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## Book Club Companion: Meeting Planning Guide for Readers of *The Fixed Stars*



All titles highlighted in the Book Club Companion can be found here— <https://hoopladigital.com/collection/11032>

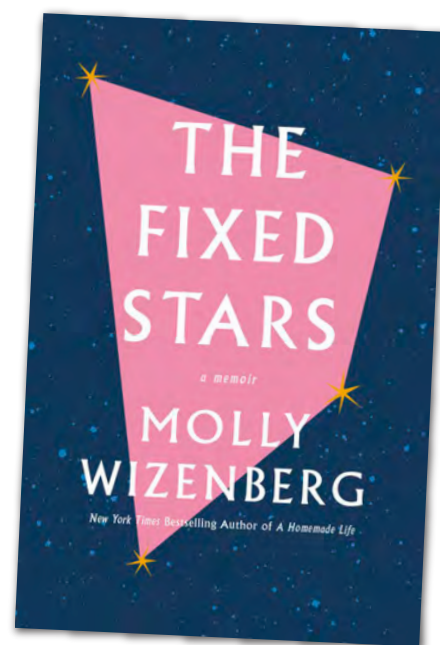
# BOOK CLUB COMPANION: PLANNING YOUR MEETING AROUND *THE FIXED STARS*

***“The Fixed Stars, like its protagonist, is both brave and sexy, both heady and bodily, and I ripped through this memoir like it was the most erudite romance novel in the world. This is a truly compelling look at sexuality, marriage, and parenthood in this century.”***

— Emma Straub, author of *All Adults Here* and *The Vacationers*

Did you, like us at hoopla (and Emma Straub), devour *The Fixed Stars* and now find yourself hungry for ways to connect with others and talk about the magnificent book you just read? Welcome to our Book Club Companion — full of ideas on ways to connect around related, additional titles available now! In this meeting planning guide, we'll explore LGBTQ+ graphic novels, recipes for book club bites inspired by Delancey restaurant, films about the way love evolves through a lifetime, and titles featured in *The Fixed Stars* bibliography. We've even surfaced a book Spotlight author Molly Wizenberg wrote the foreword for full of simple gestures for keeping connected — perfect for sharing with your book club friends.

See the full collection of titles in this document here, or click each individual section for the titles mentioned within.



## BOOK CLUBS: A MEETING BETWEEN FRIENDS

Before writing *The Fixed Stars*, Molly Wizenberg wrote two other memoirs, a popular blog, and the foreword to this book — *A Year Between Friends: 3193 Miles Apart*.

In Chapter 2 of our Spotlight, Molly is discussing differences between she and Brandon's approach to life, noting, “Meanwhile, I’m quietly reveling in making an excellent pot of soup, getting high on the ecstasy of clean sheets.”

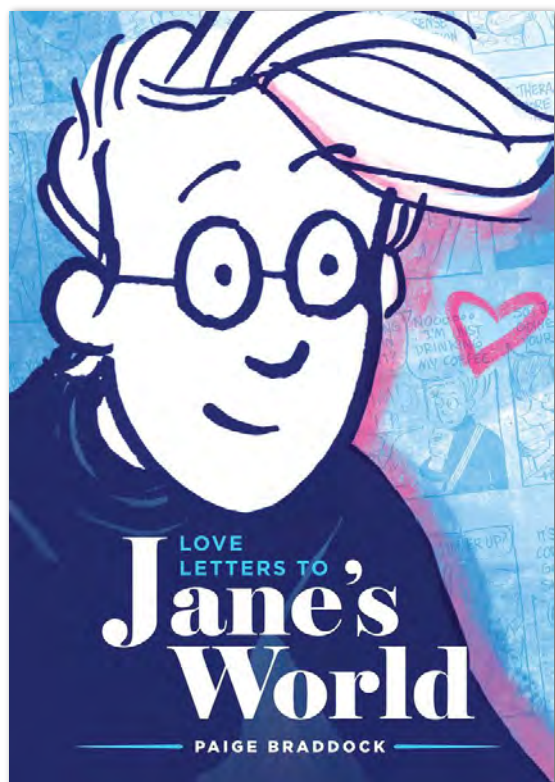
It's these quiet moments and vignettes we love so much about the book, and it's moments like this you can make for yourself and club members with *A Year Between Friends* as a springboard. In this season, as life has changed as we write this due to the pandemic, it can be hard to find true, organic connection — maybe even in your book club, as meetings have largely moved online. Why not spend the month you read *The Fixed Stars* committing to sending one or more book club members simple connections — everyday photos, handmade trinkets, a recipe for your own favorite soup? After all, some of the best book clubs are comprised of the best friends — no matter how many miles or what circumstances might separate them.





## GET THE PICTURE: COMING OUT IN COMICS

Jane Wyatt first appeared in Paige Braddock's trailblazing comic strip about a young lesbian woman making her clumsy way in the world and the friends who later help (or hinder) her along the journey. The Eisner-nominated *Jane's World* was the first syndicated comic strip with a lesbian main character to appear in many major newspaper markets. This essential *Jane's World* collection debuts twenty years after, with quintessentially "Jane" storylines from the strip's early, middle, and later years, and pairs them with "love letters" and notes of appreciation from notable fans.



