

Book Club Kit Collection

Anaheim Central Library

ENGLISH

ADULT FICTION

***The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho (1993)**

Paulo Coelho's masterpiece tells the mystical story of Santiago, an Andalusian shepherd boy who yearns to travel in search of a worldly treasure. His quest will lead him to riches far different—and far more satisfying—than he ever imagined. Santiago's journey teaches us about the essential wisdom of listening to our hearts, of recognizing opportunity and learning to read the omens strewn along life's path, and, most importantly, to follow our dreams.

***All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr (2014)**

The *New York Times* bestseller about a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France as both try to survive the devastation of World War II. Marie-Laure lives in Paris near the Museum of Natural History, where her father works. When she is twelve, the Nazis occupy Paris and father and daughter flee to the walled citadel of Saint-Malo, where Marie-Laure's reclusive great uncle lives in a tall house by the sea. With them, they carry what might be the museum's most valuable and dangerous jewel. In a mining town in Germany, Werner Pfennig, an orphan, grows up with his younger sister, enchanted by a crude radio they find that brings them news and stories from places they have never seen or imagined. Werner becomes an expert at building and fixing these crucial new instruments and is enlisted to use his talent to track down the resistance. Deftly interweaving the lives of Marie-Laure and Werner, Doerr illuminates the ways, against all odds, people try to be good to one another.

***And the Mountains Echoed* by Khaled Hosseini (2013)**

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.

***The Art of Racing in the Rain* by Garth Stein (2008)**

Enzo knows he is different from other dogs: a philosopher with a nearly human soul (and an obsession with opposable thumbs), he has educated himself by watching television extensively, and by listening very closely to the words of his master, Denny Swift, an up-and-coming race car driver. Through Denny, Enzo has gained tremendous insight into the human condition, and he sees that life, like racing, isn't simply about going fast. On the eve of his death, Enzo takes stock of his life, recalling all that he and his family have been through. Heart wrenching, but deeply funny and uplifting...a story of family, love, loyalty, and hope...as only a dog could tell it.

***Atonement* by Ian McEwan (2001)**

Ian McEwan's symphonic novel of love and war, childhood and class, guilt and forgiveness provides all the satisfaction of a brilliant narrative and the provocation we have come to expect from this master of English prose. On a hot summer day in 1935, thirteen-year-old Briony Tallis witnesses the flirtation between her older sister, Cecilia, and Robbie Turner, the son of a servant. But Briony's incomplete grasp

of adult motives and her precocious imagination bring about a crime that will change all their lives, a crime whose repercussions *Atonement* follows through the chaos and carnage of World War II and into the close of the twentieth century.

***Bad Monkey* by Carl Hiaasen (2013)**

Andrew Yancy—late of the Miami Police and soon-to-be-late of the Monroe County sheriff's office—has a human arm in his freezer. There's a logical (Hiaasenan) explanation for that, but not for how and why it parted from its shadowy owner. Yancy thinks the boating-accident/shark-luncheon explanation is full of holes, and if he can prove murder, the sheriff might rescue him from his grisly Health Inspector gig (it's not called the roach patrol for nothing). But first—this being Hiaasen country—Yancy must negotiate an obstacle course of wildly unpredictable events with a crew of even more wildly unpredictable characters, including his just-ex lover, a hot-blooded fugitive from Kansas; the twitchy widow of the frozen arm; two avariciously optimistic real-estate speculators; the Bahamian voodoo witch known as the Dragon Queen, whose suitors are blinded unto death by her peculiar charms; Yancy's new true love, a kinky coroner; and the eponymous bad monkey, who with hilarious aplomb earns his place among Carl Hiaasen's greatest characters.

***Beartown* by Fredrik Backman (2016)**

A poignant, charming novel about a forgotten town fractured by scandal, and the amateur hockey team that might just change everything. Winning a junior ice hockey championship might not mean a lot to the average person, but it means everything to the residents of Beartown, a community slowly being eaten alive by unemployment and the surrounding wilderness. A victory like this would draw national attention to the ailing town: it could attract government funding and an influx of talented athletes who would choose Beartown over the big nearby cities. At first, it seems like the team might have a shot at fulfilling the dreams of their entire town. But one night at a drunken celebration following a key win, something happens between a star player and the general manager's daughter--and the next day everything seems to have changed. Accusations are made and, like ripples on a pond, they travel through all of Beartown, leaving no resident unaffected. With so much riding on the success of the team, the line between loyalty and betrayal becomes difficult to discern. At last, it falls to one young man to find the courage to speak the truth that it seems no one else wants to hear. We are forever shaped by the places we call home. In this emotionally powerful, sweetly insightful story, Backman explores what can happen when we carry the heavy weight of other people's dreams on our shoulders.

***Bel Canto* by Ann Patchett (2001)**

The well-connected Japanese businessman, now in an unnamed South American country on yet another job, is having a very special birthday party. At the home of the country's vice president, opera singer Roxane Cos will be performing for him and his guests. But armed men invade the premises. These ragtag revolutionaries are looking for the president and disappointed that he is not there, but that doesn't stop them from holding the partygoers hostage.

***Beloved* by Toni Morrison (1987)**

Sethe, an escaped slave living in post-Civil War Ohio with her daughter and mother-in-law, is haunted persistently by the ghost of the dead baby girl whom she sacrificed.

***Blindness* by José Saramago (1997)**

A city is hit by an epidemic of "white blindness" which spares no one. Authorities confine the blind to an empty mental hospital, but there the criminal element holds everyone captive, stealing food rations and raping women. There is one eyewitness to this nightmare who guides seven strangers—among them a boy with no mother, a girl with dark glasses, a dog of tears—through the barren streets, and the procession becomes as uncanny as the surroundings are harrowing. A magnificent parable of loss and disorientation and a vivid evocation of the horrors of the twentieth century, *Blindness* has swept the

reading public with its powerful portrayal of man's worst appetites and weaknesses—and man's ultimately exhilarating spirit.

***The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison (1970)**

The first novel written by Toni Morrison, winner of the 1993 Nobel Prize in Literature. This is the story of eleven-year-old Pecola Breedlove -- a black girl in an America whose love for its blond, blue-eyed children can devastate all others -- who prays for her eyes to turn blue: so that she will be beautiful, so that people will look at her, so that her world will be different. This is the story of the nightmare at the heart of her yearning, and the tragedy of its fulfillment.

***The Book of Night Women* by Marlon James (2009)**

A true triumph of voice and storytelling, *The Book of Night Women* rings with both profound authenticity and a distinctly contemporary energy. It is the story of Lilith, born into slavery on a Jamaican sugar plantation at the end of the eighteenth century. Even at her birth, the slave women around her recognize a dark power that they- and she-will come to both revere and fear. The Night Women, as they call themselves, have long been plotting a slave revolt, and as Lilith comes of age they see her as the key to their plans. But when she begins to understand her own feelings, desires, and identity, Lilith starts to push at the edges of what is imaginable for the life of a slave woman, and risks becoming the conspiracy's weak link. However, the real revelation of the book-the secret to the stirring imagery and insistent prose-is Marlon James himself, a young writer at once breathtakingly daring and wholly in command of his craft.

***The Bookish Life of Nina Hill* by Abbi Waxman (2019)**

A quirky and charming novel chronicling the life of confirmed introvert Nina Hill as she does her best to fly under everyone's radar. Nina Hill is a young woman supremely confident in her own...shell. The only child of a single mother, Nina has her life just as she wants it: a job in a bookstore, a kick-butt trivia team, a world-class planner and a cat named Phil. If she sometimes suspects there might be more to life than reading, she just shrugs and picks up a new book. When the father Nina never knew existed suddenly dies, leaving behind innumerable sisters, brothers, nieces, and nephews, Nina is horrified. They all live close by! They're all--or mostly all--excited to meet her! She'll have to Speak. To. Strangers. It's a disaster! And as if that wasn't enough, Tom, her trivia nemesis, has turned out to be cute, funny, and deeply interested in getting to know her. It's time for Nina to come out of her comfortable shell, but she isn't convinced real life could ever live up to fiction. It's going to take a brand-new family, a persistent suitor, and the combined effects of ice cream and trivia to make her turn her own fresh page.

***Canada* by Richard Ford (2012)**

In the late 1950s, in Great Falls Montana, teenage twins Dell and Berner Parson have different concerns: Berner's is whether to run away with her boyfriend; Dell's is chess and beekeeping. Their comically mismatched parents—rakish, smalltime schemer Bev and brooding, Jewish Neeva—have problems beyond a joyless union. Bev's stolen beef scheme goes awry, leaving him owing his Cree Indian accomplices. In desperation he robs a bank, roping his wife into the crime, and Dell, peering back much later, chronicles every aspect of the intricate but misguided plan, which left his parent incarcerated and he and Berner alone. Berner runs away, and Dell ends up in the care of a shady family friend at a hunting lodge in Canada, living an even more barren and lonely existence than he had in Great Falls.

***The Children Act* by Ian McEwan (2014)**

Fiona Maye is a leading High Court judge who presides over cases in the family division. She is renowned for her fierce intelligence, exactitude, and sensitivity. But her professional success belies private sorrow and domestic strife. There is the lingering regret of her childlessness, and now her marriage of thirty years is in crisis. At the same time, she is called on to try an urgent case: Adam, a beautiful seventeen-year-old boy, is refusing for religious reasons the medical treatment that could

save his life, and his devout parents echo his wishes. Time is running out. Should the secular court overrule sincerely expressed faith? In the course of reaching a decision, Fiona visits Adam in the hospital—an encounter that stirs long-buried feelings in her and powerful new emotions in the boy. Her judgment has momentous consequences for them both.

***Cold Mountain* by Charles Frazier (1997)**

Based on local history and family stories passed down by the author's great-great-grandfather, *Cold Mountain* is the tale of a wounded soldier, Inman, who walks away from the ravages of the war and back home to his prewar sweetheart, Ada. Inman's odyssey through the devastated landscape of the soon-to-be-defeated South interweaves with Ada's struggle to revive her father's farm, with the help of an intrepid young drifter named Ruby. As their long-separated lives begin to converge at the close of the war, Inman and Ada confront the vastly transformed world they've been delivered.

***Commonwealth* by Ann Patchett (2016)**

One Sunday afternoon in Southern California, Bert Cousins shows up at Franny Keating's christening party uninvited. Before evening falls, he has kissed Franny's mother, Beverly—thus setting in motion the dissolution of their marriages and the joining of two families. Spanning five decades, *Commonwealth* explores how this chance encounter reverberates through the lives of the four parents and six children involved. Spending summers together in Virginia, the Keating and Cousins children forge a lasting bond that is based on a shared disillusionment with their parents and the strange and genuine affection that grows up between them. When, in her twenties, Franny begins an affair with the legendary author Leon Posen and tells him about her family, the story of her siblings is no longer hers to control. Their childhood becomes the basis for his wildly successful book, ultimately forcing them to come to terms with their losses, their guilt, and the deeply loyal connection they feel for one another.

***Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon (2003)**

Christopher is 15 and lives in Swindon with his father. He has Asperger's syndrome, a form of Autism. He is obsessed with math, science and Sherlock Holmes but finds it hard to understand other people. When he discovers a dead dog on a neighbor's lawn he decides to solve the mystery and write a detective thriller about it. As in all good detective stories, however, the more he unearths, the deeper the mystery gets - for both Christopher and the rest of his family.

***Crazy Rich Asians* by Kevin Kwan (2013)**

When New Yorker Rachel Chu agrees to spend the summer in Singapore with her boyfriend, Nicholas Young, she envisions a humble family home and quality time with the man she hopes to marry. But Nick has failed to give his girlfriend a few key details. One, that his childhood home looks like a palace; two, that he grew up riding in more private planes than cars; and three, that he just happens to be the country's most eligible bachelor. On Nick's arm, Rachel may as well have a target on her back the second she steps off the plane, and soon, her relaxed vacation turns into an obstacle course of old money, new money, nosy relatives, and scheming social climbers.

