Books a la Carte

If you want to meet people who like to read, Books a la Carte might be for you. There is no assigned list. We talk about books of all types. Send comments to news@peopleplusmaine.org.

Here is a list of the group's recommendations. Enjoy!

June 2026

Fiction

The Briar Club *by Kate Quinn*. The Joe McCarthy and J. Edgar Hoover years form the background of this book. The residents of a female boarding house in Washington, D.C. keep secrets and form friendships. An act of violence tears the house apart.

Schindler's List *by Thomas Keneally*. This historical novel is based on the true story of industrialist Oskar Schindler and his efforts to save thousands of Jews during the Holocaust.

Tenth of December *by George Saunders.* Short, satirical stories about claso uand other matters in America.

Half Broke Horses: A True Life Novel *by Jeannette Walls.* This novel reads like the history of the author's family, told from the perspective of her grandmother. It spans the period from 1901–1960, the year of the author's birth.

The Measure *by Nikki Erlick*. An extraordinary event changes the world. Every adult receives a box with a length of string in it. Short strings indicate death is imminent, while longer strings indicate the length of one's life. Some people look in the box, while others do not, but everyone is impacted. The book encourages the reader to live life to the fullest.

Heart the Lover *by Lily King.* In this decades-spanning love story, three college students become romantically entangled, and their emotional bonds reverberate over the years.

Here One Moment *by Liane Moriarty*. The author's 2024 tale begins aboard a short flight between Sydney and Hobart, Australia. One passenger suddenly begins telling others the dates and causes of their death. How the predictions affect the passengers and their loved ones forms the basis of this story about free will and destiny.

Nonfiction

The Philosophy of Modern Song *by Bob Dylan*. Sixty-six songs of all types are loosely reviewed by the song master.

This Time Next Year We'll by Laughing *by Jacqueline Winspear.* This memoir by the author of the Maisie Dobbs series tells about her childhood in England during the 1960s and 1970s.

Mystery

Last One Out *by Jane Harper.* A fractured family tries to solve the disappearance of their 21-year-old son and brother five years after the incident. The mystery is set in a dying town in rural, desolate Australia.

May 2026

Fiction

Wolf Hall *by Hilary Mantel*. In this wonderfully-written historical novel, the political dangers of the court of King Henry VIII and the great danger of being one of Henry's wives are described by Thomas Cromwell in his role of lawyer and court advisor.

The Correspondent *by Virginia Evans*. The life of an older woman is revealed through letters. In spite of grief and past health concerns, surprises await her.

Albion *by Anna Hope.* A British patriarch dies and the family gathers, each member with their own financial hopes. Then a stranger appears and things change.

Spencer's Mountain *by Earl Hamner, Jr.* This 1961 book is the basis for The Waltons TV series. It is filled with touching familial relationships, hopeful outlooks, good values, and an engaging storyline. It is a breath of fresh air for our times.

Gilead *by Marilynne Robinson*. In this Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, a dying Baptist minister writes what he thinks his seven-year-old son would need to learn if his father was alive to teach him. This prize-winning book describes events surrounding the Civil War, differing theological values, and denominational beliefs. It could easily be a helpful tool for those willing to grow their faith.

Nonfiction

Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea *by Barbara Demick.* This is a most interesting description of how millions of people survive in the most isolated nation on earth. The country is run by one family.

The Middle of Everywhere: Helping Refugees Enter the American Community *by Mary Pipher, Ph.D.* This book has never been more timely. It opens the reader's eyes to reveal the struggles of refugees of all ages to adapt to their new lives in communities across the United States.The author suggests ways in which we can help newcomers assimilate while maintaining their cultural identity.

Desert Queen: The Extraordinary Life of Gertrude Bell *by Janet Wallach.* In this biography of Gertrude Bell (1868-1926), a privileged, well-educated woman explores, maps, and excavates in the Middle East. She assisted British intelligence during World War I and played a major role in the creation of the modern Middle East.

Mystery/Thriller

King of Ashes *by S. A. Cosby.* A successful financial advisor returns to his hometown to help in the family crematorium business after his father is injured. He then attempts to help his brother avoid retribution from a violent gang.