

## Book Discussion Kits – Historical Fiction

[\*Abundance: a novel of Marie Antoinette\*](#) by Sena Jeter Naslund - Marie Antoinette lived a brief--but astounding--life. She rebelled against the formality and rigid protocol of the court; an outsider who became the target of a revolution that ultimately decided her fate.

[\*Ahab's Wife, or the Star-Gazer\*](#) by Sena Jeter Naslund - Inspired by a brief passage in Melville's *Moby-Dick*, this tale of 19th century America explores the strong-willed woman who loved Captain Ahab.

[\*Aindreas the Messenger: Louisville, Ky, 1855\*](#) by Gerald McDaniel - Aindreas is a young Irish-Catholic boy living in gaudy, grubby Louisville in 1855, a city where being Irish, Catholic, German or black usually means trouble.

[\*Alias Grace\*](#) by Margaret Atwood - The fictionalized account of one of the most notorious women of the nineteenth century who was convicted of murdering her employer and his mistress.

[\*All the Pretty Horses\*](#) by Cormac McCarthy - The National Book Award-winning story of three friends who set out in 1949 to cross the Rio Grande in search of the cowboy life.

[\*The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay\*](#) by Michael Chabon - In 1939 New York City, Joe Kavalier, a refugee from Hitler's Prague, joins forces with his Brooklyn-born cousin, Sammy Clay, to create comic-book superheroes inspired by their own fantasies, fears, and dreams.

[\*Angle of Repose\*](#) by Wallace Stegner - A Pulitzer Prize-winning story recounting the lives of four generations living in the American West.

[\*Atonement\*](#) by Ian McEwan - On a hot summer day in 1935, a young girl witnesses a moment's flirtation between her older sister and the son of a servant, bringing about a crime that will change all their lives.

[\*The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman\*](#) by Ernest Gaines - A novel in the guise of the tape-recorded recollections of a black woman who has lived 110 years, and has been both a slave and a witness to the black militancy of the 1960's.

[\*The Aviator's Wife\*](#) by Melanie Benjamin – This vividly imagined novel, inspired by the complicated marriage between Charles and Anne Morrow Lindbergh, traces the romance between a handsome young aviator and a shy ambassador's daughter.

[\*Away\*](#) by Amy Bloom - Arriving in America alone after her family is destroyed in a Russian pogrom, Lillian Leyb receives word that her daughter might still be alive and embarks on a risky odyssey that takes her from New York's Lower East Side to Siberia.

[\*Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress\*](#) by Dai Sijie - Two hapless city boys are exiled to a remote village for re-education during China's infamous Cultural Revolution where they discover a hidden stash of Western classics.

[\*The Beet Queen\*](#) by Louise Erdrich - A family saga of two orphans who find refuge with their aunt in a North Dakota town.

[\*Beloved\*](#) by Toni Morrison - After the Civil War ends, Sethe longingly recalls the two-year-old daughter whom she killed when threatened with recapture after escaping from slavery 18 years before.

[\*The Birth of Venus\*](#) by Sarah Dunant - (Regular and Large Print) A novel of turbulent 15th-century Florence, a lavish city besieged by plague, threat of invasion and religious turmoil, where a young noblewoman must navigate her way into womanhood.

[\*The Blind Assassin\*](#) by Margaret Atwood - Winner of the Booker Prize, this brilliant novel within a novel tells the story of two sisters as a romance, a mystery and a fantasy all combined.

[\*The Bluest Eye\*](#) by Toni Morrison - Eleven-year-old Pecola Breedlove, an African-American girl in an America whose love for blonde, blue-eyed children can devastate all others, prays for her eyes to turn blue, so that she will be beautiful, people will notice her, and her world will be different.

[\*The Book Thief\*](#) by Mark Zusak - Trying to make sense of the horrors of World War II, Death relates the story of Liesel--a young German girl whose book-stealing and story-telling talents help sustain her family and the Jewish man they are hiding, as well as their neighbors.

[\*The Boston Girl\*](#) by Anita Diamant - Addie is the spirited daughter of an immigrant Jewish family, born in 1900, whose intelligence and curiosity take her to the twentieth century world her conservative parents can't imagine—a world of short skirts, movies, celebrity culture, and new opportunities for women.

[\*The Buddha in the Attic\*](#) by Julie Otsuka – The story of a group of young women brought from Japan to San Francisco as “picture brides” from their arduous journeys by boat, and their tremulous first nights as new wives; from their experiences raising children who would later reject their culture and language, to the deracinating arrival of war.

[\*Burial Rites\*](#) by Hannah Kent – Based on the true story of Agnes Magnúsdóttir, a servant in northern Iceland who was condemned to death after the murder of two men, one of whom was her employer, and became the last woman put to death in Iceland.