***Cutting for Stone* by Abraham Verghese (2009)**

Marion and Shiva Stone are twin brothers born of a secret union between a beautiful Indian nun and a brash British surgeon at a mission hospital in Addis Ababa. Orphaned by their mother's death in childbirth 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. Yet it will be love, not politics—their passion for the same woman—that will tear them apart and force Marion, fresh out of medical school, to flee his homeland. He makes his way to America, finding refuge in his work as an intern at an underfunded, overcrowded New York City hospital. When the past catches up to him—nearly destroying him—Marion must entrust his life to the two men he thought he trusted least in the world: the surgeon father who abandoned him and the brother who betrayed him. An unforgettable

journey into one man's remarkable life, and an epic story about the power, intimacy, and curious beauty of the work of healing others.

***Days in the History of Silence* by Merethe Lindstrom (2013)**

Eva and Simon have spent most of their adult lives together. He is a physician and she is a teacher, and they have three grown daughters and a comfortable home. Yet what binds them together isn't only affection and solidarity but also the painful facts of their respective histories, which they keep hidden even from their own children. But after the abrupt dismissal of their housekeeper and Simon's increasing withdrawal into himself, the past can no longer be repressed.

***A Dictionary of Mutual Understanding* by Jackie Copleton (2015)**

When Amaterasu Takahashi opens the door of her Philadelphia home to a badly scarred man claiming to be her grandson, she doesn't believe him. Her grandson and her daughter, Yuko, perished nearly forty years ago during the bombing of Nagasaki. But the man carries with him a collection of sealed private letters that open a Pandora's Box of family secrets Ama had sworn to leave behind when she fled Japan. She is forced to confront her memories of the years before the war: of the daughter she tried too hard to protect and the love affair that would drive them apart, and even further back, to the long, sake-pouring nights at a hostess bar where Ama first learned that a soft heart was a dangerous thing. Will Ama allow herself to believe in a miracle?

***Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury (1953)**

Ray Bradbury's internationally acclaimed novel *Fahrenheit 451* is a masterwork of twentieth-century literature set in a bleak, dystopian future. Guy Montag is a fireman. In his world, where television rules and literature is on the brink of extinction, firemen start fires rather than put them out. His job is to destroy the most illegal of commodities, the printed book, along with the houses in which they are hidden. Montag never questions the destruction and ruin his actions produce, returning each day to his bland life and wife, Mildred, who spends all day with her television "family." But then he meets an eccentric young neighbor, Clarisse, who introduces him to a past where people didn't live in fear and to a present where one sees the world through the ideas in books instead of the mindless chatter of television. When Mildred attempts suicide and Clarisse suddenly disappears, Montag begins to question everything he has ever known. He starts hiding books in his home, and when his pilfering is discovered, the fireman has to run for his life.

***Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes (1966)**

The story of a mentally disabled man whose experimental quest for intelligence mirrors that of Algernon, an extraordinary lab mouse. In diary entries, Charlie tells how a brain operation increases his IQ and changes his life. As the experimental procedure takes effect, Charlie's intelligence expands until it surpasses that of the doctors who engineered his metamorphosis. The experiment seems to be a scientific breakthrough of paramount importance--until Algernon begins his sudden, unexpected deterioration. Will the same happen to Charlie?

***Georgia* by Dawn Tripp (2016)**

In 1916, Georgia O'Keeffe is a young, unknown art teacher when she travels to New York to meet Stieglitz, the famed photographer and art dealer, who has discovered O'Keeffe's work and exhibits it in his gallery. Their connection is instantaneous. O'Keeffe is quickly drawn into Stieglitz's sophisticated world, becoming his mistress, protégé, and muse, as their attraction deepens into an intense and tempestuous relationship and his photographs of her, both clothed and nude, create a sensation. Yet as her own creative force develops, Georgia begins to push back against what critics and others are saying about her and her art. And soon she must make difficult choices to live a life she believes in.

***The Ginger Tree* by Oswald Wynd (1977)**

In 1903, a young Scotswoman named Mary Mackenzie sets sail for China to marry her betrothed, a military attaché in Peking. But soon after her arrival, Mary falls into an adulterous affair with a young Japanese nobleman, scandalizing the British community. Casting her out of the European community, her compatriots tear her away from her small daughter. A woman abandoned and alone, Mary learns to survive over forty tumultuous years in Asia, including two world wars and the cataclysmic Tokyo earthquake of 1923.

***The Girl on the Train* by Paula Hawkins (2015)**

Rachel takes the same commuter train every morning and night. Every day she rattles down the track, flashes past a stretch of cozy suburban homes, and stops at the signal that allows her to daily watch the same couple breakfasting on their deck. She's even started to feel like she knows them. Jess and Jason, she calls them. Their life—as she sees it—is perfect. Not unlike the life she recently lost. And then she sees something shocking. It's only a minute until the train moves on, but it's enough. Now everything's changed. Unable to keep it to herself, Rachel goes to the police. But is she really as unreliable as they say? Soon she is deeply entangled not only in the investigation but in the lives of everyone involved. Has she done more harm than good?

***The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* by Stieg Larsson (2008)**

Murder mystery, family saga, love story, and financial intrigue combine into one satisfyingly complex and entertainingly atmospheric novel, the first in Stieg Larsson's thrilling Millennium series featuring Lisbeth Salander. 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.

***The Girl with the Pearl Earring* by Tracy Chevalier (2001)**

In 1664, 16-year-old Griet enters the Vermeer household as a servant. Daughter of a Delft tile maker, she has a natural eye for color and design. Daily, she cleans the studio, learning much about how Vermeer sees the people he paints. As his attention focuses on her, she slowly becomes one of his subjects. Tracy Chevalier fills this unusual love story with the shades, sounds, and textures of everyday life in Holland.

***Go Set a Watchman* by Harper Lee (2015)**

This novel, written in the mid-1950s, is set two decades after Harper Lee's beloved Pulitzer Prize-winning masterpiece, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Maycomb, Alabama. Twenty-six-year-old Jean Louise Finch—"Scout"—returns home from New York City to visit her aging father, Atticus. Set against the backdrop of the civil rights tensions and political turmoil that were transforming the South, Jean Louise's homecoming turns bittersweet when she learns disturbing truths about her close-knit family, the town and the people dearest to her. Memories from her childhood flood back, and her values and assumptions are thrown into doubt. Featuring many of the iconic characters from *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Go Set a Watchman* perfectly captures a young woman, and a world, in a painful yet necessary transition out of the illusions of the past—a journey that can be guided only by one's conscience. This unforgettable novel of wisdom, humanity, passion, humor and effortless precision is both wonderfully evocative of another era and relevant to our own times.

***The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy (1997)**

Compared favorably to the works of Faulkner and Dickens, Arundhati Roy's modern classic is equal parts powerful family saga, forbidden love story, and piercing political drama. The seven-year-old twins Estha and Rahel see their world shaken irrevocably by the arrival of their beautiful young cousin, Sophie. It is an event that will lead to an illicit liaison and tragedies accidental and intentional, exposing "big things [that] lurk unsaid" in a country drifting dangerously toward unrest. Lush, lyrical, and unnerving, *The God*

of *Small Things* is an award-winning landmark that started for its author an esteemed career of fiction and political commentary that continues unabated.

***The Goldfinch* by Donna Tartt (2013)**

A young boy in New York City, Theo Decker, miraculously survives an accident that takes the life of his mother. Alone and abandoned by his father, Theo is taken in by a friend's family and struggles to make sense of his new life. In the years that follow, he becomes entranced by one of the few things that reminds him of his mother: a small, mysteriously captivating painting that ultimately draws Theo into the art underworld. *The Goldfinch* is a haunted odyssey through present-day America, and a drama of almost unbearable acuity and power. It is a story of loss and obsession, survival and self-invention, and the enormous power of art.

***Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn (2012)**

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 from their rented McMansion on the Mississippi River. 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, deceptions, and inappropriate behavior. Nick is oddly evasive, and he's definitely bitter—but is he really a killer? As the cops close in, every couple in town is soon wondering how well they know the one that they love. With his twin sister, Margo, at his side, Nick stands by his innocence. Trouble is, if Nick didn't do it, where is that beautiful wife? And what was in that silvery gift box hidden in the back of her bedroom closet?

***The Good Earth* by Pearl Buck (1931)**

This classic tells the poignant tale of a Chinese farmer and his family in old agrarian China. The humble Wang Lung glories in the soil he works, nurturing the land as it nurtures him and his family. Nearby, the nobles of the House of Hwang consider themselves above the land and its workers; but they will soon meet their own downfall. Hard times come upon Wang Lung and his family when flood and drought force them to seek work in the city. The working people riot, breaking into the homes of the rich and forcing them to flee. When Wang Lung shows mercy to one noble and is rewarded, he begins to rise in the world, even as the House of Hwang falls.

***Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows (2008)**

January 1946: London is emerging from the shadow of the Second World War, and writer Juliet Ashton is looking for her next book subject. Who could imagine that she would find it in a letter from a man she's never met, a native of the island of Guernsey, who has come across her name written inside a book by Charles Lamb. As Juliet and her new correspondent exchange letters, Juliet is drawn into the world of this man and his friends--and what a wonderfully eccentric world it is. The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society--born as a spur-of-the-moment alibi when its members were discovered breaking curfew by the Germans occupying their island--boasts a charming, funny, deeply human cast of characters, from pig farmers to phrenologists, literature lovers all.

***The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood (1985)**

Offred is a Handmaid in the Republic of Gilead, serving in the household of the enigmatic Commander and his bitter wife. She may go out once a day to markets whose signs are now pictures because women are not allowed to read. She must pray that the Commander makes her pregnant, for in a time of declining birthrates her value lies in her fertility, and failure means exile to the dangerously polluted Colonies. Offred can remember a time when she lived with her husband and daughter and had a job, before she lost even her own name. Now she navigates the intimate secrets of those who control her

every move, risking her life in breaking the rules.

***The Headmaster's Wife* by Thomas Christopher Greene (2014)**

Like his father before him, Arthur Winthrop is the headmaster of Vermont's elite Lancaster School. It is the place he feels has given him his life, but is also the site of his undoing as events spiral out of his control. Found wandering naked in Central Park, he begins to tell his story to the police, but his memories collide into one another, and the true nature of things, a narrative of love, of marriage, of family, and of a tragedy Arthur does not know how to address emerges. Luminous and atmospheric, bringing to life the tight-knit enclave of a quintessential New England boarding school, the novel is part mystery, part love story, and an exploration of the ties of place and family. Beautifully written and compulsively readable, *The Headmaster's Wife* stands as a moving elegy to the power of love as an antidote to grief.

***The Help* by Kathryn Stockett (2009)**

Aibileen is a black maid in 1962 Jackson, Mississippi, who's always taken orders quietly, but lately she's unable to hold her bitterness back. Her friend Minny has never held her tongue but now must somehow keep secrets about her employer that leave her speechless. White socialite Skeeter just graduated college. She's full of ambition, but without a husband, she's considered a failure. Together, these seemingly different women join together to write a tell-all book about work as a black maid in the South that could forever alter their destinies and the life of a small town...

***Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* by Jamie Ford (2009)**

In 1986, Henry Lee joins a crowd outside the Panama Hotel, once the gateway to Seattle's Japantown. It has been boarded up for decades, but now the new owner has discovered the belongings of Japanese families who were sent to internment camps during World War II. As the owner displays and unfurls a Japanese parasol, Henry, a Chinese American, remembers a young Japanese American girl from his childhood in the 1940s—Keiko Okabe, with whom he forged a bond of friendship and innocent love that transcended the prejudices of their Old World ancestors. After Keiko and her family were evacuated to the internment camps, she and Henry could only hope that their promise to each other would be kept. Now, forty years later, Henry explores the hotel's basement for the Okabe family's belongings and for a long-lost object whose value he cannot even begin to measure. His search will take him on a journey to revisit the sacrifices he has made for family, for love, for country.

