy? When Randy Pausch, a computer science professor, was asked to give such a lecture, he didn't have to imagine it as his last, since he had recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer. But the lecture he gave--"Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams"--wasn't about dying. It was about the importance of overcoming obstacles, of enabling the dreams of others, of seizing every moment. It was a summation of everything Randy had come to believe. It was about living. Pausch has combined the humor, inspiration and intelligence that made his lecture such a phenomenon and given it an indelible form.

### Kit 46 – 6 copies
**To Kingdom Come**
**Thomas, Will**

It's May of 1884, and Scotland Yard has just been blown up, the latest attack in the Irish Republican Brotherhood's dynamiting campaign to force Home Rule. Thomas Llewelyn, apprentice to Scottish master detective Cyrus Barker, rushes to the scene of the crime with his mentor in this follow-up to *Some Danger Involved*. From Llewelyn's perspective, it chronicles Barker and Llewelyn's undercover adventures and Barker's submersion in the character of German explosives expert Johannes van Rhyn. Llewelyn is brought into the thick of the action as van Rhyn's assistant, Thomas Penrith, an anarchist similarly skilled in bomb making. Together, they're initiated into the violent faction, called the Invincibles. Can Llewelyn and Barker play along yet stop the Invincibles before they cripple the English government?

### Kit 47 – 6 copies
**The Time Traveler's Wife**
**Niffenegger, Audrey**

Henry, a rather dashing librarian, finds himself unavoidably whisked around in time. He disappears from a scene in, say, 1998 to find himself suddenly, usually without his clothes, which mysteriously disappear in transit, at an entirely different place 10 years earlier-or later. During one of these migrations, he drops in on beautiful teenage Clare Abshire, an heiress in a large house on the nearby Michigan peninsula, and a lifelong passion is born. The problem is that while Henry's age darts back and forth according to his location in time, Clare's moves forward in the normal manner, so the pair are often out of sync. It is a fair tribute to the author's skill and sensibility to say that the book leaves a reader with an impression of life's riches.

In 1995, after resigning from her job as a professor at a university in Tehran due to repressive policies, Azar Nafisi invited seven of her best female students to attend a weekly study of great Western literature in her home. Since the books they read were officially banned by the government, the women were forced to meet in secret, often sharing photocopied pages of the illegal novels. Though most of the women were shy and intimidated at first, they soon became emboldened by the forum and used the meetings as a springboard for debating the social, cultural, and political realities of living under strict Islamic rule. They discussed their harassment at the hands of "morality guards," the effects of the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, love, marriage, and life in general, giving readers a rare inside look at revolutionary Iran.

Kit 49 – 6 copies  Stealing Buddha’s Dinner  Nguyen, Bich

As a Vietnamese girl coming of age in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Nguyen is filled with a rapacious hunger for American identity, and the desire to belong transmutes into a passion for American food. More exotic- seeming than her Buddhist grandmother’s traditional specialties, the preservative-filled “delicacies” of mainstream America capture her imagination. The glossy branded allure of Pringles, Kit Kats, and Toll House Cookies becomes an ingenious metaphor for Nguyen’s struggle to become a “real” American, a distinction that brings with it the dream of the perfect school lunch, burgers and Jell- O for dinner. Vivid and viscerally powerful, this remarkable memoir about growing up in the 1980s introduces an original new literary voice and an entirely new spin on the classic assimilation story.

Kit 50 – 6 copies  Sea of Poppies  Ghosh, Amitav

Diaspora, myth and a fascinating language mashup propel the Rubik's cube of plots in Ghosh's picaresque epic of the voyage of the Ibis, a ship transporting Indian girmiyias (coolies) to Mauritius in 1838. The book chronicles how the crew and the human cargo come to the vessel, now owned by rising opium merchant Benjamin Burnham. Mulatto second mate Zachary Reid, a 20-year-old of Lord Jim--like innocence, is passing for white and doesn't realize his secret is known to the gomusta ( overseer) of the coolies, Baboo Nob Kissin, an educated Falstaffian figure who believes Zachary is the key to realizing his lifelong mission. The cast is marvelous and the plot majestically serpentine, but the real hero is the English language, which has rarely felt so alive and vibrant.

