

Book club summaries

FICTION

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

A reluctant centenarian much like Forrest Gump (if Gump were an explosives expert with a fondness for vodka) decides it's not too late to start over.

***13 rue Thérèse* – Elena Mauli Shapiro**

American academic Trevor Stratton discovers a box full of artifacts from World War I as he settles into his new office in Paris. The pictures, letters, and objects in the box relate to the life of Louise Brunet, a feisty, charming Frenchwoman who lived through both World Wars.

***The 19th Wife* – David Ebershoff**

It is 1875, and Ann Eliza Young has recently separated from her powerful husband, Brigham Young, prophet and leader of the Mormon Church. Expelled and an outcast, Ann Eliza embarks on a crusade to end polygamy in the United States. A rich account of a family's polygamous history is revealed, including how a young woman became a plural wife.

***29* – Adena Halpern**

75-year-old Ellie Jerome is granted her birthday wish: for just one day, she is 29 years old again. 29 is the story of three generations of women and how one magical day shakes up everything they knew about each other.

***Abigale Hall* – Lauren A. Forry**

Set after WWII, 17-year-old Eliza Haverford and her 12-year-old sister, Rebecca, have lost their parents and are now in the care of their sullen Aunt Bess, who's more than willing to ship the girls off to Wales to work as servants. They find themselves escorted to Thornecroft, an isolated and dilapidated manor house, whose grimy, shabby interior and labyrinthine layout provide the ideal setting for exaggerating fears and hiding appalling truths.

***The Alchemist* – Paulo Coelho**

An Andalusian shepherd boy named Santiago travels from Spain to Egypt in search of a treasure buried in the Pyramids. Along the way he meets a Gypsy woman, a man who calls himself king, and an alchemist, all of whom point Santiago in the direction of his quest. What starts out as a journey to find worldly goods turns into a discovery of the treasure found within.

***All the Light We Cannot See* – Anthony Doerr**

From the highly acclaimed, multiple award-winning Anthony Doerr, a stunningly ambitious and beautiful novel about a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France as both try to survive the devastation of World War II.

***All We Ever Wanted Was Everything* – Janelle Brown**

Divorced, dumped, and in debt, Janice Miller and her daughter, Margaret, are forced to wage war with divorce lawyers, debt collectors, drug-dealing pool boys, country club ladies, evangelical neighbours, and nasty social climbers – and in the process all illusions and artifice fall away and they must reckon with something far scarier and more consequential: their true selves.

🇨🇦 *Alone in the Classroom* – Elizabeth Hay (Canadian Author)

In a small prairie school in 1929, Connie Flood helps a backward student, Michael Graves, learn how to read. Observing them and darkening their lives is the principal, Parley Burns, whose strange behaviour culminates in an attack so disturbing its repercussions continue to the present day.

***American Wife* – Curtis Sittenfeld**

On what might become one of the most significant days in her husband's presidency, Alice Blackwell considers the strange and unlikely path that has led her to the White House --- and the repercussions of a life lived, as she puts it, "almost in opposition to itself."

***And the Dark Sacred Night* – Julia Glass**

Kit Noonan is an unemployed art historian with twins to support, a mortgage to pay, and a frustrated wife who insists that, to move forward, Kit must first confront a crucial mystery about his past. Born to a single teenage mother, he has never known the identity of his biological father.

🇨🇦 *Annabel* – Kathleen Winter (Canadian Author)

A universal concern – the importance of self-determination – takes a highly specific form in Kathleen Winter's first novel, the story of an intersex child born in a remote coastal Labrador village in 1968.

***Annie Freeman's Fabulous Traveling Funeral* – Kris Radish**

Katherine oldest and dearest friend, the impressible Annie Freeman, left one final request – a traveling funeral – and she wants the most important women in her life as "pallbearers." From Sonoma to Manhattan, Katherine, Laura, Rebecca, Jill, and Marie carry Annie's ashes to the special places in her life. At every stop there's a surprise encounter and a small miracle waiting, as the women share their deepest secrets.

***The Art of Mending* – Elizabeth Berg**

Laura Bartone anticipates her annual family reunion with a mixture of excitement and wariness. When her sister Caroline confronts Laura and their brother, Steve, with devastating allegations about their mother, the three have a difficult time reconciling their varying experiences in the same house. But a sudden misfortune will lead them all to face the past, their own culpability, and their common need for love and forgiveness.

***The Art of Racing in the Rain* – Garth Stein**

A heart-wrenching but deeply funny and ultimately uplifting story of family, love, loyalty, and hope, *The Art of Racing in the Rain* is a beautifully crafted and captivating look at the wonders and absurdities of human life...as only a dog could tell it.

***The Bathing Women* – Tie Ning**

The Bathing Women follows the lives of four women—Tiao, a children’s book editor; Fan, her sister, who thinks escaping to America might solve her problems; Fei, a hedonistic and self-destructive young woman; and Youyou, a chef—from childhood during the Cultural Revolution to adulthood in the new market economy. This moving novel charts the journey of these women as they grapple with love, sibling rivalry, and, ultimately, redemption.

***The Beautiful Mystery* – Louise Penny (Canadian Author)**

Cloistered in a remote Northern Quebec monastery, 24 monks of the Gilbertine order, long thought to have vanished altogether, sing glorious Gregorian plainchants and exist happily with minimal contact from the outside world. When the choirmaster is found murdered in the abbot’s private garden, the reluctant monks have no choice but to call in the police, opening doors long ago sealed shut.

***A Beauty* – Connie Gault (Canadian Author)**

Set in 1930’s Saskatchewan, Elena’s mother has been dead for many years, and her father, burdened by the hardships of drought, has disappeared, and the eighteen-year-old is an object of pity and charity in her community. A stranger shows up in town and Elena needs only one look and one dance before jumping into his car. What follows is a trip through the prairie towns, their dusty streets, shabby hotel rooms, surrounded by dry fields that stretch out vastly, waiting for rain.

***Be Frank with Me* – Julia Claiborne Johnson**

Full of heart and countless only-in-Hollywood moments, Be Frank With Me is a captivating and heartwarming story of an unusual mother and son, and the intrepid young woman who finds herself irresistibly pulled into their unforgettable world.

