



# Great Reads

## For you & your book club

Novels • Mysteries • Historical Fiction • Narrative Nonfiction  
Perennial Classics • Beloved Authors • Award Winners

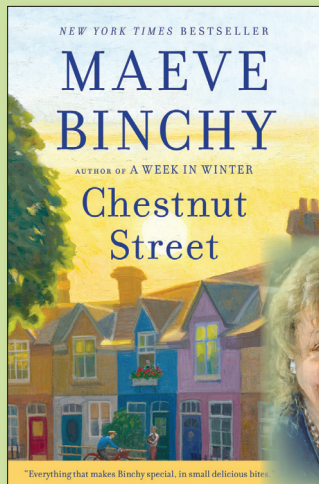


VINTAGE

IN PAPERBACK AND EBOOK

ANCHOR 





## Chestnut Street

### Maeve Binchy

**“Binchy’s wry, self-effacing style reminds one of a Celtic Nora Ephron.”** —*The Christian Science Monitor*

Chestnut Street is a place in Dublin where we encounter different people with different life circumstances, sensibilities, and stories: Maguire, the window cleaner, must do more than he bargained for in order to protect his son. Nessa Byrne’s aunt visits from America, turning Nessa’s house—and world—upside down. Lilian, a generous girl with a big heart, has a fiancé whom no one approves of. Dolly, an awkward young girl, discovers more about her perfect mother than she ever wanted to know. Melly’s gossipy ways help Madame Magic, a self-styled fortune-teller, get everyone on the right track. Imagined with humor and understanding, these characters charm us as we have our hearts warmed by Binchy’s storytelling.

Maeve Binchy’s husband, Gordon Snell, reports that while “Chestnut Street... is fictional...the Dublin portrayed there is very real: a city changing over the years in ways that come vividly to life in these stories of its residents and their families.”

Get in the Dublin spirit of neighborliness with an Irish porter cake. Make it a couple days in advance to serve to your reading group—the flavor will improve with time!

#### INGREDIENTS:

3 ½ cups all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon freshly grated or ground nutmeg  
1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice (mixed spice)  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
Pinch of salt  
1 cup butter  
1 cup packed light brown sugar  
1 pound golden or dark raisins or a mixture of both  
3 ounces chopped candied peel  
2 eggs  
One 12-ounce bottle porter or stout

#### METHOD:

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Line the bottom and sides of a deep 8-inch round cake pan (the sides should be about 2¾ inches high) with parchment paper.

Sift the flour, spices, baking powder, and salt into a bowl. Rub in the butter, then stir in the brown sugar, raisins, and candied peel.

In another bowl, whisk the eggs and add the porter. Add the dry ingredients and mix well. Pour into the prepared pan.

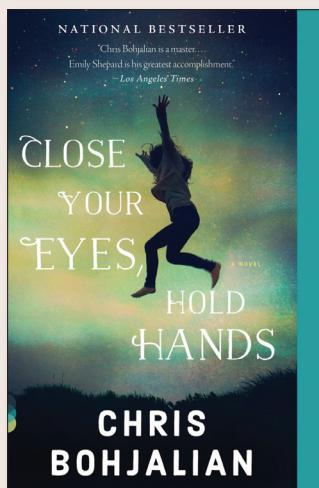
## Porter Cake

Bake for about 2 hours. After about 1 hour, if the cake starts to brown too quickly on top, cover it with aluminum foil or waxed paper. The cake is done when a skewer inserted into the center comes out clean. Allow the cake to sit in the pan for about 20 minutes before turning it out and cooling it on a wire rack.

(Makes 10 to 12 servings)



Adapted from Today.com



## Close Your Eyes, Hold Hands

### Chris Bohjalian

**A Best Book of the Year:** *The Washington Post, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*

**“A compelling tale of loss, resilience, and transformation.”**

—*The Boston Globe*

A heartbreaking, wildly inventive, and moving novel from the bestselling author of *Midwives*.

Emily Shepard is on the run; the nuclear plant where her father worked

has suffered a cataclysmic meltdown and all fingers point to him. Now orphaned, homeless, and certain that she’s a pariah, Emily has taken to hiding out on the frigid streets of Burlington, Vermont. There she creates a new identity for herself inspired by her favorite poet, Emily Dickinson.

Then she meets Cameron. Nine years old and with a string of foster families behind him, he sparks something in Emily, and she protects him with a fierceness she didn’t know she possessed. But when an emergency threatens the fledgling home she’s created, Emily realizes that she can’t hide forever.

**Chris Bohjalian talks about the inspiration for his novel.**

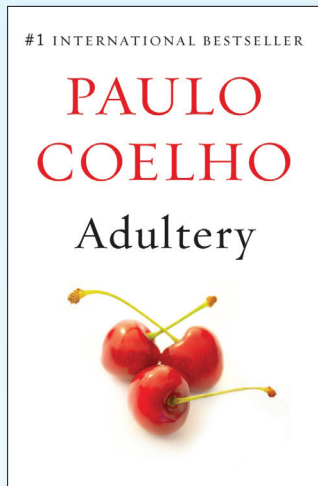
**Q:** How did you come up with the idea for *Close Your Eyes, Hold Hands*?

**A:** ... Over the years, I’ve written about teens in trouble as a *Burlington Free Press* columnist. I’m a big fan of Spectrum Youth & Family Services in Burlington, Vermont, and the remarkable work they do. And so I’ve met a lot of their kids. I’ve heard the teens’ stories and seen their faces. I’ve met the kids who are going to be okay and the kids who are already so far down the rabbit hole that there’s no coming back.

One day when I was having lunch with Annie Ramniceanu, a therapist and counselor there, she started telling me how some of the kids – the teens who are falling through the system – would build igloos against the Vermont cold out of trash bags filled with wet leaves, and I knew instantly the novel I wanted to write. The very idea of a teen girl living alone in one of those igloos broke my heart. That image haunted me – and spurred me on.



© Victoria Blever



## Adultery

Paulo Coelho

**“Propulsive.... A compelling tale of existential angst, marital betrayal and sexual sin.”** —*Chicago Tribune*

*Adultery*, the provocative new novel by Paulo Coelho, bestselling author of *The Alchemist*, explores the question of what it means to live life fully and happily.

Linda knows she's lucky, with a job, marriage, children, and wardrobe that anyone would envy. Yet every morning when she opens her eyes to a so-called new day, she feels like closing them again. Her friends recommend medication, therapy, self-help books; but Linda wants to feel more, not less. When a chance work assignment puts her in the path of an old flame, Linda thinks that she's found the answer to her unhappiness, embarking on a daring adventure that reawakens a side of her that she thought had disappeared. But when that adventure threatens to take over the rest of her life, she will be forced to confront deep emotions and make a choice.

**Paulo Coelho shares his thoughts on passion and the impossibility of attaining peace and prosperity.**

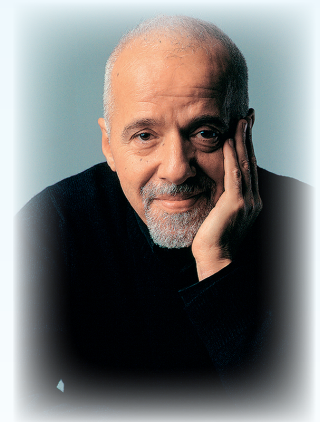
**Q: Are you the writer in the story who favors passion over happiness?**

**A:** Yes, absolutely. Happiness is this place that, once you arrive there, you have nothing else to do. You get bored. Passion is this up and down; it's like a rollercoaster, you know, and much more interesting to me.

