



# **Avid Reads Book Discussion**

## **2001 – 2018**

Lansing Public Library  
2750 Indiana Avenue  
Lansing, IL 60438  
[www.lansingpl.org](http://www.lansingpl.org)

## 2001

---

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

Abandoned by her boyfriend at a Wal-Mart in Oklahoma, Novalee Nation, 17 years old and seven months pregnant, soon discovers the treasures hiding in this small Southwest town.

### **Suspicion by Barbara Rogan**

As a writer of ghost stories, author Emma Roth dismisses rumors about her new Victorian house being haunted, until strange things begin to happen, and it seems as though an evil force has decided to focus its attention directly on her.

### **Girl with a Pearl Earring by Tracy Chevalier**

Girl with a Pearl Earring tells the story behind the advent of this famous painting, all the while depicting life in 17th century Delft, a small Dutch city with a burgeoning art community.

### **The Maltese Falcon by Dashiell Hammett**

A treasure worth killing for. Sam Spade, a slightly shopworn private eye with his own solitary code of ethics. A perfumed grafter named Joel Cairo, a fat man name Gutman, and Brigid O'Shaughnessy, a beautiful and treacherous woman whose loyalties shift at the drop of a dime.

## 2002

---

### **The Christmas Box by Richard Paul Evans**

Rick, Keri, and their 4-year-old daughter, Jenna, are hired as caretakers and are welcomed into the Victorian home of Mary Parkins, an elderly widow, just before the holiday season. As the relationship between Mary and the family develops we learn that Mary's past sorrows are compelling her to share an important message with Richard. But will he understand her message in time? A heartwarming story of parental love, healing, and Christmas.

### **Under the Tuscan Sun by Frances Mayes**

The poet and travel writer describes her experiences in Tuscany during the restoration of her countryside villa.

### **We Were the Mulvaney by Joyce Carol Oates**

A novel about the tenuous grasp on happiness of one American family. A young girl is raped by a high school acquaintance in a very small town, and the fallout affects the lives of everyone in her immediate family. It is a snapshot of the darker side of family life in the modern world.

### **Wish You Well by David Baldacci**

The year is 1953-and the worst of tragedies has struck the Cardinal family. A devastating car accident takes the life of Jack Cardinal, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, and leaves his young wife a bedridden invalid who has completely withdrawn. Lou and her younger brother Oz travel by train with their mother to the heart of the Appalachian Mountains, where their great-grandmother Louisa lives on a remote farm, ready and willing (if not financially prepared) to take the broken family in.

### **A Year by the Sea by Joan Anderson**

A woman, separated from her husband and a flat marriage, spends a year alone in a Cape Cod cottage, examining her life and finding the affirmative wisdom and peace that allows her to revitalize her marriage and freely engage life.

### **Whispers by Belva Plain**

Presenting the picture of perfection on the outside, Lynn Ferguson, wife of the wealthy and successful Robert, hides her dark secret of domestic violence as she struggles to admit the truth about her husband.

### **Persian Pickle Club by Sandra Dallas**

The Persian Pickle Club weaves together the lives, stories, and secrets of 12 women in a quilting circle in Depression-era Kansas. Rita, the newest Pickle member, wants to become a reporter and is determined to get her big break by solving the murder of a member's husband. Her sleuthing unearths both secrets and loyalty.

### **Weight of Water by Anita Shreve**

A photographer who has come to a small island off the coast of New Hampshire to shoot a photo-essay about a double murder that took place there over a century ago, notices parallels between her own life and the lives of the murder victims.

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

Bryson shares his breath-taking adventures and the fascinating history of the 2,100-mile Appalachian Trail, as he travels slowly on foot.

### **A Sudden Change of Heart by Barbara Taylor Bradford**

The lives of childhood best friends take a dramatic and unexpected turn when one of them investigates artwork stolen by Nazis during the war.

### **Evening by Susan Minot**

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

### **Plain Truth by Jodi Picoult**

Eighteen-year-old, unwed Katie Fisher is accused of birthing then smothering her baby at the family dairy farm. But not only does Katie claim her innocence, she also says she didn't even bear the child. Enter high-profile Philadelphia lawyer Ellie Hathaway, who may be Katie's only hope.

**2003**

---

### **The Prize Winner of Defiance, Ohio by Terry Ryan**

The Prize Winner of Defiance, Ohio introduces Evelyn Ryan, an enterprising woman who kept poverty at bay with wit, poetry, and perfect prose during the "contest era" of the 1950s and 1960s. Standing up to the church, her alcoholic husband, and antiquated ideas about women, Evelyn turned every financial challenge into an opportunity for innovation, all the while raising her six sons and four daughters with the belief that miracles are an everyday occurrence.

### **The Giants House by Elizabeth McCracken**

The Giant's House is narrated by Peggy Cort, a young librarian in a small Cape Cod town in the early 1950s. She falls in love and her life becomes inextricably tangled with James Sweatt, a young boy who suffers from gigantism.

### **Windfall by James Magnuson**

While searching for the missing family cat, academic Ben Lindberg stumbles upon some hidden coolers containing a fortune in dirty money that he takes and uses to enhance his family's life, until dangerous strangers arrive in town to acquire their missing millions.

### **All Over But the Shoutin' by Rick Bragg**

A Pulitzer Prize-winning correspondent for The New York Times recounts growing up in the Alabama hills, the son of a violent veteran and a mother who tried to insulate her children from poverty and ignorance.

### **Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage by Alice Munro**

A collection of short fiction explores the complexities of human relationships and emotions in stories about a housekeeper entering old-maidhood whose life is transformed by a practical joke and a lifelong philanderer who finds the tables turned.

