

## Book Discussion Kits (All)

---

### [Above All Things](#)

by Tanis Rideout

A tale inspired by the life and mysterious fate of George Mallory traces the experiences of his wife, Ruth, who in 1924 maintains a hopeful vigil in war-ravaged England during Mallory's fateful third expedition to reach the summit of Mount Everest.

### [The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian](#)

by Sherman Alexie

Budding cartoonist Junior leaves his troubled school on the Spokane Indian Reservation to attend an all-white farm town school where the only other Indian is the school mascot.

### [The Adventures of the Blue Avenger](#)

by Norma Howe

On his sixteenth birthday, still trying to cope with the unexpected death of his father, David Schumacher decides--or does he--to change his name to Blue Avenger, hoping to find a way to make a difference in his Oakland neighborhood and in the world.

### [Al Capone Does My Shirts](#)

by Gennifer Choldenko

A twelve-year-old boy named Moose moves to Alcatraz Island in 1935 when guards' families were housed there, and has to contend with his extraordinary new environment in addition to life with his autistic sister.

### [The Alchemist](#)

by Paulo Coelho

An Andalusian shepherd boy named Santiago travels from his homeland in Spain to the Egyptian desert in search of treasure buried in the pyramids. Along the way he meets a Gypsy woman, a man who calls himself king, and an alchemist, all of whom point Santiago in the direction of his quest. What starts out as a journey to find worldly goods turns into a meditation on the treasures found within.

### [Alias Grace](#)

by Margaret Atwood

Based on a sensational trial that made headlines throughout the world, a nineteenth-century housemaid endures life imprisonment for the murders of her employer and mistress, murders she may not have committed, while a doctor tries to help her recover her memories of the past.

### [All the Light We Cannot See](#)

by Anthony Doerr

From the highly acclaimed, multiple award-winning Anthony Doerr, the stunningly beautiful instant New York Times bestseller about a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France as both try to survive the devastation of World War II.

### [The Amber Spyglass](#)

by Philip Pullman

Lyra and Will find themselves at the center of a battle between the forces of the Authority and those gathered by Lyra's father, Lord Asriel.

### [Americanah](#)

by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Separated by respective ambitions after falling in love in occupied Nigeria, beautiful Ifemelu experiences triumph and defeat in America while exploring new concepts of race, while Obinze endures an undocumented status in London until the pair is reunited in their homeland 15 years later, where they face the toughest decisions of their lives. By the award-winning author of *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

### [And the band played on](#)

by Randy Shilts

An examination of the AIDS crisis critiques the federal government for its inaction, health authorities for their greed, and scientists for their desire for prestige in the face of the AIDS pandemic, in a twentieth anniversary edition of the acclaimed exposé.

### [Angle Of Repose](#)

by Wallace Stegner

Stegner's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel is the story of four generations in the life of an American family. A wheelchair-bound retired historian embarks on a monumental quest: to come to know his grandparents, now long dead. The unfolding drama of the story of the American West sets the tone for Stegner's masterpiece.

### [Animal, Vegetable, Miracle](#)

by Barbara Kingsolver

When Kingsolver and her family move from suburban Arizona to rural Appalachia, they take on a new challenge: to spend a year on a locally produced diet, paying close attention to the provenance of all they consume. "Our highest shopping goal was to get our food from so close to home, we'd know the person who grew it. Often that turned out to be ourselves as we learned to produce what we needed, starting with dirt, seeds, and enough knowledge to muddle through. Or starting with baby animals, and enough sense to refrain from naming them."

### [The Art of Detection](#)

by Laurie R. King

San Francisco detective Kate Martinelli receives a lesson in detection from the master sleuth himself when she investigates the murder of a Sherlock Holmes aficionado, who may have been killed for a century-old manuscript purportedly penned by Holmes.

### [The Art of Relevance](#)

by Nina Simon

What do the London Science Museum, California Shakespeare Theater, and ShaNaNa have in common? They are all fighting for relevance in an often indifferent world. *The Art of Relevance* is your guide to mattering more to more people. You'll find inspiring examples, rags-to-relevance case studies, research-based frameworks, and practical advice on how your work can be more vital to your community. Whether you work in museums or libraries, parks or theaters, churches or afterschool programs, relevance can work for you. Break through shallow connection. Unlock meaning for yourself and others. Find true relevance and shine.

### [Astor Place Vintage](#)

by Stephanie Lehmann

Amanda Rosenbloom, owner of a struggling vintage clothing shop, finds the journal of a woman who lived in New York one hundred years ago and discovers a secret that inspires her to stop living in the past and take control of her future.

### [Atonement](#)

by Ian McEwan

In a crumbling English mansion in 1935, young Briony tells a lie that sends a man to jail. Five years later, a soldier retreats during World War II. These story threads come together in the book's surprising conclusion.

### [Back When We Were Grownups](#)

by Anne Tyler

In this deeply moving novel a woman of fifty-three tries to find out who she truly is, compared to who her world believes she is.

### [Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress](#)

by Dai Sijie

Two boys are sent to the countryside to be re-educated in this fable set during China's Cultural Revolution. They discover hope through forbidden western literature, but find hope can be cruel and corrupting.

### [The Bean Trees](#)

by Barbara Kingsolver

Taylor Greer hits the road wanting only to get as far away from Kentucky as possible, ending up in Arizona with a 3-year-old Cherokee girl she has inherited from a woman in a bar.

### [Beautiful Ruins](#)

by Jess Walter

Follows a young Italian innkeeper and his almost-love affair with a beautiful American starlet, which draws him into a glittering world filled with unforgettable characters.

### [Because of Winn-Dixie](#)

by Kate DiCamillo

Ten-year-old India Opal Buloni describes her first summer in the town of Naomi, Florida, and all the good things that happen to her because of her big ugly dog Winn-Dixie.

### [The Beekeeper's Apprentice](#)

by Laurie R. King

Chance meeting with a Sussex beekeeper turns into a pivotal, personal transformation when fifteen-year-old Mary Russell discovers that the beekeeper is the reclusive, retired detective Sherlock Holmes, who soon takes on the role of mentor and teacher.

### [Bel Canto](#)

by Ann Patchett

In the Vice President's house in an unnamed South American country, what begins as an elegant dinner party turns into a kidnapping that goes awry when the President the terrorists are intent on capturing misses the dinner. When the government refuses to give in to their demands, the hostage

situation continues for a number of weeks during which a pleasant domesticity, enlivened by opera singing, begins to blur the lines between captive and captor.

### [Belle Prater's Boy](#)

by Ruth White

When Woodrow's mother suddenly disappears, he moves to his grandparents' home in a small Virginia town where he befriends his cousin and together they find the strength to face the terrible losses and fears in their lives.

### [Benjamin Franklin: An American Life](#)

by Walter Isaacson

Chronicles the founding father's life and his multiple careers as a shopkeeper, writer, inventor, media baron, scientist, diplomat, business strategist, and political leader, while showing how his faith in the wisdom of the common citizen helped forge an American national identity based on the virtues of its middle class.

### [Big Little Lies](#)

by Liane Moriarty

Big Little Lies is a brilliant take on ex-husbands and second wives, mothers and daughters, schoolyard scandal, and the dangerous little lies we tell ourselves just to survive.

### [Blue Shoe](#)

by Anne Lamott

When she stumbles upon a small rubber blue shoe left behind in her deceased father's car, Mattie Ryder, a recently divorced mother of two young children struggles to uncover the truth about her dysfunctional upbringing. In the process, she finds the foundation for a new relationship with her mother and the potential for a new life.

### [The Bonesetter's Daughter](#)

by Amy Tan

When Ruth Young comes across a stack of letters in Chinese calligraphy written by her ailing mother, she discovers the truth about her mother's life as the daughter of the famous bonesetter in the village of Xian Xin, China.

### [The Book Thief](#)

by Markus Zusak

Trying to make sense of the horrors of World War II, Death relates the story of Liesel--a young German girl whose book-stealing and story-telling talents help sustain her family and the Jewish man they are hiding, as well as their neighbors.

### [The Book of the Unnamed Midwife](#)

by Meg Elison

In the wake of a fever that decimated the earth's population--killing women and children and making childbirth deadly for the mother and infant--the midwife must pick her way through the bones of the world she once knew to find her place in this dangerous new one. Gone are the pillars of civilization. All that remains is power--and the strong who possess it. A few women like her survived, though they are scarce. Even fewer are safe from the clans of men, who, driven by fear, seek to control those remaining. To preserve her freedom, she dons men's clothing, goes by false names, and avoids as many people as possible. But as the world continues to grapple with its terrible circumstances, she'll

discover a role greater than chasing a pale imitation of independence. After all, if humanity is to be reborn, someone must be its guide.

### [The Bookseller of Kabul](#)

by Asne Seierstad

Capturing the harsh realities of life in modern-day Afghanistan and plight of Afghan women, the Norwegian journalist provides a portrait of a committed Muslim man, a bookseller, and his family living in post-Taliban Kabul, Afghanistan.

### [Born A Crime: Stories From A South African Childhood](#)

by Trevor Noah

The host of The Daily Show With Trevor Noah traces his wild coming of age during the twilight of apartheid in South Africa and the tumultuous days of freedom that followed, offering insight into the farcical aspects of the political and social systems of today's world.

