

WTBBL Book List:

Cults

“Is this a cult?” Spend time with your most cherished new group of friends, who may or may not worship unknown entities by moonlight. Whether surreal or entirely too real, these stories will make you wish you'd stayed home alone instead of ever reading that local meet-up flyer you saw stapled to the streetlight.

Bunny by Mona Awad, 2019. ([DB095562](#))

Samantha couldn't be more of an outsider in her small MFA program. A scholarship student who prefers the company of her dark imagination to that of most people, she is utterly repelled by the rest of her fiction writing cohort; a clique of unbearably twee rich girls who call each other Bunny. But everything changes when Samantha receives an invitation and finds herself drawn to their front door. – description from Goodreads

Educated: A Memoir by Tara Westover, 2018. ([BR022656](#), [DB090188](#))

Tara was 17 the first time she set foot in a classroom. Born to survivalists, she grew up preparing for the end of the world. The family was so isolated from mainstream society that there was no one to ensure the children received schooling or medical care. Tara taught herself enough to be admitted to Brigham Young University, learning for the first time about important world events like the Holocaust and the civil rights movement. Her quest for knowledge transformed her, taking her over oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge. Only then would she wonder if she'd traveled too far, if there was still a way home. – description adapted from Goodreads

Our Share of Night: A Novel by Mariana Enriquez, translated by Megan McDowell, 2023. ([DB115900](#))

A young father and son set out on a road trip, devastated by the death of the wife and mother they both loved. United in grief, the pair travel to her ancestral home where they must confront the terrifying legacy she has bequeathed: a family called the Order that commits unspeakable acts in search of immortality. – description from library catalog

Cultish: The Language of Fanaticism by Amanda Montell, 2021. ([DB104075](#))

Through juicy storytelling and cutting original research, Montell exposes the verbal elements that make a wide spectrum of communities “cultish,” revealing how they affect followers of groups as notorious as Heaven’s Gate, but also how they pervade our modern start-ups, Peloton leaderboards, and Instagram feeds. – description adapted from Goodreads

Sorrowland by Rivers Solomon, 2021. ([BR024123](#), [DB106020](#))

Vern, a hunted woman alone in the woods, gives birth to twins and raises them away from the influence of the outside world. But something is wrong, not with them, but with her own body. To understand her body's metamorphosis, Vern must investigate the secluded religious compound from which she fled and the violent history of dehumanization, medical experimentation, and genocide that produced it. – description from library catalog

The Incendiaries: A Novel by R. O. Kwon, 2018. ([DB091848](#))

Phoebe Lin and Will Kendall meet in their first month at prestigious Edwards University. Phoebe is a glamorous girl, while Will is a misfit scholarship boy waiting tables to get by. What Will knows for sure is that he loves Phoebe. Grieving her mother's death and guilt-ridden, Phoebe is drawn into a secretive cult founded by a charismatic former student with an enigmatic past. When the group commits a violent act in the name of faith, Will finds himself struggling to confront a new version of the fanaticism he's worked so hard to escape. – description from author's website

The Road to Jonestown: Jim Jones and Peoples Temple by Jeff Guinn, 2017. ([DB088119](#))

In the 1950s, a young Indianapolis minister named Jim Jones preached a curious blend of the gospel and Marxism. His congregation was racially mixed, and he was a leader in the early civil rights movement. In this riveting narrative, Jeff Guinn examines Jones's life, from his early days as an idealistic minister to a secret life of extramarital affairs, drug use, and fraudulent faith healing, before the fateful decision to move almost a thousand of his followers to a settlement in the jungles of Guyana in South America. – description adapted from publisher's website

The Girls by Emma Cline, 2016. ([BRG03900](#), [DB084920](#))

Northern California, during the violent end of the 1960s. At the start of summer, a lonely and thoughtful teenager, Evie Boyd, sees a group of girls in the park and is immediately caught by their freedom, careless dress, and dangerous aura of abandon. Soon, Evie is drawn into the circle of a soon-to-be infamous cult and the man who is its charismatic leader. – description from Goodreads

Mr. Splitfoot by Samantha Hunt, 2016. ([DB084468](#))

Ruth and Nat are orphans, packed into a house full of abandoned children run by a religious fanatic. To entertain their siblings, they channel the dead. Decades later Ruth's niece, Cora, finds herself accidentally pregnant. After years of absence, Aunt Ruth appears, mute and full of intention. She is on a mysterious mission, leading Cora on an odyssey across the entire state of New York on foot. Where is Ruth taking them? Where has she been? And who — or what — has she hidden in the woods at the end of the road? – description from Goodreads

Broken Faith: Inside the Word of Faith Fellowship, One of America's Most Dangerous Cults by Mitch Weiss and Holbrook Mohr, 2020. ([DB098634](#))

In 1979, a fiery preacher named Jane Whaley attracted a small group of followers with a promise that she could turn their lives around. In the years since, Whaley's following has expanded to include thousands of congregants across three continents. In their eyes she's a prophet, and to disobey her means eternal damnation. The control Whaley exerts is absolute: she decides what her followers study, where they work, whom they can marry—even when they can have sex. Based on hundreds of interviews, secretly recorded conversations, and thousands of pages of documents, this is a terrifying portrait of life inside the Word of Faith Fellowship, and the harrowing account of one family who escaped after two decades. – description from publisher's website

Hell Followed with Us by Andrew Joseph White, 2022.
([DB108885](#))

Sixteen-year-old trans boy Benji is on the run from the cult that raised him—the fundamentalist sect that unleashed Armageddon and decimated the world’s population. He desperately searches for a place where the cult can’t get their hands on him or, more importantly, on the bioweapon they infected him with. But when cornered by monsters born from the destruction, Benji is rescued by a group of teens from the local Acheson LGBTQ+ Center, affectionately known as the ALC. The ALC’s leader, Nick, is gorgeous, autistic, and a deadly shot, and he knows Benji’s darkest secret: the cult’s bioweapon is mutating him into a monster deadly enough to wipe humanity from the earth once and for all. – description from publisher’s website

Black Sheep by Rachel Harrison, 2023. ([DB116601](#))

Nobody has a “normal” family, but Vesper Wright’s is truly...something else. Vesper left home at eighteen and never looked back—mostly because she was told that leaving the staunchly religious community she grew up in meant she couldn’t return. But then an envelope arrives on her doorstep. Inside is an invitation to the wedding of Vesper’s beloved cousin Rosie, to be hosted at the family farm. Something inside her insists she go to the wedding even if it means returning to the toxic environment she escaped. Even if it means reuniting with her mother, Constance, a former horror film star and forever ice queen. When Vesper’s homecoming exhumes a terrifying secret, she’s forced to reckon with her family’s beliefs and her own crisis of faith. – description adapted from Goodreads