



The Book Lovers' Companion: What to Read Next

Lionel Shriver (Foreword)

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More than 200 truly rewarding reads are covered, with a non-spoiler synopsis, background information, discussion points, and suggested companion volumes

With so many fantastic books out there, book clubs and avid readers can have difficulty choosing what to read next—thankfully, this comprehensive guide brings together the best and most loved titles for easy reference. Featuring a diverse selection, from *Pride and Prejudice* to *The Handmaid's Tale*, *The Kite Runner* to *Cloud Atlas*, the guide includes interesting discussion points and facts as well as potential companion books with similar themes, honest opinions from readers, and razor-sharp reviews from critics, so readers will know they're making the right choice every time. Top ten lists are also included, such as Top Ten Quick Reads (*Metamorphosis*, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*), Top Ten Challenging Reads (*Anna Karenina*, *Possession*), Top Ten Gay Reads (*Giovanni's Room*, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*), and Top Ten Chilling Reads (*The Stand*, *Ring*). Compiled by a range of English literature experts and avid readers, this book is sure to inspire any book lover.

The Book Lovers' Companion: What to Read Next Details

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Sam says

This is definitely a book for book-lovers and readers everywhere. Packed full of potential reading ideas, suggestions and top ten lists, there's plenty of options for what to read next, and after that, and so... Each of the books has a synopsis that whets your appetite without giving too much away, critics and readers opinion, bookclub discussion points, background and companion books (just in case you need a few more ideas). My only critique of this is how broad it tries to be while keeping to a reasonable number...I would've loved either more genre specific volumes or a huge tome packed with reads for every eventuality (but I think I have a slight obsession when it comes to books so I would love something like that). A great read and reference book and now I have yet more lists to read from...I do like a reading list you know!

Lorraine says

This small paperback hopefully will save me and other book lovers time when searching for the next book to read. Classic and popular fiction are included in this book. Many of my favorites are included in this edition such as *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier, *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger, and *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee amongst others. I definitely like the concept, but with a book like this, it would have to be reviewed and kept up to date.

There are also included different lists such as Top Ten British and American Classics, Top Ten Quick Reads, and Top Ten Non-Fiction Books. These also would have to be reviewed and changed when necessary. This book or the concept of this book has great possibilities if reviewed and kept up to date. 3 1/2 - 4 stars.

Meredith says

This is the same book as "The Book Club Bible: The Definitive Guide That Every Book Club Member Needs" with a few changes.

Klou says

Perfect for book lovers, especially if you go to a book club. I must admit that I'm not a member of one myself, but from what I've read from this wonderful collection of recommendations, I'm sure it'll be very useful for book club members.

It's full of many recommendations from a variety of genres, facts about the books, a summary, critic comments and discussion points for book clubs. I will definitely be referring to this when in need of ideas on what to read next! Loved the introduction, loved that each page about the books was written by a different

person, giving it an unbiased opinion, and I just love it! Got it for Christmas 2018 and couldn't be happier about it. I haven't read it from front to back yet, but the beauty of this is that I can pick and choose which book I want to know about. Highly recommend!

Tracy Terry says

Frustrated/Annoyed by books that have previously been published under a different title? Beware that this is a reprint of the 2007 'The Book Club Bible'.

A great companion guide that proved much more interesting than I had anticipated. As well as 100 or so books that are discussed in a certain amount of depth there are also several sections listing the 'top 10' reads in categories such as 'British/American Classics', 'World Classics', 'Men's Books' and 'Sci-Fi Books'.

With each featured book (many of which are excellent choices for reading groups) allocated two pages the information given includes a publication date, number of pages (though it is pointed out in the notes that this can vary depending on the edition read), a spoiler free synopsis, either a 'What the critics said' or 'Readers Opinion', 'Discussion Points', 'Background Information' and what I occasionally felt were some fairly obscure 'Suggested Companion Reads'.

Great to pick out the books you have read and ideal if you want to add to your reading list. My only criticisms being that there was no note on just how the books had been chosen/who they had been chosen by and that there were few of the featured books published before the 1990's.

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Derrian says

A great book for finding inspiration on what to read next.

There are over 200 novels detailed. Each book has a brief (spoiler free) synopsis and background information, as well as discussion points, which is great if you're intending to choose a book as a book club read. There is also a section on suggested companion reads, if you like that one then you'll love this one...

The books listed cover a wide range of genres, and span from the classics to modern day novels. There are also 'Top Ten....' lists interspersed throughout the book for you to do your own research on.

A great little book, which managed to increase my tbr pile to even higher levels!

Myriam says

I really enjoy books about books and books written with the sole purpose of literary discovery. It is always difficult to rate them however, since it would be impossible for such a book to satisfy everybody or to present any kind of exhaustive list.

