Summaries of Book Club Kit Titles

“A”

_Alice I Have Been_ – Melanie Benjamin

Part love story, part literary mystery, Melanie Benjamin’s spellbinding historical novel leads readers on an unforgettable journey down the rabbit hole, to tell the story of a woman whose own life became the stuff of legend. Her name is Alice Liddell Hargreaves, but to the world she’ll always be known simply as “Alice,” the girl who followed the White Rabbit into a wonderland of Mad Hatters, Queens of Hearts, and Cheshire Cats. Now, nearing her eighty-first birthday, she looks back on a life of intense passion, great privilege, and greater tragedy. First as a young woman, then as a wife, mother, and widow, she’ll experience adventures the likes of which not even her fictional counterpart could have imagined. Yet from glittering balls and royal romances to a world plunged into war, she’ll always be the same determined, undaunted Alice who, at ten years old, urged a shy, stuttering Oxford professor to write down one of his fanciful stories, thus changing her life forever. Added: May 2011

_Americanah_ - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

**Winner of the 2013 National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction**
**One of the New York Times Book Review's 10 Best Books of 2013**

A powerful, tender story of race and identity by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, the award-winning author of _Half of a Yellow Sun_.

Ifemelu and Obinze are young and in love when they depart military-rulled Nigeria for the West. Beautiful, self-assured Ifemelu heads for America, where despite her academic success, she is forced to grapple with what it means to be black for the first time. Quiet, thoughtful Obinze had hoped to join her, but with post-9/11 America closed to him, he instead plunges into a dangerous, undocumented life in London. Fifteen years later, they reunite in a newly democratic Nigeria, and reignite their passion—for each other and for their homeland. Added: April 2015

_And the Mountains Echoed_ – Khaled Hosseini

**An unforgettable novel about finding a lost piece of yourself in someone else.**

Khaled Hosseini, the #1 New York Times bestselling author of _The Kite Runner_ and _A Thousand Splendid Suns_, has written a new novel about how we love, how we take care of one another, and how the choices we make resonate through generations. In this tale revolving around not just parents and children but brothers and sisters, cousins and caretakers, Hosseini explores the many ways in which families nurture, wound, betray, honor, and sacrifice for one another; and how often we are surprised by the actions of those closest to us, at the times that matter most. Following its characters and the ramifications of their lives and choices and loves around the globe—from Kabul to Paris
to San Francisco to the Greek island of Tinos—the story expands gradually outward, becoming more emotionally complex and powerful with each turning page. Added: July 2014

*Annie’s Ghosts* – Steve Luxenberg

**Newly selected Great Michigan Read 2013-14 and a Michigan Notable Book for 2010**

"Annie's Ghosts is one of the most remarkable books I have ever read . . . From mental institutions to the Holocaust, from mothers and fathers to children and childhood, with its mysteries, sadness, and joy—this book is one emotional ride."
—Bob Woodward, author of The War Within and State of Denial

Beth Luxenberg was an only child. Or so everyone thought. Six months after Beth's death, her secret emerged. It had a name: Annie. Added: July 2013

*Art of Hearting Heartbeats, The* – Jan-Philipp Sendker

A poignant and inspirational love story set in Burma, *The Art of Hearing Heartbeats* spans the decades between the 1950s and the present. When a successful New York lawyer suddenly disappears without a trace, neither his wife nor his daughter Julia has any idea where he might be…until they find a love letter he wrote many years ago, to a Burmese woman they have never heard of. Intent on solving the mystery and coming to terms with her father’s past, Julia decides to travel to the village where the woman lived. There she uncovers a tale of unimaginable hardship, resilience, and passion that will reaffirm the reader’s belief in the power of love to move mountains. Added: July 2013

*Aviator’s Wife, The* – Melanie Benjamin

In the spirit of *Loving Frank* and *The Paris Wife*, acclaimed novelist Melanie Benjamin pulls back the curtain on the marriage of one of America’s most extraordinary couples: Charles Lindbergh and Anne Morrow Lindbergh.

“‘The history [is] exhilarating. . . . *The Aviator’s Wife* soars.’”—*USA Today*

**NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER**

When Anne Morrow, a shy college senior with hidden literary aspirations, travels to Mexico City to spend Christmas with her family, she meets Colonel Charles Lindbergh, fresh off his celebrated 1927 solo flight across the Atlantic. Enthralled by Charles’s assurance and fame, Anne is certain the aviator has scarcely noticed her. But she is wrong. Charles sees in Anne a kindred spirit, a fellow adventurer, and her world will be changed forever. The two marry in a headline-making wedding. In the years that follow, Anne becomes the first licensed female glider pilot in the United States. But despite this
and other major achievements, she is viewed merely as the aviator’s wife. The fairy-tale life she once longed for will bring heartbreak and hardships, ultimately pushing her to reconcile her need for love and her desire for independence, and to embrace, at last, life’s infinite possibilities for change and happiness. Added: March 2014

“B”

Beatrice and Virgil – Yann Martel

When Henry receives a letter from an elderly taxidermist, it poses a puzzle that he cannot resist and draws him into the story of a donkey and a howler monkey—named Beatrice and Virgil—and the epic journey they undertake together. With all the spirit and originality that made Life of Pi so beloved, Beatrice and Virgil takes the reader on a haunting odyssey. On the way, Martel asks profound questions about life and art, truth and deception, responsibility and complicity. Added: May 2011

Beautiful Ruins – Jess Walter

From the moment it opens—on a rocky patch of Italian coastline, circa 1962, when a daydreaming young innkeeper looks out over the water and spies a mysterious woman approaching him on a boat—Jess Walter's Beautiful Ruins is a dazzling, yet deeply human, roller coaster of a novel. From the lavish set of Cleopatra to the shabby revelry of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, to the back lots of contemporary Hollywood, Beautiful Ruins is gloriously inventive and constantly surprising—a story of flawed yet fascinating people navigating the rocky shores of their lives while clinging to their improbable dreams. Added: July 2013

Behind the Beautiful Forevers – Katherine Boo

In this brilliant, breathtaking book by Pulitzer Prize winner Katherine Boo, a bewildering age of global change and inequality is made human through the dramatic story of families striving toward a better life in Annawadi, a makeshift settlement in the shadow of luxury hotels near the Mumbai airport. As India starts to prosper, the residents of Annawadi are electric with hope. Abdul, an enterprising teenager, sees “a fortune beyond counting” in the recyclable garbage that richer people throw away. Meanwhile Asha, a woman of formidable ambition, has identified a shadier route to the middle class. With a little luck, her beautiful daughter, Annawadi’s “most-everything girl,” might become its first female college graduate. And even the poorest children, like the young thief Kalu, feel themselves inching closer to their dreams. But then Abdul is falsely accused in a shocking tragedy; terror and global recession rock the city; and suppressed tensions over religion, caste, sex, power, and economic envy turn brutal. Added: May 2014

Bootstrapper: From Broke to Badass on a Northern Michigan Farm – Mardi Jo Link
When Mardi Jo Link finds herself a newly single mother after nineteen years of marriage, she makes a seemingly impossible resolution: to stay in her century old farmhouse and continue raising her three boys on well-water, chopping wood, and dirt. Armed with an unflagging sense of humor and a relentless optimism that would put Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm to shame, Link and her resolute accomplices struggle through one long, hard year of blizzards, foxes, bargain cooking, rampaging poultry, a zucchini-growing contest, and other challenges. Added: July 2014

Bridget Jones: Mad About the Boy – Helen Fielding

Bridget Jones—one of the most beloved characters in modern literature (v.g.)—is back! In Helen Fielding's wildly funny, hotly anticipated new novel, Bridget faces a few rather pressing questions:

What do you do when your girlfriend’s sixtieth birthday party is the same day as your boyfriend’s thirtieth?

Is it better to die of Botox or die of loneliness because you’re so wrinkly?

Is it wrong to lie about your age when online dating?

Is it morally wrong to have a blow-dry when one of your children has head lice?

Is it normal to be too vain to put on your reading glasses when checking your toy boy for head lice?

Does the Dalai Lama actually tweet or is it his assistant?

Is it normal to get fewer followers the more you tweet?

Is technology now the fifth element? Or is that wood?

If you put lip plumper on your hands do you get plump hands?

Is sleeping with someone after two dates and six weeks of texting the same as getting married after two meetings and six months of letter writing in Jane Austen’s day?

Pondering these and other modern dilemmas, Bridget Jones stumbles through the challenges of loss, single motherhood, tweeting, texting, technology, and rediscovering her sexuality in—Warning! Bad, outdated phrase approaching!—middle age.

In a triumphant return after fourteen years of silence, Bridget Jones: Mad About the Boy is timely, tender, touching, page-turning, witty, wise, outrageous, and bloody hilarious. Added: April 2015

Brief History of Time, A - Stephen Hawking
#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

A landmark volume in science writing by one of the great minds of our time, Stephen Hawking’s book explores such profound questions as: How did the universe begin—and what made its start possible? Does time always flow forward? Is the universe unending—or are there boundaries? Are there other dimensions in space? What will happen when it all ends?

Told in language we all can understand, A Brief History of Time plunges into the exotic realms of black holes and quarks, of antimatter and “arrows of time,” of the big bang and a bigger God—where the possibilities are wondrous and unexpected. With exciting images and profound imagination, Stephen Hawking brings us closer to the ultimate secrets at the very heart of creation.

This landmark volume in scientific writing leads us on an exhilarating journey to distant galaxies, black holes, and alternate dimensions, and includes Professor Hawking's observations about the last decade's advances -- developments that have confirmed many of his theoretical predictions. Makes vividly clear how Professor Hawking's work has transformed our view of the universe. Added: April 2015

Brooklyn: A Novel – Colm Tóibín

“One of the most unforgettable characters in contemporary literature” (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette), Eilis Lacey has come of age in small-town Ireland in the hard years following World War Two. When an Irish priest from Brooklyn offers to sponsor Eilis in America, she decides she must go, leaving her fragile mother and her charismatic sister behind.

Eilis finds work in a department store on Fulton Street, and when she least expects it, finds love. Tony, who loves the Dodgers and his big Italian family, slowly wins her over with patient charm. But just as Eilis begins to fall in love, devastating news from Ireland threatens the promise of her future. Added: July 2011

Burgess Boys, The – Elizabeth Strout

NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY
The Washington Post • NPR • Good Housekeeping

Elizabeth Strout “animates the ordinary with an astonishing force,” wrote The New Yorker on the publication of her Pulitzer Prize–winning Olive Kitteridge. The San Francisco Chronicle praised Strout’s “magnificent gift for humanizing characters.” Now the acclaimed author returns with a stunning novel as powerful and moving as any work in contemporary literature.

Haunted by the freak accident that killed their father when they were children, Jim and Bob Burgess escaped from their Maine hometown of Shirley Falls for New York City as
soon as they possibly could. Jim, a sleek, successful corporate lawyer, has belittled his bighearted brother their whole lives, and Bob, a Legal Aid attorney who idolizes Jim, has always taken it in stride. But their long-standing dynamic is upended when their sister, Susan—the Burgess sibling who stayed behind—urgently calls them home. Her lonely teenage son, Zach, has gotten himself into a world of trouble, and Susan desperately needs their help. And so the Burgess brothers return to the landscape of their childhood, where the long-buried tensions that have shaped and shadowed their relationship begin to surface in unexpected ways that will change them forever.

With a rare combination of brilliant storytelling, exquisite prose, and remarkable insight into character, Elizabeth Strout has brought to life two deeply human protagonists whose struggles and triumphs will resonate with readers long after they turn the final page. Tender, tough-minded, loving, and deeply illuminating about the ties that bind us to family and home, *The Burgess Boys* is Elizabeth Strout’s newest and perhaps most astonishing work of literary art. Added: July 2014

“C”

*Caleb’s Crossing* – Geraldine Brooks

A *New York Times* bestselling tale of passion and belief, magic and adventure from the Pulitzer Prize–winning author

Bethia Mayfield is a restless and curious young woman growing up in Martha's vineyard in the 1660s amid a small band of pioneering English Puritans. At age twelve, she meets Caleb, the young son of a chieftain, and the two forge a secret bond that draws each into the alien world of the other. Bethia's father is a Calvinist minister who seeks to convert the native Wampanoag, and Caleb becomes a prize in the contest between old ways and new, eventually becoming the first Native American graduate of Harvard College. Inspired by a true story and narrated by the irresistible Bethia, *Caleb’s Crossing* brilliantly captures the triumphs and turmoil of two brave, openhearted spirits who risk everything in a search for knowledge at a time of superstition and ignorance. Added: July 2012

*Call of the Wild, The* – Jack London

First published in 1903, *The Call of the Wild* is regarded as Jack London's masterpiece. Based on London's experiences as a gold prospector in the Canadian wilderness and his ideas about nature and the struggle for existence, *The Call of the Wild* is a tale about unbreakable spirit and the fight for survival in the frozen Alaskan Klondike.

The adventures of an unusual dog, part St. Bernard, part Scotch shepherd, that is forcibly taken to the Klondike gold fields where he eventually becomes the leader of a wolf pack. Added: March 2014

*Cat’s Table, The* – Michael Ondaatje
In the early 1950s, an eleven-year-old boy in Colombo boards a ship bound for England. At mealtimes he is seated at the “cat’s table”—as far from the Captain’s Table as can be—with a ragtag group of “insignificant” adults and two other boys, Cassius and Ramadhin. As the ship crosses the Indian Ocean, the boys tumble from one adventure to another, bursting all over the place like freed mercury. But there are other diversions as well: they are first exposed to the magical worlds of jazz, women, and literature by their eccentric fellow travelers, and together they spy on a shackled prisoner, his crime and fate a galvanizing mystery that will haunt them forever. By turns poignant and electrifying, *The Cat’s Table* is a spellbinding story about the magical, often forbidden, discoveries of childhood, and a lifelong journey that begins unexpectedly with a spectacular sea voyage. Added: March 2013

*Circle, The* – Dave Eggers

*The Circle* is the exhilarating new novel from Dave Eggers, best-selling author of *A Hologram for the King*, a finalist for the National Book Award.

When Mae Holland is hired to work for the Circle, the world’s most powerful internet company, she feels she’s been given the opportunity of a lifetime. The Circle, run out of a sprawling California campus, links users’ personal emails, social media, banking, and purchasing with their universal operating system, resulting in one online identity and a new age of civility and transparency. As Mae tours the open-plan office spaces, the towering glass dining facilities, the cozy dorms for those who spend nights at work, she is thrilled with the company’s modernity and activity. There are parties that last through the night, there are famous musicians playing on the lawn, there are athletic activities and clubs and brunches, and even an aquarium of rare fish retrieved from the Marianas Trench by the CEO. Mae can’t believe her luck, her great fortune to work for the most influential company in the world—even as life beyond the campus grows distant, even as a strange encounter with a colleague leaves her shaken, even as her role at the Circle becomes increasingly public. What begins as the captivating story of one woman’s ambition and idealism soon becomes a heart-racing novel of suspense, raising questions about memory, history, privacy, democracy, and the limits of human knowledge. Added: April 2015

*Cleopatra: A Life* – Stacy Schiff

Her palace shimmered with onyx and gold but was richer still in political and sexual intrigue. Above all else, Cleopatra was a shrewd strategist and an ingenious negotiator. She was married twice, each time to a brother. She waged a brutal civil war against the first and poisoned the second; incest and assassination were family specialties. She had children by Julius Caesar and Mark Antony, two of the most prominent Romans of the day. With Antony she would attempt to forge a new empire, in an alliance that spelled both their ends. Famous long before she was notorious, Cleopatra has gone down in history for all the wrong reasons. Her supple personality and the drama of her circumstances have been lost. In a masterly return to the classical sources, Stacy Schiff
boldly separates fact from fiction to rescue the magnetic queen whose death ushered in a new world order. Added: February 2012

Cloud Atlas: A Novel – David Mitchell

Finalist for the 2004 Man Booker Prize for Fiction

Now a major motion picture starring Tom Hanks, Halle Berry, Susan Sarandon, and Hugh Grant, and directed by Lana and Andy Wachowski and Tom Tykwer

A postmodern visionary who is also a master of styles of genres, David Mitchell combines flat-out adventure, a Nabokovian lore of puzzles, a keen eye for character, and a taste for mind-bending philosophical and scientific speculation in the tradition of Umberto Eco and Philip K. Dick. The result is brilliantly original fiction that reveals how disparate people connect, how their fates intertwine, and how their souls drift across time like clouds across the sky. Added: March 2013

Cookbook Collector, The – Allegra Goodman

Emily and Jessamine Bach are opposites in every way: Twenty-eight-year-old Emily is the CEO of Veritech, twenty-three-year-old Jess is an environmental activist and graduate student in philosophy. Pragmatic Emily is making a fortune in Silicon Valley, romantic Jess works in an antiquarian bookstore. Emily is rational and driven, while Jess is dreamy and whimsical. Emily’s boyfriend, Jonathan, is fantastically successful. Jess’s boyfriends, not so much.

National Book Award finalist and New York Times bestselling author Allegra Goodman has written a delicious novel about appetite, temptation, and holding on to what is real in a virtual world: love that stays. Added: February 2012.

Crooked Letter, Crooked Letter – Tom Franklin

In the late 1970s, Larry Ott and Silas "32" Jones were boyhood pals in a small town in rural Mississippi. Their worlds were as different as night and day: Larry was the child of lower-middle-class white parents, and Silas, the son of a poor, single black mother. But then Larry took a girl on a date to a drive-in movie and she was never heard from again. He never confessed…and was never charged.

More than twenty years have passed. Larry, a mechanic, lives a solitary existence, never able to rise above the whispers of suspicion. Silas has become the town constable. And now another girl has disappeared, forcing the two men who once called each other “friend” to confront the past they've buried for decades. Added: July 2011

Cutting for Stone – Abraham Verghese
Marion and Shiva Stone are twin brothers born of a secret union between a beautiful Indian nun and brash British surgeon. Orphaned by their mother’s death and their father’s disappearance, bound together by a preternatural connection and a shared fascination with medicine, the twins come of age as Ethiopia hovers on the brink of revolution.

Moving from Addis Ababa to New York City and back again, Cutting for Stone is an unforgettable story of love and betrayal, medicine and ordinary miracles—and two brothers whose fates are forever intertwined.

Added: May 2011

“D”

Death Comes to Pemberley – 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.

It is 1803, six years since Elizabeth and Darcy embarked on their life together at Pemberley, Darcy’s magnificent estate. Their peaceful, orderly world seems almost unassailable. Elizabeth has found her footing as the chatelaine of the great house. They have two fine sons, Fitzwilliam and Charles. Elizabeth’s sister Jane and her husband, Bingley, live nearby; her father visits often; there is optimistic talk about the prospects of marriage for Darcy’s sister Georgiana. And preparations are under way for their much-anticipated annual autumn ball.

Then, on the eve of the ball, the patrician idyll is shattered. A coach careens up the drive carrying Lydia, Elizabeth’s disgraced sister, who with her husband, the very dubious Wickham, has been banned from Pemberley. She stumbles out of the carriage, hysterical, shrieking that Wickham has been murdered. With shocking suddenness, Pemberley is plunged into a frightening mystery.

Inspired by a lifelong passion for Austen, P. D. James masterfully re-creates the world of Pride and Prejudice, electrifying it with the excitement and suspense of a brilliantly crafted crime story, as only she can write it. Added: April 2015

Deep Down True – Juliette Fay

Newly divorced Dana Stellgarten has always been unfailingly nice—even to telemarketers—but now her temper is wearing thin. Money is tight, her kids are reeling from their dad’s departure, and her Goth teenage niece has just landed on her doorstep. As she enters the slipstream of post-divorce romance and is befriended by the town queen bee, Dana finds that the tension between being true to yourself and being liked doesn’t end in middle school … and that sometimes it takes a real friend to help you embrace adulthood in all its flawed complexity.
Defending Jacob – William Landay

NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY
Entertainment Weekly • The Boston Globe • Kansas City Star

“A legal thriller that’s comparable to classics such as Scott Turow’s Presumed Innocent. . . Tragic and shocking, Defending Jacob is sure to generate buzz.”—Associated Press

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

Andy Barber has been an assistant district attorney for two decades. He is respected. Admired in the courtroom. Happy at home with the loves of his life: his wife, Laurie, and their teenage son, Jacob.

Then Andy’s quiet suburb is stunned by a shocking crime: a young boy stabbed to death in a leafy park. And an even greater shock: The accused is Andy’s own son—shy, awkward, mysterious Jacob.


It is the ultimate test for any parent: How far would you go to protect your child? It is a test of devotion. A test of how well a parent can know a child. For Andy Barber, a man with an iron will and a dark secret, it is a test of guilt and innocence in the deepest sense.

