How It Works

One night a month, every month - this is the December edition

A silent reading night is the simplest club there is: everyone brings a book, everyone reads it, and nobody has to perform. Doors open at 7, reading starts at 7:30 sharp, and the room stays quiet for ninety minutes. Then the talking starts - half an hour of tea, snacks and the one question that matters: what did your book make you feel tonight?

This kit is the December edition of the monthly series. Four Friday nights - 4, 11, 18 and 25 December 2026 - each with its own theme, its own drink and snack pairing, and its own small ritual. Use all four, or pick one and make it your club's holiday night. The format is the same every time, so the first night teaches the fourth.

The shape of the night

Time	What happens	Notes
7:00	Doors open, coats off, books out	Name tags if anyone is new
7:15	Welcome and the night's theme	Two minutes, no speeches
7:30	Silent reading begins	Phones away, voices off
9:00	Reading ends, tea is poured	Ninety minutes, on the clock
9:00	Talk: one question, everyone answers	See the prompts page
9:30	Gift exchange (weeks 3 and 4)	Wrapped book, under $10
9:45	Goodnight, next date announced	Leave the room as you found it

The Four December Nights

Fridays, 4 - 25 December 2026

Week 1 - Friday 4 December: First Snow

Theme: beginnings. Bring the book you have just started, or the one you have been meaning to start all year. Drink: hot chocolate with a cinnamon stick. Snack: shortbread. Ritual: everyone writes the first line of their book on a card and pins it to the board - by the end of the night, the board is a shelf of first lines.

Week 2 - Friday 11 December: The Long Night

Theme: the longest nights of the year. Bring the thickest book on your shelf, or the one you have been avoiding because it looks long. Drink: spiced apple cider, warm. Snack: ginger biscuits. Ritual: at 9 o'clock, everyone reads one sentence aloud - the best sentence they found tonight - and then the room goes quiet again for the talking.

Week 3 - Friday 18 December: The Gift Exchange

Theme: giving. Bring a wrapped book, under $10, that you loved and want someone else to love. Drink: mulled cranberry. Snack: mince pies. Ritual: the exchange - draw a number, pick a gift, and the person whose gift you took tells you why they chose it. No stealing, no swapping back: the book you take home is the book you were meant to read.

Week 4 - Friday 25 December: Christmas Night

Theme: home. Bring the book that feels like home, whatever home means to you. Drink: eggnog or hot milk with honey. Snack: stollen, sliced thin. Ritual: before the talking starts, everyone writes one line about the year in reading - the best book, the worst book, or the one that surprised them - and reads it aloud. Keep the cards: they are next year's first meeting.

Discussion Prompts

Nine o'clock - one question, everyone answers

The talking starts at nine and lasts half an hour. One question a night is enough - the point is that everyone answers, not that every question gets asked. Pick the one that fits the night, or let the host choose on the spot.

1. What did your book make you feel tonight - and was it the feeling you expected when you picked it up?
2. Read us the best sentence you found tonight. Why is it the best one?
3. If your book's main character walked into this room, what would they think of us?
4. What is the one thing your book got right about real life - and the one thing it got wrong?
5. Which character would you trust with a secret, and which one would you never tell?
6. Did your book change your mind about anything tonight? Even a small thing counts.
7. What would your book be like if it were set fifty years earlier - or fifty years later?
8. Who in your life would you give this book to, and what would you tell them before they started it?
9. What is the book you wish someone had given you years ago - and why this one, tonight?
10. One line about your year in reading: the best book, the worst book, or the one that surprised you.