

# A Bag of Books For Your Book Discussion Group

Genesee District Library encourages book discussion groups. We think books are meant to be shared whether reading a funny verse to a toddler, talking about something wonderful found in a book, or recommending an author to a friend. A book group is for sharing thoughts about a particular book and following the themes wherever they lead the group. Several established groups meet in our libraries. New groups can be started by just talking to a branch librarian.



GDL offers a great resource for book discussion groups anywhere in its service area. Whether you are thinking of starting a reading group or belong to an established group, we have a Bag of Books for you! The Library provides your group with a special bag containing:

- Ten copies of a title (see the attached list)
- A folder containing program information and reading guides for the title.

Many of these titles are also available for download from the GDL Digital Library.

Currently available Bags of Books are checked out for six weeks and can be picked up at your local GDL location. For more information about this program please contact Karen Bailey @ (810)789-2800.

## **Join our e-mail list!**

The GDL has set up an e-mail list that you can join for free to learn of new titles added to the collection, special book club events, and other important announcements. You can subscribe to this list, send messages to the list members, and see an archive of previously sent messages at:

<http://mailman.thegd.org/mailman/listinfo/bagofbooks>

Art of Racing in the Rain by **Garth Stein** (321 pages)

On the eve of his death, Enzo, a philosopher dog with a nearly human soul and an obsession with opposable thumbs, takes stock of his life. In the end, despite what he sees as his own limitations, Enzo comes through heroically to preserve the Swift family holding in his heart the dream that Denny will become a racing champion with Zoe at his side.

At Home in Mitford by **Jan Karon** (720 pages)

As part of a series of five books, "At Home In Mitford" which introduces the reader to Father Tim, a cherished Episcopalian rector in the town of Mitford. The residents of Mitford will surely come to take up residence in your heart as you read through this heartwarming series of miracles, love, mysteries and everyday life which take you into the lives of Mitford's charming, eccentric, and lovable citizens including Father Tim's big black dog, Barnabas, who can be instructed to behave with a mere verse of scripture!

Atonement by **Ian McEwan** (368 pages)

In 1935 England, thirteen-year-old Briony Tallis witnesses an event involving her sister Cecilia and her childhood friend Robbie Turner, and she becomes the victim of her own imagination, which leads her on a lifelong search for truth and absolution.

Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress by **Dai Sijie** (184 pages)

During the Chinese Cultural Revolution, two boys are sent to the country for reeducation, where their lives take an unexpected turn when they meet the beautiful daughter of a local tailor and stumble upon a forbidden stash of Western literature.

Bee Season by **Myla Goldberg** (274 pages)

An ordinary girl with an exceptional gift for spelling, young Eliza Naumann embarks on the rough-and-tumble "spelling bee" circuit, where her quirky family will collide with the harsh realities of life.

Best Friends Forever by **Jennifer Weiner** (362 pages)

Addie Downs and Valerie Adler will be best friends forever. That's what Addie believes after Valerie moves across the street when they're both nine years old. But in the wake of betrayal during their teenage years, Val is swept into the popular crowd, while mousy, sullen Addie becomes her school's scapegoat.

Flash-forward fifteen years; Valerie Adler has found a measure of fame and fortune working as the weathergirl at the local TV station. Addie Downs lives alone in her parents' house in their small hometown of Pleasant Ridge, Illinois, caring for a troubled brother and trying to meet Prince Charming on the Internet. She's just returned from Bad Date #6 when she opens her door to find her long-gone best friend standing there, a terrified look on her face and blood on the sleeve of her coat. "Something horrible has happened," Val tells Addie, "and you're the only one who can help."

**Book Thief by Markus Zusak (552 pages)**

Liesel Meminger is a young girl living near Munich in Nazi Germany. Liesel is scratching out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she discovers something she can't resist – books. Soon she is stealing from Nazi book-burnings, the mayor's wife's library, wherever they are to be found.

**Chosen by a Horse by Susan Richards (256 pages)**

The horse Susan Richards chose for rescue wouldn't be corralled into her waiting trailer. But Lay Me Down, a former racehorse with a foal close on her heels, walked right up that ramp and into Susan's life. Weak from malnutrition, Lay Me Down had endured a rough road, but somehow her heart was still open and generous. Then fate brought her into Susan's paddock, where she taught this brokenhearted woman how to embrace the joys of life despite the dangers of living.

**Cinnamon Kiss by Walter Mosley (320 pages)**

Easy Rawlins series - Easy's progress is never smooth and his achievements (responsible job, son and daughter both flowering, loving woman in his house, friends and even a grudging respect from local authorities) always fragile. Now, at the height of the Vietnam War era, it all threatens to collapse. Daughter Feather's mysterious illness is the proximate cause, and only an expensive Swiss clinic offers hope. Needing the nearly impossible sum of \$35,000, Easy considers assisting his dangerous pal, Raymond "Mouse" Alexander, with a robbery. But he decides instead to try his luck on a missing persons job brokered by white friend and PI Saul Lynx. Easy leaves Los Angeles for San Francisco, where his new employer puts him on the trail of a wealthy and eccentric lawyer and the lawyer's exotic lover, a girl known as Cinnamon, who have disappeared. As ever, Mosley is able to capture the era—hippies, Watts, communes—in brief strokes that provide a brilliant background to Easy's search for solutions to both a convoluted mystery and complex personal problems.

**The Confession by John Grisham (418 pages)**

*An innocent man is about to be executed. Only a guilty man can save him.*

For every innocent man sent to prison, there is a guilty one left on the outside. He doesn't understand how the police and prosecutors got the wrong man, and he certainly doesn't care. He just can't believe his good luck. Time passes and he realizes that the mistake will not be corrected: the authorities believe in their case and are determined to get a conviction. He may even watch the trial of the person wrongly accused of his crime. He is relieved when the verdict is guilty. He laughs when the police and prosecutors congratulate themselves. He is content to allow an innocent person to go to prison, to serve hard time, even to be executed.

Now nine years have passed. Travis has just been paroled in Kansas for a different crime; Donte is four days away from his execution. Travis suffers from an inoperable brain tumor. For the first time in his miserable life, he decides to do what's right and confess. But how can a guilty man convince lawyers, judges, and politicians that they're about to execute an innocent man?

**Confessions of a Shopaholic by Sophie Kinsella (310 pages)**

Millions of readers have come to adore New York Times best-selling author Sophie Kinsella's irrepressible heroine. Meet Becky Bloomwood, America's favorite shopaholic—a young woman

with a big heart, big dreams...and just one little weakness. Becky has a fabulous flat in London's trendiest neighborhood, a troupe of glamorous socialite friends, and a closet brimming with the season's must-haves. The only trouble is that she can't actually afford it—not any of it. Her job writing at *Successful Savings* not only bores her to tears, it doesn't pay much at all. And lately Becky's been chased by dismal letters from the bank—letters with large red sums she can't bear to read—and they're getting ever harder to ignore. She tries cutting back, but none of her efforts succeeds. Becky's only consolation is to buy her something ... just a little something.... Finally a story arises that Becky actually cares about, and her front-page article catalyzes a chain of events that will transform her life—and the lives of those around her—forever. Sophie Kinsella has brilliantly tapped into our collective consumer conscience to deliver a novel of our times—and a heroine who grows stronger every time she weakens. Becky's hilarious schemes to pay back her debts are as endearing as they are desperate. Her "confessions" are the perfect pick-me-up when life is hanging in the (bank) balance.