How far would you go? Added: March 2014

Detroit Shuffle by D. E. Johnson

Will Anderson and Elizabeth Hume get caught up in the political turmoil over women’s suffrage in Detroit Shuffle, the fourth book in D. E. Johnson’s critically acclaimed 1910s Detroit series

Will Anderson inadvertently breaks up a key suffrage rally when he thwarts a gunman set on killing his lover, Elizabeth Hume. No one else saw the man, and Elizabeth believes he hallucinated the entire incident, a side effect of the radium “treatment” he received at Eloise Hospital. She asks him to sit on the sidelines while she and her companions try to get the women’s suffrage amendment passed by Michigan voters.

Instead, Will sets out to protect Elizabeth and prove his sanity. Will’s nemesis, Sapphira Xanakis, contacts him with news of a conspiracy to defeat the amendment, led by Andrew Murphy, head of the Michigan Licensed Beverage Association. Against his better judgment, Will believes she is trying to help. The man she directs him to dies under suspicious circumstances. An old acquaintance of Will’s, who is working for the MLBA,
is shot and killed in front of him. Still, no one believes Will, including his former ally, Detective Riordan, who not only is unwilling to help, but seems to have secrets of his own.

With new death threats against Elizabeth and the next rally only a few days away, Will has to unravel a complicated tapestry of blackmail, double-dealing, conspiracy, and murder—before the killer has his next chance to strike. Johnson’s immaculate plotting and high-tension writing make for a spellbinding read set in early twentieth-century Detroit. Added: September 2014

Devil in the White City, The: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair that Changed America – Erik Larson

Finalist for the 2003 National Book Award, Nonfiction

Winner of the 2004 Edgar Award for Best Fact Crime

Erik Larson—author of #1 bestseller IN THE GARDEN OF BEASTS—intertwines the true tale of the 1893 World's Fair and the cunning serial killer who used the fair to lure his victims to their death. Combining meticulous research with nail-biting storytelling, Erik Larson has crafted a narrative with all the wonder of newly discovered history and the thrills of the best fiction. Added before December 2010

The Dinner – Herman Koch

"A European Gone Girl." —The Wall Street Journal

An internationally bestselling phenomenon: the darkly suspenseful, highly controversial tale of two families struggling to make the hardest decision of their lives—all over the course of one meal.

It's a summer's evening in Amsterdam, and two couples meet at a fashionable restaurant for dinner. Between mouthfuls of food and over the scrapings of cutlery, the conversation remains a gentle hum of polite discourse. But behind the empty words, terrible things need to be said, and with every forced smile and every new course, the knives are being sharpened.

Each couple has a fifteen-year-old son. The two boys are united by their accountability for a single horrific act; an act that has triggered a police investigation and shattered the comfortable, insulated worlds of their families. As the dinner reaches its culinary climax, the conversation finally touches on their children. As civility and friendship disintegrate, each couple show just how far they are prepared to go to protect those they love.
Skewering everything from parenting values to pretentious menus to political convictions, this novel reveals the dark side of genteel society and asks what each of us would do in the face of unimaginable tragedy. Added: March 2014

_A Discovery of Witches_ – Deborah Harkness

"A wonderfully imaginative grown-up fantasy with all the magic of *Harry Potter* and *Twilight.*" - _People_

In a sparkling debut, _A Discovery of Witches_ became the "it" book of early 2011, bringing Deborah Harkness into the spotlight and galvanizing fans around the world. In this tale of passion and obsession, Diana Bishop, a young scholar and the descendant of witches, discovers a long-lost and enchanted alchemical manuscript deep in Oxford's Bodleian Library. Its reappearance summons a fantastical underworld, which she navigates with her leading man, vampire geneticist Matthew Clairmont. Harkness has created a universe to rival those of Anne Rice, Diana Gabaldon, and Elizabeth Kostova, and she adds a scholar's depth to this riveting story of magic and suspense. Added: February 2012

_Dovekeepers, The: A Novel_ – Alice Hoffman

Over five years in the writing, _The Dovekeepers_ is Alice Hoffman’s most ambitious and mesmerizing novel, a tour de force of imagination and research, set in ancient Israel.

In 70 C.E., nine hundred Jews held out for months against armies of Romans on Masada, a mountain in the Judean desert. According to the ancient historian Josephus, two women and five children survived. Based on this tragic and iconic event, 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. Yael’s mother died in childbirth, and her father, an expert assassin, never forgave her for that death. Revka, a village baker’s wife, watched the horrifically brutal murder of her daughter by Roman soldiers; she brings to Masada her young grandsons, rendered mute by what they have witnessed. Aziza is a warrior’s daughter, raised as a boy, a fearless rider and an expert marksman who finds passion with a fellow soldier. Shirah, born in Alexandria, is wise in the ways of ancient magic and medicine, a woman with uncanny insight and power.

The lives of these four complex and fiercely independent women intersect in the desperate days of the siege. All are dovekeepers, and all are also keeping secrets—about who they are, where they come from, who fathered them, and whom they love. _The Dovekeepers_ is Alice Hoffman’s masterpiece. Added: March 2013

_Dreams of Joy: A Novel_ – Lisa See

#1 _NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER_

In her most powerful novel yet, acclaimed author Lisa See returns to the story of sisters Pearl and May from _Shanghai Girls_, and Pearl’s strong-willed nineteen-year-old
daughter, Joy. Reeling from newly uncovered family secrets, Joy runs away to Shanghai in early 1957 to find her birth father—the artist Z. G. Li, with whom both May and Pearl were once in love. Dazzled by him, and blinded by idealism and defiance, Joy throws herself into the New Society of Red China, heedless of the dangers in the Communist regime. Devastated by Joy’s flight and terrified for her safety, Pearl is determined to save her daughter, no matter the personal cost. From the crowded city to remote villages, Pearl confronts old demons and almost insurmountable challenges as she follows Joy, hoping for reconciliation. Yet even as Joy’s and Pearl’s separate journeys converge, one of the most tragic episodes in China’s history threatens their very lives. Added: March 2013

*Dressmaker, The: A Novel* – Kate Alcott

Tess, an aspiring seamstress, thinks she’s had an incredibly lucky break when she is hired by famous designer Lady Lucile Duff Gordon to be her personal maid on the *Titanic*. Once on board, Tess catches the eye of two men—a kind sailor and an enigmatic Chicago businessman—who offer differing views of what lies ahead for her in America. But on the fourth night, disaster strikes, and amidst the chaos, Tess is one of the last people allowed on a lifeboat.

The survivors are rescued and taken to New York, but when rumors begin to circulate about the choices they made, Tess is forced to confront a serious question. Did Lady Duff Gordon save herself at the expense of others? Torn between loyalty to Lucile and her growing suspicion that the media’s charges might be true, Tess must decide whether to stay quiet and keep her fiery mentor’s good will or face what might be true and forever change her future. Added: March 2013

“E”

*Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman’s Search for Everything Across Italy, India and Indonesia* – Elizabeth Gilbert

This beautifully written, heartfelt memoir touched a nerve among both readers and reviewers. Elizabeth Gilbert tells how she made the difficult choice to leave behind all the trappings of modern American success (marriage, house in the country, career) and find, instead, what she truly wanted from life. Setting out for a year to study three different aspects of her nature amid three different cultures, Gilbert explored the art of pleasure in Italy and the art of devotion in India, and then a balance between the two on the Indonesian island of Bali. By turns rapturous and rueful, this wise and funny author (whom *Booklist* calls “Anne Lamott’s hip, yoga-practicing, footloose younger sister”) is poised to garner yet more adoring fans. Added before December 2010

*Elegance of the Hedgehog* – Muriel Barbery

In a bourgeois apartment building in Paris, we encounter Renée, an intelligent, philosophical, and cultured concierge who masks herself as the stereotypical uneducated “super” to avoid suspicion from the building’s pretentious inhabitants. Also living in the
building is Paloma, the adolescent daughter of a parliamentarian, who has decided to commit suicide on her thirteenth birthday because she cannot bear to live among the rich. Although they are passing strangers, it is through Renée’s observations and Paloma’s journal entries that The Elegance of the Hedgehog reveals the absurd lives of the wealthy. That is until a Japanese businessman moves into the building and brings the two characters together. –Publishers Weekly Added: May 2011

Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer – Siddhartha Mukherjee

The Emperor of All Maladies is a magnificent, profoundly humane “biography” of cancer—from its first documented appearances thousands of years ago through the epic battles in the twentieth century to cure, control, and conquer it to a radical new understanding of its essence. Physician, researcher, and award-winning science writer, Siddhartha Mukherjee examines cancer with a cellular biologist’s precision, a historian’s perspective, and a biographer’s passion. The result is an astonishingly lucid and eloquent chronicle of a disease humans have lived with—and perished from—for more than five thousand years.

Riveting, urgent, and surprising, The Emperor of All Maladies provides a fascinating glimpse into the future of cancer treatments. It is an illuminating book that provides hope and clarity to those seeking to demystify cancer. Added: February 2012

End of Your Life Book Club, The – Will Schwalbe

An Entertainment Weekly and BookPage Best Book of the Year

Winner of the 2012 Books for a Better Life Award for Inspirational Memoir

During her treatment for cancer, Mary Anne Schwalbe and her son Will spent many hours sitting in waiting rooms together. To pass the time, they would talk about the books they were reading. Once, by chance, they read the same book at the same time—and an informal book club of two was born. Through their wide-ranging reading, Will and Mary Anne—and we, their fellow readers—are reminded how books can be comforting, astonishing, and illuminating, changing the way that we feel about and interact with the world around us. A profoundly moving memoir of caregiving, mourning, and love—The End of Your Life Book Club is also about the joy of reading, and the ways that joy is multiplied when we share it with others. Added: March 2014

Every Last One – Anna Quindlen

In this breathtaking and beautiful novel, the #1 New York Times bestselling author Anna Quindlen creates an unforgettable portrait of a mother, a father, a family, and the explosive, violent consequences of what seem like inconsequential actions.

Mary Beth Latham is first and foremost a mother, whose three teenaged children come first, before her career as a landscape gardener, or even her life as the wife of a doctor.
Caring for her family and preserving their everyday life is paramount. And so, when one of her sons, Max, becomes depressed, Mary Beth becomes focused on him, and is blindsided by a shocking act of violence. What happens afterwards is a testament to the power of a woman’s love and determination, and to the invisible line of hope and healing that connects one human being with another. Ultimately, in the hands of Anna Quindlen’s mesmerizing prose, Every Last One is a novel about facing every last one of the things we fear most, about finding ways to navigate a road we never intended to travel, to live a life we never dreamed we’d have to live but must be brave enough to try. Added: February 2012

Evidence of Things Unseen – Marianne Wiggins

This poetic novel, by the acclaimed author of John Dollar, describes America at the brink of the Atomic Age. In the years between the two world wars, the future held more promise than peril, but there was evidence of things unseen that would transfigure our unquestioned trust in a safe future.

Fos has returned to Tennessee from the trenches of France. Intrigued with electricity, bioluminescence, and especially x-rays, he believes in science and the future of technology. On a trip to the Outer Banks to study the Perseid meteor shower, he falls in love with Opal, whose father is a glassblower who can spin color out of light.

Fos brings his new wife back to Knoxville where he runs a photography studio with his former Army buddy Flash. A witty rogue and a staunch disbeliever in Prohibition, Flash brings tragedy to the couple when his appetite for pleasure runs up against both the law and the Ku Klux Klan. Fos and Opal are forced to move to Opal’s mother's farm on the Clinch River, and soon they have a son, Lightfoot. But when the New Deal claims their farm for the TVA, Fos seeks work at the Oak Ridge Laboratory — Site X in the government's race to build the bomb.

And it is there, when Opal falls ill with radiation poisoning, that Fos's great faith in science deserts him. Their lives have traveled with touching inevitability from their innocence and fascination with "things that glow" to the new world of manmade suns.

Hypnotic and powerful, Evidence of Things Unseen constructs a heartbreaking arc through twentieth-century American life and belief. Added: July 2014

“F”

Faith: A Novel – Jennifer Haigh

It is the spring of 2002 and a perfect storm has hit Boston. Across the city’s archdiocese, trusted priests have been accused of the worst possible betrayal of the souls in their care. Estranged for years from her difficult and demanding family, Sheila McGann has remained close to her older brother, Art, the popular, dynamic pastor of a large suburban parish. When Art finds himself at the center of the maelstrom, Sheila returns to Boston, ready to fight for him and his reputation. But what she discovers is more complicated than she imagined as the scandal forces long-buried secrets to surface.
Elegantly crafted and sharply observed, Jennifer Haigh’s *Faith* is a haunting meditation on loyalty and family that demonstrates how the truth can shatter our deepest beliefs—and restore them. Added: March 2013

*Fault in Our Stars, The* – John Green

**Winner of the 2013 Children's Choice Teen Book of the Year Award**

Despite the tumor-shrinking medical miracle that has bought her a few years, Hazel has never been anything but terminal, her final chapter inscribed upon diagnosis. But when a gorgeous plot twist named Augustus Waters suddenly appears at Cancer Kid Support Group, Hazel’s story is about to be completely rewritten.

Insightful, bold, irreverent, and raw, *The Fault in Our Stars* is award-winning author John Green’s most ambitious and heartbreaking work yet, brilliantly exploring the funny, thrilling, and tragic business of being alive and in love. Added: July 2014

*Fine Balance, A* – Robinton Mistry

With a compassionate realism and narrative sweep that recall the work of Charles Dickens, this magnificent novel captures all the cruelty and corruption, dignity and heroism, of India. The time is 1975. The place is an unnamed city by the sea. The government has just declared a State of Emergency, in whose upheavals four strangers—a spirited widow, a young student uprooted from his idyllic hill station, and two tailors who have fled the caste violence of their native village—will be thrust together, forced to share one cramped apartment and an uncertain future.

As the characters move from distrust to friendship and from friendship to love, *A Fine Balance* creates an enduring panorama of the human spirit in an inhuman state. Added: July 2014

*Finkler Question, The: A Novel* – Howard Jacobson

**Winner of the Man Booker Prize 2010**

"He should have seen it coming. His life had been one mishap after another. So he should have been prepared for this one…"

Julian Treslove, a professionally unspectacular former BBC radio producer, and Sam Finkler, a popular Jewish philosopher, writer and television personality, are old school friends. Despite a prickly relationship and very different lives, they've never quite lost touch with each other—or with their former teacher, Libor Sevcik, a Czech always more concerned with the wider world than with exam results.
Now, both Libor and Finkler are recently widowed, and with Treslove, his chequered and unsuccessful record with women rendering him an honorary third widower, they dine at Libor's grand, central London apartment.

It's a sweetly painful evening of reminiscence in which all three remove themselves to a time before they had loved and lost; a time before they had fathered children, before the devastation of separations, before they had prized anything greatly enough to fear the loss of it. Better, perhaps, to go through life without knowing happiness at all because that way you have less to mourn? Treslove finds he has tears enough for the unbearable sadness of both his friends' losses.

And it's that very evening, at exactly 11:30 pm, as Treslove, walking home, hesitates a moment outside the window of the oldest violin dealer in the country, that he is attacked. And after this, his whole sense of who and what he is will slowly and ineluctably change.

_The Finkler Question_ is a scorching story of friendship and loss, exclusion and belonging, and of the wisdom and humanity of maturity. Funny, furious, unflinching, this extraordinary novel shows one of our finest writers at his brilliant best. Added: July 2012

_Fly Away Home: A Novel_ – Jennifer Weiner

Sometimes all you can do is fly away home . . .

When Sylvie Serfer met Richard Woodruff in law school, she had wild curls, wide hips, and lots of opinions. Decades later, she has remade herself—her hair dyed and straightened, her hippie-chick wardrobe replaced by tailored knit suits. At fifty-seven, she ruefully acknowledges that her job is staying twenty pounds thinner than she was in her twenties and tending to her husband, the senator.

Lizzie, the Woodruffs’ younger daughter, is at twenty-four a recovering addict, whose mantra Still, trouble always seems to find her. Her older sister, Diana, an emergency room physician, has everything Lizzie failed to achieve—a husband, a young son, the perfect home—and yet she’s trapped in a loveless marriage.

After Richard’s extramarital affair makes headlines, the three women are drawn into the painful glare of the national spotlight, and each is forced to reconsider her life, who she is and who she is meant to be. Written with an irresistible blend of heartbreak and hilarity, _Fly Away Home_ is an unforgettable story of a mother and two daughters who after a lifetime of distance finally learn to find refuge in one another. Added: July 2012

_Forgotten Garden, The: A Novel_ – Kate Morton

A tiny girl is abandoned on a ship headed for Australia in 1913. She arrives completely alone with nothing but a small suitcase containing a few clothes and a single book—a beautiful volume of fairy tales. She is taken in by the dockmaster and his wife and raised as their own. On her twenty-first birthday, they tell her the truth, and with her sense of
self shattered and very little to go on, “Nell” sets out to trace her real identity. Her quest leads her to Blackhurst Manor on the Cornish coast and the secrets of the doomed Mountrachet family. But it is not until her granddaughter, Cassandra, takes up the search after Nell’s death that all the pieces of the puzzle are assembled. A spellbinding tale of mystery and self-discovery, *The Forgotten Garden* will take hold of your imagination and never let go. Added before December 2010

*Forgotten Waltz, The* – Anne Enright

**Winner of the 2012 Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction**

"A new, unapologetic kind of adultery novel. Narrated by the proverbial other woman—Gina Moynihan, a sharp, sexy, darkly funny thirtysomething IT worker—The Forgotten Waltz charts an extramarital affair from first encounter to arranged, settled, everyday domesticity. . . . This novel’s beauty lies in Enright’s spare, poetic, off-kilter prose—at once heartbreaking and subversively funny. It’s built of startling little surprises and one fresh sentence after another. Enright captures the heady eroticism of an extramarital affair and the incendiary egomania that accompanies secret passion: For all their utter ordinariness, Sean and Gina feel like the greatest lovers who've ever lived.”—*Elle*

Added: March 2013

*Freedom: A Novel* – Jonathan Franzen

Patty and Walter Berglund were the new pioneers of old St. Paul—the gentrifiers, the hands-on parents, the avant-garde of the Whole Foods generation. Patty was the ideal sort of neighbor, who could tell you where to recycle your batteries and how to get the local cops to actually do their job. She was an enviably perfect mother and the wife of Walter's dreams. Together with Walter—environmental lawyer, commuter cyclist, total family man—she was doing her small part to build a better world.

But now, in the new millennium, the Berglunds have become a mystery. Why has their teenage son moved in with the aggressively Republican family next door? Why has Walter taken a job working with Big Coal? What exactly is Richard Katz—outré rocker and Walter's college best friend and rival—still doing in the picture? Most of all, what has happened to Patty? Why has the bright star of Barrier Street become "a very different kind of neighbor," an implacable Fury coming unhinged before the street's attentive eyes?

In his first novel since *The Corrections*, Jonathan Franzen has given us an epic of contemporary love and marriage. Freedom comically and tragically captures the temptations and burdens of liberty: the thrills of teenage lust, the shaken compromises of middle age, the wages of suburban sprawl, the heavy weight of empire. In charting the mistakes and joys of Freedom's characters as they struggle to learn how to live in an ever more confusing world, Franzen has produced an indelible and deeply moving portrait of our time. Added: October 2011

“G”
Gate at the Stairs, A: A Novel – Lorrie Moore

Twenty-year-old Tassie Keltjin, the daughter of a gentleman farmer, has come to a university town as a student. When she takes a job as a part-time nanny for a mysterious and glamorous family, she finds herself drawn deeper into their world and forever changed. Told through the eyes of this memorable narrator, A Gate at the Stairs is a piercing novel of race, class, love, and war in America. Added: May 2011

Girl Who Chased the Moon, The: A Novel – Sarah Addison Allen

Emily Benedict has come to Mullaby, North Carolina, hoping to solve at least some of the riddles surrounding her mother’s life. But the moment Emily enters the house where her mother grew up and meets the grandfather she never knew, she realizes that mysteries aren’t solved in Mullaby, they’re a way of life: Here are rooms where the wallpaper changes to suit your mood. Unexplained lights skip across the yard at midnight. And a neighbor, Julia Winterson, bakes hope in the form of cakes, not only wishing to satisfy the town’s sweet tooth but also dreaming of rekindling the love she fears might be lost forever. Can a hummingbird cake really bring back a lost love? Is there really a ghost dancing in Emily’s backyard? The answers are never what you expect. But in this town of lovable misfits, the unexpected fits right in. Added: July 2013

Girl Who Played with Fire, The – Stieg Larsson

Part blistering espionage thriller, part riveting police procedural, and part piercing exposé on social injustice, The Girl Who Played with Fire is a masterful, endlessly satisfying novel.