**Q: Your protagonist in *Adultery* has a life almost anyone would envy, but it is not enough. Do you**

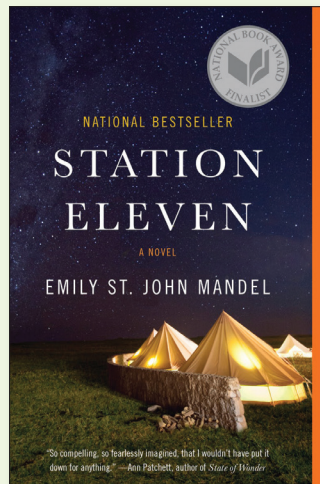
**think that human beings are just incapable of handling peace and prosperity for the long term?**

It depends how deep you dig into your soul. They can handle peace and prosperity. The problem is that they are always insecure, if they can keep this forever. So the question is not that they cannot handle it, it is how to keep this forever. And, as you know, it is impossible, so people start to destroy the excitement of the present moment due to the fact that they are trying to live behind walls to protect their prosperity and happiness.



© Xavier González

Read more at <http://reut.rs/1DvQmGW>



## Station Eleven

Emily St. John Mandel

**A National Book Award and PEN/Faulkner Award Finalist  
Arthur C. Clarke Award Winner  
A Best Book of the Year:**

***The Washington Post*,  
*San Francisco Chronicle*,  
*Chicago Tribune*, *Buzzfeed*,  
*Entertainment Weekly*, *Time*,  
*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*,  
*Minnesota Public Radio*, *The  
Huffington Post*, *BookPage*,  
*Time Out*, *BookRiot***

Twenty years later, Kirsten moves between the settlements of the altered world with The Traveling Symphony, a small troupe of actors and musicians dedicated to keeping the remnants of art and humanity alive. But when they arrive in St. Deborah by the Water, they encounter a violent prophet who will threaten the tiny band's existence. And as the story takes off, moving back and forth in time and vividly depicting life before and after the pandemic, the strange twist of fate that connects them all will be revealed.

**Readers have shared on the  
*Station Eleven* Tumblr page the  
things they would miss most:**

- The perfect cup of tea.
- Diving into pools of chlorinated water lit green from below.
- Porch lights with moths fluttering on summer nights.
- Eating an ice-cream cone in a park in the sunlight.

**What would you  
miss most?**



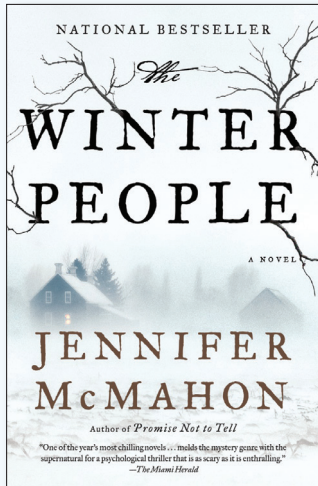
© Des'reae L. Stage

***“Station Eleven is so compelling, so fearlessly imagined, that I wouldn't have put it down for anything.”***

—Ann Patchett, author of *State of Wonder*

Kirsten Raymonde will never forget the night Arthur Leander, the famous Hollywood actor, had a heart attack on stage during a production of *King Lear*. That was the night a devastating flu pandemic arrived in the city, and within weeks, civilization as we know it came to an end.





## The Winter People

### Jennifer McMahon

A *Boston Globe* Best Book of the Year

**“One of the year’s most chilling novels.... Melds the mystery genre with the supernatural for a psychological thriller that is as scary as it is enthralling.”** —*Miami Herald*

*The Winter People* is a simmering literary thriller about the unbreakable bond between mothers and daughters.

West Hall, Vermont, has a history of strange disappearances and old legends—especially that of Sara Harrison Shea, who, in 1908, was found dead in the field behind her house just months after the tragic death of her daughter. In present day, nineteen-year-old Ruthie lives off the grid in Sara’s farmhouse with her mother, Alice, and her younger sister. One morning, Ruthie wakes up to find that Alice has vanished. In her search for clues, she is startled to find a copy of Sara Harrison Shea’s diary hidden

beneath the floorboards of Alice’s bedroom. As Ruthie gets sucked into the mystery of Sara’s fate, she discovers that she’s not the only person looking for someone they’ve lost. But she may be the only one who can stop history from repeating itself.

**Jennifer McMahon answers questions on the theme and title of her book:**

**Q:** Early on, little Gertie asks her mother, “If snow melts down to water, does it still remember being snow?”. This question foreshadows some of the more shocking developments in the novel. Can you talk about its significance—without any big spoilers, of course!

**A:** Gertie’s voice and her unique way of seeing the world was one of my favorite parts of writing this book. I feel like children her age are full of these bits of accidental insight, and I loved Sara spending time under the covers with her, listening to her and learning from her. Gertie is also the one who gives us the title of the book when she describes her visions of the “Winter People”—people stuck between this world and the next.

Her question about the snow does foreshadow what’s to come. Without giving away too much, it asks us what we might hold on to and take with us as we transition from one form to another.



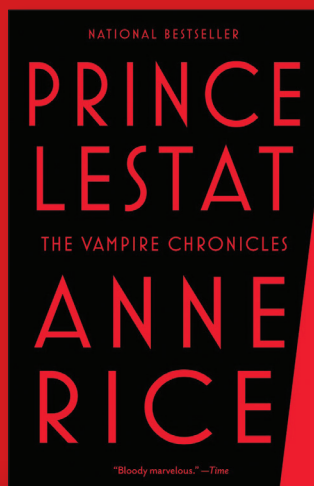
© Michael Lionstar

It began with a simple interview...  
and ended with the waking of an ancient queen.  
Now the bestselling series that launched a genre returns,  
reintroducing us to the most unforgettable of vampires:  
Lestat de Lioncourt.

## Prince Lestat

### Anne Rice

**“Bloody marvelous.”**  
—*Time*



Old vampires, roused from deep slumber in the earth, are doing the bidding of a Voice commanding that they indiscriminately burn their kin in cities across the globe, from Paris to Mumbai, Hong Kong to San Francisco. Left with little time to spare, a host of familiar characters including Louis de Pointe du Lac, Armand, and the vampire Lestat must embark on a journey to discover who—or what—is driving this mysterious being.

“Bloody marvelous.” —*Time*

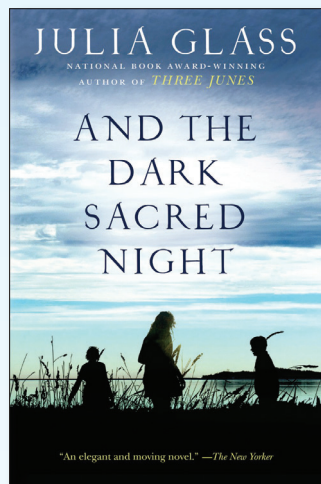


# Julia Glass

*Her new novel*

## And the Dark Sacred Night

*"An elegant and moving novel." —The New Yorker*



From National Book Award-winning author Julia Glass, comes the story of a man searching for his father, upending relationships beyond his own, and forever changing the way he fits into the world he thought he knew.

Kit Noonan is unemployed, with twins to support, a mortgage to pay, and a frustrated wife who insists that, to move forward, Kit needs to solve the mystery of his father's identity. Kit's search begins with his one-time stepfather and ultimately leads him to Fenno McLeod, the beloved protagonist of Glass's award-winning novel *Three Junes*.