***Before I Let You Go* – Kelly Rimmer**

As children, sisters Lexie and Annie were incredibly close. Bonded by the death of their beloved father, they weathered the storms of life together. As adults, Lexie and Annie could not be more different. Lexie is a successful doctor and happily engaged. Annie is an addict, a thief and a liar. When Annie’s newborn baby is in danger of being placed in foster care, Annie phones to beg her sister for help.

***Before We Were Yours* – Lisa Wingate**

Based on one of America’s most notorious real-life scandals—in which Georgia Tann, director of a Memphis-based adoption organization, kidnapped and sold poor children to wealthy families all over the country—Lisa Wingate’s riveting, wrenching, and ultimately uplifting tale reminds us how, even though the paths we take can lead to many places, the heart never forgets where we belong.

***Bel Canto* – Ann Patchett**

A lavish birthday party held at a South American embassy for powerful businessman Mr. Hosokawa seems a perfect evening – until a band of gun-wielding terrorists takes the party hostage. But what begins as a life-threatening scenario slowly evolves into something quite different, as terrorists and hostages forge unexpected bonds, and people from different backgrounds become compatriots, intimate friends, and lovers.

🇨🇦 ***The Bishop's Man* – Linden MacIntyre** (Canadian Author)

Father Duncan MacAskill is called The Exorcist. Not in the traditional sense, however: at his bishop's bidding, he drives out devils of a different sort – priests who molest children. He does not banish the devils to hell, nor to the police, but to discreet clinics or simply to far-off parishes to commence their sins anew. Despite his own celibacy and sobriety issues, MacAskill is the closest thing to a hero in this riveting novel.

🇨🇦 ***Blood and Salt* – Barbara Sapergia**

Blood and Salt is a work of fiction grounded in actual details about the Banff-Castle Mountain internment camp. It explores the search for a new life and the search for love - all the while asking what it is to be Ukrainian.

🇨🇦 ***Bloodletting and Miraculous Cures* – Vincent Lam** (Canadian Author)

Toronto ER physician Lam won the Giller Prize for this series of interlinked short stories that explore the lives of doctors. In *Bloodletting and Miraculous Cures*, Lam balances black humour, both common and extraordinary moral dilemmas, and a shockingly realistic portrait of today's medical profession.

***Blooms of Darkness* – Aharon Appelfeld**

The narrative follows an 11-year-old Jewish boy who stays with a prostitute in a Ukrainian ghetto during World War II.

***Blue Shoe* – Anne Lamott**

Mattie Ryder is newly divorced and living with her two children in her rat-infested childhood home. As she attempts to come to terms with her past, she unravels family secrets and she learns truths that are at the same time painful and liberating.

***Blue Ticket* – Sophie Mackintosh**

Calla knows how the lottery works. Everyone does. On the day of your first bleed, you report to the station to learn what kind of woman you will be. A white ticket grants you marriage and children. A blue ticket grants you a career and freedom. You are relieved of the terrible burden of choice. And once you've taken your ticket, there is no going back. But what if the life you're given is the wrong one?

🇨🇦 ***The Book of Negroes* – Lawrence Hill** (Canadian Author)

Abducted from her African village, Aminata Diallo is sent to live as a slave in America. This novel follows her on a brutal, incredible journey, including her eventual return to Sierra Leone.

***The Bookshop* – Penelope Fitzgerald**

In a small East Anglian town, Florence Green decides, against polite but ruthless local opposition, to open a bookshop. Hardborough becomes a battleground. Florence has tried to change the way things have always been done, and as a result, she has to take on not only the people who have made themselves important, but natural and even supernatural forces too. Her fate will strike a chord with anyone who knows that life has treated them with less than justice.

The Bookshop of Yesterdays – Amy Meyerson

A woman inherits a beloved bookstore and sets forth on a journey of self-discovery in this poignant debut about family, forgiveness and a love of reading.

Breakfast with Buddha – Roland Merullo

When his sister tricks him into taking her guru on a trip to their childhood home, Otto Ringling, a confirmed skeptic, is not amused. Six days on the road with an enigmatic holy man who answers every question with a riddle is not what he'd planned. But in an effort to westernize his passenger—and amuse himself—he decides to show the monk some "American fun" along the way.

Brick Lane – Monica Ali

The novel centers around the life of follows the life of Nazneen, a Bangladeshi woman who moves to London at the age of 18, to marry an older man, Chanu.

 *The Cellist of Sarajevo – Steven Galloway* (Canadian Author)

The Cellist of Sarajevo captures with taut, painstaking clarity the events and atmosphere surrounding the siege of Sarajevo in the 1990s, the longest in modern warfare. The novel's linchpin is the true story of a cellist who resolves to play Albinoni's Adagio on the same square every day for 22 days in honour of the victims of a massacre that took place there.

The Chilbury Ladies' Choir – Jennifer Ryan

The Chilbury Ladies' Choir unfolds the struggles, affairs, deceptions, and triumphs of a village choir during World War II. An enchanting ensemble story that shuttles from village intrigue to romance to the heartbreaking matters of life and death, Jennifer Ryan's debut novel thrillingly illuminates the true strength of the women on the home front in a village of indomitable spirit.

Cilka's Journey – Heather Morris

In this follow-up to *The Tattooist of Auschwitz*, the author tells the story, based on a true one, of a woman who survives Auschwitz, only to find herself locked away again.

Clock Dance – Anne Tyler

Willa Drake can count on one hand the defining moments of her life. So when she receives a phone call telling her that her son's ex-girlfriend has been shot and needs her help, she drops everything and flies across the country, taking Willa into uncharted territory.

The Color of Tea – Hannah Tunnicliffe

With the heralding of a new year, Grace resolves to do something bold. In a pocket of China, filled with casinos and yum cha restaurants, she opens her own small café called Lillian's. But Grace's immersion in the cafe is taking its toll on her marriage, and when things start to crumble in the cafe, Lillian's suddenly feels like a burden rather than an escape.