“ ”

"*Jane's World* remains a warm, hilarious voice in queer cartooning, a strip whose pioneering feat was to assure its readers, gay or straight, that the love of found family is universally glorious and goofy in nearly equal measure."

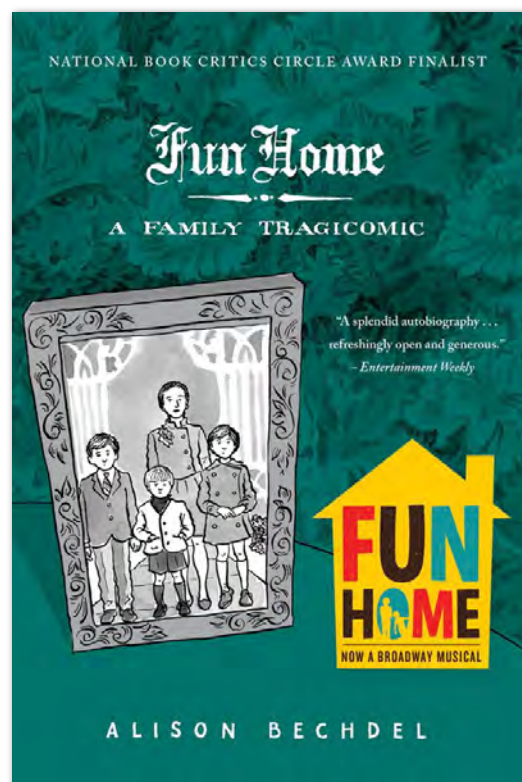
SHANNON WATTERS, Editor, *Lumberjanes*



For many, the experience of coming out rides parallel to the experience of finding community, and oneself. In hoopla's comics catalog, we highlight several graphic novels and quintessential comics that illustrate LGBTQ+ voices in the poignant way that only this medium can. Even Molly Wizenberg can trace her own experience back to comics; you'll find Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home* mentioned in her book, about which she says...

"The way I looked at Nora, I'd also looked at Brandon. I remembered it. Was I bisexual? Was that the word for me? Queer?—There's a scene in *Fun Home* where Alison Bechdel, then a four- or five- year old girl, sees a butch dyke walk into a diner wearing dungarees, boots, and a set of keys on her belt loop. It's a powerful moment, young Bechdel seeing a glimpse of who she is, and who she wants to be..."

Find the whole collection of comics at  
<https://www.hoopladigital.com/collection/11015>





## FAMILY PORTRAIT: KIDS OF LGBTQ+ PARENTS

A stunning photobook featuring more than fifty portraits of children brought up by gay parents in America, sixth in a groundbreaking series—available on hoopla—that looks at LGBTQ communities around the world.

“In this book of powerful photographs and moving texts, Gabriela Herman traces the reality of gay families in America: who the kids are, how they think of their parents, what they look like. It’s a testament to diversity, inclusion, and integrity, a book full of both pride and introspection, an important document for our time.” – Andrew Solomon, author of *Far from the Tree*



“For a long time many of us kids of LGBTQ parents have felt caught between two worlds, a little too queer for the straight community and at times a little too straight for the queer community. But here, in this beautiful collection of portraits, there is irrefutable evidence that we are, in fact, our own community.”

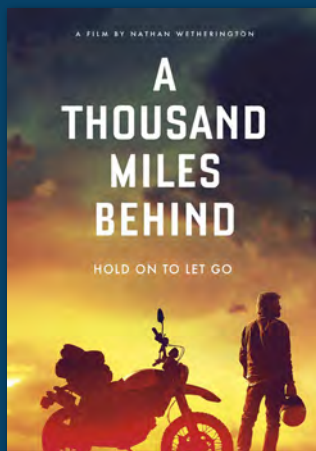
– Alysia Abbott, author of *Fairyland*

“I vividly remember the first time I saw Gabriela’s portraits of *The Kids*...that feeling of connection, being seen, and being given a voice through this stunning visual articulation of who we are—as diverse as 6 million people can be, as united in our shared experiences as any who share a meaningful identity can be. This is more than a book of portraits. This is... a narrative of a culture—our culture—created by a photographer who clearly knows our souls.”

– Annie Van Avery, executive director of COLAGE

## SCREENING ROOM: JOURNEYS FOR LOVE

Love evolves through our lifetime, in ways big and small. Sometimes – such as Molly’s journey toward meeting Ash – those shifts are seismic and life altering. Through these films available on hoopla, explore the sacrifices and circumstances along each character’s journey for love in these emotion-stirring and relatable stories.\*



\*Note – not all titles available in all territories.

## BOOK CLUB BITES: DELANCEY & ESSEX

Though Molly Wizenberg's life has moved away from days running restaurants, as her previous memoir is titled for and pays homage to she and Brandon's Seattle pizza restaurant – Delancey, and the opening of this and bar Essex are core to her journey in *The Fixed Stars*, it seems only appropriate that your book club menu should touch on this history.