Mikael Blomkvist, crusading publisher of the magazine Millennium, has decided to run a story that will expose an extensive sex trafficking operation. On the eve of its publication, two people are brutally murdered, and the fingerprints found on the murder weapon belong to his friend, the troubled genius hacker Lisbeth Salander. Blomkvist, convinced of Salander’s innocence, plunges into an investigation. Meanwhile, Salander herself is drawn in to a murderous game of cat and mouse, which forces her to face her dark past. Added July 2011

Girl with a Pearl Earring – Tracy Chevalier

The New York Times bestselling novel by the author of Remarkable Creatures and The Last Runaway

Translated into thirty-nine languages and made into an Oscar-nominated film, starring Scarlett Johanson and Colin Firth
Tracy Chevalier transports readers to a bygone time and place in this richly-imagined portrait of the young woman who inspired one of Vermeer's most celebrated paintings.

History and fiction merge seamlessly in this luminous novel about artistic vision and sensual awakening. *Girl with a Pearl Earring* tells the story of sixteen-year-old Griet, whose life is transformed by her brief encounter with genius . . . even as she herself is immortalized in canvas and oil.

*Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, The* – Stieg Larsson

An international publishing sensation, Stieg Larsson's *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* combines murder mystery, family saga, love story, and financial intrigue into one satisfyingly complex and entertainingly atmospheric novel.

Harriet Vanger, a scion of one of Sweden's wealthiest families disappeared over forty years ago. All these years later, her aged uncle continues to seek the truth. He hires Mikael Blomkvist, a crusading journalist recently trapped by a libel conviction, to investigate. He is aided by the pierced and tattooed punk prodigy Lisbeth Salander. Together they tap into a vein of unfathomable iniquity and astonishing corruption. Added before December 2010


The instant *New York Times* bestseller, now in paperback: a moving tribute to female friendships, with the inspiring story of eleven girls and the ten women they became, from the coauthor of the million-copy bestseller *The Last Lecture*.

As children, they formed a special bond, growing up in the small town of Ames, Iowa. As young women, they moved to eighth different states, yet they managed to maintain an extraordinary friendship that would carry them through college and careers, marriage and motherhood, dating and divorce, the death of a child, and the mysterious death of the eleventh member of their group. Capturing their remarkable story, *The Girls from Ames* is a testament to the enduring, deep bonds of women as they experience life's challenges, and the power of friendship to overcome even the most daunting odds. Added: July 2012

*Girls of Atomic City, The* - Denise Kiernan

The *New York Times* bestseller, now available in paperback—an incredible true story of the top-secret World War II town of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and the young women brought there unknowingly to help build the atomic bomb.

“The best kind of nonfiction: marvelously reported, fluidly written, and a remarkable story...As meticulous and brilliant as it is compulsively readable.” —Karen Abbott, author of *Sin in the Second City*
At the height of World War II, Oak Ridge, Tennessee, was home to 75,000 residents, and consumed more electricity than New York City, yet it was shrouded in such secrecy that it did not appear on any map. Thousands of civilians, many of them young women from small towns across the U.S., were recruited to this secret city, enticed by the promise of solid wages and war-ending work. What were they actually doing there? Very few knew. The purpose of this mysterious government project was kept a secret from the outside world and from the majority of the residents themselves. Some wondered why, despite the constant work and round-the-clock activity in this makeshift town, did no tangible product of any kind ever seem to leave its guarded gates? The women who kept this town running would find out at the end of the war, when Oak Ridge’s secret was revealed and changed the world forever.

Drawing from the voices and experiences of the women who lived and worked in Oak Ridge, *The Girls of Atomic City* rescues a remarkable, forgotten chapter of World War II from obscurity. Denise Kiernan captures the spirit of the times through these women: their pluck, their desire to contribute, and their enduring courage. “A phenomenal story,” and *Publishers Weekly* called it an “intimate and revealing glimpse into one of the most important scientific developments in history.”

“Kiernan has amassed a deep reservoir of intimate details of what life was like for women living in the secret city...Rosie, it turns out, did much more than drive rivets.” — *The Washington Post*

*Glass Castle, The: A Memoir* – Jeanette Walls

Jeannette Walls grew up with parents whose ideals and stubborn nonconformity were both their curse and their salvation. Rex and Rose Mary Walls had four children. In the beginning, they lived like nomads, moving among Southwest desert towns, camping in the mountains. Rex was a charismatic, brilliant man who, when sober, captured his children’s imagination, teaching them physics, geology, and above all, how to embrace life fearlessly. Rose Mary, who painted and wrote and couldn’t stand the responsibility of providing for her family, called herself an “excitement addict.” Cooking a meal that would be consumed in fifteen minutes had no appeal when she could make a painting that might last forever.

Later, when the money ran out, or the romance of the wandering life faded, the Walls retreated to the dismal West Virginia mining town—and the family—Rex Walls had done everything he could to escape. He drank. He stole the grocery money and disappeared for days. As the dysfunction of the family escalated, Jeannette and her brother and sisters had to fend for themselves, supporting one another as they weathered their parents’ betrayals and, finally, found the resources and will to leave home.

What is so astonishing about Jeannette Walls is not just that she had the guts and tenacity and intelligence to get out, but that she describes her parents with such deep affection and generosity. Hers is a story of triumph against all odds, but also a tender, moving tale of
unconditional love in a family that despite its profound flaws gave her the fiery
determination to carve out a successful life on her own terms.

For two decades, Jeannette Walls hid her roots. Now she tells her own story. A regular
contributor to MSNBC.com, she lives in New York and Long Island and is married to the
writer John Taylor. Added before December 2010

Glass Room, The: A Novel – Simon Mawer

Honeymooners Viktor and Liesel Landauer are filled with optimism of central Europe of
the 1920s when they meet modernist architect Rainer von Abt. He builds them a home to
embody their exuberant faith in the future, and the Landauer House becomes an instant
masterpiece. Viktor and Liesel, a rich Jewish mogul and a thoughtful, modern gentile,
pour all of their hopes for their marriage and budding family into their stunning new
home, filling it with a generation of artists and thinkers eager to renounce old-world
European style in favor of the avant-garde. But their new home also brings out their most
ardent desires and darkest secrets, and soon the radiant honesty and idealism of 1930
quickly evaporate beneath the storm clouds of World War II. As Nazi troops enter the
country, the family must abandon their old life and attempt to escape to America before
Viktor’s Jewish roots draw Nazi attention, and before the family itself dissolves.
Brimming with barely contained passion and cruelty, the precision of science, the wild
variance of lust, the catharsis of confession, and the fear of failure—the Glass Room
contains it all. Added: May 2011

Glover’s Mistake – Nick Laird

With his debut novel, Utterly Monkey, Nick Laird won acclaim on both sides of the
Atlantic for his deft humor and sharp-eyed powers of observation. In this new novel,
disaffected thirty-something college teacher David introduces his former teacher,
American artist Ruth Marks, to his friend and flatmate James Glover, unwittingly setting
in place a love triangle loaded with tension, guilt, and heartbreak. Set in the London art
scene awash with new money and intellectual pretension, Nick Laird's insightful and
drollly satirical novel explores the nature of contemporary romance among damaged souls
whose hearts and heads never quite line up long enough for them to achieve true
happiness. Added: July 2011

Gold – Chris Cleave

IT’S THE ULTIMATE TEST OF A MOTHER’S LOVE . . .

If your dreams pull you in one direction and your heart in another, which should you
follow? This is the question that haunts Kate Meadows, a world champion athlete whose
eight-year-old daughter Sophie is battling a recurrence of childhood leukemia just as Kate
is about to compete for her last chance at an Olympic gold medal. For years, Kate has
sacrificed everything for her family and watched her best friend and closest rival, Zoe
Castle, conquer the world stage. Kate has never won gold and will have to go through
Zoe—who has everything to lose—to get it. Now her child is facing a life-threatening illness, and the stakes are higher than ever. How can she do what is right for her daughter without abandoning all of her dreams? Added: July 2013

Gone Girl - Gillian Flynn

The #1 New York Times Bestseller

On a warm summer morning in North Carthage, Missouri, it is Nick and Amy Dunne’s fifth wedding anniversary. Presents are being wrapped and reservations are being made when Nick’s clever and beautiful wife disappears. Husband-of-the-Year Nick isn’t doing himself any favors with cringe-worthy daydreams about the slope and shape of his wife’s head, but passages from Amy’s diary reveal the alpha-girl perfectionist could have put anyone dangerously on edge. Under mounting pressure from the police and the media—as well as Amy’s fiercely doting parents—the town golden boy parades an endless series of lies, deceits, and inappropriate behavior. Nick is oddly evasive, and he’s definitely bitter—but is he really a killer? Added: April 2015

Good Daughter: A Novel – Bjorn Turman

Good Daughter is a tale of cross-cultural intrigue and personal discovery. Set in Thailand, it follows the journeys of six characters: two intelligent, imaginative Thai bargirls, a paranoid, well-paid American expatriate and his cynical, corrupting Australian mentor, a young American university graduate and an Isaan villager whose reoccurring presence borders on the mythical. Combining entertaining and dramatic narrative with poignant psychological themes, this is a novel that challenges the reader to look beneath the surface in order to try to understand what influences the characters’ behavior. At the conclusion of the story we are shown that, by releasing ourselves from that which binds us, we are able to attain greater hope and, ultimately, freedom. Added: May 2011

Grand River and Joy – Susan Messer

"Halloween morning 1966, Harry Levine arrives at his wholesale shoe warehouse to find an ethnic slur soaped on the front window. As he scavenges around the sprawling warehouse basement, looking for the supplies he needs to clean the window, he makes more unsettling discoveries: a stash of Black Power literature; marijuana; a new phone line running off his own; and a makeshift living room, arranged by Alvin, the teenaged tenant who lives with his father, Curtis, above the warehouse. Accustomed to sloughing off fears about Detroit's troubled inner-city neighborhood, Harry dismisses the soaped window as a Halloween prank and gradually dismantles "Alvin's lounge" in a silent conversation with the teenaged tenant. Still, these events and discoveries draw him more deeply into the frustrations and fissures permeating his city in the months leading up to the Detroit riots." Grand River and Joy, named after a landmark intersection in Detroit, follows Harry through the intersections of his life and the history of his city. It's a work of fiction set in a world that is anything but fictional, a novel about the intersections between races, classes, and religions exploding in the long, hot summers of Detroit in the
Grand River and Joy is a powerful and moving exploration of one of the most difficult chapters of Michigan history. Added before December 2010

**Great House** – Nicole Krauss

For twenty-five years, a reclusive American novelist has been writing at the desk she inherited from a young Chilean poet who disappeared at the hands of Pinochet’s secret police; one day a girl claiming to be the poet’s daughter arrives to take it away, sending the writer’s life reeling. Across the ocean, in the leafy suburbs of London, a man caring for his dying wife discovers, among her papers, a lock of hair that unravels a terrible secret. In Jerusalem, an antiques dealer slowly reassembles his father’s study, plundered by the Nazis in Budapest in 1944. Connecting these stories is a desk of many drawers that exerts a power over those who possess it or have given it away. As the narrators of Great House make their confessions, the desk takes on more and more meaning, and comes finally to stand for all that has been taken from them, and all that binds them to what has disappeared. Great House is a story haunted by questions: What do we pass on to our children and how do they absorb our dreams and losses? How do we respond to disappearance, destruction, and change? Nicole Krauss has written a soaring, powerful novel about memory struggling to create a meaningful permanence in the face of inevitable loss. "This is a novel about the long journey of a magnificent desk as it travels through the twentieth century from one owner to the next. It is also a novel about love, exile, the defilements of war, and the restorative power... Added: October 2011

**“H”**

**Half Broke Horses: A True-Life Novel** – Jeanette Walls

"Those old cows knew trouble was coming before we did." So begins the story of Lily Casey Smith, in Jeannette Walls's magnificent, true-life novel based on her no-nonsense, resourceful, hard working, and spectacularly compelling grandmother. By age six, Lily was helping her father break horses. At fifteen, she left home to teach in a frontier town — riding five hundred miles on her pony, all alone, to get to her job. She learned to drive a car ("I loved cars even more than I loved horses. They didn't need to be fed if they weren't working, and they didn't leave big piles of manure all over the place") and fly a plane, and, with her husband, ran a vast ranch in Arizona. She raised two children, one of whom is Jeannette's memorable mother, Rosemary Smith Walls, unforgettably portrayed in *The Glass Castle*.

Lily survived tornadoes, droughts, floods, the Great Depression, and the most heartbreaking personal tragedy. She bristled at prejudice of all kinds — against women, Native Americans, and anyone else who didn't fit the mold. *Half Broke Horses* is Laura Ingalls Wilder for adults, as riveting and dramatic as Isak Dinesen's *Out of Africa* or Beryl Markham's *West with the Night*. It will transfix readers everywhere. Added: July 2011
Gretchen Rubin had an epiphany one rainy afternoon in the unlikeliest of places: a city bus. "The days are long, but the years are short," she realized. "Time is passing, and I'm not focusing enough on the things that really matter." In that moment, she decided to dedicate a year to her happiness project.

In this lively and compelling account of that year, Rubin carves out her place alongside the authors of bestselling memoirs such as Julie and Julia, The Year of Living Biblically, and Eat, Pray, Love. With humor and insight, she chronicles her adventures during the twelve months she spent test-driving the wisdom of the ages, current scientific research, and lessons from popular culture about how to be happier.

Written with charm and wit, The Happiness Project is illuminating yet entertaining, thought-provoking yet compulsively readable. Gretchen Rubin's passion for her subject jumps off the page, and reading just a few chapters of this book will inspire you to start your own happiness project. Added: February 2012

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Have a Little Faith: A True Story – Mitch Albom

“Clear some space on your bookshelf for Mitch Albom's, Have a Little Faith, the story of a faith journey that could become a classic. Those who were born into faith, have lost faith, or are still searching will all be engaged and challenged by this powerful story of ‘finding faith’ in relationships with others and with something greater than ourselves. Never satisfied with easy answers or soft platitudes, Mitch explores some of life's greatest mysteries and unanswered questions with great honesty, depth and self reflection.”
—Jim Wallis, CEO and Founder of Sojourners and author of The Great Awakening

What if our beliefs were not what divided us, but what pulled us together?

In Have a Little Faith, Mitch Albom offers a beautifully written story of a remarkable eight-year journey between two worlds—two men, two faiths, two communities—that will inspire readers everywhere. Added: July 2012

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Heaven Is for Real: A Little Boy’s Astounding Story of His Trip to Heaven and Back – Todd Burpo

Heaven Is for Real is the true story of the four-year old son of a small town Nebraska pastor who during emergency surgery slips from consciousness and enters heaven. He survives and begins talking about being able to look down and see the doctor operating and his dad praying in the waiting room. The family didn't know what to believe but soon the evidence was clear.
Colton said he met his miscarried sister, whom no one had told him about, and his great grandfather who died 30 years before Colton was born, then shared impossible-to-know details about each. He describes the horse that only Jesus could ride, about how "reaaally big" God and his chair are, and how the Holy Spirit "shoots down power" from heaven to help us.

Told by the father, but often in Colton's own words, the disarmingly simple message is heaven is a real place, Jesus really loves children, and be ready, there is a coming last battle. Added: February 2012

*Help, The* – Kathryn Stockett

Aibileen is a black maid in 1962 Jackson, Mississippi, raising her seventeenth white child. She’s always taken orders quietly, but lately it leaves her with a bitterness she can no longer bite back. Her friend Minny has certainly never held her tongue, or held on to a job for very long, but now she’s working for a newcomer with secrets that leave her speechless. And while socialite Skeeter has just returned from college with ambition and a degree but, to her mother’s lament, no husband. Normally Skeeter would find solace in Constantine, the beloved maid who raised her, but Constantine has inexplicably disappeared.

Together, these seemingly different women join to work on a project that could forever alter their destinies and the life of a small town—to write, in secret, a tell-all book about what it’s really like to work as a black maid in the white homes of the South. Despite the terrible risks they will have to take, and sometimes humorous boundaries they will have to cross, these three women unite with one intention: hope for a better day. Added: May 2011

*Homer & Langley: A Novel* – E. L. Doctorow

Homer and Langley Collyer are brothers—the one blind and deeply intuitive, the other damaged into madness, or perhaps greatness, by mustard gas in the Great War. They live as recluses in their once grand Fifth Avenue mansion, scavenging the city street for things they think they can use, hoarding the daily newspapers as research for Langley’s proposed dateless newspaper whose reportage will be as prophecy. Yet the epic events of the century play out in the lives of the two brothers—wars, political movements, technological advances—and even though they want nothing more than to shut out the world, history seems to pass through their cluttered house in the persons of immigrants, prostitutes, society women, government agents, gangsters, jazz musicians … and their housebound lives are fraught with odyssean peril as they struggle to survive and create meaning for themselves. May 2011

*Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet: A Novel* – Jamie Ford

In the opening pages of Jamie Ford’s stunning debut novel, *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet*, Henry Lee comes upon a crowd gathered outside the Panama Hotel, once the
gateway to Seattle’s Japantown. It has been boarded up for decades, but now the new owner has made an incredible discovery: the belongings of Japanese families, left when they were rounded up and sent to internment camps during World War II. As Henry looks on, the owner opens a Japanese parasol.

This simple act takes old Henry Lee back to the 1940s, at the height of the war, when young Henry’s world is a jumble of confusion and excitement, and to his father, who is obsessed with the war in China and having Henry grow up American. While “scholarshipping” at the exclusive Rainier Elementary, where the white kids ignore him, Henry meets Keiko Okabe, a young Japanese American student. Amid the chaos of blackouts, curfews, and FBI raids, Henry and Keiko forge a bond of friendship—and innocent love—that transcends the long-standing prejudices of their Old World ancestors. And after Keiko and her family are swept up in the evacuations to the internment camps, she and Henry are left only with the hope that the war will end, and that their promise to each other will be kept.

Forty years later, Henry Lee is certain that the parasol belonged to Keiko. In the hotel’s dark dusty basement he begins looking for signs of the Okabe family’s belongings and for a long-lost object whose value he cannot begin to measure. Now a widower, Henry is still trying to find his voice—words that might explain the actions of his nationalistic father; words that might bridge the gap between him and his modern, Chinese American son; words that might help him confront the choices he made many years ago.

Set during one of the most conflicted and volatile times in American history, Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet is an extraordinary story of commitment and enduring hope. In Henry and Keiko, Jamie Ford has created an unforgettable duo whose story teaches us of the power of forgiveness and the human heart. Added before December 2010

_Hour I First Believed, The: A Novel_ – Wally Lamb

Wally Lamb’s two previous novels, _She’s Come Undone_ and _I Know This Much Is True_, struck a chord with readers. They responded to the intensely introspective nature of the books, and to their lively narrative styles and biting humor. One critic called Wally Lamb a "modern-day Dostoyevsky," whose characters struggle not only with their respective pasts, but with a "mocking, sadistic God" in whom they don't believe but to whom they turn, nevertheless, in times of trouble (New York Times).

In _The Hour I First Believed_, Lamb travels well beyond his earlier work and embodies in his fiction myth, psychology, family history stretching back many generations, and the questions of faith that lie at the heart of everyday life. The result is an extraordinary tour de force, at once a meditation on the human condition and an unflinching yet compassionate evocation of character.

When forty-seven-year-old high school teacher Caelum Quirk and his younger wife, Maureen, a school nurse, move to Littleton, Colorado, they both get jobs at Columbine High School. In April 1999, Caelum returns home to Three Rivers, Connecticut, to be
with his aunt who has just had a stroke. But Maureen finds herself in the school library at Columbine, cowering in a cabinet and expecting to be killed, as two vengeful students go on a carefully premeditated, murderous rampage. Miraculously she survives, but at a cost: she is unable to recover from the trauma. Caelum and Maureen flee Colorado and return to an illusion of safety at the Quirk family farm in Three Rivers. But the effects of chaos are not so easily put right, and further tragedy ensues.

While Maureen fights to regain her sanity, Caelum discovers a cache of old diaries, letters, and newspaper clippings in an upstairs bedroom of his family's house. The colorful and intriguing story they recount spans five generations of Quirk family ancestors, from the Civil War era to Caelum's own troubled childhood. Piece by piece, Caelum reconstructs the lives of the women and men whose legacy he bears. Unimaginable secrets emerge; long-buried fear, anger, guilt, and grief rise to the surface.

As Caelum grapples with unexpected and confounding revelations from the past, he also struggles to fashion a future out of the ashes of tragedy. His personal quest for meaning and faith becomes a mythic journey that is at the same time quintessentially contemporary -- and American.

*The Hour I First Believed* is a profound and heart-rending work of fiction. Wally Lamb proves himself a virtuoso storyteller, assembling a variety of voices and an ensemble of characters rich enough to evoke all of humanity. Added before December 2010

*House Girl, The: A Novel* – Tara Conklin

Lina Sparrow is an ambitious young lawyer working on a historic class-action suit seeking reparations for the descendants of American slaves. Josephine is a seventeen-year-old house slave who tends to the mistress of a Virginia tobacco farm—an aspiring artist named Lu Anne Bell. Alternating between antebellum Virginia and modern-day New York, *The House Girl* is a searing tale of art, history, love, and secrets that intertwines the stories of two remarkable women. Added: December 2013

*House I Loved, The* – Tatiana De Rosnay

Paris, France: 1860s. Hundreds of houses are being razed, whole neighborhoods reduced to ashes. By order of Emperor Napoleon III, Baron Haussmann has set into motion a series of large-scale renovations that will permanently alter the face of old Paris, molding it into a “modern city.” The reforms will erase generations of history—and in the midst of the tumult, one woman will take a stand.

