

January 5th

Midsummer Night's Dream by Shakespeare Led by Bernie Kaplan

Set in ancient Athens, the play revolves around the marriage of Theseus and Hippolyte, with several interweaving comic and romantic subplots. The cast of supporting characters find themselves in a forest inhabited by mischievous fairies who manipulate the humans and draw them into all sorts of intrigue. One of Shakespeare's most enduringly popular and most often staged works.

February 2nd

Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger Led by Suzanne Ashley

The hero is an adolescent child of sixteen, a native New Yorker named Holden Caulfield. Through circumstances that tend to preclude adult secondhand description, he leaves his prep school in Pennsylvania and goes underground in New York City for three days. The young man is at once simple and complex and born into a world not only strongly attracted to beauty but almost hopelessly impaled on it. But who was J.D. Salinger, and how did he come to write a novel whose impact continues to resonate with millions of readers?

March 1st

Collected Poems by Robert Frost

This work is a feast for lovers of American literature, the work of one of our greatest poets. From "The Road Not Taken" to "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," he refined and even defined our sense of what poetry is and what it can do. T. S. Eliot judged him "the most eminent, the most distinguished Anglo-American poet now living," and he is the only writer in history to have been awarded four Pulitzer Prizes.

April 5th

The Sea, The Sea by Iris Murdoch

Charles Arrowby, leading light of England's theatrical set, retires from glittering London to an isolated home by the sea. He plans to write a memoir about his great love affair with Clement Makin, his mentor, both professionally and personally, and amuse himself with Lizzie, and actress he has strung along for many years. But his memoir evolves into a riveting chronicle of strange events and unexpected visitors-some real, some spectral-that disrupt his world and shake his oversized ego to its very core.

May 3rd

Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll

An 1865 novel written by English author “Lewis Carroll” (the pseudonym for Charles Lutwidge Dodgson), tells of a girl named Alice falling through a rabbit hole into a fantasy world populated by peculiar, anthropomorphic creatures. The tale plays with logic giving the story lasting popularity with adults as well as children. Its narrative course and structure, characters and imagery have been enormously influential in both popular culture and literature, especially in the fantasy genre.

June 7th

Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens Led by Suzanne Ashley

Born into a world of poverty and despair, Oliver Twist’s journey begins in a miserable workhouse in 19th-century England where he dares to ask for more food and is promptly sold into an apprenticeship with an undertaker. Escaping his bleak fate, Oliver finds himself on the perilous streets of London where he becomes entangled with a band of young pickpockets led by the crafty old criminal and his violent associate. Yet moments of kindness shine even through the depths of London’s underworld. As Oliver seeks to discover the truth about his lineage and where he comes from, he is thrust into a world of danger, deception, and redemption. With its richly drawn characters and vivid settings, *Oliver Twist* is a scathing critique of Victorian society’s treatment of the poor and a compelling tale of the endurance of the human spirit in the face of adversity.

August 2nd

Magic Mountain by Thomas Mann

With this dizzyingly rich novel of ideas, Thomas Mann rose to the front ranks of the great modern novelists winning the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1929. This monumental work of erudition and irony, sexual tension, and intellectual ferment takes place in an exclusive tuberculosis sanatorium in the Swiss Alps, a community devoted to sickness that serves as a fictional microcosm for Europe in the days before the First World War. To this hermetic and otherworldly realm comes Hans Castorp, an “ordinary young man” who arrives for a short visit and ends up staying for seven years during which he succumbs to the lure of eros and the intoxication of ideas.

September 5th

Log from the Sea of Cortez by John Steinbeck

This work derives from the exciting day-by-day account of Steinbeck's trip to the Gulf of California with his close friend and biologist Ed Ricketts. Drawn from the longer *Sea of Cortez*, it is a wonderful combination of science, philosophy, and high-spirited adventure. They embarked on a month-long marine specimen-collecting expedition in the Gulf of California which resulted in their collaboration on the *Sea of Cortez*. In 1951, after Rickett's death, Steinbeck reissued his narrative portion of the work in memory of his friend who was the inspiration for *Cannery Row*'s "Doc".

October 9th

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee Led by Sheila Kaplan

Pulitzer Prize-winning masterwork about honor and injustice in the deep South and the heroism of one man in the face of blind and violent hatred. 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.

November 1st

Midaq Alley by Naguib Mahfouz Led by Corrinne Kevorkian

A rich account of life in a back street in a poor quarter of medieval Cairo, this novel focuses on a willful young woman whose ambition to escape the confines of the alley leads her into prostitution and a pageant of other vivid characters. Set during the Second World War, the characters' alienation from the prevailing political system and the desire of many of them to escape the economic and social stagnation of the alley give the work an unexpectedly up-to-date flavor.

December 6th

Year of the Plague by Daniel Defoe Led by Marge Josephson

In 1665 The Plague swept through London, claiming over 97,000 lives. Daniel Defoe was just five at the time, but he later called on his own memories, as well as his writing experience as he traced the devastating progress of the plague through the streets of London. It was a city transformed and some of its streets were suspiciously empty, some residents had crosses on their doors and the homes were overwhelmingly full of the sounds and smells of human suffering. Every citizen he meets has a horrifying story that demands to be heard.