### **Lying Awake by Mark Salzman**

Set in 1997 Los Angeles, Lying Awake tells the story of Carmelite nun Sister John of the Cross, who for the past three years has been experiencing ecstatic visions of God--accompanied by intense headaches.

### **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.

### **Vinegar Hill by Ansette Ansay**

In 1972, Ellen Grier, her husband, and their two children return to Holly's Field, Wisconsin. There they must live with her in-laws, in a loveless house where every day cruelty threatens to destroy her spirit.

### **Walking Across Egypt by Clyde Edgerton**

Mattie Rigsbee, seventy-eight and set in her ways, decides to help out Wesley Benfield, a troubled adolescent just out of reform school for car theft.

### **Charming Billy by Alice McDermott**

When the late Billy Lynch's relatives and friends gather together to keep his memory alive, stories are woven and memories relived detailing his life in the close Irish-American community and the intricate feelings that resurface.

### **Atticus by Ron Hansen**

After receiving word that his artist son has committed suicide, Colorado rancher Atticus Cody makes a painful journey to Mexico to recover the body, but baffled by what he finds, he soon begins to suspect that his son has been murdered.

### **Skiping Christmas by John Grisham**

Luther and Nora Krank have decided to set sail on a Caribbean cruise on December 25th and skip Christmas. They are about to discover that their decision brings enormous consequences--and isn't half as easy as they imagined.

**2004**

---

### **Montana 1948 by Larry Watson**

It tells the story of how 12-year-old David grew up fast after learning about long-held family secrets and the social system that protected them.

### **Cane River by Lalita Tademy**

Cane River is an isolated community that lies on a small river in central Louisiana. There in the early 19th century, slaves, free people of color, and Creole French planters lived and worked, loved and bore children.

The author discovered her amazing heritage there and chronicles four generations of strong, determined black women.

**Big Stone Gap by Adriana Trigani**

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.

**The Passion of Artemesia by Susan Vreeland**

A novel set against the backdrops of Rome, Florence, and Genoa recreates the life of Artemisia Gentileschi, whose search for love, forgiveness, and wholeness through her art led to her fame as a painter.

**A Thief of Time by Tony Hillerman**

Chilling discoveries unearthed at a dig for Navajo clay pots bring Lt. Joe Leaphorn and Officer Jim Chee to the site and put them on the trail of stolen artifacts, a disappearing woman, and bizarre and mystifying murders.

**Stone Heart by Diane Glancy**

Journeying alongside Lewis and Clark on their expedition to the west, young Shoshoni Sacajawea records her spiritual experiences, which include her observances of the natural world's messages.

**Back When We Were Grownups by Anne Tyler**

Rebecca Davitch is a fifty-three-year-old grandmother who discovers that she has turned into the wrong person. She begins an exploration to find out who she really is.

**Peace like a River by Leif Enger**

Eleven-year-old Reuben shares the story of how his father, trying to raise his sons alone in 1960s Minnesota, takes their family on a quest to find Reuben's older brother, who has been charged with murder.

**Mrs. Paine's Garage and the Murder of John F. Kennedy by Thomas Mallon**

A portrait of a woman who became entangled in the history-making events of November 22, 1963 profiles Ruth Hyde Paine, an ordinary

Quaker housewife in suburban Dallas who had befriended Lee Harvey Oswald and his Russian wife, Marina.

2005

---

**The Cage by Audrey Schulman**

Beryl, a photographer, is picked to go on an expedition to northern Canada because, with her five foot one frame, she's the only one who can comfortably fit in the cage they will use to photograph polar bears up close.

**Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil by John Berendt**

In charming, beautiful, and wealthy old-South Savannah, Georgia, the local bad boy is shot dead inside of the opulent mansion of a gay antiques dealer, and a gripping trial follows.

**The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald**

Newly rich Jay Gatsby tries to recapture the past and win back Daisy Buchanan, his former love, despite the fact she has married.

**The Art of Mending by Elizabeth Berg**

Returning home for a family reunion, Laura Bartone and her brother, Steve, are stunned by their sister's allegations of shocking behavior on the part of their mother, and must come to terms with the truth and lies within their family.

**The Inn at Lake Devine by Elinor Lipman**

When Natalie Marx is 13, she arranges to visit a genteel vacation spot with a camp friend, and years later, the two meet again.

**Vendetta Defense by Lisa Scottoline**

A story of revenge involving past sins, love and justice. Lawyer Judy Carrier takes the case of Tony Lucia, who's been arrested for the murder of his life-long enemy Angelo Coluzzi.

**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.

### **In the Time of Butterflies by Julia Alvarez**

A fictional account of the young lives of Mirabal sisters Patria, Minerva, and Maria Teresa, otherwise known in the Dominican Republic as Las Mariposas, describes their suffering and martyrdom in the last days of the Trujillo dictatorship.

### **Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd**

After her "stand-in mother," a bold black woman named Rosaleen, insults the three biggest racists in town, Lily Owens joins Rosaleen on a journey to Tiburon, South Carolina, where they are taken in by three black, bee-keeping sisters.

### **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.

### **The Christmas Train by David Baldacci**

Tom Langdon, a weary and cash-strapped journalist, is banned from flying when a particularly thorough airport security search causes him to lose his cool. Now, he must take the train if he has any chance of arriving in Los Angeles in time for Christmas with his girlfriend.

**2006**

---

### **The Fig Eater by Jody Shields**

It's Vienna, 1910 and it is hot, unusually hot for the end of August. Someone has murdered a young woman. They find no objects, no obvious clues around her. They'll search the area again tomorrow during the day, when there is better light.