### [Botany of Desire](#)

by Michael Pollan

Focusing on the human relationship with plants, the author of Second Nature uses botany to explore four basic human desires--sweetness, beauty, intoxication, and control--through portraits of four plants that embody them: the apple, tulip, marijuana, and potato.

### [The Boys in the Boat](#)

by Daniel James Brown

Traces the story of an American rowing team from the University of Washington that defeated elite rivals at Hitler's 1936 Berlin Olympics, sharing the experiences of such contributors as their enigmatic coach, a visionary boat builder and a homeless teen rower.

### [The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao](#)

by Junot Diaz

Living with an Old World mother and rebellious sister, an urban New Jersey misfit dreams of becoming the next J.R.R. Tolkien and believes that a longstanding family curse is thwarting his efforts to find love and happiness.

### [Broken For You](#)

by Stephanie Kallos

Two very different women, each with her own dark secrets--wealthy, reclusive septuagenarian Margaret Hughes, living alone with her vast collection of priceless antiques, and Wanda Schultz, a brokenhearted young woman in search of her wayward boyfriend--find new meaning and redemption in their growing friendship with each other.

### [Brooklyn](#)

by Colm Toibin

Hauntingly beautiful and heartbreaking, Colm Toibin's sixth novel, Brooklyn, is set in Brooklyn and Ireland in the early 1950s, when one young woman crosses the ocean to make a new life for herself.

### [The Buddha in the Attic](#)

by Julie Otsuka

Presents the stories of six Japanese mail-order brides whose new lives in early twentieth-century San Francisco are marked by backbreaking migrant work, cultural struggles, children who reject their

heritage, and the prospect of wartime internment.

### [Burial Rites](#)

by Hannah Kent

Based on a true story, tells the tale of a young woman in Iceland in 1829 who was accused of murder and sent to an isolated farm to await execution and tells the farmer's family her side of the story.

### [Cane River](#)

by Lalita Tademy

Follows four generations of African American women from slavery to the early twentieth century as they struggle for economic security and the future of their families along the Cane River in rural Louisiana.

### [The Catcher in the Rye](#)

by J.D. Salinger

In an effort to escape the hypocrisies of life at his boarding school, sixteen-year-old Holden Caulfield seeks refuge in New York City.

### [Catherine the Great: Portrait of a Woman](#)

by Robert K. Massie

The Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer of Peter the Great presents a reconstruction of the 18th-century empress's life that includes coverage of such topics as her efforts to engage Russia in the cultural life of Europe, her creation of the Hermitage and her numerous scandal-free romantic affairs.

### [Chocolat](#)

by Joanne Harris

When the beautiful and mysterious Vianne moves to Lansquenet and opens a chocolate shop across from the church, the inhabitants of the tiny village find themselves torn between the solemn law of religion and the joyful rewards of Vianne's confections.

### [The Circle](#)

by Dave Eggers

Hired to work for the Circle, the world's most powerful Internet company, Mae Holland begins to question her luck as life beyond her job grows distant, a strange encounter with a colleague leaves her shaken, and her role at the Circle becomes increasingly public.

### [Circling the Sun](#)

by Paula McLain

Paula McLain, author of the phenomenal bestseller *The Paris Wife*, now returns with her keenly anticipated new novel, transporting readers to colonial Kenya in the 1920s. *Circling the Sun* brings to life a fearless and captivating woman--Beryl Markham, a record-setting aviator caught up in a passionate love triangle with safari hunter Denys Finch Hatton.

### [The Color Purple](#)

by Alice Walker

The lives of two sisters--Nettie, a missionary in Africa, and Celie, a southern woman married to a man she hates--are revealed in a series of letters exchanged over thirty years.

### [A Constellation of Vital Phenomena](#)

by Anthony Marra

In December 2004 in a rural village in Chechnya, failed doctor Akhmed harbors the traumatized eight-year-old daughter of a man abducted by Russian forces and treats a series of wounded refugees while exploring the shared past that binds him to the child.

### [The Cookbook Collector](#)

by Allegra Goodman

While executive Emily questions her choices about her career and a long-distance relationship with a successful man, her environmental activist sister, Jessamine, struggles with her own doubts about her beliefs and love affair.

### [The Crucible](#)

by Arthur Miller

A veiled reflection of the anticommunist witch-hunts of the 1950s, this play portrays seventeenth-century Salem, Massachusetts as a rigid theocracy eager to ferret out real or imagined deviations from the norm, and indicts everyone in Salem--and by extension American society--for the crimes of intolerance and blind hatred.

### [The Cuckoo's Calling](#)

by Robert Galbraith

Working as a private investigator after losing his leg in Afghanistan, Cormoran Strike takes the case of a legendary supermodel's suspicious suicide and finds himself in a world of multi-millionaire beauties, rock-star boyfriends, desperate designers and hedonist pursuits.

### [The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time](#)

by Mark Haddon

Despite his overwhelming fear of interacting with people, Christopher, a mathematically-gifted, autistic fifteen-year-old boy, decides to investigate the murder of a neighbor's dog and uncovers secret information about his mother.

### [Cutting for Stone](#)

by Abraham Verghese

Twin brothers born from a secret love affair between an Indian nun and a British surgeon in Addis Ababa, Marion and Shiva Stone come of age in an Ethiopia on the brink of revolution, where their love for the same woman drives them apart.

### [Daughter of Fortune](#)

by Isabel Allende

An orphan raised in Valparaiso, Chile, by a Victorian spinster and her rigid brother, Eliza Sommers follows her lover to California during the Gold Rush of 1849 and meets a Chinese herbalist, who becomes her soul mate, on the journey.

### [Dead Wake](#)

by Erik Larson

Gripping and important, Dead Wake captures the sheer drama and emotional power of a disaster whose intimate details and true meaning have long been obscured by history.

### [Deadline](#)

by Chris Crutcher

When he is given the medical diagnosis of one year to live, Ben Wolf decides to fulfill his greatest

fantasies, ponders his life's purpose and legacy, and converses through dreams with a spiritual guide known as "Hey-Soos."

### [Death Comes to Pemberley](#)

by P. D. James

A rare meeting of literary genius: P. D. James, long among the most admired mystery writers of our time, draws the characters of Jane Austen's beloved novel *Pride and Prejudice* into a tale of murder and emotional mayhem.

### [Disgrace](#)

by J.M. Coetzee

Written with austere clarity, *Disgrace* explores the downfall of one man and dramatizes with unforgettable, almost unbearable vividness the plight of South Africa—a country caught in the chaotic aftermath of the overthrow of Apartheid.

### [The Dovekeepers](#)

by Alice Hoffman

Hoffman's novel is a spellbinding tale of four extraordinarily bold, resourceful, and sensuous women, each of whom has come to Masada by a different path.

### [The Dressmaker](#)

by Kate Alcott

A spirited young maid on board the *Titanic* captures the attentions of two men including a kindhearted sailor and an enigmatic Chicago millionaire and barely escapes with her life before witnessing media scorn targeting her famous designer mistress.

### [The Dressmaker of Khair Khana](#)

by Gayle Tzemach Lemmon

Presents the story of a fearless young woman who became a dress-making entrepreneur in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, thus saving her family and bringing hope to the lives of dozens of women in her war-torn nation.

### [East of Eden](#)

by John Steinbeck

The biblical account of Cain and Abel is echoed in the history of two generations of the Trask family in California.

### [Einstein: his life and universe](#)

by Walter Isaacson

A narrative portrait based on the complete body of Einstein's papers offers insight into how the iconic thinker's mind worked as well as his contributions to science, in an account that describes his two marriages, his receipt of the Nobel Prize, and the influence of his discoveries on his personal views about morality, politics, and tolerance.

### [The Elegance of the Hedgehog](#)

by Muriel Barbery

The lives of fifty-four-year-old concierge Rene Michel and extremely bright, suicidal twelve-year-old Paloma Josse are transformed by the arrival of a new tenant, Kakuro Ozu.



### [Elegy For Eddie](#)

by Jacqueline Winspear

When Eddie Pettit's death is ruled an accident by the police, many believe that this gentle soul was murdered and Maisy Dobbs, determined to do right by Eddie, searches for the truth amid the working-class of Lambeth.

### [Ender's Game](#)

by Orson Scott Card

Andrew 'Ender' Wiggin isn't just playing games at Battle School: he and the other children are being tested and trained in Earth's attempt to find the military genius that the planet needs in its all-out war with an alien enemy. Ender's two older siblings, Peter and Valentine, are every bit as unusual as he is, but in very different ways. Between the three of them lie the abilities to remake a world--if the world survives.

### [Enemy Women](#)

by Paulette Jiles

An unforgettable story of family, love, and war follows Adair, the daughter of modest farmers in the Missouri Ozarks who is wrongly accused of "enemy collaboration" by the Union militia, as she falls in love with her interrogator, a Union major who orchestrates her escape, and embarks on a perilous journey to find her family.

### [Esperanza Rising](#)

by Pam Munoz Ryan

Esperanza and her mother are forced to leave their life of wealth and privilege in Mexico to go work in the labor camps of Southern California, where they must adapt to the harsh circumstances facing Mexican farm workers on the eve of the Great Depression.

