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Subscribe now for your chance to win a copy of [Loving Frank](#) by Nancy Horan for your reading group! (For contest rules, [click here.](#))

Newsletter Archive

- [August 2007](#)
- [July 2007](#)
- [June 2007](#)
- [May 2007](#)
- [April 2007](#)
- [March 2007](#)
- [February 2007](#)
- [January 2007](#)

- [December 2006](#)
- [November 2006](#)
- [October 2006](#)
- [September 2006](#)
- [August 2006](#)
- [July 2006](#)
- [June 2006](#)
- [May 2006](#)
- [April 2006](#)
- [March 2006](#)
- [February 2006](#)
- [January 2006](#)

- [December 2005](#)
- [November 2005](#)
- [October 2005](#)
- [September 2005](#)
- [August 2005](#)
- [July 2005](#)
- [June 2005](#)
- [May 2005](#)
- [April 2005](#)

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ReadingGroupGuides.com Newsletter

September 2007

This Month on ReadingGroupGuides.com

On ReadingGroupGuides.com

Hitting the Books --- Reading Group-Style

ReadingGroupGuides.com

Find a Guide by Title

Find a Guide by Author

Advice and Ideas

Register Your Group

THE VIEW FROM MOUNT JOY by Lorna Landvik

THE FARADAY GIRLS Gift Contest

SONGS WITHOUT WORDS by Ann Packer

GARDEN SPELLS by Sarah Addison Allen

OYSTERCATCHERS by Susan Fletcher

THE GREAT MAN by Kate Christensen

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BRIDGE by Mary Lawson -- Now in Paperback

MOMMY TRACKED by Whitney Gaskell

DIE FOR ME by Karen Rose

Co

Win Cop Book



This month
Loving Frank
by Nancy Horan
[Click here](#)

Oprah's
Selected



Mid

- [March 2005](#)
- [February 2005](#)
- [January 2005](#)

- [December 2004](#)
- [November 2004](#)
- [October 2004](#)
- [September 2004](#)
- [August 2004](#)
- [July 2004](#)
- [June 2004](#)
- [June 2004 Bonus](#)
- [May 2004](#)
- [April 2004](#)
- [March 2004](#)
- [February 2004](#)
- [January 2004 Bonus](#)
- [January 2004](#)

- [December 2003](#)
- [December 2003 Bonus](#)
- [November 2003](#)
- [October 2003](#)
- [September 2003](#)
- [August 2003](#)
- [July 2003](#)
- [June 2003](#)
- [May 2003](#)
- [April 2003](#)
- [Mar. 2003](#)
- [Feb. 2003](#)
- [Jan. 2003](#)
- [Dec. 2002](#)
- [Nov. 2002](#)
- [Oct. 2002](#)
- [Sept. 2002](#)
- [Aug. 2002](#)
- [July 2002](#)
- [June 2002](#)
- [May 2002](#)
- [April 2002](#)
- [March 2002](#)
- [Feb. 2002](#)
- [Jan. 2002](#)
- [Dec. 2001](#)
- [Nov. 2001](#)
- [Oct. 2001](#)
- [Sept. 2001](#)
- [Aug. 2001](#)
- [June 2001](#)
- [May 2001](#)
- [April 2001](#)
- [March 2001](#)
- [Feb. 2001](#)
- [Jan. 2001](#)

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BLISS by O.Z. Livaneli -- Now in Paperback

Registered Book Club Offer

New Guides Now Available

This Month's Poll and Tip

This Month's Contest Book: LOVING FRANK by Nancy Horan

Hitting the Books --- Reading Group-Style

September is a time for new beginnings. After summer, where time was measured by the sunny days, the temperature of the water and the direction of the winds, September always draws one up with a jolt as we return to responsibilities and routine. My sons are back in school, and the alarms go off around our house a lot earlier than any of us want to hear them. We ended the summer with a great trip to the Outer Banks and still am kicking the sand from between my toes as I write this. I spent most of our vacation reading while floating in the pool. It had been a hectic summer of sheetrock dust, early mornings and late nights with our office renovation, which took almost four weeks and thus I was happy to do as little as possible to rejuvenate myself. For a blog about what I read as I floated, click [here](#).



