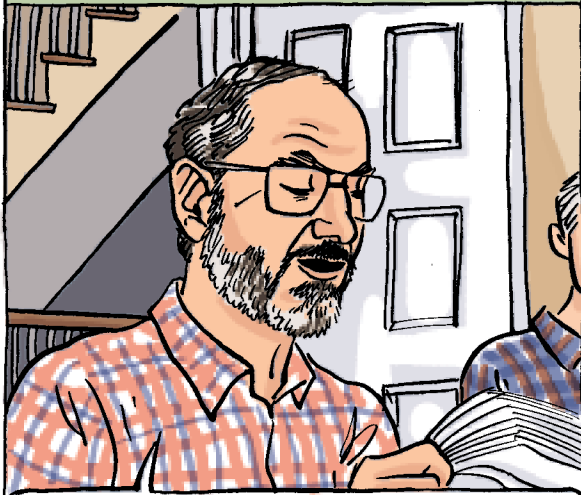


OPRAH WILL NOT BE MISSED

New York's University of Chicago alumni book club has met every month since 1990. The August selection was the last volume of Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, a novel the group has been reading, at a rate of one volume per year, since the mid-1990s.

David Fishman, this month's moderator, read some background from a thick packet of notes.



Workers on the printer's monotype machine refused to set the manuscript. They were paid by the thousand letters, and deciphering Proust's handwriting made them lose money on the job.

The discussion began calmly, but differences of opinion soon surfaced.



So the difference between the people is class.

I don't know if I would describe it as "class."

Kelly Harris, AB'76

I personally detest Mme. Verdurin more than anyone else in the novel because she is such a baying, shallow, oblivious social striver....

I agree with what you said, but I also disagree with it....

Ha Ha Ha! Ha Ha!

Proust was immersed in the work, seeking perfection. He distilled the essence of countless dinner parties into just one dinner party—the platonic ideal of a dinner party.

So you're saying he achieved perfection?



Vicky Shiefman, AB'64

Laura Tandy, AB'68

Well, I feel like I came in contact with reality. With a few real people.

Which, for a writer, is pretty close to perfection, isn't it?

Afterwards, I chatted with a few of the regulars.

I just basically got tired of reading in a vacuum.



Helen Serebin, AB'89

I belonged to another U of C book group. We were very snobby—but the group refused to read from "the canon." We were reading all this contemporary—we were reading crap, and the reason I joined *this* group is that we were reading Proust in my *other* group, and a woman there said, "I don't want to invest my time in this, it's incredibly long, and I have better things to do." And I just said, "Right, I'm breaking away—I'm joining the *real* book group."