***The House at Riverton* by Kate Morton (2006)**

The House at Riverton is a gorgeous debut novel set in England between the wars. Perfect for fans of *Downton Abbey*, it is the story of an aristocratic family, a house, a mysterious death, and a way of life that vanished forever, told in flashback by a woman who witnessed it all and kept a secret for decades. Grace Bradley went to work at Riverton House as a servant when she was just a girl, before the First World War. For years her life was inextricably tied up with the Hartford family, most particularly the two daughters, Hannah and Emmeline. In the summer of 1924, at a glittering society party held at the house, a young poet shot himself. The only witnesses were Hannah and Emmeline and only they -- and Grace -- know the truth. In 1999, when Grace is ninety-eight years old and living out her last days in a nursing home, she is visited by a young director who is making a film about the events of that summer. She takes Grace back to Riverton House and reawakens her memories. Told in flashback, this is the story of Grace's youth during the last days of Edwardian aristocratic privilege shattered by war, of the vibrant twenties, and the changes she witnessed as an entire way of life vanished forever.

***The House of Mirth* by Edith Wharton (1905)**

First published in 1905, *The House of Mirth* shocked the New York society it so deftly chronicles, portraying the moral, social and economic restraints on a woman who dared to claim the privileges of

marriage without assuming the responsibilities. Lily Bart, beautiful, witty and sophisticated, is accepted by 'old money' and courted by the growing tribe of nouveaux riches. But as she nears thirty, her foothold becomes precarious; a poor girl with expensive tastes, she needs a husband to preserve her social standing, and to maintain her in the luxury she has come to expect. Whilst many have sought her, something - fastidiousness or integrity- prevents her from making a 'suitable' match.

***The Illustrated Man* by Ray Bradbury (1951)**

Ray Bradbury brings wonders alive. For this peerless American storyteller, the most bewitching force in the universe is human nature. In these eighteen startling tales unfolding across a canvas of tattooed skin, living cities take their vengeance, technology awakens the most primal natural instincts, and dreams are carried aloft in junkyard rockets. Provocative and powerful, *The Illustrated Man* is a kaleidoscopic blending of magic, imagination, and truth—as exhilarating as interplanetary travel, as maddening as a walk in a million-year rain, and as comforting as simple, familiar rituals on the last night of the world.

***In the Time of the Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez (1994)**

It is November 25, 1960, and three beautiful sisters have been found near their wrecked Jeep at the bottom of a 150-foot cliff on the north coast of the Dominican Republic. The official state newspaper reports their deaths as accidental. It does not mention that a fourth sister lives. Nor does it explain that the sisters were among the leading opponents of Gen. Rafael Leonidas Trujillo's dictatorship. It doesn't have to. Everybody knows of Las Mariposas—"The Butterflies." In this extraordinary novel, the voices of all four sisters—Minerva, Patria, María Teresa, and the survivor, Dedé—speak across the decades to tell their own stories, from hair ribbons and secret crushes to gunrunning and prison torture, and to describe the everyday horrors of life under Trujillo's rule. Through the art and magic of Julia Alvarez's imagination, the martyred Butterflies live again in this novel of courage and love, and the human cost of political oppression.

***Into the Beautiful North* by Luis Alberto Urrea (2009)**

Nineteen-year-old Nayeli works at a taco shop in her Mexican village and dreams about her father, who journeyed to the US to find work. Recently, it has dawned on her that he isn't the only man who has left town. In fact, there are almost no men in the village--they've all gone north. While watching *The Magnificent Seven*, Nayeli decides to go north herself and recruit seven men--her own "Siete Magnificos"--to repopulate her hometown and protect it from the banditos who plan on taking it over. Filled with unforgettable characters and prose as radiant as the Sinaloan sun, *Into the Beautiful North* is the story of an irresistible young woman's quest to find herself on both sides of the fence.

***Invention of Wings* by Sue Monk Kidd (2014)**

The story follows Hetty "Handful" Grimke, a Charleston slave, and Sarah, the daughter of the wealthy Grimke family. The novel begins on Sarah's eleventh birthday, when she is given ownership over Handful, who is to be her handmaid. *The Invention of Wings* follows the next thirty-five years of their lives. Inspired in part by the historical figure of Sarah Grimke (a feminist, suffragist and, importantly, an abolitionist), Kidd allows herself to go beyond the record to flesh out the inner lives of all the characters, both real and imagined.

***I've Got Your Number* by Sophie Kinsella (2012)**

Poppy Wyatt has never felt luckier. She is about to marry her ideal man, Magnus Tavish, but in one afternoon her "happily ever after" begins to fall apart. Not only has she lost her engagement ring in a hotel fire drill, but in the panic that follows, her phone is stolen. As she paces shakily around the lobby, she spots an abandoned phone in a trash can. Finders keepers! Now she can leave a number for the hotel to contact her when they find her ring. Perfect! Well, perfect except that the phone's owner, businessman Sam Roxton, doesn't agree. He wants his phone back and doesn't appreciate Poppy reading

his messages and wading into his personal life. What ensues is a hilarious and unpredictable turn of events as Poppy and Sam increasingly upend each other's lives through emails and text messages.

***The Kept* by James Scott (2014)**

In the winter of 1897, a trio of killers descends upon an isolated farm in upstate New York. Midwife Elspeth Howell returns home to the carnage: her husband, and four of her children, murdered. Before she can discover her remaining son Caleb, alive and hiding in the kitchen pantry, another shot rings out over the snow-covered valley. Twelve-year-old Caleb must tend to his mother until she recovers enough for them to take to the frozen wilderness in search of the men responsible.

***The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini (2003)**

The unforgettable, heartbreaking story of the unlikely friendship between a wealthy boy and the son of his father's servant, caught in the tragic sweep of history, *The Kite Runner* transports readers to Afghanistan at a tense and crucial moment of change and destruction. A powerful story of friendship, it is also 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.

***The Lacuna* by Barbara Kingsolver (2009)**

Born in the United States, reared in a series of provisional households in Mexico—from a coastal island jungle to 1930s Mexico City—Harrison Shepherd finds precarious shelter but no sense of home on his thrilling odyssey. Life is whatever he learns from housekeepers who put him to work in the kitchen, errands he runs in the streets, and one fateful day, by mixing plaster for famed Mexican muralist Diego Rivera. He discovers a passion for Aztec history and meets the exotic, imperious artist Frida Kahlo, who will become his lifelong friend. When he goes to work for Lev Trotsky, an exiled political leader fighting for his life, Shepherd inadvertently casts his lot with art and revolution, newspaper headlines and howling gossip, and a risk of terrible violence.

Meanwhile, to the north, the United States will soon be caught up in the internationalist goodwill of World War II. There in the land of his birth, Shepherd believes he might remake himself in America's hopeful image and claim a voice of his own. He finds support from an unlikely kindred soul, his stenographer, Mrs. Brown, who will be far more valuable to her employer than he could ever know. Through darkening years, political winds continue to toss him between north and south in a plot that turns many times on the unspeakable breach—the lacuna—between truth and public presumption.

***The Language of Flowers* by Vanessa Diffenbaugh (2011)**

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.

***A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest J. Gaines (1997)**

A Lesson Before Dying is set in a small Cajun community in the late 1940s. Jefferson, a young black man, is an unwitting party to a liquor store shoot out in which three men are killed; the only survivor, he is convicted of murder and sentenced to death. Grant Wiggins, who left his hometown for the university, has returned to the plantation school to teach. As he struggles with his decision whether to stay or escape to another state, his aunt and Jefferson's godmother persuade him to visit Jefferson in his cell and impart his learning and his pride to Jefferson before his death. In the end, the two men

forge a bond as they both come to understand the simple heroism of resisting and defying the expected.

***Life of Pi* by Yann Martel (2000)**

The son of a zookeeper, Pi Patel has an encyclopedic knowledge of animal behavior and a fervent love of stories. When Pi is sixteen, his family emigrates from India to North America aboard a Japanese cargo ship, along with their zoo animals bound for new homes. The ship sinks. Pi finds himself alone in a lifeboat, his only companions a hyena, an orangutan, a wounded zebra, and Richard Parker, a 450-pound Bengal tiger. Soon the tiger has dispatched all but Pi, whose fear, knowledge, and cunning allow him to coexist with Richard Parker for 227 days while lost at sea. When they finally reach the coast of Mexico, Richard Parker flees to the jungle, never to be seen again. The Japanese authorities who interrogate Pi refuse to believe his story and press him to tell them "the truth." After hours of coercion, Pi tells a second story, a story much less fantastical, much more conventional—but is it more true?

***The Light Between the Oceans* by M.L. Stedman (2012)**

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, 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, who keeps meticulous records and whose moral principles have withstood a horrific war, wants to report the man and infant immediately. But Isabel insists the baby is a "gift from God," and 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.

***Like Water for Chocolate* by Laura Esquivel (1992)**

This classic love story takes place on the De la Garza ranch, as the tyrannical owner, Mama Elena, chops onions at the kitchen table in her final days of pregnancy. While still in her mother's womb, her daughter to be weeps so violently she causes an early labor, and little Tita slips out amid the spices and fixings for noodle soup. This early encounter with food soon becomes a way of life, and Tita grows up to be a master chef, using cooking to express herself and sharing recipes with readers along the way.

***Lilac Girls* by Martha Hall Kelly (2016)**

On a September day in Manhattan in 1939, twenty-something Caroline Ferriday is consumed by her efforts to secure the perfect boutonniere for an important French diplomat and resisting the romantic advances of a married actor. Meanwhile across the Atlantic, Kasia Kuzmerick, a Polish Catholic teenager, is nervously anticipating the changes that are sure to come since Germany has declared war on Poland. As tensions rise abroad - and in her personal life - Caroline's interest in aiding the war effort in France grows and she eventually comes to hear about the dire situation at the Ravensbruck all-female concentration camp. At the same time, Kasia's carefree youth is quickly slipping away, only to be replaced by a fervor for the Polish resistance movement. Through Ravensbruck - and the horrific atrocities taking place there told in part by an infamous German surgeon, Herta Oberheuser - the two women's lives will converge in unprecedented ways and a novel of redemption and hope emerges that is breathtaking in scope and depth.

***Lincoln in the Bardo* by George Saunders (2017)**

Unfolding in a graveyard over the course of a single night, narrated by a dazzling chorus of voices, *Lincoln in the Bardo* is a literary experience unlike any other—for no one but Saunders could conceive it. In February 1862, with the Civil War less than one year old, President Lincoln lost his beloved eleven-year-

old son, Willie, to typhoid fever. Newspapers report that a grief-stricken Lincoln returned to the crypt several times alone to hold his boy's body. From that seed of historical truth, George Saunders spins an unforgettable story of familial love and loss that breaks free of its realistic, historical framework into a thrilling, supernatural realm both hilarious and terrifying. Willie Lincoln finds himself in a strange purgatory, where ghosts mingle, gripe, commiserate, quarrel, and enact bizarre acts of penance. Within this transitional state—called, in the Tibetan tradition, the bardo—a monumental struggle erupts over young Willie's soul.

***Little Bee* by Chris Cleave (2008)**

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

***The Lonely Polygamist* by Brady Udall (2010)**

Golden Richards, husband to four wives, father to twenty-eight children, is having the mother of all midlife crises. His construction business is failing, his family has grown into an overpopulated mini-dukedom beset with insurrection and rivalry, and he is done in with grief: due to the accidental death of a daughter and the stillbirth of a son, he has come to doubt the capacity of his own heart. Brady Udall, one of our finest American fiction writers, tells a tragicomic story of a deeply faithful man who, crippled by grief and the demands of work and family, becomes entangled in an affair that threatens to destroy his family's future.

***Love in the Time of Cholera* by Gabriel García Márquez (1985)**

In their youth, Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza fall passionately in love. When Fermina eventually chooses to marry a wealthy, well-born doctor, Florentino is devastated, but he is a romantic. As he rises in his business career he whiles away the years in 622 affairs--yet he reserves his heart for Fermina. Her husband dies at last, and Florentino purposefully attends the funeral. Fifty years, nine months, and four days after he first declared his love for Fermina, he will do so again. A modern classic by the Colombian Nobel prize winning author.