This month's update is filled with titles that are just perfect for discussion. One title that we are featuring, [Loving Frank](#) by Nancy Horan, was selected by Borders as their monthly book club choice and Costco also selected this book for September. For those of you who would like to see what another group might be saying about a book, Borders convened a book group to talk about [Loving Frank](#) with Nancy Horan. You can view [here](#).

We know you love to hear from authors about their work. This month we share a special offer from Lorna Landvik, the author of eight novels, including [Angry Housewives Eating Bon Bons](#), [Oh My Stars](#) and [The View from Mount Joy](#), FREE to book groups who will be discussing her books. Click [here](#) or read more about this offer below.

I loved Ann Packer's book [The Dive from Clausen's Pier](#) and thus I immediately gravitated towards reading her latest book, [Songs Without Words](#). It's the story of Liz and Sarabeth, two childhood friends who became like sisters after the suicide of Sarabeth's mom. Liz's teenage

by Jeffrey

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daughter attempts suicide and this act takes a toll on Liz's family, the world as she knows it and her friendship with Sarabeth. I enjoyed it even more than [The Dive from Clausen's Pier](#), which was a lovely surprise.

[Mister Pip](#) by Lloyd Jones, which we featured last month, has been shortlisted for the Man Booker Award, the UK's celebration of the best in fiction. You can see the guide [here](#) for this imaginative story that takes place in Bougainvillea in the South Pacific in the early '90s. During this time of unrest, the single white man still residing on the island will acquaint the children there with the story of Pip from **Great Expectations**, and what they learn will change their lives.

Looking through this month's guides, I found myself making a reading list. My older son loved [Crow Lake](#), thus seeing that Mary Lawson's [The Other Side of the Bridge](#) is now out in paperback, I look forward to reading this one and sharing it with him. I have marked that I want to read this one.

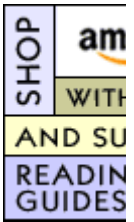
For September we have a very special opportunity for our Registered Book Groups. Our featured title is [Harmony](#) by Joanna Goodman. Groups who have registered with us by September 13th have the chance to win author chats and free books. If your group is not registered, click [here](#) to register. Five groups will have the opportunity to win 12 copies of the book. See more about [Harmony](#) below.

We share three book group interviews this month with [The Bibliomaniacs](#), [Novel Chicks](#) and the [Lifetime Friends Reading Group](#). Susan Nadeau of Northern Colorado explains how she and her fellow [Bibliomaniacs](#) enjoy their reading time --- often including a book-themed meal --- as well as the many trips they take together. RitaSue Harrison of Clarksville, TN tells us how she and the [Novel Chicks](#) have book-themed meals at their meetings, which have ranged from Indian cuisine to circus fare. And Eileen Moody of Mingo Junction, OH and her fellow readers in the [Lifetime Friends Reading Group](#) are childhood friends who have known each other for more than 60 years!

Just as I was getting ready to hit send on this newsletter, I got an email from the folks at Algonquin, who published [Water for Elephants](#) by Sara Gruen. They shared news that this book now has 1,000,000 copies out in paperback. We know that this has become a true book club favorite, so here's to all of you who helped this book hit this milestone. We all know how book club enthusiasm can make a book a success, so bravo to all of you who promote books and reading!

I will be in Miami the weekend of October 19th through 21st for the 25th Anniversary events for Books & Books in Coral Gables, which will include a Book Club Mixer. Living in this area? Be sure to keep tabs on the Books & Books [website](#) for details on this event. Also, for those of you in the New York area, I will be emceeding an event for book groups on Monday evening, October 29th in conjunction with the Women's National Book Association's launch of their National Reading Group Month initiative. More information on this to come.

