

## Webster Public Library Book Discussion Kits

These kits comprised of 8 books and discussion guides are all ready for your reading group. The kits may be borrowed for up to 6 weeks at a time, just ask when you check out.

**The Age of Miracles** by Karen Thompson Walker  
Imagines the coming-of-age story of young Julia, whose world is thrown into upheaval when it is discovered that the Earth's rotation has suddenly begun to slow, posing a catastrophic threat to all life.

**The Alchemist** by Paulo Coelho  
A fable about undauntingly following one's dreams, listening to one's heart, and reading life's omens features dialogue between a boy and an unnamed being.

**Angels & Demons** by Dan Brown  
The murder of a world-famous physicist raises fears that the Illuminati are operating again after centuries of silence, and religion professor Robert Langdon is called in to assist with the case.

**The Art of Racing in the Rain** by Garth Stein  
Nearing the end of his life, Enzo, a dog with a philosopher's soul, tries to bring together the family, pulled apart by a three year custody battle between daughter Zoe's maternal grandparents and her father Denny, a race car driver.

**Behind the Beautiful Forevers: life, death, and hope in a Mumbai undercity** by Katherine Boo  
Profiles everyday life in the settlement of Annawadi as experienced by a Muslim teen, an ambitious rural mother, and a young scrap metal thief, illuminating how their efforts to build better lives are challenged by religious, caste, and economic tensions.

**Bel Canto** by Ann Patchett  
When terrorists seize hostages at an embassy party, an unlikely assortment of people is thrown together, including American opera star Roxanne Coss, and Mr. Hosokawa, a Japanese CEO and her biggest fan.

☆ **Beautiful Ruins** by Jess Walter  
A romantic novel spanning 50 years that follows a young Italian innkeeper and his almost-love affair with a beautiful American starlet, which draws him into a glittering world filled with unforgettable characters.

**Big Russ and Me** by Tim Russert  
The author offers a memoir of life with his father, a proud World War II veteran, describing growing up in 1950s Buffalo, the influence of his Catholic upbringing, and the importance of hard work, responsibility, and patriotism.

**Big Stone Gap** by Adriana Trigiani  
The 35-year-old self-proclaimed spinster of a small Virginia village discovers a skeleton in her family's formerly tidy closet that completely unravels her quiet, conventional life.

**Birth of Venus** by Sarah Dunant  
Turning fifteen in Renaissance Florence, Alessandra Cecchi becomes intoxicated with the works of a young painter whom

her father has brought to the city to decorate the family's Florentine palazzo.

**Black and Blue** by Anna Quindlen  
Fran Benedetto tells a spellbinding story: how at 19 she fell in love with Bobby Benedetto; how their passionate marriage became a nightmare; why she stayed and then what happened on the night she finally decided to run away with her son and start a new life under a new name.

**Blind Assassin** by Margaret Atwood  
Iris Chase Griffen, married at eighteen to a wealthy industrialist but now poor and eighty-two, recalls her far from exemplary life, and the events leading up to her sister's death, who drove a car off a bridge ten days after the war ended, gradually revealing the carefully guarded Chase family secrets.

**The Blind Side** by Michael Lewis  
Follows one young man from his impoverished childhood with a crack-addicted mother, through his discovery of the sport of football, to his rise to become one of the most successful, highly-paid players in the NFL.

**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. This is the story of the nightmare at the heart of her yearning and the tragedy of its fulfillment.

**The Book of Ruth** by Jane Hamilton  
The black sheep of her troubled family, Ruth struggles to keep the peace between her mother, her young son, and her slightly off-the-wall husband and to put the pieces back together when a heated situation boils over.

**The Book that Matters Most** by Ann Hood  
A recently separated woman seeks solace and purpose in a local book group, while her daughter is dealing with her own life-changing problems that just might be resolved with a little literary assistance. The juxtaposition of the idyllic small town and the harsh reality of the seedier side of Paris, the weight of memory and regret, and the power of human connection, along with the engaging characters all work together to create an enthralling read.

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

**Bridge of Sighs** by Richard Russo  
After sixty years of living in the upstate New York town of Thomaston, Louis Charles and his wife of forty years, Sarah, prepare for a trip to Italy to visit Louis' childhood friend, an artist who had fled his hometown many years earlier.

**The Call of the Wild** by Jack London  
Abducted from his comfortable home and sold as a sled dog, Buck battles the elements to become leader of the pack. This story of a struggle for survival is an unforgettable adventure.