### Conspiracy of Fools by **Kurt Eichenwald** (742 pages)

In late 2001, the Enron Corporation--a darling of the financial world, a company whose executives were friends of presidents and the powerful--imploded virtually overnight, leaving vast wreckage in its wake and sparking a criminal investigation that would last for years. Journalist Eichenwald transforms the Enron scandal into a rip-roaring narrative of epic proportions, suitable for readers of thrillers and business books alike. In the roller-coaster style of a novel, the narrative takes readers behind every closed door--from the Oval Office to the executive suites, from the highest reaches of the Justice Department to the homes and bedrooms of the top officers. It is a tale of global reach--from Houston to Washington, from Bombay to London, from Munich to Sao Paolo--laying out the unbelievable scenes that twisted together to create this shocking true story.

### Coroners Lunch by **Colin Cotterill** (257 pages)

Dr. Siri Paiboun, one of the last doctors left in Laos after the Communist takeover, has been drafted to be a national coroner. He is untrained for the job, but this independent 72 year old has an outstanding qualification for it: curiosity. And he doesn't mind incurring the wrath of the Pary hierarchy as he unravels mysterious murders, because the spirits of the dead are on his side.

### Crow Lake by **Mary Lawson** (291 pages)

A simple trip to town to buy their college bound son a suitcase ends in tragedy for the Morrison family. When their parents are killed in an automobile accident, the 4 Morrison children are left to forge ahead with heartbreaking humor, misunderstandings, resentments, and family love.

### Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time by **Mark Haddon** (221 pages)

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

### The Da Vinci Code by **Dan Brown** (454 pages)

While in Paris on business, Harvard symbologist Robert Langdon receives an urgent late-night phone call: the elderly curator of the Louvre has been murdered inside the museum. Near the body, police have found a baffling cipher. While working to solve the enigmatic riddle, Langdon is stunned to discover it leads to a trail of clues hidden in the works of Da Vinci--clues visible for all to see--yet ingeniously disguised by the painter. Langdon joins forces with a gifted French cryptologist, Sophie Neveu, and learns the late curator was involved in the Priory of Sion--an actual secret society whose members included Sir Isaac Newton, Botticelli, Victor Hugo, and Da Vinci, among others. In a breathless race through Paris, London, and beyond, Langdon and Neveu match wits with a faceless power broker who seems to anticipate their every move. Unless Langdon and Neveu can decipher the labyrinthine puzzle in time, the Priory's ancient secret--and an explosive historical truth--will be lost forever.

### Demon Rumm by **Sandra Brown**

DEMON RUMM centers on the efforts of Hollywood heartthrob Rylan North to study and become the character he plays in his latest movie script. To fully understand Demon Rumm, deceased aeronautical daredevil, North moves into the dead man's house. Kirsten Rumm, Demon's widow, lives there and is writing a book about her husband. She is wary of North, his notoriety and good looks. Kirsten welcomes him to the house but maintains a chilly distance from the actor.

Brown's descriptions are vivid, with emotion described in virile detail. North has set out to win Kirsten's heart, but he discovers a shell against his advances that he cannot crack. The widow perplexes yet fascinates him beyond his mortal self-control. Her indifference to his charisma is the wall he passionately wishes would crumble. It is a seemingly overwhelming obstacle. When North reaches deep into the dead man's persona, rooting out details of Demon's last day alive, before his final flight and subsequent accident, Kirsten's secrets are unveiled.

### Digging to America by **Anne Tyler** (288 pages)

Two families awaiting the arrival of their adopted infant daughters from Korea meet at the airport. The families lives become intertwined after the Donaldsons, a young American couple invite the Yazdan's, Maryam, her son and his Iranian American wife to an arrival party, which becomes an annual event. Maryam, who came to this country thirty-five years earlier, feels her values threatened when she is courted by a newly widowed Donaldson. A penetrating light on the American way as seen from two perspectives, those who are born here and those who are still struggling to fit in .A chance airport encounter between two families--the Donaldsons, and the Iranian-born Yazdans--as both couples await the arrival of an adopted daughter from Korea, prompts an examination about what it means to be an American.

### Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight by **Alexandra Fuller** (301 pages)

Magnificently original and affecting, Fuller's memoir of a childhood dominated by the Rhodesian civil war of 1971-1979 captures the fascinating life of a white family living in one of the most remote regions of Africa. The author sensitively and lovingly conveys the frightening aspects of wartime, her family's personal struggles, and her parents' own racism, all the while retaining a bittersweet sense of humor. 2001.

Eat, Pray, Love by **Elizabeth Gilbert** (334 pages)

Charming, gregarious, spiritually curious, and suffering a disastrous divorce, Elizabeth Gilbert picked herself up and took off for a year of travel. The journey took her to Italy to explore Pleasure, to India to study Devotion, and to Indonesia to find Balance. The result of this meexploration is an engaging, intelligent, and entertaininmoir rich in spiritual insight.

Evening by **Susan Minot** (264 pages)

Now ailing and surrounded by her children, sixty-five-year-old Ann Grant Lord reminisces about a glorious summer weekend some forty years earlier during which she met and lost the love of her life. By the author of Folly.

Eye Contact by **Cammie McGovern** (290 pages)

In the aftermath of a child's shocking murder, the mother of the only witness, an autistic boy, struggles to work through her son's trauma and his communication disabilities in order to help the police to solve the case.

Finger Lickin' Fifteen by **Janet Evanovich** (308 pages)

While recovering from an ill-timed makeup mishap, Lula is a witness to celebrity chef, Stanley Chipotle, losing his head--literally. Now Lula and Stephanie are on the hunt to identify the killers before Lula is next on the chopping block. Meantime, Ranger's recruited Stephanie's help for a top secret mission. Someone on the inside at Rangeman is leaking client information, determined to bring the company down. Can Stephanie hunt down a killer, a traitor, and keep Grandma out of the sauce?

Firefly Lane by **Kristin Hannah** (479 pages)

Firefly Lane is the poignant, powerful story of two women and the friendship that becomes the bulkhead of their lives. For thirty years, Tully and Kate buoy each other through lilfe, weathering the storms of friendship--jealousy, anger, hurt, resentment. They think they've survived it all until a single act of betrayal tears them apart...and puts their courage and friendship to the ultimate test.

Founding Mothers by **Cokie Roberts** (278 pages)

Focusing mainly on the wives, daughters, sisters, and mothers of the Founding Fathers, this lively and engaging title chronicles the adventures and contributions of numerous women of the era between 1740 and 1797. While their men were away serving as soldiers, statesmen, or ambassadors, the women's lives were fraught with difficulty and danger. Through it all, they corresponded with their husbands, friends, and even like-minded women in England. Readers will enjoy seeing how many of these individuals showed their mettle when they were still in their teens.