Here's to a great month of reading as we all hit the books --- reading group-style.



Carol Fitzgerald (Carol@bookreporter.com)

[Click here to read all our Book Club interviews.](#)

THE VIEW FROM MOUNT JOY by Lorna Landvik

When hunky teenage hockey player Joe Andreson and his widowed mother move to Minneapolis, Joe falls under the seductive spell of Kristi Casey, Ole Bull High's libidinous head cheerleader. Joe balances Kristi's lustful manipulation with the down-to-earth companionship of his smart, platonic girlfriend, Darva. But it is Kristi who will prove to be a temptation (and torment) throughout Joe's life.



Years later, having once dreamed of a career in pro hockey or as a globetrotting journalist, Joe can't believe that life has deposited him in the aisles of Haugland Foods. For Joe, everyday life is its own roller-coaster ride, and all he wants to do is hold on tight.

Meanwhile, the path Kristi has charged down is as wild as Joe's is tame --- or at least that's how it seems. But who has really risked more? Who has lived more? And who is truly happy? As Joe discovers, sometimes people are lucky enough to be standing in the one place where the view of the world is breathtaking, if only they'll open their eyes to all there is to see.

-Click [here](#) to request your free copy of the "At Home with Lorna Landvik" DVD.

[Click here to read the guide for **The View from Mount Joy.**](#)

THE FARADAY GIRLS Gift Contest

We are celebrating the release of **The Faraday Girls** by Monica McInerney --- a story about family secrets, the loyalty of sisters and the power of redemption --- with a special contest. You can win a Faraday Girls gift to send to your favorite Aunt! Readers who answer the question correctly by reading an excerpt from the book will be automatically entered to win. One lucky winner will receive the Grand Prize gift that includes a copy of **The Faraday Girls** by Monica McInerney and other goodies that the book's protagonist, Maggie Faraday, sends to her aunts for Christmas, including a glass vase (sans flowers), a crystal necklace, a set of notepaper with a pen, and a box of chocolates. This gift will also include Monica McInerney's other titles, **The Alphabet Sisters** and **Family Baggage**. Five other lucky readers each will win a copy of **The Faraday Girls**.



-Click [here](#) to read an excerpt from **The Faraday Girls**.

Click here for more details about the contest and how to enter.

SONGS WITHOUT WORDS by Ann Packer

Liz and Sarabeth were childhood neighbors in the suburbs of northern California, brought as close as sisters by the suicide of Sarabeth's mother when the girls were just sixteen. In the decades that followed --- through Liz's marriage and the birth of her children, through Sarabeth's attempts to make a happy life for herself despite the shadow cast by her mother's act --- their relationship remained a source of continuity and strength.



But when Liz's adolescent daughter enters dangerous waters that threaten to engulf the family, the fault lines in the women's friendship are revealed, and both Liz and Sarabeth are forced to reexamine their most deeply held beliefs about their connection. This story is about the sometimes confining roles we take on in our closest relationships, about the familial myths that shape us both as children and as parents, and about the limits --- and the power --- of the friendships we create when we are young.

Click here to read the guide for **Songs Without Words**.

GARDEN SPELLS by Sarah Addison Allen

A successful caterer, Claire Waverley prepares dishes made with her mystical plants --- from the nasturtiums that aid in keeping secrets and the pansies that make children thoughtful, to the snapdragons intended to discourage the attentions of her amorous neighbor. Meanwhile, her elderly cousin, Evanelle, is known for distributing unexpected gifts whose uses become uncannily clear. They are the last of the Waverleys --- except for Claire's rebellious sister, Sydney, who fled Bascom the moment she could, abandoning Claire, as their own mother had years before.



When Sydney suddenly returns home with a young daughter of her own, Claire's quiet life is turned upside down --- along with the protective boundary she has so carefully constructed around her heart. Together again in the house they grew up in, Sydney takes stock of all she left behind, as Claire struggles to heal the wounds of the past. And soon the sisters realize they must deal with their common legacy --- if they are ever to feel at home in Bascom --- or with each other.