### **When the Emperor Was Divine by Julia Otsuka**

A story told from five different points of view, chronicles the

experiences of Japanese Americans caught up in the nightmare of the World War II internment camps.

**Jim the Boy by Tony Earley**

Describes the life of a young boy in a small southern town in the early twentieth century as he begins to explore the confusing adult world that surrounds him and begins to take his own first steps toward maturity.

**Shutter Island by Dennis Lehane**

U.S. Marshal Teddy Daniels and his partner, Chuck Aule, come to Shutter Island's Ashcliffe Hospital in search of an escaped mental patient, but uncover true wickedness as Ashcliffe's mysterious patient treatments propel them to the brink of insanity.

**The Dive from Clausen's Pier by Ann Packer**

When her fiancé Mike is left paralyzed following a tragic accident, Carrie Bell begins to question her familiar world, from her everyday life in Wisconsin to her relationships, as she sets out to rediscover her own identity.

**The Closers by Michael Connelly**

Years after the death of a sixteen-year-old girl is ruled a suicide, detective Harry Bosch receives DNA evidence that reopens the case, which involves an investigation of a white supremacist with close ties to the LAPD.

**The Kitchen Boy by Robert Alexander**

Presents a novel based on the 1918 Bolshevik revolutionary murder of Czar Nicholas II and the rest of the Russian royal family as told from the perspective of the event's only surviving witness, a young kitchen boy.

**The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini**

Afghanistan, 1975: Twelve-year-old Amir is desperate to win the local kite-fighting tournament and his loyal friend Hassan promises to help him. But neither of the boys can foresee what will happen to Hassan that afternoon, an event that is to shatter their lives. After the Russians invade and the family is forced to flee to America, Amir realizes that

one day he must return to Afghanistan under Taliban rule to find the one thing that his new world cannot grant him: redemption.

2007

---

**Evening Class by Maeve Binchy**

A middle-aged man and woman are the co-teachers of an Italian language class in Dublin, each hoping the class will renew their lives of disappointment.

**Losing Julia by Jonathon Hull**

From the French battlefields of World War I to a present-day nursing home in California, Patrick Delaney describes his long-time love for Julia, the wife of his best friend, Daniel, as he meets her as a young widow at a memorial service at Verdun, France, through their brief time together, to their ultimate separation and its impact on his life.

**Angry Housewives Eating Bon Bons by Lorna Landvik**

From the initial formation of The Freesia Court Book Club and over the course of the next thirty years, five women in small-town Minnesota share the events, triumphs, tragedies, hardships, joys, and sorrows of their lives.

**To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee**

Scout Finch, daughter of the town lawyer, likes to spend her summers building treehouses, swimming, and catching lightning bugs with her big brother Jem. But one summer, when a black man is accused of raping a white woman, Scout's carefree days come to an end. In the county courtroom, she will join her father in a desperate battle against ignorance and prejudice.

**Devil in the White City by Erik Larson**

An account of the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 relates the stories of two men who shaped the history of the event--architect Daniel H. Burnham, who coordinated its construction, and serial killer Herman Mudgett.

### **The Giver by Lois Lowry**

Given his lifetime assignment at the Ceremony of Twelve, Jonas becomes the receiver of memories shared by only one other in his community and discovers the terrible truth about the society in which he lives.

### **The Bean Trees by Barbara Kingsolver**

Taylor Greer hits the road wanting only to get as far away from Kentucky as possible, ending up in Arizona with a 3-year-old Cherokee girl she has inherited from a woman in a bar.

### **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.

### **The Westing Game by Ellen Raskin**

The mysterious death of an eccentric millionaire brings together an unlikely assortment of heirs who must uncover the circumstances of his death before they can claim their inheritance.

**2008**

---

### **One Thousand White Women by Jim Fergus**

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

### **Luncheon of the Boating Party by Susan Vreeland**

Renoir is inspired to paint "Luncheon of the boating party" when his other work is criticized by Emile Zola, and while doing so is drawn into lives of the thirteen people featured in it as they enjoy a Parisian summer during the late 1800s.

### **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.

### **In the Land of Second Chances by George Shaffner**

Calvin Millet struggles to cope with a series of disasters--his wife leaves him, his daughter is terminally ill, his store faces bankruptcy, and his house is destroyed by a tornado--but the arrival of a mysterious stranger, traveling salesman Vernon L. Moore, who arrives in town to sell games of chance to the store and possesses an uncanny talent for asking life-altering questions, helps Calvin and the other inhabitants of Ebb, Nebraska, rediscover hope and second chances.

### **Crazy 08 by Cait Murphy**

A chronicle of the historical 1908 baseball season documents the contributions of numerous personalities who shaped the game, in an account that also explores how the sport was influenced by crooked politics, crime, and everyday Americans.

### **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 Rest of Her Life by Laura Moriarty**

When her daughter accidentally hits and kills another high school girl with the family's car, Leigh, a troubled mother, is forced to confront her relationship with her daughter, her resentment toward her husband (who understands the daughter better) and her long-buried feelings towards her own neglectful mother.

### **The Appeal by John Grisham (discussion led by local lawyer)**

Wall Street millionaire Carl Trudeau purchases an unsuspecting Mississippi State Supreme Court judge candidate when a lower court rules against one of his chemical companies for dumping toxic waste into a small town's water supply causing a cancer cluster.

### **A Girl Name Zippy by Haven Kimmel**

Named "Zippy" for the way she would bolt around her home, Kimmel's witty memoir takes readers back to a time when small-town America was caught in the amber of the innocent post-war period, where people helped their neighbors, went to church on Sunday, and kept barnyard animals in their backyards.

