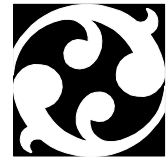




# CAMELOT BOOK CLUB



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## *CANNERY ROW*

By John Steinbeck

John Steinbeck's story is about Mack, Hazel, Eddie, Hughie, and Jones who live among the sardine canneries of Monterey, California, and have nothing much to do except to survive from day to day. They are unburdened by the material necessities of the more fortunate, and run into unique obstacles every time they embark on a new adventure. Mack and his boys, Doc, Lee Chong the grocer, Dora Flood with her bordello, are some of the characters that inhabit the very interesting pages of this delightful book.

The story is "an evocative portrait of life as it is lived by those who unabashedly put the highest value on the intangibles – human warmth, camaraderie, and love." Steinbeck strikes again!

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### CAMELOT'S DISCUSSION of the BOOK

**Most of us were quite smitten with the book, and think of John Steinbeck as one of the very best authors we have read. All were struck by the simplicity of the lives of the book's characters; we who have so much, and they who have so little. They survived quite well with the very few material things they possessed, and put great value on the more elusive qualities of life. We had a great time discussing the book, and a lot of laughs. Some of the events and characters which amused us were:**

- Mack and the boys - in their makeshift quarters they had no furniture, but drew a 4 x 7 foot space on the floor for each to sleep on.
  - The party they gave for Doc was a hilarious disaster. They liked him so much, and out of respect for him they put together a party. The only problem was they forgot to tell Doc, and made shambles out of his place when they held the party without him.
  - After Doc's party, Mack apologized and said, "It don't do no good to say I'm sorry. I been sorry all my life."
  - Lee Chong, the grocer, never threw anything away and had decorations available for every holiday. And he never pronounced an "r".
  - Eddie tended bar sometimes and poured what was left-over from patrons' drinks into a big jar. So his friends always had some drinks to celebrate with.
  - Gay worked on cars, and could make anything run - he went and got Lee Chong's old rusty wreck and fabricated parts from junk and made it run.
  - The frog scenario was comical and zany – Mack and his boys collected hundreds of frogs for Doc, and another time it was tom cats.
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## CAMELOT COMMENTS

- Dotsy: It was just fun rediscovering John Steinbeck. Makes you want to read more of his work.
- Barbara: From chapter to chapter - I felt like I was in another world - loved the characters. What fun.
- Tim: I think he sort of deconstructs and reconstructs human nature. And don't you love the picture he paints of the community.
- Anne: I thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience. I have visited Cannery Row, could picture the characters. Loved the book.
- Robin: Steinbeck has one of the most colorful cast of characters in American literature. I searched and read most of his.
- Gwen: I liked the part about the skater on the roof. This is one of the strangest books I've ever read. The study about relationships was very interesting - they didn't judge each other. Would be wonderful if we could all be like that.
- Ann: It's the first John Steinbeck book I've ever read. Loved it - his descriptions of people - the way he writes - I want to read others of his. Didn't want it to end. Loved it.
- Margaret: Steinbeck's characters were not burdened with possessions - lived off the land and what others discarded. What their lives showed was caring for each other, camaraderie, the intangibles of life.

### NEXT MEETING

- When? Friday, April 20, 2012, 1:30 p.m.
- Where? At Karen O'Shea's house
- Why? To have fun, and to discuss  
*A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*  
by Betty Smith
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### MEETING NOTES

We met at your Scribe, Margaret's house, and it was fun to all be together again. This book induced a lot of conversation and a lot of laughs. -- We welcomed Tim Latta as our recurrent guest. She would be a regular if she didn't live in so many houses. -- Anne announced that the May book selection is *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri. And she also would like to remind us that the books for second graders are due in April.

Oh, it was a pleasure to be at Camelot, as always!

## CAMELOT BOOK CLUB IS GREAT