French by Heart by **Rebecca S. Ramsey** (304 pages)

Describes how an American family of five moved from South Carolina suburbia to a town in the middle of France and the dramatic changes in their lives as the entire family embraced a whole new culture and language.

French Lieutenant's Woman by **John Fowles** (467 pages)

Sarah Woodruff lives in the Coastal town of Lyme Regis, as a disgraced woman, supposedly ill-used by a French naval officer who turned out to be married. She soon catches the attention of Charles Smithson, and a clandestine and convention defying relationship begins.

Friday Night Knitting Club by **Kate Jacobs** (345 pages)

As a single mom in her late 30s, Georgia has her hands full juggling the demands of running the Walker & Daughter knitting store with the challenges of raising her spunky teen daughter, Dakota. Georgia's regular customers gather once a week to work on their latest projects and chat.

Girl Named Zippy by **Haven Kimmel** (275 pages)

When Haven Kimmel was born in 1965, Mooreland, Indiana, was a sleepy little hamlet of three hundred people. Nicknamed "Zippy" for the way she would bolt around the house, this small girl was possessed of big eyes and even bigger ears. In this witty and lovingly told memoir, Kimmel takes readers back to a time when small-town America was caught in the amber of the innocent postwar period—people helped their neighbors, went to church on Sunday, and kept barnyard animals in their backyards. Laced with fine storytelling, sharp wit, dead-on observations, and moments of sheer joy, Haven Kimmel's straight-shooting portrait of her childhood gives us a heroine who is wonderfully sweet and sly as she navigates the quirky adult world that surrounds Zippy.

Girl With a Pearl Earring by **Tracy Chevalier** (233 pages)

A poor seventeenth-century servant girl knows her place in the household of the painter Johannes Vermeer, but when he begins to paint her, nasty whispers and rumors circulate throughout the town.

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo by **Stieg Larsson** (465 pages)

It's about the disappearance forty years ago of Harriet Vanger, a young scion of one of the wealthiest families in Sweden . . . and about her octogenarian uncle, determined to know the truth about what he believes was her murder. It's about Mikael Blomkvist, a crusading journalist recently at the wrong end of a libel case, hired to get to the bottom of Harriet's disappearance . . . and about Lisbeth Salander, a twenty-four-year-old pierced and tattooed genius hacker possessed of the hard-earned wisdom of someone twice her age—and a terrifying capacity for ruthlessness to go with it—who assists Blomkvist with the investigation. This unlikely team discovers a vein of nearly unfathomable iniquity running through the Vanger family, astonishing corruption in the highest echelons of Swedish industrialism—and an unexpected connection between themselves.

Glass Castle by **Jeannette Walls** (288 pages)

The second child of a scholarly, alcoholic father and an eccentric artist mother discusses her family's nomadic upbringing from the Arizona desert, to Las Vegas, to an Appalachian mining town, during which her siblings and she fended for themselves while their parents outmaneuvered bill collectors and the authorities.

Good Good Pig by **Sy Montgomery** (272 pages)

When author Sy Montgomery brought home the runt of the pig litter as a pet, she never imagined how much he would grow and enrich the lives of all those who came in contact with him. This amazing pig not only thrived, but he reached 750 pounds of exuberance and free spirit. Christopher Hogwood was not just sociable and amusing, but he was also a catalyst for humans around him to help and support each other.

Grace by **Richard Paul Evans** (192 pages)

She was my first kiss, my first love. She was a little match girl who could see the future in the flame of a candle. She was a runaway who taught me more about life than anyone has before or since. And when she was gone my innocence left with her. As I begin to write, a part of me feels as if I am awakening something best left dead and buried, or at least buried. We can bury the past, but it never really dies. The experience of that winter has grown on my soul like ivy climbing the outside of a home, growing until it begins to tear and tug at the brick and mortar. I pray I can still get the story right. My memory, like my eyesight, has waned with age. Still, there are things that become clearer to me as I grow older. This much I know: too many things were kept secret in those days. Things that never should have been hidden; and things that should have.

Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society by **Mary Ann Shaffer**(290 pages)

In January of 1946, Juliet Ashton receives a letter from Dawsey Adams, a founding member of the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society. And so begins a remarkable tale of the island of Guernsey during the German Occupation, and of a society as extraordinary as its name.

Haunting of Hill House by **Shirley Jackson** (208 pages)

First published in 1959, Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House* has been hailed as a perfect work of unnerving terror. It is the story of four seekers who arrive at a notoriously unfriendly pile called Hill House: Dr. Montague, an occult scholar looking for solid evidence of a "haunting"; Theodora, his lighthearted assistant; Eleanor, a friendless, fragile young woman well acquainted with poltergeists; and Luke, the future heir of Hill House. At first, their stay seems destined to be merely a spooky encounter with inexplicable phenomena. But Hill House is gathering its powers--and soon it will choose one of them to make its own.

The Help by **Kathryn Stockett** (451 pages)

In Jackson, Mississippi, in 1962, there are lines that are not crossed. With the civil rights movement exploding all around them, three women start a movement of their own, forever changing a town and the way women--black and white, mothers and daughters--view one another.

Hemingway Book Club of Kosovo by **Paula Huntley** (226 pages)

The author recounts her experiences as an English teacher for Kosovo Albanians and how her students formed a book club that brought them together and helped them work through their painful war experiences.

The Hot Flash Club by **Nancy Thayer** (324 pages)

This is "Sex and the City" 20 years later. **Meet Faye, Shirley, Marilyn, and Alice**, four mature women with different life styles and problems, who meet, eat, and scheme. They help each other, their friends and their grown children. They change clothes, jobs, and men. Their friendship illuminates strengths they never knew they had, and solutions they never would have dreamed of alone.

House of Sand and Fog by **Andre Dubus III** (365 pages)

In this riveting novel of almost unbearable suspense, three fragile yet determined people become dangerously entangled in a relentlessly escalating crisis. Colonel Behrani, once a wealthy man in Iran, is now a struggling immigrant willing to bet everything he has to restore his family's dignity. Kathy Nicolo is a troubled young woman whose house is all she has left, and who refuses to let her hard-won stability slip away from her. Sheriff Lester Burdon, a married man who finds he is falling in love with Kathy, becomes obsessed with helping her fight for justice.

Drawn by their competing desires to the same small house in the California hills and doomed by their tragic inability to understand one another, the three converge in an explosive collision course. Combining unadorned realism with profound empathy, *House of Sand and Fog* marks the arrival of a major new voice in American fiction. (*From the publisher.*)

House Rules by **Jodi Picoult** (529 pages)

HOUSE RULES is about Jacob Hunt, a teenage boy with Asperger's Syndrome. He's hopeless at reading social cues or expressing himself well to others, and like many kids with AS, Jacob has a special focus on one subject – in his case, forensic analysis.

He's always showing up at crime scenes, thanks to the police scanner he keeps in his room, and telling the cops what they need to do...and he's usually right. But then one day his tutor is found dead, and the police come to question him. All of the hallmark behaviors of Asperger's – not looking someone in the eye, stimulatory tics and twitches, inappropriate affect – can look a heck of a lot like guilt to law enforcement personnel -- and suddenly, Jacob finds himself accused of murder.