### **An excerpt from *And the Dark Sacred Night*:**

She saw him through the trees, and she almost turned around. In just eight days, she had come to believe that this wedge of shore, tumbled rock enclosed by thorny juniper and stunted saplings (but lit by the tilting sun at the western side of the lake) was her secret. Each afternoon, it became her refuge—just one brief measure, a *piacere*, of solitude—from another attenuated day of rehearse, practice, and practice even more; of master classes and Popper études, hour after hour of Saint-Saëns and Debussy; of walking over plush lawns, passing adults who spoke zealously, even angrily, in German and Russian; of waking and going to sleep in a room shared with three other girls.

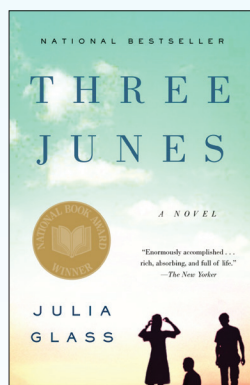


© Dennis Cowley

*Rediscover the beloved National Book Award Winner*

## Three Junes

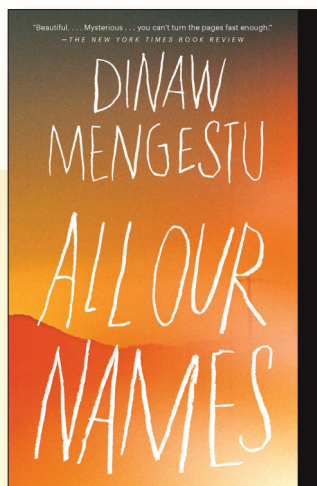
An astonishing first novel that traces the lives of a Scottish family over a decade as they confront the joys and longings, fulfillments and betrayals of love in all its guises.



### **An excerpt from *Three Junes*:**

Paul chose Greece for its predictable whiteness: the blanching heat by day, the rush of stars at night, the glint of the lime-washed houses crowding its coast. Blinding, searing, somnolent, fossilized Greece.

Joining a tour—that was the gamble, because Paul is not a gregarious sort. He dreads fund-raisers and drinks parties, all occasions at which he must give an account of himself to people he will never see again. Yet there are advantages to the company of strangers. You can tell them whatever you please: no lies perhaps, but no affecting truths. Paul does not fabricate well (though once, foolishly, he believed that he could), and the single truth he's offered these random companions—that recently he lost his wife—brought down a flurry of theatrical condolence. (A hand on his at the breakfast table in Athens, the very first day: "Time, time, and more time. Let Monsignor Time do his tedious, devious work." Marjorie, a breathy schoolmistress from Devon.)



## All Our Names

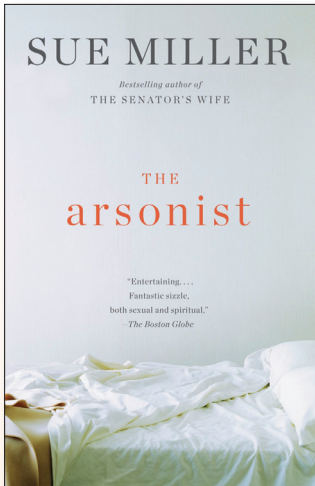
**Dinaw Mengestu**

**A Best Book of the Year:** *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, NPR, *The Boston Globe*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Daily Beast*

**"Beautiful.... Mysterious...you can't turn the pages fast enough." —The New York Times Book Review**

A sweeping, continent-spanning story about the love between men and women, between friends, and between citizens and their countries, *All Our Names* is a transfixing exploration of the relationships that define us.

Fleeing war-torn Uganda for the American Midwest, Isaac begins a passionate affair with the social worker assigned to him. But the couple's bond is inescapably darkened by the secrets of Isaac's past: the country and the conflict he left behind and the beloved friend who changed the course of his life—and sacrificed everything to ensure his freedom. From acclaimed author Dinaw Mengestu, here is a love story for our time.



## The Arsonist Sue Miller

**“Entertaining.... Fantastic sizzle, both sexual and spiritual.... A cracking good romance.”** —*The Boston Globe*

After fifteen years working in East Africa, Frankie Rowley returns to the New Hampshire village where her family has always spent their summers. But the tranquility she's expecting proves short-lived when, on the very night she arrives, a mysterious arsonist begins targeting the homes of summer residents. As this seemingly idyllic community becomes increasingly on edge, Frankie also has to deal with her father's declining health—and begins a passionate affair with the editor of a local paper that will yield its own remarkable risks and revelations.

Suspenseful, sophisticated, and finely wrought, *The Arsonist* is an artfully nuanced and deeply emotional novel about a family and a community tested, and about what it means to lead a fulfilling life.

### Sue Miller on the notion of home:

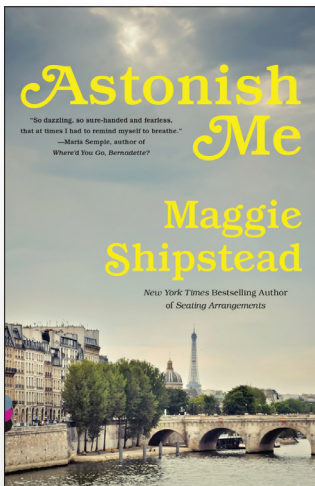
*The notion of home was uppermost in my mind as I began to think about writing The Arsonist, in some measure because my son, my only child, had, at that point, been living in Africa for about twelve years. Occasionally during those years, I'd ask, on a visit to him in Kenya or Uganda, or Zanzibar, when he thought he might come home. Sometimes in amusement, sometimes with irritation, he'd answer, "But I have a home, Mom. And it's in Africa."*

*Point taken. But still, I worried about it, his situation. It made me think of cousins of mine who grew up in India, the children of missionaries. How for them the question of where home was seemed central to all decisions—to the question, even, of who they were, a question each answered very differently.*

Read more on [ReadingGroupCenter.com](http://ReadingGroupCenter.com)



© Elena Seibert



## Astonish Me Maggie Shipstead

**“So dazzling, so sure-handed and fearless, that at times I had to remind myself to breathe.”** —*Maria Semple, author of Where'd You Go, Bernadette*

For years Joan has been trying to find satisfaction in her role as wife and mother. Few in her drowsy California suburb know her thrilling history: As a young American ballerina in Paris, she fell into a doomed, passionate romance with Soviet dance superstar Arslan Rusakov. After playing a leading role in his celebrated defection, Joan bowed out of the spotlight for good, heartbroken by Arslan and humbled by her own modest career.

When her son turns out to be a ballet prodigy, Joan is pulled back into a world she thought she'd left behind—a world of dangerous secrets, of Arslan, and of longing for what will always be just out of reach.

Maggie Shipstead shares the origin stories of three elements of her book on the Reading Group Center. Here is one of those origin stories, for *The Hunt for Red October*. The other two, ballet and Disneyland, can be found on [ReadingGroupCenter.com](http://ReadingGroupCenter.com).