That being said, I felt like *The Book Lovers' Companion* was a well-edited compilation, one that would surely help people trying to discover new works or to get more into reading. A nice, diverse selection of exciting, important and entertaining works as well as some more challenging ones.

Nancy Moore says

I collect books about books and love to read and consult them over and over again. The reason I didn't "finish" this book for so long is that I kept going back and consulting it. From the back of the book: "With the *The Book Lovers' Companion*, deciding what to read next will never be a dilemma again. Containing over 200 titles, from classics to bestsellers, as well as little-known gems, this handy guide features in-depth analysis of truly rewarding reads. Each book report provides a non-spoiler synopsis, background information, starting points for discussion and suggested companion volumes. For bibliophiles everywhere, this is an indispensable handbook."

??? ??? says

The Book Lovers' Companion

Trevor says

Some great suggestions of books to read - some that will now go on my to read list.

Only minor criticisms of the book are:

- 1) The majority of the books are recently published - not a lot from prior to 1990
- 2) There seemed to be a bias towards stories with female lead characters - nothing wrong with this, but a more even balance would have been good

Éowyn says

Well, if I am ever stuck for something to read I now know how many angst filled tomes are out there.....!

Caitlin says

I am going to be buying everybody I know this book for Christmas. The introduction is written by one of my favourite authors of all time, there are enough books that I have loved in there to make me trust it and it has already started answering my most often asked question: "What should I read next?"

Tim Corke says

A great collection of literary insight and information that is definitely for book lovers. You can dip in and out or read it through in one go but it'll stay on your shelf as a reference either way.

These type of 'list' books are always very subjective but this has been written by many authors who have contributed so it gives a broad overview of what to read. I love the lists of 'top 10' that appear throughout e.g top 10 male books or top 10 challenging reads.

I'm usually a fan of swapping books but this will one will remain on my shelf for sure!!!

Ardyth says

Eclectic collection! Not simply the same old boring list of must-read classics, though there are plenty of those. A good bit of late-20th and 21st century suggestions in the mix, including some post-colonial foreign lit.

I've read about a third of what's listed and rate most titles inside the union set of our Venn diagram at four stars or better. Feels fairly safe to assume the pattern continues.

So why this book of books over another? I would argue two reasons:

First, each major title listing includes a handful of others to try along with what they have in common. For example, from Heart of Darkness we are pointed next to Things Fall Apart, Lord of the Flies, Jekyll & Hyde and The Waste Land. Alongside Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell, we get The Earthsea Quartet, The Crimson Petal and the White, and Sense and Sensibility. One would be hard pressed to argue these rabbit trails are without variety...

The second point in favor here is the inclusion of a Reader's Opinion for many listings. These aren't all fawning, either, which makes for a nice change. On Buchan's The Thirty-Nine Steps:

"The character of Richard Hannay was a bit two-dimensional." Hear, hear!

Val Penny says

Lionel Shriver is an American journalist and author. She was born 18, May 1957 in Gastonia, North Carolina, USA and is best known for her novel We Need to Talk About Kevin which won the Orange Prize

for Fiction in 2005. So when I noticed that she had written the forward to The Book Lovers' Companion, I knew it would be worth consulting this book as I now lead the village book group, having inherited that distinction from my friend, Evelyn Hood. Going through the table of contents actually feels a bit like being at a book club. Some of the choices made me beam with delight; others left me spluttering with disbelief!

Of course, such a good book club discussion can be the forging of a new friendship but deciding what to read next can be a daunting task for a lot of us. You want a book that is different enough that it will not suffer from a comparison from the last book you read. While books and stories can be social; reading itself is a very individual process. There are a plethora of factors that impact on reading. Mood alone can change how you respond to a book. Getting recommendations from friends and family or a trusted book reviewer is probably considered the safest route to sourcing your next read. You will have a first hand positive review to work from.

There are over 200 entries, including many of the usual suspects: Pride and Prejudice, Brick Lance or The Great Gatsby in The Book Lovers' Companion. There are also gems that do not normally make their way into an anthology of this type including Perfume and The Story of Lucy Gault.

Each entry in The Book Lovers' Companion is divided up into sections. These include spoiler free summaries, discussion points, reader's notes and background information. Similar titles that might be of interest are also included.

I started off reading about books that I had already read so that I could get into the style of The Book Lovers' Companion. However, there were a number of reviewers involved in the compilation of this book resulting in a diverse range that are humorous, personal and topic specific. I love top tens and look forward to spending a bit of time contrasting theirs with my mental lists.

The Book Lovers' Companion contains a great range of books reviewed. Importantly, each review reads honestly, albeit briefly. It is particularly enjoyable to pick out the entry of a really unique book and watch the struggle to succinctly condense it into a few sentences. However, perhaps if each review were a page or two longer, it would allow for a slightly more in-depth look at each book. The summaries were quite impressive and I enjoyed reading the opinions offered.