**Case Histories** by Kate Atkinson  
As private investigator Jackson Brodie investigates three resurrected old crimes, he finds himself caught up in a story of families divided, love lost and found, and the mysteries of fate.

**The City of Falling Angels** by John Berendt  
Traces the aftermath of the 1996 Venice opera house fire, an event that devastated Venetian society and was investigated by the author, who through interviews with local figures learned about the region's rich cultural history.

**The Club Dumas** by Arturo Perez-Reverte  
Lucas Corso's search for the original copy of a book of the occult takes him from Madrid to Paris and into a secret society of antiquarians.

**Coal Black Horse** by Robert Olmstead  
When 14-year-old Robey Child is sent by his mother to search for his father, a doomed soldier, he witnesses the horrors of war both on and off the battlefield. Riding a talismanic coal black horse, he embarks upon a life-altering journey that will challenge him physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

**Code Orange** by Caroline B. Cooney  
While conducting research for a school paper on smallpox, Mitty finds an envelope containing 100-year-old smallpox scabs and fears that he has infected himself and all of New York City.

**The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time** by Mark Haddon  
Despite his overwhelming fear of interacting with people, Christopher, a mathematically-gifted, autistic fifteen-year-old boy, decides to investigate the murder of a neighbor's dog and uncovers secret information about his mother.

**Cutting for Stone** by Abraham Verghese  
Marion and Shiva Praise Stone are born of a secret love affair between Thomas Stone, a British surgeon working in Missing Hospital near Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and Sister Mary Joseph Praise, the quiet Indian nun who has served as his surgical nurse and assistant.

**The Dante Club** by Matthew Pearl  
In 1865, the preparations of "The Dante Club"--led by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Oliver Wendell Holmes--to release the first translation of Dante's "The Divine Comedy" are threatened by a series of murders that re-create episodes from "Inferno."

**The Devil in the White City** by Erik Larson  
Bringing Chicago circa 1893 to vivid life, Erik Larson's spellbinding bestseller intertwines the true tale of two men--the brilliant architect behind the legendary 1893 World's Fair, striving to secure America's place in the world; and the cunning serial killer who used the fair to lure his victims to their death. Combining meticulous research with nail-biting storytelling, Erik Larson has crafted a narrative with all the wonder of newly discovered history and the thrills of the best fiction.

**The Double Bind** by Chris Bohjalian  
Working at a homeless shelter, student Laurel Estabrook encounters Bobbie Crocker, a man with a history of mental illness and a box of secret photos; but when Bobbie dies suddenly, Laurel embarks on an obsessive search for the truth behind the photos.

**Dracula** by Bram Stoker  
A popular bestseller in Victorian England, Stoker's hypnotic tale of the bloodthirsty Count Dracula, whose nocturnal atrocities are symbolic of an evil ages old yet forever new, endures as the quintessential story of suspense and horror. The unbridled lusts and desires, the diabolical cravings that Stoker dramatized with such mythical force, render Dracula resonant and unsettling a century later.

**Eat, Pray, Love** by Elizabeth Gilbert  
At the age of thirty-one, Gilbert moved with her husband to the suburbs of New York and began trying to get pregnant, only to realize that she wanted neither a child nor a husband. Three years later, she embarked on a yearlong trip of recovery, with three main stops: Rome, for pleasure (mostly gustatory, with a special emphasis on gelato); an ashram outside of Mumbai, for spiritual searching; and Bali, for "balancing."

☆ **Educated** by Tara Westover  
Traces the author's experiences as a child born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, describing her participation in her family's paranoid stockpiling activities and her resolve to educate herself well enough to earn an acceptance into a prestigious university and the unfamiliar world beyond.

☆ **Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine** by Gail Honeyman  
A socially awkward, routine-oriented loner teams up with a bumbling IT guy from her office to assist an elderly accident victim, forging a friendship that saves all three from lives of isolation and secret unhappiness.

**Elegance of the Hedgehog** by Muriel Barbery  
The lives of fifty-four-year-old concierge Rene Michel and extremely bright, suicidal twelve-year-old Paloma Josse are transformed by the arrival of a new tenant, Kakuro Ozu.

**Ellen Foster** by Kaye Gibbons  
Having suffered abuse and misfortune for much of her life, a young child searches for a better life and finally gets a break in the home of a loving woman with several foster children.