### [Euphoria](#)

by Lily King

Frustrated by his research efforts and depressed over the death of his brothers, Andre Banson runs into two fellow anthropologists, a married couple, in 1930s New Guinea and begins a tumultuous relationship with them.

### [Exit West](#)

by Mohsin Hamid

From the internationally bestselling author of "The Reluctant Fundamentalist" and "How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia," a love story that unfolds in a world being irrevocably transformed by migration. In a country teetering on the brink of civil war, two young people meet--sensual, fiercely independent Nadia and gentle, restrained Saeed. They embark on a furtive love affair, thrust into premature intimacy by the unrest roiling their city. When it explodes, turning familiar streets into a patchwork of checkpoints and bomb blasts, they begin to hear whispers about doors--doors that can whisk people far away, if perilously and for a price. As violence and the threat of violence escalate, Nadia and Saeed decide that they no longer have a choice. Leaving their homeland and their old lives behind, they find a door and step through. Exit West is an epic compressed into a slender page-turner--both completely of our time and for all time, Mohsin Hamid's most ambitious and electrifying novel yet.

### [Exposure](#)

by Helen Dunmore

It's London, 1960. The Cold War is at its height, and a spy may be a friend or neighbor, colleague or

lover. Two colleagues, Giles Holloway and Simon Callington, face a terrible dilemma over a missing top-secret file. At the end of a suburban garden, in the pouring rain, Simon's wife, Lily, buries a briefcase containing the file deep in the earth. She believes that in doing so she is protecting her family. What she will learn is that no one is immune from betrayal or the devastating consequences of exposure. A master of the literary war novel as seen through the lens of individuals impacted by war's effects, in *Exposure*, Helen Dunmore pulls back the veneer of 1960's London life to reveal just how the betrayals and paranoia of the Cold War infiltrate even families. This is a propulsive novel of forbidden love and intimate deceptions from one of our finest writers.

### [Eyes Wide Open](#)

by Paul Fleischman

Paul Fleischman offers teens an environmental wake-up call and a tool kit for decoding the barrage of conflicting information confronting them.

### [Farewell to Manzanar](#)

by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston

The American-born author describes her family's experience and impressions when they were forced to relocate in a camp for the Japanese in Owens Valley, California, during World War II.

### [The Fellowship of the Ring](#)

by J.R.R. Tolkien

In ancient times the Rings of Power were crafted by the Elven-smiths, and Sauron, the Dark Lord, forged the One Ring, filling it with his own power so that he could rule all others. But the One Ring was taken from him, and though he sought it throughout Middle-earth, it remained lost to him. After many ages it fell into the hands of Bilbo Baggins, as told in *THE HOBBIT*. In a sleepy village in the Shire, young Frodo Baggins finds himself faced with an immense task, as his elderly cousin Bilbo entrusts the Ring to his care. Frodo must leave his home and make a perilous journey across Middle-earth to the Cracks of Doom, there to destroy the Ring and foil the Dark Lord in his evil purpose.

### [Galileo's Daughter: A Historical Memoir of Science, Faith and Love](#)

by Dava Sobel

Galileo Galilei's telescopes allowed him to discover a new reality in the heavens. But for publicly declaring his astounding argument--that the earth revolves around the sun--he was accused of heresy and put under house arrest by the Holy Office of the Inquisition. Living a far different life, Galileo's daughter Virginia, a cloistered nun, proved to be her father's greatest source of strength through the difficult years of his trial and persecution.

### [The Garden of Evening Mists](#)

by Tan Twan Eng

Seeking solace in the Malaysian plantations of her childhood after grueling World War II experiences, criminal prosecutor Yun Ling Teoh discovers a Japanese garden and its enigmatic tender, an exiled Japanese royal gardener who reluctantly accepts her as an apprentice. By the author of *The Gift of Rain*.

### [Garden of Stones](#)

by Sophie Littlefield

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Lucy Takeda and her mother, Miyako, are rounded up and taken to the Manzanar prison camp where they endure abuse and harsh living conditions until Miyako makes the ultimate sacrifice.

### [A Gate at the Stairs](#)

by Lorrie Moore

In the Midwest just after the September 11 attacks, twenty-year-old Tassie Keltjin comes of age amid such challenges as racism, the War on Terror, and cruelty in the name of love, as she leaves her family's farm to attend college and takes a part-time job as a nanny.

### [A Gentleman In Moscow](#)

by Amor Towles

When, in 1922, Count Alexander Rostov is deemed an unrepentant aristocrat by a Bolshevik tribunal, the count is sentenced to house arrest in the Metropol, a grand hotel across the street from the Kremlin. Rostov, an indomitable man of erudition and wit, has never worked a day in his life, and must now live in an attic room while some of the most tumultuous decades in Russian history are unfolding outside the hotel's doors. Unexpectedly, his reduced circumstances provide him a doorway into a much larger world of emotional discovery.

### [The Ghost Bride](#)

by Yangsze Choo

When she agrees to become a ghost bride for the wealthy Lim family's son, who recently died under mysterious circumstances, Li Lan must dive into a shadowy parallel world of the Chinese afterlife to find the truth.

### [The Ginger Tree](#)

by Oswald Wynd

A young Scottish woman, in 1903, travels to Peking to marry a British military attachee. She becomes a scandal to the British community by having an affair with Count Kuriha, a Japanese soldier. She is shunned by her own people, and not really accepted by the Japanese either. We are given the account of a hard, lonely, but fascinating life in an alien culture.

### [The Girl Next Door](#)

by Ruth Rendell

When bones are discovered in a tin box inside the tunnel a group of long-time friends played in as children, they reunite to recall their adventures in the tunnel for the detective investigating the case.

### [Girl In Translation](#)

by Jean Kwok

Emigrating with her mother from Hong Kong to Brooklyn, Kimberly begins a double life as a schoolgirl by day and sweatshop worker at night, an existence also marked by her first crush and the pressure to save her family from poverty.

### [The Girl Who Fell From the Sky](#)

by Heidi W. Darrow

After a family tragedy orphans her, Rachel, the daughter of a Danish mother and a black G.I., moves into her grandmother's mostly black community in the 1980s, where she must swallow her grief and confront her identity as a biracial woman in a world that wants to see her as either black or white.

### [The Girls From Ames](#)

by Jeffrey Zaslow

The story of eleven girls from Ames, Iowa, the ten women they became, and the mysterious death of their eleventh member demonstrates how female friendships can shape every aspect of women's lives.

### [Going Bovine](#)

by Libba Bray

After being diagnosed with Creutzfeldt-Jakob (aka mad cow) disease, disaffected teenager Cameron Smith sets off on a road trip with a death-obsessed video gaming dwarf he meets in the hospital in an attempt to find a cure.

### [The Golden Compass](#)

by Philip Pullman

Accompanied by her daemon, Lyra Belacqua sets out to prevent her best friend and other kidnapped children from becoming the subject of gruesome experiments in the Far North.

### [The Golem and the Jinni](#)

by Helene Wecker

Combines elements of Jewish and Arab folk mythology in the story of two supernatural creatures, Chava, a golem brought to life by a disgraced rabbi, and Ahmad, a jinni made of fire, who form an unlikely friendship on the streets of turn-of-the-century New York.

### [Gone Girl](#)

by Gillian Flynn

When a woman goes missing on her fifth wedding anniversary, her diary reveals hidden turmoil in her marriage, while her husband, desperate to clear himself of suspicion, realizes that something more disturbing than murder may have occurred.

### [The Good Thief](#)

by Hannah Tinti

Growing up in a New England orphanage unaware of his family and how he lost his left hand as an infant, twelve-year-old Ren is terrified of the future until a young man shows up claiming to be his long-lost brother.

### [The Grapes of Wrath](#)

by John Steinbeck

Depicts the hardships and suffering endured by the Joads as they journey from Oklahoma to California during the Depression.

### [A Grave Talent](#)

by Laurie R. King

Assigned, along with her new partner, to investigate the murders of three little girls, homicide detective Casey Martinelli closes in on a colony of mismatched people living in the wooded hills near San Francisco

### [The Healer of Fox Hollow](#)

by Joann Rose Leonard

Layla acquires the ability to heal people after a horrifying incident leaves her mute at five years of age, but she starts to question her skill and true place in the community after falling in love and suffering another tragedy as an adult.

### [The Heart is a Lonely Hunter](#)

by Carson McCullers

In a small Georgia mill town during the depression, four misfits form a group that revolves around a

deaf-mute whose sole companion has been sent to an insane asylum.

### [A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius](#)

by Dave Eggers

A moving memoir of a college senior who, in the space of five weeks, loses both of his parents to cancer and inherits his eight-year-old brother. This is an account that manages to be simultaneously hilarious and wildly inventive, as well as a deeply heartfelt story of the love that holds a family together.

### [The Help](#)

by Kathryn Stockett

Limited and persecuted by racial divides in 1962 Jackson, Mississippi, three women, including an African-American maid, her sassy and chronically unemployed friend, and a recently graduated white woman, team up for a clandestine project.

### [History of Love](#)

by Nicole Krauss

Sixty years after a book's publication, its author remembers his lost love and missing son, while a teenage girl named for one of the book's characters seeks her namesake, as well as a cure for her widowed mother's loneliness.

### [Home](#)

by Toni Morrison

Presents the story of embittered Korean War veteran Frank Money, who struggles against trauma and racism to rescue his medically abused sister and work through identity-shattering memories.

