



# Great Reads

For you & your book club

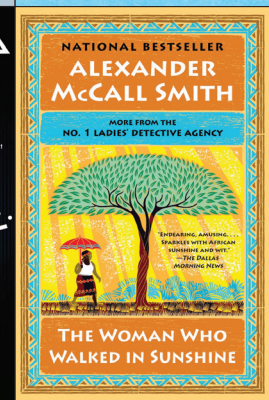
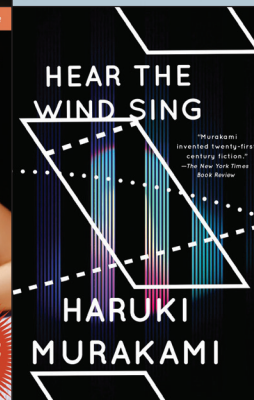
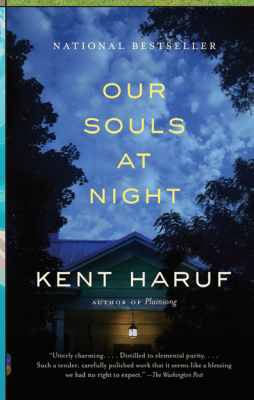
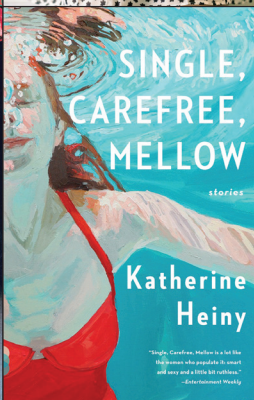
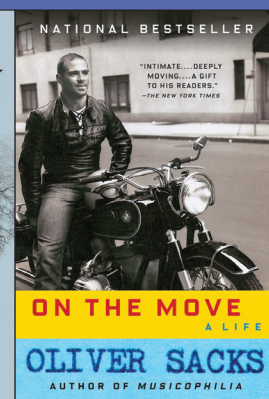
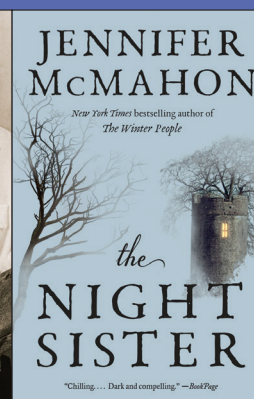
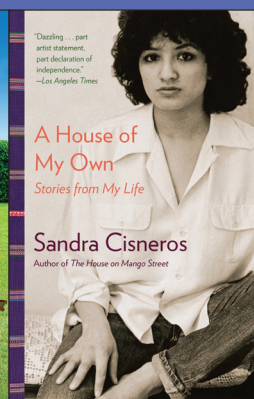
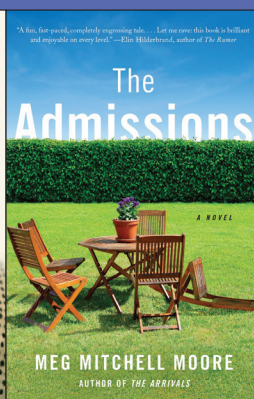
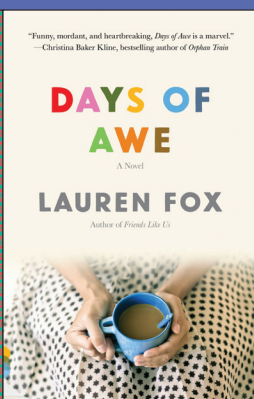
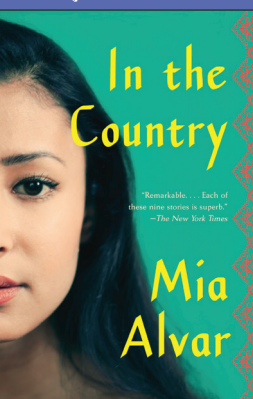
Novels • Mysteries • Historical Fiction • Narrative Nonfiction  
Perennial Classics • Beloved Authors • Award Winners



VINTAGE

IN PAPERBACK AND EBOOK

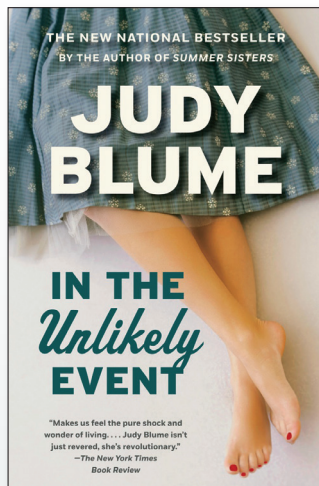
ANCHOR 





“A page-turner.... Like reconnecting with a long-lost friend.”

—*The New Yorker*



*The new novel from the beloved and bestselling author*

## Judy Blume In the Unlikely Event

In this brilliant new novel—her first for adults since *Summer Sisters*—Judy Blume takes us back to the 1950s and introduces us to the town of Elizabeth, New Jersey, where she grew up. Here she imagines and weaves together a vivid portrait of three generations of families, friends, and strangers, whose lives are profoundly changed one winter. At the center of an extraordinary cast of characters are fifteen-year-old Miri Ammerman and her spirited single mother, Rusty. Their warm and resonant stories are set against the backdrop of a real-life tragedy that struck the town when a series of airplanes fell from the sky, leaving the community reeling. Gripping, authentic, and unforgettable, *In the Unlikely Event* has all the hallmarks of this renowned author's deft narrative magic.



### Judy Blume shares her thoughts on having a story inside of you.

**Q:** Did you ever feel like, maybe I can't take on a story this big? Or did it strike you as an interesting challenge to write about actual historical events?

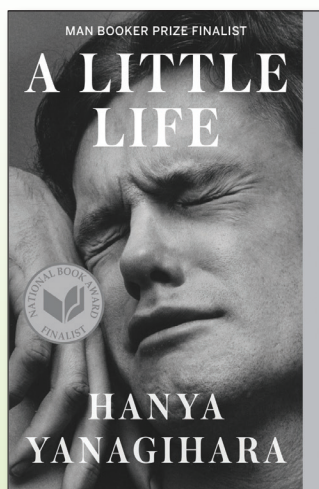
**A:** I never, ever thought about it until I was hit over the head by that moment of “Oh my God. I've got the story. It takes place in the '50s, and I have to tell it.” It came like no other book has ever come to me. It came with three families, structure.... Of course, you know, it took five years to write it, but it came very quickly and then evolved very slowly. I had to do a lot of research.

**Q:** You really capture so vividly the details of the time. Was it difficult to make sure the brand names and details of the era complemented, rather than overwhelmed, the narrative?

**A:** I think that for me the details of the time were just part of my life; they were inside of me. I didn't have to research things like angora sweaters and who was singing what, and what we were wearing, and the lipstick. I knew all of that firsthand.