 *Come, Thou Tortoise – Jessica Grant* (Canadian Author)

Audrey Flowers is living quietly in Oregon with Winnifred, her tortoise, when she finds out her dear father has been knocked into a coma back in Newfoundland. Despite her fear of flying, she goes to him, but not before

she reluctantly dumps Winnifred with her unreliable friends. When Audrey disarms an Air Marshal en route to St. John's we begin to realize there's something, well, odd about her. And we soon know that Audrey's quest to discover who her father really was – and reunite with Winnifred – will be an adventure like no other.

 **Consumption – Kevin Patterson** (Canadian Author)

Born on the tundra in the 1950s, Victoria knows nothing but the nomadic life of the Inuit until, at the age of ten, she is diagnosed with tuberculosis and evacuated to a southern sanitarium. When she returns home six years later, she finds a radically different world.

 **Cool Water – Dianne Warren** (Canadian Author)

Juliet, Saskatchewan, is a blink-of-an-eye kind of town. But the heart of the town beats in the rich and overlapping stories of its people; stories that bring the prairie desert and the town of Juliet to vivid and enduring life.

Courting Greta – Ramsey Hootman

The relationship between former computer programmer Samuel Cooke and tough-as-nails gym coach Greta Cassamajor has a chance of succeeding, but only if the two of them can stop keeping the past secret and finally be honest with each other. In this poignant, witty debut, Ramsey Hootman upends traditional romance tropes to weave a charming tale of perseverance, trust, and slightly conditional love.

The Cranes Dance – Meg Howrey

The Cranes Dance tells the fast-paced story of two exceptionally talented dancers, Kate and Gwen Crane, their rise to prominence in the high-stress world of New York's most prestigious ballet company, and their eventual fall from grace. Narrated in a voice that is by turns flippant, cynical, heartbroken, and harshly self-critical, the novel offers a visceral portrait of the dancer's life, and the close bond between sisters.

 **Crow Lake – Mary Lawson** (Canadian Author)

Four children in northern Ontario struggle to remain a family following the deaths of their parents in a car accident; narrator Kate looks back in adulthood to the sacrifices made by her two older brothers, and tries to come to terms with the long-term effects of their decisions.

Cry of the Dove – Fadia Faqir

Years ago, Salma was imprisoned for violating the laws of her Bedouin village by becoming pregnant out of wedlock. Now, escaped from her prison and living in exile in England, Salma tries to forge a new life for herself. Salma's past and the cries of her lost child still haunt her, so risking everything, she returns to her village in a desperate attempt to save her daughter.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time – Mark Haddon

Christopher Boone has autism, and while he has a brilliant and analytical mind, everyday social interaction is threatening and baffling to him. After being falsely accused of killing his neighbour's dog, Christopher emulates his idol, Sherlock Holmes, in trying to solve the mystery. Along the way, he also discovers the solutions to a lot of other unanswered questions in his life.

Dance, Gladys, Dance – Cassie Stocks

27-year-old Frieda Zweig is at an impasse. Behind her is a string of failed relationships and half-forgotten ambitions of being a painter; in front of her lies the dreary task of finding a real job and figuring out what “normal” people do with their lives. Then, a classified ad in the local paper introduces Frieda to Gladys, an elderly woman who long ago gave up on her dreams of being a dancer. The catch? Gladys is a ghost.

Dancing on Broken Glass – Ka Hancock

A powerfully written novel offering an intimate look at a beautiful marriage and how bipolar disorder and cancer affect it, *Dancing on Broken Glass* by Ka Hancock perfectly illustrates the enduring power of love.

Dancing to the Flute – Manisha Jolie Amin

Kalu is left as a boy at a temple near Hastinapore, India, with no memory of his past. His happy wit and thoughtful manner earn him friends, though, and his talent eventually takes him away from Hastinapore to learn music from a reclusive master.

Dear Life – Alice Munro

Suffused with Munro's clarity of vision and her unparalleled gift for storytelling, these stories about departures and beginnings, accidents, dangers, and homecomings both virtual and real, paint a vivid and lasting portrait of how strange, dangerous, and extraordinary the ordinary life can be.

The Diary – Eileen Goudge

When the two grown daughters of Elizabeth Marshall discover an old diary of their mother's in her attic, it comes as a shock to learn that the true love of Elizabeth's life was not their father. But is all as it seems? Only the pages of her diary can provide clues to what really happened.

The Elegance of the Hedgehog – Muriel Barbery

An enchanting New York Times and international bestseller about life, art, literature, philosophy, culture, class, privilege, and power, seen through the eyes of a 54-year old French concierge and a precocious but troubled 12-year-old girl. A moving, funny, and triumphant novel that exalts the quiet victories of the inconspicuous among us.

Ella Minnow Pea – Mark Dunn

Ella Minnow Pea is a girl living happily on the fictional island of Nollop off the coast of South Carolina. Nollop was named after Nevin Nollop, author of the immortal pangram, “The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.” Now Ella finds herself acting to save her friends, family, and fellow citizens from the encroaching totalitarianism of the island's Council, which has banned the use of certain letters of the alphabet as they fall from a memorial statue of Nevin Nollop.

Extensions – Myrna Dey

When she makes the discovery of a photograph of her grandmother and her twin sister, RCMP Constable Arabella Dryvynsydes decides to investigate how a picture taken in 1914 in the mining town of Extension, B.C. wound up at a garage sale in small-town Saskatchewan almost one hundred years later. As Arabella sifts through caches of long-forgotten letters, she pieces together the heartbreaking truth of her family history and resolves a nearly century-old murder.

***Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* – Jonathan Safran Foer**

Nine-year-old Oskar Schell has embarked on an urgent, secret mission that will take him through the five boroughs of New York. His goal is to find the lock that matches a mysterious key that belonged to his father, who died in the World Trade Center on the morning of September 11.

***The Factory Voice* – Jeanette Lynes (Canadian Author)**

The lives and dreams of four vital, engaging, women revolve around mysterious events at a Fort William military aircraft factory in 1941. *The Factory Voice* is a quirky, light-hearted mystery about the daily lives of factory workers and in particular of women in a time of transition, both for their personal lives and for the society in general.