2009

---

### **A Redbird Christmas by Fannie Flagg**

It's the story of Oswald Campbell, a Yankee come South, and a man resigned to his Chicago doctor's prognosis of terminal emphysema and less than a year to live. Moving to Lost River, Alabama, though, he finds that not only does the slow pace and beautiful setting agree with him, but that the community itself has a way of redeeming whatever's hurt, lost or marred in the world at large.

### **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 Color of Water by James McBride**

While growing up, James McBride never knew where his mother had come from. When he asked her if she was white, she simply replied that she was "light-skinned", triggering a long-standing confusion about his own racial identity.

### **Garden Spells by Sarah Addison Allen**

For generations, the Waverly family has tended the garden behind their family home known for the apple tree and edible flowers that grow there. In a twist of magical realism, the plants that grow in the garden possess certain properties that have supernatural effects on whoever consumes them.

### **Marley & Me by John Grogan**

Follows the life story of an exuberant Labrador retriever who gets into

perpetual trouble and experiences a range of inspiring adventures, from shutting down an entire beach to guarding a seventeen-year-old neighbor after a stabbing attack.

### **Loving Frank by Nancy Horan**

Fact and fiction blend in a historical novel that chronicles the relationship between seminal architect Frank Lloyd Wright and Mamah Cheney, from their meeting, when they were each married to another, to the clandestine affair that shocked Chicago society.

### **Sin in the Second City by Karen Abbott**

A history of America's most famous brothel, Chicago's Everleigh Club, which catered to some of America's leading moguls, actors, and writers from 1900 to 1911, profiles its aristocratic proprietors and their efforts to elevate the industry to new heights.

### **Kabul Beauty School by Deborah Rodriguez**

Arriving in Afghanistan in 2002 with nothing more than a beauty degree and a desire to help, Deborah Rodriguez set out on a course of action that would change her life and those of many Afghan women. The once proud tradition of beauty schools had been all but destroyed and with it Afghani women's ability to support themselves. As one of the founders of the Kabul Beauty School she set about training women and helping them rebuild their lives.

### **Three Cups of Tea by Greg Mortenson**

Traces how Mortenson, having been rescued and resuscitated by Himalayan villagers after a failed attempt to climb K2, worked to build schools that would benefit the young girls who were forbidden an education by Taliban restrictions.

### **Heretic's Daughter by Kathleen Kent**

Young Sarah Carrier tries to cope with life in Salem, Massachusetts, after her mother, Martha Carrier, is accused, tried, and hanged as a witch.

### **Oh My Stars by Lorna Ladvik**

In a novel set during the early days of rock 'n' roll, Violet Mathers, a

down-and-out woman, becomes embroiled with a handsome musical pioneer.

**2010**

---

**Christmas Sweater by Glenn Beck**

When 13-year-old Eddie receives only a sweater for Christmas from his single mother, he is obviously disappointed. He throws the sweater on the floor of his room and quickly forgets about it. But when tragedy strikes soon after, Eddie begins to see that the best kind of gift is one given with love.

**The Letters by Luanne Rice**

A series of letters reveals the emotional odyssey and evolution of one couple's relationship as they fall in love, confront the loss of an adult child, and struggle to rediscover who they each are and what they mean to each other in the wake of the tragedy.

**Pomegranate Soup by Marsha Mehran**

Three Iranian sisters--Marjan, Layla, and Bahar Aminpour--flee the turmoil of the Islamic Revolution in their native country to seek refuge in Ireland, where they open the exotic Babylon Cafê.

**Sugar Queen by Sarah Addison Allen**

Quiet, awkward Josey Cirrini's peaceful life--caring for her elderly mother, enjoying romance novels, and indulging in her secret passion for sweets--is turned upside down when Della Lee Baker, a sassy, confident, and bold waitress fleeing an abusive boyfriend, decides to hide out in Josey's home.

**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.

**Pompeii by Robert Harris**

When the aqueduct that brings fresh water to thousands of people around the bay of Naples fails, Roman engineer Marius Primus heads to the



slopes of Mount Vesuvius to investigate, only to come face to face with an impending catastrophe.

**Lady in Blue by Javier Sierra**

Plagued by unsettling visions after leaving her U.S. Defense Department job where she participated in psychic espionage experiments, Jennifer Narody learns unsettling truths about the subject of her visions, while journalist Carlos Albert stumbles upon a seventeenth-century convent founded by a woman said to possess miraculous powers.

**Silver Lies by Ann Parker**

When the body of Joe Rose, a precious-metals assayer, turns up trampled behind her saloon, Inez Stannert is asked by the victim's widow to help settle his affairs, a job that leads Inez into a web of skewed assays, counterfeit money, blackmail, and murder.

**The Other Boleyn Girl by Philippa Gregory**

The daughters of a ruthlessly ambitious family, Mary and Anne Boleyn are sent to the court of Henry VIII to attract the attention of the king, who first takes Mary as his mistress, in which role she bears him an illegitimate son, and then Anne as his wife.

**December by Elizabeth Hartley Winthrop**

After eight months without speaking, eleven-year-old elective mute Isabelle becomes the focus of desperate efforts on the part of her parents, including her mother, who has given up her law practice to provide full-time care for her daughter, and others to restore their child to normal life.

**I Was Amelia Earhart by Jane Mendelsohn**

Amelia Earhart discusses her fate on a remote Pacific island in the log she writes after she and Fred Noonan crash in 1937.

**Ghost at the Table by Suzanne Berne**

Thanksgiving at the New England home of the second of three sisters marks a reunion between the three Fiske sisters and their long-estranged father, in a portrait of the unraveling of a family.