[\*Caleb's Crossing\*](#) by Geraldine Brooks - Forging a deep friendship with a Wampanoag chieftain's son on the Great Harbor settlement where her minister father is working to convert the tribe, Bethia follows his subsequent ivy league education and efforts to bridge cultures among the colonial elite.

[\*The Cats Table\*](#) by Michael Ondaatje - The story by the author *The English Patient*, begins at "the cat's table" of ocean liner where 11-year narrator Michael shares meals and the company of an eccentric group of passengers as they journey from Sri Lanka to England.

[\*The Chaperone\*](#) by Laura Moriarty - A novel about the friendship between an adolescent, pre-movie-star Louise Brooks, and the 36-year-old woman who chaperones her to New York City for a summer, in 1922, and how it changes both their lives

[\*Circling the Sun\*](#) by Paula McLain - A fictionalized biography of the adventures and romances of beautiful, high-flying aviator and author Beryl Markham in British Kenya in the early 20th century. Her 1936 solo flight across the Atlantic in a two-seater prop plane transfixed the world.

[\*City of Thieves\*](#) by David Benioff - Documenting his grandparents' experiences during the siege of Leningrad, a young writer learns his grandfather's story about how a military deserter and he tried to secure pardons by gathering hard-to-find ingredients for a powerful colonel's daughter's wedding cake.

[\*City of Women\*](#) by David Gillham - Hiding her clandestine activities behind the persona of a model Nazi soldier's wife at the height of World War II, Sigrid Schroeder dreams of her former Jewish lover and risks everything to hide a mother and two young children who she believes might be her lover's family.

[\*Cloud Chamber\*](#) by Michael Dorris - The saga of an American immigrant family from their roots in 19th century Ireland to life in present-day Montana.

[\*Cloudsplitter\*](#) by Russell Banks - Narrated by the son of the abolitionist John Brown, this work of fiction recreates the fractured political and social landscape of pre-Civil War America.

[\*Confessions of a Pagan Nun\*](#) by Kate Horsley - A fictional memoir of a 5<sup>th</sup> century nun of St Brigid's convent who had been a practicing druid for many years during Ireland's Dark Ages.

[\*Dancing at the Rascal Fair\*](#) by Ivan Doig - The tale of the settlement of the frontier between 1890 and 1919 told through the lives of a young Scotsman and his friend who homestead in the Two Medicine Country.

[\*The Daughters of Mars\*](#) by Thomas Keneally - Joining the war effort as nurses in 1915, two spirited Australian sisters, carrying a guilty secret, become the friends they never were at home and find themselves courageous in the face of danger as they serve during the first World War.

[\*Day After Night\*](#) by Anita Diamant - A tale inspired by the post-Holocaust experience is set in an immigrant holding camp in 1945 Palestine, where four women, refugees from Nazi Europe, find healing in the bonds of friendship that are forged while recounting their losses.

[\*The Dream Lover\*](#) by Elizabeth Berg – In 1831 Aurore Dupin, a free-spirited young woman, leaves her loveless marriage in the French countryside for a creative, bohemian life in Paris, a life that will lead her to become literary icon George Sand whose cross-dressing persona and many love affairs scandalized society.

[\*Dreamers of the Day\*](#) by Mary Doria Russell - Agnes Shanklin at 40 decides to take a trip to Egypt and the Middle East. Her social status puts her in contact with members of the post World War I Cairo Peace Conference who designated the boundaries of many of the Middle Eastern countries of today.

[\*Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close\*](#) by Jonathan Foer - Oskar searches New York with a mysterious key left by his father, killed in the September 11 attacks, a quest that intertwines with the story of his grandparents, whose lives were blighted by the firebombing of Dresden.

[\*Fair and Tender Ladies\*](#) by Lee Smith - Ivy Rowe, turn of the century Virginia mountain girl, then mother, wife, and finally, "Mamaw," writes eloquent letters to friends and family.

[\*Five Quarters of the Orange\*](#) by Joanne Harris - A sensual novel follows a woman as she returns to the French village where she lived as a girl during the German occupation.

[\*The Fountain of St. James Court\*](#) by Sena Jeter Naslund (Large Print) - Kathryn Callaghan has just finished her novel about renowned painter Élisabeth Vigée-Le Brun, a survivor of the French Revolution who was hated for her sympathetic portraits of Marie Antoinette. Although the manuscript is complete, its author remains haunted by Élisabeth's experiences.

[\*Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café\*](#) by Fannie Flagg - (Large Print) After Idgie saves Ruth from an abusive marriage, these two friends become partners in running the Whistle Stop Cafe, where no one, "not even hobos and colored," is turned away for inability to pay.

[\*The German Woman\*](#) by Paul Griner - Years after being mistaken for a spy and forced to flee a World War I field hospital, Kate, the English widow of a German surgeon, attracts the attention of Claus, a propaganda filmmaker and World War II British spy. New book by Kentucky author.

