

## Your Book Discussion Favorites of 2008

Practical Reading  
Group Tips  
May 2009

Dear Barbara,

Some old discussible favorites--and some new debut titles--grace the Top Ten list of discussible favorites chosen by thousands of your votes in the most recent **Reading Group Choices** poll;

Your colleagues offer creative tips to make your discussions lively;

And some newly available titles cover a wide range of thorny topics for your discussion gatherings.

See these and more in this month's **Reading Group Choices** newsletter!

### In This Issue

[Think About That --And That!](#)

[Tips From Your Colleagues](#)

[Indies Choice Book Awards](#)

[Book Discussion on a Stroll!](#)

[Juan's "Field of Dreams"](#)

[#1 Again!](#)

### Think About That--And That!

New releases this month will make you and those in your group ponder a wide range of questions, ranging from motherhood and family to race, religion, and war. There are

### #1 Again!



For the second year in a row, reading groups have voted ***Water for Elephants*** by Sara Gruen as their #1 favorite discussible book! The **Reading Group Choices** poll conducted over the past few months drew thousands of your responses, and Rosie--the book's untrainable elephant--won reading group hearts, just as she did the book's circus characters.

Several new titles made the Top Ten list this time. Reading groups picked ***Loving Frank*** as their #2 choice. This was the

plenty of choices for your group from these discussibles.



In Mameve Medwed's ***Of Men and Their Mothers***, there are as many different kinds of mothers as there are men: good, good-enough, not so hot, and utterly terrible. Is Maisie Grey-Pollock one of the good mothers? She asks herself that question every day of her life, as she tries to navigate the murky waters of motherhood. She learns to how to negotiate all kinds of love and figures out her place in a world-a world in which values of sex, of class, of work, of friendship clash, and where the very nature of being a mother seems up for grabs.

In his new affectionate and funny coming-of-age novel, ***Sag Harbor***, Colson Whitehead - using the perpetual mortification of teenage existence and the desperate quest for reinvention-litely probes the elusive nature of identity, both personal and communal.



According to *The Boston Globe*, "Whitehead is making a strong case for a new name of his own: that of the best of the new generation of American novelists."



Kamila Shamsie's ***Burnt Shadows*** is a political thriller that moves from the bombing of Nagasaki in 1945 to the 2001 World Trade Center attacks. Through the generation-spanning lives of its itinerant characters, it weaves in Partition, the Iran-Iraq war, the nuclear stand-off between Pakistan and India and the shady world of private military companies before a denouement that harks back to its prologue, set in Guantanamo Bay.



***The Well and the Mine***, Gin Phillips' award-winning debut novel, transports readers to a bygone time and place and introduces a cast of characters that comes vividly alive in all their humor, grace, and humanity. Reminiscent of the writings of Eudora Welty and Carson McCullers, with the emotional resonance of Sue Monk Kidd and Fannie Flagg, ***The Well and the Mine*** is rooted in the very best of southern writing but claims a territory all its own.

first time Nancy Horan's debut novel-a well--researched blend of fact and fiction--made the Top Ten list.

Another first novel--this one about courageous men and women who formed ***The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*** as a cover to protect them from the Nazis occupying the Channel Islands of Great Britain--also made the Top Ten list.

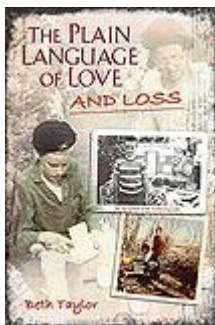
A number of titles seem to be perennial favorites. ***Pope Joan***, for example, first appeared on the list of favorites in 2002. 2008 is Joan Woolfolk Cross' fifth year among the Top Twenty! Other repeat winners include ***A Thousand Splendid Suns***, ***The Book Thief***, and ***Eat, Pray, Love***.

[Click Here for the Complete 2008 List](#)

Chances to Win Discussible Books and More!

[The Art of Racing in the Rain Buzz Kit](#)

## Enter for a Chance to Win a Copy!



Beth Taylor's idyllic childhood was shattered at age twelve by the suicide of her older brother Geoff. Beth Taylor's memoir, ***The Plain Language of Love and Loss***, reflects on the meaning of death and loss for three generations of her family and their friends. The work offers a rare look at growing up Quaker in the tumultuous 1960s.

Can lightning really strike twice? Just ask Eve, whose husband walks out on her in the middle of a garage sale. A poignant, lovely, funny, and ultimately uplifting story of love, family, and survival,

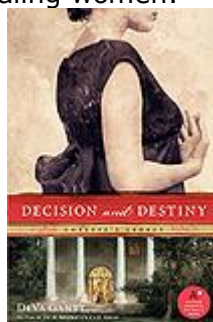


Liz Rosenberg's ***Home Repair*** is an unforgettable introduction to a lyrical, wise, and wonderfully vibrant new literary voice.



Laura Dave's new novel, ***The Divorce Party***, is a multi-generational story about what it means to share a life with someone. The tale brings us two immensely appealing women:

Gwyn who is stumbling upon the end of her marriage, and Maggie, her future-daughter-in-law, who is trying to navigate the beginning of hers. With emotional candor and surprising humor, these two women find themselves trying to answer the same questions: Can you ever really know someone?