***The Lovely Bones* by Alice Sebold (2002)**

The story of a family devastated by a gruesome murder -- a murder recounted by the teenage victim. Upsetting, you say? Alice Sebold takes this difficult material and delivers a compelling and accomplished exploration of a fractured family's need for peace and closure. The details of the crime are laid out in the first few pages: from her vantage point in heaven, Susie Salmon describes how she was confronted by the murderer one December afternoon on her way home from school. Lured into an underground hiding place, she was raped and killed. But what the reader knows, her family does not. Anxiously, we keep vigil with Susie, aching for her grieving family, desperate for the killer to be found and punished. Sebold creates a heaven that's calm and comforting, a place whose residents can have whatever they enjoyed when they were alive -- and then some. But Susie isn't ready to release her hold on life just yet, and she intensely watches her family and friends as they struggle to cope with a reality in which she is no longer a part. To her great credit, Sebold has shaped one of the most loving and sympathetic fathers in contemporary literature.

***The Maltese Falcon* by Dashiell Hammett (1930)**

A treasure worth killing for. Sam Spade, a slightly shopworn private eye with his own solitary code of ethics. A perfumed grafter named Joel Cairo, a fat man name Gutman, and Brigid O'Shaughnessy, a beautiful and treacherous woman whose loyalties shift at the drop of a dime. These are the ingredients of Dashiell Hammett's coolly glittering gem of detective fiction, a novel that has haunted three generations of readers.

***A Man Called Ove* by Fredrik Backman (2014)**

Meet Ove. He's a curmudgeon—the kind of man who points at people he dislikes as if they were burglars caught outside his bedroom window. He has staunch principles, strict routines, and a short fuse. People call him “the bitter neighbor from hell.” But must Ove be bitter just because he doesn't walk around with a smile plastered to his face all the time? Behind the cranky exterior there is a story and a sadness. So when one November morning a chatty young couple with two chatty young daughters move in next door and accidentally flatten Ove's mailbox, it is the lead-in to a comical and heartwarming tale of unkempt cats, unexpected friendship, and the ancient art of backing up a U-Haul. All of which will change one cranky old man and a local residents' association to their very foundations.

***Me Before You* by Jojo Moyes (2012)**

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 never 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 a motorcycle 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?

***Memoirs of a Geisha* by Arthur Golden (1997)**

A literary sensation and runaway bestseller, this brilliant debut novel presents with seamless authenticity and exquisite lyricism the true confessions of one of Japan's most celebrated geisha. In *Memoirs of a Geisha*, we enter a world where appearances are paramount; where a girl's virginity is auctioned to the highest bidder; where women are trained to beguile the most powerful men; and where love is scorned as illusion. It is a unique and triumphant work of fiction - at once romantic, erotic, suspenseful - and completely unforgettable.

***Middlesex* by Jeffrey Eugenides (2002)**

Middlesex tells the breathtaking story of Calliope Stephanides, and three generations of the Greek-American Stephanides family, who travel from a tiny village overlooking Mount Olympus in Asia Minor to Prohibition-era Detroit, witnessing its glory days as the Motor City and the race riots of 1967 before moving out to the tree-lined streets of suburban Grosse Pointe, Michigan. To understand why Calliope is not like other girls, she has to uncover a guilty family secret, and the astonishing genetic history that turns Callie into Cal, one of the most audacious and wondrous narrators in contemporary fiction. Lyrical and thrilling, *Middlesex* is an exhilarating reinvention of the American epic.

***Mister Pip* by Lloyd Jones (2006)**

In a novel that is at once intense, beautiful, and fable like, Lloyd Jones weaves a transcendent story that celebrates the resilience of the human spirit and the power of narrative to transform our lives. On a copper-rich tropical island shattered by war, where the teachers have fled with most 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 begins to read to the children each day from Charles Dickens's 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. As Mr. Watts says, “A person entranced by a book simply forgets to breathe.” Soon come the rest of the villagers, initially threatened, finally inspired

to share tales of their own that bring alive the rich mythology of their past. 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.

***My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry* by Fredrik Backman (2013)**

Elsa is seven years old and different. Her grandmother is seventy-seven years old and crazy, standing-on-the-balcony-firing-paintball-guns-at-men-who-want-to-talk-about-Jesus-crazy. She is also Elsa's best, and only, friend. At night Elsa takes refuge in her grandmother's stories, in the Land of Almost-Awake and the Kingdom of Miamas where everybody is different and nobody needs to be normal. When Elsa's grandmother dies and leaves behind a series of letters apologizing to people she has wronged, Elsa's greatest adventure begins. Her grandmother's letters lead her to an apartment building full of drunks, monsters, attack dogs, and totally ordinary old crones, but also to the truth about fairytales and kingdoms and a grandmother like no other.

***My Sisters Keeper* by Jodi Picoult (2005)**

Anna is not sick, but she might as well be. By age thirteen, she has undergone countless surgeries, transfusions, and shots so that her older sister, Kate, can somehow fight the leukemia that has plagued her since childhood. The product of preimplantation genetic diagnosis, Anna was conceived as a bone marrow match for Kate—a life and a role that she has never challenged...until now. Like most teenagers, Anna is beginning to question who she truly is. But unlike most teenagers, she has always been defined in terms of her sister—and so Anna makes a decision that for most would be unthinkable, a decision that will tear her family apart and have perhaps fatal consequences for the sister she loves.

My Sister's Keeper examines what it means to be a good parent, a good sister, a good person. Is it morally correct to do whatever it takes to save a child's life, even if that means infringing upon the rights of another? Is it worth trying to discover who you really are, if that quest makes you like yourself less? Should you follow your own heart, or let others lead you?

***The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri (2003)**

The Namesake follows the Ganguli family through its journey from Calcutta to Cambridge to the Boston suburbs. Ashima and Ashoke Ganguli arrive in America at the end of the 1960s, shortly after their arranged marriage in Calcutta, in order for Ashoke to finish his engineering degree at MIT. Ashoke is forward-thinking, ready to enter into American culture if not fully at least with an open mind. His young bride is far less malleable. Isolated, desperately missing her large family back in India, she will never be at peace with this new world.

Soon after they arrive in Cambridge, their first child is born, a boy. According to Indian custom, the child will be given two names: an official name, to be bestowed by the great-grandmother, and a pet name to be used only by family. But the letter from India with the child's official name never arrives, and so the baby's parents decide on a pet name to use for the time being. Ashoke chooses a name that has particular significance for him: on a train trip back in India several years earlier, he had been reading a short story collection by one of his most beloved Russian writers, Nikolai Gogol, when the train derailed in the middle of the night, killing almost all the sleeping passengers onboard. Ashoke had stayed awake to read his Gogol, and he believes the book saved his life. His child will be known, then, as Gogol.

***The Narrow Road to the Deep North* by Richard Flanagan (2013)**

A novel of the cruelty of war, and tenuousness of life and the impossibility of love. Richard Flanagan's story — of Dorrigo Evans, an Australian doctor haunted by a love affair with his uncle's wife — journeys from the caves of Tasmanian trappers in the early twentieth century to a crumbling pre-war beachside hotel, from a Thai jungle prison to a Japanese snow festival, from the Changi gallows to a chance meeting of lovers on the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Taking its title from 17th-century haiku poet Basho's travel journal, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* is about the impossibility of love. At its heart is one day in a

Japanese slave labor camp in August 1943. As the day builds to its horrific climax, Dorrigo Evans battles and fails in his quest to save the lives of his fellow POWs, a man is killed for no reason, and a love story unfolds.

***News of the World* by Paulette Jiles (2016)**

In the wake of the Civil War, Captain Jefferson Kyle Kidd travels through northern Texas, giving live readings from newspapers to paying audiences hungry for news of the world. An elderly widower who has lived through three wars and fought in two of them, the captain enjoys his rootless, solitary existence. In Wichita Falls, he is offered a \$50 gold piece to deliver a young orphan to her relatives in San Antonio. Four years earlier, a band of Kiowa raiders killed Johanna's parents and sister; sparing the little girl, they raised her as one of their own. Recently rescued by the U.S. army, the ten-year-old has once again been torn away from the only home she knows. Their 400-mile journey south through unsettled territory and unforgiving terrain proves difficult and at times dangerous. Johanna has forgotten the English language, tries to escape at every opportunity, throws away her shoes, and refuses to act "civilized." Yet as the miles pass, the two lonely survivors tentatively begin to trust each other, forming a bond that marks the difference between life and death in this treacherous land. Arriving in San Antonio, the reunion is neither happy nor welcome. The captain must hand Johanna over to an aunt and uncle she does not remember—strangers who regard her as an unwanted burden. A respectable man, Captain Kidd is faced with a terrible choice: abandon the girl to her fate or become—in the eyes of the law—a kidnapper himself.

***The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* by Alexander McCall Smith (1998)**

Precious Ramotswe has only just set up shop as Botswana's No.1 (and only) lady detective when she is hired to track down a missing husband, uncover a con man, and follow a wayward daughter. However, the case that tugs at her heart, and lands her in danger, is a missing eleven-year-old boy, who may have been snatched by witch doctors.

***Nutshell* by Ian McEwan (2016)**

Trudy has betrayed her husband, John. She's still in the marital home—a dilapidated, priceless London townhouse—but John's not there. Instead, she's with his brother, the profoundly banal Claude, and the two of them have a plan. But there is a witness to their plot: the inquisitive, nine-month-old resident of Trudy's womb. Told from a perspective unlike any other, *Nutshell* is a classic tale of murder and deceit from one of the world's master storytellers. "To be bound in a nutshell, see the world in two inches of ivory, in a grain of sand. Why not, when all of literature, all of art, of human endeavor, is just a speck in the universe of possible things."

***Olive Kitteridge* by Elizabeth Stout (2008)**

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, this book offers profound insights into the human condition. At times stern, at other times patient, at times 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. A collection of 13 short stories set in small-town Maine that packs a cumulative emotional wallop, bound together by polished prose and by Olive, the title character, blunt, flawed and fascinating.

***One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez (1967 in Spanish; 2003 in English)**

This bestselling landmark novel by the Nobel Prize winning Columbian author tells the story of seven generations of the Buendia family. José Arcadio Buendía, and Úrsula Iguarán, his wife, leave Riohacha,

Colombia. While camping on a riverbank, José Arcadio dreams of "Macondo", a city of mirrors that reflected the world in and about it. Upon awakening, he decides to establish Macondo at the riverside. Soon after its foundation, Macondo becomes a town frequented by unusual and extraordinary events that involve the generations of the Buendía family, who are unable or unwilling to escape their periodic (mostly self-inflicted) misfortunes. For years the town is solitary and unconnected to the outside world, with the exception of the annual visit of a band of gypsies, who show the townspeople technology such as magnets, telescopes, and ice. Eventually Macondo becomes exposed to the outside world and the government of newly independent Colombia. The impact on the town and the family is enormous. This book, one of the most influential Latin American texts of all time, chronicles the irreconcilable conflict between the desire for solitude and the need for love—in rich, imaginative prose that has come to define an entire genre known as "magical realism."

***The One-in-a-Million Boy* by Monica Wood (2016)**

The story of your life never starts at the beginning. Don't they teach you anything at school? So says 104-year-old Ona to the 11-year-old boy who's been sent to help her out every Saturday morning. As he refills the bird feeders and tidies the garden shed, Ona tells him about her long life, from first love to second chances. Soon she's confessing secrets she has kept hidden for decades. One Saturday, the boy doesn't show up. Ona starts to think he's not so special after all, but then his father arrives on her doorstep, determined to finish his son's good deed. The boy's mother is not so far behind. Ona is set to discover that the world can surprise us at any age, and that sometimes sharing a loss is the only way to find ourselves again.