**Father Joe** by Tony Hendra  
At 14 years old, Tony began an affair with a married woman that ended when the jilted husband, a devout Roman Catholic, sent Tony to a Benedictine abbey. There, Tony met the remarkably kind and compassionate Father Joe. For the next four decades, Father Joe's guidance never faltered, even as Tony failed in marriage, fought substance abuse, and struggled to find meaning.

**Fireproof** by Eric Wilson  
Inside burning buildings, Captain Caleb Holt lives by the firefighter's adage: Never leave your partner. Yet at home, in the cooling embers of his marriage, countless arguments have him wanting to leave. As they prepare for divorce, Caleb's father challenges him to commit to a 40-day experiment: "The Love Dare." Surprised by what he discovers about the meaning

of love, Caleb begins to see his wife and marriage as worth fighting for. But is it too late? His job is to rescue others. Now Captain Holt must face his toughest job ever . . . rescuing his wife's heart.

### **The Five People You Meet In Heaven**

by Mitch Albom

Killed in a tragic accident, Eddie, an elderly man who believes that he had an uninspired life, awakens in the afterlife, where he discovers that heaven consists of having five people explain the meaning of one's life.

### **Flags of Our Fathers**

by James Bradley

In February 1945, American Marines plunged into the surf at Iwo Jima through a hail of machine-gun and mortar fire that left the beaches strewn with comrades. They battled to the island's highest peak. *Flags of Our Fathers* tells the true story of six very different young men who were captured in the immortal photograph as they rose the flag atop Iwo Jima.

### **Friday Night Knitting Club**

by Kate Jacobs

Gathering for their weekly knitting club at a small yarn shop on Manhattan's Upper West Side, a group of friends shares such challenges as raising children, navigating the ups and downs of their careers, and pursuing uncertain relationships.

### **Getting There: Navigating Holistic Care**

by Jean Bennett

This is a unique book and workbook by a local author! What "getting there" means depends on where **you** are. It may mean getting rid of a chronic issue or pain, getting a different job, finding peace of mind, or learning how to move forward with family dynamics. Enjoy the multitude of informational treasures inside that help people navigate holistic care and get relief.

### **Ghost Boy**

by Iain Lawrence

Unhappy in a home seemingly devoid of love, a fourteen-year-old albino *boy* who thinks of himself as Harold the *Ghost* runs away to join the circus, where he works with the elephants and searches for a sense of who he is.

### **Girl in Hyacinth Blue**

by Susan Vreeland

Chronicles the history of a painting and the lives with which it intersects, from the artist's inspiration to its admiration by two art scholars three hundred years later.

### **A Girl Named Zippy**

by Haven Kimmel

When Haven Kimmel was born in 1965, Mooreland, Indiana, was a sleepy little hamlet of three hundred people. In this 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.

### **Girl with the Pearl Earring**

by Tracy Chevalier

The story of Griet, a 16-year-old Dutch girl, who becomes a maid in the house of the painter Johannes Vermeer. Her calm and perceptive manner not only helps her in her household duties, but also attracts Vermeer's attention. He slowly draws her into the world of his paintings and ultimately has her sit for him as a model. History and fiction merge seamlessly in a luminous tale of artistic vision, sensual awakening, and daily life in the Netherlands of the 17th-century.

### **The Glass Castle**

by Jeanette Walls

A remarkable memoir of resilience and redemption, and a penetrating look into a family at once deeply dysfunctional and uniquely vibrant.

### **The Good Earth**

by Pearl S. Buck

Wang Lung, a Chinese peasant, rises from poverty to become a rich landowner with the aid of his patient wife in the 1920s.

### **The Good Thief**

by Hannah Tinti

Growing up in a New England orphanage unaware of his family and of how he had lost his left hand as an infant, twelve-year-old Ren is terrified of the future until a young man shows up claiming to be his long-lost brother.

### **The Great Gatsby**

by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Jay Gatsby still adores Daisy Buchanan although she has married someone else, and he risks everything to lure her back.

### **The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society**

by Mary Ann Shaffer

In 1946, writer Juliet Ashton finds inspiration for her next book in her correspondence with a native of Guernsey, who tells her about the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society, a book club born as an alibi during German occupation.

### **The Handmaid's Tale**

by Margaret Atwood

In a future world where the birth rate has declined, fertile women are rounded up, indoctrinated as "handmaids," and forced to bear children to prominent men.