***Far From Home* – Anne DeGrace**

After a shocking family betrayal and an unexpected pregnancy, Jo leaves home, college, and everything she knows. Far from home, she finds her way to Cass's Roadside Café. Cass's seems as good a place as any for Jo to get her bearings. Jo finds the café to be a way station through which an odd assortment of travelers blow. Their stories open Jo's eyes to life lessons, and give her the strength to face her past.

***Finding Dorothy* – Elizabeth Letts**

Hollywood, 1938: As soon as she learns that M-G-M is adapting her late husband's masterpiece for the screen, seventy-seven-year-old Maud Gage Baum sets about trying to finagle her way onto the set. Nineteen years after Frank's passing, Maud is the only person who can help the producers stay true to the spirit of the book—because she's the only one left who knows its secrets.

***The Finkler Question* – Howard Jacobson**

Julian Treslove and Sam Finkler are old school friends. They've never lost touch with each other, or with their former teacher, Libor Sevcik. Dining together one night, they share a sweetly painful evening, reminiscing on a time before they had loved and lost, before they had prized anything greatly enough to fear the loss of it. But as Treslove makes his way home, he is attacked and mugged. Convinced the crime was a misdirected act of anti-Semitism, his whole sense of self will fundamentally change.

***Five Days Left* – Julie Lawson Timmer**

Mara Nichols, a successful lawyer, and devoted wife and adoptive mother, has recently been diagnosed with a terminal disease. Scott Coffman, a middle school teacher, has been fostering an eight-year-old boy while the boy's mother serves a jail sentence. Scott and Mara both have five days left until they must say good-bye to the ones they love the most.

***The Forgotten Daughter* – Renita D'Silva**

"You were adopted." Raised in England by her caring but emotionally reserved parents, Nisha has never been one to take risks. Now, with the scrawled address of an Indian convent, she begins a search for the mother and family she never knew. And, as her eyes are opened to a side of herself she didn't know existed, Nisha realizes that she must also seek answers to the hardest question of all—why?

***The Forgotten Garden* – Kate Morton**

A dockmaster and his wife take in a tiny girl who is left abandoned on a ship headed for Australia in 1913. Finally told the truth on her twenty-first birthday, “Nell” sets out on a journey to England to try to find her real identity. It is not until her granddaughter, Cassandra, takes up the search after Nell’s death that all of the pieces of the puzzle are assembled.

***The Girl on the Train* – Paula Hawkins**

Rachel takes the same commuter train every morning, and stops at the signal that allows her to daily watch the same couple breakfasting on their deck. Their life—as she sees it—is perfect. And then she sees something shocking. Now everything’s changed. Rachel offers what she knows to the police, and becomes inextricably entwined in what happens next, as well as in the lives of everyone involved.

***Gone Girl* – Gillian Flynn**

Amy disappears on her fifth wedding anniversary, and while Nick has not been a model husband, could he really have killed her? Under mounting pressure from the police and the media—as well as Amy’s fiercely doting parents—the town golden boy parades an endless series of lies, deceits, and inappropriate behavior.

***Good to a Fault* – Marina Endicott (Canadian Author)**

Driving to the bank during her lunch hour, Clara Purdy crashes into a beat-up car carrying an itinerant family of six. When bruises on the mother, Lorraine, prove to be late-stage cancer, Clara decides to do the right thing. She moves Lorraine’s three children and their grandmother into her own house.

***The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* – Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows**

The letters comprising this charming novel begin in 1946, when author Juliet Ashton invited articulate – and not-so-articulate – neighbours to write her with their stories of the war and of the German occupation of Guernsey which had so recently ended. The tragic stories of life under Nazi occupation animate the novel and give it its urgency, while also affirming the power of books to nourish people during hard times.

***The Guest Book* – Sarah Blake**

An unforgettable love story, a novel about past mistakes and betrayals that ripple throughout generations, *The Guest Book* examines not just a privileged American family, but a privileged America. *The Guest Book* follows three generations of a powerful American family, a family that “used to run the world”.

***Half Broke Horses* – Jeannette Walls**

Lily Casey Smith, this novel’s feisty Texas protagonist, is a frontier teacher, a rancher, a rodeo rider, a poker player, and bootlegger. In *Half Broke Horses*, she survives droughts, tornados, floods, poverty, and whatever else fate can throw against her. Based on author Jeannette Walls’s grandmother, Lily is a plausible character because she has a voice that synchronizes with her history.

***Hanging Mary* – Susan Higginbotham**

A widow who runs a small boardinghouse on H Street, Mary Surratt isn’t half as committed to the cause as her son, Johnny. If he’s not delivering messages or escorting veiled spies, he’s invited home men like John Wilkes Booth, the actor who is even more charming in person than he is on the stage. Based on the true case of Mary Surratt, *Hanging Mary* reveals the untold story of those on the other side of the assassin’s gun.

🇨🇦 *The Heart Specialist* – Claire Holden Rothman (Canadian Author)

Inspired by the life of Doctor Maude Elizabeth Seymour Abbott, *The Heart Specialist* is the story of an ambitious woman pursuing her dream of being a doctor at the dawn of the twentieth century.

***Heartbreak Hotel* – Deborah Moggach**

Russell 'Buffy' Buffery has upped sticks from London and moved to a decrepit B&B in Wales. He needs to fill the beds, and what better way than with 'Courses for Divorces'. From cookery to car maintenance, the recently divorced find themselves re-learning all those skills they never thought they'd need again, and a whole lot more besides.

***Heartburn* – Nora Ephron**

Seven months into her pregnancy, Rachel discovers that her husband is in love with another woman. The fact that the other woman has "a neck as long as an arm and a nose as long as a thumb and you should see her legs" is no consolation. Food sometimes is, though, since Rachel writes cookbooks for a living. And in between trying to win Mark back and loudly wishing him dead, Ephron's irrepressible heroine offers some of her favorite recipes.