[\*Giants in the Earth: a Saga of the Prairie\*](#) by Ole Edvart Rolvaag - Nobel Prize winning classic story of a Norwegian pioneer family's struggles with the land and the elements of the Dakota Territory as they try to make a new life in America.

[\*Gilead\*](#) by Marilynne Robinson - (Regular and Large Print) Nearing death, the Reverend John Ames writes a letter to his son chronicling three generations of his family, a story that stretches back to the Civil War and reveals uncomfortable family secrets.

[\*Girl in Hyacinth Blue\*](#) by Susan Vreeland - A compelling tale that traces the ownership of a Vermeer painting through time, marking the ways that beauty transforms us.

[\*The Girl in the Blue Beret\*](#) by Bobbie Ann Mason - When an American World War II pilot shot down in Occupied Europe returns to his crash site decades later, he finds himself drawn back in time to the brave people who helped him escape from the Nazis.

[\*Girl with a Pearl Earring\*](#) by Tracy Chevalier - A fictional history of 17th century Dutch culture featuring the young woman portrayed in Johannes Vermeer's "Girl with a Pearl Earring".

[\*Gods and Generals\*](#) by Jeff Shaara - (Large Print) An epic fictional account of the lives and military careers of Stonewall Jackson, Winfield Scott Hancock, Joshua Chamberlain, and Robert E. Lee.

[\*The Good Lord Bird\*](#) by James McBride - Mistaken for a girl on account of his delicate features and sackcloth smock, 12-year-old slave Henry Shackleford is liberated by abolitionist John Brown and accompanies the increasingly fanatical Brown on his crusade to end slavery.

[\*Great House\*](#) by Nicole Krauss - This novel consists of four stories divided among eight chapters, all touching on themes of loss and recovery, and anchored to a massive writing desk that resurfaces among numerous households, much to the bewilderment and existential tension of those in its orbit,

[\*The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society\*](#) by Mary Ann Shaffer - An account of a writer's relationship with the members of a unique book club formed on the isle of Guernsey as an alibi to protect its members from arrest at the hands of the Nazis during WWII.

[\*Guests on Earth\*](#) by Lee Smith - A young orphaned piano prodigy in 1936 is admitted to a North Carolina mental hospital under the care of a celebrated doctor and receives innovative treatment based on exercise, diet, and art therapies alongside Zelda Fitzgerald.

[\*Half Broke Horses\*](#) by Jeanette Walls - Originally conceived as a biography of her pioneer grandmother based on family interviews and historical research, Walls ultimately assumed Smith's indomitable voice and set out to write a novelistic recreation of an unconventional life.

[\*Hannah Coulter\*](#) by Wendell Berry - Now, in her late seventies, twice-widowed and alone, Hannah sorts through her memories: of her childhood, of young love and loss, of raising children and the changing seasons. An installment in Wendell Berry's story of the citizens of Port William, Kentucky.

[\*The History of Love\*](#) by Nicole Kraus - A long-lost book reappears, mysteriously connecting an old man searching for his son and a girl seeking a cure for her widowed mother's loneliness.

[\*Homer and Langley\*](#) by E. L Doctorow - A tale inspired by a true story finds the blind Homer Collyer closeted within a once-grand Fifth Avenue mansion with his damaged brother and remembering a life marked by colorful characters, political events, and technological achievements.

[\*Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet\*](#) by Jamie Ford - When artifacts from Japanese families sent to internment camps during World War II are uncovered during renovations at a Seattle hotel, Henry Lee embarks on a quest that leads to memories of growing up Chinese in a city rife with anti-Japanese sentiment.

[\*The House at Riverton\*](#) by Kate Morton - Living out her final days in a nursing home, ninety-eight-year-old Grace remembers the secrets surrounding the 1924 suicide of a young poet during a glittering society party hosted by Grace's English aristocrat employers, a family that is shattered by war.

[\*The House of the Spirits\*](#) by Isabel Allende - An epic tale of the influence of great families on history as well as the influence of history on great families set amidst the oppression and communism of Chile.

[\*I Am Forbidden\*](#) by Anouk Markovits - Of a Hasidic family's two daughters, one breaks with tradition to pursue a life of intellectual and emotional freedom, the other cleaves to convention only to find her childless marriage leads her to consider a course of action outside her religious beliefs.

[\*The Illuminator\*](#) by Brenda Rickman Vantrease - (Large Print) A medieval illuminator with radical views finds himself sharing quarters with a widow struggling to preserve her independence in this novel set in the 14th century.

[\*In the Name of Salome\*](#) by Julia Alvarez - An epic story of a strong woman, based upon the real-life Salome' Urena, a poet who was a national icon in the Dominican Republic.