In the Woods by **Tana French** (464 pages)

As dusk approaches a small Dublin suburb in the summer of 1984, mothers begin to call their children home. But on this warm evening, three children do not return from the dark and silent woods. When the police arrive, they find only one of the children gripping a tree trunk in terror, wearing blood-filled sneakers, and unable to recall a single detail of the previous hours.

Jane Austen Book Club by **Karen Joy Fowler** (288 pages)

As six Californians get together to form a book club to discuss the novels of Jane Austen, their lives are turned upside down by troubled marriages, illicit affairs, changing relationships, and love.

Julie and Julia by **Julie Powell** (307 pages)

Nearing 30 and trapped in a dead-end secretarial job, Julie Powell resolved to reclaim her life by cooking, in the span of a single year, every one of the 524 recipes in Julia Child's legendary *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*. Her unexpected reward: not just a newfound respect for calves' livers and aspic, but a new life--lived with gusto.

Kindred by **Octavia E. Butler** (264 pages)

Dana, a modern black woman, is celebrating her twenty-sixth birthday with her new husband, when she is abruptly snatched from her home in present California and transported back to the antebellum South. Rufus, the white son of a plantation owner, is drowning; and Dana has been summoned across the years to save him. After this first summons, Dana is drawn back again and again to the plantation to protect Rufus and ensure that he will grow to manhood and father the daughter who is to become her ancestor. Each time, however, the stays grow longer and more dangerous until it is uncertain whether or not Dana's life will end, long before it has even begun.

Kite Runner by **Khaled Hosseini** (371 pages)

Traces the unlikely friendship of Amir, a wealthy Afghanistani youth, and a servant's son, in a tale that spans the final days of the nation's monarchy through the atrocities of the present day.

The Lake Shore Limited by **Sue Miller**

Four unforgettable characters beckon you into this spellbinding novel. First among them is Wilhelmina--Billy--Gertz, small as a child, fiercely independent, powerfully committed to her work as a playwright. The story itself centers on "The Lake Shore Limited"--a play Billy has written about an imagined terrorist bombing of that train as it pulls into Union Station in Chicago, and about a man waiting to hear the fate of his estranged wife, who is traveling on it. Billy had waited in just such a way on 9/11 to hear whether her lover, Gus, was on one of the planes used in the attack. The novel moves from the snow-filled woods of Vermont to the rainy brick sidewalks of Boston as the lives of the other characters intersect and interweave with Billy's: Leslie, Gus's sister, still driven by grief years after her brother's death; Rafe, the actor who rises to greatness in a performance inspired by a night of incandescent lovemaking; and Sam, a man irresistibly drawn to Billy after he sees the play that so clearly displays the terrible conflicts and ambivalence of her situation. How Billy has come to create the play out of these emotions, how it is then created anew on the stage, how the performance itself touches and changes the other characters' lives--these form the thread that binds them all together and drives the novel compulsively forward.

The Last Song by **Nicholas Sparks** (390 pages)

Seventeen year old Veronica "Ronnie" Miller's life was turned upside-down when her parents divorced and her father--a former concert pianist and teacher--moved from New York City to Wilmington, North Carolina. Three years later, she remains angry and alienated from her parents, especially her father ... until her mother decides it would be in everyone's best interest if she spent the summer in Wilmington with him. An unforgettable story of love on many levels.

Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid by **Bill Bryson** (268 pages)

Bill Bryson re-creates the life of his family and his native city in the 1950s in all its transcendent normality—a life at once completely familiar to us all and as far away and unreachable as another galaxy. It was, he reminds us, a happy time, when automobiles and televisions and appliances (not to mention nuclear weapons) grew larger and more numerous with each passing year, and DDT, cigarettes, and the fallout from atmospheric testing were considered harmless or even good for you. He brings us into the life of his loving but eccentric family, including affectionate portraits of his father, a gifted sportswriter for the local paper and dedicated practitioner of isometric exercises, and of his mother, whose job as the home furnishing editor for the same paper left her little time for practicing the domestic arts at home.

The Lightning Thief by **Rick Riordan**

It is the first novel in the *Percy Jackson & the Olympians* series, which charts the adventures of a modern-day twelve-year-old Percy Jackson as he discovers he is a demigod, the son of a mortal woman and the Greek god Poseidon. Percy and his friends go on a quest to prevent an apocalyptic war between the Greek gods Zeus, Poseidon and Hades.

Little Bee by Chris Cleave (271 pages)

"Originally published in Great Britain in 2008 by Sceptre, an imprint of Hodder & Stoughton." A haunting novel about the tenuous friendship that blooms between two disparate strangers--one an illegal Nigerian refugee, the other a recent widow from suburban London.

Little Heathens by **Mildred Armstrong Kalish** (290 pages)

Little Heathens offers a loving but realistic portrait of a "hearty-handshake Methodist" family that gave its members a remarkable legacy of kinship, kindness, and remembered pleasures. Recounted in a luminous narrative filled with tenderness and humor, Kalish's memoir of her childhood shows how the right stuff can make even the bleakest of times seem like "quite a romp."

Live to Tell by **Lisa Gardener** (388 pages)

On a warm summer night in one of Boston's working-class neighborhoods, an unthinkable crime has been committed: Four members of a family have been brutally murdered. The father--and possible suspect--now lies clinging to life in the ICU. Murder-suicide? Or something worse? Veteran police detective D. D. Warren is certain of only one thing: There's more to this case than meets the eye.

Danielle Burton is a survivor, a dedicated nurse whose passion is to help children at a locked-down pediatric psych ward. But she remains haunted by a family tragedy that shattered her life nearly twenty-five years ago. The dark anniversary is approaching, and when D. D. Warren and her partner show up at the facility, Danielle immediately realizes: It has started again.

A devoted mother, Victoria Oliver has a hard time remembering what normalcy is like. But she will do anything to ensure that her troubled son has some semblance of a childhood. She will love him no matter what. Nurture him. Keep him safe. Protect him; even when the threat comes from within their house.

### **The Lost Symbol by Dan Brown (509 pages)**

Harvard symbologist Robert Langdon is summoned to give a lecture at the United States Capitol, with the invitation apparently from his mentor, a 33rd degree Mason named Peter Solomon, who is the head of the Smithsonian Institution. Solomon has also asked him to bring a small, sealed package which he had entrusted to Langdon years earlier. When Langdon arrives at the Capitol, however, he learns that the invitation he received was not from Solomon, but from Solomon's kidnapper, Mal'akh, who has left Solomon's severed right hand in the middle of the Capitol Rotunda in a recreation of the Hand of Mysteries. Mal'akh then contacts Langdon, charging him with finding both the Mason's Pyramid, which Masons believe is hidden somewhere underground in Washington D.C., and the Lost Word, lest Solomon be executed.

### **Love in the Time of Cholera by Gabriel García Márquez**

The main female character in the novel, **Fermina Daza**, is the strong axis around which the story revolves. Fermina easily rejects **Florentino Ariza** in their youth when she realizes the naïveté of their first romance, and she weds **Juvenal Urbino** at the age of 21, the "deadline" she had set for herself, ultimately because he seemed to be able to offer security and love to her. Urbino is a medical doctor devoted to science, modernity, and "order and progress." He is committed to the eradication of cholera and to the promotion of public works. He is a rational man whose life is organized precisely and who values his importance and reputation in society to the utmost. He is a herald of progress and modernization.