### **Hanna's Daughters**

by Marianne Fredriksson

Anna has returned from visiting her mother. Restless and unable to sleep, she wanders through her parents' house, revisiting the scenes of her childhood. In a cupboard drawer, folded and pushed away from sight, she finds a sepia photograph of her grandmother, Hanna, who she remembers as old and forbidding, a silent stranger enveloped in a huge pleated black dress. Now, looking at the features Anna recognizes as her own, she realizes she is looking at a different woman from the one of her memory. Set against the majestic isolation of the Scandinavian lakes and mountains, this is more than a story of three Swedish women. It is a moving testament of a time forgotten and an epic romance in every sense of the word.

### **The Help**

by Kathryn Stockett

Limited and persecuted by racial divides in 1962 Jackson, Mississippi, three women, including an African-American maid, her sassy and chronically unemployed friend, and a recently graduated white woman, team up for a clandestine project.



### **Hillbilly Elegy**

by J. D. Vance

Shares the poignant story of the author's family and upbringing, describing how they moved from poverty to an upwardly mobile clan that included the author, a Yale Law School graduate, while navigating the demands of middle-class life and the collective demons of the past.

## **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 Immortalists**

by Chloe Benjamin

Sneaking out to get readings from a traveling psychic reputed to be able to tell customers when they will die, four adolescent siblings from New York City's 1969 Lower East Side hide what they learn from each other before embarking on five decades of respective experiences shaped by their determination to control fate.

## **In Cold Blood**

by Truman Capote

An account of the senseless murder of a Kansas farm family and the search for the killers.

## **Incantation**

by Alice Hoffman

Estrella is a Marrano, one of a community of Spanish Jews living double lives as Catholics during the time of the Spanish Inquisition. She is living in a house of secrets, raised by a family who practices underground the ancient and mysterious way of wisdom known as kabbalah. When Estrella discovers her family's true identity--and her family's secrets are made public--she confronts a world she's never imagined.



## **Independence Day**

by Richard Ford

Real estate agent Frank Bascombe moves into his newly married ex-wife's old home, and is looking forward to the upcoming Fourth of July weekend, but somehow nothing turns out the way he expects.

## **Into Thin Air**

by Jon Krakauer

Krakauer, standing on the summit of Mt. Everest, saw nothing that "suggested that a murderous storm was bearing down." He was wrong. The storm, which claimed five lives and left countless more in guilt-ridden disarray, would also provide the impetus for this epic account of the May 1996 disaster.

## **Jeremiah's Hunger**

by Elizabeth Osta

When Jeremiah Buckley buries his baby sister and his mother in a hillside in County Cork in the midst of An Gorta Mor (the Great Hunger), his grief turns to rebellion and commitment to the land as he works to achieve a dream which will echo over the centuries and as far away as America.

## **The Last Lecture**

by Randy Pausch

When Randy Pausch, a computer science professor at Carnegie Mellon University, was asked to give a "last lecture," he didn't have to imagine it as his last, since he had recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer. But the lecture he gave - "Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams" - wasn't about dying. It was about the importance of overcoming obstacles, of enabling the dreams of others, of seizing every moment (because "time is all you have... and you may find one day that you have less than you think").

## **Life of Pi**

by Yann Martel

Possessing encyclopedia-like intelligence, unusual zookeeper's son Pi Patel sets sail for America, but when the ship sinks, he escapes on a life boat and is lost at sea with a

dwindling number of animals until only he and a hungry Bengal tiger remain.

## **Little Bee**

by Chris Cleave

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

## **Love Walked In**

by Marisa de los Santos

Harboring romantic notions about golden-age Hollywood film stars, thirty-one-year-old Philadelphia cafe manager Cornelia Brown embarks on a too-good-to-be-true relationship with the debonair Martin Grace.

## **The Madonnas of Leningrad**

by Debra Dean

In a novel that moves back and forth between the Soviet Union during World War II and modern-day America, Marina, an elderly Russian woman, recalls vivid images of her youth during the height of the siege of Leningrad.

## **Major Pettigrew's Last Stand**

by Helen Simonson

Major Ernest Pettigrew (retired) leads a quiet life in the village of St. Mary, England, until his brother's death sparks an unexpected friendship with Mrs. Jasmina Ali, the Pakistani shopkeeper from the village. Drawn together by their shared love of literature and the loss of their respective spouses, the Major and Mrs. Ali soon find their friendship blossoming into something more. But will their relationship survive in a society that considers Ali a foreigner?

## **The Maltese Falcon**

by Dashiell Hammett

Sam Spade's partner is murdered while working on a case, and it is Spade's responsibility to find the killer. In his search, Spade runs mortal risks as he comes closer to the answer.