Rose Bazelet is determined to fight against the destruction of her family home until the very end. As others flee, she stakes her claim in the basement of the old house on rue Childebert, ignoring the sounds of change that come closer and closer each day. Attempting to overcome the loneliness of her daily life, she begins to write letters to Armand, her beloved late husband. And as she delves into the ritual of remembering,
Rose is forced to come to terms with a secret that has been buried deep in her heart for thirty years. Added: March 2013

Hunger Games, The – Suzanne Collins

In the ruins of a place once known as North America lies the nation of Panem, a shining Capitol surrounded by twelve outlying districts. The Capitol is harsh and cruel and keeps the districts in line by forcing them all to send one boy and one girl between the ages of twelve and eighteen to participate in the annual Hunger Games, a fight to the death on live TV.

Sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen, who lives alone with her mother and younger sister, regards it as a death sentence when she is forced to represent her district in the Games. But Katniss has been close to dead and survival, for her, is second nature. Without really meaning to, she becomes a contender. But if she is to win, she will have to start making choices that weigh survival against humanity and life against love. Added: March 2013

“I”

I Feel Bad About My Neck: And Other Thoughts on Being a Woman – Nora Ephron

With her disarming, intimate, completely accessible voice, and dry sense of humor, Nora Ephron shares with us her ups and downs in I Feel Bad About My Neck, a candid, hilarious look at women who are getting older and dealing with the tribulations of maintenance, menopause, empty nests, and life itself.

Ephron chronicles her life as an obsessed cook, passionate city dweller, and hapless parent. But mostly she speaks frankly and uproariously about life as a woman of a certain age. Utterly courageous, uproariously funny, and unexpectedly moving in its truth telling, I Feel Bad About My Neck is a scrumptious, irresistible treat of a book, full of truths, laugh out loud moments that will appeal to readers of all ages. Added before December 2010

I Remember Nothing: And Other Reflections – Nora Ephron

Ephron writes about falling hard for a way of life ("Journalism: A Love Story") and about breaking up even harder with the men in her life ("The D Word"); lists "Twenty-five Things People Have a Shocking Capacity to Be Surprised by Over and Over Again"; reveals the alarming evolution, a decade after she wrote and directed You've Got Mail, of her relationship with her in-box ("The Six Stages of E-Mail"); and asks the age-old question, which came first, the chicken soup or the cold?" All the while, she gives a candid, edgy voice to everything women who have reached a certain age have been thinking…but rarely acknowledging.

Filled with insights and observations that instantly ring true—and could have come only from Nora Ephron—I Remember Nothing is pure joy. Added: December 2011
**Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, The** – Rebecca Skloot

Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. She was a poor black tobacco farmer whose cells—taken without her knowledge in 1951—became one of the most important tools in medicine, vital for developing the polio vaccine, cloning, gene mapping, and more. Henrietta’s cells have been bought and sold by the billions, yet she remains virtually unknown, and her family can’t afford health insurance. This phenomenal New York Times bestseller tells a riveting story of the collision between ethics, race, and medicine; of scientific discovery and faith healing; and of a daughter consumed with questions about the mother she never knew. Added: May 2011

**Imperfectionists, The: A Novel** – Rachman

Set against the gorgeous backdrop of Rome, Tom Rachman’s wry, vibrant debut follows the topsy-turvy private lives of the reporters, editors, and executives of an international English language newspaper as they struggle to keep it—and themselves—afloat.

Fifty years and many changes have ensued since the paper was founded by an enigmatic millionaire, and now, amid the stained carpeting and dingy office furniture, the staff’s personal dramas seem far more important than the daily headlines. Kathleen, the imperious editor in chief, issmarting from a betrayal in her open marriage; Arthur, the lazy obituary writer, is transformed by a personal tragedy; Abby, the embattled financial officer, discovers that her job cuts and her love life are intertwined in a most unexpected way. Out in the field, a veteran Paris freelancer goes to desperate lengths for his next byline, while the new Cairo stringer is mercilessly manipulated by an outrageous war correspondent with an outsize ego. And in the shadows is the isolated young publisher who pays more attention to his prized basset hound, Schopenhauer, than to the fate of his family’s quirky newspaper.

As the era of print news gives way to the Internet age and this imperfect crew stumbles toward an uncertain future, the paper’s rich history is revealed, including the surprising truth about its founder’s intentions.

Spirited, moving, and highly original, *The Imperfectionists* will establish Tom Rachman as one of our most perceptive, assured literary talents.

One of the most acclaimed books of the year, Tom Rachman’s debut novel follows the topsy-turvy private lives of the reporters and editors of an English-language newspaper in Rome. Added: July 2011

**In the Garden of Beasts: Love, Terror, and an American Family in Hitler’s Berlin** – Erik Larson

The time is 1933, the place, Berlin, when William E. Dodd becomes America’s first ambassador to Hitler’s Germany in a year that proved to be a turning point in history.
A mild-mannered professor from Chicago, Dodd brings along his wife, son, and flamboyant daughter, Martha. At first Martha is entranced by the parties and pomp, and the handsome young men of the Third Reich with their infectious enthusiasm for restoring Germany to a position of world prominence. But as evidence of Jewish persecution mounts, confirmed by chilling first-person testimony, her father telegraphs his concerns to a largely indifferent State Department back home. Dodd watches with alarm as Jews are attacked, the press is censored, and drafts of frightening new laws begin to circulate. As that first year unfolds and the shadows deepen, the Dodds experience days full of excitement, intrigue, romance, and—ultimately—horror, when a climactic spasm of violence and murder reveals Hitler’s true character and ruthless ambition.

Suffused with the tense atmosphere of the period, and with unforgettable portraits of the bizarre Göring and the expectedly charming—yet wholly sinister—Goebbels, In the Garden of Beasts lends a stunning, eyewitness perspective on events as they unfold in real time, revealing an era of surprising nuance and complexity. The result is a dazzling, addictively readable work that speaks volumes about why the world did not recognize the grave threat posed by Hitler until Berlin, and Europe, were awash in blood and terror.

Added: July 2012

Interestings, The – Meg Wolitzer

The summer that Nixon resigns, six teenagers at a summer camp for the arts become inseparable. Decades later the bond remains powerful, but so much else has changed. In The Interestings, Wolitzer follows these characters from the height of youth through middle age, as their talents, fortunes, and degrees of satisfaction diverge.

The kind of creativity that is rewarded at age fifteen is not always enough to propel someone through life at age thirty; not everyone can sustain, in adulthood, what seemed so special in adolescence. Jules Jacobson, an aspiring comic actress, eventually resigns herself to a more practical occupation and lifestyle. Her friend Jonah, a gifted musician, stops playing the guitar and becomes an engineer. But Ethan and Ash, Jules’s now-married best friends, become shockingly successful—true to their initial artistic dreams, with the wealth and access that allow those dreams to keep expanding. The friendships endure and even prosper, but also underscore the differences in their fates, in what their talents have become and the shapes their lives have taken.

Wide in scope, ambitious, and populated by complex characters who come together and apart in a changing New York City, The Interestings explores the meaning of talent; the nature of envy; the roles of class, art, money, and power; and how all of it can shift and tilt precipitously over the course of a friendship and a life. Added: July 2014

Into the Wild – Jon Krakauer

In April 1992, a young man from a well-to-do family hitchhiked to Alaska and walked alone into the wilderness north of Mt. McKinley. He had given $25,000 in savings to a
charity, abandoned his car and most of his possessions, burned all the cash in his wallet and invented a life for himself. Four months later, his decomposed body was found by a moose hunter. Jon Krakauer brings Chris McCandless's uncompromising pilgrimage out of the shadows and illuminates it with meaning in this mesmerizing and heartbreaking tour de force. Added before December 2010

“J”

_**J.M. Barrie Ladies’ Swimming Society, The** – Barbara J. Zitwer

When Joey Rubin stumbles upon a group of elderly women swimming in a lake one freezing January morning, she thinks they must be mad. But then they dare her to come in…

Joey, an overworked New York architect, is in the Cotswolds to oversee the restoration of Stanway House – the stately home that inspired J.M. Barrie to write _Peter Pan_. It hasn’t been easy. The local residents aren’t exactly welcoming, and then there’s the problem of the brooding caretaker, a man who seems to take every opportunity to undermine her plans. She soon begins to feel that she can’t do anything right.

Until, that is, she discovers the J.M. Barrie Ladies’ Swimming Society and begins to take a daily dip with them in their own private Neverland. For Joey, meeting Aggie, Gala, Lilia and co. is a life-changing experience, the beginning of a friendship that will transform her in the most remarkable of ways… Added: March 2013

_Jasmine and Fire: A Bittersweet Year in Beirut_ – Salma Abdelnour

_Jasmine and Fire_ is Salma’s poignant and humorous journey of trying to resettle in Beirut and fumbling through the new realities of life in one of the world’s most complex, legendary, ever-vibrant, ever-troubled cities. What’s more, in a year of roiling changes around the Middle East and the rise of the Arab Spring, Salma found herself in the midst of the turmoil, experiencing it all up close.

As she comes to grips with all the changes in her life—a love left behind in New York and new relationships blossoming in Beirut—Salma takes comfort in some of Lebanon’s enduring traditions, particularly its extraordinary food culture. Through the sights, sounds, and flavors of a city full of beauty, tragedy, despair, and hope, Salma slowly begins to reconnect with the place she’s longed for her entire life. Added: March 2013

“K”

_**Kids Are All Right, The: A Memoir** – Diana Welch and Liz Welch

“Perfect is boring.”
Well, 1983 certainly wasn’t boring for the Welch family. Somehow, between their handsome father’s mysterious death, their glamorous soap-opera-star mother’s cancer diagnosis, and a phalanx of lawyers intent on bankruptcy proceedings, the four Welch siblings managed to handle each new heartbreaking misfortune in the same way they dealt with the unexpected arrival of the forgotten-about Chilean exchange student—together.

All that changed with the death of their mother. While nineteen-year-old Amanda was legally on her own, the three younger siblings—Liz, sixteen; Dan, fourteen; and Diana, eight—were each dispatched to a different set of family friends. Quick-witted and sharp-tongued, Amanda headed for college in New York City and immersed herself in an ’80s world of alternative music and drugs. Liz, living with the couple for whom she babysat, followed in Amanda’s footsteps until high school graduation when she took a job in Norway as a nanny. Mischievous, rebellious Dan, bounced from guardian to boarding school and back again, getting deeper into trouble and drugs. And Diana, the red-haired baby of the family, was given a new life and identity and told to forget her past. But Diana’s siblings refused to forget her—or let her go.

Told in the alternating voices of the four siblings, their poignant, harrowing story of unbreakable bonds unfolds with ferocious emotion. Despite the Welch children’s wrenching loss and subsequent separation, they retained the resilience and humor that both their mother and father endowed them with—growing up as lost souls, taking disastrous turns along the way, but eventually coming out right side up. The kids are not only all right; they’re back together. Added: May 2011

*Kitchen House, The* – Kathleen Grissom

Lavinia, a seven-year-old Irish orphan with no memory of her past, arrives on a tobacco plantation where she is put to work as an indentured servant. Placed with the slaves in the kitchen house under the care of Belle, the master’s illegitimate daughter, Lavinia becomes deeply bonded to her new adopted family, even though she is forever set apart from them by her white skin. As Lavinia is slowly accepted into the world of the big house, where the master is absent and the mistress battles an opium addiction, she finds herself perilously straddling two very different worlds. When Lavinia marries the master’s troubled son and takes on the role of mistress, loyalties are brought into question, dangerous truths are laid bare and lives are put at risk. *The Kitchen House* is a tragic story of page-turning suspense, exploring the meaning of family, where love and loyalty prevail. Added: July 2012

*Kite Runner, The* – Khaled Hosseini

The unforgettable, heartbreaking story of the unlikely friendship between a wealthy boy and the son of his father's servant, *The Kite Runner* is a beautifully crafted novel set in a country that is in the process of being destroyed. It is about the power of reading, the price of betrayal, and the possibility of redemption; and an exploration of the power of fathers over sons—their love, their sacrifices, their lies.
A sweeping story of family, love, and friendship told against the devastating backdrop of the history of Afghanistan over the last thirty years, *The Kite Runner* is an unusual and powerful novel that has become a beloved, one-of-a-kind classic. Added before December 2010

“L”

*Lacuna, The: A Novel* – Barbara Kingsolver

“A work that is often close to magic.” – *Denver Post*

In this powerfully imagined, provocative novel, Barbara Kingsolver takes us on an epic journey from the Mexico of artists Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo to the America of Pearl Harbor, FDR, and J. Edger Hoover. *The Lacuna* is the poignant story of a man pulled between two nations as well as an unforgettable portrait of the artist—and of art itself. Added: July 2011

*Language of Flowers, The: A Novel* – Vanessa Diffenbaugh

The Victorian language of flowers was used to convey romantic expressions: honeysuckle for devotion, asters for patience, and red roses for love. But for Victoria Jones, it’s been more useful in communicating mistrust and solitude. After a childhood spent in the foster-care system, she is unable to get close to anybody, and her only connection to the world is through flowers and their meanings. Now eighteen and emancipated from the system with nowhere to go, Victoria realizes she has a gift for helping others through the flowers she chooses for them. But an unexpected encounter with a mysterious stranger has her questioning what’s been missing in her life. And when she’s forced to confront a painful secret from her past, she must decide whether it’s worth risking everything for a second chance at happiness. Added: July 2012


As onetime classmates meet up over the course of a weekend for their fortieth high school reunion, they discover things that will irrevocably affect the rest of their lives. For newly divorced Dorothy, the reunion brings with it the possibility of finally attracting the attention of the class heartthrob. For the ever self-reliant, ever left-out Mary Alice, it’s a chance to reexamine a painful past. For Lester, a veterinarian and widower, it is the hope of talking shop with a fellow vet—or at least that’s what he tells himself. For Candy, the class beauty, it’s the hope of finding friendship before it’s too late. As these and other classmates converge for the reunion dinner, four decades melt away: desires and personalities from their youth reemerge, and new discoveries are made. For so much has happened to them all. And so much can still happen. Added: May 2011

*Let the Great World Spin: A Novel* – Colum McCann
In the dawning light of a late-summer morning, the people of lower Manhattan stand hushed, staring up in disbelief at the Twin Towers. It is August 1974, and a mysterious tightrope walker is running, dancing, leaping between the towers, suspended a quarter mile above the ground. In the streets below, a slew of ordinary lives become extraordinary in bestselling novelist Colum McCann’s stunningly intricate portrait of a city and its people. Let the Great World Spin is the critically acclaimed author’s most ambitious novel yet: a dazzlingly rich vision of the pain, loveliness, mystery, and promise of New York City in the 1970s.

Corrigan, a radical young Irish monk, struggles with his own demons as he lives among the prostitutes in the middle of the burning Bronx. A group of mothers gather in a Park Avenue apartment to mourn their sons who died in Vietnam, only to discover just how much divides them even in grief. A young artist finds herself at the scene of a hit-and-run that sends her own life careening sideways. Tillie, a thirty-eight-year-old grandmother, turns tricks alongside her teenage daughter, determined not only to take care of her family but to prove her own worth. Elegantly weaving together these and other seemingly disparate lives, McCann’s powerful allegory comes alive in the unforgettable voices of the city’s people, unexpectedly drawn together by hope, beauty, and the “artistic crime of the century.” Added: July 2011

*Lethal* – Sandra Brown

When her four year old daughter informs her a sick man is in their yard, Honor Gillette rushes out to help him. But that "sick" man turns out to be Lee Coburn, the man accused of murdering seven people the night before. Dangerous, desperate, and armed, he promises Honor that she and her daughter won't be hurt as long as she does everything he asks. She has no choice but to accept him at his word.

But Honor soon discovers that even those close to her can't be trusted. Coburn claims that her beloved late husband possessed something extremely valuable that places Honor and her daughter in grave danger. Coburn is there to retrieve it -- at any cost. From FBI offices in Washington, D.C., to a rundown shrimp boat in coastal Louisiana, Coburn and Honor run for their lives from the very people sworn to protect them, and unravel a web of corruption and depravity that threatens not only them, but the fabric of our society. Added: February 2012

*Let's Explore Diabetes with Owls* - David Sedaris

A guy walks into a bar car and...

From here the story could take many turns. When this guy is David Sedaris, the possibilities are endless, but the result is always the same: he will both delight you with twists of humor and intelligence and leave you deeply moved.
Sedaris remembers his father's dinnertime attire (shirtsleeves and underpants), his first colonoscopy (remarkably pleasant), and the time he considered buying the skeleton of a murdered Pygmy.

With *Let's Explore Diabetes with Owls*, David Sedaris shows once again why his work has been called "hilarious, elegant, and surprisingly moving" (*Washington Post*). Added: April 2015

**Liar's Club, The: A Memoir** – Mary Karr

When it was published in 1995, Mary Karr's *The Liars' Club* took the world by storm and raised the art of the memoir to an entirely new level, as well as bringing about a dramatic revival of the form. Karr's comic childhood in an east Texas oil town brings us characters as darkly hilarious as any of J. D. Salinger's—a hard-drinking daddy, a sister who can talk down the sheriff at twelve, and an oft-married mother whose accumulated secrets threaten to destroy them all. Now with a new introduction that discusses her memoir's impact on her family, this unsentimental and profoundly moving account of an apocalyptic childhood is as “funny, lively, and un-put-downable” (*USA Today*) today as it ever was. Added: July 2011

**Light Between Oceans, The: A Novel** – M.L. Stedman

After four harrowing years on the Western Front, Tom Sherbourne returns to Australia and takes a job as the lighthouse keeper on Janus Rock, nearly half a day's journey from the coast. To this isolated island, where the supply boat comes once a season and shore leaves are granted every other year at best, Tom brings a young, bold, and loving wife, Isabel. Years later, after two miscarriages and one stillbirth, the grieving Isabel hears a baby's cries on the wind. A boat has washed up onshore carrying a dead man and a living baby.

Tom, whose records as a lighthouse keeper are meticulous and whose moral principles have withstood a horrific war, wants to report the man and infant immediately. But Isabel has taken the tiny baby to her breast. Against Tom's judgment, they claim her as their own and name her Lucy. When she is two, Tom and Isabel return to the mainland and are reminded that there are other people in the world. Their choice has devastated one of them.

M. L. Stedman's mesmerizing, beautifully written novel seduces us into accommodating Isabel's decision to keep this gift from God. And we are swept into a story about extraordinarily compelling characters seeking to find their North Star in a world where there is no right answer, where justice for one person is another's tragic loss.

*The Light Between Oceans* is exquisite and unforgettable, a deeply moving novel. Added: July 2013

**Life After Life** – Kate Atkinson
"One of the best novels I've read this century. Kate Atkinson is a marvel. There aren't enough breathless adjectives to describe LIFE AFTER LIFE: Dazzling, witty, moving, joyful, mournful." --Gillian Flynn, author of Gone Girl

One of the New York Times Book Review's 10 Best Books of 2013
Winner of the 2013 Costa Book Award for Best Novel

What if you could live again and again, until you got it right?

On a cold and snowy night in 1910, Ursula Todd is born, the third child of a wealthy English banker and his wife. She dies before she can draw her first breath. On that same cold and snowy night, Ursula Todd is born, lets out a lusty wail, and embarks upon a life that will be, to say the least, unusual. For as she grows, she also dies, repeatedly, in any number of ways. Ursula's world is in turmoil, facing the unspeakable evil of the two greatest wars in history. What power and force can one woman exert over the fate of civilization -- if only she has the chance?

Wildly inventive, darkly comic, startlingly poignant -- this is Kate Atkinson at her absolute best. Added: March 2014

Life of Pi: A Novel – Yann Martel

Winner of the 2002 Man Booker Prize

New York Times Bestseller
• Los Angeles Times Bestseller
• Washington Post Bestseller
• San Francisco Chronicle Bestseller
• Chicago Tribune Bestseller

"A story to make you believe in the soul-sustaining power of fiction."—Los Angeles Times Book Review

After the sinking of a cargo ship, a solitary lifeboat remains bobbing on the wild blue Pacific. The only survivors from the wreck are a sixteen-year-old boy named Pi, a hyena, a wounded zebra, an orangutan—and a 450-pound royal bengal tiger. The scene is set for one of the most extraordinary and beloved works of fiction in recent years.