[\*In the Time of the Butterflies\*](#) by Julia Alvarez - A novelization of the true story the Mirabal sisters, three young wives and mothers who are assassinated after visiting their jailed husbands in the Dominican Republic.

[\*The Invention of Wings\*](#) by Sue Monk Kidd - Traces three decades in the lives of a wealthy Charleston debutante who longs to break free from the strictures of her household and pursue a meaningful life; and the urban slave, Handful, who is placed in her charge as a child before finding courage and freedom.

[\*Invisible Man\*](#) by Ralph Ellison - The classic novel of the experiences of a young black man during the Depression as he travels from the Deep South to Harlem portray the invisibility of his life.

[\*The Japanese Lover\*](#) by Isabel Allende – In pre-war San Francisco a young Jewish refugee and the son of the Japanese gardener of her wealthy relations form a loving attachment that spans decades despite misfortunes, cultural differences and the realities of ageing.

[\*Jerusalem Maiden\*](#) by Leslie Carner -In the waning days of the Ottoman Empire, a young Orthodox Jewish woman in the holy city of Jerusalem is expected to marry and produce many sons. But Esther's artistic talent inspires her to secretly explore worlds outside her religion and to believe that God has a special destiny for her.

[\*The Joy Luck Club\*](#) by Amy Tan - Four older Chinese women living in San Francisco recall their memories of pre-war China and pass their culture and visions on to their American-born daughters.

[\*Kindred\*](#) by Octavia Butler - A modern black woman is snatched abruptly from her home in California and transported to the antebellum South where she must save the life of her white, slave-owning ancestor.

[\*Kingdom of Shadows\*](#) by Alan Furst - In 1938 Paris, Nicholas Morath, a Hungarian aristocrat and former cavalry officer, is recruited by his uncle, Count Janos Polanyi, to try to bring down the Hungarian fascists, as Europe moves ever closer to all-out war.

[\*The Kitchen Boy: a Novel of the Last Tsar\*](#) by Robert Alexander - A novel based on the 1918 Bolshevik revolutionary murder of Czar Nicholas II and the rest of the Russian royal family as told from the perspective of the event's only surviving witness, a young kitchen boy.

[\*The Kitchen God's Wife\*](#) by Amy Tan - Pressured to reveal to her adult American-born daughter her secret past in war-torn China in the 1940s, Winnie weaves an account of loneliness, love, courage and endurance.

[\*The Kitchen House\*](#) by Kathleen Grissom – Orphaned aboard a ship from Ireland to America, a young girl is sent to a plantation where she works with the slaves of the kitchen house. Under the care of the master's illegitimate slave daughter, she becomes deeply bonded to her adopted family, though set apart from them by her white skin.

[\*The Known World\*](#) by Edward P. Jones - When a black slave owner dies, his widow Caldonia mismanages their Virginia plantation with disastrous results.

[\*The Lacuna\*](#) by Barbara Kingsolver - The story of Harrison William Shepherd, a man caught between two worlds -- Mexico and the United States in the 1930s, '40s, and '50s -- and whose search for identity takes readers to the heart of the twentieth century's most tumultuous events.

[\*The Lady and the Unicorn\*](#) by Tracy Chavalier - (Large Print) A story of the tapestries of the Lady and the Unicorn, interweaving narratives of the painter who conceived the famous images, the tapissier who weaved them onto cloth, and the women in both artists' lives.

[\*Lamb\*](#) by Christopher Moore - A humorous, speculative novel fills in the lost years of Jesus' life, told from the perspective of Biff, his childhood best friend.

[\*Last Night in Twisted River\*](#) by John Irving - In a story spanning five decades, a twelve-year-old boy in New Hampshire mistakes the constable's girlfriend for a bear, leading to an unfortunate accident that forces the boy and his father to become fugitives pursued by the constable.

[Life After Life](#) by Kate Atkinson - As she grows up during the first half of the twentieth century in Britain Ursula Todd dies and is brought back to life again and again. With a seemingly infinite number of lives it appears as though she has the ability to alter the history of the world, should she so choose.

[The Lifeboat](#) by Charlotte Rogan – Forced into an overcrowded lifeboat after a mysterious explosion on their trans-Atlantic ocean liner in the summer of 1914, newly widowed Grace Winter battles the elements and her fellow survivors. For any to live, some must die.

[The Light Between Oceans](#) by M. L. Stedman - A novel set on a remote Australian island in the years following WWI, where a childless couple live quietly running a lighthouse, until a boat carrying a dead man and a living baby washes ashore

[The Light in the Ruins](#) by Chris Bohjalian– In Florence in 1955 a serial killer is at work, preying on the noble and once- wealthy Rosati family. Is it connected to 1943 when the family lived in the Villa Chimera and reluctantly played host to a number of Nazis who come to visit a recently discovered Etruscan tomb on their land?