### **Sarah's Key by Tatiana de Rosnay (Skyped author)**

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.

2011

---

### **Christmas Cookie Club by Ann Pearlman**

On the first Monday of December, Marnie and her 12 closest friends gather every year to make homemade cookies and dish about the ups and downs of their lives.

### **The Wives of Henry Oades by Johanna Moran**

A family epic based on a true story follows the experiences of Henry Oades, who in the late 19th century loses his family to Maori kidnappers and remarries in California only to learn of his original family's escape, a situation that compels him to live in bigamy.

### **Look Again by Lisa Scottoline**

When reporter Ellen Gleeson gets a "Have You Seen This Child?" flyer in the mail, her heart stops--the child in the photo is identical to her adopted son, Will. She investigates the story behind the flyer, uncovering clues no one was meant to discover, and when she digs too deep, she risks losing her own life--and that of the son she loves.

### **Vanishing Act of Esme Lenox by Maggie O' Farrell**

Moving between the 1930s and the present, Maggie O'Farrell's new novel is an unforgettable portrait of a woman edited out of her family's history. The heartbreaking tale of two sisters in colonial India and Edinburgh bound together by loneliness and driven apart by rivalries that lead to a cruel betrayal, it is also the gripping story of how, 60 years later, their shocking secret comes to light. An impassioned, intense, haunting family drama, this novel is a stunning imagining of a life stolen, and reclaimed.

### **The War Orphan and the Lady by Sandra Lundin (author visit)**

Caught up in the harshest conditions of WWII the need to survive was the greatest challenge especially for a young man thrust into that bitter conflict.

### **The Help by Kathryn Sackett**

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.

### **Lying with Strangers by James Grippando**

Peyton Shields finds her life irrevocably changed by an attack that she barely survives, an event that causes her to realize that she can trust no one when everyone close to her denies her story that the attack was deliberate.

### **Brooklyn by Colm Toibin**

Young Eilis Lacey dreams of life beyond the confines of her tiny Irish village, but unlike her beautiful sister, Rose, Eilis gifts are of a more practical nature: she has a head for numbers, and is a loving and dutiful daughter. Yet her ambition cannot be hidden and soon is noted by the Parish Priest, Father Flood. Via a church contact, he arranges for Eilis to travel to America where a job opportunity has arisen in New York with a reputable "merchant of Italian origin". Eilis finds lodgings in an eccentric boarding house and ekes out an existence in the cosmopolitan melting pot that is 1950s Brooklyn, impressing her employer, outwitting her landlady, and even falling in love.

### **The Virginian by Owen Wister**

A strong, silent stranger rides into the lawless lands of the western frontier, battles horse thieves, deals with unyielding scoundrels, and wins the heart of a schoolmarm. Owen Wister's 1902 classic, the first great novel of the American West, is rich in moral drama and vernacular wit.

### **Thirteenth Tale by Diane Setterfield**

When her health begins failing, the mysterious author Vida Winter decides to let Margaret Lea, a biographer, write the truth about her life, but Margaret needs to verify the facts since Vida has a history of telling outlandish tales.

### **My Abandonment by Peter Rock**

Thirteen-year old Caroline has been raised and home-schooled by her father in a wild nature preserves on the outskirts of Portland, Oregon. They follow a rigid code that enables them to survive in the wilderness. Once a week, they go to the city to buy groceries, attend church and otherwise merge with the civilized world. Yet one small mistake allows the authorities to discover them and their forced relocation is only a brief respite in their flight from a world that doesn't understand them.

2012

---

### **The Gift by Cecelia Ahern**

Despite job stress and a crumbling home life, workaholic businessman Lou Suffern gives Gabe, a homeless man, a job in his company's mail room; but the mysterious Gabe seems to be in two places at once and he's meddling in Lou's private affairs.

### **The Daughters Walk by Jane Kirkpatrick**

Nineteen-year-old Clara Estby is hauled by her mother, Helga, on a 7,000-mile walk from Spokane, Wash., to New York in 1896. The fashion industry is looking for promotion of the new, shorter dress for women; Helga is looking for a cash prize to save the family farm from foreclosure ... and Clara dreams of becoming a businesswoman.

### **The Big Over Easy: a nursery crime by Jasper Fforde**

Unconvinced that a former convict and millionaire philanthropist has been murdered by his suicide-victim ex-wife, detective inspector Jack Spratt and his assistant, Mary Mary, uncover a plot involving money laundering and asylum-seeking titans.

### **Butterfly's Child by Angela Davis Gardner**

When three-year-old Benji is plucked from the security of his home in

Nagasaki to live with his American father, Lt. Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton, and stepmother, Kate, on their farm in Illinois, the family conceals Benji's true identity as a child born from a liaison between an officer and a geisha.

### **The Widow's War by Sally Gunning**

When Lyddie Berry's husband is lost in a whaling disaster, she becomes the dependent of her ruthless son-in-law, who tries to take everything she and her husband had worked for.

### **Molokai by Alan Brennert**

Seven-year-old Rachel is forcibly removed from her family's 1890s Honolulu home when she contracts leprosy and is placed in a settlement, where she loses a series of new friends before new medical discoveries enable her to reenter the world.

### **22 Britannia Road by Amanda Hodgkinson**

In this tale of a Polish family desperately trying to put itself back together after WWII, Silvana and Janusz travel to England where they attempt to put the past behind them. But the secrets they carry pull at the threads of their fragile peace.

### **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.

### **Little Bee by Chris Cleever**

The fates of a 16-year-old Nigerian orphan and a well-to-do British couple seeking to repair their strained marriage with a free holiday are joined when the couple decide to stray beyond the walls of their holiday resort on a Nigerian beach.