Kit 51 – 6 copies  Flowers for Algernon  Keys, Daniel

Charlie Gordon wants to better himself, but with an IQ of 68 can't even beat the laboratory mouse Algernon at maze-solving: Algernon is extra-clever thanks to an experimental brain operation so far tried only on animals. Charlie eagerly volunteers as the first human subject. After frustrating delays and agonies of concentration, the effects begin to show and the reports steadily improve. But getting smarter brings cruel shocks, as Charlie realizes that his merry "friends" have all along been laughing at him, never with him. The IQ rise continues, taking him past the human average to genius level and beyond, until he's as intellectually alone as the old, foolish Charlie ever was--and now painfully aware of it. Then, the smart mouse Algernon begins to deteriorate...

Kit 52 – 6 copies  Snow Falling on Cedars  Guterson, David

A phenomenal West Coast bestseller, winner of the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Award, the PEN/Faulkner Award, and an Abby Award nominee, this enthralling novel is at once a murder mystery, a courtroom drama, the story of a doomed love affair, and a stirring meditation on place, prejudice, and justice.

Kit 53 – 6 copies  Sailing Grace  Otterbacher, John

Sailing Grace is the author's account of drowning in heart disease, fighting back to the surface, and sailing on. It begins with him flat on his back in a local health club and ends 31 months and 4000 miles later when he and his family maneuver their sailboat Grace to Schull Harbor, Ireland.
### Kit 54 – 6 copies
**The Prince of Frogtown**
Bragg, Rick

Bragg merges his father's history of severe hardships and simple joys with a tale from the present: his own relationship with his stepson. The title comes from his father, who grew up in the mill village in Jacksonville, Ala., a dirt-poor neighborhood known as Frogtown, a place where they didn't bother to name the streets, but simply assigned letters. His father's story walks the line between humorous and heartbreaking. Juxtaposed with vignettes about Bragg's stepson, this memoir has great perspective as the reader sees Bragg, the son of a dysfunctional father who grew up very poor, grapple with becoming the father of a modern-day mama's boy.

### Kit 55 – 6 copies
**The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time**
Haddon, Mark

This novel is a bitterly funny murder mystery of sorts. Fifteen-year-old Christopher John Francis Boone is mathematically gifted and socially hopeless, raised in a working-class home by parents who can barely cope with their child's quirks. He takes everything at face value, and is unable to sort out the strange behavior of his elders and peers. Late one night, Christopher comes across his neighbor's poodle, Wellington, impaled on a garden fork. Wellington's owner finds him cradling her dead dog in his arms, and has him arrested. After spending a night in jail, Christopher resolves--against the objection of his father and neighbors--to discover just who has murdered Wellington. The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time is original, clever, and genuinely moving: this one is a must-read.

### Kit 56 – 6 copies
**Olive Kitteridge**
Strout, Elizabeth

Thirteen linked tales from Strout present a heart-wrenching, penetrating portrait of ordinary coastal Mainers living lives of quiet grief intermingled with flashes of human connection. The opening chapter focuses on terse, dry junior high school teacher Olive Kitteridge and her gregarious pharmacist husband, Henry, both of whom have survived the loss of a psychologically damaged parent, and both of whom suffer painful attractions to co-workers. Themes of suicide, depression, bad communication, aging, love, Olive herself, appear in each of these stories. The collection is easy to read and impossible to forget.

### Kit 57
**Lace Makers of Glenmara**
Barbieri, Heather

In a small Irish town, Glenmara, a heartbroken American tourist, Kate Robinson, finds her one-night stay extended with the help of some motherly role models. Kate's hostess, chronically grieving widow Bernie, draws the young Seattleite into a gossipy ring of lace makers. Kate, a former fashion designer, takes to them perfectly, inspiring them to take on an empowering but controversial project. The result is a sweet novel with few surprises. Still, Barbieri's world generates convincing warmth and emotion, making it worth a look for Friday Night Knitting Club fans between sequels.

### Kit 58
**Tortilla Curtain**
Boyle, T.C.

Boyle's latest concerns two couples in Southern California, one a pair of wealthy suburbanites, the other illegal immigrants from Mexico. These four and their opposing worlds gradually intersect in what becomes a tragically comic of error and misunderstanding.