### [Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet](#)

by Jamie Ford

When artifacts from Japanese families sent to internment camps during World War II are uncovered in Seattle, Henry Lee embarks on a quest that leads to memories of growing up Chinese in a city rife with anti-Japanese sentiment.

### [How to Be Compassionate](#)

by Dalai Lama

Through practical exercises and personal anecdotes, the revered spiritual leader shows how individuals' compassion can lead to global changes.

### [The Hummingbird's Daughter](#)

by Luis Alberto Urrea

When sixteen-year-old Teresita, the illegitimate and beloved daughter of a powerful late-nineteenth-century rancher, arises from death possessing the power to heal, she is declared a saint and finds her family and faith tested by the impending Mexican civil war.

### [The Hunger Games](#)

by Suzanne Collins

In a future North America, where the rulers of Panem maintain control through a televised survival competition pitting young people against one another, Katniss's skills are put to the test when she takes her younger sister's place.

### [I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up For Education and Was Shot By The Taliban](#)

by Malala Yousafzai

Describes the life of the young Pakistani student who advocated for women's rights and education in the Taliban-controlled Swat Valley, survived an assassination attempt, and became the youngest nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize.

### [I Capture the Castle](#)

by Dodie Smith

In a classic English story, Cassandra Mortmain chronicles in her diary what happens to her eccentric family when a young American man inherits the local estate. The bittersweet love story that ensues is far more complicated than she ever imagines.

### [The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks](#)

by Rebecca Skloot

Henrietta Lacks was a poor Southern tobacco farmer who worked the same land as her slave ancestors, and whose cells--taken without her knowledge when she was treated for cancer in 1951--have become one of the most important tools in medicine. The Lacks family did not learn of Henrietta's cells until 20 years after her death, but these first "immortal" human cells grown in culture are still alive today: they've been bought and sold by the billions and have been vital in fighting polio, cancer, and many viruses. This incredible book explores race, bioethics, scientific research, human rights, the power of family, and the question of whether we control the very cells we're made of.

### [The Inheritance of Loss](#)

by Kiran Desai

In a crumbling house in the remote northeastern Himalayas, an embittered, elderly judge finds his peaceful retirement turned upside down by the arrival of his orphaned granddaughter, Sai, but their world--and Sai's romance with her handsome Nepali tutor--is threatened by a Nepalese insurgency. By the author of Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard.

### [Interpreter of Maladies](#)

by Jhumpa Lahiri

A debut collection of short fiction blends elements of Indian traditions with the complexities of American culture in such tales as "A Temporary Matter," in which a young Indian-American couple confronts their grief over the loss of a child, while their Boston neighborhood copes with a nightly blackout.

### [The Invention of Wings](#)

by Sue Monk Kidd

Traces the lives of a wealthy Charleston debutante who longs to break free from the strictures of her household and the urban slave who is placed in her charge as a child before finding courage and a sense of self.

### [Justine](#)

by Lawrence Durrell

The Egyptian city of Alexandria once boasted the world's greatest library, home to scholars dedicated solely to the pursuit of knowledge. But on the eve of World War II, the obsessed characters in this mesmerizing novel find that their pursuits lead only to bedrooms in which each seeks to know-and possess-the other.

### [Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI](#)

by David Grann

In the 1920s, the richest people per capita in the world were members of the Osage Indian Nation in Oklahoma. After oil was discovered beneath their land, the Osage rode in chauffeured automobiles, built mansions, and sent their children to study in Europe. Then, one by one, they began to be killed off. One Osage woman, Mollie Burkhart, watched as her family was murdered. David Grann revisits a shocking series of crimes in which dozens of people were murdered in cold blood. The book is a masterpiece of narrative nonfiction, as each step in the investigation reveals a series of sinister secrets and reversals. But more than that, it is a searing indictment of the callousness and prejudice toward Native Americans that allowed the murderers to operate with impunity for so long.

### [The Known World](#)

by Edward P. Jones

When a plantation proprietor and former slave--now possessing slaves of his own--dies, his household falls apart in the wake of a slave rebellion and corrupt underpaid patrolers who enable free black people to be sold into slavery.

### [The Kurdish Bike](#)

by Alesa Lightbourne

"Courageous teachers wanted to rebuild war-torn nation." With her marriage over and life gone flat, Theresa Turner responds to an online ad, and lands at a school in Kurdish Iraq. Befriended by a widow in a nearby village, Theresa is embroiled in the joys and agonies of traditional Kurds, especially the women who survived Saddam's genocide only to be crippled by age-old restrictions, brutality and honor killings. Theresa's greatest challenge will be balancing respect for cultural values while trying to introduce more enlightened attitudes toward women - at the same time seeking new spiritual dimensions within herself. The Kurdish Bike is gripping, tender, wry and compassionate - an eye-opener into little-known customs in one of the world's most explosive regions - a novel of love, betrayal and redemption.

### [Lab Girl](#)

by Hope Jahren

An illuminating debut memoir of a woman in science; a moving portrait of a longtime friendship; and a stunningly fresh look at plants that will forever change how you see the natural world

### [The Lacuna](#)

by Barbara Kingsolver

Harrison William Shepherd, a highly observant writer, is caught between two worlds--in Mexico, working for communists Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo, and Leon Trotsky, and later in America, where he is caught up in the patriotism of World War II.

### [Ladder of Years](#)

by Anne Tyler

Forty-year-old Delia Grinstead, mother of three almost-grown children, impulsively walks away from her marriage and sets off into the unknown to begin an entirely new life, but suddenly she discovers that she is accumulating fresh responsibilities.

### [The Language of Flowers](#)

by Vanessa Diffenbaugh

Discovering the symbolic meanings of flowers while languishing in the foster-care system,

eighteen-year-old Victoria is hired by a florist when her talent for helping others is discovered, a situation that leads her to confront a painful secret from her past.

### [Learning To Swim](#)

by Sara J. Henry

Witnessing a small boy being thrown into the middle of Lake Champlain, Troy Chance rescues the child only to discover that he had been kidnapped and is at the center of a bizarre and violent plot.

### [Leonardo Da Vinci](#)

by Walter Isaacson

Based on thousands of pages from Leonardo da Vinci's astonishing notebooks and new discoveries about his life and work, Walter Isaacson "deftly reveals an intimate Leonardo" (San Francisco Chronicle) in a narrative that connects his art to his science. He shows how Leonardo's genius was based on skills we can improve in ourselves, such as passionate curiosity, careful observation, and an imagination so playful that it flirted with fantasy. He produced the two most famous paintings in history, The Last Supper and the Mona Lisa. With a passion that sometimes became obsessive, he pursued innovative studies of anatomy, fossils, birds, the heart, flying machines, botany, geology, and weaponry. He explored the math of optics, showed how light rays strike the cornea, and produced illusions of changing perspectives in The Last Supper. His ability to stand at the crossroads of the humanities and the sciences, made iconic by his drawing of Vitruvian Man, made him history's most creative genius. In the "luminous" (Daily Beast) Leonardo da Vinci, Isaacson describes how Leonardo's delight at combining diverse passions remains the ultimate recipe for creativity. So, too, does his ease at being a bit of a misfit: illegitimate, gay, vegetarian, left-handed, easily distracted, and at times heretical. His life should remind us of the importance to be imaginative and, like talented rebels in any era, to think different. Here, da Vinci "comes to life in all his remarkable brilliance and oddity in Walter Isaacson's ambitious new biography...a vigorous, insightful portrait".

### [Less](#)

by Andrew Sean Greer

Receiving an invitation to his ex-boyfriend's wedding, Arthur, a failed novelist on the eve of his fiftieth birthday, embarks on an international journey that finds him falling in love, risking his life, reinventing himself, and making connections with the past.

### [Let's Take the Long Way Home](#)

by Gail Caldwell

Traces the author's close friendship with the late fellow writer Caroline Knapp, describing their shared experiences with sobriety, a love of dogs, and Caroline's battle with cancer.

### [Life As We Knew It](#)

by Susan Beth Pfeffer

Through journal entries sixteen-year-old Miranda describes her family's struggle to survive after a meteor hits the moon, causing worldwide tsunamis, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions.

### [The Light Between Oceans](#)

by M.L. Stedman

Moving his young bride to an isolated lighthouse home on Australia's Janus Rock where the couple suffers miscarriages and a stillbirth, Tom allows his wife to claim an infant that has washed up on the shore, a decision with devastating consequences.



### [Little Bee](#)

by Chris Cleave

A tale of a precarious friendship between an illegal Nigerian refugee and a recent widow from suburban London, a story told from the alternating and disparate perspectives of both women.

### [Little Heathens](#)

by Mildred Armstrong Kalish

An evocative memoir of growing up in the heart of the Midwest during the Great Depression describes life on an Iowa farm during a time of endless work, resourcefulness, family and kinship, and no tolerance for idleness or waste.

### [Loving Frank](#)

by Nancy Horan

Fact and fiction blend in a historical novel that chronicles the relationship between seminal architect Frank Lloyd Wright and Mamah Cheney, from their meeting, when they were each married to another, to the clandestine affair that shocked Chicago society.