### **The Descendants by Kauai Hart Hemmings**

A descendant of royalty and one of the largest landowners in Hawaii,

Matthew King struggles to deal with his out-of-control daughters--ten-year-old Scottie and seventeen-year-old Alex--as well as his comatose wife, whom they are about to remove from life support.

**2013**

---

**Autobiography of Mrs. Tom Thumb by Melanie Benjamin**

Mid-nineteenth-century little person Mercy Levinia Warren Bump comes of age in the antebellum south before being invited to join the P. T. Barnum circus, through which she meets her future husband, General Tom Thumb, and pursues limitless international opportunities.

**Clara and Mr. Tiffany by Susan Vreeland**

Hoping to honor his father and the family business with innovative glass designs, Louis Comfort Tiffany launches the Tiffany lamp as designed by women's division head Clara Driscoll, who struggles with the mass production of her creations.

**The Language of Flowers by Vanessa Defferbaugh**

The story of a woman whose gift for flowers helps her change the lives of others even as she struggles to overcome her own past.

**Room by Emma Donoghue**

A five-year-old narrates a story about his life growing up in a single room where his mother aims to protect him from the man who has held her prisoner for seven years since she was a teenager.

**Circle of Friends by Maeve Binchy**

Portrays the uneasy association between beautiful, greedy jet-setter Nan Mahon and Benny Hogan and Eve Malone, best friends from a small Irish village.

**Kashmir Shawl by Rosie Thomas**

Wrapped in its folds is a lock of child's hair. Tracing her grandparents' roots back to Kashmir, Mair embarks on a quest that will change her life forever ... A sweeping multigenerational tale of marriage, isolation, and finding love in a magical place, The Kashmir Shawl is the inimitable Rosie Thomas at her very best.

### **Light Between Oceans by M.L. Steadman**

After moving with his wife to an isolated Australian lighthouse where they suffer miscarriages and a stillbirth, Tom allows his wife to claim an infant that has washed up on the shore, a decision with devastating consequences.

### **Gone Girl by Gillian Flynn**

When beautiful Amy Dunne disappears from her Missouri home, it looks as if her husband Nick is to blame. But though he protests his innocence, it's clear that he's not being entirely truthful. *Gone Girl* is not only the story of a disappearance, but a truly frightening glimpse of a souring marriage.

### **Round House by Louise Erdrich**

When his mother, a tribal enrollment specialist living on a reservation in North Dakota, slips into an abyss of depression after being brutally attacked, fourteen-year-old Joe Coutz sets out with his three friends to find the person that destroyed his family.

### **Recalled to Life by Dan Burns (author visit)**

Chicago architect Peter O'Hara had a plan, a blueprint, for how he wanted to build his life. He had goals and ambitions and his path was clear. He had a loving wife and son, career success, and his final career goal was close within reach. The opportunity to become a partner in his firm was there for the taking. He almost had it all. But life and fate do not consider such plans.

**2014**

---

### **Snow Child by Eowyn Ivey**

Alaska in the 1920s is a difficult place for Jack and Mabel. Drifting apart, the childless couple discover Faina, a young girl living alone in the wilderness. Soon, Jack and Mabel come to love Faina as their own. But when they learn a surprising truth about the girl, their lives change in profound ways.

### **Reservoir by John Thompson**

On an early spring morning in Richmond, Virginia, in the year 1885, a

young pregnant woman is found floating in the city reservoir. It appears that she has committed suicide, but there are curious clues at the scene that suggest foul play. As the identity of the woman, Lillie, is revealed, her dark family history comes to light.

### **Ruins of Lace by Iris Anthony**

The demand for illegal Flemish lace in seventeenth century France impacts everyone from a blind lace maker who would likely become a prostitute should her disability come to light to a count whose confidence can be bought with the smuggled good.

### **We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves by Karen Joy Fowler**

Coming of age in middle America, 18-year-old Rosemary evaluates how her entire youth was defined by the presence and forced removal of an endearing chimpanzee who was secretly regarded as a family member and who Rosemary loved as a sister.

### **A Constellation of Vital Phenomena by Anthony Marra**

This debut novel by Pushcart Prize-winning author Anthony Marra is set in rural Chechnya during the region's war with Russia. Though events shift in time, the main focus is a five-day period in 2004, when an eight-year-old girl witnesses her father's abduction by Russian soldiers.

Swearing to protect the girl, local doctor Akhmed (whose true passion is portraiture), brings her to a crumbling hospital, run by a hardened but dedicated surgeon, for safety.

### **Cutting For Stone by Abraham Verghese**

Marion and Shiva Stone, twin brothers born from a secret love affair between an Indian nun and a British surgeon in Addis Ababa, come of age in an Ethiopia on the brink of revolution, where their love for the same woman drives them apart.

### **Calling Invisible Women by Jeanne Ray**

Feeling unattractive and unappreciated as she enters her fifties, wife and mother Clover wakes up one morning and discovers that she has actually become invisible, a condition that goes unnoticed by her family.



### **Claire of the Sea Light by Edwidge Danticat**

Just as her father makes the wrenching decision to send her away for a chance at a better life, Claire Limyè Lanmè—Claire of the Sea Light—suddenly disappears. As the people of the Haitian seaside community of Ville Rose search for her, painful secrets, haunting memories, and startling truths are unearthed.

### **Movement of Stars by Amy Brill**

In 1845 Nantucket, Hannah Gardner Price, a young Quaker, strives to discover a comet that will win her recognition by the King of Denmark and falls in love with a young whaler from the Azores who also aspires to progress beyond his station.

