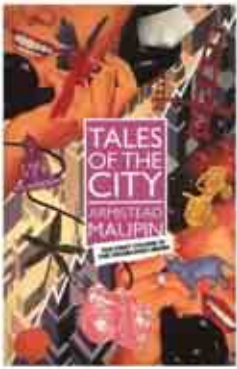




LGBT Reading Group



August/September 2007



The Read... Tales of the City

Set in 1970s San Francisco, Mary-Ann Singleton is a naive young secretary, fresh out of Cleveland. She moves into 28 Barbary Lane, where she soon finds there is more than meets the eye to landlady Anna Madrigal. Meet her neighbours - Michael 'Mouse' Tolliver, is gay and proud but not yet out; Mona Ramsay isn't quite sure who she is; the charming Brian, a straight man in a gay world; and what is the guy upstairs really up to? The saga that ensues is manic, romantic, tawdry, touching and outrageous. If you thought San Francisco in the 70s was all about sex, drugs and having fun... you're absolutely right! ISBN 0552993840



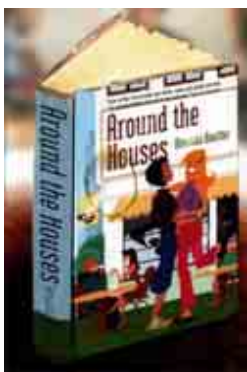
The Author... Armistead Maupin

Armistead was born in Washington DC in 1944 but grew up in North Carolina. After graduating from University, he served as a naval officer in the Mediterranean and with the River Patrol Force in Vietnam. He then worked briefly as a reporter for a newspaper in South Carolina, before being assigned to the Associated Press in 1971. Two years after coming out in 1974, he launched his *Tales of the City* serial in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the first fiction to appear in an American daily for decades. Maupin lives in San Fran with husband Christopher.

Our Opinion... This book (the winner of The 2005 Big Gay Read, incidentally) is fondly regarded as a nostalgic romp through heady, carefree times before the threat of HIV and AIDS changed gay society irrevocably. Some readers had read this book before and enjoyed the opportunity to read it (and the rest of the series) again. The story is compiled of short 'episodes' and quite a large cast of characters to keep up with - most of whom, it turns out, are linked to each other, usually romantically. Some readers found it a bit hard to keep up with the conversations these characters have because of the way Maupin 'lists' their dialogue.

The mystery side of Maupin's tales is often overlooked in the right-ups (in this case Norman Neal Williams and his sinister pastimes) but they certainly add an aspect of drama that might otherwise leave these stories as just light 'sex and shopping' fiction.

The group recommends *More Tales of the City* as a compliment to this first volume.



What Next? Around the Houses

By Amanda Boulter

Anna is an ordinary woman in an extraordinary situation. She's having a baby, the father's gay, her lover's a woman and she still hasn't told her parents. Her best friend is feckless, 40 and fondling every man she can. Her neighbours are OAPs from Hell and straight Greg from across the road has been abandoned. Into all this walks Shirley, but Pearl, her mother, is coming too! Anna and her new family have to deal with the consequences of coming out; Ruby has to face up to a violent past; Shirley falls for Greg; and Pearl finds her true self at the Cosmic Café. The subject of this quirky, insightful and sharp novel, Balham will never be the same again. ISBN 978-1852426972

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