***The Help* – Kathryn Stockett**

The Help tells the story of black maids working in white Southern homes in the early 1960s in Jackson, Mississippi, and of Miss Eugenia "Skeeter" Phelan, a 22-year-old graduate from Ole Miss. Skeeter returns to her family's cotton plantation to find that her beloved maid and nanny has left and no one will tell her why.

🇨🇦 *Helpless* – Barbara Gowdy (Canadian Author)

A single mother's daughter is kidnapped during a blackout and days pass with no clues, only a phone call that she receives from a woman whose voice is familiar, but which she cannot place.

***The Hive* – Gill Hornby**

It's the start of another school year at St. Ambrose. While the children are busy in the classroom, their mothers are learning sharper lessons. Lessons in friendship. Lessons in betrayal. Lessons in the laws of community, the transience of power...and how to get invited to lunch.

🇨🇦 *The Home for Unwanted Girls* – Joanna Goodman

Philomena meets *Orphan Train* in this suspenseful, provocative novel filled with love, secrets, and deceit—the story of a young unwed mother who is forcibly separated from her daughter at birth and the lengths to which they go to find each other.

***The Hour of the Fox* – Kurt Palka**

Set against the backdrops of the rugged Atlantic coast, Toronto, and Paris, *The Hour of the Fox* is emotionally resonant, atmospheric, and unforgettable in its depiction of motherhood and loss.

***A House Without Windows* – Nadia Hashimi**

When she's found with her murdered husband's blood on her hands, Zeba is almost strangled by his outraged cousin. She's rescued only to land in jail, accused of killing her husband. Luckily, Zeba's bother has hired Yusuef, a young lawyer, to represent her.

🇨🇦 *The Imposter Bride* – Nancy Richler (Canadian Author)

The Second World War is over, and mail-order bride Lily Azerov has come to Montreal from Poland, via Palestine, to marry Sol Kramer. In an odd twist of fate, she ends up marrying his brother instead, and soon gives birth to a daughter. But when her child is three months old, Lily goes out one day to buy milk and disappears, abandoning her family and leaving behind a mystery that will take decades to untangle.

🇨🇦 *In Search of April Raintree* – Beatrice Mosionier

In Search of April Raintree is the story of two Métis sisters growing up in Winnipeg, Manitoba. They are taken from their home and family and each put into different foster homes. As they each make their way in a society that is, at times, indifferent, hostile, and violent, they both struggle to find their own identity. One embraces her Métis heritage, while the other tries to leave it behind. In the end, out of tragedy, comes an unexpected legacy of triumph and reclamation.

***In the Lake of the Woods* – Tim O'Brien**

John Wade is a man in crisis: after spending years building a successful political career, he finds his future derailed during a bid for the U.S. Senate by revelations about his past as a soldier in Vietnam. The election lost by a landslide, John and his wife, Kathy, retreat to a small cabin on the shores of a Minnesota lake--from which Kathy mysteriously disappears.

🇨🇦 *Indian Horse* – Richard Wagamese

Saul Indian Horse is in trouble, and there seems to be only one way out. As he journeys back through his life as a northern Ojibway, from the horrors of residential school to his triumphs on the hockey rink, he must question everything he knows. In *Indian Horse*, author Richard Wagamese crafted a wise and magical novel about love, family and the power of spirit.

***The Keeper of Lost Things* – Ruth Hogan**

A charming, clever, and quietly moving debut novel of of endless possibilities and joyful discoveries that explores the promises we make and break, losing and finding ourselves, the objects that hold magic and meaning for our lives, and the surprising connections that bind us.

***The Kitchen Daughter* – Jael McHenry**

When Ginny's parents die unexpectedly, she is left on her own for the first time in her 26-year-old life. Unable to cope, Ginny turns her focus to cooking various recipes from the family collection. When the ghosts of the recipe's creators start to appear, does it mean she's going crazy, or is it just her private way of seeking advice and comfort?

***Left Neglected* – Lisa Genova**

Sarah Nickerson, like any other working mom, is busy trying to have it all. After a brain injury steals her awareness of everything on her left side, Sarah must retrain her mind to perceive the world as a whole. In so doing, she also learns how to pay attention to the people and parts of her life that matter most.

***The Library of Legends* – Janie Chang**

China, 1937. When Japanese bombs begin falling on the city of Nanking, nineteen-year-old Hu Lian and her classmates at Minghua University are ordered to flee. Lian and a convoy of students, faculty and staff must

walk 1,000 miles to the safety of China's western provinces, a journey marred by the constant threat of aerial attack. And it is not just the refugees who are at risk; Lian and her classmates have been entrusted with a priceless treasure: a 500-year-old collection of myths and folklore known as the Library of Legends.

***The Life We Bury* – Allen Eskens**

Joe Talbert, a junior at the University of Minnesota, receives a class assignment to write a biography of someone who has lived an interesting life. At a nursing home he meets Carl Iverson, a man dying of cancer who has been medically paroled after spending thirty years in prison for the murder of a fourteen-year-old girl. Carl agrees to tell Joe his story, and Joe sets out to unravel the tapestry of the thirty-year-old murder.

***The Little Old Lady Who Broke All the Rules* – Catharina Ingelman-Sundberg**

Martha dreams of escaping the dull, drab life of the retirement home. She enlists her four oldest friends to rebel against the rules imposed upon them: protesting against early bedtimes, tasteless meals, and a host of unfair cost-cutting measures. As the elderly friends become more daring, their activities escalate, and they devise a cunning plan to rob a bank in order to fund their exciting new lives.

***The Little Paris Bookshop* – Nina George**

From his floating bookstore on the Seine River in Paris, Monsieur Perdu prescribes novels for the hardships of life, offering the exact book a reader needs. However, he can't seem to heal himself from his lost love and sets sail in a journey to heal the human soul, dispensing books and wisdom along the way.

***The Lizard Cage* – Karen Connelly**

Set during Burma's military dictatorship of the mid—1990s, Karen Connelly's exquisitely written and harshly realistic debut novel is a hymn to human resilience and love.

