

## Four essential reads to soak up the sun this summer

*PBS Books Readers Club announces its 2024 summer reading list, comprised of delicious page-turners for book lovers to devour*

*Detroit, MI* — May 23, 2024 – Whether you plan to staycation, lounge by the pool or soak in the sun by the lake, summer is the perfect time to slow down and savor a few essential reads. The [PBS Books Readers Club](#) is featuring some of the season’s hottest, fresh fiction from four contemporary and sought-after authors: *Rachel Khong, Olivia Ford, Percival Everett and Tana French*. These page turners check every box, ranging in category from philosophical and emotive to heartwarming and redemptive to adventurous and darkly humorous to suspenseful and alluring.

“To me, a great summer read is a book you get lost in while you’re reading it, and you can’t wait to talk about when you’re done!” says Lauren Smith, co-host and executive producer of the PBS Books Readers Club. “The books selected vary widely across genres and are replete with riveting storylines and memorable characters — they’re each a must-read, perfect for those lazy summer days.”

Beginning this month, [PBS Books Readers Club](#) will feature one of these authors in its monthly digital video series.

### **“Real Americans,” by Rachel Khong, Wednesday, May 29 @ 8 p.m.**

In honor of [Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month](#), [PBS Books Readers Club](#) dives into this highly anticipated novel from award-winning Rachel Khong, author of “Goodbye, Vitamin.” Khong discusses this sweeping family drama that tells the story of three generations of Chinese Americans, raising questions about identity, what it means to be real Americans and wrestles with issues of class, race and genetics.

The novel is narrated by three members of the same family: May, the Chinese-born matriarch; her American daughter, Lily; and Lily’s biracial son, Nick. The novel begins in 1999 in New York City, when 22-year-old Lily Chen, an unpaid intern at a slick media company, meets Matthew, heir to a pharmaceutical empire. Matthew is everything Lily is not yet despite all this, Lily and Matthew fall in love and eventually have a child, Nick.

Fast forward to 2021, Nick has never felt like he belonged on the isolated Washington island where he lives with his single mother, Lily. He can’t shake the sense she’s hiding something. When Nick sets out to find his biological father, the journey threatens to raise more questions than it provides answers.

### **“Mrs. Quinn’s Rise to Fame,” by Olivia Ford, Wednesday, June 27 @ 8 p.m.**

Lauded by The New York Times, The Washington Post and NPR, this debut novel by Olivia Ford is a delightful, coming-of-old-age tale. Jenny Quinn, a 77-year-old homemaker has lived a quiet life with her husband of nearly 60 years. But as she ages, she aches for more meaning, so she applies and wins a spot on the popular British show, “Britain Bakes.”

Jenny delights in a new-found independence. But that independence, and the stress of the competition, starts to unearth memories and a secret buried decades ago. With her baking star rising, Jenny struggles to keep a lid on that first secret—a long-concealed deceit that threatens to

shatter the very foundations of her marriage. By putting herself in the limelight, has Jenny created a recipe for disaster? PBS viewers who are loyal fans of [“Great American Recipe.”](#) will love this charming read.

**“James,” by Percival Everett, Wednesday, July 24 @ 8 p.m.**

Enjoy a robust discussion with Pulitzer Prize finalist, Percival Everett about his new release, “James.” An instant New York Times bestseller, this brilliant, action-packed reimagining of “Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,” is harrowing, darkly humorous and brimming with scathing observations.

When the enslaved Jim overhears that he is about to be sold to a man in New Orleans—to be separated from his wife and child forever, he decides to hide on nearby Jackson Island until he can formulate a plan. Meanwhile, Huck Finn has faked his own death to escape his violent father who recently returned to town. Thus begins the dangerous and transcendent journey by raft down the Mississippi River toward the elusive and too-often-unreliable promise of the Free States and beyond.

Fans of [PBS’ Passport](#) catalog and [Ken Burns’ historical films](#), including his series on [Mark Twain](#) will enjoy this thrilling and soulful novel.

**“The Hunter,” by Tana French, Wednesday, Aug. 28 @ 8 p.m.**

Lastly, New York Times bestselling author Tana French talks with [PBS Books Readers Club](#) about her latest novel, “The Hunter,” the sequel to “The Searcher.” In “The Hunter,” French weaves a nuanced tale of loyalty and retribution and what we sacrifice when the two collide.

Set a small village in the West of Ireland, two men enter the town. One of them is coming home. Both of them are coming to get rich. One of them is coming to die.