## **A Man Called Ove**

by Fredrik Backman

Meet Ove. He's a curmudgeon - the kind of man who points at people he dislikes as if they were burglars caught outside his bedroom window. He has staunch principles, strict routines, and a short fuse. People call him "the bitter neighbor from hell." But behind the cranky exterior there is a story and a sadness. So when one November morning a chatty young couple with two chatty young daughters move in next door and accidentally flatten Ove's mailbox, it is the lead-in to a comical and heartwarming tale of unkempt cats, unexpected friendship, and the ancient art of backing up a U-Haul. All of which will change one cranky old man and a local residents' association to their very foundations.

## **The Memory Keeper's Daughter**

by Kim Edwards

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

## **Mennonite in a Little Black Dress**

by Rhoda Jantzen

In a hilarious and moving memoir, a poet describes how, after her husband left her for a relationship with a man and she subsequently was seriously injured in a car crash, she returned home to her close-knit Mennonite family and came to terms with her failed marriage and her choices in life.

**The Mermaid Chair** by Sue Monk Kidd

Jessie Sullivan is summoned home to tiny Egret Island, where she meets Brother Thomas, a monk who is about to take his final vows, and encounters the legend of a mysterious chair dedicated to a saint who had originally been a mermaid.

**Midnight In The Garden Of Good And Evil:  
A Savannah Story** by John Berendt

Berendt presents a true story of intrigue, murder, forgery and eccentricity set in the steamy, surreal atmosphere of Savannah, Georgia. This book brings the unpredictable twists and turns of a murder case that are interwoven with a first-person account of life in this isolated remnant of the Old South.

**The Murder Room** by P.D. James

Commander Adam Dalgliesh and his team investigate the murder of a trustee of the Dupayne, a small private London museum locked in a battle over its future, and find their probe complicated by a second corpse.

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

Bullied at school and left out at home, seven-year-old Elsa relies on her grandmother for love and attention, and she is only too happy to provide it. Granny weaves tall tales of the Land of Almost-Awake, and sets up a quest for Elsa to undertake so that she will not be so alone after Granny, who has cancer, dies. Precocious Elsa delivers the letters Granny has left, and as she does so discovers that her neighbors seem to embody characteristics of the creatures from the Land of Almost Awake...

**My Sister's Keeper** by Jodi Picoult

Conceived to provide a bone marrow match for her leukemia-stricken sister, teenage Anna begins to question her moral obligations in light of countless medical procedures and decides to fight for the right to make decisions about her own body.

**The Namesake** by Jhumpa Lahiri

A portrait of the immigrant experience follows the Ganguli family from their traditional life in India through their arrival in Massachusetts in the late 1960s and their difficult melding into an American way of life.

**The Nanny Diaries**

by Nicola Kraus & Emma McLaughlin

A satirical glimpse into Manhattan's upper class follows Nanny, a struggling NYU student who takes a position caring for the son of the rich and glamorous X family, as she learns how to juggle a vast array of tasks so that a Park Avenue wife never has to lift a well-manicured finger.

**Nickel and Dimed** by Barbara Ehrenreich

A modern classic that deftly portrays the plight of America's working-class poor. Ehrenreich decides to see if she can scratch out a comfortable living in blue-collar America. What she discovers is a culture of desperation, where workers often take multiple low-paying jobs just to keep a roof overhead.

**The Night Circus** by Erin Morgenstern

A fierce competition is underway, a contest between two young magicians, Celia and Marco, who have been trained since childhood to compete in "a game," in which each must use

their powers of illusion to best the other. Unbeknownst to them, this game is a duel to the death, and the circus is but the stage for a remarkable battle of imagination and will.

**No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency**

by Alexander McCall Smith

The story of the delightfully cunning and enormously engaging Precious Ramotswe, who is drawn to her profession to "help people with problems in their lives." Immediately upon setting up shop in a small storefront in Gaborone, she is hired to track down a missing husband, uncover a con man, and follow a wayward daughter.

**October Sky: a memoir (also published as  
Rocket Boys)** by Homer H. Hickam, Jr.

Looking back after a distinguished NASA career, Hickam shares the story of his youth in a coal mining town. Originally published as "Rocket Boys", this bestseller--based on a true story--follows a group of boys in a small West Virginia town in 1957 as they light up the skies with their flaming rockets and dreams of glory.