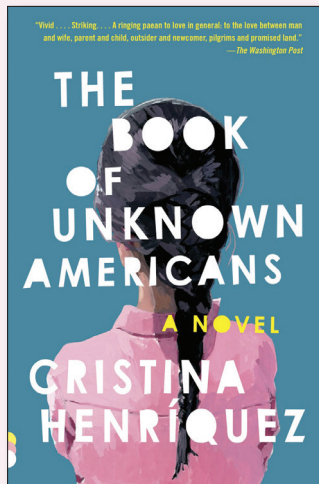
*In Astonish Me, a man takes his son to see The Hunt for Red October in the theater in 1990, and the kid is enraptured. I have a similar memory of going with my family to see it at the mall near our house when I was six. It's been one of my favorite movies ever since. Sometimes my brother and I have entire text conversations that are just miscellaneous Red October quotes...*

*Defectors were of particular interest to me—I was attracted to the drama of their risks and sacrifices. My mom told me about the famous ballet defectors—Balanchine, Nureyev, Makarova, Baryshnikov. What was it like to run out the back door of a theater in Toronto, as Baryshnikov did in 1974, and find yourself in a new life, a new world? Ballet, I came to understand as a child, was so important to some people that they would make the wrenching choice to give up their countries and leave behind loved ones for the sake of artistic freedom.*



© Michelle Legro





# The Book of Unknown Americans

## Cristina Henríquez

A Best Book of the Year: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, NPR, *The Daily Beast*, *Mother Jones*, Oprah.com, *School Library Journal*, *BookPage*

**“Vivid.... Striking.... A ringing paean to love in general: to the love between man and wife, parent and child, outsider and newcomer, pilgrims and promised land.”** —*The Washington Post*

*The Book of Unknown Americans* is a stunning novel of hopes and dreams, guilt and love—a book that offers a resonant new definition of what it means to be American.

When fifteen-year-old Maribel Rivera sustains a terrible injury, her family leaves behind a comfortable life in Mexico, risking everything to come to the United States so that Maribel can have the care she needs. Once they arrive, Maribel attracts the attention of Mayor Toro, the son of one of their new neighbors, who sees a kindred spirit in this beautiful, damaged outsider. Their love story sets in motion

events that will have profound repercussions for everyone involved. Henríquez seamlessly interweaves the story of these star-crossed lovers and their families with the testimonials of men and women who have come to the United States from all over Latin America.

### *The Book of Unknown Americans* #UnknownAmericans Project

Cristina Henríquez’s acclaimed novel *The Book of Unknown Americans* gives voice to immigrants—people like her father, who came to this country from Panama in 1971—and offers us a new look at what it means to be an American. Woven into its pages are the stories of men and women from all over Latin America who left their homelands to follow their hopes and dreams in the United States, and their first-person accounts make up a beautiful tapestry.

After she finished working on the novel, Henríquez felt compelled to create a place for people like her characters to share their experiences—and so the Unknown Americans Project was born.



© Michael Lionstar

UnknownAmericans.Tumblr.com is a forum where immigrants can submit a photo of themselves, write about how and why they came to America, and reminisce. Its mission is powerful: to tell stories people don’t usually hear.

**“One of my hopes for *The Book of Unknown Americans* was that it might tell stories people don’t usually hear. And now, another hope: that we will all tell our #UnknownAmerican stories. Where did you or your family come from? What is your life like now? We’ll create a chorus and make our voices known.”**

—Cristina Henríquez

# The Children Act

## Ian McEwan

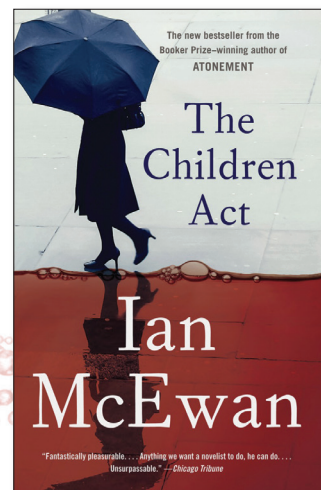
A Best Book of the Year: *The Washington Post*, NPR, *Vogue*, *BookRiot*, *Kirkus Reviews*

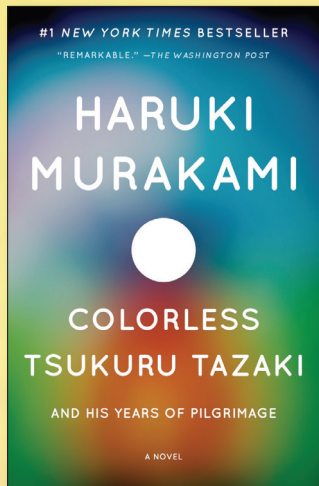
**“Fantastically pleasurable.... Unsurpassable...devastating prose.”**  
—*Chicago Tribune*

From the Booker Prize-winning author of *Atonement*, a stunning new novel that grapples with questions of faith, justice, and the nature of long-term love.

Fiona Maye is a leading High Court judge who presides over cases in the family division. Renowned for her fierce intelligence and sensitivity, her professional success belies private sorrow. There is the lingering regret of her childlessness, and now her marriage of thirty years is in crisis.

At the same time, she is called on to try an urgent case: Adam, a beautiful seventeen-year-old boy, is refusing for religious reasons life-saving medical treatment, and his devout parents echo his wishes. Time is running out. Should the secular court overrule sincerely expressed faith? When Fiona visits Adam in the hospital, the encounter stirs long-buried feelings in her and powerful new emotions in the boy. Her judgment has momentous consequences for them both.





# Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage

## Haruki Murakami

A Best Book of the Year: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Financial Times*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *Slate*, *Mother Jones*, *The Daily Beast*, *BookPage*

“Intoxicating.... Full of beauty, strangeness, and color.” —NPR

From award-winning, internationally bestselling author Haruki Murakami, *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage* is the remarkable story of a young man haunted by a great loss; of dreams and nightmares that have unintended consequences for the world around us; and of a journey into the past that is necessary to mend the present. Murakami’s long-awaited novel gives us a story of love, friendship, and heartbreak for the ages.

### Music in the Novel

Franz Liszt’s “Le mal du pays” is a musical piece that runs through the novel almost like a chorus. The piano composition is part of a set of three suites called *Years of Pilgrimage*. The music not only harmonizes with the wistful, meditative tonality of the novel and Tsukuru’s journey into past love, friendship, and heartbreak, but it also adds new and unexpected layers of meaning. Delve deep into the musical symbolism of the novel while listening to the author’s playlist as you read select chapters. Visit the [ReadingGroupCenter.com](http://ReadingGroupCenter.com) to listen and watch a video of *Years of Pilgrimage* played by designer, author, and classical pianist Peter Mendelsund.

### Listen along to these selections from the author’s playlist as you read select chapters:

- Franz Liszt | “Le mal du pays” from *Years of Pilgrimage*; Peter Mendelsund, piano | Chapters 4, 7, 10, 11, 13, 16, 19
- Thelonius Monk | “Round Midnight” | Chapter 5
- Elvis Presley | “Viva Las Vegas” | Chapter 10
- Schumann | “Träumerei” from *Scenes from Childhood* Chapter 11
- Franz Liszt | Petrarch’s Sonnet 47 from *Years of Pilgrimage* Chapter 13
- Elvis Presley | “Don’t Be Cruel” | Chapter 14

Listen at: <http://bit.ly/1SPg1Bu>

# The Dog

## Joseph O’Neill

A *New York Times* Notable Book  
Man Booker Prize Nominee

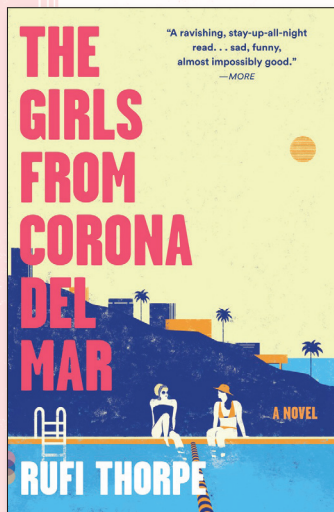
“Brilliant.... A devastating portrait of a man and world stuck in a moral impasse.” —*The Boston Globe*

A comic and philosophically profound exploration of what has become of humankind’s moral progress, *The Dog* is told with Joseph O’Neill’s hallmark eloquence, empathy, and storytelling mastery.