[Like Water for Chocolate](#) by Laura Esquivel - A bittersweet romance set in Mexico, where romance and sensuality are combined with magical realism in the celebration of food.

[Lincoln](#) by Gore Vidal - Isolated in a ramshackle White House in the center of a proslavery city, Lincoln presides over a fragmenting government as Lee's armies beat at the gates. An intimate depiction of the power struggles that accompanied Lincoln's efforts to preserve the Union at all costs.

[Lives of Girls and Women](#) by Alice Munro - This classic female coming-of-age novel is both the story of strong-willed Del Jordan, from schoolchild to passionate young woman, and an evocative portrait of small-town rural Ontario in the 1940s.

[Longbourn](#) by Jo Baker - The servants in the Bennet household of Pride and Prejudice fame live their lives in Regency England during the Napoleonic Wars. And there is just as much romance, heartbreak, and intrigue downstairs at Longbourn as there is upstairs.

[Loving Frank](#) by Nancy Horan - This narrative, vividly portraying the conflicts and struggles of a woman forced to choose between the roles of mother, wife, lover, and intellectual, is based on the clandestine love affair between Mamah Borthwick Cheney and Frank Lloyd Wright.

[Love and Treasure](#) by Ayelet Waldman - A tale inspired by the World War II Hungarian Gold Train follows the 1945 American capture of a locomotive filled with riches and the efforts of a Jewish-American lieutenant's granddaughter to track down a mysterious woman 70 years later.

[The Lover](#) by Marguerite Duras - An adolescent French girl living with her family in pre-World War II Indochina in the waning days of France's colonial empire has a scandalous and tumultuous affair with the son of a wealthy Chinese businessman.

[Maisie Dobbs](#) by Jacqueline Winspear - Maisie Dobbs entered domestic service in 1910 at thirteen. When her remarkable intelligence is discovered by her employer, Maisie is educated and in 1929 she hangs out her shingle: M. Dobbs, Trade and Personal Investigations.

[Man in the Blue Moon](#) by Michael Morris - Single mother Ella Wallace fights to keep a banker from buying the Florida land that has been in her family for generations when a mysterious stranger shows up and convinces Ella he can help her, until his past comes to light.

[March](#) by Geraldine Brooks - From Louisa May Alcott's beloved classic Little Women, Geraldine Brooks has taken the character of the absent father, March, who has gone off to war. Spanning the vibrant intellectual world of Concord and the sensuous antebellum South, March adds adult resonance to Alcott's optimistic children's tale.

[\*Mary Coin\*](#) by Marisa Silver - Imagines the lives of the subject of the famous depression-era photograph and the photographer, as well as a college professor who finds a connection to a family legacy in the image of the iconic "Migrant Mother."

[\*The Master\*](#) by Colm Toibin - Nineteenth-century writer Henry James is heartbroken when his first play performs poorly in contrast to Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest" and struggles with subsequent doubts about his sexual identity.

[\*Maus: a Survivor's Tale\*](#) by Art Spiegelman - A story of a Jewish survivor of Hitler's Europe and his son, a cartoonist who tries to come to terms with his father's story and history itself.

[\*Memoirs of a Geisha\*](#) by Arthur Golden – (Regular and Large Print) Historical fiction about the experience and art of being a Geisha during 1900s.

[\*The Memory of Old Jack\*](#) by Wendell Berry - Kentucky author Wendell Berry proves his mastery as a storyteller by sharing the life story of a 92-year-old small town Kentucky farmer, "Old Jack" Beechum.

[\*The Meursault Investigation\*](#) by Kamel Daoud - This work revisits Albert Camus's *The Stranger* from the Arab perspective. The narrator, Harun, recalls the murder of his older brother, Musa, who is all but anonymous in Camus's work, and the heavy consequences of this act.

[\*Middle Passage\*](#) by Charles Richard Johnson - This is a picaresque tale, historical romance, sea yarn, slave narrative, and philosophical novel about Rutherford Calhoun, a newly freed slave and irrepressible rogue.

[\*Middlesex\*](#) by Jeffrey Eugenides - Calliope's friendship with a classmate and her sense of identity are compromised by the adolescent discovery that she is a hermaphrodite, a situation with roots in her grandparents' desperate struggle for survival in the 1920s.

[\*Miss Fuller\*](#) by April Bernard - When feminist, journalist, and orator Margaret Fuller's family is drowned off the coast of New York upon their return from Europe, Henry David Thoreau visits the site of their shipwreck and discovers a revealing personal document of hers.

[\*Monkey Hunting\*](#) by Christina Garcia - The story of a Chinese immigrant's enslavement on a Cuban sugar plantation, his escape and eventual prosperity, interwoven with the stories of his Chinese and American descendants.