### [MaddAddam](#)

by Margaret Atwood

In this final volume of the internationally celebrated MaddAddam trilogy, the Waterless Flood pandemic has wiped out most of the population. Toby is part of a small band of survivors, along with the Children of Crake: the gentle, bioengineered quasi-human species who will inherit this new earth. As Toby explains their origins to the curious Crakers, her tales cohere into a luminous oral history that sets down humanity's past--and points toward its future. Blending action, humor, romance, and an imagination at once dazzlingly inventive and grounded in a recognizable world, MaddAddam is vintage Atwood--a moving and dramatic conclusion to her epic work of speculative fiction.

### [Maisie Dobbs](#)

by Jacqueline Winspear

Private detective Maisie Dobbs must investigate the reappearance of a dead man who turns up at a cooperative farm called the Retreat that caters to men who are recovering their health after World War I.

### [Major Pettigrew's Last Stand](#)

by Helen Simonson

Forced to confront the realities of life in the 21st century when he falls in love with widowed Pakistani descendant Mrs. Ali, a retired Major Pettigrew finds the relationship challenged by local prejudices that view Mrs. Ali, a Cambridge native, as a perpetual foreigner.

### [A Man Called Ove](#)

by Fredrik Backman

A feel-good story in the spirit of The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry and Major Pettigrew's Last Stand, Fredrik Backman's novel about the angry old man next door is a thoughtful exploration of the profound impact one life has on countless others.

### [March](#)

by Geraldine Brooks

In a story inspired by the father character in Little Women and drawn from the journals and letters of Louisa May Alcott's father Bronson, a man leaves behind his family to serve in the Civil War and finds

his marriage and beliefs profoundly challenged by his experiences

### [Margot](#)

by Jillian Cantor

In this excellent re-imagining of Anne Frank's sister's experience in post-war America, Margie Franklin, a.k.a. Margot Frank - a young woman working as a secretary at a Jewish law firm in Philadelphia, finds her carefully constructed life falling apart when her sister, Anne Frank, becomes a global icon.

### [The Martian](#)

by Andy Weir

Six days ago, astronaut Mark Watney became one of the first people to walk on Mars. Now, he's sure he'll be the first person to die there. After a dust storm nearly kills him and forces his crew to evacuate while thinking him dead, Mark finds himself stranded and completely alone with no way to even signal Earth that he's alive--and even if he could get word out, his supplies would be gone long before a rescue could arrive. Chances are, though, he won't have time to starve to death. The damaged machinery, unforgiving environment, or plain-old "human error" are much more likely to kill him first. But Mark isn't ready to give up yet. Drawing on his ingenuity, his engineering skills--and a relentless, dogged refusal to quit--he steadfastly confronts one seemingly insurmountable obstacle after the next. Will his resourcefulness be enough to overcome the impossible odds against him?

### [Mennonite in a Little Black Dress](#)

by Rhoda Janzen

A poet describes how, after her husband left her for a relationship with a man and she subsequently was seriously injured in a car crash, she returned home to her close-knit Mennonite family and came to terms with her failed marriage and her choices in life.

### [Middlesex](#)

by Jeffrey Eugenides

A young girl discovers she's actually a hermaphrodite in her teen years. This is a story of her family's history beginning with their escape from Greece as well as her own experiences growing up in Detroit in the 1960's.

### [Mink River](#)

by Brian Doyle

In a small fictional town on the Oregon coast there are love affairs and almost-love-affairs, mystery and hilarity, bears and tears, brawls and boats, a garrulous logger and a silent doctor, rain and pain, Irish immigrants and Salish stories, mud and laughter. There's a Department of Public Works that gives haircuts and counts insects, a policeman who is addicted to Puccini, a philosophizing crow, beer, and berries. An expedition is mounted, a crime is committed, and there's an unbelievably huge picnic on the football field. Babies are born. A car is cut in half with a saw. A river confesses what it's thinking. This is the tale of a town, written in a distinct and lyrical voice, and when the book ends, readers will be more than a little sad to leave the village of Neawanaka, on the wet coast of Oregon, beneath the hills that used to boast the biggest trees in the history of the world.

### [From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler](#)

by E. L. Konigsburg

Having run away with her younger brother to live in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, twelve-year-old Claudia strives to keep things in order in their new home and to become a changed person and a heroine to herself.

### [Moloka'i](#)

by Alan Brennert

Seven-year-old Rachel is forcibly removed from her family's 1890s Honolulu home when she contracts leprosy and is placed in a settlement, where she loses a series of new friends before new medical discoveries enable her to reenter the world.

### [Moon Over Manifest](#)

by Clare Vanderpool

Twelve-year-old Abilene Tucker is the daughter of a drifter who, in the summer of 1936, sends her to stay with an old friend in Manifest, Kansas, where he grew up, and where she hopes to find out some things about his past.

### [Motherless Brooklyn](#)

by Jonathan Lethem

Lionel Essrog has always respected Frank Minna, who helped him out when he was young, and when Frank is found dead, Lionel and his friends, the Minna Men, scour the streets of Brooklyn in search of the killer.

### [Mountains Beyond Mountains](#)

by Tracy Kidder

A portrait of infectious disease expert Dr. Paul Farmer follows the efforts of this unconventional Harvard genius to understand the world's great health, economic, and social problems and to bring healing to humankind.

### [The Museum of Extraordinary Things](#)

by Alice Hoffman

The daughter of a curiosities museum's front man pursues an impassioned love affair with a Russian immigrant photographer, who after fleeing his Lower East Side Orthodox community, has captured poignant images of the infamous Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire.

### [Musicophilia](#)

by Oliver Sacks

In this book, Oliver Sacks explores the power music wields over us; a power that sometimes we control and at other times don't. He explores, in his inimitable fashion, how it can provide access to otherwise unreachable emotional states, how it can revivify neurological avenues that have been frozen, evoke memories of earlier, lost events or states or bring those with neurological disorders back to a time when the world was much richer.

### [My Life in France](#)

by Julia Child

A memoir begun just months before Child's death describes the legendary food expert's years in Paris, Marseille, and Provence and her journey from a young woman from Pasadena who cannot cook or speak any French to the publication of her legendary Mastering cookbooks and her winning the hearts of America as "The French Chef."

### [My Name is Red](#)

by Orhan Pamuk

In sixteenth-century Istanbul, a furor erupts when the Sultan hires a group of artists to illuminate a great book in the European style at a time in which all figurative art is considered Islamic heresy, but the

situation becomes worse when one of the miniaturists vanishes.

### [The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness](#)

by Michelle Alexander

Argues that the War on Drugs and policies that deny convicted felons equal access to employment, housing, education, and public benefits create a permanent under caste based largely on race.

### [A Northern Light](#)

by Jennifer Donnelly

In 1906, sixteen-year-old Mattie, determined to attend college and be a writer against the wishes of her father and fiance, takes a job at a summer inn where she discovers the truth about the death of a guest.

### [The Ocean at the End of the Lane](#)

by Neil Gaiman

Presents a modern fantasy about fear, love, magic, and sacrifice in the story of a family at the mercy of dark forces, whose only defense is the three women who live on a farm at the end of the lane.

### [The Odyssey](#)

by Homer/ translated by Robert Fagles

The award-winning translator of Iliad and Oresteia introduces a new translation of Homer's age-old tale of the wanderings of Odysseus during his ten-year voyage back home to Ithaca after the Trojan War as he overcomes both divine and natural forces.

### [Old age is another country: a traveler's guide](#)

by Page Smith

Smith tells us how to grow old with dignity, humor, and active participation in life during the sometimes puzzling retirement years.

### [Olive Kitteridge](#)

by Elizabeth Strout

The world of Olive Kitteridge, a retired school teacher in a small coastal town in Maine, is revealed in stories that explore her diverse roles in many lives, including a lounge singer haunted by a past love, her stoic husband, and her own resentful son.

### [The One and Only Ivan](#)

by Katherine Applegate

When Ivan, a gorilla who has lived for years in a down-and-out circus-themed mall, meets Ruby, a baby elephant that has been added to the mall, he decides that he must find her a better life.

### [One Thousand White Women: The Journals of May Dodd](#)

by Jim Fergus

A vivid portrait of the American West follows May Dodd as she leaves the East Coast asylum to which she had been committed by her high-society family, heads west, and, with the help of a government program, ends up marrying a chief of the Cheyenne nation.

### [The Orchardist](#)

by Amanda Coplin

When two feral girls--one of them very pregnant--appear on his homestead, solitary orchardist

Talmadge, who carefully tends the grove of fruit trees he has cultivated for nearly half a century, vows to save and protect them.

### [The Orchid Thief](#)

by Susan Orlean

A staff writer for The New Yorker describes the life and times of John Laroche, a plant smuggler and orchid thief, and the eccentric world of Florida's obsessed collectors of rare plants.

### [Ordinary Grace](#)

by William Kent Krueger

New Bremen, Minnesota, 1961. The Twins were playing their debut season, ice-cold root beers were selling out at the soda counter of Halderson's Drugstore, and Hot Stuff comic books were a mainstay on every barbershop magazine rack. It was a time of innocence and hope for a country with a new, young president. But for thirteen-year-old Frank Drum it was a grim summer in which death visited frequently and assumed many forms. Accident. Nature. Suicide. Murder.

