

Book Discussion Kits (Fiction)

[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 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.

[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*.

[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.

[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.

[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.

[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 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.

[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 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.

[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.

[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.

[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.

[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.

[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.

[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.

[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.

[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. Durrow

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 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.

[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.

[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.

[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.

[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.

[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 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.

[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 Alesia 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.

[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.

[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.

[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.

[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.

[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.

[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.

[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.

[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.

[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.

[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.

[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 fiancé, 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.

[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.

[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.

[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.

[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.

[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.

[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.

[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 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 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 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.

[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 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.

[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.

[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 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.

[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.

[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.

[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.

[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 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.

[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.

[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.

[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 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.