[\*The Moor's Account\*](#) by Laila Lalami - Moorish slave Estebanico accompanies Spanish conquistadors on a voyage to the New World. Struggling to survive in the uncharted territory of La Florida Estebanico witnesses the Europeans' brutal treatment of the Indians and dreams of his own idea.

[\*Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker\*](#) by Jennifer Chiaverini - Presents a fictionalized account of the friendship between Mary Todd Lincoln and her dressmaker Elizabeth Keckley, a former slave who bought her freedom from slavery and went on to become a well-known modiste in Washington.

[\*Mrs. Poe\*](#) by Lynn Cullen - Struggling to support her family in mid-19th-century New York, writer Frances Osgood makes an unexpected connection with literary master Edgar Allan Poe and finds her survival complicated by her intense attraction to the writer and the scheming manipulations of his wife.

[\*The Museum of Extraordinary Things\*](#) by Alice Hoffman - The daughter of a Coney Island boardwalk curiosities museum's front man pursues an impassioned love affair with a Russian immigrant photographer who after fleeing his Lower East Side Orthodox community has captured poignant images of the infamous Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire.

[\*My Name is Red\*](#) by Orhan Pamuk - In sixteenth-century Istanbul, a furor erupts when the Sultan hires a group of artists to illuminate a great book in the European style at a time in which all figurative art is considered Islamic heresy, but the situation becomes worse when one of the miniaturists vanishes.

[\*The 19th Wife\*](#) by David Ebershoff - The story of Ann Eliza Young, former wife of Brigham Young, and her crusade against polygamy is intertwined with a tale of murder involving a polygamist family in present-day Utah.

[\*On Agate Hill\*](#) by Lee Smith - (Large Print) Diaries, letters, court documents, poems and ballads gradually divulge the tale of Molly Petree, a girl orphaned in North Carolina in the late 1860s whose life unfolds through Reconstruction

[\*One Thousand White Women\*](#) by Jim Fergus - A colorful assembly of women, under the auspices of the U.S. government, travel to the western prairies in 1875 to intermarry among the Cheyenne Indians, a covert and controversial "Brides for Indians" program intended to help assimilate the Indians.

[\*Orphan Train\*](#) by Christine Baker Kline –As a child Vivian was packed off on one of the many orphan trains intended to bring children to Midwestern families who would care for them. Now elderly, she hires foster child Molly to help clean out her attic. As Molly sorts through old boxes, Vivian begins to share stories from her past.

[\*The Palace of Illusions\*](#) by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni - Panchaali, wife of the five legendary Pandavas brothers, offers her own version of the ancient Indian epic, The Mahabharat, as she chronicles the story of her magical birth, the problems of dealing with five husbands who have been cheated out of their birthright, the trials she endures, and her attraction to her husband's enemy.

[\*Palace Walk\*](#) by Naguib Mahfouz - Volume I of the masterful Cairo Trilogy this novel introduces the engrossing saga of a Muslim family in Cairo during Egypt's occupation by British forces in the early 1900s.

[\*A Parchment of Leaves\*](#) by Silas House - In 1917, a Cherokee woman who leaves her community to marry a white man finds herself isolated and discriminated against as she tries to settle into her new life.

[\*The Paris Wife\*](#) by Paula McLain - Meeting through mutual friends in Chicago, Hadley is intrigued by brash "beautiful boy" Ernest Hemingway, and after a brief courtship and small wedding, they take off for Paris, where Hadley makes a convincing transformation from an overprotected child to a game and brave young woman.

[\*Parrot and Olivier in America\*](#) by Peter Carey - A tale loosely inspired by the life of Alexis de Tocqueville is set in the early nineteenth century and follows an unlikely friendship between a survivor of the French Revolution and an itinerant English engraver's son.

[\*The Paying Guests\*](#) by Sarah Waters – An impoverished upper-class widow and her daughter take a young couple into their home in 1920s London. Little do they know just how profoundly and unexpectedly their new tenants will alter the course of their lives.

[\*The Pearl That Broke Its Shell\*](#) by Nadia Hashimi - In Kabul, 2007, with a drug-addicted father and no brothers, Rahima and her sisters can only sporadically attend school and rarely leave the house, and their only hope lies in the ancient custom of bacha posh, which allows young Rahima to dress and be treated as a boy until she is of marriageable age.

[\*People of the Book\*](#) by Geraldine Brooks - Offered a coveted job to analyze and conserve a priceless Sarajevo Haggadah, Australian rare-book expert Hanna Heath discovers a series of tiny artifacts in the volume's ancient binding that reveal its historically significant origins.

[\*The Plague of Doves\*](#) by Louise Erdrich - (Large Print) The unsolved murder of a farm family haunts the small town of Pluto, North Dakota. The vengeance exacted for this crime and the subsequent distortions of truth transform the lives of Ojibwe living on the nearby reservation and shape the passions of both communities for the next generation.