In this luminous debut novel, Sarah Addison Allen tells the story of that enchanted tree, and the extraordinary people who tend it.

-Click [here](#) to see our One to Watch on Sarah Addison Allen and **Garden Spells** on Bookreporter.com.

Click here to read the guide for **Garden Spells**.

OYSTERCATCHERS by Susan Fletcher

Sixteen-year-old Amy lies in a coma. Her elder sister, Moira, sits beside her in the evenings and tells this story seeking forgiveness and retribution. She tells of her own life --- her secrets, her shameful actions, and her link to the accident that has brought her sister to this bed.

An only child until the age of eleven, Moira perceived the arrival of Amy as a betrayal. Sent away to a boarding school, she became untrusting, inward and lonely. Even after marriage, she continued to doubt herself and that anyone could love her and be faithful. It is only Amy's accident that brings her back to her family, closer to her husband, and closer to understanding the implications of her own dark nature.



Susan Fletcher lyrically probes the pulls of envy, loneliness, and love --- craving it, fearing it, and ultimately recognizing it as the greatest force of

all.

[Click here to read the guide for **Oystercatchers**.](#)

THE GREAT MAN by Kate Christensen

Oscar Feldman, the "Great Man," was a New York City painter of the heroic generation of the forties and fifties. But instead of the abstract canvases of the Pollocks and Rothkos, he stubbornly hewed to painting one subject --- the female nude. When he died in 2001, he left behind a wife, Abigail, an autistic son, and a sister, Maxine, herself a notable abstract painter --- all duly noted in the *New York Times* obituary.



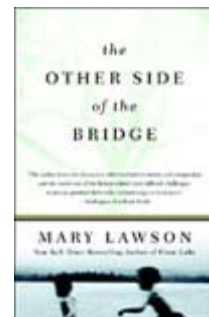
What no one knows is that Oscar Feldman led an entirely separate life in Brooklyn with his longtime mistress, Teddy St. Cloud, and their twin daughters. Now two rival biographers, book contracts in hand, are circling around Feldman's life story, and each of these three women --- Abigail, Maxine, and Teddy --- will have a chance to tell the truth as they experienced it.

[The Great Man](#) is a scintillating comedy of life among the avant-garde --- of the untidy truths, needy egos, and jostlings for position behind the glossy facade of artistic greatness. Not a pretty picture --- but a provocative and entertaining one that incarnates the take-no-prisoners satirical spirit of Dawn Powell and Mary McCarthy.

[Click here to read the guide for **The Great Man**.](#)

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BRIDGE by Mary Lawson -- Now in Paperback

Two brothers, Arthur and Jake Dunn, are the sons of a farmer in the mid-1930s, when life is tough and another world war is looming. Arthur is reticent, solid, dutiful and set to inherit the farm and his father's character; Jake is younger, attractive, mercurial and dangerous to know --- the family misfit. When a beautiful young woman comes into the community, the fragile balance of sibling rivalry tips over the edge.



Then there is Ian, the family's next generation, and far

too sure he knows the difference between right and wrong. By now it is the fifties, and the world has changed --- a little, but not enough.

These two generations in the small town of Struan, Ontario, are tragically interlocked, linked by fate and community but separated by a war which devours its young men --- its unimaginable horror reaching right into the heart of this remote corner of an empire. With her astonishing ability to turn the ratchet of tension slowly and delicately, Lawson builds their story to a shocking climax.

[Click here to read the guide for **The Other Side of the Bridge**.](#)

MOMMY TRACKED by Whitney Gaskell

In [Mommy Tracked](#), author Whitney Gaskell turns her eye to motherhood, introducing us to four moms who find comfort and sanity in each other while struggling to maintain balanced lives.