**Olive Kitteridge** by Elizabeth Strout

At the edge of the continent, in the small town of Crosby, Maine lives a retired schoolteacher who deplores the changes in her town and in the world at large but doesn't always recognize the changes in those around her. The world of Olive Kitteridge is revealed in stories that explore her diverse roles in many lives, including a lounge singer haunted by a past love, her stoic husband, and her own resentful son.

**On Chesil Beach** by Ian McEwan

On their wedding day, a young couple--Florence, daughter of an Oxford academic and a successful businessman, and Edward, an earnest history student with little experience of women--looks forward to the future while worrying about their upcoming wedding night.

**Open House** by Elizabeth Berg

Samantha's husband has left her, and after a spending spree, she settles down to reconstruct a life for herself and her son. Sam takes in boarders to make her mortgage payments while she tries to figure out what to do with her life and comes to realize that only she has the keys to her own happiness.

**Orphan Train** by Christina Baker Kline

Close to aging out of the foster care system, Molly Ayer takes a position helping an elderly woman named Vivian and discovers that they are more alike than different as she helps Vivian solve a mystery from her past.

**Painted House** by John Grisham

For seven-year-old Luke Chandler, 1952 is proving to be a year filled with secrets. Heavily in debt and renting some of the most flood-prone land in Arkansas, his family must do whatever it takes to bring in a good cotton crop this year. But Luke witnesses things that could threaten his family's entire community. A forbidden love affair is brewing, two brutal murders are committed, a fatherless baby is born. And someone has secretly begun painting the Chandlers' dilapidated farmhouse, whose weathered clapboards make Luke's mother look wistfully on the missed opportunities of 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 who puts up with impoverished living conditions and shattering loneliness to prop up her husband's career.

**Perfect Storm** by Sebastian Junger  
Presents a vivid account of a history-making storm that hit the New England coast in October 1991 and the lives it changed, weaving together the history of the fishing industry, the science of storms, and personal accounts.

**Plain Truth** by Jodi Picoult  
The discovery of a dead baby under a pile of old blankets in Aaron Fisher's barn sets off a scandal in Amish country and an investigation that could implicate Fisher's eighteen-year-old daughter.

☆ **The Poisonwood Bible** by Barbara Kingsolver  
The family of a fierce evangelical Baptist missionary--Nathan Price, his wife, and his four daughters--begins to unravel after they embark on a 1959 mission to the Belgian Congo, where they find their lives forever transformed over the course of three decades by the political and social upheaval of Africa.

**Pope Joan** by Donna Woolfolk Cross  
Berated for being intelligent and scholarly, Joan dons her dead brother's clothes, assumes a man's identity, and gains respect and authority as well as the title of pope.

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

**Prey** by Michael Crichton  
Deep in the remote Nevada desert, eight people are trapped inside of the Xymos Corporation by a rapidly evolving swarm of predatory molecules that have massed together to form a powerful and intelligent organism that is targeting its creators.

**Pride and Prejudice** by Jane Austen  
Human foibles and early nineteenth-century manners are satirized in this romantic tale of English country family life. The story follows the main character Elizabeth Bennet as she deals with issues of manners, upbringing, morality, education, and marriage in the society of the landed gentry of early 19th-century England.

**The Rapture of Canaan** by Sheri Reynolds  
Ninah Huff, the teenage granddaughter of the founder of an isolated religious community, causes controversy when she is discovered to be pregnant with what she claims is a holy child.

**The Reader** by Bernard Schlink  
Schoolboy Michael Berg, 15, meets an older woman and they have an affair, which she breaks off and disappears. Seven years later Berg, now a law student attending a trial, sees her in the dock, accused in a crime dating back to World War II and the death camp at Auschwitz.

**The Red Tent** by Anita Diamant  
The story of Dinah, a tragic character from the Bible whose great love, a prince, is killed by her brother, leaving her alone and pregnant. The novel traces her life from childhood to death, in the process examining sexual and religious practices of the day, and what it meant to be a woman.

**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.

**Runaway Jury** by John Grisham  
In Biloxi, Mississippi, a landmark tobacco trial with hundreds of millions of dollars at stake begins routinely, then swerves mysteriously off course. The jury is behaving strangely, and at least one juror is convinced he's being watched. Soon they have to be sequestered. Then a tip from an anonymous young woman suggests she is able to predict the jurors' increasingly odd behavior. Is the jury somehow being manipulated, or even controlled? If so, by whom? And, more important, why?

**Sarah's Key** by Tatiana de Rosnay  
On the sixtieth anniversary of the 1942 roundup of Jews by the French police in the Vel d'Hiv section of Paris, American journalist Julia Jarmond is asked to write an article on this dark episode during World War II and embarks on investigation that leads her to long-hidden family secrets and to the ordeal of Sarah, a young girl caught up in the raid.