[\*Pope Joan\*](#) by Donna Woolfolk Cross - For a thousand years her existence has been denied. She is a legend that will not die—Pope Joan, the ninth-century woman who disguised herself as a man and rose to become the only female ever to sit on the throne of St. Peter.

[\*The Postmistress\*](#) by Sarah Blake - (Large Print) The stories of a small Cape Cod postmistress and an American radio reporter stationed in London collide on the eve of the United States's entrance into World War II, a meeting that is shaped by a broken promise to deliver a letter.

[\*The Red Garden\*](#) by Alice Hoffman - Fourteen freestanding but consecutive stories trace the life of the town of Blackwell, Mass., from its founding in 1750 up to the present as the founders' descendents connect to the land and each other.

[\*The Red Tent\*](#) by Anita Diamant - (Regular and Large Print) A fictional retelling of Genesis stories of the daily life of women, as told by Dinah, daughter of Jacob and Leah.

[\*A Reliable Wife\*](#) by Robert Goolrick - Ralph Truitt, a wealthy businessman with a troubled past who lives in a remote nineteenth-century Wisconsin town, has advertised for a reliable wife; and his ad is answered by Catherine Land, a woman who makes every effort to hide her own dark secrets.

[\*The Remains of the Day\*](#) by Kazuo Ishiguro - The fictional account of an aging butler recalling his life at Darlington Hall which includes intrigue of world politics and upper-class English society.

[\*Remarkable Creatures\*](#) by Tracy Chevalier (Large Print) - When Mary Anning uncovers an unusual fossilized skeleton in the cliffs near her home on the English coast, she sets the townspeople to vicious gossip and the scientific world alight.

[\*Remembering Babylon\*](#) by David Malouf - A compelling tale of a young Australian left for dead who is brought up by the Aborigines, and the bigotry he faces when he returns to Australian society.

[\*Rules of Civility\*](#) by Amor Towles - A chance encounter in a jazz bar on New Year's Eve 1938 catapults Wall Street secretary Katey Kontent into the upper echelons of New York society, where she befriends a shy multi-millionaire, an Upper East Side ne'er-do-well, and a single-minded widow.

[\*The Sandcastle Girls\*](#) by Chris Bohjalian - Parallel stories of a woman who falls in love with an Armenian soldier during the Armenian Genocide and a modern-day New Yorker prompted to rediscover her Armenian past

[\*Sarah's Key\*](#) by Tatiana de Rosnay - On the sixtieth anniversary of the 1942 roundup of Jews by the French police in Paris, American journalist Julia Jarmond embarks on an investigation that leads her to long-hidden family secrets and to the ordeal of Sarah, a young girl caught up in the raid.

[\*The Secrets of Mary Bowser\*](#) by Lois Leveen - Based on the true story of Mary Bowser, an educated freedwoman who worked with the Underground Railroad and ultimately posed as an illiterate slave in the Confederate White House in order to spy on President Jefferson Davis.

[\*Serena\*](#) by Ron Rash - Traveling to the mountains of 1929 North Carolina to forge a timber business with her new husband, Serena Pemberton champions her mastery of harsh natural and working conditions but turns murderous when she learns she cannot bear children.

[\*Sex Wars\*](#) by Marge Piercy - Coming of age in a post-Civil War New York City tenement flat, Jewish-Russian Freydeh juggles multiple jobs to earn passage for her family, until she learns that her younger sister is adrift somewhere in the city.

[\*Shanghai Girls\*](#) by Lisa See - Forced to leave Shanghai when their father sells them to California suitors, sisters May and Pearl struggle to adapt to life in 1930s Los Angeles while still bound to old customs, as they face discrimination and confront a life-altering secret.

[\*A Short History of Women\*](#) by Kate Walbert - Inspired by a suffragist ancestor who starved herself to promote the integration of Cambridge University, Evie refuses to marry and Dorothy defies a ban on photographing the bodies of her dead Iraq War soldier sons, a choice that embarrasses Dorothy's daughters.

[\*The Signature of All Things\*](#) by Elizabeth Gilbert - A multi-generational saga of the Whittaker family, whose progenitor makes a fortune in the quinine trade before his daughter, a gifted botanist, researches the mysteries of evolution while falling in love with an utopian artist against a backdrop of the Age of Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution.

[\*The Snow Child\*](#) by Eowyn Ivey - A childless couple working a farm in the brutal landscape of 1920 Alaska discover a little girl living in the wilderness, with a red fox as a companion, and begin to love the strange, almost-supernatural child as their own.

[\*Snow Flower and the Secret Fan\*](#) by Lisa See - 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.

[\*Some Luck\*](#) by Jane Smiley – A love song to American farms and the people who keep them, *Some Luck* spans thirty years in the lives of a Iowa farm family, telling a parallel story of the changes taking place in America from 1920 through 1950.