### Kit 59
**EAT PRAY LOVE**
Gilbert, Elizabeth

At the age of thirty-one, Gilbert moved with her husband to the suburbs of New York and began trying to get pregnant, only to realize that she wanted neither a child nor a husband. Three years later, after a protracted divorce, she embarked on a yearlong trip of recovery, with three main stops: Rome, for pleasure (mostly gustatory, with a special emphasis on gelato); an ashram outside of Mumbai, for spiritual searching; and Bali, for “balancing.” These destinations are all on the beaten track, but Gilbert's exuberance and her self-deprecating humor enliven the proceedings: recalling the first time she attempted to speak directly to God, she says, “It was all I could do to stop myself from saying, 'I've always been a big fan of your work.'”
Kit 60  One Mississippi  Childress, Mark
When his father is relocated from Indiana to Minor, Miss., in 1973, 16-year-old Daniel Musgrove finds himself a classic fish out of water. At Minor High, the Midwestern teenager finds a kindred spirit in wisecracking Tim Cousins, whose motto is “Everything is funny all the time.” The two indulge their love of Sonny and Cher, get recruited by a local Baptist church to perform in an amateur musical called Christ! and endure the bullying of football star Red Martin. When, on prom night, the boys accidentally run over Arnita Beecham, a beautiful, popular black girl, the boys flee, letting Red take the fall. Arnita wakes from her coma believing she's white and promptly falls for Daniel—which makes Tim extremely jealous and puts their coverup at risk. Childress's comic tone and well-written adolescent confusion make his late shift into darker territory jarring, and readers might not follow him all the way to his violent destination.

Kit 61  The Spectator Bird  Stegner, Wallace
Edward Herrmann uses his same elegant persona to amplify and underscore the bittersweet nuance of Stegner's novel about a retired man who travels to his mother's Danish hometown. There are hidden reserves of frustration and displeasure in Stegner's tale, and Herrmann aptly conveys these emotions with short, sharp bursts of dialogue matched with longer, more drawn-out ellipses of exposition. He even manages a serviceable Danish accent to top off his flawless performance.

Kit 62  The Help  Stockett, Kathryn
What perfect timing for this optimistic, uplifting debut novel (and maiden publication of Amy Einhorn's new imprint) set during the nascent civil rights movement in Jackson, Miss., where black women were trusted to raise white children but not to polish the household silver. Eugenia Skeeter Phelan is just home from college in 1962, and, anxious to become a writer, is advised to hone her chops by writing about what disturbs you. The budding social activist begins to collect the stories of the black women on whom the country club sets relies and mistrusts enlisting the help of Aibileen, a maid who's raised 17 children, and Aibileen's best friend Minny, who's found herself unemployed more than a few times after mouthing off to her white employers. The book Skeeter puts together based on their stories is scathing and shocking, bringing pride and hope to the black community, while giving Skeeter the courage to break down her personal boundaries and pursue her dreams. Assured and layered, full of heart and history, this has bestseller written all over it.

Kit 63  The King’s Speech  Logue, Mark & Conradi, Peter
It's the eve of World War II, and King Edward VIII has abdicated the throne of England to marry the woman he loves. Never has the nation needed a leader more. But the new monarch, George VI--father of today's Queen Elizabeth II--is painfully shy and cursed with a terrible stammer. How can he inspire confidence in his countrymen when he cannot even speak to them? Help arrives in speech therapist Logue, who not only is a commoner, but Australian to boot. Will he be able to give King George his voice? The King's Speech tells an inspiring tale of triumph over adversity and the unlikely friendship between a reluctant king and the charismatic subject who saved the throne.

Kit 64  Murder on the Orient Express  Christie, Agatha
Just after midnight, the famous Orient Express is stopped in its tracks by a snowdrift. By morning, the millionaire Samuel Edward Ratchett lies dead in his compartment, stabbed a dozen times, his door locked from the inside. One of his fellow passengers must be the murderer. Isolated by the storm, detective Hercule Poirot must find the killer among a dozen of the dead man's enemies, before the murderer decides to strike again.

Kit 65  Sarah’s Key  Rosnay, Tatiana de
Paris, July 1942: Sarah, a ten year-old girl, is brutally arrested with her family by the French police in the Vel’d'Hiv’ roundup, but not before she locks her younger brother in a cupboard in the family's apartment, thinking that she will be back within a few hours. Paris, May 2002: On Vel’d'Hiv’s 60th anniversary, journalist Julia Jarmond is asked to write an article about this black day in France's past. Through her contemporary investigation, she stumbles onto a trail of long-hidden family secrets that connect her to Sarah. Julia finds herself compelled to retrace the girl's ordeal, from that terrible term in the Vel d'Hiv’, to the camps, and beyond. A brilliantly subtle, compelling portrait of France under occupation and reveals the taboos and silence that surround this painful episode.
Kit 66    Sensible Shoes    Brown, Sharon Garlough
Meg Crane has never had a longing for adventure. She's never even traveled more than two hundred miles from home. But when she receives an invitation from the New Hope Retreat Center to travel deeper into the heart of God, Meg finds herself saying yes. What will she discover if she begins to walk the winding path through the broken pieces of her past? Meg isn't the only one who feels apprehensive about the journey. Though the other people gathered at New Hope appear to have life well put together, each of them has a story to tell. Join the girls as they become unlikely companions on the road to healing, transformation, and self-discovery. Because the long walk leads through the unpredictable terrain of the inner life, the travelers will need courage, patience, perseverance, and of course...Sensible Shoes.