***Love Anthony* – Lisa Genova**

Olivia Donatelli's dream of a "normal" life shattered when her son, Anthony, was diagnosed with autism at age three. Now she's alone in Nantucket, desperate to find meaning in her son's short life, when a chance encounter with another woman brings Anthony alive again in a most unexpected way.

***Loving Frank* – Nancy Horan**

Mamah Borthwick Cheney keeps a diary as she struggles to justify her clandestine love affair with Frank Lloyd Wright. While scholars have largely relegated Mamah to a footnote in the life of America's greatest architect, author Nancy Horan gives full weight to their dramatic love story and illuminates Cheney's profound influence on Wright.

 *Lullabies for Little Criminals* – Heather O'Neill (Canadian Author)

At thirteen, Baby lives with her father, Jules, who takes better care of his heroin habit than he does of his daughter. Although nothing shakes her love for Jules, there's only one career option for an attractive, neglected girl, no matter how bright and imaginative.

***Major Pettigrew's Last Stand* – Helen Simonson**

The Major leads a quiet life valuing the proper things that Englishmen have lived by for generations: honor, duty, decorum, and a properly brewed cup of tea. But then his brother's death sparks an unexpected friendship with Mrs. Jasmina Ali, the Pakistani shopkeeper from the village.

***A Man Called Ove* – Fredrik Backman**

A grumpy yet loveable man finds his solitary world turned on its head when a boisterous young family moves in next door. Ove continuously pushes his demise from one day to the next, and, as time passes, these characters slowly weave themselves into his life, offering Ove a chance at rebirth.

***The Memory Keeper's Daughter* – Kim Edwards**

When his wife gives birth to twins in 1964, Dr. David Henry decides to tell her that, while their son is healthy, their daughter has died. The daughter is very much alive, but has Down's syndrome. When the attending nurse is told to take the child to an institution, she instead vanishes with her to start a new life.

***Middlesex* – Jeffrey Eugenides**

Spanning three generations and two continents, the story of the Stephanides family is influenced by the presence of a rogue gene that creates a hermaphroditic child (born Calliope, later known as Cal). While following Cal's history and development, the book raises many questions about what it means, fundamentally, to be male or female.

***Miss Julia Speaks Her Mind* – Ann B. Ross**

Wealthy and newly-widowed Julia Springer has always used her sharp wit and proper Southern manner as a barrier to presumption. When a woman claiming to be the mistress of her husband arrives on her doorstep with a child in tow, Miss Julia needs to reassess her perception of her life, her marriage, and her standing in the town.

***The Next Thing on My List* – Jill Smolinski**

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.

***Olive Kitteridge* – Elizabeth Strout**

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 of Crosby, Maine, and in the world at large, but she doesn't always recognize the changes in those around her. As the townspeople grapple with their problems, Olive is brought to a deeper understanding of herself and her life.

***Orphan #8* – Kim van Alkemade**

In this stunning new historical novel inspired by true events, Kim van Alkemade tells the fascinating story of a woman who must choose between revenge and mercy when she encounters the doctor who subjected her to dangerous medical experiments in a New York City Jewish orphanage years before.

***Orphan Train* – Christina Baker Kline**

Penobscot Indian Molly Ayer is close to "aging out" out of the foster care system. A community service position helping an elderly woman clean out her home is the only thing keeping Molly out of juvie and worse. Molly discovers that she has the power to help Vivian find answers to mysteries that have haunted her for her entire life – answers that will ultimately free them both.

***The Other Boleyn Girl* – Philippa Gregory**

Mary Boleyn catches the eye of Henry VIII when she comes to court as a girl of fourteen. Dazzled by the golden prince, Mary's joy is cut short when she discovers that she is a pawn in the dynastic plots of her family. When the capricious king's interest wanes, Mary is ordered to pass on her knowledge of how to please him to her friend and rival: her sister Anne.

***The Other Einstein* – Marie Benedict**

A vivid and mesmerizing novel about the extraordinary woman who married and worked with one of the greatest scientists in history.

***Outlander* – Diana Gabaldon**

Claire Randall has a husband in one century, and a lover in another. In 1945, Claire, a former combat nurse, is back from the war and reunited with her husband on a second honeymoon—when she innocently touches a boulder in one of the ancient stone circles that dot the British Isles. Suddenly she is a Sassenach—an "outlander"—in a Scotland torn by war and raiding border clans in the year of our Lord...1743.

***The Painted Girls* – Cathy Marie Buchanan**

A heartrending, gripping novel set in belle époque Paris and inspired by the real-life model for Degas's Little Dancer Aged 14 and by the era's most famous criminal trials.

***Peace Like a River* – Leif Enger**

Young Reuben Land has little doubt that miracles happen all around us, suspecting that his own father is touched by God. When his older brother flees a controversial murder charge, Reuben, along with his older sister and father, set off on a journey that will take them to the Badlands and through a landscape more extraordinary than they could have anticipated. Enger's novel is at once a heroic quest and a haunting meditation on the possibility of magic in the everyday world.

***The Postmistress* – Sarah Blake**

What would happen if someone did the unthinkable—and didn't deliver a letter? Filled with stunning parallels to today, *The Postmistress* is a sweeping novel about the loss of innocence of two extraordinary women—and of two countries torn apart by war.

***Plainsong* – Kent Haruf**

In the small town of Holt, Colorado, a high school teacher is confronted with raising his two boys alone after their mother retreats first to the bedroom, then altogether. A teenage girl—her father long since disappeared, her mother unwilling to have her in the house—is pregnant, alone herself, with nowhere to go. And out in the country, two brothers, elderly bachelors, work the family homestead, the only world they've ever known.

***The Reader* – Bernhard Schlink**

Michael Berg is 15 when he begins a long, obsessive affair with Hanna, an enigmatic older woman. He never learns very much about her, and when she disappears one day, he expects never to see her again. But, to his horror, he does. Hanna is a defendant in a trial related to Germany's Nazi past, and it soon becomes clear that she is guilty of an unspeakable crime.

The Red Tent – Anita Diamant

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.

A Reliable Wife – Robert Goolrick

Rural Wisconsin, 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. She is both complex and devious, haunted by a terrible past and motivated by greed.