Judy Blume is one of America's most beloved authors. She grew up in Elizabeth, New Jersey, and was a teenager in 1951-52 when the real events in this book took place. She has written books for all ages. Her twenty-eight previous titles include *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*; *Forever*; and *Summer Sisters*. Her books have sold more than eighty-five million copies in thirty-two languages. She is a champion of intellectual freedom, working with the National Coalition Against Censorship in support of writers, teachers, librarians, and students. In 2004, Blume was awarded the National Book Foundation's Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters. She lives in Key West and New York City.





*Award-Winning • Critically Acclaimed • Best Book of the Year*

## A Little Life

### Hanya Yanagihara

National Book Award Finalist, Man Booker Prize Finalist, and Kirkus Reviews Award Winner

**A Best Book of the Year:** *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, NPR, *Vogue*, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *O, The Oprah Magazine*, *Newsweek*, *People*, *The Kansas City Star*, *Refinery29*, *BookPage*, and many many more.

**“Deeply moving.... A wrenching portrait of the enduring grace of friendship.” —NPR**

*A Little Life* follows four male college classmates—broke, adrift, and buoyed only by their friendship and ambition—as they move to New York in search of fame and fortune. While their relationships, which are tinged by addiction, success, and pride, deepen over the decades, the men are held together

by their devotion to the brilliant, enigmatic Jude, a man scarred by an unspeakable childhood trauma. A hymn to brotherly bonds and a masterful depiction of love in the twenty-first century, Hanya Yanagihara’s stunning novel is about the families we are born into, and those that we make for ourselves.



### Jude’s Sugar Cookies

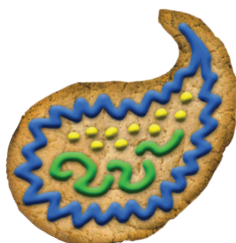


Food plays a central role in the lives of the characters in *A Little Life*. Early in the novel, Jude is working at a bakery when his boss requests that he fulfill an order for sugar cookies decorated like bacteria:

*“I thought you of all people might be able to figure this out,” she said. “The customer’s wife’s a microbiologist and he wants to surprise her and her lab.”*

*“I’ll do some research,” he said, taking the page from her, and noting the customer’s name: Harold Stein. So he had, asking CM and Janusz for their advice, and had made cookies shaped like paisleys, like mace balls, like cucumbers, using different-colored frosting to draw their cytoplasm and plasma membranes and ribosomes and fashioning flagella from strands of licorice.*

The sugar cookies dazzle Harold, who eventually becomes a very important person in Jude’s life. Your reading group is sure to be as impressed as Harold when you whip out these sweet treats at your next meeting.



#### Ingredients:

¾ teaspoon kosher salt  
½ teaspoon baking powder  
3 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for rolling  
1¼ cups (2½ sticks) chilled unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch pieces  
1 cup sugar  
1 large egg  
1 large egg yolk  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
Icing for decorating

#### Method:

1. Whisk salt, baking powder, and 3 cups flour in a small bowl. Using an electric mixer on high speed, beat butter and sugar until well combined, about 3 minutes. Add egg, egg yolk, and vanilla; beat just to combine. Reduce speed to low and gradually add dry ingredients; mix just to combine. Form dough into two ¾"-thick disks; wrap in plastic. Chill at least 2 hours.
2. Place racks in lower and upper thirds of oven; preheat to 325°. Let 1 disk of dough sit at room temperature until softened slightly, about 5 minutes. Roll out on a lightly floured sheet of parchment paper until about ¼" thick, dusting with flour as needed. Using a template, trace out bacteria shapes and cut with a paring knife. Repeat with other disk.
3. Bake cookies, rotating baking sheets halfway through, until edges are golden, 12–16 minutes, depending on size. Transfer to wire racks and let cool. Repeat with scraps and remaining dough. Decorate cooled cookies with colored icing to look like bacteria.

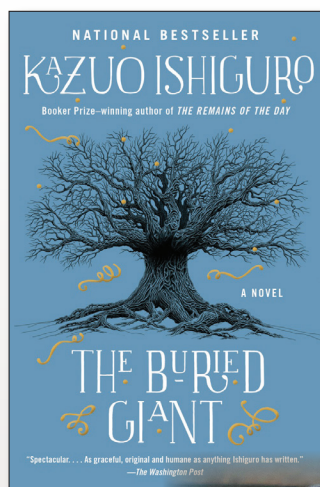
Makes about 2 dozen cookies.

Recipe adapted from *Bon Appétit*’s Ultimate Sugar Cookies





## AWARD WINNERS AND BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR



### The Buried Giant

Kazuo Ishiguro

**A Best Book of the Year:** *The Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *NPR*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *USA Today*, *The Huffington Post*, *The Kansas City Star*, *Financial Times*, *BookPage*

**“Spectacular.... *The Buried Giant* has the clear ring of legend, as graceful, original and humane as anything Ishiguro has written.”**

—*The Washington Post*

In post-Arthurian Britain, the wars that once raged between the Saxons and the Britons have finally ceased. Axl and Beatrice, an elderly British couple, set off to visit their son, whom they haven't seen in years. And, because a strange mist has caused mass amnesia throughout the land, they can scarcely remember anything about him.

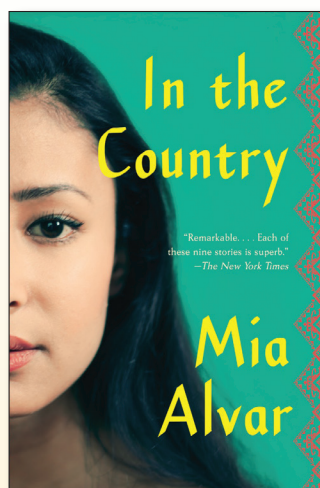
As they are joined on their journey by a Saxon warrior, his orphan charge, and an illustrious knight, Axl and Beatrice slowly begin to remember the dark and troubled past they all share.



#### Kazuo Ishiguro on his inspiration for *The Buried Giant*:

“What happened to me was that for well on about fifteen years now I've had this idea of writing a story about historical memory, or societal memory. The question of how do societies remember and forget, particularly their dark secrets, or their dark memories.... Exactly the same questions that fascinate me about a society that buries memories of past atrocities seem to apply to a marriage.”

Listen to the full NPR interview at [www.readinggroupcenter.com/kazuoisishiguronpr](http://www.readinggroupcenter.com/kazuoisishiguronpr).



### In the Country

Mia Alvar

**Winner of the PEN/Robert W. Bingham Prize for Debut Fiction**

**A 2015 Nautilus Book Award Winner**

**A National Book Critics' Circle/John Leonard Prize for Best Debut Finalist**

**A *New Yorker* Staff Pick**

**A Best Book of the Year:** *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Buzzfeed*, *Men's Journal*, *Huffington Post*, *NPR*, *Bustle*, *Electric Literature*, *Kirkus Reviews*

**“Remarkable.... Each of these nine stories is superb.”**

—*The New York Times*

In these nine globe-trotting tales, Mia Alvar gives voice to the women and men of the Philippines and its diaspora. From teachers to housemaids, from mothers to sons, Alvar's stories explore the universal experiences of loss, displacement, and the longing to connect across borders both real and imagined. *In the Country* speaks to the heart of everyone who has ever searched for a place to call home.