Cal Hooper took early retirement from Chicago PD and moved to rural Ireland looking for peace and has built a relationship with a local woman, Lena and her daughter, Trey. Once Trey’s absentee father reappears, bringing along an English millionaire and a scheme to find gold in the townland, suddenly everything the three of them have been building is under threat. Cal and Lena are both ready to do whatever it takes to protect Trey, but Trey doesn’t want protecting, she wants revenge.

Fans of PBS’ [“Grantchester”](#) and [“Hotel Portofino”](#) will love this tense and immersive read.

**PBS Books Readers Club by the Numbers**

Since its inception in January 2024, the [PBS Books Readers Club](#) has experienced explosive growth. Currently the [PBS Books Readers Club](#) Facebook group has more than 100,000 members and has generated 1.2-million-episode views and nearly 2.8 million views in total with social media promotional posts included. Its audience engagement has generated more than 250,000+ likes, loves, shares, comments.

“It’s been so much fun to see the lively interaction between readers in the PBS Books Readers Club Facebook group and during our monthly events, and talking to authors about their writing process and inspiration always makes us appreciate their books even more!” said Smith.

The [PBS Books Readers Club](#) was launched as an initiative between [PBS Books](#), [Detroit PBS](#) and [PBS](#) as a national online hub for avid readers who enjoy public television.

Here are a few recent comments from our readers:

*Thanks PBS Books! That was amazing! I'm really enjoying this book!*

*This interview has expanded my love for this book. Thank you! I loved the stories behind the characters...*

*This is such a good idea – love it ...I hope you will do it again.*

To learn more, please visit [www.pbsbooks.org](http://www.pbsbooks.org).

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### **About the PBS Books Readers Club**

The [PBS Books Readers Club](#) is a multi-platform initiative connecting a community of readers nationwide to diverse and important stories by many of today's most prolific and thought-provoking authors and PBS personalities.

The online platform offerings include a [new monthly digital video series](#) featuring in-depth conversations with authors, weekly social media content, a biweekly [e-newsletter](#) with book-related articles and book recommendations plus an interactive [PBS Books Readers Club Facebook Group](#) where readers can chat, discover new books, and submit questions for authors featured in the digital-first streaming series. Each month an extended interview with the authors is made available to station members who have PBS Passport; find out more about Passport [here](#).

Viewers can sign up on [Facebook](#), our [YouTube channel](#) and for the [PBS Books newsletter](#).

### **[About PBS Books \(PBSBooks.org\)](#)**

Started in 2015, PBS Books is a trusted national brand and a multiplatform initiative connecting diverse audiences to literature through PBS stations and programming, daily and original content, book fairs, conferences, live performances, screenings and other book-related events. The vision of PBS Books is to foster a community of people engaged in unique literary experiences that spark curiosity, promote dialogue and inspire learning. PBS Books aims to provide context for complex issues — both national and local. In early 2019 with the support of the Knight Foundation and the Wyncote Foundation, PBS Books launched a free Library Engagement Program. Currently, PBS Books has a library and museum engagement network of 2,000+ partners nationwide. PBS Books also produces regular virtual programming with significant authors and filmmakers, partnering with the Library of Congress, the Institute of Library and Museum Services, major publishers, and other significant institutions promoting critical dialogue about current topics and crucial issues across the U.S.

### **[About Detroit PBS \(detroitpbs.org\)](#)**

Detroit PBS is Michigan's only community-licensed public television station, operating independently of any educational institution or governmental entity. With more than 2 million weekly viewers across its five TV channels, Detroit PBS is the state's largest and most watched public television station, boasting the most diverse public television audience in America. Formerly known as Detroit Public TV, Detroit PBS reaches nearly 4 million visitors on average each month

through its websites, YouTube channels and social media platforms. Its listener-supported radio station, 90.9 WRCJ, is Detroit's only classical and jazz station, reaching a local and worldwide audience and averaging 280,000 streams per month. Licensed to Detroit Public Media, Detroit PBS is governed by a volunteer board of trustees representing the local business, civic and cultural communities.

### **[About PBS \(PBS.org\)](#)**

**[PBS](#)**, with more than 330 member stations, offers all Americans the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and digital content. Each month, PBS reaches over 42 million adults on linear primetime television, more than 15 million users on PBS-owned streaming platforms, and 56 million people view PBS content on social media, inviting them to experience the worlds of science, history, nature, and public affairs; to hear diverse viewpoints; and to take front-row seats to world-class drama and performances. PBS's broad array of programs has been consistently honored by the industry's most coveted award competitions.