### [The Orphan Master's Son](#)

by Adam Johnson

The son of a singer mother whose career forcibly separated her from her family and an influential father who runs an orphan work camp, Pak Jun Do rises to prominence using instinctive talents and eventually becomes a professional kidnapper and romantic rival to Kim Jong Il. By the author of Parasites Like Us.

### [Orphan Train](#)

by Christina Baker Kline

Close to aging out of the foster care system, Molly Ayer takes a position helping an elderly woman named Vivian and discovers that they are more alike than different as she helps Vivian solve a mystery from her past.

### [Oryx and Crake](#)

by Margaret Atwood

A new work by the Booker Prize-winning author of The Blind Assassin and Alias Grace is set in a future world that has been devastated by a series of ecological and scientific disasters.

### [Our Souls at Night](#)

by Kent Haruf

In the familiar setting of Holt, Colorado, home to all of Kent Haruf's inimitable fiction, Addie Moore pays an unexpected visit to a neighbor, Louis Waters. Her husband died years ago, as did his wife, and in such a small town they naturally have known of each other for decades; in fact, Addie was quite fond of Louis's wife. His daughter lives hours away, her son even farther, and Addie and Louis have long been living alone in empty houses, the nights so terribly lonely, especially with no one to talk with. But maybe that could change? As Addie and Louis come to know each other better--their pleasures and their difficulties--a beautiful story of second chances unfolds, making Our Souls at Night the perfect final installment to this beloved writer's enduring contribution to American literature.

### [Out Stealing Horses](#)

by Per Petterson

After a meeting with his only neighbor, sixty-seven-year-old Trond is forced to reflect upon a long-ago incident that marks the beginning of a series of losses for Trond and his childhood friend, Jon.

### [The Overstory](#)

by Richard Powers

The Overstory, winner of the 2019 Pulitzer Prize in Fiction, is a sweeping, impassioned work of activism and resistance that is also a stunning evocation of--and paean to--the natural world. From the roots to the crown and back to the seeds, Richard Powers's twelfth novel unfolds in concentric rings of interlocking fables that range from antebellum New York to the late twentieth-century Timber Wars of the Pacific Northwest and beyond. There is a world alongside ours--vast, slow, interconnected, resourceful, magnificently inventive, and almost invisible to us. This is the story of a handful of people who learn how to see that world and who are drawn up into its unfolding catastrophe.

### [Pachinko](#)

by Min Jin Lee

In the early 1900s, teenaged Sunja, the adored daughter of a crippled fisherman, falls for a wealthy stranger at the seashore near her home in Korea. He promises her the world, but when she discovers she is pregnant--and that her lover is married--she refuses to be bought. Instead, she accepts an offer of marriage from a gentle, sickly minister passing through on his way to Japan. But her decision to abandon her home, and to reject her son's powerful father, sets off a dramatic saga that will echo down through the generations. Richly told and profoundly moving, Pachinko is a story of love, sacrifice, ambition, and loyalty. From bustling street markets to the halls of Japan's finest universities to the pachinko parlors of the criminal underworld, Lee's complex and passionate characters--strong, stubborn women, devoted sisters and sons, fathers shaken by moral crisis--survive and thrive against the indifferent arc of history.

### [The Paris Wife](#)

by Paula McLain

Follows the life of Ernest Hemingway's first wife, Hadley, as she navigates 1920s Paris.

### [Peace Like a River](#)

by Leif Enger

Set in 1950s rural Minnesota, Enger weaves spirituality into this coming-of-age quest novel. The family's search for one of its sons is at once a heroic quest, a tragedy, a love story, and a haunting meditation on the possibility of magic in the everyday world.

### [The Perks of Being a Wallflower](#)

by Stephen Chbosky

In a thought-provoking coming-of-age novel, Charlie struggles to cope with complex world of high school as he deals with the confusions of sex and love, the temptations of drugs, and the pain of losing a close friend and a favorite aunt.

### [Pirate King](#)

by Laurie R. King

Sent to Lisbon and Morocco, where a British studio is creating a silent film version of "The Pirates of Penzance," Mary Russell investigates a series of crimes targeting the production and confronts a high-stakes situation when actual pirates orchestrate a hostage situation.

### [Plainsong](#)

by Kent Haruf

An unlikely extended family is formed when a high school teacher helps a pregnant student make a home with two elderly bachelor ranchers.

### [Pope Joan](#)

by Donna Woolfolk Cross

Rebelling against medieval strictures forbidding the education of women, young Joan assumes the identity of her murdered brother and is initiated into the monastery of Fulda, where she distinguishes herself as a great Christian scholar before relocating to Rome and becoming a powerful force in religious politics.

### [Possession](#)

by A.S. Byatt

Roland Michell and Maud Bailey, two rather unfulfilled young literary scholars, unexpectedly become figures of romance as they discover a surprising link between the two poets on whom they are authorities. Byatt deftly plays with literary genres--Romantic quest, campus satire, detective story, myth, fairy tale--as Maud and Roland become deeply involved in the unfolding story of a secret relationship between the Victorian poets Randolph Henry Ash and Christabel LaMotte.

### [The Power](#)

by Naomi Alderman

All over the world, women are discovering they have the power. There's Roxy, a white British teenager and the daughter of a gangster. There's Allie, a mixed-race girl who runs away after years of abuse and finds herself at a convent, revered as a goddess. There's Margot, an American mayor and one of the few older women to develop the power. And then Tunde, a young Nigerian man and aspiring journalist who captures early footage of the power in action. With a flick of their fingers, these women can inflict terrible pain - even death. Every man on the planet finds he's lost control. The day of the girls has arrived - but where will it end?

### [The Prodigal Summer](#)

by Barbara Kingsolver

Three stories of human love are woven together within a larger tapestry of lives amid the mountains and farms of southern Appalachia. Over the course of one humid summer, this novel's intriguing protagonists face disparate predicaments but find connections to one another and to the flora and fauna with which they necessarily share a place.

### [The Rainbow Comes and Goes](#)

by Anderson Cooper

A poignant correspondence between the CNN journalist and his iconic designer mother, exchanged in the aftermath of the latter's brief illness, shares a rare window into their relationship and the life lessons imparted by an aging mother to her adult son.

### [Reading Lolita in Tehran](#)

by Azar Nafisi

Lolita in Tehran? Yes, and plenty of other Western classics, read and discussed by a group of women who met secretly with Nafisi, an instructor at the University of Tehran until she was expelled in 1997 for shunning the veil and left the country.

### [Red Clocks](#)

by Leni Zumas

In this ferociously imaginative novel, abortion is once again illegal in America, in-vitro fertilization is banned, and the Personhood Amendment grants rights of life, liberty, and property to every embryo. Five very different women navigate these new barriers alongside age-old questions surrounding

motherhood, identity, and freedom. In the vein of Margaret Atwood and Eileen Myles, Leni Zumas fearlessly explores the contours of female experience, evoking "The Handmaid's Tale" for a new millennium. This is a story of resilience, transformation, and hope in tumultuous - even frightening - times.

### [The Red Tent](#)

by Anita Diamant

The story of Dinah, a tragic character from the Bible whose great love, a prince, is killed by her brother, leaving her alone and pregnant. The novel traces her life from childhood to death, in the process examining sexual and religious practices of the day, and what it meant to be a woman.

### [Refuge: an unnatural history of family and place](#)

by Terry Williams

The author of Leap describes her Mormon upbringing, juxtaposing these reminiscences with discussions of the flooding of a wildlife bird sanctuary and its effect on that ecosystem, and her family's legacy of cancer.

### [Reliable Wife](#)

by Robert Goolrick

Ralph Truitt, a wealthy businessman with a troubled past who lives in a remote nineteenth-century Wisconsin town, has advertised for a reliable wife; and his ad is answered by Catherine Land, a woman who makes every effort to hide her own dark secrets.

### [The Return of the King](#)

by J.R.R. Tolkien

In a multi-part effort to destroy the evil power of Sauron, Frodo and Sam the hobbits try to quietly take the ruling ring to Mt. Doom to destroy it, while Aragorn and the combined military might of the West first defend Minas Tirith and then march on Cirith Ungol.

### [The River of Doubt : Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey](#)

by Candice Millard

The true story of Theodore Roosevelt's harrowing 1914 exploration of one of the most dangerous rivers on earth, a black, uncharted tributary of the Amazon that snakes through one of the most treacherous jungles in the world. Indians armed with poison-tipped arrows haunt its shadows; piranhas glide through its waters; boulder-strewn rapids turn the river into a roiling cauldron. After his humiliating election defeat in 1912, Roosevelt set his sights on the most punishing physical challenge he could find, the first descent of an unmapped tributary of the Amazon. He and his men faced an unbelievable series of hardships, losing their canoes and supplies to punishing whitewater rapids, and enduring starvation, Indian attack, disease, drowning, and a murder within their own ranks. Three men died, and Roosevelt was brought to the brink of suicide. Yet he accomplished a feat so great that many at the time refused to believe it.

### [The Road Home](#)

by Rose Tremain

Making his way to London through Eastern Europe in the wake of factory closings and his wife's death, Lev finds a job in a posh restaurant and a room in the home of an Irishman who has also lost his family.

### [The Round House](#)

by Louise Erdrich



When his mother, a tribal enrollment specialist living on a reservation in North Dakota, slips into an abyss of depression after being brutally attacked, 14-year-old Joe Coutz sets out with his three friends to find the person that destroyed his family.

