

Kaleidoscope Book Club

November Prompt

Theme: Seasoned Stories (Stories w/ Queer Elders/Characters 30+)

Celebrate the wisdom of queer elders with books featuring older LGBTQIA+ characters, intergenerational relationships, or community members sharing their experiences across generations. Read about characters over 30, aging in the LGBTQIA+ community, or the bonds between elders and younger generations. Books should center LGBTQIA+ characters or be written by authors from the community. Fiction, nonfiction, or memoir are welcome. Books from any category—adult, young adult, juvenile—are welcome.

The below titles are all available in print or other physical formats via our catalog - either at your local library or through consortium sharing. Some titles may also be available through our E-book services, Hoopla and Libby. Please note for any given title, we cannot guarantee immediate availability - some may already be checked out or have a waitlist. Happy reading!

Fiction

A/S/L — Jeanne Thornton

A transformational, transformative story about video games, three queer friends, and the code(s) they learn to survive. [Literary fiction, adult protagonists aged 30+] (Trans representation; queer friendship)

Bingo Love — Tee Franklin

Hazel and Mari fall in love as teenagers in 1963 and find each other again decades later as older women. [Graphic novel, romance, older adult protagonists] (Black lesbian protagonists; F/F romance)

The Heart's Invisible Furies — John Boyne

Cyril Avery's life unfolds across decades of Irish history, from his birth in 1945 through social repression, relationships, and the AIDS crisis. [Literary historical fiction, adult, childhood through older adulthood] (Gay protagonist)

The House in the Cerulean Sea — TJ Klune

Forty-year-old caseworker Linus Baker visits a remote orphanage for magical children and discovers unexpected friendship, belonging, and love. [Fantasy, adult, older protagonist] (Gay protagonist; M/M romance; queer found family.)

The Incandescent — Emily Tesh

A dark academic fantasy set in an elite magical institution, exploring power, ambition, and the complicated relationships within its walls. [Fantasy, adult, protagonist aged 30+] (Queer romance.)

In One Person — John Irving

Narrator Billy Abbott looks back on decades of desire, secrecy, relationships, and the search for a language to describe his sexuality. [Literary fiction, adolescence through older adulthood] (Bisexual rep)

The Keeper's Six — Kate Elliott

Esther Green, a determined mother and leader of a team of interdimensional travelers, reunites her crew to rescue her grown son from a dragon. [Fantasy novella, middle-aged protagonist with an adult child] (Queer romance)

Less — Andrew Sean Greer

Nearly fifty-year-old novelist Arthur Less accepts a series of invitations around the world to avoid attending his former lover's wedding. [Literary comedy, middle aged protagonist] (Gay protagonist)

Light from Uncommon Stars — Ryka Aoki

A demanding violin teacher, a young trans violinist, and a retired starship captain become connected through music, supernatural bargains, and the search for belonging. [Science fiction and fantasy, intergenerational queer characters] (Trans protagonist; queer found family)

The Master — Colm Tóibín

This historical novel imagines the inner life of writer Henry James as he navigates artistic ambition, loneliness, desire, and complicated personal relationships in late-19th-century Europe. [Literary historical fiction, middle-aged protagonist] (Queer historical lens)

Mr. Loverman — Bernardine Evaristo

Barrington Walker, a 74-year-old Antiguan-born man living in London, has spent decades hiding his relationship with his childhood friend Morris while maintaining a marriage and family. [Contemporary literary fiction, older protagonist] Gay protagonist; M/M relationship)

Our Wives Under the Sea — Julia Armfield

After a disastrous deep-sea expedition, Leah returns to her wife Miri changed in ways neither woman can fully explain, testing their marriage and their understanding of loss. [Literary horror, adult protagonists] (F/F relationship)

Frontier — Grace Curtis

Fusing the fire and brimstone of the American Old West with sprawling post-apocalyptic science fiction, Frontier is a heartfelt queer romance in a high noon standoff set against the backdrop of our planet's uncertain future. [Science fiction, adult protagonists aged 30+] (Queer romance and characters)

