

# A NOVEL APPROACH

FOOTHILLS GENERAL FICTION  
BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP



*Join us for discussions  
of the following titles, the  
second Monday evening  
of each month at 6:30.*

July 14, 2025

## ***Martyr!***

By Kaveh Akbar

August 11, 2025

## ***Birnam Wood***

By Eleanor Catton

September 15, 2025

## ***You Dreamed of Empires***

By Alvaro Enrigue

October 13, 2025

## ***Dinosaurs***

By Lydia Millet

November 10, 2025

## ***The Fraud***

By Zadie Smith

December 8, 2025

## ***Orbital***

By Samantha Harvey

## ***Martyr!* by Kaveh Akbar**

Cyrus Shams is the newly sober, orphaned son of Iranian immigrants, grappling with an inheritance of violence and loss, whose obsession with martyrs leads him to examine the mysteries of his past. He embarks on a remarkable search for a family secret that leads him to a terminally ill painter living out her final days in the Brooklyn Museum. *Martyr!* is a paean to how we spend our lives seeking meaning—in faith, art, ourselves, others.

## ***Birnam Wood* by Eleanor Catton**

A landslide has closed Korowai Pass, cutting off the town and leaving a sizable farm abandoned. The disaster presents an opportunity for Birnam Wood, a gardening collective that struggles to break even. Occupying the farm would mean a shot at solvency at last. But an enigmatic billionaire has an interest in the place to build his end-times bunker. This sophisticated page-turner is a mesmerizing consideration of the human impulse to ensure our own survival.

## ***You Dreamed of Empires* by Alvaro Enrigue**

One morning in 1519, conquistador Hernán Cortés enters the city of Tenochtitlan, where he will meet the emperor Moctezuma in a collision of two worlds, two empires, two languages, two possible futures. *You Dreamed of Empires* brings Tenochtitlan to life at its height, reimagining its destiny, setting afire the moment of conquest and turning it into a moment of revolution, in a novel so electric and so unique that it feels like a dream.

## ***Dinosaurs* by Lydia Millet**

Gil, a middle-aged oil heir, leaves behind heartbreak in New York City and walks to Arizona to discover the “alien beauty” of the desert. As he arrives, new neighbors move into the glass-walled house next door, and they form unexpected bonds as his life begins to mesh with theirs. This warmly textured, drily funny, and philosophical account of Gil’s unexpected devotion to the family explores the uncanny territory where the self ends and community begins.

## ***The Fraud* by Zadie Smith**

It is 1873. Mrs. Eliza Touchet is the Scottish housekeeper and cousin by marriage of a once-famous novelist, now in decline. She is a woman of many interests: literature, justice, abolitionism. Meanwhile, Andrew Bogle grew up enslaved in Jamaica. He knows every lump of sugar comes at a human cost. That the rich deceive the poor. When Bogle finds himself in London, star witness in a celebrated case of imposture, he knows his future depends on telling the right story. The “Tichborne Trial” captivates Mrs. Touchet and all of England. Is Sir Roger Tichborne really who he says he is? Or is he a fraud?

## ***Orbital* by Samantha Harvey**

*Orbital* deftly snapshots one day in the lives of six women and men traveling through space on one of the last space station missions before the program is dismantled. We glimpse moments of their earthly lives; we watch them whip up dehydrated meals, float in gravity-free sleep, and exercise in regimented routines; we witness them form bonds that will stand between them and utter solitude. Most of all, we are with them as they behold and record their silent blue planet. Profound and contemplative, *Orbital* is a moving elegy to our environment and planet.



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*Book annotations adapted from a  
variety of sources quoted and cited  
on Amazon.com and Novelist.*