### **Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold (328 pages)**

Susie Salmon, a 14 year old girl, is murdered by her next door neighbor in suburban Pennsylvania. As she adjusts to her new home in heaven, she also watches life on earth continue without her – her friends trading rumors about her disappearance, her killer trying to cover his tracks, her grief-stricken family unraveling. Though a story of great tragedy and loss, *The Lovely Bones* is a tale of hope, humor, suspense and even joy.

### **Loving Frank by Nancy Horan (400 pages)**

Drawing on years of research, Horan weaves little-known facts into a compelling narrative, vividly portraying the conflicts and struggles of a woman forced to choose between the roles of mother, wife, lover, and intellectual. Horan's Mamah is a woman seeking to find her own place, her own creative calling in the world. Mamah's is an unforgettable journey marked by choices that reshape her notions of love and responsibility, leading inexorably ultimately lead to this novel's stunning conclusion. Elegantly written and remarkably rich in detail, *Loving Frank* is a fitting tribute to a courageous woman, a national icon, and their timeless love story.

**Madonnas of Leningrad by Debra Dean (228 pages)**

As a young woman, Marina worked as a museum guide at the Hermitage in Leningrad. When war broke out and the Germans invaded the city, Marina and her comrades were tasked with removing the museum's priceless treasures and storing them safely away. During the 900 days of siege, the city residents faced devastation, starvation, and cold. The Hermitage's basement became Marina's refuge. The empty picture frames gracing its exhibition halls contained echoes of its former art, providing a distraction that helped Marina survive the horrors of war. Now living in Seattle, Marina is an elderly woman who is sinking into dementia. About to attend her granddaughter's wedding, her past overtakes the present and she is living in a muddled world of war, beauty, and the struggle for survival.

**Maisie Dobbs by Jacqueline Winspear (306 pages)**

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

**Mama Dearest by E. Lynn Harris (384 pages)** Diva supreme Yancey Harrington Braxton is working her way back to Broadway and beyond—and stirring up drama in and out of the spotlight—in the acclaimed *New York Times* bestseller from E. Lynn Harris. After being out on tour, the ambitious singer and actress is fired up to move past her recent setbacks—including an explosive romance with NFL tight end John Basil Henderson—and prove her talents are stronger than ever. What Yancey *really* wants is to star in her own reality TV series, and she's even found a rich and well-connected lover to make it happen. There are, however, two women fierce enough to derail Yancey's comeback dreams: Madison B., a hot new bombshell taking the music industry by storm, and Ava Middlebrooks, who happens to be Yancey's own mama dearest. Not even a stint in prison for attempted murder has curbed Ava's competitive nature. Now she will bring down her #1 rival—her own daughter—by using Madison B. to turn Yancey's world upside-down.

**March by Geraldine Brooks (280 pages)**

Brooks's luminous second novel, after 2001's acclaimed *Year of Wonders*, imagines the Civil War experiences of Mr. March, the absent father in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*. An idealistic Concord cleric, March becomes a Union chaplain and later finds himself assigned to be a teacher on a cotton plantation that employs freed slaves, or "contraband." His narrative begins with cheerful letters home, but March gradually reveals to the reader what he does not to his family: the cruelty and racism of Northern and Southern soldiers, the violence and suffering he is powerless to prevent and his reunion with Grace, a beautiful, educated slave whom he met years earlier as a Connecticut peddler to the plantations.

**Memory Keeper's Daughter by Kim Edwards (401 pages)**

In a tale spanning twenty-five years, a doctor delivers his newborn twin daughter during a snowstorm and, rashly deciding to protect his wife from the baby's affliction with Down Syndrome, turns her over to a nurse, who secretly raises the child.

### My Formerly Hot Life by **Stephanie Dolgoff**

When men stop making lecherous catcalls and Spanx get comfortable in your lingerie drawer, when marketers target you for Activia instead of \$200 premium denim, when you have to start wearing makeup to get that "I'm not wearing any makeup" glow and are "ma'amed" outside the Deep South, it may dawn on you that somehow you have crossed an invisible line: You are not the young, relevant, in-the-mix woman you used to be. But neither are you old, or even what you think of as middle-aged. You are no longer what you were, but not quite sure what you are. Wildly entertaining and inspiring, "My Formerly Hot Life" offers hilarious observations on getting older in today's society, and proves that growing older most certainly means growing better. Annotation: Wildly entertaining and inspiring, "My Formerly Hot Life" offers hilarious observations on getting older in today's society, and proves that growing older most certainly means growing better.

### My Sister's Keeper by **Jodi Picoult** (448 pages)

New York Times bestselling author Jodi Picoult is widely acclaimed for her keen insights into the hearts and minds of real people. Now she tells the emotionally riveting story of a family torn apart by conflicting needs and a passionate love that triumphs over human weakness. 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? Once again, in My Sister's Keeper, Jodi Picoult tackles a controversial real-life subject with grace, wisdom, and sensitivity.

### Nanny Diaries by **Emma McLaughlin and Nicola Kraus** (368 pages)

Nanny, a struggling NYU student, takes a position caring for the son of the rich and glamorous X family, and learns how to juggle a vast array of tasks so that a Park Avenue wife never has to lift a well-manicured finger.

### Next Thing on My List by **Jill Smolinski** (288 pages)

After a car accident in which her passenger, Marissa, dies, June Parker finds herself in possession of a list Marissa has written: "20 Things to Do by My 25th Birthday." The tasks range from inspiring (run a 5K) to daring (go braless) to near-impossible (change someone's life). To assuage her guilt, June races to achieve each goal herself before the deadline, learning more about her own life than she ever bargained for.

### Nickel and Dimed by **Barbara Ehrenreich** (244 pages)

This book has fueled nationwide campaigns for a living wage. Funny, poignant, and passionate, this revelatory firsthand account of life in low-wage America—the story of Barbara Ehrenreich's attempts to seek out a living while working as a waitress, hotel maid, house cleaner, nursing-home aide, and Wal-Mart Associate, has become an essential part of the nation's political discourse.

Night Road by **Kristin Hannah** (385 pages)

Former foster child Lexi has become Mia's best friend, and Mia's twin brother, Zach, has fallen in love with her. The twins' mom, Jude, couldn't be happier that her children are happy—until one dark night when Lexi is implicated in a terrible accident and the family is torn apart. Years later, Jude must consider reconciling with Lexi.

No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency by **Alexander McCall Smith** (235 pages)

Working in Gaborone, Botswana, sleuth Precious Ramotswe investigates several local mysteries, including a search for a missing boy and the case of the clinic doctor with different personalities for different days of the week.

No! I Don't Want to Join a Book Club by **Virginia Ironside** (231 pages)

In her first American release, London journalist Ironside slices through the hullabaloo about reclaiming youth. On the cusp of 60, Marie begins keeping a diary, and the approximately 18 months' worth of entries that make up the narrative offer blunt appraisals of the state of the world, matters of health and family, and the good and bad aspects of the Internet age (cut and paste is good; booking travel online is bad).