[\*Someone\*](#) by Alice McDermott - An ordinary life—its sharp pains and unexpected joys, its bursts of clarity and moments of confusion—lived by an ordinary, but unforgettable woman, we follow Marie through the changing world of the twentieth century and her Irish-American enclave

[\*Song yet Sung\*](#) by James McBride - Liz Spocott, a beautiful young runaway slave, suffers a nasty head wound. When she awakes, she can see the future—from the near-future to Martin Luther King to hip-hop—in her dreams. Liz's visions help her and her fellow slaves escape, but soon there are new dangers on her trail.

[\*A Spool of Blue Thread\*](#) by Anne Tyler - Three generations of Whitshanks have lived in the family home in Baltimore since the 1920s, in which they have loved, squabbled and protected secrets. Now there are mounting tensions among the grown Whitshank siblings as their aging parents need looking after.

[\*Stones from the River\*](#) by Ursula Hegi - The story of a dwarf librarian living in Germany during the two World Wars whose craving for normalcy results in her attention to gossip and narrative.

[\*Sula\*](#) by Toni Morrison - The story of a young African-American girl who leaves her oppressive neighborhood to expand her dreams but finds many of her previous relationships tested when she returns ten years later.

[\*Sweeping Up Glass\*](#) by Carolyn D. Wall - Living behind her store with her son in 1938 Kentucky, Olivia is stunned when members of the exclusive Hunt Club suddenly turn their sights on the two of them, a dangerous situation complicated by the exposure of the community's horrifying secrets.

[\*The Testament of Mary\*](#) by Colm Toibin - Years after her son's crucifixion, Mary lives alone and in fear, badgered by her son's friends and hunted by his enemies, trying to piece together the events that led to her son's brutal death.

[\*A Thread of Grace\*](#) by Mary Doria Russell - In September 1943, Claudette Blum and her father flee across the Alps into Italy with other Jews seeking refuge, only to find an open battle ground among the Nazis, Allied forces, resistance fighters, and ordinary Italians struggling to survive.

[\*The Tiger's Wife\*](#) by Tea Obreht - A young doctor living in an unnamed country, crosses the border in search of answers about the death of her beloved grandfather, who raised her on tales from the village he grew up in, and where in 1941, a tiger escaped from the zoo in a nearby city and befriended a mysterious deaf-mute woman.

[\*Tinkers\*](#) by Paul Harding -The history and final thoughts of a dying grandfather surrounded by his family. George Washington Crosby repairs clocks for a living and on his deathbed revisits his turbulent childhood as the oldest son of an epileptic smalltime traveling salesman.

[\*Train Dreams\*](#) by Denis Johnson - The story of early twentieth-century day laborer Robert Grainer, who endures the harrowing loss of his family while struggling for survival in the American West against a backdrop of radical historical changes.

[\*Trapeze\*](#) by Simon Mawer - During World War II Briton Marian Sutro is recruited for service in the Special Operations Executive, only to find that another secret organization wants her to infiltrate Paris to persuade a research physicist to join the Allied war effort.

[\*Water for Elephants\*](#) by Sara Gruen - 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.

[\*Wench\*](#) by Dolen Perkins-Valdez - Situated in Ohio, a free territory before the Civil War, Tawawa House is an idyllic retreat for Southern white men who vacation there every summer with their enslaved black mistresses.

[\*When the Emperor Was Divine\*](#) by Julie Otsuka – (Regular and Large Print) A story told from five different points of view chronicles the experiences of Japanese Americans caught up in the nightmare of the World War II internment camps.

[\*Wide Sargasso Sea\*](#) by Jean Rhys - In a prequel to Jane Eyre, Creole heiress Antoinette Cosway lives in Dominica and Jamaica in the 1830s before she travels to England, becomes Mrs. Rochester, and goes mad.

[\*The Women\*](#) by T. C. Boyle - Recounts the life of Frank Lloyd Wright as told through the experiences of the four women who loved him: the Montenegrin beauty Olgivanna Milanoff; the passionate Southern belle Maud Miriam Noel; the spirited Mamah Cheney, tragically killed; and his first wife, Kitty Tobin.

[\*The World Before Her\*](#) by Deborah Weisgall - Two parallel stories, set in Venice a century apart, follow two women and their marriages--Marian Evans, better known as famed English author George Eliot, and sculptor Caroline Spingold, coming unwillingly to the city with her older, wealthy husband.

[\*World's Fair\*](#) by E. L. Doctorow - A story of New York of the 1930's as the country deals with a looming depression and war on the horizon, as told through the eyes of a young boy.

[\*Year of Wonders\*](#) by Geraldine Brooks - The story of the plague in the year 1666 from the eyes of Anna Frith, a housemaid and an unlikely heroine and healer. A tale of hope and faith in a time of despair.