### [The Ruby in the Smoke](#)

by Philip Pullman

In search of clues to the mystery of her father's death, 16-year-old Sally Lockhart ventures into the shadowy underworld of Victorian London. Pursued by villains at every turn, the intrepid Sally finally uncovers two dark mysteries--and realizes that she herself is the key to both.

### [The Samurai's Garden](#)

by Gail Tsukiyama

In 1938, on the eve of World War II, a young Chinese man suffering from tuberculosis travels to his family's summer home in Japan, where his encounters with a lovely Japanese girl and four local residents prove to be memorable.

### [The Sandcastle Girls](#)

by Chris Bohjalian

A historical love story inspired by the author's Armenian heritage finds early 20th-century nurse Elizabeth Endicott arriving in Syria to help deliver food and medical aid to genocide refugees, a volunteer service during which she exchanges letters with an Armenian engineer and widower.

### [The Satanic Verses](#)

by Salman Rushdie

Set in a modern world filled with both mayhem and miracles, the story begins with a bang: the terrorist bombing of a London-bound jet in midflight. Two Indian actors of opposing sensibilities fall to earth, transformed into living symbols of what is angelic and evil.

### [The Second Summer of the Sisterhood](#)

by Ann Brashares

When Carmen and her friends discover that jeans from a thrift shop provide an uncanny fit for all four of them, they form a sisterhood, with the pants as the symbol of their friendship, and embark on a sweet-sixteen summer.

### [The Secret History](#)

by Donna Tartt

A transfer student from a small town in California, Richard Papen is determined to affect the ways of his Hampden College peers, and he begins his intense studies under the tutelage of eccentric Julian Morrow.

### [The Secret Keeper](#)

by Kate Morton

Withdrawing from a family party, sixteen-year-old Laurel Nicolson witnesses a shocking murder that throughout a subsequent half century shapes her beliefs, her acting career, and the lives of three strangers from vastly different cultures.

### [The Secret Life of Bees](#)

by Sue Monk Kidd

When Lily's "stand-in mother" insults the racists in town, Lily knows it's time to leave. They end up

being taken in by a trio of black beekeeping sisters who lead her to the single thing her heart longs for most.

### [Sees Behind Trees](#)

by Michael Dorris

A Native American boy with a special gift to "see" beyond his poor eyesight journeys with an old warrior to a land of mystery and beauty

### [The Sense of an Ending](#)

by Julian Barnes

Follows a middle-aged man as he reflects on a past he thought was behind him, until he is presented with a legacy that forces him to reconsider different decisions, and to revise his place in the world.

### [The Shadow of the Wind](#)

by Carlos Ruiz Zafon

A boy named Daniel selects a novel from a library of rare books, enjoying it so much that he searches for the rest of the author's works, only to discover that someone is destroying every book the author has ever written.

### [The signature of all things](#)

by Elizabeth Gilbert

A glorious, sweeping novel of desire, ambition, and the thirst for knowledge... In *The Signature of All Things*, Elizabeth Gilbert returns to fiction, inserting her inimitable voice into an enthralling story of love, adventure and discovery. Spanning much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the novel follows the fortunes of the extraordinary Whittaker family as led by the enterprising Henry Whittaker--a poor-born Englishman who makes a great fortune in the South American quinine trade, eventually becoming the richest man in Philadelphia.

### [The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants](#)

by Ann Brashares

During their first summer apart, four teenage girls, best friends since earliest childhood, stay in touch through a shared pair of secondhand jeans that magically adapts to each of their figures and affects their attitudes to their different summer experiences.

### [The Sixth Extinction](#)

by Elizabeth Kolbert

Drawing on the work of geologists, botanists, marine biologists and other researchers, an award-winning writer for *The New Yorker* discusses the five devastating mass extinctions on earth and predicts the coming of a sixth.

### [The Snow Child](#)

by Eowyn Ivey

A childless couple working a farm in the brutal landscape of 1920 Alaska discover a little girl living in the wilderness, with a red fox as a companion, and begin to love the strange, almost-supernatural child as their own.

### [The Spirit Catches You And You Fall Down](#)

by Anne Fadiman

A tragic tale of cultural differences chronicles the fight over the proper care of an epileptic Hmong child

between a California medical center and her tradition-minded Laotian refugee family.

### [State of Wonder](#)

by Ann Patchett

A researcher at a pharmaceutical company, Marina Singh must step out of her comfort zone when she is sent into the heart of the Amazonian delta to check on a field team that has been silent for two years--a dangerous assignment that forces Marina to confront the ghosts of her past.

### [Steve Jobs](#)

by Walter Isaacson

Based on more than forty interviews with Steve Jobs conducted over two years--as well as interviews with more than 100 family members, friends, adversaries, competitors, and colleagues--Walter Isaacson has written a riveting story of the roller-coaster life and searingly intense personality of a creative entrepreneur whose passion for perfection and ferocious drive revolutionized six industries: personal computers, animated movies, music, phones, tablet computing, and digital publishing. Isaacson's portrait touched millions of readers. At a time when America is seeking ways to sustain its innovative edge, Jobs stands as the ultimate icon of inventiveness and applied imagination. He knew that the best way to create value in the twenty-first century was to connect creativity with technology. He built a company where leaps of the imagination were combined with remarkable feats of engineering. Although Jobs cooperated with the author, he asked for no control over what was written. He put nothing off-limits. He encouraged the people he knew to speak honestly. He himself spoke candidly about the people he worked with and competed against. His friends, foes, and colleagues offer an unvarnished view of the passions, perfectionism, obsessions, artistry, devilry, and compulsion for control that shaped his approach to business and the innovative products that resulted. His tale is instructive and cautionary, filled with lessons about innovation, character, leadership, and values.

### [Still Life With Bread Crumbs](#)

by Anna Quindlen

Abandoning her expensive world to move to a small country cabin, a once world-famous photographer bonds with a local man and begins to see the world around her in new, deeper dimensions while evaluating second chances at love, career and self-understanding.

### [The Stone Diaries](#)

by Carol Shields

In this Pulitzer Prize winning book, Daisy Goodwill attempts to understand her place in the world as she nears the end of her life. She narrates her own biography, from her birth in Manitoba in 1905 when she loses her mother to childbirth, through her college years, her marriages and her work as a newspaper columnist.

### [The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry](#)

by Gabrielle Zevin

A. J. Fikry's life is not at all what he expected it to be. He lives alone, his bookstore is experiencing the worst sales in its history, and now his prized possession, a rare collection of Poe poems, has been stolen. But when a mysterious package appears at the bookstore, its unexpected arrival gives Fikry the chance to make his life over--and see everything anew.

### [The Subtle Knife](#)

by Philip Pullman

As the boundaries between worlds begin to dissolve, Lyra and her daemon help Will Parry in his search

for his father and for a powerful, magical knife.

### [Summer of My German Soldier](#)

by Bette Greene

Patty Bergen, an unhappy Jewish girl living in Arkansas, shelters a pacifist German POW who escaped from a local prison compound, and she must face the wrath and hatred of her family and her town for her actions.

### [The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie](#)

by Alan Bradley

Eleven-year-old Flavia de Luce, an aspiring chemist with a passion for poison, is propelled into a mystery when a man is murdered on the grounds of her family's decaying English mansion and Flavia's father becomes the main suspect.

### [Tangerine](#)

by Edward Bloor

Twelve-year-old Paul, who lives in the shadow of his football hero brother Erik, fights for the right to play soccer despite his near blindness and slowly begins to remember the incident that damaged his eyesight.

### [The tattooist of Auschwitz](#)

by Heather Morris

In April 1942, Lale Sokolov, a Slovakian Jew, is forcibly transported to the concentration camps at Auschwitz-Birkenau. When his captors discover that he speaks several languages, he is put to work as a Tätowierer (the German word for tattooist), tasked with permanently marking his fellow prisoners. Imprisoned for over two and a half years, Lale witnesses horrific atrocities and barbarism--but also incredible acts of bravery and compassion.

### [Tell the Wolves I'm Home](#)

by Carol Rifka Brunt

Her world upended by the death of a beloved artist uncle who was the only person who understood her, fourteen-year-old June is mailed a teapot by her uncle's grieving friend, with whom June forges a poignant relationship.

### [The Tenderness of Wolves](#)

by Stef Penney

When her teenage son disappears in the aftermath of a brutal murder, a determined mother sets out from her snow-covered nineteenth-century settlement to find him, an effort that is hampered by vigilante groups and the harrowing forces of nature.

### [There There](#)

by Tommy Orange

Tommy Orange's shattering novel follows twelve characters from Native communities: all traveling to the Big Oakland Powwow, all connected to each other in ways they may not yet realize. There is Jacquie Red Feather, newly sober and working to make it back to the family she left behind. Dene Oxendene, who is pulling his life back together after his uncle's death, has come to work at the powwow to honor his memory. Fourteen-year-old Orvil has come to perform traditional dance for the very first time. Together, this chorus of voices tells of the plight of the urban Native American--grappling with a complex and painful history, with an inheritance of beauty and spirituality, with communion and

sacrifice and heroism. Hailed as an instant classic, *There There* is at once poignant and laugh-out-loud funny, utterly contemporary and always unforgettable.