## AWARD WINNERS AND BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR

# God Help the Child

Toni Morrison

A New York Times Notable Book

A Best Book of the Year: *San Francisco Chronicle*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *The Kansas City Star*

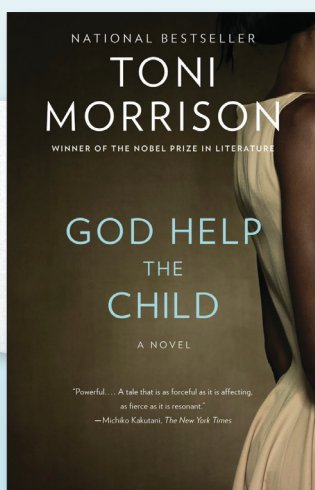
**“Powerful.... A tale that is as forceful as it is affecting, as fierce as it is resonant.”**

—Michiko Kakutani, *The New York Times*

At the center: a young woman who calls herself Bride, whose stunning blue-black skin is only one element of her beauty, her boldness and confidence, her success in life, but which caused her light-skinned mother to deny her even the simplest forms of love. There is Booker, the man Bride loves and loses to anger. Rain, the mysterious white child with whom she crosses paths. And finally, Bride’s mother herself, Sweetness.

A fiery and provocative novel, *God Help the Child*—the first book by Toni Morrison to be set in our current moment—weaves a tale about the way the sufferings of childhood can shape, and misshape, the life of the adult.

“She knew from personal experience how hard loving was, how selfish and how easily sundered. Withholding sex or relying on it, ignoring children or devouring them, rerouting true feelings or locking them out.” (p. 158)



“What you do to children matters. And they might never forget.” (p. 43)

“Correct what you can; learn from what you can’t.” (p. 56)

Visit [www.readinggroupcenter.com/tonimorrisonwisdom](http://www.readinggroupcenter.com/tonimorrisonwisdom) to read more.

### Mia Alvar on inspiration and displacement:

**Q:** How much did you draw on your own life to compose these stories?

**A:** It's hard to measure exactly how much, but each story contains some element of personal experience. As soon as I sit down to write, memories or family anecdotes get mashed up with imaginary details, my own research, and inspiration from other writers and the stories they've told.... Like a lot of writers, I like to distort, exaggerate, and rearrange the real world, and I enjoy the opposite process too: finding the emotional core of even the most outlandish invented scenario, and in that way help it ring true for myself and hopefully for readers.

**Q:** The theme of displacement is very prominent throughout the book. Why did you choose to focus so much on this aspect of the Filipino cultural experience?

**A:** I think that themes—or obsessions, as I tend to think of them—choose the writer, not the other way around. When I'm at my desk, scribbling or typing away, I'm usually focused on small tasks...rather than on themes. But of course “we write who we are,” so my own experiences of displacement as an expat and immigrant...always surfaces.

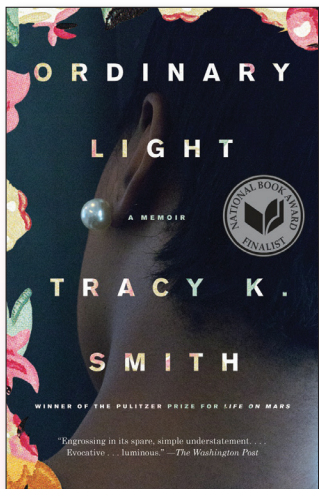


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Visit [www.readinggroupcenter.com/miaalvarqa](http://www.readinggroupcenter.com/miaalvarqa) to read the full interview.



## AWARD WINNERS AND BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR



### Ordinary Light Tracy K. Smith

National Book Award Finalist

A Best Book of the Year: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Denver Post*, *Oprah.com*

“Transcendent.... Lovely, languid, and painful.” —*Slate*

In *Ordinary Light*, Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Tracy K. Smith tells her remarkable story, giving us a quietly potent memoir that explores her coming-of-age and the meaning of home against a complex backdrop of race, faith, and the unbreakable bond between a mother and daughter. Here is the story of a young artist struggling to fashion her own understanding of belief, loss, history, and what it means to be black in America.

**Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, Tracy K. Smith, writes about the magic of writing poetry:**

“Wasn’t it strange that a poem, written in my vocabulary and as a result of my own thoughts or observations, could, when it was finished, manage to show me something I hadn’t already known? Sometimes, when I tried very hard to listen to what the poem I was writing was trying to tell me, I felt the way I imagined godly people felt when they were trying to discern God’s will. ‘Write this,’ the poem would sometimes consent to say, and I’d revel in a joy to rival the saints’ that Poetry—this mysterious presence I talked about and professed belief in—might truly be real.” (p. 309)



© Rachel Eliza Griffiths

Find more quotes from *Ordinary Light* on [www.readinggroupcenter.com/ordinarylight](http://www.readinggroupcenter.com/ordinarylight).

## A CLASSIC OF CHINESE LITERATURE BY THE AUTHOR OF

### Half a Lifelong Romance Eileen Chang

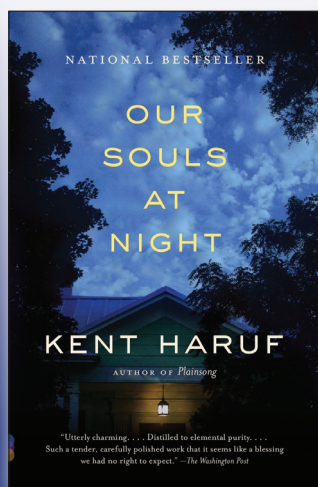
“An enveloping, haunting and insightful read, rich in Chang’s trademark passionate prose.” —*The Wall Street Journal*

Shanghai, 1930s. Shen Shijun, a young engineer, has fallen in love with his colleague, the beautiful Gu Manzhen. He is determined to resist his family’s efforts to match him with his wealthy cousin so that he can marry Manzhen. But dark circumstances—a lustful brother-in-law, a treacherous sister, a family secret—force the two young lovers apart.

As Manzhen and Shijun go on their separate paths, they lose track of one another, and their lives become filled with feints and schemes, missed connections and tragic misunderstandings. At every turn, societal expectations seem to thwart their prospects for happiness. Still, Manzhen and Shijun dare to hold out hope—however slim—that they might one day meet again. A glamorous, wrenching tale set against the glittering backdrop of an extraordinary city, *Half a Lifelong Romance* is a beloved classic from one of the essential writers of twentieth-century China.