And finally, in ***Decision and Destiny: Colette's Legacy***, a young woman must come to terms with shattering truths about the family she once believed she knew-and decide who among them deserves her admiration, her derision, her devotion-and her heart. DeVa Gantt's second historical novel in a Colette Trilogy is a spellbinding saga of a remarkable American family.

## Tips From Your Colleagues

Thanks to the book group members who have offered lots of creative ideas to make discussions lively. We share a few of these proven tips here. There are many more on the website.

## Wit's End

### The Well and the Mine

### Matrimony

### 15th Anniversary Book Pack

## Choices

### Featured Books

### What's New?

### May We Recommend

## New 1-On-Ones

### Karen Joy Fowler

### Meg Waite Clayton

### Nicole Baart

### Mahbod Seraji

### Mameve Medwed

### Janelle Brown

## More About Reading Group Choices

### Order Your Own

"We also get together for charity walks-hence the name **Bookwalkers**. We like to add fitness and exercise into our social network/circle of friends."

**Colleen, Bookwalkers, Monroe, NY**



"I have started making a list of the characters in the books and passing that out along with some discussion starters. This is very popular and helps the discussion, especially for those who have read the book a few months before the discussion."

**Arden, Under 400, Murrysville, PA**

"If a member of the group has recently taken an exciting trip, have the group read a book about that location and get the traveller to lead the discussion and share their experience.

For instance, one of our members travelled to Kenya, we read **Out of Africa** and planned appropriate refreshments."

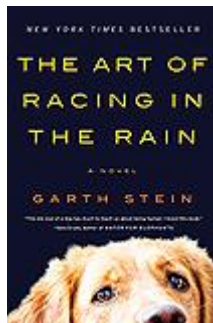
**Anne, Page Turners, Duluth, GA**

[More Tips](#)

## Indies Choice Book Awards

Several **Reading Group Choices** selections are also winners of the first **Indies Choice Book Awards**, formerly the Book Sense Book of the Year Awards, sponsored by the American Booksellers Association (ABA).

**People of the Book**, by Geraldine Brooks, **The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society** by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows, and **The Art of Racing in the Rain** by Garth Stein were all in the top ten chosen by ABA members.



## Book Discussion on a Stroll!

The **North County Times** reports that Patti McFarland, owner of **Encinitas Book Tales**, Encinitas, CA, will soon launch "The Literary Walking Companions," a daily book club for walkers. The Literary Walking Companions will allow participants to chat about whatever books, authors, plot lines, characters or writing styles they're in the mood to discuss."

In Patti's words, "*Book lovers love to read, but they have to*

[Print Edition](#)

[Subscribe To The FREE Newsletter](#)

[Share Your Reading Group Tips](#)

[Visit Us At Home](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[About Us](#)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

*get off their butts, too. I'm 65. I need to walk. It's about trying to be a little more healthy. Everybody is outside doing things, because the weather is good. Why not start something like this?"*

## Your Own Discussible Choices



Congratulations to Lynn and **The Burnsville Book Club** for winning the random drawing for this month's Discussible Book Choice!

**"*The Book Thief*"** by Markus Zusak is an excellent book for discussion. It reminds us that Nazi Germany left no soul untouched by its devastation. Death narrates this story as he works his way across Nazi Germany scooping up the souls of the war dead. Familiar with destruction and loss of life, he is unmoved until he crosses paths with a young German girl named Liesel Meminger. With the war's mounting human toll he is able to watch Liesel as she is separated from her family and begins life with a foster family. Her only tie to her birth family is a book that she has taken from her dead brother's gravesite. Afraid, alone and illiterate, Liesel forms a bond with her new Papa as he helps her unlock the mystery of the written word. A newfound passion for reading compels Liesel to become the book thief. With each theft, she gains a feeling of control in her war savaged life. Both Liesel and Death gain an understanding of the power both good and bad of words."



**Lynn, The Burnsville Book Club, Burnsville, MN**

We enjoy hearing from book club members and sharing their choices with everyone. Please **let us know** about your group's discussible choices - you may win a book-related prize for every member of your reading group!

### **More Discussible Choices**

## Juan's "Field of Dreams"

Juan Williams, news analyst for NPR, political analyst for Fox News, and author of six books, speaking to the *Washington Post's* "**Short Stack**" book blog recently called the **Brooklyn**

**Public Library** "My Field of Dreams."

Juan noted that, "I met **Pippi Longstocking** by Astrid Lindgren there, **Studs Lonigan** by James T. Farrell, and **Invisible Man** by Ralph Ellison. That library introduced me to Chaim Potok's book **The Chosen**, as well as to Richard Wright's **Native Son**. In a tough neighborhood the library can be a refuge, a safe place. But it is also a place to dream of fitting in and understanding others who don't fit in. And for me it was also a place to dream of being a writer."

**Happy Mother's Day and thanks for keeping the joy of shared reading alive,**



**[Forward email](#)**

✉ [SafeUnsubscribe®](#)

This email was sent to [barbara.d.mead@mindspring.com](mailto:barbara.d.mead@mindspring.com) by [info@readinggroupchoices.com](mailto:info@readinggroupchoices.com).

[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Reading Group Choices | 532 Cross Creek Court | Chester | MD | 21619-2673

Email Marketing by