### [Thirteen Reasons Why](#)

by Jay Asher

When Clay Jenkins receives a box containing thirteen cassette tapes recorded by his classmate Hannah, who committed suicide, he spends the night crisscrossing their town, listening to Hannah's voice recounting the events leading up to her death.

### [The Thirteenth Tale](#)

by Diane Setterfield

Having spent sixty years creating a series of alternate identities for herself, enigmatic Vida Winter pens a painful letter to young Margaret Lea when the latter begs her to disclose the truth about her secretive birth.

### [Thousand Pieces of Gold](#)

by Ruthanne Lum McCunn

Lalu Nathoy's father called his thirteen-year-old daughter his treasure, his "thousand pieces of gold," yet when famine strikes northern China in 1871, he is forced to sell her. Polly, as Lalu is later called, is sold to a brothel, sold again to a slave merchant bound for America, auctioned to a saloonkeeper, and offered as a prize in a poker game. This biographical novel is the extraordinary story of one woman's fight for independence and dignity in the American West.

### [Three Junes](#)

by Julia Glass

Reveals the interconnected lives, loves, and relationships of different generations of the McLeod family over the course of three crucial summers.

### [Thunderstruck](#)

by Erik Larson

A portrait of the Edwardian era recounts two parallel stories--the case of Dr. Hawley Crippen, who murdered his wife and fled to America, and Guglielmo Marconi, the inventor of wireless communication--as the new technology is used to capture a killer.

### [The Tipping Point](#)

by Malcolm Gladwell

By exposing the importance of the "tipping point" in human affairs--that moment when a trend, idea, or social behavior crosses the threshold into acceptability--the author sheds important light on the forces that drive group dynamics and mass culture.

### [Tortilla Curtain](#)

by T.C. Boyle

The lives of two very different couples--wealthy Los Angeles liberals Delaney and Kyra Mossbacher, and Candido and America Rincon, a pair of Mexican illegals--suddenly collide, in a story that unfolds from the shifting viewpoints of the various characters.

### [TransAtlantic](#)

by Colum McCann

A tale spanning 150 years and two continents reimagines the peace efforts of democracy champion

Frederick Douglass, Senator George Mitchell and World War I airmen John Alcock and Teddy Brown through the experiences of four generations of women from a matriarchal clan.

### [A Tree Grows in Brooklyn](#)

by Betty Smith

Armed with her idealism and determination, young Francie Nolan struggles to escape from the poverty of life in a Brooklyn tenement during the early 1900s.

### [Turn of Mind](#)

by Alice LaPlante

Implicated in the murder of her best friend, Jennifer White, a brilliant retired surgeon with dementia, struggles with fractured memories of their complex relationship and wonders if she actually committed the crime.

### [The Two Towers](#)

by J.R.R. Tolkien

Recounts the deeds of the individual members of the Fellowship of the Ring after being divided by an attack of the orc-soldiers, following Frodo and his servant Samwise on their continuing quest to destroy the Ring of Power in the Mountain of Fire.

### [Unbroken](#)

by Laura Hillenbrand

Relates the story of a U.S. airman who survived when his bomber crashed into the sea during World War II, spent forty-seven days adrift in the ocean before being rescued by the Japanese Navy, and was held as a prisoner until the end of the war.

### [Under the Wide and Starry Sky](#)

by Nancy Horan

Imagines the love affair of Robert Louis Stevenson and American divorcee Fanny Van de Grift Osbourne, who after meeting in rural France take refuge from their unhappy lives and embark on two shared decades of international turbulence.

### [The Underground Railroad](#)

by Colson Whitehead

Cora is a slave on a cotton plantation in Georgia. When Caesar, a recent arrival from Virginia, tells her about the Underground Railroad, they decide to take a terrifying risk and escape. Though they manage to find a station and head north, they are being hunted. Their first stop is South Carolina, in a city that initially seems like a haven. But the city's placid surface masks an insidious scheme designed for its black denizens. And even worse: Ridgeway, the relentless slave catcher, is close on their heels.

### [The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry](#)

by Rachel Joyce

Harold Fry is convinced that he must deliver a letter to an old love in order to save her, meeting various characters along the way and reminiscing about the events of his past and people he has known, as he tries to find peace and acceptance.

### [Vivian Apple at the End of the World](#)

by Katie Coyle

Seventeen-year-old Vivian Apple never believed in the evangelical Church of America, unlike her

recently devout parents. But when Vivian returns home the night after the supposed "Rapture," all that's left of her parents are two holes in the roof. Suddenly, she doesn't know who or what to believe. With her best friend Harp and a mysterious ally, Peter, Vivian embarks on a desperate cross-country road trip through a paranoid and panic-stricken America to find answers. Because at the end of the world, Vivian Apple isn't looking for a savior. She's looking for the truth.

### [Waiting](#)

by Ha Jin

An ambitious and dedicated Chinese doctor, Lin Kong finds himself torn between two very different women--the educated and dynamic nurse with whom he has fallen in love and the traditional, meek, and humble woman to whom his family married him when they were both very young.

### [A Walk in the Woods](#)

by Bill Bryson

Bryson shares his breath-taking adventures and the fascinating history of the 2,100-mile Appalachian Trail, in this wry account of his arduous trek past the Trail's natural pleasures, human eccentrics, and offbeat comforts.

### [Walking on Water](#)

by Richard Paul Evans

When the long walk from Seattle to Key West finally nears an end, Alan Christoffersen must return to the west and face yet another crisis just as he has begun to heal from so much loss.

### [The Warmth of Other Suns](#)

by Isabel Wilkerson

In an epic history covering the period from the end of World War I through the 1970s, a Pulitzer Prize winner chronicles the decades-long migration of African Americans from the South to the North and West through the stories of three individuals and their families.

### [The Weight of Water](#)

by Anita Shreve

A double narrative set on and around an island off the coast of New Hampshire. A vacationing woman investigates the house and environs where a murder took place more than 100 years ago.

### [What It Is Like To Go To War](#)

by Karl Marlantes

Drawing on his background as a decorated Vietnam War veteran, the author offers insight into his war experiences, maintaining that combat troops are ill prepared for the psychological and spiritual trauma of battle.

### [When the Emperor Was Divine](#)

by Julie Otsuka

A story told from five different points of view chronicles the experiences of Japanese Americans caught up in the nightmare of the World War II internment camps.

### [When We Were Orphans](#)

by Kazuo Ishiguro

Christopher Banks, an English boy born in early 20th century Shanghai, is orphaned at age nine when both his parents disappear under suspicious circumstances. He grows up to become a renowned

detective, and more than 20 years later, returns to Shanghai to solve the mystery of the disappearance.

### [When You Reach Me](#)

by Rebecca Stead

In the 1980s, as her mother prepares to be a contestant on a television game show, Miranda tries to make sense of a series of mysterious notes received from an anonymous source that seems to defy the laws of time and space.

### [While I Was Gone](#)

by Sue Miller

When an old housemate settles in her small town, the fabric of Jo's life begins to unravel: seduced again by the enticing possibility of another self and another life, she begins a dangerous flirtation that returns her to the darkest moment of her past and imperils all she loves.

### [Whirligig](#)

by Paul Fleischman

While traveling to each corner of the country to build a whirligig in memory of the girl whose death he caused, sixteen-year-old Brent finds forgiveness and atonement.

### [White Teeth](#)

by Zadie Smith

Set in post-war London, this novel of the racial, political, and social upheaval of the last half-century follows two families--the Joneses and the Iqbals, both outsiders from within the former British empire--as they make their way in modern England.

### [The Wives of Los Alamos](#)

by Tarashea Nesbit

An emotionally charged tale told in the collective voices of the wives of the team who created the atom bomb traces their struggles to adapt and raise children in a rugged military town where everything their husbands are doing is an intense secret.

### [The World Below](#)

by Sue Miller

After being diagnosed at nineteen with tuberculosis in 1919, a young woman is sent to a sanitarium, where she rediscovers the pleasures of unfettered youth and falls in love with a doomed man, in a novel that follows the lives of two women of two very different generations.

### [The year of the flood](#)

by Margaret Atwood

Set in the visionary future of Atwood's acclaimed *Oryx and Crake*, *The Year of the Flood* is at once a moving tale of lasting friendship and a landmark work of speculative fiction. In this second book of the *MaddAddam* trilogy, the long-feared waterless flood has occurred, altering Earth as we know it and obliterating most human life. Among the survivors are Ren, a young trapeze dancer locked inside the high-end sex club *Scales and Tails*, and Toby, who is barricaded inside a luxurious spa. Amid shadowy, corrupt ruling powers and new, gene-spliced life forms, Ren and Toby will have to decide on their next move, but they can't stay locked away.

### [The Year of Magical Thinking](#)

by Joan Didion



An autobiographical portrait of marriage and motherhood by the acclaimed author details the critical illness of her daughter, Quintana Roo, followed by the fatal coronary of her husband, John Gregory Dunne, and her daughter's second bout with a life-threatening ailment, and her struggle to come to terms with life and death, illness, sanity, personal upheaval, and grief.

[The Yiddish Policemen's Union](#)

by Michael Chabon

In a world in which Alaska, rather than Israel, has become the homeland for the Jews following World War II, Detective Meyer Landsman and his half-Tlingit partner Berko investigate the death of a heroin-addled chess prodigy.