***Orphan Train* by Christina Baker Kline (2013)**

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.

***Our Souls at Night* by Kent Haruf (2015)**

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

***Our Town* by Thornton Wilder (1938)**

This Pulitzer Prize-winning drama of life in the small village of Grover's Corners, an allegorical representation of all life, has become a classic. It is Thornton Wilder's most renowned and most frequently performed play.

***The Pecan Man* by Cassie Dandridge Selleck (2012)**

In the summer of 1976, recently widowed and childless, Ora Lee Beckworth hires a homeless old black man to mow her lawn. The neighborhood children call him the Pee-can Man; their mothers call them inside whenever he appears. When the police chief's son is found stabbed to death near his camp, the man Ora knows as Eddie is arrested and charged with murder. Twenty-five years later, Ora sets out to tell the truth about the Pecan Man. In narrating her story, Ora discovers more truth about herself than she could ever have imagined.

***The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver (1998)**

A story told by the wife and four daughters of Nathan Price, a fierce, evangelical Baptist who takes his family and mission to the Belgian Congo in 1959. They carry with them everything they believe they will need from home, but soon find that all of it, from garden seeds to Scripture, is calamitously transformed on African soil. What follows is a suspenseful epic of one family's tragic undoing and remarkable reconstruction over the course of three decades in postcolonial Africa.

***The Readers of Broken Wheel Recommend* by Katarina Bivald (2016)**

Broken Wheel, Iowa, has never seen anyone like Sara, who traveled all the way from Sweden just to meet her book-loving pen pal, Amy. When she arrives, however, she finds Amy's funeral guests just leaving. The residents of Broken Wheel are happy to look after their bewildered visitor—there's not much else to do in a dying small town that's almost beyond repair. You certainly wouldn't open a bookstore. And definitely not with the tourist in charge. You'd need a vacant storefront (Main Street is full of them), books (Amy's house is full of them), and...customers. The bookstore might be a little quirky. Then again, so is Sara. But Broken Wheel's own story might be more eccentric and surprising than she thought. A heartwarming reminder of why we are booklovers, this is a sweet, smart story about how books find us, change us, and connect us.

***Rebecca* by Daphne Du Maurier (1938)**

The novel begins in Monte Carlo, where our heroine is swept off her feet by the dashing widower Maxim de Winter and his sudden proposal of marriage. Orphaned and working as a lady's maid, she can barely believe her luck. It is only when they arrive at his massive country estate that she realizes how large a shadow his late wife will cast over their lives--presenting her with a lingering evil that threatens to destroy their marriage from beyond the grave. A gothic classic.

***Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline (2011)**

In the year 2045, reality is an ugly place. The only time teenage Wade Watts really feels alive is when he's jacked into the virtual utopia known as the OASIS. Wade's devoted his life to studying the puzzles hidden within this world's digital confines, puzzles that are based on their creator's obsession with the pop culture of decades past and that promise massive power and fortune to whoever can unlock them. When Wade stumbles upon the first clue, he finds himself beset by players willing to kill to take this ultimate prize. The race is on, and if Wade's going to survive, he'll have to win—and confront the real world he's always been so desperate to escape.

***The Red Tent* by Anita Diamant (1997)**

Her name is Dinah. In the Bible, her life is only hinted at in a brief and violent detour within the more familiar chapters of the Book of Genesis that are about her father, Jacob, and his dozen sons. Told in Dinah's voice, this novel reveals the traditions and turmoil of ancient womanhood—the world of the red tent. It begins with the story of her mothers—Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, and Bilhah—the four wives of Jacob. They love Dinah and give her gifts that sustain her through a hard-working youth, a calling to midwifery, and a new home in a foreign land. Dinah's story reaches out from a remarkable period of early history and creates an intimate connection with the past. Deeply affecting, *The Red Tent* combines rich storytelling with a valuable achievement in modern fiction: a new view of biblical women's society.

***The Road* by Cormac McCarthy (2006)**

A searing, post-apocalyptic novel. A father and his son walk alone through burned America. Nothing moves in the ravaged landscape except the ash on the wind. It is cold enough to crack stones, and when the snow falls it is gray. The sky is dark. Their destination is the coast, although they don't know what, if anything, awaits them there. They have nothing; just a pistol to defend themselves against the lawless bands that stalk the road, the clothes they are wearing, a cart of scavenged food—and each other. *The Road* is the profoundly moving story of a journey. It boldly imagines a future in which no hope remains, but in which the father and his son, “each the other's world entire,” are sustained by love. Awesome in the totality of its vision, it is an unflinching meditation on the worst and the best that we are capable of: ultimate destructiveness, desperate tenacity, and the tenderness that keeps two people alive in the face of total devastation.

***Room* by Emma Donoghue (2010)**

To five-year-old Jack, Room is the entire world. It is where he was born and grew up; it's where he lives with his Ma as they learn and read and eat and sleep and play. 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 is the prison where Old Nick has held her captive for seven years. Through determination, ingenuity, and fierce motherly love, Ma has created a life for Jack. But she knows it's not enough ... not for her or for him. She devises a bold escape plan, one that relies on her young son's bravery and a lot of luck. What she does not realize is just how unprepared she is for the plan to actually work. Told entirely in the language of the energetic, pragmatic five-year-old Jack, *Room* is a celebration of resilience and the limitless bond between parent and child, a brilliantly executed novel about what it means to journey from one world to another.

***The Round House* by Louise Erdrich (2012)**

One of the most revered novelists of our time - a brilliant chronicler of Native-American life - Louise Erdrich transports readers to the Ojibwe reservation in North Dakota. It is an exquisitely told story of a boy on the cusp of manhood who seeks justice and understanding in the wake of a terrible crime that upends and forever transforms his family. Riveting and suspenseful, Erdrich's *The Round House* is a page-turning masterpiece of literary fiction - at once a powerful coming-of-age story, a mystery, and a tender, moving novel of family, history, and culture.

***Run* by Ann Patchett (2007)**

Since their mother's death, Tip and Teddy Doyle have been raised by their loving possessive and ambitious father. As the former mayor of Boston, Bernard Doyle wants to see his sons in politics, a dream the boys have never shared. But when an argument in a blinding New England snowstorm inadvertently causes an accident that involves a stranger and her child, all Bernard Doyle cares about is his ability to keep his children--all his children--safe.

Set over a period of twenty-four hours, *Run* takes us from the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard to a home for retired Catholic Priests in downtown Boston. It shows us how worlds of privilege and poverty can coexist only blocks apart from each other, and how family can include people you've never even met.

***Salt to the Sea* by Ruta Sepetys (2016)**

World War II is drawing to a close in East Prussia and thousands of refugees are on a desperate trek toward freedom, many with something to hide. Among them are Joana, Emilia, and Florian, whose paths converge en route to the ship that promises salvation, the *Wilhelm Gustloff*. Forced by circumstance to unite, the three find their strength, courage, and trust in each other tested with each step closer to safety. Just when it seems freedom is within their grasp, tragedy strikes. Not country, nor culture, nor

status matter as all ten thousand people—adults and children alike—aboard must fight for the same thing: survival.

***Sarah's Key* by Tatiana de Rosnay (2006)**

Paris, July 1942: Ten-year-old Sarah is brutally arrested with her family in the Vel' d'Hiv' roundup, the most notorious act of French collaboration with the Nazis. Before the police come to take them, Sarah locks her younger brother, Michel, in their favorite hiding place, a cupboard in the family's apartment. She keeps the key, thinking that she will be back within a few hours. Paris, May 2002: On Vel' d'Hiv's sixtieth anniversary, Julia Jarmond, an American journalist, is asked by her Paris-based American magazine to write an article about this black day in France's past. Julia has lived in Paris for nearly twenty-five years, married a Frenchman, and she is shocked both by her ignorance about the event and the silence that still surrounds it. In the course of her investigation, she stumbles onto a trail of long-hidden family secrets that connects her to Sarah. Julia finds herself compelled to retrace the girl's ordeal, from the terrible days spent shut in at the Vel' d'Hiv' to the camps and beyond. As she probes into Sarah's past, she begins to question her own place in France and to reevaluate her marriage and her life.

***The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd (2001)**

Set in South Carolina in 1964, *The Secret Life of Bees* tells the story of Lily Owens, whose life has been shaped around the blurred memory of the afternoon her mother was killed. When Lily's fierce-hearted black "stand-in mother," Rosaleen, insults three of the deepest racists in town, Lily decides to spring them both free. They escape to Tiburon, South Carolina--a town that holds the secret to her mother's past. Taken in by an eccentric trio of black beekeeping sisters, Lily is introduced to their mesmerizing world of bees and honey, and the Black Madonna. This is a remarkable novel about divine female power, a story women will share and pass on to their daughters for years to come.

***A Separate Peace* by John Knowles (1959)**

Set at a boys' boarding school in New England during the early years of World War II, *A Separate Peace* is a harrowing and luminous parable of the dark side of adolescence. Gene is a lonely, introverted intellectual. Phineas is a handsome, taunting, daredevil athlete. What happens between the two friends one summer, like the war itself, banishes the innocence of these boys and their world.

***The Snow Child* by Eowyn Ivey (2012)**

Alaska, 1920: a brutal place to homestead, and especially tough for recent arrivals Jack and Mabel. Childless, they are drifting apart – he under the weight of the work of the farm, she crumbling from loneliness and despair. In a moment of levity during the season's first snowfall, they build a child out of snow. The next morning the snow child is gone – but they glimpse a young, blonde-haired girl running through the trees. This little girl seems to be a child of the woods. She hunts with a red fox by her side, skims lightly against the snow and somehow survives alone in the Alaskan wilderness. As Jack and Mabel struggle to understand this child, they come to love her as their own daughter. But in this beautiful, violent place things are rarely as they appear, and what they eventually learn about the child will transform all of them.

***The Son* by Philipp Meyer (2012)**

Part epic of Texas, part classic coming-of-age story, part unflinching examination of the bloody price of power, *The Son* is a gripping and utterly transporting novel that maps the legacy of violence in the American west with rare emotional acuity, even as it presents an intimate portrait of one family across two centuries. Eli McCullough is just twelve-years-old when a marauding band of Comanche storm his Texas homestead and brutally murder his mother and sister, taking him as a captive. Despite their torture and cruelty, Eli--against all odds--adapts to life with the Comanche, learning their ways, their language, taking on a new name, finding a place as the adopted son of the chief of the band, and

fighting their wars against not only other Indians, but white men, too--complicating his sense of loyalty, his promised vengeance, and his very understanding of self. But when disease, starvation, and westward expansion finally decimate the Comanche, Eli is left alone in a world in which he belongs nowhere, neither white nor Indian, civilized or fully wild. Deftly interweaving Eli's story with those of his son, Peter, and his great-granddaughter, JA, *The Son* deftly explores the legacy of Eli's ruthlessness, his drive to power, and his life-long status as an outsider, even as the McCullough family rises to become one of the richest in Texas, a ranching-and-oil dynasty of unsurpassed wealth and privilege.

***The Sound of Waves* by Yukio Mishima (1954)**

Set in a remote fishing village in Japan, *The Sound of Waves* is a timeless story of first love. It tells of Shinji, a young fisherman and Hatsue, the beautiful daughter of the wealthiest man in the village. Shinji is entranced at the sight of Hatsue in the twilight on the beach and they fall in love. When the villagers' gossip threatens to divide them, Shinji must risk his life to prove his worth.

***The Space Between Us* by Thrity Umrigar (2006)**

Best-selling author Thrity Umrigar won the Nieman Fellowship and earned a finalist spot for the PEN/Beyond Margins award with *The Space Between Us*. Set in modern-day India, this evocative novel follows upper-middle-class Parsi housewife Sera Dubash and 65-year-old illiterate household worker Bhima as they make their way through life. Though separated by their stations in life, the two women share bonds of womanhood that prove far stronger than the divisions of class or culture.