### **My Notorious Life by Kate Manning**

A tale based on the life of a controversial Victorian New York City midwife features plucky orphan Axie Muldoon, who recounts her apprenticeship and establishment of a thriving practice that is threatened by a censorious zealot.

**2015**

---

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

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

### **Rosie Project by Graeme Simsion**

Don Tillman, a brilliant geneticist, thinks that having women fill out a six-page, double-sided questionnaire before a date is logical and reasonable. Rosie Jarman, an impetuous barmaid, thinks Don should loosen up and learn to live a little. Follow the unlikely pair in this laugh-out-loud, feel-good story of unexpected joys, discovery and love.

### **Cellist of Sarajevo by Steven Galloway**

While a cellist plays at the site of a mortar attack to commemorate the deaths of twenty-two friends and neighbors, a woman sniper secretly protects the life of the cellist as her army becomes increasingly threatening.

### **We Are Called to Rise by Laura McBride**

Beyond the bright lights and casinos lies the real Las Vegas where four lives will be brought together by one split-second choice.

### **Me Before You by Jo Jo Moyes**

Taking a job as an assistant to extreme sports enthusiast Will, who is wheelchair bound after a motorcycle accident, Louisa struggles with her employer's acerbic moods and learns of his shocking plans before demonstrating to him that life is still worth living.

### **Supremes at Earls All You Can Eat by Edward Kelsey Moore**

Forging a friendship at the height of the Civil Rights Movement, Odette, Clarice and Barbara Jean meet regularly at the first diner owned by black proprietors in their Indiana city and are watched throughout the years by a big-hearted man who observes their struggles with school, marriage, parenthood and beyond.

### **Book of Unknown Americans by Cristina Henriquez**

Moving from Mexico to America when their daughter suffers a near-fatal accident, the Rivera's confront cultural barriers, their daughter's difficult recovery and her developing relationship with a Panamanian boy.

### **Saving Cee Cee Honeycutt by Beth Hoffman**

For years, 12-year-old Cee Cee Honeycutt has been the caretaker of her psychotic mother, Camille-the tiara-toting, lipstick-smearing laughingstock of an entire town. But when Camille is hit by a truck and killed, Cee Cee is left to fend for herself. To the rescue comes her previously unknown great-aunt from Savannah, Tootie Caldwell, who whirls Cee Cee into her world of female friendship, strong women, wacky humor, and good old-fashioned heart.

### **Storied Life of A.J. Fikry by Gabrielle Zevin**

A middle-aged bookseller mourning his lost wife, a feisty publisher's rep, and a charmingly precocious abandoned child come together on a small island off the New England coast in this utterly delightful novel of love and second chances.

### **Where'd You Go Bernadette by Maria Semple**

When her notorious, hilarious, volatile, talented, troubled and agoraphobic mother goes missing, teenage Bee begins a trip that takes her to the ends of the earth to find her.

### **A Man Called Ove by Fredrik Backman**

There is something about Ove. At first sight, he is almost certainly the grumpiest man you will ever meet. He thinks himself surrounded by idiots - neighbors who can't reverse a trailer properly, joggers, shop assistants who talk in code, and the perpetrators of the vicious coup d'état that ousted him as Chairman of the Residents' Association. He will persist in making his daily inspection rounds of the local streets. But isn't it rare, these days, to find such old-fashioned clarity of belief and deed? Such unswerving conviction about what the world should be, and a lifelong dedication to making it just so?

**2016**

---

### **Songs of Willow Frost by Jamie Ford**

Set in 1920s Seattle, this is the moving story of a young Chinese-American woman who becomes pregnant by her stepfather. With her stunning good looks and lovely voice, Liu supports herself through singing, but difficult circumstances force her to give up her son William for adoption. Flash forward several years: William spots a movie ad featuring the glamorous actress, Willow Frost. Convinced that Willow is his ah-ma, he escapes the orphanage, determined to find her. A memorable journey, and one well worth taking.

### **Yellow Birds by Kevin Powers**

In the midst of a bloody battle in the Iraq War, two soldiers, bound together since basic training, do everything to protect each other from both outside enemies and the internal struggles that come from constant danger.

### **All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr**

From the highly acclaimed, multiple award-winning Anthony Doerr, the beautiful, stunningly ambitious instant New York Times bestseller about

a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France as both try to survive the devastation of World War II.

**An Untamed State by Roxanne Gay**

A debut novel about a woman kidnapped for ransom, her captivity as her father refuses to pay and her husband fights for her release over thirteen days, and her struggle to come to terms with the ordeal in its aftermath.

**A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith**

The slums of Brooklyn, and the Irish Catholics, form the setting for the story of Francie Nolan and her family: - Johnny, her father, handsome and shiftless; Katie, her mother, hardening under years of poverty and improvidence; Neeley, Katie's favorite child; Aunt Sissy, a good "bad woman", and chiefly Francie herself, gentle, shy, imaginative.

**Mr. Churchill's Secretary by Susan Elia Macneal**

After German Luftwaffe bomb London, Maggie Hope--trained in math and code breaking, but only able to find a job as Winston Churchill's secretary--uses the access her position demands to try to unravel an assassinate plot.

**Midwife of Hope River by Patricia Harman**

Midwife Patience Murphy has a gift: a talent for escorting mothers through the challenges of bringing children into the world. Working in the hardscrabble conditions of Appalachia during the Depression, Patience takes the jobs that no one else wants, helping those most in need.