Universally acclaimed upon publication, Life of Pi is a modern classic. Added before December 2010

Lincoln Lawyer, The – Michael Connelly

This #1 bestselling legal thriller from Michael Connelly is a stunning display of novelistic mastery - as human, as gripping, and as whiplash-surprising as any novel yet from the writer Publishers Weekly has called "today's Dostoevsky of crime literature."
Mickey Haller is a Lincoln Lawyer, a criminal defense attorney who operates out of the backseat of his Lincoln Town Car, traveling between the far-flung courthouses of Los Angeles to defend clients of every kind. Bikers, con artists, drunk drivers, drug dealers - they're all on Mickey Haller's client list. For him, the law is rarely about guilt or innocence, it's about negotiation and manipulation. Sometimes it's even about justice.

A Beverly Hills playboy arrested for attacking a woman he picked up in a bar chooses Haller to defend him, and Mickey has his first high-paying client in years. It is a defense attorney's dream, what they call a franchise case. And as the evidence stacks up, Haller comes to believe this may be the easiest case of his career. Then someone close to him is murdered and Haller discovers that his search for innocence has brought him face-to-face with evil as pure as a flame. To escape without being burned, he must deploy every tactic, feint, and instinct in his arsenal - this time to save his own life. Added before December 2010

*Little Bee* – Chris Cleave

This is the story of two women. Their lives collide one fateful day, and one of them has to make a terrible choice, the kind of choice we hope you never have to face. Two years later, they meet again--the story starts there...

Once you have read it, you'll want to tell your friends about it. When you do, please don't tell them what happens. The magic is in how the story unfolds. Added: May 2011

*Little Bride*, The – Anna Solomon

When 16-year-old Minna Losk journeys from Odessa to America as a mail-order bride, she dreams of a young, wealthy husband, a handsome townhouse, and freedom from physical labor and pogroms. But her husband Max turns out to be twice her age, rigidly Orthodox, and living in a one-room sod hut in South Dakota with his two teenage sons. The country is desolate, the work treacherous. Most troubling, Minna finds herself increasingly attracted to her older stepson. As a brutal winter closes in, the family's limits are tested, and Minna, drawing on strengths she barely knows she has, is forced to confront her despair, as well as her desire. Added: February 2012

*Long Way Gone, A: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* – Ishmael Beah

At the age of twelve, Ishmael Beah fled attacking rebels in Sierra Leone and wandered a land rendered unrecognizable by violence. By thirteen, he’d been picked up by the government army, and Beah, at heart a gentle boy, found that he was capable of truly terrible acts. At sixteen, he was removed from fighting by UNICEF, and through the help of the staff at his rehabilitation center, he learned how to forgive himself, to regain his humanity, and, finally, to heal.

This is an extraordinary and mesmerizing account, told with real literary force and heartbreaking honesty. Added: May 2011
**Love and Summer** – William Trevor

Ellie Dillahan is a shy orphan girl, married to a man whose life has been blighted by an unspeakable tragedy. She lives a quiet life in the Irish town of Rathmoye, until she meets Florian Kilderry, a young photographer preparing to leave Ireland and his past forever. The chance intersection of these two lost souls sets in motion a poignant love affair that requires Ellie to make an impossible choice. In spare, exquisite prose, William Trevor delves into the circumscribed lives of the people of Rathmoye, exploring their passions and frustrations during one long summer. Added: July 2011

**Lowlands, The** – Lahiri Jhumpa

*National Book Award Finalist and shortlisted for the 2013 Man Booker Prize*

*The Lowland* is an engrossing family saga steeped in history: the story of two very different brothers bound by tragedy, a fiercely brilliant woman haunted by her past, a country torn apart by revolution, and a love that endures long past death. Moving from the 1960s to the present, and from India to America and across generations, this dazzling novel is Jhumpa Lahiri at the height of her considerable powers. Added: July 2014

**Luminaries, The** - Eleanor Catton

*Winner of the 2013 Man Booker Prize and Governor General’s Award for Fiction, and set during the heady days of New Zealand’s Gold Rush, The Luminaries is a magnificent novel of love, lust, murder, and greed, in which three unsolved crimes link the fates and fortunes of twelve men. Dickens meets Deadwood in this internationally celebrated phenomenon.*

In January 1866, young Walter Moody lands in a gold-mining frontier town on the west coast of New Zealand to make his fortune and forever leave behind a family scandal. On arrival, he stumbles across a tense gathering of twelve local men who have met in secret to investigate what links three crimes that occurred on a single day: the town’s wealthiest man has vanished. An enormous fortune has been discovered in the home of a luckless drunk. A prostitute has supposedly tried to end her life. But nothing is quite as it seems.

As the men share their stories, what emerges is an intricate network of alliances and betrayals, secrets and lies, that is as exquisitely patterned as the night sky.

Part mystery, part fantastical love story, and intricately structured around the zodiac and the golden mean (each chapter is half the length of the preceding one), *The Luminaries* weaves together the changing fates and fortunes of an entire community, one where everyone has something to hide. Rich with character and event, it is a gripping page-turner – and a unique, atmospheric world – in which readers will gladly lose themselves. It confirms Eleanor Catton’s reputation as one of the most exciting and innovative novelists writing today. Added: April 2015
Madonnas of Leningrad, The – Debra Dean

Bit by bit, the ravages of age are eroding Marina's grip on the everyday. An elderly Russian woman now living in America, she cannot hold on to fresh memories—the details of her grown children's lives, the approaching wedding of her grandchild—yet her distant past is miraculously preserved in her mind's eye.

Vivid images of her youth in war-torn Leningrad arise unbidden, carrying her back to the terrible fall of 1941, when she was a tour guide at the Hermitage Museum and the German army's approach signaled the beginning of what would be a long, torturous siege on the city. As the people braved starvation, bitter cold, and a relentless German onslaught, Marina joined other staff members in removing the museum's priceless masterpieces for safekeeping, leaving the frames hanging empty on the walls to symbolize the artworks' eventual return. As the Luftwaffe's bombs pounded the proud, stricken city, Marina built a personal Hermitage in her mind—a refuge that would stay buried deep within her, until she needed it once more. . . . Added: December 2010

Maine: A Novel – J. Courtney Sullivan

A Time Book of the Year / A Washington Post Book World Notable Book

For the Kellehers, Maine is a place where children run in packs, showers are taken outdoors, and old Irish songs are sung around a piano. As three generations of women arrive at the family's beach house, each brings her own hopes and fears. Maggie is thirty-two and pregnant, waiting for the perfect moment to tell her imperfect boyfriend the news; Ann Marie, a Kelleher by marriage, is channeling her domestic frustration into a dollhouse obsession and an ill-advised crush; Kathleen, the black sheep, never wanted to set foot in the cottage again; and Alice, the matriarch at the center of it all, would trade every floorboard for a chance to undo the events of one night, long ago. Added: March 2013

Major Pettigrew’s Last Stand: A Novel – Helen Simonson

In the small village of Edgecombe St. Mary in the English countryside lives Major Ernest Pettigrew (retired), the unlikely hero of Helen Simonson’s wondrous debut. Wry, courtly, opinionated, and completely endearing, the Major leads a quiet life valuing the proper things that Englishmen have lived by for generations: honor, duty, decorum, and a properly brewed cup of tea. But then his brother’s death sparks an unexpected friendship with Mrs. Jasmina Ali, the Pakistani shopkeeper from the village. Drawn together by their shared love of literature and the loss of their spouses, the Major and Mrs. Ali soon find their friendship blossoming into something more. But village society insists on embracing him as the quintessential local and regarding her as the permanent foreigner. Can their relationship survive the risks one takes when pursuing happiness in the face of culture and tradition? Added: March 2011?
Marriage Plot, The – Jeffrey Eugenides

A National Book Critics Circle Award Finalist
Named a Best Book of the Year by
The New York Times Book Review • NPR • The New Republic • Salon • The Seattle Times • Houston Chronicle • The Miami Herald • Publisher's Weekly

"Remind[s] us with uncommon understanding what it is to be young and idealistic, in pursuit of true love, and in love with books and ideas."—Michiko Kakutani, The New York Times

"A grand romance in the Austen tradition."—USA Today

Are the great love stories of the nineteenth century dead? Or can there be a new story, written for today and alive to the realities of feminism, sexual freedom, prenups, and divorce?

It’s the early 1980s. In American colleges, the wised-up kids are inhaling Derrida and listening to Talking Heads. But Madeleine Hanna, dutiful English major, is writing her senior thesis on Jane Austen and George Eliot, purveyors of the marriage plot that lies at the heart of the greatest English novels. As Madeleine studies the age-old motivations of the human heart, real life, in the form of two very different guys, intervenes—the charismatic and intense Leonard Bankhead, and her old friend the mystically inclined Mitchell Grammaticus. As all three of them face life in the real world they will have to reevaluate everything they have learned. Jeffrey Eugenides creates a new kind of contemporary love story in "his most powerful novel yet" (Newsweek). Added: October 2012

May We Be Forgiven - A.M. Homes

“A big American story with big American themes” (Elle) from the author of the New York Times–bestselling memoir The Mistress’s Daughter

In this vivid, transfixing new novel, A. M. Homes presents a darkly comic look at twenty-first-century domestic life and the possibility of personal transformation. Harold Silver has spent a lifetime watching his more successful younger brother, George, acquire a covetable wife, two kids, and a beautiful home in the suburbs of New York City. When George’s murderous temper results in a shocking act of violence, both men are hurled into entirely new lives. May We Be Forgiven digs deeply into the near biblical intensity of fraternal relationships, our need to make sense of things, and our craving for connection. It is an unnerving tale of unexpected intimacies and of how one deeply fractured family might begin to put itself back together. Added: April 2015

Me Before You – Jojo Moyes

A New York Times bestseller—with more than one million copies sold—by the author of One Plus One and The Girl You Left Behind
They had nothing in common until love gave them everything to lose . . .

Louisa Clark is an ordinary girl living an exceedingly ordinary life—steady boyfriend, close family—who has barely been farther afield than their tiny village. She takes a badly needed job working for ex-Master of the Universe Will Traynor, who is wheelchair bound after an accident. Will has always lived a huge life—big deals, extreme sports, worldwide travel—and now he’s pretty sure he cannot live the way he is.

Will is acerbic, moody, bossy—but Lou refuses to treat him with kid gloves, and soon his happiness means more to her than she expected. When she learns that Will has shocking plans of his own, she sets out to show him that life is still worth living.

A Love Story for this generation, Me Before You brings to life two people who couldn’t have less in common—a heartbreakingly romantic novel that asks, What do you do when making the person you love happy also means breaking your own heart? Added: March 2014


Not long after Rhoda Janzen turned forty, her world turned upside down. It was bad enough that her husband of fifteen years left her for Bob, a guy he met on Gay.com, but that same week a car accident left her seriously injured. Needing a place to rest and pick up the pieces of their life, Rhoda packed her bags, crossed the country, and returned to her quirky Mennonite family’s home, where she was welcomed back with open arms and offbeat advice. (Rhoda’s good-natured mother suggested she get over her heartbreak by dating her first cousin—he owned a tractor, see.)

Written with wry humor and huge personality—and tackling faith, love, family, and aging—Mennonite in a Little Black Dress is an immensely moving memoir of healing, certain to touch anyone who has ever had to look homeward in order to move ahead. Added before December 2010

Mind Over Medicine - Lissa Rankin M.D.

A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

AS SEEN ON NATIONAL PUBLIC TELEVISION

We’ve been led to believe that when we get sick, it’s our genetics. Or it’s just bad luck—and doctors alone hold the keys to optimal health. Therefore when Dr. Lissa Rankin’s own health started to suffer, she turned to Western medical treatments, but what she found was that they not only failed to help; they made her worse. So she decided to take matters into her own hands.
Through her research, Dr. Rankin discovered that the health care she had been taught to practice was missing something crucial: a recognition of the body’s innate ability to self-repair and an appreciation for how we can control these self-healing mechanisms with the power of the mind. To better understand this phenomenon, she explored peer-reviewed medical literature and found evidence that the medical establishment had been proving that the body can heal itself for over 50 years.

Using extraordinary cases of spontaneous healing, Dr. Rankin shows how thoughts, feelings, and beliefs can alter the body’s physiology. She lays out the scientific data proving that loneliness, pessimism, depression, fear, and anxiety damage the body, while intimate relationships, gratitude, meditation, sex, and authentic self-expression flip on the body’s self-healing processes.

In this book, you’ll find a radical new wellness model based on Dr. Rankin’s scientific findings. Her unique six-step program will help you uncover where things might be out of whack in your life—spiritually, creatively, environmentally, nutritionally, and in your professional and personal relationships—so that you can create a customized treatment plan aimed at bolstering these health-promoting pieces of your life. You’ll learn how to listen to your body’s “whispers” before they turn to life-threatening “screams” that can be prevented with proper self-care, and you’ll learn how to trust your inner guidance when making decisions about your health and your life.

By the time you finish *Mind Over Medicine*, you’ll have made your own Diagnosis, written your own Prescription, and created a clear action plan designed to help you make your body ripe for miracles. Added: April 2015

*Mister Pip: A Novel* – Lloyd Jones

On a copper-rich tropical island shattered by war, where the teachers have fled with almost everyone else, only one white man chooses to stay behind: the eccentric Mr. Watts, object of much curiosity and scorn, who sweeps out the ruined schoolhouse and beings to read to the children each day from Charles Dickens’ classic *Great Expectations*.

So begins this rare, original story about the abiding strength that imagination, once ignited, can provide. As artillery echoes in the mountains, thirteen-year-old Matilda and her peers are riveted by the adventures of a young orphan named Pip in a city called London, a city whose contours soon become more real than their own blighted landscape. But in a ravaged place where even children are forced to live by their wits and daily survival is the only objective, imagination can be a dangerous thing. Added before December 2010

*Moonwalking with Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything* – Joshua Foer

The blockbuster phenomenon that charts an amazing journey of the mind while revolutionizing our concept of memory.
An instant bestseller that is poised to become a classic, *Moonwalking with Einstein* recounts Joshua Foer's yearlong quest to improve his memory under the tutelage of top "mental athletes." He draws on cutting-edge research, a surprising cultural history of remembering, and venerable tricks of the mentalist's trade to transform our understanding of human memory. From the United States Memory Championship to deep within the author's own mind, this is an electrifying work of journalism that reminds us that, in every way that matters, we are the sum of our memories. Added: July 2012

*Mornings in Jenin: A Novel – Susan Abulhawa*

In the refugee camp of Jenin, Amal is born into a world of loss—of home country, and heritage. Her Palestinian family was driven from their ancestral village by the newly formed state of Israel in 1948. As the villagers fled that day, Amal’s older brother, just a baby, was stolen away by an Israeli soldier. In Jenin, the adults subsist on memories, waiting to return to the homes they love. This is the story of one family’s struggle and survival through over sixty years of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, carrying us from Jenin to Jerusalem, to Lebanon and the anonymity of America. It is a story shaped by scars and fear, but also by the transformative intimacy of marriage and the fierce protectiveness of motherhood. *Mornings in Jenin* is haunting and heart-wrenching, a novel of vital contemporary importance. Lending human voices to the headlines, it forces us to take a fresh look at one of the defining political conflicts of our lifetimes. Added: March 2013

*The Mountain Lion – Jean Stafford*

Eight-year-old Molly and her ten-year-old brother Ralph are inseparable, in league with each other against the stodgy and stupid routines of school and daily life; against their prim mother and prissy older sisters; against the world of authority and perhaps the world itself. One summer they are sent from the genteel Los Angeles suburb that is their home to backcountry Colorado, where their uncle Claude has a ranch. There the children encounter an enchanting new world—savage, direct, beautiful, untamed—to which, over the next few years, they will return regularly, enjoying a delicious double life. And yet at the same time this other sphere, about which they are both so passionate, threatens to come between their passionate attachment to each other. Molly dreams of growing up to be a writer, yet clings ever more fiercely to the special world of childhood. Ralph for his part feels the growing challenge, and appeal, of impending manhood. Youth and innocence are hurtling toward a devastating end. Added: May 2011

*Mudbound: A Novel – Hillary Jordan*

In Jordan's prize-winning debut, prejudice takes many forms, both subtle and brutal. It is 1946, and city-bred Laura McAllan is trying to raise her children on her husband's
Mississippi Delta farm -- a place she finds foreign and frightening. In the midst of the family's struggles, two young men return from the war to work the land. Jamie McAllan, Laura's brother-in-law, is everything her husband is not -- charming, handsome, and haunted by his memories of combat. Ronsel Jackson, eldest son of the black sharecroppers who live on the McAllan farm, has come home with the shine of a war hero. But no matter his bravery in defense of his country, he is still considered less than a man in the Jim Crow South. It is the unlikely friendship of these brothers-in-arms that drives this powerful novel to its inexorable conclusion. Added: Jan 2012

*Murderer’s Daughters, The* – Randy Susan Meyers

Lulu and Merry's childhood was never ideal, but on the day before Lulu's tenth birthday their father drives them into a nightmare. He's always hungered for the love of the girls’ self-obsessed mother; after she throws him out, their troubles turn deadly.

For thirty years, the sisters try to make sense of what happened. Their imprisoned father is a specter in both their lives, shadowing every choice they make. One spends her life pretending he's dead, while the other feels compelled, by fear, by duty, to keep him close. Both dread the day his attempts to win parole may meet success.

A beautifully written, compulsively readable debut, *The Murderer's Daughters* is a testament to the power of family and the ties that bind us together and tear us apart. Added: February 2012

“N”

*Night Circus, The: A Novel* – Erin Mortgenstern

The circus arrives without warning. No announcements precede it. It is simply there, when yesterday it was not. Within the black-and-white striped canvas tents is an utterly unique experience full of breathtaking amazements. It is called *Le Cirque des Rêves*, and it is only open at night.

But behind the scenes, a fierce competition is underway: a duel between two young magicians, Celia and Marco, who have been trained since childhood expressly for this purpose by their mercurial instructors. Unbeknownst to them both, this is a game in which only one can be left standing. Despite the high stakes, Celia and Marco soon tumble headfirst into love, setting off a domino effect of dangerous consequences, and leaving the lives of everyone, from the performers to the patrons, hanging in the balance. Added: July 2012

*Night Strangers, The: A Novel* – Chris Bohjalian

In a dusty corner of a basement in a rambling Victorian house in northern New Hampshire, a door has long been sealed shut with 39 six-inch-long carriage bolts.
The home's new owners are Chip and Emily Linton and their twin ten-year-old daughters. Together they hope to rebuild their lives there after Chip, an airline pilot, has to ditch his 70-seat regional jet in Lake Champlain after double engine failure. Unlike the Miracle on the Hudson, however, most of the passengers aboard Flight 1611 die on impact or drown. The body count? Thirty-nine – a coincidence not lost on Chip when he discovers the number of bolts in that basement door. Meanwhile, Emily finds herself wondering about the women in this sparsely populated White Mountain village – self-proclaimed herbalists – and their interest in her fifth-grade daughters. Are the women mad? Or is it her husband, in the wake of the tragedy, whose grip on sanity has become desperately tenuous? Added: March 2013

*No Time Like the Present* – Nadine Gordimer

**A sharply observed new novel about post-apartheid South Africa from the Nobel Prize winner**

Nadine Gordimer is one of our most telling contemporary writers. With each new work, she attacks—with a clear-eyed fierceness, a lack of sentimentality, and a deep understanding of the darkest depths of the human soul—her eternal themes: the inextricable link between personal and communal history; the inescapable moral ambiguities of daily life; the political and racial tensions that persist in her homeland, South Africa. And in each new work is fresh evidence of her literary genius: in the sharpness of her psychological insights, the stark beauty of her language, the complexity of her characters, and the difficult choices with which they are faced.

In *No Time Like the Present*, Gordimer trains her keen eye on Steve and Jabulile, an interracial couple living in a newly, tentatively, free South Africa. They have a daughter, Sindiswa; they move to the suburbs; Steve becomes a lecturer at a university; Jabulile trains to become a lawyer; there is another child, a boy this time. There is nothing so extraordinary about their lives, and yet, in telling their story and the stories of their friends and families, Gordimer manages to capture the tortured, fragmented essence of a nation struggling to define itself post-apartheid.

The subject is contemporary, but Gordimer’s treatment is, as ever, timeless. In *No Time Like the Present*, she shows herself once again a master novelist, at the height of her prodigious powers. Added: July 2013

*Nobodies Album, The: A Novel* – Carolyn Parkhurst

Bestselling novelist Octavia Frost has just completed her latest book, a revolutionary novel in which she has rewritten the last chapters of all her previous books and removed clues about her personal life concealed within, especially the horrific tragedy that once befell her family.