When our unnamed hero, a self-sabotaging and oddly existential lawyer, finds his life in New York falling apart, he seizes an opportunity to flee to Dubai, taking a mysterious job for a fabulously wealthy Lebanese family. As he grapples with his position as the “family officer” of the capricious Batros brothers, he also struggles with the “doghouse,” a condition of culpability in which he feels trapped, even as he composes endless electronic correspondence—both sent and unsent—in an attempt to find a way out.







# The Girls from Corona del Mar

## Rufi Thorpe

International Dylan Thomas Prize and Flaherty-Dunn First Novel Prize Nominee

**“A ravishing, stay-up-all-night read...sad, funny, almost impossibly good.”** —*More*

Fierce and beautifully written, *The Girls from Corona del Mar* is a searing debut that blazes with emotion and explores the true nature of female friendship and how it survives—or doesn’t—as we get older.

Best friends Mia and Lorrie Ann couldn’t be more different; where Mia is reckless and proudly hard-hearted, Lorrie Ann is kind, serenely beautiful, and seemingly immune to the kind of teenage mistakes that Mia can’t help but make. When a sudden loss catapults Lorrie Ann into tragedy, things fall apart—and there is nothing Mia can do to help. As good, kind, brave Lorrie Ann stops being so good, Mia begins to question just who this woman is and what that will mean for them both.

Rufi Thorpe shares her intriguing list of top ten books about female friendship that inspired the writing of *The Girls from Corona del Mar*. Here are the first five. Visit [ReadingGroupCenter.com](http://ReadingGroupCenter.com) for the other five.

### 1. *Sula* by Toni Morrison

*When has a book been so honest and full of blood? I first read Sula when I was fifteen, and in many ways it spoiled me for the rest of literature.*

### 2. *Best Friends Forever* by Jennifer Weiner

*Jennifer Weiner is one of those writers who is almost constantly underestimated. Even the title, Best Friends Forever, seems to promise something saccharine and easily digestible, but what you find instead is a kind of fever dream.*

### 3. *Goodbye Tsugumi* by Banana Yoshimoto

*Banana Yoshimoto’s books are as intoxicating and creepy as any Grimm’s fairy tale, and*

*Goodbye Tsugumi is haunting, addictively readable, and absolutely unforgettable.*

### 4. *Truth & Beauty* by Ann Patchett

*Truth & Beauty is Ann Patchett’s memoir of her friendship with Lucy Grealy, author of the famous memoir Autobiography of a Face. Patchett tells the story of their seventeen-year friendship with a sparseness and simplicity that is simply scorching. A must-read.*

### 5. *My Brilliant Friend* by Elena Ferrante

*My Brilliant Friend follows two girls, Elena and Lila, from age six through their teenage years in a suburb of Naples in the 1950s, though the book begins in the present day with the sudden disappearance of Lila, who, at the age of sixty-six, has decided to try to vanish without a trace, going so far as to cut herself out of all her family pictures before leaving.*



© Nina Subin

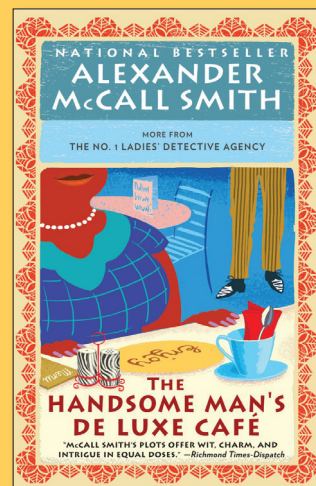
Illustration ©Maria Cecilia Azzali for Tapiro

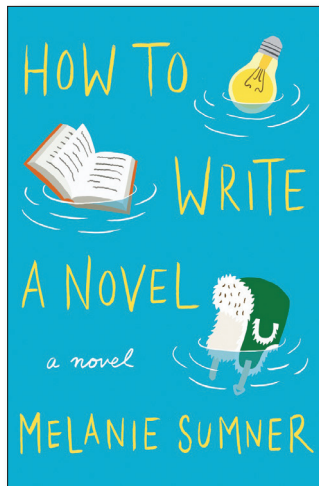
# The Handsome Man’s De Luxe Café

## Alexander McCall Smith

**“McCall Smith’s depictions of the sights and sounds of Botswana and his overarching theme of compassion make this novel radiant.... Humor runs rampant.... Calling Precious Ramotswe, owner and chief investigator of the No. 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency in Botswana, a detective doesn’t do her justice. ‘Problem solver extraordinaire’ would be much better.”** —*Booklist* (starred review)

Over the years Mma Ramotswe has found many lost things, but never before has she been asked to help a woman find herself—until now. A kindhearted brother and sister have taken in a nameless woman with no memory of her own history or how she came to Botswana. It falls to Precious Ramotswe and her new co-director, Grace Makutsi, to discover the woman’s identity. Meanwhile, motherhood proves to be no obstacle to Mma Makutsi’s professional success, as she launches a new enterprise of her own: the Handsome Man’s De Luxe Café, a restaurant for Gaborone’s most fashionable diners, even if it becomes quickly apparent that she’s bitten off more than she can chew. And next door, Mr. J. L. B. Matekoni is forced to make a choice that will directly affect not only Tlokweng Road Speedy Motors, but the No. 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency, as well. With sympathy and indefatigable good humor, Mma Ramotswe and her friends see one another through these major changes and discover along the way what true friendship really means.





# How to Write a Novel

## Melanie Sumner

**"A beautiful and accomplished novel by an extraordinarily gifted talent."** —*Fill McCorkle, author of Life After Life*

Aristotle "Aris" Thibodeau is 12.5 years old and destined for greatness. Ever since her father's death, however, she's been stuck in Kanuga, Georgia, where she has to manage her mother's floundering love life and dubious commitment to her job. Not to mention co-parent a little brother who hogs all the therapy money.

Luckily, Aris has a plan. Following the advice laid out in *Write a Novel in Thirty Days!*, she sets out to pen a bestseller, using her family as material. If Diane would ditch online dating and accept that the perfect man is clearly the handyman/nanny character, Aris would have the essential romance for her plot (and a real-life father). But when an accident uncovers a dark part of her family history, Aris is forced to confront the fact that sometimes in life—as in great literature—things might not work out exactly as planned.

### Writing Tips for Aspiring Writers

Aris relies on *Write a Novel in Thirty Days!* to guide her through the writing of her very first book. With rules like "Do not indulge in superfluous characters" and "A writer gets one hyperbole per novel," Aris's guide provides very useful writing advice. She also relies on tips she's heard from others, including the librarian whose comment "Your book must have a conflict" sets Aris in a writing tailspin.

### Aris' Tips for Aspiring Writers

- Do not indulge in superfluous characters. However, if you are short on male characters, feel free to add a few.
- Sex sells! Here's a surefire way to create a sex scene. Make a list of one hundred food and kitchen

items. Write a short sex scene. Now rewrite it, substituting your libidinous words with your kitchen words. An example borrowed from Ian McEwan's *Atonement*: ("They were beyond the present, outside time, with no memories and no future. There was nothing but an obliterating pot of coffee...as their Gimme Lean soy dogs slid across each other in this restless, sensuous wrestling.")

- A writer gets one hyperbole per novel—unless he/she is on a deadline. Then you get two.
- Avoid cliché—if you let one innocuous example slip under the fence, its friends and relatives will follow like a herd of elephants.
- It's juvenile to end a story with "The End." But this is a list, not a story, so...