Godkiller — Hannah Kaner

A warrior who hunts gods, a young nobleman, and a disgraced knight become connected in a fantasy world where gods are dangerous and faith carries a price. [Epic fantasy, adult, protagonists ranging from their late 20s to early 30s] (Queer representation))

The Seep — Chana Porter

After an alien presence transforms society, fifty-year-old trans woman Trina must face a crisis when her wife begins imagining a different life and identity. [Speculative fiction, adult/middle-aged protagonist] (Trans woman protagonist; lesbian relationship)

The Secret Life of Albert Entwistle — Matt Cain

On the verge of retirement at 64, closeted postman Albert begins searching for the man he loved decades earlier, hoping it isn't too late to build a different life. [Contemporary fiction, older adult protagonist] (Gay protagonist; M/M relationships)

The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo — Taylor Jenkins Reid

An aging Hollywood star tells the story of her career, marriages, and great love to a young journalist, revealing the price of hiding her true self. [Historical and contemporary fiction, older protagonist] (Bisexual and other queer rep; F/F relationships)

A Single Man — Christopher Isherwood

One day in the life of George Falconer, a 58-year-old English professor grieving the death of his partner, becomes a quiet portrait of love, isolation, and invisibility. [Literary fiction, older adult protagonist] (Gay protagonist)

Spent — Alison Bechdel

A fictionalized Alison Bechdel runs a goat sanctuary in Vermont while navigating creative frustration, relationships, and the anxieties of contemporary life alongside familiar queer characters. [Graphic novel, middle-aged protagonist] (Lesbian protagonist; queer representation.)

This Is How You Lose the Time War — Amal El-Mohtar and Max Gladstone

Two rival agents fighting on opposite sides of a time-spanning war exchange letters that gradually become an intimate love story. [Science-fiction novella, timeless adults?!?] (Sapphic romance; F/F relationship)

Triple Sec — TJ Alexander

A woman in an established marriage becomes involved with a charismatic bartender and discovers the possibilities and complications of a polyamorous relationship. [Contemporary romance, 30+ adult protagonist] (Queer romance; trans and nonbinary author.)

Vicious — V. E. Schwab

Former college roommates Victor Vale and Eli Cardale become bitter enemies after experiments intended to produce extraordinary abilities turn deadly. Their rivalry unfolds across years, exploring ambition, revenge, and the consequences of their choices. [Dark speculative fantasy, young adulthood into later adulthood] (Asexual representation)

Nonfiction

Baldwin: A Love Story — Nicholas Boggs

A biography of James Baldwin that examines his personal relationships alongside the people, experiences, and creative connections that shaped his writing and public life. [Biography, adult, Baldwin from adolescence through his early 60s] (Gay Black writer.)

Bayard Rustin: A Legacy of Protest and Politics — edited by Michael G. Long

A collection of essays exploring the life and work of Bayard Rustin, the gay Quaker, pacifist, and civil rights organizer who helped plan the 1963 March on Washington. [Biography and essays] (Gay Black historical figure)

Conversations with People Who Hate Me — Dylan Marron

Marron reflects on conversations with people who sent him hateful messages online, exploring what happens when people engage with one another rather than simply trading insults. [Memoir and essays] (Gay author)

The Fixed Stars — Molly Wizenberg

Wizenberg recounts falling in love with a woman at 36 while married to a man, then navigating divorce, coming out, parenting, and changing relationships. [Memoir, adult] (Queer relationships; nonbinary rep)

I Heard Her Call My Name: A Memoir of Transition — Lucy Sante

Sante describes coming out as a trans woman in her 60s and reconsidering a lifetime of memories, relationships, and assumptions about identity. [Memoir] (Trans woman author)

It Rhymes with Takei — George Takei

A graphic memoir about Takei's life, including his experiences in the closet, his career, and his journey toward living openly. [Graphic memoir, spans childhood to older adulthood] (Gay Japanese American author)

Marsha: The Joy and Defiance of Marsha P. Johnson — Tourmaline

A portrait of activist and performer Marsha P. Johnson, exploring her influence on queer liberation, her community work, and her care for people affected by the AIDS crisis. [Biography,] (Black trans woman; queer and trans activism)

The Mayor of Castro Street: The Life and Times of Harvey Milk — Randy Shilts

A detailed biography of Harvey Milk, examining his political rise in San Francisco and his importance to the gay rights movement. [Biography] (Gay historical figure; LGBTQ+ political history.)