But on her way to deliver the manuscript to her editor, Octavia learns that her estranged son, Milo, a famous musician, has been arrested for the murder of his girlfriend. Did she
drive her son to violence? Did Milo murder anyone at all? And what exactly happened all those years ago? As the novel builds to a stunning reveal, Octavia must consider how this story will come to a close. Added: July 2011

Nothing Was the Same: A Memoir – Kay Redfield Jamison

Kay Redfield Jamison, professor and writer, changed the way we think about moods and madness with her best-selling book, An Unquiet Mind. Now Jamison uses her characteristic honesty, wit, and eloquence to look back at her relationship with her husband, Richard Wyatt, a renowned scientist who died of cancer. Nothing Was the Same is a penetrating psychological study of grief viewed from deep inside the experience itself. Added: May 2011

“O”

Olive Kitteridge – Elizabeth Strout

At times stern, at other times patient, at time perceptive, at other times in sad denial, Olive Kitteridge, a retired schoolteacher, deplores the changes in her little town of Crosby, Maine and in the world at large, but she doesn’t always recognize the changes in those around her: a lounge musician haunted by a past romance; a former student who has lost the will to live; Olive’s own adult child, who feels tyrannized by her irrational sensitivities; and her husband, Henry, who finds his loyalty to his marriage both a blessing and a curse.

As the townspeople grapple with their problems, mild and dire, Olive is brought to a deeper understanding of herself and her life—sometimes painfully, but always with ruthless honesty. Olive Kitteridge offers profound insights into the human condition—its conflicts, its tragedies and joy, and the endurance it requires. Added before December 2010

Once Upon a River: A Novel – Bonnie Jo Campbell

From the National Book Award and National Book Critics Circle Award finalist—
an odyssey of a novel about a girl's search for love and identity.

Bonnie Jo Campbell has created an unforgettable heroine in sixteen-year-old Margo Crane, a beauty whose unflinching gaze and uncanny ability with a rifle have not made her life any easier. After the violent death of her father, in which she is complicit, Margo takes to the Stark River in her boat, with only a few supplies and a biography of Annie Oakley, in search of her vanished mother. But the river, Margo's childhood paradise, is a dangerous place for a young woman traveling alone, and she must be strong to survive, using her knowledge of the natural world and her ability to look unsparingly into the hearts of those around her. Her river odyssey through rural Michigan becomes a defining journey, one that leads her beyond self-preservation and to the decision of what price she is willing to pay for her choices. Added: March 2013
One Day – David Nicholls

It’s 1988 and Dexter Mayhew and Emma Morley have only just met. But after only one day together, they cannot stop thinking about one another. Over twenty years, snapshots of that relationship are revealed on the same day—July 15th—of each year. Dex and Em face squabbles and fights, hopes and missed opportunities, laughter and tears. And as the true meaning of this one crucial day is revealed, they must come to grips with the nature of love and life itself. Added: May 2011

100-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out the Window and Disappeared – Jonas Jonasson

The international publishing sensation—over six million copies sold worldwide! A reluctant centenarian much like Forrest Gump (if Gump were an explosives expert with a fondness for vodka) decides it’s not too late to start over . . .

After a long and eventful life, Allan Karlsson ends up in a nursing home, believing it to be his last stop. The only problem is that he's still in good health, and in one day, he turns 100. A big celebration is in the works, but Allan really isn't interested (and he'd like a bit more control over his vodka consumption). So he decides to escape. He climbs out the window in his slippers and embarks on a hilarious and entirely unexpected journey, involving, among other surprises, a suitcase stuffed with cash, some unpleasant criminals, a friendly hot-dog stand operator, and an elephant (not to mention a death by elephant).

It would be the adventure of a lifetime for anyone else, but Allan has a larger-than-life backstory: Not only has he witnessed some of the most important events of the twentieth century, but he has actually played a key role in them. Starting out in munitions as a boy, he somehow finds himself involved in many of the key explosions of the twentieth century and travels the world, sharing meals and more with everyone from Stalin, Churchill, and Truman to Mao, Franco, and de Gaulle. Quirky and utterly unique, The 100-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out the Window and Disappeared has charmed readers across the world. Added: April 2015

One Summer, America 1927 - Bill Bryson

A Chicago Tribune Noteworthy Book

A GoodReads Reader's Choice

The summer of 1927 began with Charles Lindbergh crossing the Atlantic. Meanwhile, Babe Ruth was closing in on the home run record. In Newark, New Jersey, Alvin “Shipwreck” Kelly sat atop a flagpole for twelve days, and in Chicago, the gangster Al Capone was tightening his grip on bootlegging. The first true “talking picture,” Al Jolson’s The Jazz Singer, was filmed, forever changing the motion picture industry.

All this and much, much more transpired in the year Americans attempted and accomplished outsized things—and when the twentieth century truly became the
American century. One Summer transforms it all into narrative nonfiction of the highest order. Added: April 2015

Orchardist, The: A Novel – Amanda Coplin

A Best Book of the Year

Washington Post • Seattle Times • The Oregonian • National Public Radio • Amazon • Kirkus Reviews • Publishers Weekly • The Daily Beast

An Indie Next Pick

Barnes & Noble Discover Award Winner

At the turn of the twentieth century, in a rural stretch of the Pacific Northwest, a reclusive orchardist, William Talmadge, tends to apples and apricots as if they were loved ones. A gentle man, he's found solace in the sweetness of the fruit he grows and the quiet, beating heart of the land he cultivates. One day, two teenage girls appear and steal his fruit at the market; they later return to the outskirts of his orchard to see the man who gave them no chase.

Feral, scared, and very pregnant, the girls take up on Talmadge's land and indulge in his deep reservoir of compassion. Just as the girls begin to trust him, men arrive in the orchard with guns, and the shattering tragedy that follows will set Talmadge on an irrevocable course not only to save and protect them but also to reconcile the ghosts of his own troubled past.

Transcribing America as it once was before railways and roads connected its corners, Amanda Coplin weaves a tapestry of solitary souls who come together in the wake of unspeakable cruelty and misfortune. She writes with breathtaking precision and empathy, and in The Orchardist she crafts an astonishing debut novel about a man who disrupts the lonely harmony of an ordered life when he opens his heart and lets the world in. Added: July 2013

Orphan Master's Son, The – Adam Johnson

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER


Pak Jun Do is the haunted son of a lost mother—a singer “stolen” to Pyongyang—and an influential father who runs a work camp for orphans. Superiors in the state soon recognize the boy’s loyalty and keen instincts. Considering himself “a humble citizen of the greatest nation in the world,” Jun Do rises in the ranks. He becomes a professional kidnapper who must navigate the shifting rules, arbitrary violence, and baffling demands of his Korean overlords in order to stay alive. Driven to the absolute limit of what any
human being could endure, he boldly takes on the treacherous role of rival to Kim Jong Il in an attempt to save the woman he loves, Sun Moon, a legendary actress “so pure, she didn’t know what starving people looked like.”

In this epic, critically acclaimed tour de force, Adam Johnson provides a riveting portrait of a world rife with hunger, corruption, and casual cruelty but also camaraderie, stolen moments of beauty, and love. Added: March 2014

*Orphan Train* – by Christina Baker Kline

Between 1854 and 1929, so-called orphan trains ran regularly from the cities of the East Coast to the farmlands of the Midwest, carrying thousands of abandoned children whose fates would be determined by pure luck. Would they be adopted by a kind and loving family, or would they face a childhood and adolescence of hard labor and servitude?

As a young Irish immigrant, Vivian Daly was one such child, sent by rail from New York City to an uncertain future a world away. Returning east later in life, Vivian leads a quiet, peaceful existence on the coast of Maine, the memories of her upbringing rendered a hazy blur. But in her attic, hidden in trunks, are vestiges of a turbulent past.

Seventeen-year-old Molly Ayer knows that a community-service position helping an elderly widow clean out her attic is the only thing keeping her out of juvenile hall. But as Molly helps Vivian sort through her keepsakes and possessions, she discovers that she and Vivian aren't as different as they appear. A Penobscot Indian who has spent her youth in and out of foster homes, Molly is also an outsider being raised by strangers, and she, too, has unanswered questions about the past.

Moving between contemporary Maine and Depression-era Minnesota, *Orphan Train* is a powerful tale of upheaval and resilience, second chances, and unexpected friendship. Added: July 2014

*Other Wes Moore, The* – Wes Moore

“The chilling truth is that his story could have been mine. The tragedy is that my story could have been his.”

Two kids named Wes Moore were born blocks apart within a year of each other. Both grew up fatherless in similar Baltimore neighborhoods and had difficult childhoods; both hung out on street corners with their crews; both ran into trouble with the police. How, then, did one grow up to be a Rhodes Scholar, decorated veteran, White House Fellow, and business leader, while the other ended up a convicted murderer serving a life sentence? Wes Moore, the author of this fascinating book, sets out to answer this profound question. In alternating narratives that take readers from heart-wrenching losses to moments of surprising redemption, *The Other Wes Moore* tells the story of a generation of boys trying to find their way in a hostile world. Added: July 2012
Outliers: The Story of Success – Malcolm Gladwell

In this stunning new book, Malcolm Gladwell takes us on an intellectual journey through the world of "outliers"—the best and the brightest, the most famous and the most successful. He asks the question: what makes high-achievers different? His answer is that we pay too much attention to what successful people are like, and too little attention to where they are from: that is, their culture, their family, their generation, and the idiosyncratic experiences of their upbringing. Along the way he explains the secrets of software billionaires, what it takes to be a great soccer player, why Asians are good at math, and what made the Beatles the greatest rock band. Brilliant and entertaining, Outliers is a landmark work that will simultaneously delight and illuminate. Added: February 2012

“P”

Paris Wife, The – Paula McLain

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

WINNER—BEST HISTORICAL FICTION—GOODREADS CHOICE AWARDS

NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY People • Chicago Tribune • NPR • The Philadelphia Inquirer • Kirkus Reviews • The Toronto Sun • BookPage

“A beautiful portrait of being in Paris in the glittering 1920s—as a wife and as one’s own woman.”—Entertainment Weekly

A deeply evocative story of ambition and betrayal, The Paris Wife captures the love affair between two unforgettable people: Ernest Hemingway and his wife Hadley.

Chicago, 1920: Hadley Richardson is a quiet twenty-eight-year-old who has all but given up on love and happiness—until she meets Ernest Hemingway. Following a whirlwind courtship and wedding, the pair set sail for Paris, where they become the golden couple in a lively and volatile group—the fabled “Lost Generation”—that includes Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, and F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Though deeply in love, the Hemingways are ill prepared for the hard-drinking, fast-living, and free-loving life of Jazz Age Paris. As Ernest struggles to find the voice that will earn him a place in history and pours himself into the novel that will become The Sun Also Rises, Hadley strives to hold on to her sense of self as her roles as wife, friend, and muse become more challenging. Eventually they find themselves facing the ultimate crisis of their marriage—a deception that will lead to the unraveling of everything they’ve fought so hard for.

A heartbreaking portrayal of love and torn loyalty, The Paris Wife is all the more
poignant because we know that, in the end, Hemingway wrote that he would rather have died than fallen in love with anyone but Hadley. Added: March 2014

**Partial History of Lost Causes, A** – Jennifer DuBois

In St. Petersburg, Russia, world chess champion Aleksandr Bezetov begins a quixotic quest: He launches a dissident presidential campaign against Vladimir Putin. He knows he will not win—and that he is risking his life in the process—but a deeper conviction propels him forward.

In Cambridge, Massachusetts, thirty-year-old English lecturer Irina Ellison struggles for a sense of purpose. Irina is certain she has inherited Huntington’s disease—the same cruel illness that ended her father’s life. When Irina finds an old, photocopied letter her father wrote to the young Aleksandr Bezetov, she makes a fateful decision. Her father asked the chess prodigy a profound question—How does one proceed in a lost cause?—but never received an adequate reply. Leaving everything behind, Irina travels to Russia to find Bezetov and get an answer for her father, and for herself. Added: July 2014

**Picture of Dorian Gray, The** – Oscar Wilde

Spellbound before his own portrait, Dorian Gray utters a fateful wish. In exchange for eternal youth he gives his soul, to be corrupted by the malign influence of his mentor, the aesthete and hedonist Lord Henry Wotton. The novel was met with moral outrage by contemporary critics who, dazzled perhaps by Wilde's brilliant style, may have confused the author with his creation, Lord Henry, to whom even Dorian protests, 'You cut life to pieces with your epigrams.' Encouraged by Lord Henry to substitute pleasure for goodness and art for reality, Dorian tries to watch impassively as he brings misery and death to those who love him. But the picture is watching him, and, made hideous by the marks of sin, it confronts Dorian with the reflection of his fall from grace, the silent bearer of what is in effect a devastating moral judgment. Added: March 2014

**Postmistress, The** – Sarah Blake

Those who carry the truth sometimes bear a terrible burden...

Filled with stunning parallels to today's world, *The Postmistress* is a sweeping novel about the loss of innocence of two extraordinary women—and of two countries torn apart by war.

On the eve of the United States's entrance into World War II in 1940, Iris James, the postmistress of Franklin, a small town on Cape Cod, does the unthinkable: She doesn't deliver a letter.

In London, American radio gal Frankie Bard is working with Edward R. Murrow, reporting on the Blitz. One night in a bomb shelter, she meets a doctor from Cape Cod with a letter in his pocket, a letter Frankie vows to deliver when she returns from
Germany and France, where she is to record the stories of war refugees desperately trying to escape. Added: July 2012

**Private Life: A Novel – Smiley**

From the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of A Thousand Acres: the powerful and deeply affecting story of one woman’s life, from post Civil-War Missouri to California in the midst of World War II.

When Margaret Mayfield marries Captain Andrew Jackson Jefferson Early at the age of twenty-seven, she narrowly avoids condemning herself to life as an old maid. Instead, knowing little about marriage and even less about her husband, she moves with Andrew to his naval base in California. Margaret stands by Andrew during tragedies both historical and personal, but as World War II approaches and the secrets of her husband’s scientific and academic past begin to surface, she is forced to reconsider the life she had so carefully constructed.

A riveting and nuanced novel of marriage and family, *Private Life* reveals the mysteries of intimacy and the anonymity that endures even in lives lived side by side. Added: July 2011

**“Q”**

**Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking – Susan Cain**

At least one-third of the people we know are introverts. They are the ones who prefer listening to speaking; who innovate and create but dislike self-promotion; who favor working on their own over working in teams. It is to introverts—Rosa Parks, Chopin, Dr. Seuss, Steve Wozniak—that we owe many of the great contributions to society. In *Quiet*, Susan Cain argues that we dramatically undervalue introverts and shows how much we lose in doing so. She charts the rise of the Extrovert Ideal throughout the twentieth century and explores how deeply it has come to permeate our culture. She also introduces us to successful introverts—from a witty, high-octane public speaker who recharges in solitude after his talks, to a record-breaking salesman who quietly taps into the power of questions. Passionately argued, superbly researched, and filled with indelible stories of real people, *Quiet* has the power to permanently change how we see introverts and, equally important, how they see themselves. Added: March 2014

**“R”**

**Room: A Novel – Emma Donoghue**

To five-year-old-Jack, Room is the world. . . . It's where he was born, it's where he and his Ma eat and sleep and play and learn. At night, his Ma shuts him safely in the wardrobe, where he is meant to be asleep when Old Nick visits.
Room is home to Jack, but to Ma it's the prison where she has been held for seven years. Through her fierce love for her son, she has created a life for him in this eleven-by-eleven-foot space. But with Jack's curiosity building alongside her own desperation, she knows that Room cannot contain either much longer.

Room is a tale at once shocking, riveting, exhilarating—a story of unconquerable love in harrowing circumstances, and of the diamond-hard bond between a mother and her child. Added: July 2011

Rosie Project, The – Graeme C. Simsion

The art of love is never a science: Meet Don Tillman, a brilliant yet socially inept professor of genetics, who’s decided it's time he found a wife. In the orderly, evidence-based manner with which Don approaches all things, he designs the Wife Project to find his perfect partner: a sixteen-page, scientifically valid survey to filter out the drinkers, the smokers, the late arrivers.

Rosie Jarman possesses all these qualities. Don easily disqualifies her as a candidate for The Wife Project (even if she is “quite intelligent for a barmaid”). But Don is intrigued by Rosie’s own quest to identify her biological father. When an unlikely relationship develops as they collaborate on The Father Project, Don is forced to confront the spontaneous whirlwind that is Rosie—and the realization that, despite your best scientific efforts, you don’t find love, it finds you. Added: July 2014

Rules of Civility – Amor Towles

The New York Times bestselling novel that "enchants on first reading and only improves on the second" (The Philadelphia Inquirer).

This sophisticated and entertaining first novel presents the story of a young woman whose life is on the brink of transformation. On the last night of 1937, twenty-five-year-old Katey Kontent is in a second-rate Greenwich Village jazz bar when Tinker Grey, a handsome banker, happens to sit down at the neighboring table. This chance encounter and its startling consequences propel Katey on a year-long journey into the upper echelons of New York society—where she will have little to rely upon other than a bracing wit and her own brand of cool nerve. With its sparkling depiction of New York’s social strata, its intricate imagery and themes, and its immensely appealing characters, Rules of Civility has won the hearts of readers and critics alike. Added: March 2013

“S”

Sag Harbor: A Novel – Colson Whitehead

From the award-winning author of John Henry Days and The Intuitionist: a tender, hilarious, and supremely original novel about coming-of-age in the ‘80s.
Benji Cooper is one of the few black students at an elite prep school in Manhattan. But every summer, Benji escapes to the Hamptons, to Sag Harbor, where a small community of African American professionals have built a world of their own.

The summer of ’85 won’t be without its usual trials and tribulations, of course. There will be complicated new handshakes to fumble through and state-of-the-art profanity to master. Benji will be tested by contests big and small, by his misshapen haircut (which seems to have a will of its own), by the New Coke Tragedy, and by his secret Lite FM addiction. But maybe, just maybe, this summer might be one for the ages. Added: May 2011

*Salvage the Bones: A Novel* – Jesmyn Ward

**Winner of the 2011 National Book Award**

A hurricane is building over the Gulf of Mexico, threatening the coastal town of Bois Sauvage, Mississippi, and Esch's father is growing concerned. A hard drinker, largely absent, he doesn't show concern for much else. Esch and her three brothers are stocking food, but there isn't much to save. Lately, Esch can't keep down what food she gets; she's fourteen and pregnant. Her brother Skeetah is sneaking scraps for his prized pitbull's new litter, dying one by one in the dirt. Meanwhile, brothers Randall and Junior try to stake their claim in a family long on child's play and short on parenting.

As the twelve days that make up the novel's framework yield to their dramatic conclusion, this unforgettable family—motherless children sacrificing for one another as they can, protecting and nurturing where love is scarce—pulls itself up to face another day. A big-hearted novel about familial love and community against all odds, and a wrenching look at the lonesome, brutal, and restrictive realities of rural poverty, *Salvage the Bones* is muscled with poetry, revelatory, and real. Added before December 2010

*Same Kind of Different as Me* – Ron Hall and Denver Moore

Meet Denver, a man raised under plantation-style slavery in Louisiana in the 1960s; a man who escaped, hopping a train to wander, homeless, for eighteen years on the streets of Dallas, Texas. No longer a slave, Denver's life was still hopeless—until God moved. First came a godly woman who prayed, listened, and obeyed. And then came her husband, Ron, an international arts dealer at home in a world of Armani-suited millionaires. And then they all came together.

*Same Kind of Different As Me* is the emotional tale of their story: a telling of pain and laughter, doubt and tears, dug out between the bondages of this earth and the free possibility of heaven. No reader or listener will ever forget it. Added: February 2012

*Saving CeeCee Honeycutt: A Novel* – Beth Hoffman
In Hoffman's charming debut, Cecelia Rose (CeeCee) Honeycutt tells the story of her tragic life and the strong women who stepped in to save her. At age 12, CeeCee realizes her mother, flouncing around Willoughby, OH, in prom dresses and matching shoes, is crazy and the town's laughingstock. Her father is never home, and nothing is going to change so CeeCee buries herself in books as an escape. But her true liberation comes after her mother's tragic death when great-aunt Tootie sweeps CeeCee off to Savannah. There, a group of powerful, independent women offer the young girl love, laughter, and a new chance at life. Readers who enjoy strong female characters will appreciate CeeCee, a survivor despite her heartbreaking childhood, and Aunt Tootie and her friends, all of them steel magnolias. VERDICT: Exemplifying Southern storytelling at its best, this coming-of-age novel is sure to be a hit with the book clubs that adopted Sue Monk Kidd's The Secret Life of Bees. Interestingly enough, both novels share the same editor. – Library Journal

Steel Magnolias meets The Help in this Southern debut novel sparkling with humor, heart, and feminine wisdom. Added: July 2012

Scent of Rain and Lightning, The: A Novel – Nancy Pickard

One beautiful summer afternoon, Jody Linder receives shocking news: Billy Crosby, the man convicted of murdering her father, is being released from prison and returning to the small town of Rose, Kansas. It has been twenty-three years since that stormy night when her father was shot and killed and her mother disappeared, presumed dead.

Now Billy Crosby is free, thanks to the efforts of his son, Collin, a lawyer who has spent most of his life trying to prove his father’s innocence.