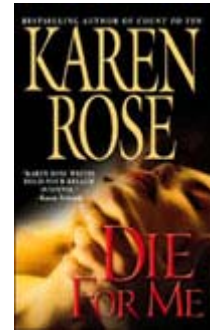
Anna is a single mother, still reeling from a divorce and annoyed by her mother's advice to find a man soon, despite Anna's deep-seated fears of falling in love. Grace has a terrific husband and three endearing little girls, yet her stepmother's degrading remarks lead her to take dangerous measures in the quest to be thin after pregnancy. Juliet is a powerful attorney whose stay-at-home husband does such a great job of caring for their twins that she has begun to wonder whether she is even a part of her own family anymore. The newest addition to their group of friends, Chloe, watches helplessly as her husband shirks his dad duties in favor of living like a carefree bachelor.

Together, these charismatic women will transform their lives ... while making time for play dates too.

[Click here to read the guide for **Mommy Tracked**.](#)

DIE FOR ME by Karen Rose

In this intriguing thriller, the first victim is found in a snow-covered Philadelphia field. Detective Vito Ciccotelli enlists the aid of archaeologist Sophie Johannsen to determine exactly what lies beneath the frozen ground. Despite years of unearthing things long buried, nothing can prepare Sophie for the matrix of graves dug with chilling precision. The victims buried there haunt her. But the empty graves terrify her --- the killer isn't done yet.

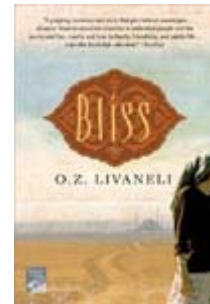


The killer is cold and calculating, the master of a twisted game. Even with Vito and Sophie hot on his trail, he will not stop. One more empty grave must be filled, and one last scream must be heard --- the scream of an archaeologist who is too close for comfort and too near to resist.

[Click here to read the guide for **Die for Me**.](#)

BLISS by O.Z. Livaneli -- Now in Paperback

Bliss is the story of Meryem, a young girl who is raped by her uncle. An outcast for shaming her family, she is locked in the barn and expected to kill herself. When she refuses to do so, her cousin and childhood playmate Cemal is charged with carrying out the honor killing, to "take her to Istanbul" as the village euphemism goes. By chance, their paths cross with Irfan, an older and sophisticated professor from Istanbul who has abandoned his elite existence. Together they embark on a journey that sets them free.



Beautifully wrought and simply told, **Bliss** captures universal truths forged in the space between people from opposite ends of a complicated culture. Already an international bestseller, this lyrical and moving tale juxtaposes the traditional and modern and draws attention to human rights violations against women in the Middle East.

[Click here to read the guide for **Bliss**.](#)

Registered Book Club Offer

For September we have a very special opportunity for Registered Book Groups. Our featured title is [Harmony](#) by Joanna Goodman. Groups who have registered with us by September 13th have the chance to win author chats and free books. If your group is not registered, [click here to register](#).



[Harmony](#) by Joanna Goodman --- Five groups will have the opportunity to win 12 copies of the book.

More about [Harmony](#):

Anne Mahroum knows she's lucky. She has a loving husband and a comfortable living. She's a successful artist in her own right --- refurbishing tables at her shop, Anne of Green Tables --- and she is a new mother.

But Anne is also beset by a deep-seated discontent, by anxiety over her baby son's severely club feet, and by a sudden need to know more about the mystery surrounding her and her mother's abrupt escape from their hometown out West when she was five. Anne's mother Jean never speaks about their past. She is vague about who Anne's father is and why she broke all ties with her family so completely. Now that Anne has her own child, she feels a need to connect to the people of her origins, yet at the same time, she can't help being embarrassed by her imperfect son, and ashamed by her failure to accept him as he is.

As Anne struggles to care for Evan through painful casting and surgeries, she begins pressing her mother to reveal the truth --- never anticipating that the truth might be more than she wanted to know about where she comes from and who she is.