**Seabiscuit** by Laura Hillenbrand  
Hillenbrand unfolds the spellbinding story of the racehorse Seabiscuit in a riveting tale of grit, grace, luck, and an underdog's stubborn determination.

**Servants of the Map** by Andrea Barrett  
Spanning two centuries, an intricately woven collection of stories and novellas journeys across landscapes of yearning, awakening, loss, and unexpected discovery as the lives of extraordinary characters unfold in a borderland between science and passion.

**The Shack** by William P. Young  
Four years after his daughter is abducted and evidence of her murder is found in an abandoned shack, Mackenzie Allen Phillips returns to the shack in response to a note claiming to be from God, and has a life-changing experience.

**The Shoemaker's Wife** by Adriana Trigiani  
Two star-crossed lovers--Enzo and Ciro--meet and separate, until, finally, the power of their love changes both of their lives forever. Set during the years preceding and during World War I.

**Slaughterhouse-Five** by Kurt Vonnegut  
Slaughterhouse-Five is one of the world's great anti-war books. Unstuck in time, Billy Pilgrim, Vonnegut's shattered survivor of the Dresden bombing, relives his life over and over again under the gaze of aliens; he comes at last to some understanding of the human comedy. Centering on the infamous fire-bombing of Dresden, Billy Pilgrim's odyssey through time reflects the mythic journey of our own fractured lives as we search for meaning in what we are afraid to know.

**Snow Flower and the Secret Fan** by Lisa See

Lily, now eighty years old, sets out to tell the story of her life and of the most important relationship in that life: her friendship with the long-dead Snow Flower....

**The Soloist** by Steve Lopez

The true story of Nathaniel Ayers, a musician who becomes schizophrenic and homeless, and his friendship with Steve Lopez, the Los Angeles columnist who discovers and writes about him in the newspaper.

**The Street Lawyer** by John Grisham

After a violent encounter with a homeless man, talented corporate lawyer Michael finds himself out in the streets, lucky to be alive, and holding a top-secret file belonging to his former employers.

**Suite Française** by Irene Nemirovsky

A story of life in France under the Nazi occupation includes two parts--"Storm in June," set amid the chaotic 1940 exodus from Paris, and "Dolce," set in a German-occupied village rife with resentment, resistance, and collaboration.

**Sweetwater Creek** by Anne Rivers Siddons

Rebuilding her life on a plantation after the disappearance of her mother and the death of a sibling, Emily Parmenter forges a near-mystical relationship with her beloved spaniel and finds her world changing after the arrival of a rebellious debutante.

**Tara Road** by Maeve Binchy

Thanks to a chance phone call, Ria from Dublin and Marilyn from New England switch houses for the summer with extraordinary results when they are drawn into lifestyles vastly different than their own.

★ **The Tattooist of Auschwitz** by Heather Morris

An international best-seller based on the true story of an Auschwitz-Birkenau survivor traces the experiences of a Jewish Slovakian who uses his position as a concentration-camp tattooist to secure food for his fellow prisoners.

**The Tenth Circle** by Jodi Picoult

When his fourteen-year-old daughter is raped by her boyfriend, an overprotective father with a secret past decides to take the law into his own hands, a choice that takes him into the wilds of the Alaskan bush.

**The Things They Carried** by Tim O'Brien

Heroic young men carry the emotional weight of their lives to war in Vietnam in a patchwork account of a modern journey into the heart of darkness.

**The Thirteenth Tale** by Diane Setterfield

Amateur biographer Margaret Lea receives a letter from reclusive author Vida Winter, summoning her to write Vida's life story. Up to this point, Vida has never given a true account of her life, toying with interviewers by inventing outlandish life histories of herself. In her old age, she at last wants to tell the truth about her extraordinary life. Margaret is captivated by Vida's strange tale of the mysterious March family. But as a biographer she deals in fact not fiction, and she doesn't entirely trust Vida's account. As Margaret pieces together the story on her own, what she discovers is a chilling and transforming experience.

**A Thousand Acres** by Jane Smiley

Larry Cook, an Iowan farmer who has worked a thousand acre plot owned by his family for generations, abruptly decides to leave his farm to his three daughters and retire. His two eldest daughters are pleased with the decision but his youngest daughter has been cut out by her father and is angry. As the daughters' activity on the land progresses, they notice a change in their father. Events begin to unfold that will threaten and destroy the family and their farm.