## AWARD WINNERS AND BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR



### Our Souls at Night

Kent Haruf

A Best Book of the Year: *The Boston Globe*, *The Washington Post*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *The Denver Post*

“Utterly charming.... Such a tender, carefully polished work that it seems like a blessing.” —*The Washington Post*

In the familiar setting of Holt, Colorado, home to all of Kent Haruf's inimitable fiction, Addie Moore pays an unexpected visit to a neighbor, Louis Waters. Her husband died years ago, as did his wife, and in such a small town they naturally have known of each other for decades. They have long been living alone in houses now empty of family, the nights so terribly lonely, especially with no one to talk with.

Addie and Louis' brave adventures—their pleasures and their difficulties—are hugely involving and truly resonant, making *Our Souls at Night* the perfect final installment to this beloved writer's enduring contribution to American literature.

#### Cathy Haruf reveals her role in shaping her husband's final novel.

**Q:** Where did the inspiration for the main characters Addie Moore and Louis Waters come from? How much did Kent draw from his own life experiences to craft these characters?

**A:** When Kent gave me the manuscript to enter into the computer, it was the first time I'd read it; I discovered that it was about a couple who talk all the time, which is what Kent and I spent our last twenty-three years doing (and we used to talk a lot when we were kids in high school, too). The prototypes for Addie Moore and Louis Waters were Kent and myself; a couple who are not about to give up their conversations even when it seems they must end.

**Q:** What do you see as your husband's greatest legacy?

**A:** The meaning in Kent's stories came out when these characters interacted. He described these interactions with honesty and simplicity, without moralizing or apology and I believe that is why his books have touched so many readers. He gave a voice to the quiet people, the people of small towns and hard work.

Read the full interview at [www.readinggroupcenter.com/cathyharufqa](http://www.readinggroupcenter.com/cathyharufqa).

## LUST, CAUTION, AVAILABLE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE U.S.

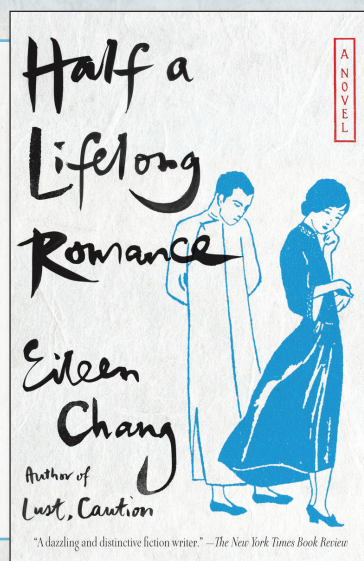
An excerpt from an interview with Linda Huang, who designed the book cover:

**Q:** How did you begin when designing the cover for *Half a Lifelong Romance*?

**A:** I was vaguely aware of Eileen Chang but had never read any of her books. I had only seen Ang Lee's film adaptation of *Lust, Caution*. I was really excited to be working on this project and began by researching the author's background and legacy, trying to understand the defining characteristics of her writing. Although she died some two decades ago, she retains a devoted following in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and among the Chinese diaspora.

**Q:** The cover for *Half a Lifelong Romance* features an illustration by the author Eileen Chang. How did you discover this image?

**A:** When I was doing research, I came across a YouTube video introducing her life story. It featured these wonderful illustrations of characters she had drawn herself. They were completely legitimate. I thought how special it would be to use art by the author herself. Through a lot of Googling, I came across a book of these illustrations from a shop in Hong Kong and asked my mother, who lives there, to purchase a copy and mail it over.



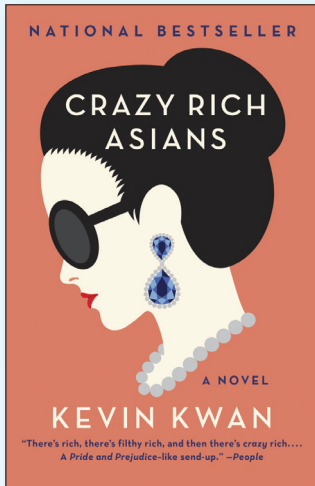
Read more of the interview at [www.readinggroupcenter.com/halfalifelongromance](http://www.readinggroupcenter.com/halfalifelongromance).



"This year's best beach reading.... Highly entertaining."

—*The Washington Post*

## From Kevin Kwan



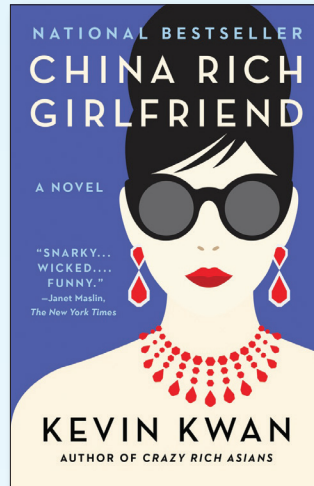
### Crazy Rich Asians

When New Yorker Rachel Chu agrees to spend the summer in Singapore with her boyfriend, Nicholas Young, she envisions a humble family home and quality time with the man she hopes to marry. But Nick has failed to give his girlfriend a few key details. One, that his childhood home looks like a palace;

two, that he grew up riding in more private planes than cars; and three, that he just happens to be the country's most eligible bachelor.



On Nick's arm, Rachel may as well have a target on her back. The second she steps off the plane her relaxed vacation turns into an obstacle course of old money, new money, nosy relatives, and scheming social climbers.

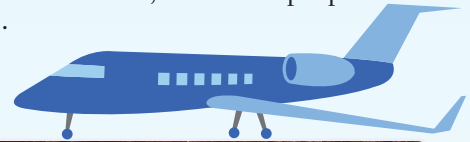


### China Rich Girlfriend

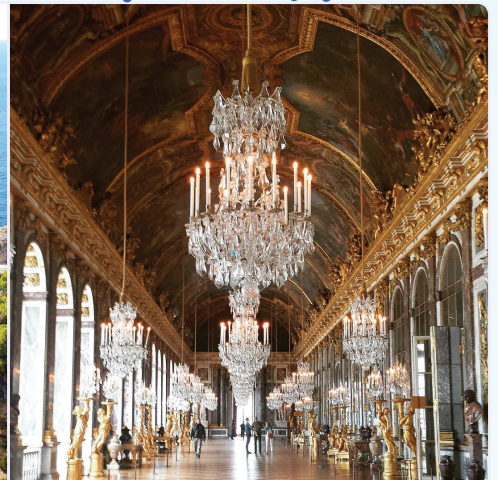
It's the eve of Rachel Chu's wedding and she should be over the moon. She has a flawless oval-cut diamond, a wedding dress she loves, and a fiancé willing to thwart his meddling relatives and give up one of the biggest fortunes in Asia in order to marry her. Still, Rachel mourns the fact that her birthfather, a man she never

knew, won't be there to walk her down the aisle.