***A Spool of Blue Thread* by Anne Tyler (2015)**

"It was a beautiful, breezy, yellow-and-green afternoon. . ." This is how Abby Whitshank always begins the story of how she fell in love with Red that day in July 1959. The Whitshanks are one of those families that radiate togetherness: an indefinable, enviable kind of specialness. But they are also like all families, in that the stories they tell themselves reveal only part of the picture. Abby and Red and their four grown children have accumulated not only tender moments, laughter, and celebrations, but also jealousies, disappointments, and carefully guarded secrets. From Red's father and mother, newly arrived in Baltimore in the 1920s, to Abby and Red's grandchildren carrying the family legacy boisterously into the twenty-first century, here are four generations of Whitshanks, their lives unfolding in and around the sprawling, lovingly worn Baltimore house that has always been their anchor.

***Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel (2014)**

Kirsten Raymonde will never forget the night Arthur Leander, the famous Hollywood actor, had a heart attack on stage during a production of *King Lear*. That was the night when a devastating flu pandemic arrived in the city, and within weeks, civilization as we know it came to an end. Twenty years later, Kirsten moves between the settlements of the altered world with a small troupe of actors and musicians. They call themselves The Traveling Symphony, and they have dedicated themselves to keeping the remnants of art and humanity alive. But when they arrive in St. Deborah by the Water, they encounter a violent prophet who will threaten the tiny band's existence. And as the story takes off, moving back and forth in time, and vividly depicting life before and after the pandemic, the strange twist of fate that connects them all will be revealed.

***The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry* by Gabrielle Zevin (2014)**

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

***The Sympathizer* by Viet Thanh Nguyen (2015)**

It is April 1975, and Saigon is in chaos. At his villa, a general of the South Vietnamese army is drinking whiskey and, with the help of his trusted captain, drawing up a list of those who will be given passage aboard the last flights out of the country. The general and his compatriots start a new life in Los Angeles, unaware that one among their number, the captain, is secretly observing and reporting on the group to a higher-up in the Viet Cong. *The Sympathizer* is the story of this captain: a man brought up by an absent French father and a poor Vietnamese mother, a man who went to university in America, but returned to Vietnam to fight for the Communist cause. Viet Thanh Nguyen's astonishing novel takes us inside the mind of this double agent, a man whose lofty ideals necessitate his betrayal of the people closest to him.

***Tell the Wolves I'm Home* by Carol Rifka Brunt (2012)**

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.

***The Tigers Wife* by Tea Obreht (2011)**

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.

***A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini (2007)**

A Thousand Splendid Suns is a breathtaking story set against the volatile events of Afghanistan's last thirty years—from the Soviet invasion to the reign of the Taliban to post-Taliban rebuilding—that puts the violence, fear, hope, and faith of this country in intimate, human terms. It is a tale of two generations of characters brought jarringly together by the tragic sweep of war, where personal lives—the struggle to survive, raise a family, find happiness—are inextricable from the history playing out around them. Both a remarkable chronicle of three decades of Afghan history and a deeply moving account of family and friendship, it is a striking, heart-wrenching novel of an unforgiving time, an unlikely friendship, and an indestructible love—a stunning accomplishment.

***The Time Travelers Wife* by Audrey Niffenegger (2003)**

A most untraditional love story, this is the celebrated tale of Henry DeTamble, a dashing, adventuresome librarian who inadvertently travels through time, and Clare Abshire, an artist whose life takes a natural sequential course. Henry and Clare's passionate affair endures across a sea of time and captures them in an impossibly romantic trap that tests the strength of fate and basks in the bonds of love.

***To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee (1960)**

The unforgettable novel of a childhood in a sleepy Southern town and the crisis of conscience that rocked it, *To Kill a Mockingbird* became both an instant bestseller and a critical success when it was first published in 1960. It went on to win the Pulitzer Prize in 1961 and was later made into an Academy Award-winning film, also a classic. Compassionate, dramatic, and deeply moving, *To Kill A Mockingbird* takes readers to the roots of human behavior - to innocence and experience, kindness and cruelty, love and hatred, humor and pathos. Now with over 18 million copies in print and translated into forty languages, this regional story by a young Alabama woman claims universal appeal.

***The Truth According to Us* by Annie Barrows (2015)**

In the summer of 1938, Layla Beck's father, a United States senator, cuts off her allowance and demands that she find employment on the Federal Writers' Project, a New Deal jobs program. Within days, Layla finds herself far from her accustomed social whirl, assigned to cover the history of the remote mill town of Macedonia, West Virginia, and destined, in her opinion, to go completely mad with boredom. But once she secures a room in the home of the unconventional Romeyn family, she is drawn into their complex world and soon discovers that the truth of the town is entangled in the thorny past of the Romeyn dynasty. At the Romeyn house, twelve-year-old Willa is desperate to learn everything in her quest to acquire her favorite virtues of ferocity and devotion—a search that leads her into a thicket of mysteries, including the questionable business that occupies her charismatic father and the reason her adored aunt Jottie remains unmarried. Layla's arrival strikes a match to the family veneer, bringing to light buried secrets that will tell a new tale about the Romeyns. As Willa peels back the layers of her family's past, and Layla delves deeper into town legend, everyone involved is transformed—and their personal histories completely rewritten.

***Under the Wide and Starry Sky* by Nancy Horan (2014)**

At the age of thirty-five, Fanny Van de Grift Osbourne has left her philandering husband in San Francisco to set sail for Belgium—with her three children and nanny in tow—to study art. It is a chance for this adventurous woman to start over, to make a better life for all of them, and to pursue her own desires. Not long after her arrival, however, tragedy strikes, and Fanny and her children repair to a quiet artists' colony in France where she can recuperate. Emerging from a deep sorrow, she meets a lively Scot, Robert Louis Stevenson, ten years her junior, who falls instantly in love with the earthy, independent, and opinionated “belle Americaine.” Fanny does not immediately take to the slender young lawyer who longs to devote his life to writing—and who would eventually pen such classics as *Treasure Island* and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. In time, though, she succumbs to Stevenson's charms, and the two begin a fierce love affair—marked by intense joy and harrowing darkness—that spans the decades and the globe. The shared life of these two strong-willed individuals unfolds into an adventure as impassioned and unpredictable as any of Stevenson's own unforgettable tales.

***Vinegar Hill* by A. Manette Ansay (1988)**

It is 1972 when circumstance carries Ellen Grier and her family back to Holly's Field, Wisconsin. Dutifully accompanying her newly unemployed husband, Ellen has brought her two children into the home of her in-laws on Vinegar Hill -- a loveless house suffused with the settling dust of bitterness and routine -- where calculated cruelty is a way of life preserved and perpetuated in the service of a rigid, exacting and angry God. Behind a facade of false piety, there are sins and secrets in this place that could crush a vibrant young woman's passionate spirit. And here Ellen must find the straight to endure, change, and grow in the all-pervading darkness that threatens to destroy everything she is and everyone she loves.

***Waiting for Sunrise* by William Boyd (2012)**

Vienna, 1913. Lysander Rief, a young English actor in town seeking psychotherapy, is caught up in a feverish affair with a beautiful, enigmatic woman—until she goes to the police to press charges of rape.

Only a frenzied getaway plotted by two mysterious British diplomats saves him from trial. But after Lysander returns to a London on the cusp of war, the traumatic ordeal haunts him at every turn. The men who coordinated his escape recruit him to carry out a brutal murder. His lover shows up at a party, ready to resume their liaison. Suddenly plunged into the dangerous theater of wartime intelligence—a murky world of sex, scandal, and spies—Lysander must unravel a secret that threatens Britain's safety.

***Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen (2006)**

Jacob Janowski's luck had run out--orphaned and penniless, he had no direction until he landed on a rickety train that was home to the Benzini Brothers Most Spectacular Show on Earth. A veterinary student just shy of a degree, he was put in charge of caring for the circus menagerie. It was the Great Depression and for Jacob the circus was both his salvation and a living hell. There he met Marlena, the beautiful equestrian star married to August, the charismatic but brutal animal trainer. And he met Rosie, an untrainable elephant who was the great hope for this third-rate traveling show. The bond that grew among this group of misfits was one of love and trust, and ultimately, it was their only hope for survival.

***Where'd You Go, Bernadette* by Maria Semple (2012)**

When her daughter Bee claims a family trip to Antarctica as a reward for perfect grades, Bernadette, a fiercely intelligent shut-in, throws herself into preparations for the trip. But worn down by years of trying to live the Seattle life she never wanted, Ms. Fox is on the brink of a meltdown. And after a school fundraiser goes disastrously awry at her hands, she disappears, leaving her family to pick up the pieces--which is exactly what Bee does, weaving together an elaborate web of emails, invoices, and school memos that reveals a secret past Bernadette has been hiding for decades. *Where'd You Go Bernadette* is an ingenious and unabashedly entertaining novel about a family coming to terms with who they are and the power of a daughter's love for her mother.

***The Whistling Season* by Ivan Doig (2006)**

"Can't cook but doesn't bite." So begins the newspaper ad offering the services of an "A-1 housekeeper, sound morals, exceptional disposition" that draws the hungry attention of widower Oliver Milliron in the fall of 1909. And so begins the unforgettable season that deposits the noncooking, nonbiting, ever-whistling Rose Llewellyn and her font-of-knowledge brother, Morris Morgan, in Marias Coulee along with a stampede of homesteaders drawn by the promise of the Big Ditch--a gargantuan irrigation project intended to make the Montana prairie bloom. When the schoolmarm runs off with an itinerant preacher, Morris is pressed into service, setting the stage for the "several kinds of education"--none of them of the textbook variety--Morris and Rose will bring to Oliver, his three sons, and the rambunctious students in the region's one-room schoolhouse. A paean to a vanished way of life and the eccentric individuals and idiosyncratic institutions that made it fertile, *The Whistling Season* is Ivan Doig at his evocative best.

***White Oleander* by Janet Fitch (1999)**

Everywhere hailed as a novel of rare beauty and power, *White Oleander* tells the unforgettable story of Ingrid, a brilliant poet imprisoned for murder, and her daughter, Astrid, whose odyssey through a series of Los Angeles foster homes--each its own universe, with its own laws, its own dangers, its own hard lessons to be learned--becomes a redeeming and surprising journey of self-discovery.

***Wicked: the Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West* by Gregory Maguire (1995)**

When Dorothy triumphed over the Wicked Witch of the West in L. Frank Baum's classic tale we heard only her side of the story. But what about her arch-nemesis, the mysterious Witch? Where did she come from? How did she become so wicked? And what is the true nature of evil? Gregory Maguire creates a fantasy world so rich and vivid that we will never look at Oz the same way again. *Wicked* is about a land where animals talk and strive to be treated like first-class citizens, Munchkinlanders seek the comfort of middle-class stability, and the Tin Man becomes a victim of domestic violence. And then there is the little

green-skinned girl named Elphaba, who will grow up to become the infamous Wicked Witch of the West, a smart, prickly, and misunderstood creature who challenges all our preconceived notions about the nature of good and evil.

ADULT NONFICTION

***Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt (1996)**

The Pulitzer Prize winning memoir of Frank McCourt, born in Depression-era Brooklyn to recent Irish immigrants and raised in the slums of Limerick, Ireland. Frank's mother, Angela, has no money to feed the children since Frank's father, Malachy, rarely works, and when he does he drinks his wages. Yet Malachy-- exasperating, irresponsible and beguiling-- does nurture in Frank an appetite for the one thing he can provide: a story. Frank lives for his father's tales of Cuchulain, who saved Ireland, and of the Angel on the Seventh Step, who brings his mother babies. Perhaps it is story that accounts for Frank's survival. Wearing rags for diapers, begging a pig's head for Christmas dinner and gathering coal from the roadside to light a fire, Frank endures poverty, near-starvation and the casual cruelty of relatives and neighbors-- yet lives to tell his tale with eloquence, exuberance and remarkable forgiveness.