**A Thousand Splendid Suns** by Khaled Hosseini

Two women born a generation apart witness the destruction of their home and family in war torn Kabul, losses incurred over the course of thirty years that test the limits of their strength and courage.

**Three Junes** by Julia Glass

Reveals the interconnected lives, loves, and relationships of different generations of the McLeod family over the course of three crucial summers.

**The Tiger's Wife** by Tea Obreht

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

**The Time Machine** by H. G. Wells

Published in 1895, *The Time Machine* was the first novel to suggest the theme of time travel by machine. The scientist who invents a time machine uses it to travel hundreds of thousands of years into the future, where he discovers the childlike Eloi and the hideous underground Morlocks.

**'Tis** by Frank McCourt

The sequel to the Pulitzer Prize-winning "Angela's Ashes," McCourt's glowing memoir chronicles his story from impoverished immigrant to brilliant raconteur and schoolteacher--a tale of survival as vivid, harrowing, and often hilarious as its bestselling predecessor.

**A Walk in the Woods** by Bill Bryson

With his offbeat sensibility, his eye for the absurd, and his laugh-out-loud sense of humor, Bryson recounts his confrontations with nature at its most uncompromising over his five-month journey along the Appalachian Trail in this "New York Times" bestseller.

**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.

**The Wednesday Sisters** by Meg Waite Clayton

Description:From their first meeting during the turbulent summer of 1968, five young California mothers--Frankie, Linda, Brett, Ali, and Kath--form a **sister**-like bond as they confront the ups and downs of life and pursue their mutual dreams of becoming writers.

## **Where the Heart is** by Billie Letts

Pregnant, overweight, and convinced about her inherent bad luck, Novalee Nation hopes for a new life in a new state with her boyfriend but is dumped along the way in Oklahoma, where she finds her spirit renewed.



## **White Teeth** by Zadie Smith

White Teeth is a comic epic of multicultural Britain that tells the story of immigrants in England over a period of 40 years. At the center of this invigorating novel are two unlikely friends, Archie Jones and Samad Iqbal. Hapless veterans of World War II, Archie and Samad and their families become agents of England's irrevocable transformation. A second marriage to Clara Bowden, a beautiful, albeit tooth-challenged, Jamaican half his age, quite literally gives Archie a second lease on life, and produces Irie, a knowing child whose personality doesn't quite match her name (Jamaican for "no problem"). Samad's late-in-life arranged marriage (he had to wait for his bride to be born), produces twin sons whose separate paths confound Iqbal's every effort to direct them, and a renewed, if selective, submission to his Islamic faith. Set against London's racial and cultural tapestry, venturing across the former empire and into the past as it barrels toward the future, White Teeth revels in the ecstatic hodgepodge of modern life, flirting with disaster, confounding expectations, and embracing the comedy of daily existence.

## **Wicked: the Life and Times of the Wicked**

### **Witch of the West** by Gregory Maguire

Set in an Oz where a morose Wizard battles suicidal thoughts, the story of the green-skinned Elphaba, otherwise known as the Wicked Witch of the West, profiles her as an animal rights activist striving to avenge her dear sister's death.

## **Wuthering Heights** by Emily Bronte

Emily Brontë's only novel, Wuthering Heights remains one of literature's most disturbing explorations into the dark side of romantic passion. Heathcliff and Cathy believe they're destined to love each other forever, but when cruelty and snobbery separate them, their untamed emotions literally consume them. Set amid the wild and stormy Yorkshire moors, Wuthering Heights, an unpolished and devastating epic of childhood playmates who grow into soul mates, is widely regarded as the most original tale of thwarted desire and heartbreak in the English language.

## **Ya-Yas in Bloom** by Rebecca Wells

Ya-Yas in Bloom reveals the roots of the Ya-Yas' friendship in the 1930s and roars with all the raw power of Vivi Abbott Walker's 1962 T-Bird through 60 years of marriage, child-raising, and hair-raising family secrets. In love and a war with convention, through crises of faith and hilarious lapses of parenting skills, brushes with alcoholism and glimpses of the dark reality of racial bigotry, the Ya-Ya values of unconditional loyalty, high style, and Cajun sass shine through.

## **Zorro** by Isabel Allende

Diego de la Vega, the son of an aristocratic Spanish landowner and a Shoshone mother, returns to California from school in Spain to reclaim the hacienda on which he was raised and to seek justice for the weak and helpless.