Ocean's Apart by **Karen Kingsbury** (352 pages)

Eight years ago, during a stormy weekend on the shores of Hawaii, Connor Evans broke his vows. He's kept his secret, until the woman from Connor's past dies, leaving behind a young son...Michele never thought her family was perfect, but they were happy. Now her family is on the brink of destruction. Will a lonely child help bridge the distance between them before it's too late?

Olive Kitteridge by **Elizabeth Strout** (286 pages)

At times stern, at other times patient, at times perceptive, at other times in sad denial, Olive Kitteridge, a retired schoolteacher, deplors the changes in her little town and in the world at large. As the townspeople grapple with their problems, mild and dire, Olive is brought to a deeper understanding of herself and her life with ruthless honesty.

One Thousand White Women by **Jim Fergus** (304 pages)

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

Other Boleyn Girl by **Philippa Gregory** (735 pages)

Sisterly rivalry is the basis of this fresh, wonderfully vivid retelling of the story of Anne Boleyn. Anne, her sister Mary and their brother George are all brought to the king's court at a young age, as players in their uncle's plans to advance the family's fortunes.

Out Stealing Horses by **Per Petterson** (238 pages)

Out Stealing Horses has been embraced across the world as a classic, a novel of universal relevance and power. Panoramic and gripping, it tells the story of Trond Sander, a sixty-seven-year-old man who has moved from the city to a remote, riverside cabin, only to have all the turbulence, grief, and overwhelming beauty of his youth come back to him one night while he's out on a walk. From the moment Trond sees a strange figure coming out of the dark behind his home, the reader is immersed in a decades-deep story of searching and loss, and in the precise, irresistible prose of a newly crowned master of fiction.

Outliers by **Malcolm Gladwell** (309 pages)

The best-selling author of Blink identifies the qualities of successful people, posing theories about the cultural, family, and idiosyncratic factors that shape high achievers, in a resource that covers such topics as the secrets of software billionaires, why certain cultures are associated with better academic performance, and why the Beatles earned their fame.

Peace Like a River by **Leif Enger** (320 pages)

Equal parts tragedy, romance, adventure yarn, and meditation, Peace Like a River is an inspired story of family love, religious faith, and the lifelong work and trust required of both.

Physick Book of Deliverance Dane by **Katherine Howe** (384 pages)

A spellbinding, beautifully written novel that moves between contemporary times and one of the most fascinating and disturbing periods in American history – the Salem witch trials. Harvard graduate student Connie Goodwin needs to spend her summer doing research for her doctoral dissertation. But when her mother asks her to handle the sale of Connie's grandmother's abandoned home near Salem, she can't refuse. As she is drawn deeper into the mysteries of the family house, Connie discovers an ancient key secreted within a seventeenth-century Bible. The key contains a yellowing fragment of parchment with a name written upon it: Deliverance Dane.

Pilot's Wife by **Anita Shreve** (304 pages)

From the initial knock on the door at 3 a.m. to some five months later, Katharine Lyons finds herself in the grips of extreme emotion. Her pilot husband Jack's plane, with 103 passengers aboard, has exploded off the coast of Ireland.

Play Dirty by **Sandra Brown**

Sandra Brown has created another superhero for those who love their mysteries flavored with romance. Griff Burkett, former Dallas Cowboy football icon, has just been released from prison after serving five years for racketeering. In a state where football is king, he was convicted of shaving points and conspiring with mobsters to cheat his fans of imminent victory. There is no way that he ever could serve enough time to redeem himself in the eyes of most Texans. Yet, upon his release, one of the state's wealthiest couples invites him to their estate and offers him a job.

As owners of the innovative and successful SunSouth Airlines, Foster and Laura Speakman are used to getting what they want, and they have the means to pay for it. The simple task that they require of Griff promises to pay him one-million dollars a year, and it's all perfectly legal. With everyone else turning their backs on him, the disgraced hero accepts their bizarre offer and steps into a dangerous world where nothing is as it seems and everyone plays dirty.

From the Speakmans to his old coach and foster father, from Stanley Rodarte, a thug out to torment Griff in every possible way, to the Vista boys who facilitated his downfall, all have secrets and hidden agendas that serve to push Griff to the wall. He does not want to return to prison and is doing his best to follow the rules of his parole. Though debased in numerous ways by unforgiving former fans and disregarded by those who once sought his favor, Griff is determined to become a better person. He had time to do some soul searching while behind bars and recognizes that, despite his difficult childhood, he had been given the talent and opportunity to do more with his life. Regardless of how everyone else played, he is resolved to make the right choices and play fair.

### Plum Lucky by **Janet Evanovich** (166 pages)

Stephanie finds herself in over her head with a caper involving thrice stolen money, a racehorse, a car chase and a bad case of hives--not to mention her grandmother playing the slots in Atlantic City using the stolen money!

### Red Tent by **Anita Diamant** (336 pages)

The Red Tent tells the little-known Biblical story of Dinah, daughter of the patriarch Jacob and his wife, Leah. In Chapter 34 of the Book of Genesis, Dinah's tale is a short, horrific detour in the familiar narrative of Jacob and Joseph. Anita Diamant imaginatively tells the story from the fresh perspective of its women. In the Biblical tale Dinah is given no voice; she is the narrator of The Red Tent, which reveals the life of ancient womanhood -- the world of the red tent. Readers of The Red Tent will view the Book of Genesis in a new light. This guide can help spur creative discussions of the timeless story.

### Reliable Wife by **Robert Goolrick** (291 pages)

In rural Wisconsin in 1909, Ralph Truitt stands alone on a train platform waiting for the woman who answered his newspaper advertisement for "a reliable wife." But when Catherine Land steps off the train from Chicago, she's not the "simple, honest woman" that Ralph is expecting.

### Revenge of the Middle-Aged Woman by **Elizabeth Buchan** (341 pages)

Her happy marriage and successful career falling apart after twenty-five years, Rose Lloyd struggles with the prospect of starting over before finding unexpected fulfillment in her new independence and the reappearance of an old flame.

### River King by **Alice Hoffman** (344 pages)

There are two things any reader can count on when coming to Alice Hoffman: her prose and a remarkable empathy for those who live on the fringes of society. In her 13th novel, the author turns both to good account. Set in a tony private school located in a small New England town, The River King traces an intricate weave of intersecting lives over the course of a year.

### The Road by **Cormac McCarthy**

Set sometime in the future after a global catastrophe, *The Road* chronicles a father and a son—maybe the last of the “good guys”—as they tread along a forsaken patch of highway peopled by marauders and cannibals. The novel can be read in a variety of ways. *The Road* is perhaps the most chilling commentary of the post-9/11 world. The post-apocalyptic setting plays upon the public’s fear of terrorism, pandemics, genocide, and weapons of mass destruction.