***The Bad-Ass Librarians of Timbuktu* by Joshua Hammer (2016)**

To save precious centuries-old Arabic texts from Al Qaeda, a band of librarians in Timbuktu pulls off a brazen heist. In the 1980s, a young adventurer and collector for a government library, Abdel Kader Haidara, journeyed across the Sahara Desert and along the Niger River, tracking down and salvaging tens of thousands of ancient Islamic and secular manuscripts that had fallen into obscurity. *The Bad-Ass Librarians of Timbuktu* tells the incredible story of how Haidara, a mild-mannered archivist and historian from the legendary city of Timbuktu, later became one of the world's greatest and most brazen smugglers. In 2012, thousands of Al Qaeda militants from northwest Africa seized control of most of Mali, including Timbuktu. They imposed Sharia law, chopped off the hands of accused thieves, stoned to death unmarried couples, and threatened to destroy the great manuscripts. As the militants tightened their control over Timbuktu, Haidara organized a dangerous operation to sneak all 350,000 volumes out of the city to the safety of southern Mali. Over the past twenty years, journalist Joshua Hammer visited Timbuktu numerous times and is uniquely qualified to tell the story of Haidara's heroic and ultimately successful effort to outwit Al Qaeda and preserve Mali's—and the world's—literary patrimony. Hammer explores the city's manuscript heritage and offers never-before-reported details about the militants' march into northwest Africa. But above all, *The Bad-Ass Librarians of Timbuktu* is an inspiring account of the victory of art and literature over extremism.

***Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?* by Roz Chast (2014)**

In her first memoir, New Yorker cartoonist Roz Chast brings her signature wit to the topic of aging parents. Spanning the last several years of their lives and told through four-color cartoons, family photos, and documents, and a narrative as rife with laughs as it is with tears, Chast's memoir is both comfort and comic relief for anyone experiencing the life-altering loss of elderly parents. While the particulars are Chast-ian in their idiosyncrasies--an anxious father who had relied heavily on his wife for stability as he slipped into dementia and a former assistant principal mother whose overbearing personality had sidelined Roz for decades--the themes are universal: adult children accepting a parental role; aging and unstable parents leaving a family home for an institution; dealing with uncomfortable physical intimacies; and hiring strangers to provide the most personal care. An amazing portrait of two lives at their end and an only child coping as best she can, *Can't We Talk about Something More Pleasant?* shows the full range of Roz Chast's talent as cartoonist and storyteller.

***Daughters of the Samurai: A Journey from East to West and Back* by Janice P. Nimura (2015)**

In 1871, five young girls were sent by the Japanese government to the United States. Their mission: learn Western ways and return to help nurture a new generation of enlightened men to lead Japan. Raised in traditional samurai households during the turmoil of civil war, three of these unusual ambassadors—Sutematsu Yamakawa, Shige Nagai, and Ume Tsuda—grew up as typical American schoolgirls. Upon their arrival in San Francisco they became celebrities, their travels and traditional clothing exclaimed over by newspapers across the nation. As they learned English and Western customs, their American friends grew to love them for their high spirits and intellectual brilliance. The passionate relationships they formed reveal an intimate world of cross-cultural fascination and connection. Ten years later, they returned to Japan—a land grown foreign to them—determined to revolutionize women’s education. Based on in-depth archival research in Japan and in the United States, including decades of letters exchanged between the three women and their American host families, *Daughters of the Samurai* is beautifully, cinematically written, a fascinating lens through which to view an extraordinary historical moment.

***The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair That Changed America* by Erik Larson (2003)**

Author Erik Larson imbues the incredible events surrounding the 1893 Chicago World's Fair with such drama that readers may find themselves checking the book's categorization to be sure that *The Devil in the White City* is not, in fact, a highly imaginative novel. Larson tells the stories of two men: Daniel H. Burnham, the architect responsible for the fair's construction, and H.H. Holmes, a serial killer masquerading as a charming doctor. Burnham's challenge was immense. In a short period of time, he was forced to overcome the death of his partner and numerous other obstacles to construct the famous "White City" around which the fair was built. His efforts to complete the project, and the fair's incredible success, are skillfully related along with entertaining appearances by such notables as Buffalo Bill Cody, Susan B. Anthony, and Thomas Edison. The activities of the sinister Dr. Holmes, who is believed to be responsible for scores of murders around the time of the fair, are equally remarkable. He devised and erected the World's Fair Hotel, complete with crematorium and gas chamber, near the fairgrounds and used the event as well as his own charismatic personality to lure victims.

***Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything Across Italy, India and Indonesia* by Elizabeth Gilbert (2006)**

In her early thirties, Elizabeth Gilbert had everything a modern American woman was supposed to want—husband, country home, successful career—but instead of feeling happy and fulfilled, she was consumed by panic and confusion. This wise and rapturous book is the story of how she left behind all these outward marks of success, and set out to explore three different aspects of her nature, against the backdrop of three different cultures: pleasure in Italy, devotion in India, and on the Indonesian island of Bali, a balance between worldly enjoyment and divine transcendence.

***The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls (2005)**

A tender, moving tale of unconditional love in a family that, despite its profound flaws, gave the author the fiery determination to carve out a successful life on her own terms. Jeannette Walls grew up with parents whose ideals and stubborn nonconformity were both their curse and their salvation. Rex and Rose Mary Walls lived like nomads with their four children, 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." Later, 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.

***How to be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi (2019)**

Antiracism is a transformative concept that reorients and reenergizes the conversation about racism—and, even more fundamentally, points us toward liberating new ways of thinking about ourselves and each other. At its core, racism is a powerful system that creates false hierarchies of human value; its warped logic extends beyond race, from the way we regard people of different ethnicities or skin colors to the way we treat people of different sexes, gender identities, and body types. Racism intersects with class and culture and geography and even changes the way we see and value ourselves. In *How to Be an Antiracist*, Kendi takes readers through a widening circle of antiracist ideas—from the most basic concepts to visionary possibilities—that will help readers see all forms of racism clearly, understand their poisonous consequences, and work to oppose them in our systems and in ourselves.

***The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot (2010)**

Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. She was a poor Southern tobacco farmer who worked the same land as her slave ancestors, yet her cells—taken without her knowledge—became one of the most important tools in medicine. The first “immortal” human cells grown in culture, they are still alive today, though she has been dead for more than sixty years. If you could pile all HeLa cells ever grown onto a scale, they’d weigh more than 50 million metric tons—as much as a hundred Empire State Buildings. HeLa cells were vital for developing the polio vaccine; uncovered secrets of cancer, viruses, and the atom bomb’s effects; helped lead to important advances like in vitro fertilization, cloning, and gene mapping; and have been bought and sold by the billions. Yet Henrietta Lacks remains virtually unknown, buried in an unmarked grave.

***Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer (1996)**

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. His name was Christopher Johnson McCandless. He had given \$25,000 in savings to charity, abandoned his car and most of his possessions, burned all the cash in his wallet, and invented a new life for himself. Four months later, a party of moose hunters found his decomposed body. How McCandless came to die is the unforgettable story of *Into the Wild*.

***It's All Relative: Adventures Up and Down the World's Family Tree* by A. J. Jacobs (2017)**

A.J. Jacobs undergoes a hilarious, heartfelt quest to understand what constitutes family—where it begins and how far it goes—and attempts to untangle the true meaning of the “Family of Humankind.” A.J. Jacobs has received some strange emails over the years, but this note was perhaps the strangest: “You don’t know me, but I’m your eighth cousin. And we have over 80,000 relatives of yours in our database.” That’s enough family members to fill Madison Square Garden four times over. Who are these people, A.J. wondered, and how do I find them? So began Jacobs’s three-year adventure to help build the biggest family tree in history. Jacobs’s journey would take him to all seven continents. He drank beer with a US president, found himself singing with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, and unearthed genetic links to Hollywood actresses and real-life scoundrels. After all, we can choose our friends, but not our family.

***Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books* by Azar Nafisi (2003)**

Every Thursday morning for two years in the Islamic Republic of Iran, a bold and inspired teacher named Azar Nafisi secretly gathered seven of her most committed female students to read forbidden Western classics. As Islamic morality squads staged arbitrary raids in Tehran, fundamentalists seized hold of the universities, and a blind censor stifled artistic expression, the girls in Azar Nafisi's living room risked removing their veils and immersed themselves in the worlds of Jane Austen, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Henry James, and Vladimir Nabokov. In this extraordinary memoir, their stories become intertwined with the ones they are reading. *Reading Lolita in Tehran* is a remarkable exploration of resilience in the face of

tyranny and a celebration of the liberating power of literature.

***Seabiscuit: An American Legend* by Laura Hillenbrand (2001)**

Seabiscuit was one of the most electrifying and popular attractions in sports history and the single biggest newsmaker in the world in 1938, receiving more coverage than FDR, Hitler, or Mussolini. But his success was a surprise to the racing establishment, which had written off the crooked-legged racehorse with the sad tail. Three men changed Seabiscuit's fortunes:

Charles Howard was a onetime bicycle repairman who introduced the automobile to the western United States and became an overnight millionaire. When he needed a trainer for his new racehorses, he hired Tom Smith, a mysterious mustang breaker from the Colorado plains. Smith urged Howard to buy Seabiscuit for a bargain-basement price, then hired as his jockey Red Pollard, a failed boxer who was blind in one eye, half-crippled, and prone to quoting passages from Ralph Waldo Emerson. Over four years, these unlikely partners survived a phenomenal run of bad fortune, conspiracy, and severe injury to transform Seabiscuit into an American sports icon.

***Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption* by Laura Hillenbrand (2010)**

In boyhood, Louis Zamperini was an incorrigible delinquent. As a teenager, he channeled his defiance into running, discovering a prodigious talent that had carried him to the Berlin Olympics. But when World War II began, the athlete became an airman, embarking on a journey that led to a doomed flight on a May afternoon in 1943. When his Army Air Forces bomber crashed into the Pacific Ocean, against all odds, Zamperini survived, adrift on a foundering life raft. Ahead of Zamperini lay thousands of miles of open ocean, leaping sharks, thirst and starvation, enemy aircraft, and, beyond, a trial even greater. Driven to the limits of endurance, Zamperini would answer desperation with ingenuity; suffering with hope, resolve, and humor; brutality with rebellion. His fate, whether triumph or tragedy, would be suspended on the fraying wire of his will.

***We Are Not Here to Be Bystanders* by Linda Sarsour (2020)**

From the Brooklyn bodega her father owned, where Linda learned the real meaning of intersectionality, to protests in the streets of Washington, DC, Linda's experience as a daughter of Palestinian immigrants is a moving portrayal of what it means to find one's voice and use it for the good of others. We follow Linda as she learns the tenets of successful community organizing, and through decades of fighting for racial, economic, gender, and social justice, as she becomes one of the most recognized activists in the nation. We also see her honoring her grandmother's dying wish, protecting her children, building resilient friendships, and mentoring others even as she loses her first mentor in a tragic accident. Throughout, she inspires you to take action as she reaffirms that we are not here to be bystanders.

***Wild: from Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail* by Cheryl Strayed (2012)**

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.

TEEN FICTION

***Before We Were Free* by Julia Alvarez (2007)**

Anita de la Torre never questioned her freedom living in the Dominican Republic. But by her 12th birthday in 1960, most of her relatives have emigrated to the United States, her Tío Toni has disappeared without a trace, and the government's secret police terrorize her remaining family because of their suspected opposition of el Trujillo's dictatorship.

Using the strength and courage of her family, Anita must overcome her fears and fly to freedom, leaving all that she once knew behind.

From renowned author Julia Alvarez comes an unforgettable story about adolescence, perseverance, and one girl's struggle to be free.

***The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak (2006)**

It is 1939. Nazi Germany. The country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier, and will be busier still. By her brother's graveside, Liesel's life is changed when she finds *The Gravedigger's Handbook*, left behind there by accident, partially hidden in the snow. It is her first act of book thievery. So begins a love affair with books and words, as Liesel, with the help of her accordion-playing foster father, learns to read. Soon she is stealing books from Nazi book-burnings, the mayor's wife's library, wherever there are books to be found. But these are dangerous times. When Liesel's foster family hides a Jew in their basement, Liesel's world is both opened up, and closed down. In superbly crafted writing that burns with intensity, award-winning author Markus Zusak has given us one of the most enduring stories of our time.