Then a chance accident reveals his identity. Suddenly, Rachel is drawn into a dizzying world of Shanghai splendor, a world where people attend church in a penthouse, where exotic cars race down the boulevard, and where people aren't just crazy rich ... they're China rich.



© Giancarlo Ciampini



**Kevin Kwan shares the story behind his favorite photos from his travels abroad. Here are two, but visit [www.readinggroupcenter.com/kevinkwaninstagram](http://www.readinggroupcenter.com/kevinkwaninstagram) to find more.**

In New York, my life moves at such a fast pace that I rarely have time to get my phone out for a snapshot. But when I'm traveling, it's a different story, and I find myself taking and posting pictures nonstop. One of my favorites is this one taken during an arduous cliffside hike on the island of Capri. I had no idea that the trail would be so steep and

involve climbing up hundreds of ancient steps, but it was worth it for the breathtaking views of the sparkling Mediterranean and the dramatic Faraglioni rock formations. Incidentally, this was a hike that one of my favorite poets, Pablo Neruda, would take every day when he lived on Capri.

As exhausting as the cliffside hike was, it paled in comparison to the effort it took to capture the second picture of Versailles' legendary Hall of Mirrors. A Parisian friend recommended that I be first in line when the

palace opened and to make a beeline for the hall so I could experience it as it should be—in the morning light without any crowds. So when the doors opened, I sprinted through the palace, ignoring the other rooms. My reward was being able to stand in the middle of the glorious space almost completely alone. For a brief moment, I could almost believe that I was Louis XIV, enjoying the tranquility of my private palace. Fifteen minutes later, the room was packed wall-to-wall with tourists.





“As close to a great American novel as this century has produced.”  
—Stephen King

## City on Fire

### Garth Risk Hallberg

**A Best Book of the Year:** *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *NPR*, *Vogue*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Wall Street Journal*

New York City, 1976. Meet Regan and William Hamilton-Sweeney, estranged heirs to one of the city’s great fortunes; Keith and Mercer, the men who, for better or worse, love them; Charlie and Samantha, two suburban teenagers seduced by downtown’s punk scene; an obsessive magazine reporter and his idealistic neighbor—and the detective trying to figure out what any of them have to do with a shooting in Central Park on New Year’s Eve.



The mystery, as it reverberates through families, friendships, and the corridors of power, will open up even the loneliest-seeming corners of the crowded city. And when the blackout of July 13, 1977, plunges this world into darkness, each of these lives will be changed forever. *City on Fire* is an unforgettable novel about love and betrayal and forgiveness, about art and truth and rock ’n’ roll: about what people need from each other in order to live—and about what makes the living worth doing in the first place.

“Stunning.... A novel of head-snapping ambition and heart-stopping power.”

—Michiko Kakutani, *The New York Times*

#### Take a tour of New York City as seen in *City on Fire*.

##### Central Park:

“The park on his left was forbiddingly black, and it was a well-known fact that after dark it belonged to muggers and dope fiends and fags. Stories of the decaying City had reached even unto Long Island.” (p. 124)

##### Chinatown:

“He headed north through Chinatown, whose stink was summer, was the city itself, growth and its own decay. Women with wheeled carts and lean men with cigarettes hurried past. People thrust objects into his sightline, umbrellas, luggage, whole duck, a frenzied commercial semaphore he didn’t need to speak the language to understand.” (p. 662)

##### Greenwich Village:

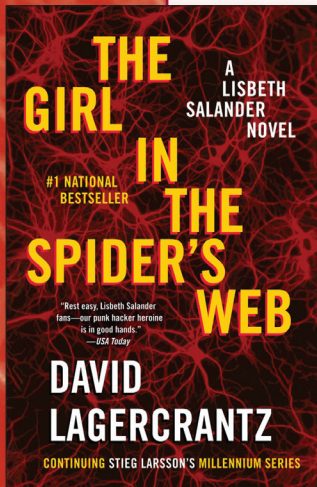
“Greenwich Village on a Friday at lunchtime was the opposite of everything Charlie hated about the suburbs. People everywhere, street musicians, smells of fifteen different foods floating out of the propped-open doors.” (p. 229)

##### Times Square:

“Down the length of a sidestreet, the lights of Times Square were cold and inhuman. Surprising, how quickly it emptied out once the cameras were off.” (p. 87)







## The Girl in the Spider's Web

David Lagercrantz

A Best Book of the Year: NPR, *USA Today*, *O*, *The Oprah Magazine*, *Esquire*

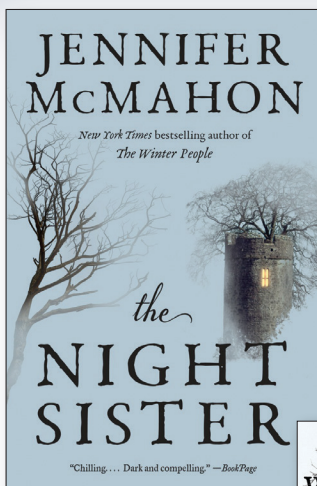
"An instant page-turner." —*USA Today*

David Lagercrantz continues Stieg Larsson's Millennium series, which began with the phenomenal bestseller *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*.

A genius hacker who has always been an outsider. A journalist with a penchant for danger. She is Lisbeth Salander, the girl with the dragon tattoo. He is Mikael Blomkvist, crusading editor of *Millennium*. One night, Blomkvist receives a call from a source who claims to have been given information vital to the United States by a young female hacker. Blomkvist, always on the lookout for a story, reaches out to Salander for help. She, as usual, has plans of her own. Together they are drawn into a ruthless underworld of spies, cybercriminals, and government operatives—some willing to kill to protect their secrets.

Three reasons why *The Girl in the Spider's Web* is a must-read:

- ① Lisbeth Salander is as bad-ass as ever.
- ② The plot doesn't quit.
- ③ It's a worthy addition to Stieg Larsson's Millennium series.



## The Night Sister

Jennifer McMahon

"Chilling.... A powerful story of childhood friendship and sisterhood.... Dark and compelling." —*BookPage*

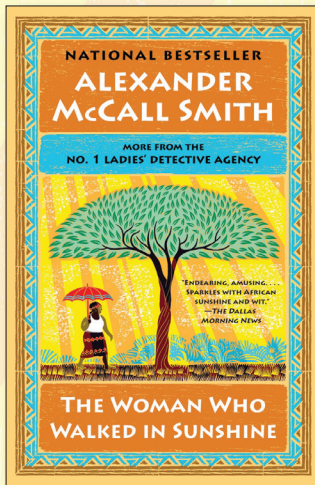
The Tower Motel was once a thriving attraction of rural Vermont. Today it lies in disrepair, alive only in the memories of the three women—Amy, Piper, and Piper's kid sister, Margot—who played there as children. They loved exploring the abandoned rooms ... until the day their innocent games uncovered something dark and twisted that ruined their friendship forever.