As Jody revisits old wounds, startling truths emerge about her family’s tragic past. But even through struggle and hardship, she still dares to hope for a better future—and maybe even love. Added: July 2011

Secret Daughter – Shilpi Somaya Gowda

Somer’s life is everything she imagined it would be—she’s newly married and has started her career as a physician in San Francisco—until she makes the devastating discovery she never will be able to have children.

The same year in India, a poor mother makes the heartbreaking choice to save her newborn daughter’s life by giving her away. It is a decision that will haunt Kavita for the rest of her life, and cause a ripple effect that travels across the world and back again.

Asha, adopted out of a Mumbai orphanage, is the child that binds the destinies of these two women. We follow both families, invisibly connected until Asha’s journey of self-discovery leads her back to India.
Compulsively readable and deeply touching, *Secret Daughter* is a story of the unforeseen ways in which our choices and families affect our lives, and the indelible power of love in all its many forms. Added: May 2011

*Secret Keeper: A Novel* – Kate Morton

From the New York Times and #1 internationally bestselling author of *The Distant Hours, The Forgotten Garden*, and *The House at Riverton*, a spellbinding novel of family secrets, murder, and enduring love.

During a picnic at her family’s farm in the English countryside, sixteen-year-old Laurel Nicolson witnesses a shocking crime, a crime that challenges everything she knows about her adored mother, Dorothy. Now, fifty years later, Laurel and her sisters are meeting at the farm to celebrate Dorothy’s ninetieth birthday. Realizing that this is her last chance to discover the truth about that long-ago day, Laurel searches for answers that can only be found in Dorothy’s past. Clue by clue, she traces a secret history of three strangers from vastly different worlds thrown together in war-torn London—Dorothy, Vivien, and Jimmy—whose lives are forever after entwined. A gripping story of deception and passion, *The Secret Keeper* will keep you enthralled to the last page. Added: August 2013

*Secret Kept*, A – Tatiana de Rosnay

Antoine Rey thought he had the perfect surprise for his sister Mélanie’s birthday: a weekend by the sea at Noirmoutier Island, where the pair spent many happy childhood summers playing on the beach. It had been too long, Antoine thought, since they’d returned to the island—over thirty years, since their mother died and the family holidays ceased. But the island’s haunting beauty triggers more than happy memories; it reminds Mélanie of something unexpected and deeply disturbing about their last island summer. When, on the drive home to Paris, she finally summons the courage to reveal what she knows to Antoine, her emotions overcome her and she loses control of the car.

By turns thrilling, seductive and destructive, with a lingering effect that is bittersweet and redeeming, *A Secret Kept* is the story of a modern family, the invisible ties that hold it together, and the impact it has throughout life. Added: February 2012

*Secrets of Eden: A Novel* – Chris Bohjalian

“There,” says Alice Hayward to Reverend Stephen Drew, just after her baptism and just before she is killed by her husband, who then turns the gun on himself. Stephen, tortured by the cryptic finality of that short utterance, feels his faith in God slipping away. He is saved from despair by meeting Heather Laurent, the author of wildly successful inspirational books about angels. Heather offers herself as a mentor to Alice’s daughter, Katie, and a shoulder for Stephen. But then the state’s attorney begins to suspect that Alice’s husband may not have killed himself—and discovers that Alice had secrets only her minister knew. Added: May 2011
Sense of an Ending, The – Julian Barnes

Winner of the 2011 Man Booker Prize

A novel so compelling that it begs to be read in a single setting, The Sense of an Ending has the psychological and emotional depth and sophistication of Henry James at his best, and is a stunning new chapter in Julian Barnes's oeuvre.

This intense novel follows Tony Webster, a middle-aged man, as he contends with a past he never thought much about—until his closest childhood friends return with a vengeance: one of them from the grave, another maddeningly present. Tony thought he left this all behind as he built a life for himself, and his career has provided him with a secure retirement and an amicable relationship with his ex-wife and daughter, who now has a family of her own. But when he is presented with a mysterious legacy, he is forced to revise his estimation of his own nature and place in the world. Added: July 2012

Shanghai Girls: A Novel – Lisa See

In 1937 Shanghai—the Paris of Asia—twenty-one-year-old Pearl Chin and her younger sister, May, are having the time of their lives. Both are beautiful, modern, and carefree—until the day their father tells them that he has gambled away their wealth. To repay his debts, he must sell the girls as wives to suitors who have traveled from Los Angeles to find Chinese brides. As Japanese bombs fall on their beloved city, Pearl and May set out on the journey of a lifetime, from the Chinese countryside to the shores of America. Though inseparable best friends, the sisters also harbor petty jealousies and rivalries. Along the way they make terrible sacrifices, face impossible choices, and confront a devastating, life-changing secret, but through it all the two heroines of this astounding new novel hold fast to who they are—Shanghai girls. Added: July 2011

Shoemaker’s Wife, The: A Novel – Adriana Trigiani

The fateful first meeting of Enza and Ciro takes place amid the haunting majesty of the Italian Alps at the turn of the last century. Still teenagers, they are separated when Ciro is banished from his village and sent to hide in New York's Little Italy, apprenticed to a shoemaker, leaving a bereft Enza behind. But when her own family faces disaster, she, too, is forced to emigrate to America. Though destiny will reunite the star-crossed lovers, it will, just as abruptly, separate them once again—sending Ciro off to serve in World War I, while Enza is drawn into the glamorous world of the opera . . . and into the life of the international singing sensation Enrico Caruso. Still, Enza and Ciro have been touched by fate—and, ultimately, the power of their love will change their lives forever.

Inspired by the author's own family history, The Shoemaker's Wife is the novel Adriana Trigiani was born to write. Added: March 2013

Signature of All Things, The – Elizabeth Gilbert
A glorious, sweeping novel of desire, ambition, and the thirst for knowledge, from the #1 New York Times bestselling author of Eat, Pray, Love and Committed

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. Born in 1800, Henry’s brilliant daughter, Alma (who inherits both her father’s money and his mind), ultimately becomes a botanist of considerable gifts herself. As Alma’s research takes her deeper into the mysteries of evolution, she falls in love with a man named Ambrose Pike who makes incomparable paintings of orchids and who draws her in the exact opposite direction—into the realm of the spiritual, the divine, and the magical. Alma is a clear-minded scientist; Ambrose a utopian artist—but what unites this unlikely couple is a desperate need to understand the workings of this world and the mechanisms behind all life.

Exquisitely researched and told at a galloping pace, The Signature of All Things soars across the globe—from London to Peru to Philadelphia to Tahiti to Amsterdam, and beyond. Along the way, the story is peopled with unforgettable characters: missionaries, abolitionists, adventurers, astronomers, sea captains, geniuses, and the quite mad. But most memorable of all, it is the story of Alma Whittaker, who—born in the Age of Enlightenment, but living well into the Industrial Revolution—bears witness to that extraordinary moment in human history when all the old assumptions about science, religion, commerce, and class were exploding into dangerous new ideas. Written in the bold, questing spirit of that singular time, Gilbert’s wise, deep, and spellbinding tale is certain to capture the hearts and minds of readers. Added: July 2014

Silent Wife, The – A.S. Harrison

"This summer's Gone Girl – I gobbled it down in one sitting." - Anne Lamott, People

Jodi and Todd are at a bad place in their marriage. Much is at stake, including the affluent life they lead in their beautiful waterfront condo in Chicago, as she, the killer, and he, the victim, rush haplessly toward the main event. He is a committed cheater. She lives and breathes denial. He exists in dual worlds. She likes to settle scores. He decides to play for keeps. She has nothing left to lose. Told in alternating voices, The Silent Wife is about a marriage in the throes of dissolution, a couple headed for catastrophe, concessions that can’t be made, and promises that won’t be kept. Expertly plotted and reminiscent of Gone Girl and These Things Hidden, The Silent Wife ensnares the reader from page one and does not let go. Added: March 2014

Sing You Home: A Novel – Jodi Picoult

Every life has a soundtrack. All you have to do is listen.
Music has set the tone for most of Zoe Baxter’s life. There’s the melody that reminds her of the summer she spent rubbing baby oil on her stomach in pursuit of the perfect tan. A dance beat that makes her think of using a fake ID to slip into a nightclub. A dirge that marked the years she spent trying to get pregnant.

In the aftermath of a series of personal tragedies, Zoe throws herself into her career as a music therapist. When an unexpected friendship slowly blossoms into love, she makes plans for a new life, but to her shock and inevitable rage, some people—even those she loves and trusts most—don’t want that to happen.

Sing You Home is about identity, love, marriage, and parenthood. It’s about people wanting to do the right thing for the greater good, even as they work to fulfill their own personal desires and dreams. And it’s about what happens when the outside world brutally calls into question the very thing closest to our hearts: family. Added: February 2012

State of Wonder – Ann Patchett

In a narrative replete with poison arrows, devouring snakes, scientific miracles, and spiritual transformations, State of Wonder presents a world of stunning surprise and danger, rich in emotional resonance and moral complexity.

As Dr. Marina Singh embarks upon an uncertain odyssey into the insect-infested Amazon, she will be forced to surrender herself to the lush but forbidding world that awaits within the jungle. Charged with finding her former mentor Dr. Annick Swenson, a researcher who has disappeared while working on a valuable new drug, she will have to confront her own memories of tragedy and sacrifice as she journeys into the unforgiving heart of darkness. Stirring and luminous, State of Wonder is a world unto itself, where unlikely beauty stands beside unimaginable loss beneath the rain forest's jeweled canopy. Added: June 2012

Stealing Buddha's Dinner: A Memoir – Bich Minh Nguyen

As a Vietnamese girl coming of age in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Nguyen is filled with a rapacious hunger for American identity, and in the pre-PC-era Midwest (where the Jennifers and Tiffanys reign supreme), the desire to belong transmutes into a passion for American food. More exotic- seeming than her Buddhist grandmother's traditional specialties, the campy, preservative-filled "delicacies" of mainstream America capture her imagination.

In Stealing Buddha's Dinner, the glossy branded allure of Pringles, Kit Kats, and Toll House Cookies becomes an ingenious metaphor for Nguyen's struggle to become a "real" American, a distinction that brings with it the dream of the perfect school lunch, burgers and Jell- O for dinner, and a visit from the Kool-Aid man. Vivid and viscerally powerful, this remarkable memoir about growing up in the 1980s introduces an original new
Still Alice: A Novel – Lisa Genova

Alice Howland is proud of the life she worked so hard to build. At fifty years old, she’s a cognitive psychology professor at Harvard and a world-renowned expert in linguistics with a successful husband and three grown children. When she becomes increasingly disoriented and forgetful, a tragic diagnosis changes her life—and her relationship with her family and the world—forever.

At once beautiful and terrifying, Still Alice is a moving and vivid depiction of life with early-onset Alzheimer’s disease that is as compelling as A Beautiful Mind and as unforgettable as Ordinary People.

Storied Life of A.J. Fikry, The - Gabrielle Zevin

“Funny, tender, and moving, The Storied Life of A. J. Fikry reminds us all exactly why we read and why we love.”

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.

“This novel has humor, romance, a touch of suspense, but most of all love--love of books and bookish people and, really, all of humanity in its imperfect glory.” —Eowyn Ivey, author of The Snow Child

“Marvelously optimistic about the future of books and bookstores and the people who love both.” —The Washington Post

“You won’t want it to end.” —Family Circle

“A natural for book groups.” —Richmond Times-Dispatch

“A reader’s paradise of the first order.” —The Buffalo News

“A fun, page-turning delight.” —Minneapolis Star Tribune

“Captures the joy of connecting people and books . . . Irresistible.” —Booklist

“A wonderful, moving, endearing story of redemption and transformation that will sing in your heart for a very, very long time.” —Garth Stein, author of The Art of Racing in the Rain
“Readers who delighted in *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*, *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*, and *Letters from Skye* will be equally captivated by this novel.” — *Library Journal*, starred review. Added: April 2015

**Story of Edgar Sawtelle, The: A Novel** – David Wroblewski

Born mute, speaking only in sign, Edgar Sawtelle leads an idyllic life with his parents on their farm in remote northern Wisconsin. For generations, the Sawtelles have raised and trained a fictional breed of dog whose thoughtful companionship is epitomized by Almondine, Edgar's lifelong friend and ally. But with the unexpected return of Claude, Edgar's paternal uncle, turmoil consumes the Sawtelles' once peaceful home. When Edgar's father dies suddenly, Claude insinuates himself into the life of the farm--and into Edgar's mother's affections.

Grief-stricken and bewildered, Edgar tries to prove Claude played a role in his father's death, but his plan backfires--spectacularly. Forced to flee into the vast wilderness lying beyond the farm, Edgar comes of age in the wild, fighting for his survival and that of the three yearling dogs that follow him. But his need to face his father's murderer and his devotion to the Sawtelle dogs turn Edgar ever homeward.

David Wroblewski is a master storyteller, and his breathtaking scenes--the elemental north woods, the sweep of seasons, an iconic American barn, a fateful vision rendered in the falling rain--create a riveting family saga, a brilliant exploration of the limits of language, and a compulsively readable modern classic. Added: May 2011

**Storyteller, The** – Jodi Picoult

Some stories live forever . . .

Sage Singer is a baker. She works through the night, preparing the day’s breads and pastries, trying to escape a reality of loneliness, bad memories, and the shadow of her mother’s death. When Josef Weber, an elderly man in Sage’s grief support group, begins stopping by the bakery, they strike up an unlikely friendship. Despite their differences, they see in each other the hidden scars that others can’t, and they become companions.

Everything changes on the day that Josef confesses a long-buried and shameful secret—one that nobody else in town would ever suspect—and asks Sage for an extraordinary favor. If she says yes, she faces not only moral repercussions, but potentially legal ones as well. With her own identity suddenly challenged, and the integrity of the closest friend she’s ever had clouded, Sage begins to question the assumptions and expectations she’s made about her life and her family. When does a moral choice become a moral imperative? And where does one draw the line between punishment and justice, forgiveness and mercy?
In this searingly honest novel, Jodi Picoult gracefully explores the lengths we will go in order to protect our families and to keep the past from dictating the future. Added: March 2014

*Submission, The* – Amy Waldman

- A New York Times Book Review Notable Book of the Year
- An Entertainment Weekly Best Novel of the Year
- An NPR Top Ten Novel of the Year
- A Washington Post Notable Book of the Year
- Esquire Book of the Year

A jury chooses a memorial for the victims of a devastating terrorist attack on Manhattan, only to learn that the anonymous designer is an American Muslim — an enigmatic architect named Mohammad Khan. His selection reverberates across a divided, traumatized country and, more intimately, through individual lives. Claire Burwell, the sole widow on the jury, becomes Khan's fiercest defender. But when the news of his selection becomes public, she comes under pressure from outraged family members and into collision with hungry journalists, opportunistic politicians, and even Khan himself. A story of clashing convictions and emotions, and a cunning satire of political ideals, *The Submission* is a resonant novel for our times. July 2013

*Summertime: A Novel* – J.M. Coetzee

Nobel Prize-winning author J. M. Coetzee’s new work of fiction follows a young biographer as he works on a book about the late writer, John Coetzee. The biographer embarks on a series of interviews with people who were important to Coetzee during the period when he was “finding his feet as a writer”—in his thirties and sharing a run-down cottage in the suburbs of Cape Town with his widowed father. Their testimonies create an image of an awkward, reserved and bookish young man who finds it difficult to connect to the people around him. Innovative, incisive, elegant, and often surprisingly funny, *Summertime* allows one of the most revered writers of our time to imagine his own life with a critical and unsparing eye. Added: July 2011

*Sweet Tooth: A Novel* - Ian McEwan

- A New York Times Notable Book
- One of the Best Books of the Year: San Francisco Chronicle, Seattle Times

Cambridge student Serena Frome's beauty and intelligence make her the ideal recruit for MI5. The year is 1972. The Cold War is far from over. England's legendary intelligence agency is determined to manipulate the cultural conversation by funding writers whose politics align with those of the government. The operation is code named "Sweet Tooth." Serena, a compulsive reader of novels, is the perfect candidate to infiltrate the literary
circle of a promising young writer named Tom Haley. At first, she loves the stories. Then
she begins to love the man. How long can she conceal her undercover life? To answer
that question, Serena must abandon the first rule of espionage: trust no one. Added: July
2013

“T”

Tale for the Time Being, A - Ruth Ozeki

A brilliant, unforgettable novel from bestselling author Ruth Ozeki—shortlisted for
the Booker Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award

Winner of the 2013 Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Fiction

“A time being is someone who lives in time, and that means you, and me, and every one
of us who is, or was, or ever will be.”

In Tokyo, sixteen-year-old Nao has decided there’s only one escape from her aching
loneliness and her classmates’ bullying. But before she ends it all, Nao first plans to
document the life of her great grandmother, a Buddhist nun who’s lived more than a
century. A diary is Nao’s only solace—and will touch lives in ways she can scarcely
imagine. Across the Pacific, we meet Ruth, a novelist living on a remote island who
discovers a collection of artifacts washed ashore in a Hello Kitty lunchbox—possibly
debris from the devastating 2011 tsunami. As the mystery of its contents unfolds, Ruth is
pulled into the past, into Nao’s drama and her unknown fate, and forward into her own
future.

Full of Ozeki’s signature humor and deeply engaged with the relationship between writer
and reader, past and present, fact and fiction, quantum physics, history, and myth, A Tale
for the Time Being is a brilliantly inventive, beguiling story of our shared humanity and
the search for home. Added: April 2015

Teacher Man: A Memoir – Frank McCourt

Since the publication of Angela's Ashes nearly a decade ago, Frank McCourt has become
one of literature's superstars. He is the recipient of the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book
Critics Circle Award, the American Booksellers Association ABBY Award, and the Los
Angeles Times Book Award. More than four million copies of Angela's Ashes are now in
print; its sequel, 'Tis, has sold more than two million in America; and the books have
been published in more than twenty countries and languages.

In Teacher Man Frank turns his attention to the subject that he most often talks about in
his lectures-teaching: why it's so important, why it's so undervalued. He describes his
own coming of age-as a teacher, a storyteller, and, ultimately, a writer. He is alternately
humble and mischievous, downtrodden and rebellious. He instinctively identifies with the
underdog; his sympathies lie more with students than administrators. It takes him almost
fifteen years to find his voice in the classroom, but what's clear in the thrilling pages of Teacher Man is that from the beginning he seizes and holds his students' attention by telling them memorable stories. And then it takes him another fifteen years to find his voice on the page.

With all the wit, charm, irreverence, and poignancy that made Angela's Ashes and 'Tis so universally beloved, Frank McCourt tells his most exhilarating story yet—how he became a writer. Added before December 2010

*Telegraph Avenue* – Michael Chabon

As the summer of 2004 draws to a close, Archy Stallings and Nat Jaffe are still hanging in there—longtime friends, bandmates, and co-regents of Brokeland Records, a kingdom of used vinyl located in the borderlands of Berkeley and Oakland. Their wives, Gwen Shanks and Aviva Roth-Jaffe, are the Berkeley Birth Partners, a pair of semi-legendary midwives who have welcomed more than a thousand newly minted citizens into the dented utopia at whose heart—half tavern, half temple—stands Brokeland.

When ex–NFL quarterback Gibson Goode, the fifth-richest black man in America, announces plans to build his latest Dogpile megastore on a nearby stretch of Telegraph Avenue, Nat and Archy fear it means certain doom for their vulnerable little enterprise. Meanwhile, Aviva and Gwen also find themselves caught up in a battle for their professional existence, one that tests the limits of their friendship. Adding another layer of complications to the couples' already tangled lives is the surprise appearance of Titus Joyner, the teenage son Archy has never acknowledged and the love of fifteen-year-old Julius Jaffe's life. Added: October 2013

*Tell the Wolves I’m Home* – Carol Rifka Brunt

**NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY**
*The Wall Street Journal • O: The Oprah Magazine • BookPage • Kirkus Reviews • Booklist • School Library Journal*

In this striking literary debut, Carol Rifka Brunt unfolds a moving story of love, grief, and renewal as two lonely people become the unlikeliest of friends and find that sometimes you don’t know you’ve lost someone until you’ve found them.

**NATIONAL BESTSELLER • NAMED A FAVORITE READ BY GILLIAN FLYNN • WINNER OF THE ALEX AWARD**

1987. There’s only one person who has ever truly understood fourteen-year-old June Elbus, and that’s her uncle, the renowned painter Finn Weiss. Shy at school and distant from her older sister, June can only be herself in Finn’s company; he is her godfather, confidant, and best friend. So when he dies, far too young, of a mysterious illness her mother can barely speak about, June’s world is turned upside down. But Finn’s death brings a surprise acquaintance into June’s life—someone who will help her to heal, and
to question what she thinks she knows about Finn, her family, and even her own heart.

At Finn’s funeral, June notices a strange man lingering just beyond the crowd. A few days later, she receives a package in the mail. Inside is a beautiful teapot she recognizes from Finn’s apartment, and a note from Toby, the stranger, asking for an opportunity to meet. As the two begin to spend time together, June realizes she’s not the only one who misses Finn, and if she can bring herself to trust this unexpected friend, he just might be the one she needs the most.