Kit 67    Little Bee    Cleave, Chris
We don't want to tell you too much about this book. It is a truly special story and we don't want to spoil it. Nevertheless, you need to know something, so we will just say this: It is extremely funny, but the African beach scene is horrific. The story starts there, but the book doesn't. And it's what happens afterward that is most important. Once you have read it, you'll want to tell everyone about it. When you do, please don't tell them what happens either. The magic is in how it unfolds.

Kit 68    Mutant Message Down Under    Morgan, Marlo
Morgan's novel is a fictionalized account of a "walkabout" she took in the Outback with a group of Aborigines. An alternative health practitioner, Morgan was working with underprivileged Aborigine youths in the inner cities of Australia when a group of Aborigines offered her a chance to learn firsthand about their culture. Morgan's account of the tribe's customs, healing methods, food-finding tactics, etc. is absorbing, and her willingness to forgo Western luxuries and to relish the experience is courageous and touching. Less compellingly, the author claims that she was "chosen" by the Aborigines to tell the rest of humanity that Westerners have a limited time to clean up their act. Still, it is a New Age philosophy wrapped in an adventure narrative.

Kit 69    Mennonite in the Little Black Dress    Janzen, Rhoda
Not long after Rhoda Janzen turned forty, her world turned upside down. It was bad enough that her husband of fifteen years left her for Bob, a guy he met on Gay.com, but that same week a car accident left her injured. Needing a place to rest and pick up the pieces of her life, Rhoda packed her bags, crossed the country, and returned to her quirky Mennonite family's home, where she was welcomed back with open arms and offbeat advice.

Kit 70    Arc of Justice    Boyle, Kevin
In 1925, Detroit was a smoky swirl of jazz, assembly lines and fistfights. The advent of automobiles had brought workers from around the globe to compete for manufacturing jobs, and tensions often flared with the KKK. Ossian Sweet, a proud Negro doctor-grandson of a slave-had made the long climb from the ghetto to a home of his own in a previously all-white neighborhood. Just after his arrival, a mob gathered outside his house; shots rang out: Sweet, or one of his defenders, had accidentally killed one of the whites threatening their lives. And so it began—a chain of events that brought attorney, Clarence Darrow, into the fray and transformed Sweet into a controversial symbol of equality. Boyle weaves the police investigation and courtroom drama of Sweet's murder trial into an unforgettable tapestry of narrative history that movingly re-creates the Sweet family's journey from slavery through the Great Migration to the middle class.

Kit 71    Listen    Gutteridge, Rene
Nothing ever happens in the small town of Marlo . . . until the residents begin seeing their private conversations posted online for everyone to read. Then it’s neighbor against neighbor, friend against friend, as paranoia and violence escalate. The police scramble to identify the person responsible for the posts and pull the plug on the Website before it destroys the town. But what responsibility do the people of the town have for the words they say when they think no one is listening? Life and death are in the power of the tongue.
### Kit 72
**Red Badge of Courage**  
**Crane, Stephen**

Henry Fleming, a private in the Union Army, runs away from the field of war. Afterwards, the shame he feels at this act of cowardice ignites his desire to receive an injury in combat—a “red badge of courage” that will redeem him. Stephen Crane’s novel about a young soldier’s experiences during the American Civil War is well known for its understated naturalism and its realistic depiction of battle.

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### Kit 73
**Personal History**  
**Graham, Katharine**

Personal History is a book composed of both personal memoir and history. Kay Graham was brought up in a family of great wealth, yet she learned and understood nothing about money. She describes herself as having been naive and awkward, yet intelligent and energetic. She married a man she worshipped, and he fascinated and educated her, and then, turned from her and abused her. It is the story of Graham's parents: the multimillionaire father who left private business and government service to buy and restore the down-and-out Washington Post, and the formidable, self-absorbed mother who was more interested in her political and charity work. This destruction of her confidence and happiness is a drama in itself, followed by the even more intense drama of her new life as the head of a great newspaper and a great company.