Now, Amy stands accused of committing a horrific crime, and the only hint to her motives is a hasty message that forces Piper and Margot to revisit the motel's past, and the fate of two sisters who lived there in its heyday. Sylvie Slater had dreams of running off to Hollywood and becoming Alfred Hitchcock's leading lady, while her little sister, Rose, was content with their simple life. Each believed the other to be something truly monstrous, but only one knows the secret that will haunt the generations to come.



Also available





## The Woman Who Walked in Sunshine

### Alexander McCall Smith

**“Enchanting.... As usual, Smith’s blend of gentle humor and insights into human nature is irresistible.”** —*Publishers Weekly*

Business is slow at the No. 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency—so slow in fact that, for the first time in her distinguished career Precious Ramotswe, the esteemed proprietor, has reluctantly agreed to take a holiday. The week of uninterrupted peace is cut short, however, when she meets Samuel, a wayward young boy with a troubled past. Moreover, Mma Ramotswe can’t help but wonder how the agency is faring in her absence. Her worries grow when she discovers that Mma Makutsi is handling a rather delicate case.

Precious Ramotswe shares her unique kernels of wisdom.

**“You simply could not help everybody; but you could at least help those who came into your life.”**

MORALITY FOR BEAUTIFUL GIRLS  
ALEXANDER McCALL SMITH

**“We should be careful, thought Mma Ramotswe, of the insults we fling at others, lest they return and land at our own feet, newly minted to apply to those who had first coined them.”**

THE MIRACLE AT SPEEDY MOTORS  
ALEXANDER McCALL SMITH

**“The trouble with the world today, she thought, was that people were not prepared to stand up to bad behaviour.”**

THE WOMAN WHO WALKED IN SUNSHINE  
ALEXANDER McCALL SMITH

Find more quote tiles at [www.readinggroupcenter.com/preciouslifelessons](http://www.readinggroupcenter.com/preciouslifelessons) and share them with friends.

#### Jennifer McMahon on crafting a suspenseful story:

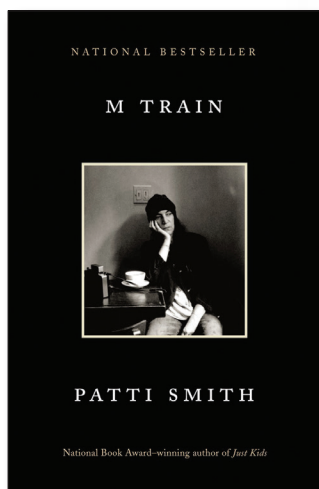
Start with a bang, not a whimper. Look through the early part of your story, pick the strongest scene and move it to beginning. You need to pull the reader in and hook her right away. She needs to be invested enough to keep turning pages. The scene at the beginning of *The Night Sister*, of all my novels in fact, is not the first scene I wrote. It came later and I moved it to the beginning because I knew I needed something that would grab readers right away, something scary, something that would show how very much is at stake in the book, and hint at the dark things to come.

Let go of what you think you know. Sometimes you tell yourself you know just where a story is going and what a character is supposed to do next to get you from point A to point B. But then something happens, something remarkable, and your character does something that completely surprises you and takes the story in a whole new direction. Don’t fight it. No story I have ever written has turned out the way I originally envisioned it might, and this is the thing that keeps me going back to my desk every day: This beautiful sense of not quite knowing what my characters might have in store for me.



© Michael Lionstar





## M Train Patti Smith

With new material, additional photos, French flaps and deckle edge for the paperback edition.

**“Elegiac, melancholic, and meditative, filled with wistful flashbacks and haunting Polaroid snapshots.” —NPR**

From the National Book Award-winning author of *Just Kids*: an unforgettable odyssey of a legendary artist, told through the cafés and haunts she has worked in around the world. It is a book Patti Smith has described as “a roadmap to my life.”

terrain of Iceland; to a ramshackle seaside bungalow in New York’s Far Rockaway that Smith acquires just before Hurricane Sandy hits; to the West 4th Street subway station, filled with the sounds of the Velvet Underground after the death of Lou Reed; and to the graves of Genet, Plath, Rimbaud, and Mishima.

Woven throughout are reflections on the writer’s craft and on artistic creation. Here, too, are singular memories of Smith’s life in Michigan and the irremediable loss of her husband, Fred Sonic Smith.

Braiding despair with hope and consolation, illustrated with her signature Polaroids, *M Train* is a meditation on travel, detective shows, literature, and coffee. It is a powerful, deeply moving book by one of the most remarkable multiplatform artists at work today.

*M Train* begins in the tiny Greenwich Village café where Smith goes every morning for black coffee, ruminates on the world as it is and the world as it was, and writes in her notebook. Through prose that shifts fluidly between dreams and reality, past and present, we travel to Frida Kahlo’s Casa Azul in Mexico; to the fertile moon

### An excerpt from *M Train*:

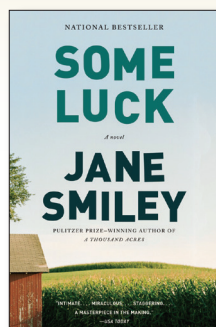
In 1965 I had come to New York City from South Jersey just to roam around, and nothing seemed more romantic than to write poetry in a Greenwich Village café. I finally got the courage to enter Caffè Dante on MacDougal Street. The walls were covered with printed murals of the

city of Florence and scenes from *The Divine Comedy*.

A few years later I would sit by a low window that looked out into a small alley, reading Mrabet’s *The Beach Café*. A young fish-seller named Driss meets a reclusive, uncongenial codger who has a café with only one table

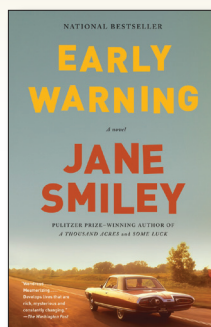
and one chair on a rocky stretch of shore near Tangier. The slow-moving atmosphere surrounding the café captivated me. Like Driss, I dreamed of opening a place of my own: the Café Nerval, a small haven where poets and travelers might find the simplicity of asylum.

© Elena Seibert



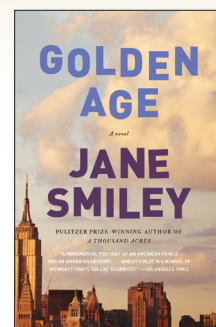
### Some Luck National Book Award Nominee

The first volume of an epic trilogy from a beloved writer at the height of her powers, *Some Luck* starts us on a literary adventure through cycles of birth and death, passion and betrayal in the lives of the Iowa’s Langdon family.



### Early Warning

As the country moves into the Cold War, through the social revolutions of the ’60s and ’70s, and into the unprecedented wealth—for some—of the early ’80s, the Langdon children have children of their own. Capturing a transformative period through characters we come to know and love, this second volume in Jane Smiley’s epic trilogy brings to life the challenges—and rewards—of family and home, even in the most turbulent of times.