***Code Name Verity* by Elizabeth E. Wein (2012)**

Oct. 11th, 1943 - A British spy plane crashes in Nazi-occupied France. Its pilot and passenger are best friends. One of the girls has a chance at survival. The other has lost the game before it's barely begun. When "Verity" is arrested by the Gestapo, she's sure she doesn't stand a chance. As a secret agent captured in enemy territory, she's living a spy's worst nightmare. Her Nazi interrogators give her a simple choice: reveal her mission or face a grisly execution. As she intricately weaves her confession, Verity uncovers her past, how she became friends with the pilot Maddie, and why she left Maddie in the wrecked fuselage of their plane. On each new scrap of paper, Verity battles for her life, confronting her views on courage and failure and her desperate hope to make it home. But will trading her secrets be enough to save her from the enemy? Harrowing and beautifully written, Elizabeth Wein creates a visceral read of danger, resolve, and survival that shows just how far true friends will go to save each other. Code Name Verity is an outstanding novel that will stick with you long after the last page.

***The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green (2012)**

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*, by award-winning author John Green, is ambitious and heartbreaking, brilliantly exploring the funny, thrilling, and tragic business of being alive and in love.

***I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* by Erika L. Sánchez (2017)**

When the sister who delighted their parents by her faithful embrace of Mexican culture dies in a tragic accident, Julia, who longs to go to college and move into a home of her own, discovers from mutual friends that her sister may not have been as perfect as believed.

Long Way Down by Jason Reynolds (2017)

As Will, fifteen, sets out to avenge his brother Shawn's fatal shooting, seven ghosts who knew Shawn board the elevator and reveal truths Will needs to know. This stunning novel takes place in sixty potent seconds—the time it takes a kid to decide whether or not he's going to murder the guy who killed his brother. Told in short, fierce staccato narrative verse, *Long Way Down* is a fast and furious, dazzlingly brilliant look at teenage gun violence.

Looking for Alaska by John Green (2005)

Miles “Pudge” Halter is done with his safe life at home. His whole life has been one big non-event, and his obsession with famous last words has only made him crave “the Great Perhaps” even more (Francois Rabelais, poet). He heads off to the sometimes crazy and anything-but-boring world of Culver Creek Boarding School, and his life becomes the opposite of safe. Because down the hall is Alaska Young. The gorgeous, clever, funny, sexy, self-destructive, screwed up, and utterly fascinating Alaska Young. She is an event unto herself. She pulls Pudge into her world, launches him into the Great Perhaps, and steals his heart. Then. . . nothing is ever the same.

Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children by Ransom Riggs (2011)

A mysterious island. An abandoned orphanage. A strange collection of very curious photographs. It all waits to be discovered in *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*, an unforgettable novel that mixes fiction and photography in a thrilling reading experience. As our story opens, a horrific family tragedy sets sixteen-year-old Jacob journeying to a remote island off the coast of Wales, where he discovers the crumbling ruins of Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children. As Jacob explores its abandoned bedrooms and hallways, it becomes clear that the children were more than just peculiar. They may have been dangerous. They may have been quarantined on a deserted island for good reason. And somehow-impossible though it seems-they may still be alive. A spine-tingling fantasy illustrated with haunting vintage photography, *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* will delight adults, teens, and anyone who relishes an adventure in the shadows.

Paper Towns by John Green (2008)

Quentin Jacobsen has spent a lifetime loving the magnificent Margo Roth Spiegelman from afar. So when she cracks open a window and climbs back into his life—summoning him for an ingenious campaign of revenge—he follows. When their all-nighter ends and a new day breaks, Margo has disappeared. But Q soon learns that there are clues—and they're for him. Embarking on an exhilarating adventure to find her, the closer Q gets, the less he sees the girl he thought he knew.

Thirteen Reasons Why by Jay Asher (2007)

Clay Jensen returns home from school to find a strange package with his name on it lying on his porch. Inside he discovers several cassette tapes recorded by Hannah Baker—his classmate and crush—who committed suicide two weeks earlier. Hannah's voice tells him that there are thirteen reasons why she decided to end her life. Clay is one of them. If he listens, he'll find out why. Clay spends the night crisscrossing his town with Hannah as his guide. He becomes a firsthand witness to Hannah's pain, and as he follows Hannah's recorded words throughout his town, what he discovers changes his life forever.

TEEN NONFICTION**Night by Elie Wiesel (1958)**

Born in the town of Sighet, Transylvania, Elie Wiesel was a teenager when he and his family were taken from their home in 1944 to Auschwitz concentration camp, and then to Buchenwald. *Night* is the terrifying record of Elie Wiesel's memories of the death of his family, the death of his own innocence, and his despair as a deeply observant Jew confronting the absolute evil of man. Elie Wiesel provides a

testimony to what happened in the camps and of his unforgettable message that this horror must never be allowed to happen again.

CHILDREN'S FICTION

***Black Beauty* by Anna Sewell (1877)**

Black Beauty spends his youth in a loving home, surrounded by friends and cared for by his owners. But when circumstances change, he learns that not all humans are so kind. Passed from hand to hand, Black Beauty witnesses love and cruelty, wealth and poverty, friendship and hardship. Black Beauty was written in 1877 and was subtitled "The Autobiography of a Horse." It quickly became known as the best-loved animal story. In addition to this, the book achieved its aim to "induce kindness, sympathy and an understanding treatment of horses." The story was used first by George Angell, founder of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and then by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. At a time when horses were relied upon for transport, the horse was the animal most likely to be abused. This book, by telling the story through the eyes of the animal, changed people's attitudes.

***Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott (1868)**

The adventures of the four March sisters, each with their distinct and realistic virtues and flaws: Tomboyish, ambitious Jo; frail and sweet Beth; beautiful, confident Meg; and artistic, willful Amy. With their patient mother Marmee, they survive the hardship of the Civil War and the dramas and tragedies of family life.

***Redwall* by Brian Jacques (1986)**

The question in this first volume is resoundingly clear: What can the peace-loving mice of Redwall Abbey do to defend themselves against Cluny the Scourge and his battle-seasoned army of rats? If only they had the sword of Martin the Warrior, they might have a chance. But the legendary weapon has long been forgotten—except, that is, by the bumbling young apprentice Matthias, who becomes the unlikeliest of heroes. Teeming with riddles, humor, unforgettable characters, and high-bounding adventure, the original *Redwall* was the launching point for a series that has captured the world's attention.

***Wonder* by R. J. Palacio (2012)**

August Pullman was born with a facial difference that, up until now, has prevented him from going to a mainstream school. Starting 5th grade at Beecher Prep, he wants nothing more than to be treated as an ordinary kid—but his new classmates can't get past Auggie's extraordinary face. *Wonder*, a *New York Times* bestseller, begins from Auggie's point of view, but soon switches to include his classmates, his sister, her boyfriend, and others. These perspectives converge in a portrait of one community's struggle with empathy, compassion, and acceptance.

***The Yearling* by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings (1938)**

An instant bestseller when it was released in 1938, this Pulitzer Prize winner has been read and loved by school-age children across the nation for more than fifty years. In this classic story of the Baxter family and their wild, hard, and satisfying life in remote central Florida, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings has written one of the great novels of our times. A rich and varied tale -- tender in its understanding of boyhood, crowded with the excitement of the backwoods hunt, with vivid descriptions of the primitive, beautiful hammock country, written with humor and earthy philosophy -- *The Yearling* is a novel for readers of all ages. Its glowing picture of a life refreshingly removed from modern patterns of living is universal in its revelation of simple courageous people and the beliefs they must live by.

ESPAÑOL

FICCIÓN PARA ADULTOS

***En El Tiempo de las Mariposas* por Julia Alvarez (1998)**

Es el 25 de noviembre de 1960 y se han encontrado tres hermosas hermanas cerca de su Jeep destrozado al pie de un acantilado de 150 pies en la costa norte de la República Dominicana. El periódico oficial del estado informa que sus muertes fueron accidentales. No menciona que vive una cuarta hermana.

Tampoco explica que las hermanas estuvieran entre los principales opositores a la dictadura del general Rafael Leonidas Trujillo. No tiene por qué ser así. Todo el mundo sabe de “Las Mariposas.”

En esta extraordinaria novela, las voces de los cuatro istras: Minerva, Patria, María Teresa y la superviviente Dedé, hablan a lo largo de las décadas para contar sus propias historias, desde cintas para el pelo y amores secretos hasta el tráfico de armas y la tortura en la cárcel, y para describir los horrores cotidianos de la vida bajo el gobierno de Trujillo. A través del arte y la magia de la imaginación de Julia Álvarez, las mariposas martirizadas vuelven a vivir en esta novela de coraje y amor, y el costo humano de la opresión política.

***La Casa en Mango Street* escrito por Sandra Cisneros (1991)**

Elogiado por la crítica, admirado por lectores de todas las edades, en escuelas y universidades de todo el país y traducido a una multitud de idiomas, *La Casa en Mango Street* es la extraordinaria historia de Esperanza Cordero. Contado a través de una serie de viñetas —a veces desgarradoras, a veces profundamente alegres— es el relato de una niña latina que crece en un barrio de Chicago, inventando por sí misma en qué y en quién se convertirá. Pocos libros de nuestra era han conmovido a tantos lectores.

***Los Minutos Negros* escrito por Martín Solares (2010)**

Para resolver el asesinato de un periodista en la calurosa ciudad de Paracuán, Tamaulipas, en el Golfo de México, un policía muy poco inteligente debe investigar un crimen ocurrido veinte años antes. Sin embargo, a medida que se sumerge en los bajos fondos del puerto, empieza a dudar de la identidad del asesino que busca. ¿Será el mismo que mató a aquel grupo de niñas a mediados de los años setenta? ¿Fue el narco incipiente? ¿Un miembro de la siniestra y casi invisible policía secreta que asoló México durante decenios? ¿O sus poco honorables colegas en la comandancia? Por extraño que parezca, el caso parece invocar a la figura del misterioso escritor B. Traven, así como a uno de los mejores detectives de América Latina, el legendario doctor Quiroz Cuarón, a un cantante de música tropical con cara de angelito, a un elemento del FBI con peculiares ideas sobre los extraterrestres y a un inspector desaparecido en tenebrosas circunstancias. Entre el testimonio de un ex policía con un sentido del humor negrísimo y el de un tímido jesuita aficionado al vodka y a la mentira en dosis elevadas, el detective deberá explorar el enigma de su misión, con un agravante: la vida, en esta ciudad tropical, funciona como una oscura sinfonía donde todos los integrantes del coro tienen deudas con la ley.

***Rumbo al Hermoso Norte* escrito por Luis Alberto Urrea (2009)**

Nayeli es una chica de diecinueve años que trabaja en una taquería de tres Camarones, un poblado mexicano. Ve en sueños a su padre, que emigró al norte cuando era niña. Recientemente se ha dado cuenta de que su padre no es el único hombre que se ha ido del pueblo, de hecho, ya casi no quedan hombres, todos se han ido al otro lado, a los Estados Unidos. Un grupo de narcotraficantes también se ha percatado de ese hecho y ven la oportunidad para apoderarse. Pero una noche, durante la

exhibición de la película *Los Siete Magníficos*, Nayeli tiene una revelación: Debe dirigirse al norte a reclutar sus propios Siete Magníficos, para que la protejan de los criminales y que ayuden a repoblar Tres Camarones. Ella y sus amigas viajan al norte y en el camino hacia esa extraña y fascinante tierra de sus sueños, ese mítico lugar donde su padre desapareció, van sumando una colección de inusitados y sorprendentes aliados. La meta es un poblado del estado de Illinois, donde Nayeli espera encontrar a su padre y reclutar a sus guerreros. Con suerte, hará realidad también su destino.

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