

MOSTLY BOOKS

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Law and Literature Book Club 2025

| Month | Title | Author | Blurb |
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| 6 February | <i>The Suspect</i> | Rob Rinder | When the UK's favourite breakfast TV presenter dies live on air in front of millions of viewers, the nation is left devastated...it becomes clear that her death was not an accident. The evidence points to one culprit: celebrity chef Sebastian Brooks. But junior barrister Adam Green is about to discover that the case is not as open-and-shut as it first seemed. And although her angelic persona would suggest otherwise, she was not short of enemies in the glittery TV world. Can Adam uncover the truth? |
| 6 March | <i>The Night Watchman</i> | Louise Erdrich | Based on the extraordinary life of the author's grandfather who worked as a night watchman and carried the fight against Native dispossession from rural North Dakota all the way to Washington DC. It is 1953. Thomas Wazhushk is the night watchman at the first factory to open near the Turtle Mountain Reservation in rural North Dakota. He is also a Council member, trying to understand a new bill that is soon to be put before Congress. The US Government calls it an 'emancipation' bill; but it isn't about freedom - it threatens the rights of Native Americans to their land, their very identity. Louise Erdrich weaves together a story of past and future generations, of preservation and progress. She grapples with the worst and best impulses of human nature, illuminating the loves and lives, desires and ambitions of her characters with compassion, wit and intelligence. |

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| 3 April | <i>Courting: An Intimate History of Love and the Law</i> | Alecia Simmonds | <p>Non-fiction.</p> <p>Until well into the twentieth century, jilted lovers could claim compensation for 'breach of promise to marry'. Hundreds of people, mostly from the working classes, came before the courts, and their stories give us a tantalising insight into the romantic landscape of the past – where couples met, how they courted, and what happened when flirtations turned sour. In packed courtrooms and breathless newspaper reports, love letters were read as contracts and private gifts and gossip scrutinised as evidence. In <i>Courting</i>, Alecia Simmonds brings these stories vividly to life.</p> <p>Challenging our preconceptions about how previous generations loved and lost, and prompting fascinating questions about the ethics of love today, <i>Courting</i> is a transcontinental journey into the most intimate corners of the past.</p> |
| 1 May | <i>The Peepshow</i> | Kate Summerscale | <p>To be published March 2025</p> <p>London, 1953. Police discover the bodies of three young women hidden in a wall of a terrace house in Notting Hill. On searching the building, they find another body beneath the floorboards, then an array of human bones in the garden. Police investigated a double murder at this house, three years ago, and the killer was hanged. Did they get the wrong man? A nationwide manhunt is launched for the tenant of the ground-floor flat, a softly spoken former policeman named Reg Christie. Star reporter Harry Procter chases after the scoop. The story becomes an instant tabloid press sensation. Who is Christie? Why did he choose to kill women, and to keep their bodies near him? As Harry and Fryn start to learn the full horror of what went on at Rillington Place, they realise that Christie might also have engineered a terrible miscarriage of justice in plain sight. In this riveting true story, Kate Summerscale mines the archives to uncover the lives of Christie's victims, the tabloid frenzy that their deaths inspired, and the truth about what happened inside the house.</p> |

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| 5 June | <i>The Fraud</i> | Zadie Smith | <p>In her first historical novel, Zadie Smith transports the reader to a Victorian England transfixed by the real-life trial of the Tichborne Claimant, in which a cockney butcher, recently returned from Australia, lays claim to the Tichborne baronetcy, with his former slave Andrew Bogle as star witness. Watching the proceedings, and with her own story to tell, is Eliza Touchet - cousin, housekeeper and perhaps more - to failing novelist William Harrison Ainsworth.</p> <p>From literary London to the Jamaica's sugar-cane plantations, Zadie Smith weaves an enthralling story linking the rich and the poor, the free and the enslaved, and the comic and the tragic.</p> |
| 3 July | <i>Intimacies</i> | Katie Kitamura | <p>An interpreter has come to The Hague to escape New York and work at the International Court. She's drawn into simmering personal dramas. Her friend Jana witnesses a crime the interpreter becomes increasingly obsessed with. And she's pulled into an explosive political controversy when she's asked to interpret for a former president accused of war crimes. She is forced to decide what she wants from her life.</p> |
| 7 August | <i>The Death of Dr Duncan</i> | Tim Reeves | <p>The drowning of Dr Duncan in the River Torrens in 1972 remains one of Australia's most notorious unsolved murders. His death shocked the local community and still reverberates 50 years later. Tim Reeves is an award-winning author and the acknowledged authority on the Duncan case. He pulls together the complex strands of a police investigation, coroner's inquest, New Scotland Yard enquiry and trial. He also examines the attempts at gay law reform in the state that were triggered by Duncan's killing. This meticulously researched and tautly written book tells a story that is disturbing yet captivating, distressing yet ultimately uplifting.</p> |
| 4 September | <i>The Trial</i> | Franz Kafka | <p>Our annual classic. The bleak tale of Joseph K who is arrested one morning for unexplained reasons. Struggling against a bewildering judicial process, K. finds himself thrown from one disorientating</p> |

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| | | | encounter to the next, becoming increasingly desperate to prove his innocence in the face of unknown charges. |
| 2 October | <i>The Baby Farmers</i> | Annie Cossins | In October 1892, a one-month-old baby boy was found buried in the backyard of Sarah and John Makin, two wretchedly poor baby farmers in inner Sydney. In the weeks that followed, 12 more babies were found buried in the backyards of other houses in which the Makins had lived. This resulted in the most infamous trial in Australian legal history, and exposed a shocking underworld of desperate mothers, drugged and starving babies, and a black market in the sale and murder of children. Annie Cossins pieces together the fascinating story of the most infamous legal trial in Australia to reveal an underworld of struggling mothers, unwanted babies, and a society that preferred to turn a blind eye to the fate of its most vulnerable members, only a century ago. |
| 6 November | <i>I Am Rome</i> | | <p>Every legend has a beginning . . .</p> <p>Rome, 77 B.C. The corrupt Senator Dolabella is about to go on trial for his crimes.</p> <p>But Dolabella owns the jury. He's hired the best lawyers in the city. And he's very willing to use violence against those who oppose him.</p> <p>In all of Rome, no man dares accept the role of prosecutor—until, against all odds, an unknown twenty-three-year-old steps out to lead the case, defend the people of the city, and defy the power of the ruling elite.</p> <p>That lawyer's name is Gaius Julius Caesar.</p> <p>So begins Santiago Posteguillo's acclaimed masterpiece of historical fiction—a tale as epic as Caesar's life itself. An irresistible page-turning novel of politics and betrayal, grand battles and impossible odds, shocking villainy and even greater acts of courage, <i>I Am Rome</i> brilliantly animates the moments that shaped this extraordinary young man's fate—and in so doing, changed the course of history itself.</p> |