### Golden Age

Moving seamlessly from the power-brokered 1980s and the scandal-ridden ’90s to our own present moment and beyond, *Golden Age* combines intimate drama, emotional suspense, and an intricate view of history, bringing to a magnificent conclusion the epic trilogy of one unforgettable family.

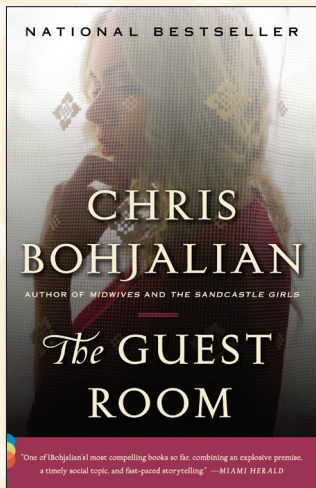
## Jane Smiley’s The Last Hundred Years Trilogy

**“A monumental portrait of an American family and an American century.... [A] sweeping, cumulatively absorbing American epic.”**

—*Los Angeles Times*

Read character profiles and find the complete Langdon family tree at [www.readinggroupcenter.com/langdonfamilytree](http://www.readinggroupcenter.com/langdonfamilytree)

“One of Chris Bohjalian’s most compelling books.... An explosive premise, a timely social topic, and fast-paced storytelling.” —*Miami Herald*



## The Guest Room

### Chris Bohjalian

When Kristin Chapman agrees to let her husband, Richard, host his brother’s bachelor party, she expects a certain amount of debauchery. She takes their young daughter to Manhattan for the evening, leaving her Westchester home to the men and their hired entertainment. What she does not expect is that the entertainment—two scared young women brought there by force—will kill their captors and drive off into the night.

With their house now a crime scene, Kristin and Richard’s life spirals into nightmare. Kristin is unable to forgive her husband for his lapses in judgement, or for the moment he shared with a dark-haired girl in the guest room. But for the dark-haired girl, Alexandra, the danger is just beginning.

“A gripping story about suburban American lives ripped apart....  
Hard to put down, or ever forget.”

—*Minneapolis Star Tribune*

“A remarkable artistic feat.”

—*USA Today*

“Suspenseful.... It took all of our willpower to not bite  
off all of our nails as we tore through this dark thriller.”

—*Glamour*



©Victoria Blewett

#### Chris Bohjalian talks about the moment he realized he needed to tell this special story:

In 2013, my family and I brought one of our daughter’s friends with us to Yerevan. The young woman was part Armenian, but had never been to Armenia. Our daughter and her friend were nineteen at the time. Our daughter’s friend was leaving a day before us and was on a six a.m. flight to Moscow. The plan was that I would meet her in the lobby of our hotel about 3:30 in the morning and bring her to the airport.

I got to the lobby first, about 3:15, and while I was waiting I saw another young woman paying off the bellman to go upstairs. She was clearly an escort, and she was roughly the age of my daughter and her friend. It broke my heart as a father—but I had a sense that here was the kernel for my next novel.

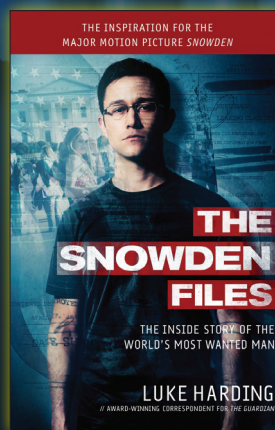
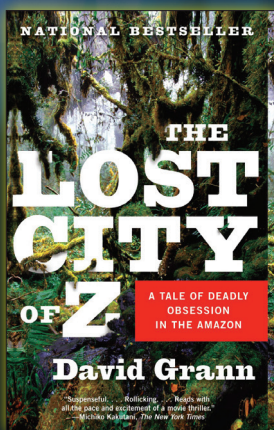
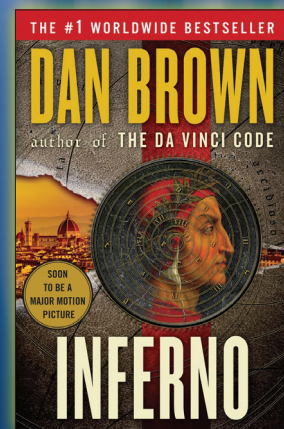
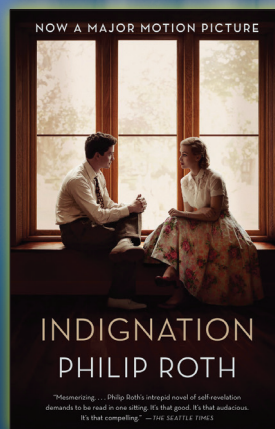
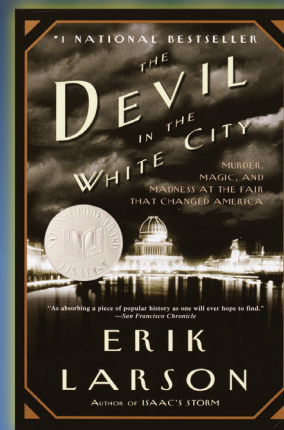
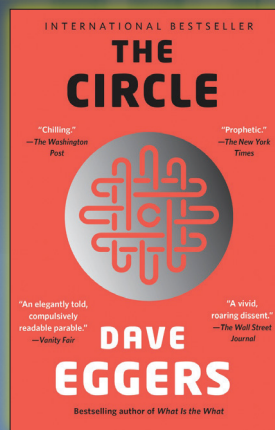
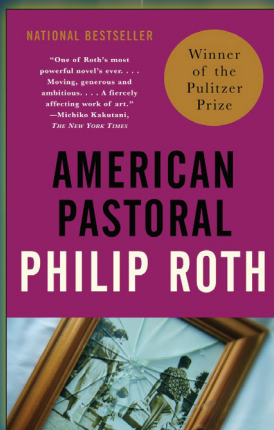
My hope is that *The Guest Room* is a novel of suspense with characters you care about deeply, especially a couple of very remarkable women: a suburban history teacher and mom, and a young woman trafficked to America. It’s a thriller about that one moment you wish more than anything you could take back. But I hope also that it raises awareness of human trafficking and sexual slavery.

Chris Bohjalian is the author of eighteen books, including *Close Your Eyes*, *Hold Hands*, *The Sandcastle Girls*, *Skeletons at the Feast*, *The Double Bind*, and *Midwives*. His novel *Midwives* was a number-one *New York Times* bestseller and a selection of Oprah’s Book Club. His work has been translated into more than thirty languages, and three of his novels have become movies (*Secrets of Eden*, *Midwives*, and *Past the Bleachers*). He lives in Vermont. Visit him at [www.chrisbohjalian.com](http://www.chrisbohjalian.com) or on Facebook.