### Rocket Boys by **Homer H. Hickam, Jr.** (368 pages)

The author traces the boyhood enthusiasm for rockets that eventually led to a career at NASA, describing how he built model rockets in the family garage in West Virginia, inspired by the launch of the Soviet satellite "Sputnik"

### Sarah’s Key by **Tatiana De Rosnay** (293 pages)

Paris, July 1942: Sarah, a ten year old girl, is taken with her parents by the French police as they go door-to-door arresting Jewish families in the middle of the night. Desperate to protect her younger brother, Sarah locks him in a bedroom cupboard, their secret hiding place, and promises to come back for him as soon as they are released. Sixty years later, Sarah’s story intertwines with that of Julia Jarmond, an American journalist investigating the roundup. In her research, Julia stumbles onto a trail of secrets that link her to Sarah, and questions about her own romantic future.

### The Scent of Water by Naomi Zacharias (222 pages)

Follow Naomi as she talks to women working in brothels in Mumbai; survivors of an Indonesian tsunami in which more than 160,000 lives were lost; a young girl waiting on an operation to save her life; and victims of domestic violence horrifically burned by fire. Be still with her when she realizes the pain she feels in the face of these extreme injustices reveals a common struggle that exists within all of humanity. And rise with her as she wrestles with confusion over her identity, comes face to face with redemption, and then begins to understand her own story ... and to find her calling. *The Scent of Water* will open your eyes to the complexities of the world, showing you pain can also be beauty, and how each are found in the unlikeliest of places. Zacharias doesn't have all the answers. But she has hope and encouragement that will empower you to find and begin the adventure of your life.

Secret Life of Bees by **Sue Monk Kidd** (302 pages) After her "stand-in mother," a bold black woman named Rosaleen, insults the three biggest racists in town, Lily Owens joins Rosaleen on a journey to Tiburon, South Carolina, where they are taken in by three black, bee-keeping sisters.

Secret Scripture by **Sabastian Barry**In the beginning, Dr. William Grene's interest in the almost impossibly old woman is merely professional, tinged perhaps with a hint of curiosity. Roseanne McNulty, one hundred years old, was one of the most beautiful girls in County Sligo, Ireland, in her youth. She has been confined in the Roscommon Regional Mental Hospital, where Dr. Grene is the senior psychiatrist, since the days of World War II. Now, in compliance with a change in government policy that has decreed the closing of the hospital, Dr. Grene is evaluating the facility's patients to make dispassionate recommendations about which ones are mentally fit to resume life in society. As he interviews Roseanne to determine her mental state his neutrality evaporates. Reluctant to cooperate but curiously compassionate toward him, the ancient woman impresses him as "a formidable person," and indeed she is. Cleverly, carefully, she keeps the doctor at bay, denying him access to the deepest secrets of her past.

Seen It All and Done The Rest by **Pearl Cleage** (298 pages)

The toast of Europe, Josephine Evans had spent thirty years abroad establishing her reputation as one of the finest actresses of her generation. In Amsterdam, she redefined who and what an African American diva could be, and her legions of loyal fans loved her for it. But when a war she didn't even understand suddenly makes her the target of angry anti-American protests, Josephine is forced to return to America to see if she can find a new definition of home. Camping out with her granddaughter in Atlanta's West End, Josephine tries to reclaim her old life even as she scrambles to shape her new one. An unexpected reunion with an old friend, Abbie Allen Browning, soon offers her a chance to set things right. Rallying with Abbie against an unscrupulous land developer who threatens to tear the community apart, Josephine finds herself playing the most important role of her life.

Senator's Wife by **Sue Miller** (306 pages)

Meri is newly married and pregnant, and standing on the cusp of life and mother, recognizing with some terror the gap between reality and expectation. Delia, wife of the 2-term Senator Tom Naughton, is Meri's new neighbor in the adjacent town house. Tom's infidelity is an open secret in Washington circles, but despite the complexity of their relationship, the bond between them remains strong. Soon Delia and Meri find themselves leading strangely parallel lives, as they reckon with the mysteries of marriage.

Sense and Sensibility by **Jane Austen**

The story is about Elinor and Marianne, two daughters of Mr Dashwood by his second wife. They have a younger sister, Margaret, and an older half-brother named John. When their father dies, the family estate passes to John, and the Dashwood women are left in reduced circumstances. The novel follows the Dashwood sisters to their new home, a cottage on a distant relative's property, where they experience both romance and heartbreak. The contrast between the sisters' characters is eventually resolved as they each find love and lasting happiness. Through the events in the novel, Elinor and Marianne encounter the sense and sensibility of life and love.

The Shack: Where Tragedy Confronts Eternity by **William Young** (256 pages)

Mackenzie Allen Phillips' youngest daughter, Missy, has been abducted during a family vacation, and evidence that she may have been brutally murdered is found in an abandoned shack deep in the Oregon wilderness. Four years later, in the midst of his great sadness, Mack receives a suspicious note, apparently from God, inviting him back to that shack for a weekend. Against his better judgment he arrives at the shack on a wintry afternoon and walks back into his darkest nightmare. What he finds there will change Mack's world forever.

Shadows of Lancaster County by **Mindy Starns Clark** (326 pages)

Anna Bailey thought she left the tragedies of the past behind when she took on a new identity and moved from Pennsylvania to California. But now that her brother has vanished and his wife is crying out for help, Anna knows she has no choice but to come out of hiding, go home, and find him. Back in Lancaster County, Anna follows the high-tech trail her brother left behind, a trail that leads from the simple world of Amish farming to the cutting edge of DNA research and gene therapy.

Shroud for a Nightingale by **P.D. James** (363 pages)

The young women of Nightingale House are there to learn to nurse and comfort the suffering. But when one of the students plays patient in a demonstration of nursing skills, she is horribly, brutally killed. Another student dies equally mysteriously, and it is up to Adam Dalgliesh of Scotland Yard to unmask a killer who has decided to prescribe murder as the cure for all ills.

Snow Flower and the Secret Fan by **Lisa See** (258 pages)

A story of friendship set in nineteenth-century China follows an elderly woman and her companion as they communicate their hopes, dreams, joys, and tragedies through a unique secret language.

Spies by **Michael Frayn** (261 pages)

When a long-forgotten scent forces Stephen Wheatley to confront his past, he starts to remember a troubling childhood summer in wartime London where an imaginative child's game of playing spies wreaked havoc upon innocent lives.

Starvation Lake by **Bryan Gruley** (370 Pages)

In the dead of a Michigan winter, pieces of a snowmobile wash up near the crumbling, small town of Starvation Lake- the same snowmobile that went down with Starvation's legendary hockey coach years earlier. But everybody knows Coach Blackburn's accident happened five miles away on a different lake. As rumors buzz about mysterious underground tunnels, the evidence from the snowmobile says one thing: murder.

Stop That Girl by **Elizabeth McKenzie** (207 pages)

From the start of Elizabeth McKenzie's beguiling fiction debut, we are drawn into the offbeat worldview of sharp-eyed, intrepid Ann Ransom. *Stop That Girl* chronicles Ann's colorful coming-of-age travails, from her childhood in a disjointed family through her tender adolescence and beyond. Along the way, she discovers the absurdities that lurk around every corner of a young woman's life, by way of oafish neighbors, overzealous boyfriends, prurient vegetable salesmen, sour landlords, and an iconoclast grandmother, known even to her family as Dr. Frost. Keenly funny and highly original, *Stop That Girl* is a brilliant examination of the exigencies of love and the fragile fabric of family, and heralds the emergence of a remarkable new voice in fiction.