THE END



© Michael Lionstar



# The Narrow Road to the Deep North

## Richard Flanagan

Man Booker Prize Winner

**"Nothing short of a masterpiece."** —*Financial Times*

In *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, Richard Flanagan displays the gifts that have made him one of the most acclaimed writers of contemporary fiction. Moving deftly from a Japanese POW camp to present-day Australia, from the experiences of Dorrigio Evans and his fellow prisoners to that of the Japanese guards, this savagely beautiful novel tells a story of the many forms of love and death, of war and truth, as one man comes of age and prospers, only to discover all that he has lost.

### The poetic source of the book's title:

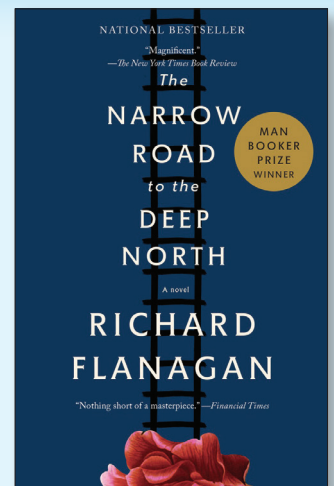
Richard Flanagan named his book after a spiritually intense travel journal by the seventeenth century Japanese poet Bashō.

*The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, translated alternately as *The Narrow Road to the Interior*, is a major work of *haibun* by the Japanese poet Matsuo Bashō and considered one of the major texts of classical Japanese literature. The text is written in the form of a prose and verse travel diary and was penned as Bashō made an epic and dangerous journey on foot through Japan in the late seventeenth century.

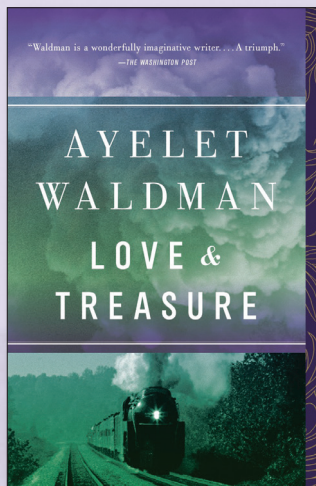
### An excerpt from the poem as translated by Donald Keene:

I seemed to be possessed by the spirits of wanderlust, and they all but deprived me of my senses. The guardian spirits of the road beckoned, and I could not settle down to work.

Read more at <http://bit.ly/1JyR8VH>







# Love and Treasure

## Ayelet Waldman

A Best Book of the Year: *The Washington Post*, Oprah.com

**“A triumph.... Wonderfully imaginative writer.”** —*The Washington Post*

In 1945, on the outskirts of Salzburg, American soldiers discover a train filled with unspeakable riches: gold watches and wedding rings, picture frames and Shabbat candlesticks. Jack Wiseman is the lieutenant charged with guarding this treasure—a responsibility that grows more complicated when he meets Ilona, a fierce, beautiful Hungarian woman who has lost everything in the ravages of the Holocaust.

Seventy years later, amid the shadowy world of art dealers who profit off the sins of previous generations, Jack gives a necklace to his granddaughter, Natalie, and charges her with returning it to its owner. As Natalie searches for the woman whose portrait and unknown fate have begun to haunt her, she will come to understand the secret her grandfather took to his grave.

**Ayelet Waldman's research led to interviewing many but one special jeweler stood out.**

*While researching Love and Treasure I interviewed dozens of people, among them historians, experts, and survivors. Hungarian history and women's studies professors spent hours with me, sharing their expertise but also telling me stories about obscure characters and incidents that often hadn't made it into their research. I met survivors in museums and libraries, even in cafés, who shared their memories with me. But of all the individuals I interviewed, there was one who stood out. I was looking to speak to a jeweler with expertise in the Jugendstil movement [Jugendstil is the German style that paralleled Art Nouveau]. And he was, indeed, the perfect person to speak to. But it turned out he was so much more.*

**Here is an excerpt from the letter Waldman wrote to thank him for inspiring her.**

Dear Mr. X,

We met one rainy winter afternoon a number of years ago, in your small shop on a side street in Budapest. I was researching a novel in which a piece of jewelry would feature prominently, and a friend had recommended that I sift through the offerings in your shop to see if anything triggered my imagination.

I must confess, when we first walked into the dim and dusty space, I was not anticipating much success. I was looking for an antique piece, something from the Hungarian Art Nouveau—the Jugendstil — and your window displays featured bulbous modern silver pendants and bracelets, the kind favored by women like my mother, who carried copies of *The New York Review of Books* and complicated knitting projects in their Channel 13 tote bags as they stood in line for half-price tickets to Broadway matinees.

Read the rest on [ReadingGroupCenter.com](http://ReadingGroupCenter.com)



© Deborah Copaken Kogan

# The Painter

## Peter Heller

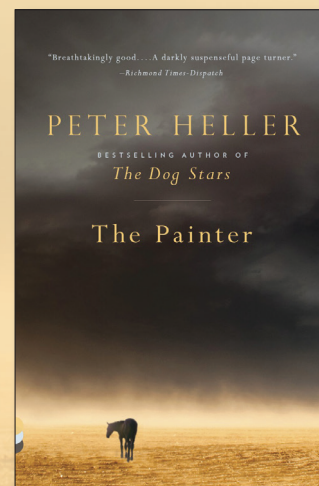
An Oprah.com Best Book of the Year

**“Breathtakingly good.... A darkly suspenseful page-turner.”**

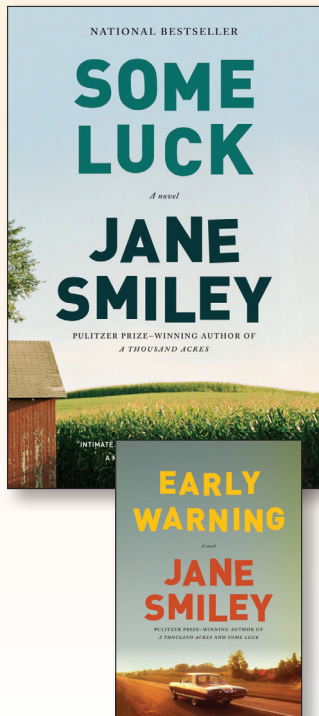
—*Richmond Times-Dispatch*

Peter Heller, the celebrated author of the beloved bestseller *The Dog Stars*, returns with a novel of art and suspense.

Years ago, Jim Stegner, a well-known expressionist painter, shot a man in a bar. Jim served out his sentence and has since struggled to manage the dark impulses that sometimes overtake him. He lives a quiet life until the day when he comes across a hunting guide beating a small horse and a brutal act of new violence rips his quiet life right open. Pursued by men intent on retribution, Jim is left with no choice but to return to New Mexico and the high-profile life he left behind, where he'll reckon with past deeds and the dark shadows in his own heart.







## Some Luck

Jane Smiley

National Book Award Nominee

A Best Book of the Year: *The Washington Post*, NPR, *USA Today*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Financial Times*, *The Seattle Times*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *BookPage*

“Intimate.... Miraculous.... Staggering.... A masterpiece in the making.”

—*USA Today*

1920, Denby, Iowa: Rosanna and Walter Langdon have just welcomed their firstborn son, Frank, into their family. He will be the eldest of five.

Each chapter in this extraordinary novel covers a single year, encompassing the sweep of history as the Langdons pass time-honoured values on to their children. With the country on the cusp of enormous social and economic change through the early 1950s, we watch as the personal and the historical merge seamlessly: one moment electricity is just beginning to power the farm, and the next a son is volunteering to fight the Nazis.

The first volume of an epic trilogy from the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *A Thousand Acres*, *Some Luck* starts us on a literary adventure through cycles of birth and death, passion and betrayal, that will span a century in America.