We've gathered recipes from our favorite cookbooks centered on pizza and other Italian favorites to echo Delancey's menu. Also, you'll find a few cocktail books here too—and a mocktail book for balance—inspired by Essex's creatively crafted drinks. Check out our full collection here, highlights from which include...



### Pizza Camp

The ultimate guide to achieving pizza nirvana at home, from the chef who is making what Bon Appetit magazine calls "the best pizza in America." Beddia takes you through the pizza-making process, teaching the foundation (dough, sauce, cheese, bake – it's that simple!) for making perfectly crisp, satisfyingly chewy, dangerously addictive pies at home.



### Big Love Cooking

From Joey Campanaro, chef and owner of NYC's popular Little Owl restaurant, comes a recipe book that includes mouth-watering dishes like Littleneck Clams with Juicy Bread, Mom-Mom Pizza, and Pork Chop with Parmesan Butter Beans.



### Floral Libations

Learn how to create floral pantry item staples to create a scrumptious and sophisticated cocktail of your own, and embark on a new culinary adventure. This garden-party eye candy also includes practical tips on where to buy edible flowers, how to grow edible flowers at home, and how to use florals in other recipes.



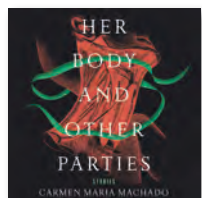
# TBR: THE FIXED STARS BIBLIOGRAPHY



*The Fixed Stars* contains a multitude of references to books, articles, research and more. In this collection, we've gathered everything in Molly's bibliography available on hoopla. Here are a few highlights you might choose to read from to open your book club meeting.

## ***Wedding Toasts I'll Never Give* by Ada Calhoun**

"Brutally honest, hilarious and unsentimental—but never unkind—this is a book for anyone who has ever had a thought (good or bad) about the institution of marriage. I devoured this gem in one sitting. I want to marry this book." — Susannah Cahalan, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Brain on Fire*

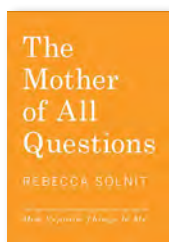


## ***Her Body and Other Parties* by Carmen Maria Machado**

**Finalist for the National Book Award for Fiction**

"[These stories] vibrate with originality, queerness, sensuality and the strange." — Roxane Gay, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Bad Feminist*

In *Her Body and Other Parties*, Carmen Maria Machado blithely demolishes the arbitrary borders between psychological realism and science fiction, comedy and horror, fantasy and fabulism. While her work has earned her comparisons to Karen Russell and Kelly Link, she has a voice that is all her own. In this electric and provocative debut, Machado bends genre to shape startling narratives that map the realities of women's lives and the violence visited upon their bodies.



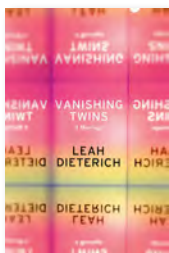
## ***The Mother of All Questions* by Rebecca Solnit**

"...a powerful punch. This collection examines age-old philosophical questions: What does it mean to live a happy life? What is the role of art and entertainment in our day-to-day lives? How does language create myths about happiness and art?—from a contemporary, feminist perspective." — *Publisher's Weekly*



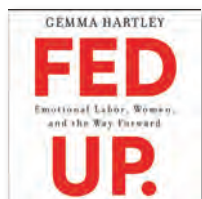
## ***Dancing at the Edge of the World* by Ursula K. Le Guin**

"I have decided that the trouble with print is it, it never changes its mind," writes Ursula Le Guin in her introduction. But she has, and here is the record of that change in the decade since the publication of her last nonfiction collection, *The Language of the Night*. And what a mind strong, supple, disciplined, playful, ranging over the whole field of its concerns, from modern literature to menopause, from utopian thought to rodeos, with an eloquence, wit, and precision that makes for exhilarating reading.



## ***Vanishing Twins* by Leah Dietrich**

"The themes in *Vanishing Twins* are at once timeless and contemporary: what does it mean to be both wife and artist, both partner and individual? Leah Dietrich's singular explorations of these ideas paired with her sharp, nimble sentences made it impossible for me to put this book down." — Chelsea Hodson, author of *Tonight I'm Someone Else*



## ***Fed Up* by Gemma Hartley**

Launching a heated national conversation with her viral article "*Women Aren't Nags; We're Just Fed Up*"—viewed over two billion times—journalist Gemma Hartley gave voice to the frustration and anger of countless women putting in the hidden, underappreciated, and absolutely draining mental work that consists of keeping everyone in their lives comfortable and happy. Bringing long overdue awareness to the daunting reality of emotional labor in our lives, Hartley defines the largely invisible but demanding, time-consuming, and exhausting "worry work" that falls disproportionately and unfairly on all women—no matter their economic class or level of education.

For each and every hoopla Book Club Spotlight we've presented, you can find several materials at [theclub.hoopladigital.com](http://theclub.hoopladigital.com)—in addition to these Companion meeting planners, locate discussion guides, exclusive author interviews, Recommended Next Reads, and more! We'd love to know how your book club has used these—tag @hoopladigital or #hooplalbookclub to share with us and book clubs across the world!