Room – Emma Donoghue

To 5-year-old Jack, Room is the entire world. It is where he was born and grew up; it's where he lives with his Ma as they learn and read and eat and sleep and play. But to Ma, it is the prison where Old Nick has held her captive for seven years. Through determination, ingenuity, and fierce motherly love, Ma has created a life for Jack. But she knows it's not enough...not for her or for him.

The Rosie Effect – Graeme Simsion

In this highly anticipated sequel to the New York Times bestselling novel *The Rosie Project*, Don Tillman and his new wife, Rosie, find themselves with a new and unexpected "project"—a baby on the way.

The Rosie Project – Graeme Simsion

An international sensation, this hilarious, feel-good novel is narrated by an oddly charming and socially challenged genetics professor on an unusual quest: to find out if he is capable of true love.

Sarah's Key – Tatiana de Rosnay

Paris, July 1942: Sarah, a ten year-old girl, is arrested with her family by the French police in the Vel' d'Hiv' roundup. Paris, May 2002: On Vel' d'Hiv's 60th anniversary, journalist Julia Jarmond is asked to write an article about this black day in France's past. Through her contemporary investigation, she stumbles onto a trail of long-hidden family secrets that connect her to Sarah.

The Shack – William Paul Young

Mack's youngest daughter, 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, Mack receives a suspicious note, apparently from God, inviting him back to that shack. Against his better judgment he arrives at the shack on a wintry afternoon and walks back into his darkest nightmare.

A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian – Marina Lewycka

Sisters Vera and Nadezhda must put aside feuding to save their engineer father from gold-digger Valentina. With her proclivity for satin underwear and boil-in-the-bag cuisine, she will stop at nothing in her pursuit of wealth. But the sisters' campaign to oust Valentina unearths secrets and sends them back to roots they'd much rather forget.

***Still Alice* – Lisa Genova**

Alice Howland is a celebrated Harvard professor at the height of her career when she notices a forgetfulness creeping into her life. As confusion starts to cloud her thinking and her memory begins to fail her, she receives a devastating diagnosis: early onset Alzheimer's disease.

🇨🇦 *The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie* – Alan Bradley (Canadian Author)

Set in the English countryside in 1950, it features Flavia de Luce, an 11-year-old amateur sleuth who pulls herself away from her beloved chemistry lab in order to clear her father in a murder investigation.

***The Thirteenth Tale: A Novel* – Diane Setterfield**

Biographer Margaret Lea is asked by one of Britain's most well-loved novelists, Vida Winter, to tell her story. Intrigued, Margaret agrees to meet Miss Winter and act as her biographer. Vida Winter shares her dark family history, and Margaret finds herself more and more deeply immersed in the strange and troubling story.

🇨🇦 *Three Day Road* – Joseph Boyden (Canadian Author)

Three Day Road refers to a trip taken by an old Cree medicine woman and her nephew, wounded in World War I, as she takes him back home to the bush in a canoe; it also refers to the journey taken after death. Xavier and his friend Elijah were expert sharpshooters in the trenches of France, and both coped with this in very different ways.

***Three Souls* – Janie Chang**

Set in 1935 China, this is the story of the ghost of a young woman named Leiyin, who watches her own funeral from above and wonders why she is being denied entry to the afterlife. Beside her are three souls—stern and scholarly yang; impulsive, romantic yin; and wise, shining hun—who will guide her toward understanding. She must, they tell her, make amends.

***The Truth According to Us* – Annie Barrows**

Macedonia is the kind of town where everyone knows everyone else's business. Into this environment comes a Layla, commissioned to write a history of the town upon its sesquicentennial. She boards with the Romeyn family whose fortunes have fallen after a series of scandals, befriending reluctant spinster Jottie Romeyn, but Jottie's 12-year-old niece, Willa, deeply distrusts Layla's intentions toward Willa's divorced father, Felix.

***The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* – Rachel Joyce**

Harold Fry embarks on a journey after receiving a letter from a woman he hasn't heard from in twenty years. The woman is in a hospice and is writing to say goodbye, so Harold writes a response. But on his way to the mailbox he just keeps going.

***Water for Elephants: A Novel* – Sara Gruen**

When Jankowski learns that his parents have been killed in a car crash, he drops out of veterinary school and parlays his expertise with animals into a job with the circus, where he cares for a menagerie of exotic creatures. He falls in love with Marlena, one of the show's star performers—a romance complicated by Marlena's husband, the sadistic circus boss who beats both his wife and the animals Jankowski cares for.

***When Crickets Cry* – Charles Martin**

In a small town square of a sleepy Georgia town, a spirited 7-year-old sits at her lemonade stand, raising money for her own heart transplant. As a beat-up bread truck careens around the corner, a strong wind blows Annie's money into the road. A bearded stranger looks up in time to see Annie's yellow dress fluttering in the wind as she runs into the road. What happens next will change both of their lives forever.

***Where the Crawdads Sing* – Delia Owens**

In late 1969, when handsome Chase Andrews is found dead, the locals immediately suspect Kya Clark, the so-called Marsh Girl. But Kya is not what they say. Sensitive and intelligent, she has survived for years alone in the marsh that she calls home, finding friends in the gulls and lessons in the sand.

***Wicked* – Gregory Maguire**

Following the traditions of Gabriel García Márquez, John Gardner and J.R.R. Tolkien, *Wicked* is a richly woven tale that takes us to the other, darker side of the rainbow as novelist Gregory Maguire chronicles the Wicked Witch of the West's odyssey through the complex world of Oz—where people call you wicked if you tell the truth.

***Zara's Dead* – Sharon Butala (Canadian author)**

Inspired by the unsolved murder of a young girl in 1962 in Saskatoon, *Zara's Dead* is the fictional retelling of a very real story, one that has captivated the public and eluded answers for decades.

NON-FICTION

***Beyond Belief* – Jenna Miscavige Hill**

In this memoir, Jenna Miscavige Hill—the niece of David Miscavige, the leader of the Church of Scientology—pulls back the curtain of this secretive organization. She tells the incredible story of a childhood too strange to be believed and exposes the inner workings of Scientology’s celebrity culture.