**Early Warning** is the second volume in the American trilogy. (Hardcover featured. Coming in paperback in 2016.)

## Thirty Girls

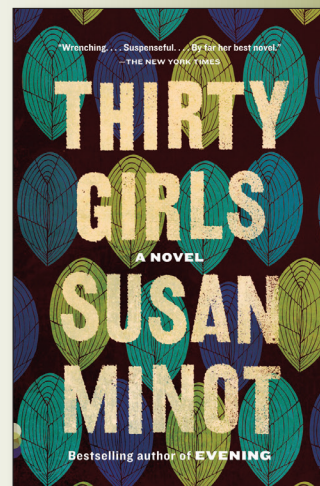
Susan Minot

A Best Book of the Year: *The New York Times*, *Economist*

“Wrenching.... Suspenseful.... By far her best novel.” —*The New York Times*

From the bestselling author of *Evening*, a literary tour de force set in war-torn Africa.

Esther Akello is one of thirty Ugandan teenage girls abducted from a Catholic boarding school by rebel bandits. Held captive by the Lord's Resistance Army, Esther is forced to witness and commit unspeakable atrocities. She struggles to survive, to escape, and to find a way to live with what she has seen and done. Jane Wood is an idealistic American writer who is traveling across Africa, hoping to give a voice to young people like Esther and to find her own center. Minot interweaves the stories of these two astonishing young women who, as they confront displacement and heartbreak, are hurtled inexorably closer to each other.



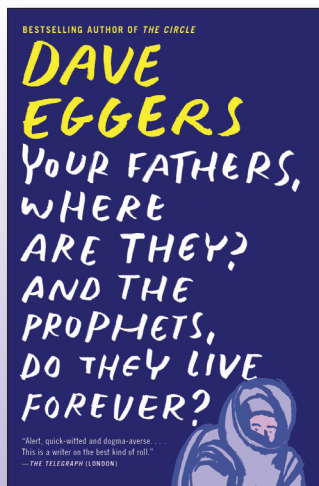
## Your Fathers, Where Are They? And the Prophets, Do They Live Forever?

Dave Eggers

“Unmistakably the work of a singular talent.... Prescient, moving and unsettling.” —*The Independent (London)*

From Dave Eggers, best-selling author of *The Circle*, a tour de force of dialogue and dark humor, coursing emotions and tight control.

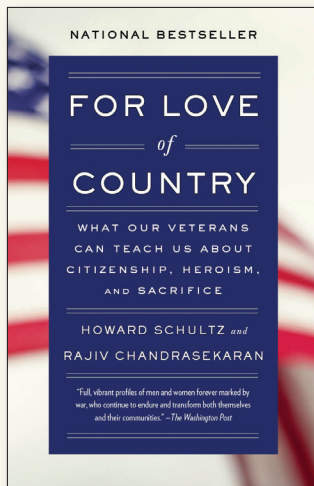
What do you do when you're full of questions: What happened to missions to the moon? Why spend a trillion dollars on war? Where did America go wrong? If you're Thomas, a young man nursing migraines and a lack of direction, this calls for drastic action. To find some answers, Thomas kidnaps a NASA astronaut and brings him to an abandoned military base on the edge of the California coast. Then the questioning begins. The answers must be honest. The back and forth might even hurt. It might get uncomfortable. But eventually the truth will emerge.





“This splendid book should be read by every American. It is a story of heroes, of sacrifice, of valor. But it is also a story of resilience, recovery, and a continuing desire to serve our country and its citizens. You must be made of stone to read this and not shed tears. But the book’s message is that, after the tears, we must not forget the sacrifices those in uniform and their families have made for all of us over the last thirteen years; we must welcome back into our communities those who served not just with thanks and open arms, but with respect, admiration, and new lives and careers worthy of all they have done for all of us.”

—Robert M. Gates, author of *Duty*



## For Love of Country What Our Veterans Can Teach Us About Citizenship, Heroism, and Sacrifice

Howard Schultz and  
Rajiv Chandrasekaran

Starbucks CEO and longtime veterans’ advocate Howard Schultz and National Book Award finalist Rajiv Chandrasekaran honor acts of uncommon valor in Iraq and Afghanistan in this collection of original portraits celebrating our veterans. These include an army sergeant who repeatedly runs through a storm of gunfire to save the lives of his wounded comrades, and two Marines who sacrifice their lives to protect thirty-three of their brothers in arms.

We also see how veterans make vital contributions once they return home, drawing on their leadership skills and commitment to service: former soldiers who help rebuild communities after natural disasters, and a retired general leading efforts to improve treatments for brain-injured troops.

These powerful, unforgettable stories demonstrate just how indebted we are to those who protect us and what they have to offer our nation when their military service is done.

### An excerpt:

As he recovered in a local hospital and grieved for Jeff, Tim worried about his house. His brother, Anthony Hunter, broke the news that it was beyond repair. Every home on Tim’s side of Clover Ridge Drive had been destroyed by the tornado. Roofs were gone and windows shattered. Two-by-fours had been snapped in half as if they were matchsticks. Family photographs and heirlooms were scattered everywhere. Residents, friends, and family would have to sort through the rubble to recover whatever could be salvaged. Then the owners would have to call a demolition crew. Everything—the bricks, the floor tiles, the drywall, the appliances, the waterlogged furniture—would have to be hauled away.

Tim was certain the demolition firms would be charging top dollar, as they always did after big storms, and he feared the cost would deplete the insurance funds he would need to rebuild his house. He knew of others in Vilonia who had used so much of their insurance payouts to clear their lots after a tornado three years earlier that they were unable to afford new homes.

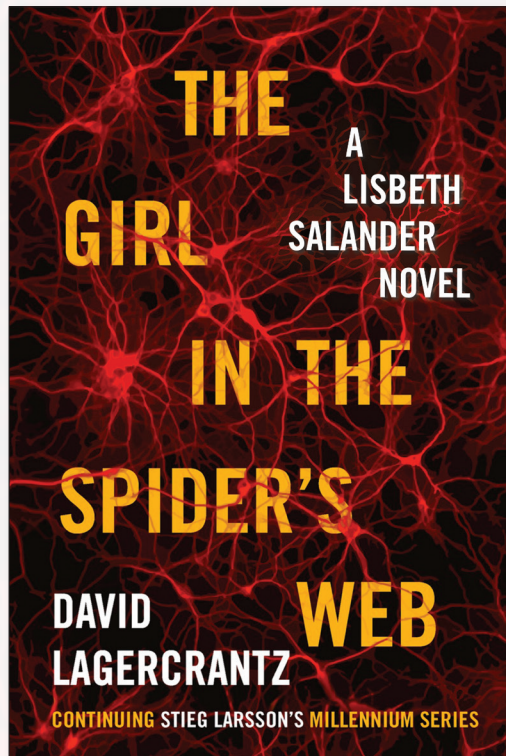
Anthony returned to the house the next day, driving through a tableau of postapocalyptic devastation. National Guard troops offered to help look for family keepsakes, but they couldn’t dismantle the structure. As Anthony prepared to search for a wrecking crew to hire, two men pulled up in a black Ford pickup truck. Clad in matching gray T-shirts identifying them as members of Team Rubicon, they walked around the property, their boots crunching shards of glass. One took notes on a clipboard, while the other tapped on a tablet computer and took a few photographs.

They offered to demolish what remained of the house and haul the debris to the curb so it could be collected by municipal workers, for free.

“Who are you guys?” Anthony asked.

“We’re veterans,” one said. “We’re here to help.”