Suspicious of Mr. Whicher by **Kate Summerscale** (372 pages)

In June of 1860, three-year old Saville Kent was found at the bottom of an outdoor privy, his throat viciously cut. The suspicion that fell upon the grieving family and their servants horrified the public. In this true story, Scotland Yard sent its best man, Detective-Inspector Jonathan Whicher to investigate the murder at Road Hill.

Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie by **Alan Bradley** (416 pages)

In his wickedly brilliant first novel, Debut Dagger Award winner Alan Bradley introduces one of the most singular and engaging heroines in recent fiction: eleven year old Flavia de Duce, an aspiring chemist with a passion for poison. It is the summer of 1950 – and a series of inexplicable events has struck Buckshaw, the decaying English mansion that Flavia's family calls home. A dead bird is found on the doorstep, a postage stamp bizarrely pinned to its beak. Hours later, Flavia finds a man lying in the cucumber patch and watches him as he takes his dying breath. For Flavia, who is both appalled and delighted, life begins in earnest when murder comes to Buckshaw.

Their Eyes Were Watching God by **Zora Neale Hurston**

The main character, an African American woman in her early forties named Janie Crawford, tells the story of her life and journey via an extended flashback to her best friend, Pheoby, so that Pheoby can tell Janie's story to the nosy community on her behalf. Her life has three major periods corresponding to her marriages to three very different men. A life marked by poverty, trials, and purpose. A true literary wonder, Hurston's masterwork remains as relevant and affecting today as when it was first published -- perhaps the most widely read and highly regarded novel in the entire canon of African American literature.

These Old Shades by **Georgette Heyer** (384 pages)

When Justin Alastair, the Duke of Avon, rescues a beautiful orphan from life on the streets it is for one reason only--to use her to get revenge on his enemy Comte de Saint Vire. Sure that the street urchin is Comte's illegitimate daughter, Justin plans to present her to society, expose her past, and destroy her father in the process. However, what Justin did not count on was the fact that he would fall in love with her himself.

**Thirteenth Tale by Diane Setterfield (406 pages)**

Now old and ailing, the famous but reclusive writer, Vida Winter, is ready to reveal the truth about her extraordinary existence and the violent and tragic past she has kept secret for 6 decades. Calling on young biographer Margaret Lea, who is also troubled by a painful past, Vida disinters the life she meant to bury for good in this gothic tale of heartache and romance.

**Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini (420 pages)**

Propelled by the same superb instinct for storytelling that made *The Kite Runner* a beloved classic, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is at once an incredible chronicle of thirty years of Afghan history and a deeply moving story of family, friendship, faith, and the salvation to be found in love.

**Thread of Grace by Mary Doria Russell (430 pages)**

Set in the ports and valleys of northeastern Italy during the last 2 years of World War II, Mary Doria Russell tells the story of 43,000 Jews, both native born Italians and refugees from eastern Europe, whose lives were saved by ordinary citizens. This is the story of a father and daughter making their escape from Belgium, a British soldier parachuting into occupied territory, a Catholic priest risking his life shielding refugees, and an emotionally disillusioned, renegade German doctor.

**Three Cups of Tea by Greg Mortenson (368 pages)**

Anyone who despairs of the individual's power to change lives has to read the story of Greg Mortenson, a homeless mountaineer who, following a 1993 climb of Pakistan's treacherous K2, was inspired by a chance encounter with impoverished mountain villagers and promised to build them a school. Over the next decade he built fifty-five schools--especially for girls--that offer a balanced education in one of the most isolated and dangerous regions on earth. As it chronicles Mortenson's quest, which has brought him into conflict with both enraged Islamists and uncomprehending Americans, *Three Cups of Tea* combines adventure with a celebration of the humanitarian spirit.

**Time Traveler's Wife by Audrey Niffenegger (536 pages)**

Caught in an impossible-to-resolve situation that spans the boundaries of temporal reality, this tale of a plucky librarian who is accidentally cast back in time focuses on the romantic complications of time travel.

**Tortilla Curtain by T. Coraghessan Boyle (355 pages)**

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

**Virgin of Small Plains by Nancy Pickard (336 pages)**

Pickard probes the truth behind miracles and the tragedies behind lies in this mesmerizing suspense novel set in Kansas.

Waking with Enemies by **Eric Jerome Dickey**

Gideon, the hit man introduced in "Sleeping with Strangers," returns in this high-octane ("Publishers Weekly") thriller to discover that a hit has been taken out on "him." Is it the man he left alive in Tampa, the cold beauty who taught him how to kill, the scorned woman he still desires, or an unknown enemy? As the hunter becomes the hunted, Gideon will need his friends and his enemies to get out of this crisis alive.

Water for Elephants by **Sara Gruen** (331 pages)

Ninety-something-year-old Jacob Jankowski remembers his time in the circus as a young man during the Great Depression, and his friendship with Marlena, the star of the equestrian act, and Rosie, the elephant, who gave them hope.

Weight of Silence by **Heather Gudenkauf** (373 pages)

On a humid August morning in Iowa, 2 families awaken to find their little girls missing. Desperate to find their daughters, both families are bound by the question of what happened to their children who also happen to be best friends. The answer is trapped in the silence of unspoken family secrets.

Welsh Girl by **Peter Ho Davies** (343 pages)

When a POW camp is established near her village in North Wales just after D-Day, 17 year-old Esther Evans finds herself strangely drawn to the camp and its forlorn captives. She is exploring the camp boundary when something astonishing occurs: Karsten, a young German prisoner, calls out to her from behind the fence. From that moment on, the two foster a secret relationship that will put them both at risk. Meanwhile, another foreigner, the German-Jewish interrogator Rotherham, travels to Wales to investigate Britain's most notorious Nazi prisoner, Rudolf Hess. In this thought-provoking work, all will come to question where they belong and where their loyalties lay.

When Crickets Cry by **Charles Martin** (352 pages)

It begins on the shaded town square in a sleepy Southern town. A spirited seven year old has a brisk business at her lemonade stand. Her latest customer, a bearded stranger, drains his cup and heads to his car, his mind on a boat he's restoring at a nearby lake. But the little girl's pretty yellow dress can't quite hide the ugly scar on her chest. The stranger understands more about it than he wants to admit. And the beat-up bread truck careening around the corner with its radio blaring is about to change the trajectory of both their lives.

Whistling Season by **Ivan Doig** (352 pages)

Hired as a housekeeper to work on the early 1900s Montana homestead of widower Oliver Milliron, the irreverent Rose and her brother, Morris, endeavor to educate the widower's sons while witnessing local efforts on a massive irrigation project.

The Year of Pleasures by **Elizabeth Berg**

Betta Nolan moves to a small town after the death of her husband to try to begin anew. Pursuing a dream of a different kind of life, she is determined to find pleasure in her simply daily routines. Among those who help her in both expected and unexpected ways are the ten-year-old boy next door, three wild women friends from her college days, a twenty-year-old who is struggling to find his place in the world, and a handsome man who is ready for love.