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### Kit 74
**Ordinary People**  
**Guest, Judith**

In Ordinary People, Judith Guest’s remarkable first novel, the Jarrets are a typical American family. Calvin is a determined, successful provider and Beth an organized, efficient wife. They had two sons, Conrad and Buck, but now they have one. In this memorable, moving novel, Judith Guest takes the reader into their lives to share their misunderstandings, pain...and ultimate healing.

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### Kit 75
**The Chosen**  
**Potok, Chaim**

It is the now-classic story of two fathers and two sons and the pressures on all of them to pursue the religion they share in the way that is best suited to each. And as the boys grow into young men, they discover in the other a lost spiritual brother, and a link to an unexplored world that neither had ever considered before. In effect, they exchange places, and find the peace that neither will ever retreat from again....

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### Kit 76
**Dry Grass of August**  
**Mayhew, Anna Jean**

Mayhew offers a riveting depiction of Southern life in the throes of segregation. In August 1954, thirteen-year-old Jubie Watts leaves with her family for a Florida vacation. Crammed into the Packard along with Jubie are her three siblings, her mother, and the family’s black maid, Mary Luther. For as long as Jubie can remember, Mary has been there—cooking, cleaning, compensating for her father’s rages and her mother's benign neglect, and loving Jubie unconditionally. Bright and curious, Jubie takes note of the anti-integration signs they pass, and of the racial tension that builds as they journey further south. But she could never have predicted the shocking turn their trip will take. Now, in the wake of tragedy, Jubie must confront her parents' failings and limitations, decide where her own convictions lie, and make the tumultuous leap to independence.

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### Kit 77
**Frankenstein**  
**Shelley, Mary**

While staying in the Swiss Alps in 1816 with her lover Percy Shelley, Lord Byron, and others, Mary Shelley, then eighteen, began to concoct the story of Dr. Victor Frankenstein and the monster he brings to life by electricity. Written in a time of great personal tragedy, it is a subversive and morbid story warning against the dehumanization of art and the corrupting influence of science. Packed with allusions and literary references, it is also one of the best thrillers ever written.
Kit 78   Keepsake   Riggle, Kristina
Trish isn't perfect. She's divorced and raising two kids—so of course her house isn't pristine. But she's got all the important things right and she's convinced that it’s all under control. Until the day her youngest son gets hurt and Child Protective Services comes. Trish is then forced to consider the one thing she's always hoped wasn't true: that she's living out her mother's life as a compulsive hoarder. The last person Trish ever wanted help from is her sister, Mary—perfect Mary, with the spotless house. Mary moved away from their mother to live somewhere else, just like Trish's oldest child has. But now, working together to get Trish's disaster of a home into livable shape, two very different sisters are about to uncover more than just piles of junk, as years of secrets, resentments, obsessions, and pain are finally brought to light.

Kit 79   Dandelion Wine   Bradbury, Ray
Bradbury’s Dandelion Wine is a semi-autobiographical recollection of a magical small-town summer in 1928. Twelve-year-old Douglas Spaulding knows Green Town, Illinois, is as vast and deep as the whole wide world that lies beyond the city limits. It is a pair of brand-new tennis shoes, the first harvest of dandelions for Grandfather's renowned intoxicant, the distant clang of the trolley's bell on a hazy afternoon. It is yesteryear and tomorrow blended into an unforgettable always. But as Douglas is about to discover, summer can be more than the repetition of established rituals whose mystical power holds time at bay. It can be a best friend moving away, a human time machine who can transport you back to the Civil War, or a sideshow automaton able to glimpse the bittersweet future.

Discussion Date: January 8, 2013

Kit 80   Reliable Wife   Goolrick, Robert
Rural Wisconsin, 1909. In the bitter cold, Ralph Truitt, a successful businessman, stands alone on a train platform waiting for the woman who answered his newspaper advertisement for "a reliable wife." But when Catherine Land steps off the train from Chicago, she's not the "simple, honest woman" that Ralph is expecting. She is both complex and devious, haunted by a terrible past and motivated by greed. Her plan is simple: she will win this man's devotion, and then, ever so slowly, she will poison him and leave Wisconsin a wealthy widow. What she has not counted on, though, is that Truitt — a passionate man with his own dark secrets —has plans of his own for his new wife. Isolated on a remote estate and imprisoned by relentless snow, the story of Ralph and Catherine unfolds in unimaginable ways.