[Click here to register your group.](#)

New Guides Now Available

The following guides are now available on [ReadingGroupGuides.com](#):

- [At First Sight](#) by Nicholas Sparks
- [The Birthdays](#) by Heidi Pitlor
- [Bliss](#) by O.Z. Livaneli
- [Daughter of the Sun](#) by Barbara Wood
- [Die for Me](#) by Karen Rose
- [Garden Spells](#) by Sarah Addison Allen
- [The Great Man](#) by Kate Christensen
- [Harmony](#) by Joanna Goodman



[Imposture](#) by Benjamin Markovits
[Just Beyond the Clouds](#) by Karen Kingsbury
[Loving Frank](#) by Nancy Horan
[The Meaning of Night](#) by Michael Cox
[Mommy Tracked](#) by Whitney Gaskell
[Night of Sorrows](#) by Frances Sherwood
[Odd Mom Out](#) by Jane Porter
[One Good Turn](#) by Kate Atkinson
[One Mississippi](#) by Mark Childress
[The Other Side of the Bridge](#) by Mary Lawson
[Oystercatchers](#) by Susan Fletcher
[Poison](#) by Susan Fromberg Schaeffer
[The Ruby in Her Navel](#) by Barry Unsworth
[The Sea Captain's Wife](#) by Martha Hodes
[Songs Without Words](#) by Ann Packer
[The View from Mount Joy](#) by Lorna Landvik

Please note that these titles, for which we already had the guides when they appeared in hardcover, are now available in paperback:

[Cage of Stars](#) by Jacquelyn Mitchard
[When Madeline Was Young](#) by Jane Hamilton

We have the following new guides for Christian book groups:

[The Clear Light of Day](#) by Penelope Wilcock
[Fuse of Armageddon](#) by Sigmund Brouwer and Hank Hanegraaff
[Informed Consent](#) by Sandra Glahn
[Providence: Once Upon a Second Chance](#) by Chris Coppernoll

This Month's Poll and Tip

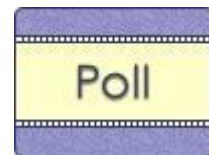
Poll:

Be honest. Have you ever not finished a book that your group was discussing?

Yes, this happens a lot.
Yes, this happens a few times.
I did this once.
No, this has not happened to me.

How do you feel about people who have not read the book attending your book group discussions?

I really do not like it when people have not read the book, but still show up.
We have some members who never finish the book, but I do not mind having them there.



This is a real problem with our group.
We all always finish the book, so this is not a problem.
I am not sure how I feel about this.

Tip for September:

Share your all-time favorite book with members of your group.

[Click here to answer the poll.](#)

This Month's Contest Book: LOVING FRANK by Nancy Horan

Win a copy of [Loving Frank](#) by Nancy Horan for your reading group!

To be a group to win 20 free copies of this book, all you have to do is sign up for the [ReadingGroupGuides.com newsletter](#) by October 1, 2007. If you are receiving this newsletter in your mailbox, you already are signed up!



More about [Loving Frank](#):

In 1903, Mamah and her husband, Edwin, had commissioned a renowned architect to design a new home for them: Frank Lloyd Wright. During the construction of the house, a powerful attraction developed between Mamah and Frank, and in time the lovers, each married with children, embarked on a course that would shock Chicago society and forever change their lives.

In this ambitious debut novel, fact and fiction blend together brilliantly. While scholars have largely relegated Mamah to a footnote in the life of America's greatest architect, author Nancy Horan gives full weight to their dramatic love story and illuminates Cheney's profound influence on Wright. Drawing on years of research, Horan weaves little-known facts into a compelling narrative, vividly portraying the conflicts and struggles of a woman forced to choose between the roles of mother, wife, lover, and intellectual. Mamah's is an unforgettable journey marked by choices that reshape her notions of love and responsibility, leading inexorably ultimately lead to this novel's stunning conclusion.

[Click here to read contest details and rules.](#)

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