**Necessary Lies by Diane Chamberlane (skyped author)**

Caring for her family on their mid-twentieth-century tobacco farm after the loss of her parents, Ivy connects with social worker Jane Forrester, who strains her personal and professional relationships with her advocacy of Ivy's family.

**Tallgrass by Sandra Dallas**

Her life turned upside-down when a Japanese internment camp is opened in their small Colorado town, Rennie witnesses the way her

community places suspicion on the newcomers when a young girl is murdered.

**Visions of Sugar Plums by Janet Evanovich**

A holiday adventure finds Stephanie Plum struggling to remove an intruder from her apartment and falling for a mysterious newcomer.

2017

---

**Blessings by Anna Quindlen**

A baby is left on their doorstep, the lives of Lydia Blessing and Skip, her down-and-out caretaker, are transformed.

**My Brilliant Friend by Elena Ferrante**

Elena and Lila, who grow up in a working class neighborhood near Naples in the 1950s. Lila has disappeared. Elena, decides to tell Lila's story.

**Fever by Mary Beth Keane**

1883, Irish immigrant Mary Mallon, "Typhoid Mary".

**The Lifeboat by Charlotte Rogan**

Forced into an overcrowded lifeboat after a mysterious explosion on their trans-Atlantic ocean liner. Grace Winter battles the elements and her fellow survivors.

**My name is Lucy Barton by Elizabeth Strout**

Set in the mid-1980s, Lucy Barton, hospitalized for nine weeks, is surprised when her estranged mother shows up at her bedside.

**Shortest Way Home by Juliette Fay**

Sean, burnt out after spending twenty years in the Third World, returns home to Massachusetts and reconnects with his family.

**What the Lady Wants by Renee Rosen**

Marshall Field and Delia Spencer and an infamous love affair.

**Be Frank with Me by Julia Clairborne Johnson**

Frank is 9-years-old boy has a higher IQ than Einstein's and dresses as if he were on a movie set in the early 1920s. Frank's reclusive mother is an

author whose publisher has just sent Alice Whitley to serve as an assistant.

**Flight of Gemma Hardy by Margot Livesey**

Gemma Hardy leaves Iceland to live with family in Scotland where she encounters many difficulties as she grows up.

**Tell the Wolves I'm Home by Carol Rifka Brun**

A moving story of love, grief, and renewal as two lonely people become the unlikeliest of friends and find that sometimes you don't know you've lost someone until you've found them.

**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. She helps Vivian solve a mystery from her past.

**2018**

---

**Charm Bracelet by Viola Shipman**

Through an heirloom charm bracelet, three women will rediscover the importance of family, love, faith, friends, fun, and a passion for living as the magic of each charm changes their lives.

**Forgetting Time by Sharon Guskin**

While a mother's life abruptly stops after receiving an emergency phone call from her son's preschool, a driven former Ivy League professor confronts the realities of his terminal diagnosis and helps a woman whose child has been missing for years.

**Life She Was Given by Ellen Marie Wiseman**

1931. Lilly Blackwood isn't allowed to explore the meadows around Blackwood Manor. Momma insists it's for Lilly's own protection, that people would be afraid if they saw her. But on this unforgettable night, Lilly is taken outside for the first time-- and sold to the circus sideshow. More than two decades later, Julia Blackwood has inherited her parents' estate and horse farm, an unhappy place full of strict rules and forbidden rooms. She discovers a hidden attic room and photos of circus scenes featuring a striking young girl. In learning the truth about Lilly's fate,

can Julia find a way to make Blackwood Manor into a place of healing at last?

### **Our Souls at Night by Kent Hauruf**

Addie Moore and Louis Waters have been neighbors in the eastern Colorado farming town of Holt for over 40 years. Now, alone except for visits from their grown children, Addie has asked Louis to come over every evening and to stay with her in bed, just to get through the lonely nights . Louis is not a risk taker, but he's lonely, too, and so begins their companionable routine.

### **Eight Hundred Grapes by Laura Dave**

Take your time and savor the family dynamics. Enjoy the romantic twists in this tale of a career-minded young woman circling back to her roots at a California winery. The appeal is broader than that of a romance since it delves into the complexities of various relationships--parent to parent, parents and children, even winery and owner.

### **The Book That Matters the Most by Ann Hood**

Ava joins a book group, not only for her love of reading but also out of sheer desperation for companionship. The group's goal throughout the year is for each member to present the book that matters most to them.

### **Glory Days by Melissa Fratterigo (author visit)**

The small plains town of Ingleside, Nebraska, is populated by down-on-their-luck ranchers and new money, ghosts and seers, drugs and greed, the haves and the have-nots. Teensy and his daughter, Luann, face the loss of their land even as they mourn the death of Luann's mother, while others in town find enormous wealth when developers begin buying property.

### **Funeral Dress by Susan Gregg Gilmore**

When Leona, the brilliant seamstress who taught her how to sew and offered to save her from her abusive father, passes away, single mother Emmalee Bullard, struggling to do what is right for her new baby and honor Leona the best way she can, must fight for all she holds dear.

### **Elizabeth is Missing by Emma Healey**

Maude sinks into a confusing world in this gripping psychological mystery written in the voice of an aging woman with Alzheimer's. She can't remember what she's doing or where she is, but she is obsessed with one thought—her good friend Elizabeth is missing.

### **Seven Days of Us by Francesca Hornak**

The Birch family will be spending the Christmas holiday in quarantine, thanks to eldest daughter Olivia's recent relief work in a disease-infested Liberia. She has returned to England but must be in quarantine for seven days. This family has not ever spent this much time in each other's company. Each person has secrets that are slowly revealed over the course of the seven days. It is particularly interesting to watch them become the family they should have been all along: supportive and loving.