Discussion Date: February 12, 2013

Kit 81   Macbeth   Shakespeare, William
Three witches, three prophecies and one tragic hero ... this is the complete, unabridged version of William Shakespeare's classic play.

Kit 82   Wild   Strayed, Cheryl
Strayed tells the story of her emotional devastation after the death of her mother and the weeks she spent hiking the 1,100-mile Pacific Crest Trail. As her family, marriage, and sanity go to pieces, Strayed drifts into spontaneous encounters with other men, to the consternation of her confused husband, and eventually hits rock bottom while shooting up heroin with a new boyfriend. Convinced that nothing else can save her, she latches onto the unlikely idea of a long solo hike. Woefully unprepared (she fails to read about the trail, buy boots that fit, or pack practically), she relies on the kindness and assistance of those she meets along the way, much as McCandless did. Strayed labors along the demanding trail, documenting her bruises, blisters, and greater troubles. Hiker wannabes will likely be inspired. Experienced backpackers will roll their eyes. But this chronicle, perfect for book clubs, is certain to spark lively conversation.

Kit 83   Saving Lee, Finding Grace   Hamming, Anne Marie
Hamming headed into motherhood with a simple plan. Motherhood would be part of her life, but certainly not all of it. A divorce and a baby boy who didn't thrive weren't part of the plan. Follow her through a gut-wrenching and risky decision to leave a career for full-time motherhood with a child who just kept getting sicker. After three years of mysterious symptoms, he was diagnosed with a rare autoimmune condition that only a bone marrow transplant could reverse. Anne relives her family's tender journey through grave illness and recovery to find hope waiting for them on the other side. In the process, she comes to terms with the mothering role she never sought or envisioned. This memoir of redemption will touch all who have faced major, unexpected changes and rewritten their lives with freshness and honesty.
Kit 84  Bossypants  Fey, Tina

From her humble roots growing up in Pennsylvania to her days doing amateur improv in Chicago to her early sketches on SNL, Fey gives us a fascinating glimpse behind the curtain of modern comedy with equal doses of wit, candor, and self-deprecation. Fey’s life is best detailed when she’s dividing her efforts equally between rehearsing her Sarah Palin impression, trying to get Oprah to appear on 30 Rock, and planning her daughter’s Peter Pan-themed birthday. Bossypants gets to the heart of why Fey remains universally adored: she embodies the hectic, too-many-things-to-juggle lifestyle we all have, but instead of complaining about it, she can just laugh it off.

Kit 85  Dr. Jekyl and Mr. Hyde  Stevenson, Robert Louis

When Gabriel Utteron discovers that the sinister Mr. Hyde has moved into the home of his friend Dr. Jekyll and stands to benefit from his will, he becomes concerned and enlists the help of their mutual friend, Dr. Hastie Lanyon. Things go from bad to worse: Jekyll withdraws further from his social circle; Hyde's criminal sprees culminate in murder; and Utteron and Lanyon fight to save their friend and unravel the mystery of Hyde's origins and disappearance.

Kit 86  People of the Book  Brooks, Geraldine

One of the earliest Jewish religious volumes to be illuminated with images, the Sarajevo Haggadah survived centuries of purges and wars thanks to people of all faiths who risked their lives to safeguard it. Geraldine Brooks, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of March, has turned the intriguing but sparsely detailed history of this precious volume into an emotionally rich, thrilling fictionalization that retraces its turbulent journey. In the hands of Hanna Heath, an impassioned rare-book expert restoring the manuscript in 1996 Sarajevo, it yields clues to its guardians and whereabouts: an insect wing, a wine stain, salt crystals, and a white hair. While readers experience crucial moments in the book's history through a series of fascinating, fleshed-out short stories, Hanna pursues its secrets scientifically, and finds that some interests will still risk everything in the name of protecting this treasure. A complex love story, thrilling mystery, vivid history lesson, and celebration of the enduring power of ideas, People of the Book will surely be hailed as one of the best of 2008.

*Book covers are a sample. They may not be from the edition contained within the Book Club Kit used by the Ransom Discussion Group. Reviews are from Kalamazoo Public Library and Amazon.com. Some reviews have been edited to be more concise.*