***The Boy Who Followed His Father Into Auschwitz* – Jeremy Dronfield**

In 1939, Gustav Kleinmann, a Jewish upholsterer from Vienna, and his sixteen-year-old son Fritz are arrested by the Gestapo and sent to Germany. Imprisoned in the Buchenwald concentration camp, they miraculously survive the Nazis’ murderous brutality. Then Gustav learns he is being sent to Auschwitz—and certain death. For Fritz, letting his father go is unthinkable. Desperate to remain together, Fritz makes an incredible choice: he insists he must go too. To the Nazis, one death camp is the same as another, and so the boy is allowed to follow.

***The Education of Augie Merasty* – Joseph Auguste Merasty (Canadian Author)**

This is the memoir of Augie Merasty, the chronicle of life in a residential school from one of its survivors. Despite the pain of these childhood memories, Merasty’s sense of humour and warm voice shine through in a tale that highlights the importance of reconciliation.

***The End of Your Life Book Club* – Will Schwalbe**

This is the inspiring true story of a son and his mother, who start a “book club” that brings them together as her life comes to a close.

***Expecting Adam* – Martha Beck**

This is a wickedly funny, yet wrenchingly sad memoir of a young mother awaiting the birth of a Down syndrome baby, while she pursues a doctorate at Harvard. A former Mormon turned atheist, Beck has several experiences during her pregnancy that challenge her long-held beliefs about religion, education, and what is really important in life.

***Forgiveness* – Mark Sakamoto (Canadian author)**

The heart-rending true story of two families on either side of the Second World War—and a moving tribute to the nature of forgiveness.

***From the Ashes* – Jesse Thistle (Canadian author)**

In this extraordinary and inspiring debut memoir, Jesse Thistle, once a high school dropout and now a rising Indigenous scholar, chronicles his life on the streets and how he overcame trauma and addiction to discover the truth about who he is.

***The Glass Castle* – Jeanette Walls**

Jeanette Walls’ parents were far from ideal – in fact, their irresponsibility was often criminal, resulting in their children suffering from constant disruption, neglect, delusions of grandeur, and betrayal. However,

Walls does not turn this memoir into a diatribe against them; instead, she shows us how she and her siblings survived by feeling their turbulent life was a glorious adventure.

The Happiness Project – Gretchen Rubin

In this lively and compelling account, Rubin chronicles her adventures during the twelve months she spent test-driving the wisdom of the ages, current scientific research, and lessons from popular culture about how to be happier. Written with a wicked sense of humour and sharp insight, Gretchen Rubin's story will inspire readers to embrace the pleasure in their lives and remind them how to have fun.

I am Hutterite – Mary Ann Kirkby (Canadian Author)

When she was ten years old her parents packed up their seven children and a handful of possessions and left the security of the colony to start a new life. Overnight they were thrust into a world they didn't understand, a world that did not understand them. More than a history lesson, *I Am Hutterite* is a powerful tale of retracing steps and understanding how our beginnings often define us.

Kabul Beauty School – Deborah Rodriguez

Deborah Rodriguez became the Clara Barton of personal style in Afghanistan, shortly after 9/11. Armed with shipping crates filled with donated high-end styling aids, Rodriguez opened a beauty school for burqa-covered women and rebel men who found great comfort and control in the lessons she taught and the styles she helped them achieve while their homeland was being systematically destroyed and the very earth under their feet shook with the fervor of life during wartime.

Lake of the Prairies – Warren Cariou (Canadian Author)

Warren Cariou's maternal grandparents were immigrants who came to the harsh country near Meadow Lake and carved out pasture from the raw treed land. His family sank their roots into the place and Cariou grew up with his family legacy, particularly as remembered and influenced by his father, still relatively intact.

Lion – Saroo Brierley

The miraculous and triumphant story of Saroo Brierley, a young man who used Google Earth to rediscover his childhood life and home in an incredible journey from India to Australia and back again.

A Long Way Gone – Ishmael Beah

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

Making Toast – Roger Rosenblatt

A revered, many times honored (George Polk, Peabody, and Emmy Award winner, to name but a few) journalist, novelist, and playwright, Roger Rosenblatt shares the unforgettable story of the tragedy that changed his life and his family.

Mao's Last Dancer – Li Cunxin

From a desperately poor village in northeast China, to a career that took him across the world, this is the incredible story of Li Cunxin - a story that almost vanished, like so many other peasants' lives, amid revolution and chaos.

My Maasai Life – Robin Wiszowaty

Growing up in suburban Illinois, Robin Wiszowaty never pictured herself living with an impoverished Maasai family in rural Kenya. Yet in her early twenties Wiszowaty embarked on an incredible journey that would shake her from complacency, take her to unimaginable locales, and change her life forever. *My Maasai Life* follows Wiszowaty's remarkable voyage as she explores some of the most remote areas of East Africa and has her eyes opened to the diverse issues facing the fascinating Maasai people.

Precious Cargo: My Year Driving the Kids on School Bus 3077 – Craig Davidson

A moving, heartfelt, funny and surprising memoir about one year spent driving a bus for children with special needs.

Quiet: The Power of Introverts in A World That Won't Stop Talking – Susan Cain

At least one-third of the people we know are introverts. Although they are often labeled “quiet,” it is to introverts we owe many of the great contributions to society – from Van Gogh's sunflowers to the invention of the personal computer. Passionately argued, impressively researched, and filled with indelible stories, *Quiet* shows how dramatically we undervalue introverts and how much we lose in doing so.

They Left Us Everything – Plum Johnson

They Left Us Everything is a funny, touching memoir about the importance of preserving family history to make sense of the past and nurturing family bonds to safeguard the future.

Three Cups of Tea – Greg Mortenson

Greg Mortenson recounts the journey that led him from a failed attempt to climb Pakistan's K2, the world's second highest mountain, to successfully establishing schools in remote regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Mortenson combines his unique background with an intimate knowledge of the third world to promote peace with books, not bombs, and to successfully bring education and hope to remote communities in central Asia.