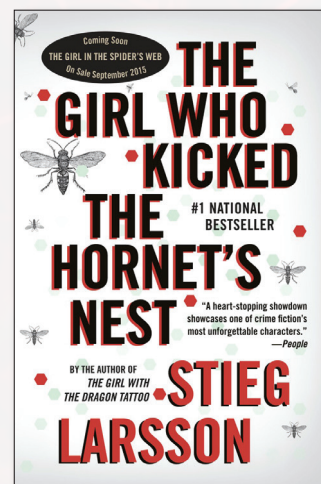
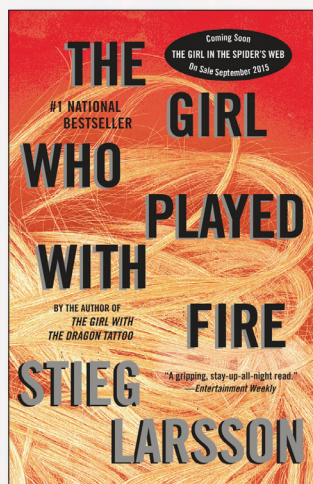
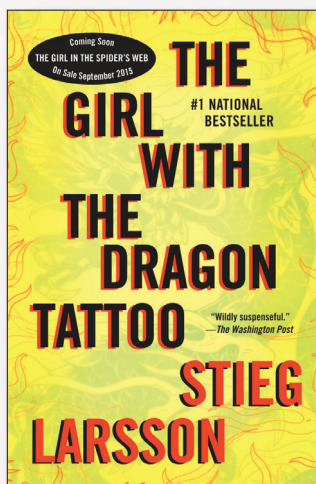
# THE GIRL IS BACK!



The new book in the Millennium series is now available.

## READ THE BOOKS THAT STARTED IT ALL

—or reread and rediscover why you fell in love with Lisbeth Salander, crime fiction's toughest and smartest heroine.

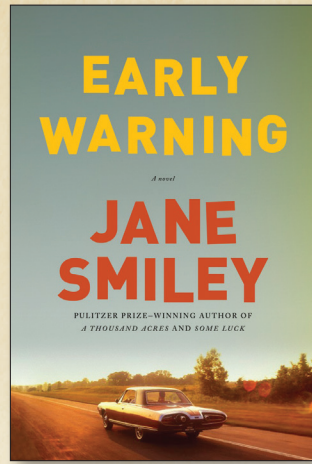


[StiegLarsson.net](http://StiegLarsson.net)

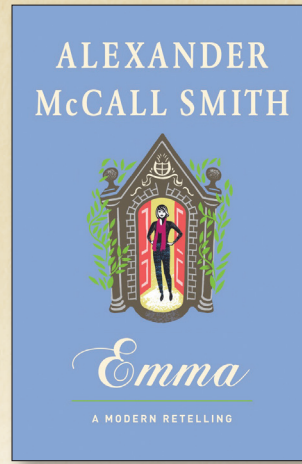




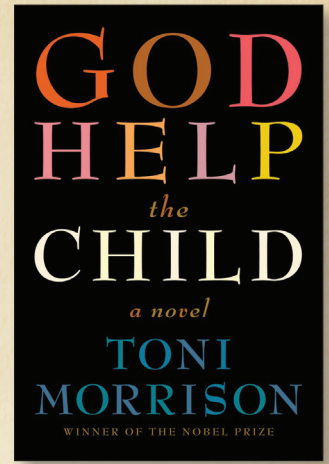
The Buried Giant  
Kazuo Ishiguro



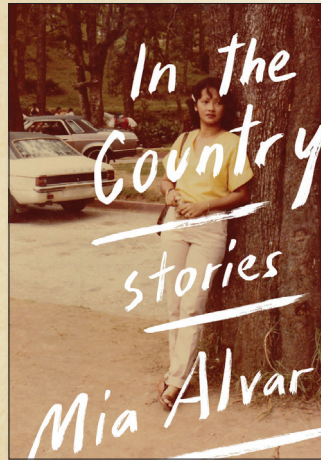
Early Warning  
Jane Smiley



Emma  
Alexander McCall Smith



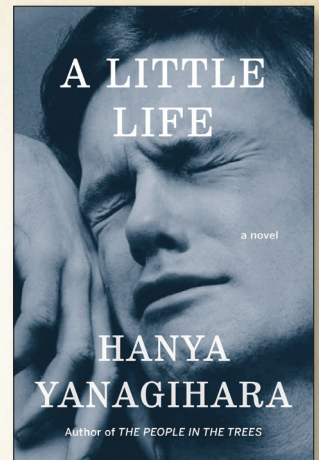
God Help the Child  
Toni Morrison



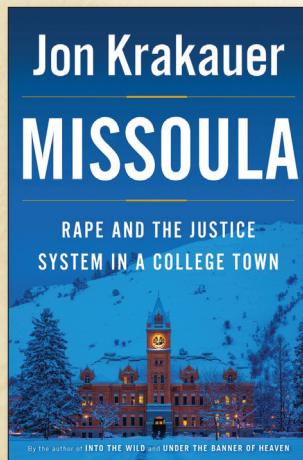
In the Country  
Mia Alvar

# Great Book Club titles

coming in paperback in 2016\*



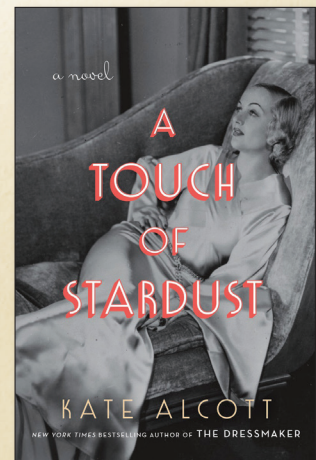
A Little Life  
Hanya Yanagihara



Missoula  
Jon Krakauer



Single, Carefree, Mellow  
Katherine Heiny



A Touch of Stardust  
Kate Alcott

\*Hardcovers featured. Check our website for the most up-to-date paperback release dates.



VINTAGE BOOKS & ANCHOR BOOKS



# Reading Group Center

THE BOOK CLUB SOURCE FOR BOOK LOVERS

Discover Wonderful Books • Talk to Interesting Writers • Connect with Other Readers  
Find Extensive Resources for Fun and Creative Meetings

Find great books and extensive resources,  
enter book giveaway contests, and  
get ideas from other groups nationwide  
for productive and enjoyable meetings.

Among the wonderful extras are:

## Author Chats

Sign up for conversations with your favorite authors via phone or video

## Discussion Guides and Tips

Find more than 1,000 guides and ideas on having a productive and enjoyable meeting

## Group Talk

Connects groups nationwide who share ideas, helpful tips, anecdotes, and much more



## Recipe by the Book

Includes recipes inspired by reading group books along with authors' personal recipes for delicious eats at book club meetings

## Armchair Adventurer

Features information about the settings of reading group titles and authors' homelands, historical context, travel information, and more



## Extra Features

Author videos, original essays, editors' inside stories, and other unique and useful materials and resources for an enhanced discussion

## Join an Exciting Reading Group Community

Sign up on our site for the Reading Group Center e-newsletter to receive exclusive behind-the-scenes publishing news, author updates, special offers, and more!

Join the discussion at

[ReadingGroupCenter.com](http://ReadingGroupCenter.com)



[/RGCenter](https://twitter.com/RGCenter)



[/ReadingGroupCenter](https://facebook.com/ReadingGroupCenter)

If you'd like to print a copy of this brochure to share with other book lovers  
you can download a pdf at [ReadingGroupCenter.com/Planner](http://ReadingGroupCenter.com/Planner)