The Old Gays Guide to the Good Life: Lessons Learned About Love and Death, Sex and Sin, and Saving the Best for Last — Mick Peterson, Bill Lyons, Robert Reeves, and Jessay Martin

Four older gay men share life stories and advice about love, loss, sex, friendship, the AIDS crisis, and growing older. [Memoir and advice] (Gay authors)

Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches — Audre Lorde

A collection of influential essays and speeches exploring race, gender, sexuality, power, and social justice. [Essays and speeches] (Black lesbian author)

Ten Steps to Nanette: A Memoir Situation — Hannah Gadsby

Gadsby traces the experiences that shaped their comedy and the creation of Nanette, examining identity, misogyny, homophobia, trauma, and the power of telling the truth. [Memoir] (Queer, nonbinary author)

Not Available in EMPL's Catalog

The below titles are not available in print via the EMPL catalog or through consortium sharing. They may be available through Libby, Hoopla, and may be able to be requested through interlibrary loan. Any questions or requests, please contact reference@monroepl.org

External Fiction Recs

Arthur and Teddy Are Coming Out — Ryan Love

After a lifetime in the closet, 79-year-old Arthur comes out to his family, while his 21-year-old grandson Teddy struggles with whether to reveal his own secret. [Contemporary feel-good fiction, intergenerational protagonists] (Gay protagonists; M/M relationships)

Burning Roses — S. L. Huang

Two older women, a Chinese archer and a Western gunslinger, team up to face dangerous creatures in a fantasy world inspired by fairy tales. [Fantasy novella, middle-aged to older protagonists] (Queer characters)

The Care and Feeding of Waspish Widows — Olivia Waite

A widowed printer and a beekeeper develop feelings for each other in Regency England as political unrest and a royal scandal disrupt their lives. [Historical romance, middle-aged protagonists] (F/F romance)

Mrs. Martin's Incomparable Adventure — Courtney Milan

Bertrice Martin, 73, and Violetta Beauchamps, 69, join forces to thwart a cruel relative and discover love along the way. [Historical romance novella, older protagonists] (F/F romance.)

Now and Then — William Corlett

Nearly fifty-year-old Christopher Metcalfe searches for Stephen, the older school prefect he loved as a teenager, revisiting memories of first love and regret. [Literary fiction, middle aged protagonists] (Gay protagonist; M/M relationships)

External Non-Fiction Recs

Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women, and the Rest of Us — Kate Bornstein

A work blending memoir, performance, and social commentary to challenge rigid ideas about gender and the categories used to define people. [Memoir and essays] (Trans and nonbinary author)

Marie Equi: Radical Politics and Outlaw Passions — Michael Helquist

A biography of Oregon physician and labor activist Marie Equi, examining her political work, personal relationships, and life as a lesbian during the early 20th century. [Biography] (Lesbian historical figure)

My Butch Career: A Memoir — Esther Newton

Anthropologist Esther Newton reflects on her career, relationships, and life as a butch lesbian, connecting her personal experiences to the history of queer communities. [Memoir] (Butch lesbian author)

Native Country of the Heart: A Memoir — Cherrie Moraga

Moraga explores her relationship with her mother as illness and aging reshape their lives, reflecting on family, cultural identity, and memory. [Memoir] (Chicana lesbian author)

Queer Elders: Lives and Life Lessons — Juno Roche

Interviews with queer elders explore aging, identity, activism, and what it means to grow older within LGBTQ+ communities. [Interview collection] (Trans author; a range of LGBTQ+ identities and lived experiences.)

A Two-Spirit Journey: The Autobiography of a Lesbian Ojibwa-Cree Elder — Ma-Nee Chacaby

Chacaby recounts her life as an Indigenous woman, including childhood trauma, discrimination, addiction, survival, and her journey toward sobriety and healing. [Memoir] (Two-Spirit lesbian author; Indigenous)