An emotionally charged coming-of-age novel, Tell the Wolves I’m Home is a tender story of love lost and found, an unforgettable portrait of the way compassion can make us whole again. Added: March 2014

Things They Carried, The: A Work of Fiction – Tim O’Brien

One of the first questions people ask about The Things They Carried is this: Is it a novel, or a collection of short stories? The title page refers to the book simply as "a work of fiction," defying the conscientious reader's need to categorize this masterpiece. It is both: a collection of interrelated short pieces which ultimately reads with the dramatic force and tension of a novel. Yet each one of the twenty-two short pieces is written with such care, emotional content, and prosaic precision that it could stand on its own.

The Things They Carried depicts the men of Alpha Company: Jimmy Cross, Henry Dobbins, Rat Kiley, Mitchell Sanders, Norman Bowker, Kiowa, and of course, the character Tim O'Brien who has survived his tour in Vietnam to become a father and writer at the age of forty-three. They battle the enemy (or maybe more the idea of the enemy), and occasionally each other. In their relationships we see their isolation and loneliness, their rage and fear. They miss their families, their girlfriends and buddies; they miss the lives they left back home. Yet they find sympathy and kindness for strangers (the old man who leads them unscathed through the mine field, the girl who grieves while she dances), and love for each other, because in Vietnam they are the only family they have. We hear the voices of the men and build images upon their dialogue. The way they tell stories about others, we hear them telling stories about themselves.

With the creative verve of the greatest fiction and the intimacy of a searing autobiography, The Things They Carried is a testament to the men who risked their lives in America's most controversial war. It is also a mirror held up to the frailty of humanity. Ultimately The Things They Carried and its myriad protagonists call to order the courage, determination, and luck we all need to survive.

In 1979, Tim O'Brien's Going After Cacciato -- a novel about the Vietnam War -- won the National Book Award. In this, his second work of fiction about Vietnam, O'Brien's unique artistic vision is again clearly demonstrated. Neither a novel nor a short story collection, it is an arc of fictional episodes, taking place in the childhoods of its characters, in the jungles of Vietnam and back home in America two decades later. Added before December 2010
Thirteenth Tale, The: A Novel – Diane Setterfield

Sometimes, when you open the door to the past, what you confront is your destiny.

Reclusive author Vida Winter, famous for her collection of twelve enchanting stories, has spent the past six decades penning a series of alternate lives for herself. Now old and ailing, she is ready to reveal the truth about her extraordinary existence and the violent and tragic past she has kept secret for so long. Calling on Margaret Lea, a young biographer troubled by her own painful history, Vida disinters the life she meant to bury for good. Margaret is mesmerized by the author's tale of gothic strangeness — featuring the beautiful and willful Isabelle, the feral twins Adeline and Emmeline, a ghost, a governess, a topiary garden and a devastating fire. Together, Margaret and Vida confront the ghosts that have haunted them while becoming, finally, transformed by the truth themselves. Added before December 2010

Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet, The: A Novel – David Mitchell

The year is 1799, the place Dejima in Nagasaki Harbor, the Japanese Empire’s single port and sole window onto the world, designed to keep the West at bay. To this place of devious merchants, deceitful interpreters, and costly courtesans comes Jacob de Zoet, a devout young clerk who has five years in the East to earn a fortune of sufficient size to win the hand of his wealthy fiancée back in Holland. But Jacob’s original intentions are eclipsed after a chance encounter with Orito Aibagawa, the disfigured midwife to the city’s powerful magistrate. The borders between propriety, profit, and pleasure blur until Jacob finds his vision clouded, one rash promise made and then fatefully broken—the consequences of which will extend beyond Jacob’s worst imaginings. Added: July 2011

Thousand Splendid Suns, A – Khaled Hosseini

A breathtaking story set against the volatile events of Afghanistan's last 30 years—from the Soviet invasion to post-Taliban rebuilding—that puts the violence, fear, hope and faith of this country in intimate, human terms. Added before December 2010

Three Weissmanns of Westport, The – Cathleen Schine


Betty Weissmann has just been dumped by her husband of forty-eight years. Exiled from her elegant New York apartment by her husband’s mistress, she and her two middle-aged daughters, Miranda and Annie, regroup in a run-down Westport, Connecticut, beach cottage. In Schine’s playful and devoted homage to Jane Austen’s Sense and Sensibility, the impulsive sister is Miranda, a literary agent entangled in a series of scandals, and the more pragmatic sister is Annie, a library director, who feels compelled to move in and watch over her capricious mother and sister. Schine’s witty, wonderful novel “is simply full of pleasure: the pleasure of reading, the pleasure of Austen, and the pleasure that the
characters so rightly and humorously pursue….An absolute triumph” (The Cleveland Plain Dealer). Added: July 2011

*Tiger’s Wife, The: A Novel – Tea Obreht*

**National Book Award Finalist • New York Times Bestseller**

Named one of the best books of the year by *The Wall Street Journal • O: The Oprah Magazine • The Economist • Vogue • Slate • Chicago Tribune • The Seattle Times • Dayton Daily News • Publishers Weekly • Alan Cheuse, NPR's All Things Considered*

Selected one of the top 10 books of the year by *Michiko Kakutani, The New York Times • Entertainment Weekly • The Christian Science Monitor • The Kansas City Star • Library Journal*

In a Balkan country mending from war, Natalia, a young doctor, is compelled to unravel the mysterious circumstances surrounding her beloved grandfather’s recent death. Searching for clues, she turns to his worn copy of The Jungle Book and the stories he told her of his encounters over the years with “the deathless man.” But most extraordinary of all is the story her grandfather never told her—the legend of the tiger’s wife. Added: February 2012

*Time Traveler’s Wife, The – Audrey Niffenegger*

Audrey Niffenegger's innovative debut, The Time Traveler's Wife, is the story of Clare, a beautiful art student, and Henry, an adventuresome librarian, who have known each other since Clare was six and Henry was thirty-six, and were married when Clare was twenty-three and Henry thirty-one. Impossible but true, because Henry is one of the first people diagnosed with Chrono-Displacement Disorder: periodically his genetic clock resets and he finds himself misplaced in time, pulled to moments of emotional gravity in his life, past and future. His disappearances are spontaneous, his experiences unpredictable, alternately harrowing and amusing.

The Time Traveler's Wife depicts the effects of time travel on Henry and Clare's marriage and their passionate love for each other as the story unfolds from both points of view. Clare and Henry attempt to live normal lives, pursuing familiar goals--steady jobs, good friends, children of their own. All of this is threatened by something they can neither prevent nor control, making their story intensely moving and entirely unforgettable. Added before December 2010

*To the End of June: The Intimate Life of American Foster Care - Cris Beam*

"A triumph of narrative reporting and storytelling. . . . Beam gives [foster children] a much-needed voice and does what too many adults in the foster-care system can't, or won't: She advocates for them." -- New York Times Book Review
Who are the children of foster care? What, as a country, do we owe them? Cris Beam, a foster mother herself, spent five years immersed in the world of foster care, looking into these questions and tracing firsthand stories. The result is *To the End of June*, an unforgettable portrait that takes us deep inside the lives of foster children at the critical points in their search for a stable, loving family.

The book mirrors the life cycle of a foster child and so begins with the removal of babies and kids from birth families. There’s a teenage birth mother in Texas who signs away her parental rights on a napkin only to later reconsider, crushing the hopes of her baby’s adoptive parents. Beam then paints an unprecedented portrait of the intricacies of growing up in the system—the back-and-forth with agencies, the shuffling between pre-adoptive homes and group homes, the emotionally charged tug of prospective adoptive parents and the fundamental pull of birth parents. And then what happens as these system-reared kids become adults? Beam closely follows a group of teenagers in New York who are grappling with what aging out will mean for them and meets a woman who has parented eleven kids from the system, almost all over the age of eighteen, and all still in desperate need of a sense of home and belonging.

Focusing intensely on a few foster families who are deeply invested in the system’s success, *To the End of June* is essential for humanizing and challenging a broken system, while at the same time it is a tribute to resiliency and offers hope for real change. Added: April 2015

*Tower, the Zoo, and the Tortoise, The* – Julia Stuart

Set in the popular tourist attraction in present-day London, The Tower, the Zoo, and the Tortoise is an exquisite story of love, loss, and a one-hundred-eighty-one-year-old pet. Balthazar Jones has lived and worked in the Tower of London for the past eight years. Being a Beefeater is no easy job, and when Balthazar is tasked with setting up an elaborate menagerie of the many exotic animals gifted to the Queen, life at the Tower gets all the more interesting. Penguins escape, giraffes go missing, and the Komodo dragon sends innocent tourists running for their lives. Still, that chaos is nothing compared to what happens when his wife, Hebe, makes a surprise announcement. What’s a Beefeater to do? Added: October 2011

*Twelve Tribes of Hattie, The* – Ayana Mathis

* A New York Times Notable Book
* An NPR Best Book of the Year
* A Buzzfeed Best Book of the Year

In 1923, fifteen-year-old Hattie Shepherd, swept up by the tides of the Great Migration, flees Georgia and heads north. Full of hope, she settles in Philadelphia to build a better life. Instead she marries a man who will bring her nothing but disappointment, and watches helplessly as her firstborn twins are lost to an illness that a few pennies could
have prevented. Hattie gives birth to nine more children, whom she raises with grit, mettle, and not an ounce of the tenderness they crave. She vows to prepare them to meet a world that will not be kind. Their lives, captured here in twelve luminous threads, tell the story of a mother’s monumental courage—and a nation's tumultuous journey. Added: March 2014

“U”

Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption - Laura Hillenbrand

On a May afternoon in 1943, an Army Air Forces bomber crashed into the Pacific Ocean and disappeared, leaving only a spray of debris and a slick of oil, gasoline, and blood. Then, on the ocean surface, a face appeared. It was that of a young lieutenant, the plane's bombardier, who was struggling to a life raft. So began one of the most extraordinary odysseys of the Second World War.

The lieutenant's name was Louis Zamperini. In boyhood, he'd been a cunning and incorrigible delinquent. As a teenager, he had channeled his defiance into running, discovering a prodigious talent that had carried him to the Berlin Olympics. But when war had come, the athlete had become an airman, embarking on a journey that led to his doomed flight, a tiny raft, and a drift into the unknown.

Ahead of Zamperini lay thousands of miles of open ocean, leaping sharks, a foundering raft, thirst and starvation, enemy aircraft, and, beyond, a trial even greater. His fate, whether triumph or tragedy, would be suspended on the fraying wire of his will. Unbroken is a testament to the resilience of the human mind, body, and spirit. Added: April 2015

Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry, The: A Novel – Rachel Joyce

“[Rachel] Joyce’s beguiling debut is [a] modest-seeming story of ‘ordinary’ English lives that thralls and moves you as it unfolds.”—People (four stars)

Meet Harold Fry, recently retired. He lives in a small English village with his wife, Maureen, who seems irritated by almost everything he does. Little differentiates one day from the next. Then one morning a letter arrives, addressed to Harold in a shaky scrawl, from a woman he hasn’t heard from in twenty years. Queenie Hennessy is in hospice and is writing to say goodbye. But before Harold mails off a quick reply, a chance encounter convinces him that he absolutely must deliver his message to Queenie in person. In his yachting shoes and light coat, Harold Fry embarks on an urgent quest. Determined to walk six hundred miles to the hospice, Harold believes that as long as he walks, Queenie will live. Added: July 2013

Unorthodox: The Scandalous Rejection of My Hasidic Roots – Deborah Feldman
In the tradition of Ayaan Hirsi Ali’s *Infidel* and Carolyn Jessop’s *Escape, Unorthodox* is a captivating story about a young woman determined to live her own life at any cost.

The Satmar sect of Hasidic Judaism is as mysterious as it is intriguing to outsiders. In this arresting memoir, Deborah Feldman reveals what life is like trapped within a religious tradition that values silence and suffering over individual freedoms.

The child of a mentally disabled father and a mother who abandoned the community while her daughter was still a toddler, Deborah was raised by her strictly religious grandparents, Bubby and Zeidy. Along with a rotating cast of aunts and uncles, they enforced customs with a relentless emphasis on rules that governed everything from what Deborah could wear and to whom she could speak, to what she was allowed to read. As she grew from an inquisitive little girl to an independent-minded young woman, stolen moments reading about the empowered literary characters of Jane Austen and Louisa May Alcott helped her to imagine an alternative way of life. She had no idea how to seize this dream that seemed to beckon to her from the skyscrapers of Manhattan, but she was determined to find a way. The tension between Deborah’s desires and her responsibilities as a good Satmar girl grew more explosive until, at the age of seventeen, she found herself trapped in a sexually and emotionally dysfunctional marriage to a man she had met for only thirty minutes before they became engaged. As a result, she experienced debilitating anxiety that was exacerbated by the public shame of having failed to immediately consummate her marriage and thus serve her husband. But it wasn’t until she had a child at nineteen that Deborah realized more than just her own future was at stake, and that, regardless of the obstacles, she would have to forge a path—for herself and her son—to happiness and freedom. Added October 2012

“V”

*Visit from the Good Squad, A* – Jennifer Egan

“A new classic of American fiction.” – *Time*

Bennie is an aging former punk rocker and record executive. Sasha is the passionate, troubled young woman he employs. Here Jennifer Egan brilliantly reveals their pasts, along with the inner lives of a host of other characters whose paths intersect with theirs. With music pulsing on every page, *A Visit from the Goon Squad* is a startling, exhilarating novel of self-destruction and redemption. Added: July 2011

“W”

*Water for Elephants: A Novel* – Sara Gruen

“Though he may not speak of them, the memories still dwell inside Jacob Jankowski's ninety-something-year-old mind. Memories of himself as a young man, tossed by fate onto a rickety train that was home to the Benzini Brothers Most Spectacular Show on Earth. Memories of a world filled with freaks and clowns, with wonder and pain and
anger and passion; a world with its own narrow, irrational rules, its own way of life, and its own way of death. The world of the circus: to Jacob it was both salvation and a living hell.” Jacob was there because his luck had run out - orphaned and penniless, he had no direction until he landed on this locomotive "ship of fools." It was the early part of the Great Depression, and everyone in this third-rate circus was lucky to have any job at all. Marlena, the star of the equestrian act, was there because she fell in love with the wrong man, a handsome circus boss with a wide mean streak. And Rosie the elephant was there because she was the great gray hope, the new act that was going to be the salvation of the circus; the only problem was, Rosie didn't have an act - in fact, she couldn't even follow instructions. The bond that grew among this unlikely trio was one of love and trust, and ultimately, it was their only hope for survival. Added before December 2010

*Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail* – Cheryl Strayed

**A Best Book of the Year: NPR, The Boston Globe, Entertainment Weekly, Vogue, St. Louis Dispatch**

At twenty-two, Cheryl Strayed thought she had lost everything. In the wake of her mother’s death, her family scattered and her own marriage was soon destroyed. Four years later, with nothing more to lose, she made the most impulsive decision of her life. With no experience or training, driven only by blind will, she would hike more than a thousand miles of the Pacific Crest Trail from the Mojave Desert through California and Oregon to Washington State—and she would do it alone. Told with suspense and style, sparkling with warmth and humor, *Wild* powerfully captures the terrors and pleasures of one young woman forging ahead against all odds on a journey that maddened, strengthened, and ultimately healed her. Added: March 2014

*Winter Garden* – Kristin Hannah

How can a woman know herself … if she doesn’t really know her mother? Meredith and Nina Whitson are as different as sisters can be. One stayed at home to raise her children and manage the family business; the other followed a dream and traveled the world. But when their beloved father falls ill, these two estranged sisters will find themselves together again, standing alongside their icy and enigmatic mother, Anya, who even now offers no comfort to her daughters. On his deathbed, their father extracts a promise of his wife: Anya will tell her daughters a story; it a fairy tale she began years ago and never finished. This time she will tell it all the way to the end.

The tale their mother tells them is a captivating, mysterious love story that spans more than sixty years and moves from frozen, war-torn Leningrad to Modern-day Alaska. Nina’s obsession to uncover the truth behind the story will send them all on an unexpected journey into their mother’s past, where they will discover a secret so shocking, so terrible, it shakes the foundation of their family and changes who they believe they are. Added before December 2010

*With or Without You* - Domenica Ruta
A haunting, unforgettable mother-daughter story for a new generation—the debut of a blazing new lyrical voice

Domenica Ruta grew up in a working-class, unforgiving town north of Boston, in a trash-filled house on a dead-end road surrounded by a river and a salt marsh. Her mother, Kathi, a notorious local figure, was a drug addict and sometimes dealer whose life swung between welfare and riches, and whose highbrow taste was at odds with her hardscrabble life. And yet she managed, despite the chaos she created, to instill in her daughter a love of stories. Kathi frequently kept Domenica home from school to watch such classics as the Godfather movies and everything by Martin Scorsese and Woody Allen, telling her, “This is more important. I promise. You’ll thank me later.” And despite the fact that there was not a book to be found in her household, Domenica developed a love of reading, which helped her believe that she could transcend this life of undying grudges, self-inflicted misfortune, and the crooked moral code that Kathi and her cohorts lived by.

With or Without You is the story of Domenica Ruta’s unconventional coming of age—a darkly hilarious chronicle of a misfit ’90s youth and the necessary and painful act of breaking away, and of overcoming her own addictions and demons in the process. In a brilliant stylistic feat, Ruta has written a powerful, inspiring, compulsively readable, and finally redemptive story about loving and leaving.

Wolf Hall: A Novel – Hilary Mantel

In inimitable style, Hilary Mantel's Wolf Hall is "a darkly brilliant reimagining of life under Henry VIII. . . . Magnificent." – The Boston Globe

England in the 1520s is a heartbeat from disaster. If the king dies without a male heir, the country could be destroyed by civil war. Henry VIII wants to annul his marriage of twenty years and marry Anne Boleyn. The pope and most of Europe opposes him. Into this impasse steps Thomas Cromwell: a wholly original man, a charmer and a bully, both idealist and opportunist, astute in reading people, and implacable in his ambition. But Henry is volatile: one day tender, one day murderous. Cromwell helps him break the opposition, but what will be the price of his triumph? Added: July 2011

Writing on the Wall: Social Media - The First 2,000 Years - Tom Standage

Social media is anything but a new phenomenon. From the papyrus letters that Cicero and other Roman statesmen used to exchange news, to the hand-printed tracts of the Reformation and the pamphlets that spread propaganda during the American and French revolutions, the ways people shared information with their peers in the past are echoed in the present. After decades of newspapers, radio, and television dominating in dissemination of information, the Internet has spawned a reemergence of social media as
a powerful new way for individuals to share information with their friends, driving public discourse in new ways.

Standage reminds us how historical social networks have much in common with modern social media. The Catholic Church's dilemmas in responding to Martin Luther's attacks are similar to those of today's large institutions in responding to criticism on the Internet, for example, and seventeenth-century complaints about the distractions of coffeehouses mirror modern concerns about social media. Invoking figures from Thomas Paine to Vinton Cerf, co-inventor of the Internet, Standage explores themes that have long been debated, from the tension between freedom of expression and censorship to social media's role in spurring innovation and fomenting revolution. Writing on the Wall draws on history to cast provocative new light on today's social media and encourages debate and discussion about how we'll communicate in the future. Added: April 2015

“Y”

*Year of Living Biblically, The: One Man's Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally as Possible* – A.J. Jacobs

From the bestselling author of *The Know-It-All* comes a fascinating and timely exploration of religion and the Bible.

Raised in a secular family but increasingly interested in the relevance of faith in our modern world, A.J. Jacobs decides to dive in headfirst and attempt to obey the Bible as literally as possible for one full year. He vows to follow the Ten Commandments. To be fruitful and multiply. To love his neighbor. But also to obey the hundreds of less publicized rules: to avoid wearing clothes made of mixed fibers; to play a ten-string harp; to stone adulterers.

The resulting spiritual journey is at once funny and profound, reverent and irreverent, personal and universal and will make you see history's most influential book with new eyes. Added before December 2010

“Z”

*Zookeeper’s Wife, The: A War Story* – Diane Ackerman

A true story—as powerful as Schindler's List—in which the keepers of the Warsaw Zoo saved hundreds of people from Nazi hands.

When Germany invaded Poland, Stuka bombers devastated Warsaw—and the city's zoo along with it. With most of their animals dead, zookeepers Jan and Antonina Zabinski began smuggling Jews into empty cages. Another dozen "guests" hid inside the Zabinskis' villa, emerging after dark for dinner, socializing, and, during rare moments of calm, piano concerts. Jan, active in the Polish resistance, kept ammunition buried in the elephant enclosure and stashed explosives in the animal hospital. Meanwhile, Antonina
kept her unusual household afloat, caring for both its human and its animal inhabitants—
otters, a badger, hyena pups, lynxes. Added before December 2010