

Prison Reading Groups (PRG) was created in 1999 to set up, support and fund informal reading groups in prisons. We now support more than 91 groups in over 70 prisons nationwide. PRG is part of Give a Book.



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### Finding a Good Read: Pride

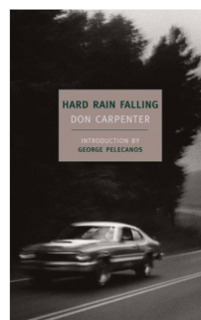
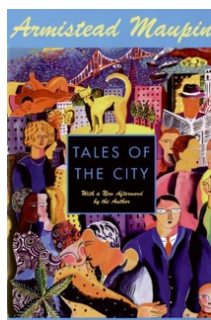
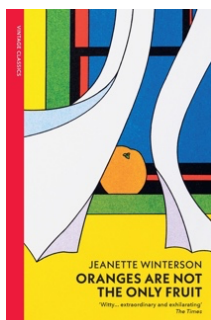
A regular column to help you find a good read.

June is LGBTQ+ Pride Month, which celebrates queer individuals and communities. Pride Month began after the Stonewall riots, a series of gay liberation protests in New York, 1969, and has become a worldwide phenomenon ever since.

Although LGBTQ+ writing has existed for centuries, during the 1900s, this genre faced both significant backlash and popularisation. Don Carpenter's **Hard Rain Falling**, published in 1966, depicts an unusually non-exploitative and heartfelt relationship between two men for this era. This novel follows the lives of orphaned teenager, Jack Levitt, and black runaway, pool player, Billy Lancing, through their time spent inside and outside of prison.

**Tales of the City** is a witty series of 10 books, the first of which was published in 1978. These novels are non-judgemental and political, focusing on the overlapping storylines of both queer and non-queer characters in San Francisco. **Armistead Maupin** touches on heavier themes, such as the impact of the AIDs crisis on the LGBTQ+ community in this city.

**Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit**, published in 1985, is a ground-breaking portrayal of a romantic relationship between two women. This humorous coming-of-age novel follows Jeanette, a devout Christian girl, who struggles with the realisation that she loves another woman as much as she loves God.



LGBTQ+ romance writing exists outside of hetero-normative storylines. In-keeping with the trend of Ancient Greek retelling novels, Madeline Miller's bestseller, **The Song of Achilles**, retells Homer's Iliad. The heart-breaking story centres around the bond between beautiful semi-God, Achilles, and awkward young prince, Patroclus.

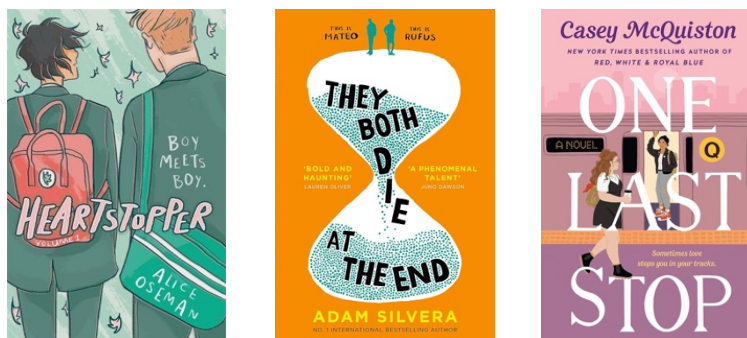
**Call Me by Your Name** by André Aciman tells the story of the heart-wrenching summer romance in 1980s Italy between intellectual 17-year-old, Elio, and 24-year-old American scholar, Oliver. This book was adapted into the popular 2017 film starring Timothée Chalamet.



LGBTQ+ books written for YA audiences have surged in recent years. One of the most popular is the ongoing series of Graphic Novels, entitled **Heartstopper**, by Alice Oseman. These books were originally published as a webcomic and have been adapted into a popular Netflix series. They follow the friendship and love story of schoolboys Nick Nelson and Charlie Spring.

Another bestselling teen novel with a queer focus is **They Both Die at the End**. On September 5<sup>th</sup>, two boys find out they are going to die that day. These complete strangers, whose aim is to live a lifetime in a single day, befriend one other, fall in love and remind us of the impermanence of life.

LGBTQ+ YA novel, **One Last Stop**, follows cynical pseudo detective, August Landry, who falls in love with Jane Su, a punk lesbian woman, who she meets on the subway; the catch is that Jane Su has been lost in time and is actually from the 70s...



Queer books not only provide solace for LGBTQ+ people, but they make room for any reader to consider their identity, accept differences in others and question stereotypes. **Girl, Woman, Other** by Bernadine Evaristo follows the intertwining lives and struggles of twelve diverse characters of varying sexualities, genders, races and backgrounds. The author writes in a unique and subversive way, which reflects her characters.

The poignant novel, **Detransition, Baby**, by Torrey Peters also explores the diverse experiences of three women, both cisgender and transgender, whose lives merge when an unplanned pregnancy forces them to explore their complex desires around gender, motherhood and sex.

Meredith Talusan debunks stereotypes around disability, race and gender identity in her beautiful coming of age memoir, **Fairest**. This is the story of an albino boy from the Philippines, who emigrates to America, transitions into a woman and struggles to find her place within the queer community.



Note: your library may not have all of these titles or even any of them, but it's sure to have some of the authors mentioned. So, if you like the sound of any of the books mentioned, just include 'or any other books by ...' on your request app.

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