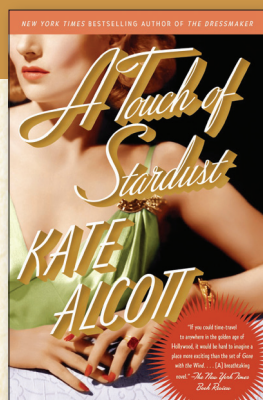
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In bookstores and theaters now, (or coming soon to theaters).





# More Book



## A Touch of Stardust Kate Alcott

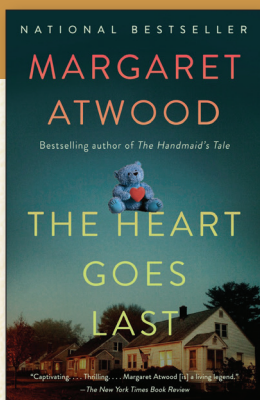
"[A] breathtaking novel.... If you could time-travel to anywhere in the golden age of Hollywood, it would be hard to imagine a place more exciting than the set of *Gone with the Wind*."

—*The New York Times*  
Book Review

Julie Crawford left Fort Wayne, Indiana, with dreams of being a Hollywood screenwriter. Unfortunately, her new life is off to a rocky start. Fired by the notoriously demanding director of *Gone with the Wind*, she's lucky to be rescued by Carole Lombard, whose scandalous affair with the still-married Clark Gable is just heating up.

As Carole's assistant, Julie suddenly has a front-row seat to two of the world's greatest love affairs. And while Rhett and Scarlett—and Lombard and Gable—make movie history, Julie is caught up in a whirlwind of outsized personalities and overheated behind-the-scenes drama ... not to mention a budding romance of her own.

Read about other timeless fictional couples who have transitioned from book to screen at [www.readinggroupcenter.com/touchofstardust](http://www.readinggroupcenter.com/touchofstardust)



## The Heart Goes Last Margaret Atwood

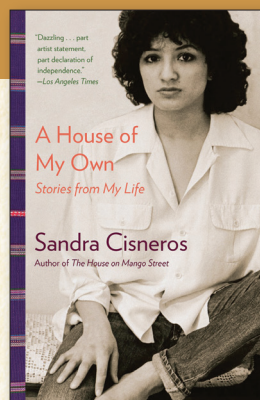
Bestselling author of  
*The Handmaid's Tale*

**A Best Book of the Year:**  
*The Boston Globe*

"Captivating.... Thrilling.... Margaret Atwood [is] a living legend."

—*The New York Times*  
Book Review

Stan and Charmaine, a young urban couple, have been hit by job loss and bankruptcy in the midst of a nationwide economic collapse. Forced to live in their thirdhand Honda, where they are vulnerable to roving gangs, they think the gated community of Consilience may be the answer to their prayers. If they sign a life contract, they'll get a job and a lovely house...for six months out of the year. On alternating months, residents must leave their homes and serve as inmates in the Positron prison system. At first, this seems worth it: they will have a roof over their heads and food on the table. But when a series of troubling events unfolds, Positron begins to look less like a prayer answered and more like a chilling prophecy fulfilled.



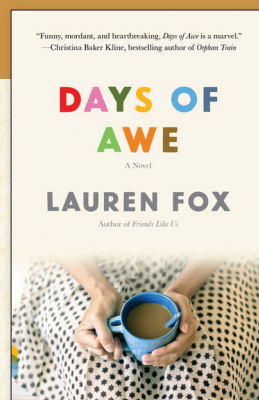
## A House of My Own Sandra Cisneros

Bestselling author of  
*The House on Mango Street*

"Dazzling.... Part artist statement, part declaration of independence."

—*Los Angeles Times*

From Chicago to Mexico, the places Sandra Cisneros has lived have provided inspiration for her now-classic works of fiction and poetry. But a house of her own, a place where she could truly take root, has eluded her. In this jigsaw autobiography, made up of essays and images spanning three decades—and including never-before-published work—Cisneros has come home at last. Poignant, honest, and deeply moving, *A House of My Own* is an exuberant celebration of a life lived to the fullest, from one of our most beloved writers.



## Days of Awe Lauren Fox

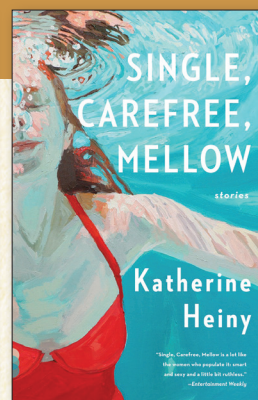
"As Fox deconstructs the myth of perfect womanhood, her humor and humanity remind us that love's the only lifeboat through grief."

—*People*, "Book of the Week"

Only a year ago Isabel Moore was married, was the object of adoration for her ten-year-old daughter, and thought she knew everything about her best friend, Josie. But in one short year Isabel's husband moved out; her daughter grew into a moody insomniac; and Josie—impulsive, funny, secretive Josie—was killed behind the wheel in a single-car accident that's left a mess of unanswered questions in its wake.

Suddenly, the relationships that have always defined Isabel—wife, mother, best friend—are changing before her eyes. As Isabel struggles to understand who she really is, Lauren Fox brings us a daring book that explores marriage, motherhood, and the often surprising shape of new love.

Find a Q&A with the author at [www.readinggroupcenter.com/laurenfoxqa](http://www.readinggroupcenter.com/laurenfoxqa)



## Single, Carefree, Mellow Katherine Heiny

"*Single, Carefree, Mellow* is a lot like the women who populate it: smart and sexy and a little bit ruthless."

—*Entertainment Weekly*

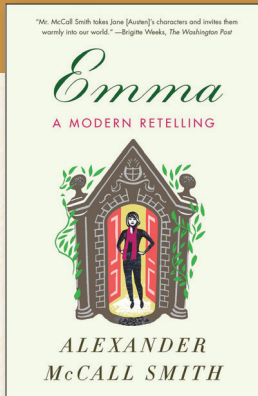
For the commitment-averse women in the eleven sublime stories of *Single, Carefree, Mellow*, falling in love is never easy and always inconvenient. Maya is in love with both her boyfriend and her boss. Sadie's lover calls her as he drives to meet his wife at marriage counseling. Nina is more worried that the Presbyterian minister living above her garage will hear her kids swearing than that he will find out she's sleeping with her running partner.

The women grapple with love amidst everything from unwelcome houseguests to disastrous birthday parties as Katherine Heiny spins a debut that is superbly accomplished, endlessly entertaining, and laugh-out-loud funny.

Read about the books that inspired the author while writing *Single, Carefree, Mellow* at [www.readinggroupcenter.com/katherineheinyinspiration](http://www.readinggroupcenter.com/katherineheinyinspiration)



# Club Favorites



## Emma Alexander McCall Smith

A modern retelling of Jane Austen's classic novel.

"One of the most delightful books of the year.... A literary jewel, just like the original."

—*Minneapolis Star Tribune*

Carriages have been replaced by Mini Coopers and cups of tea by cappuccinos, but Alexander McCall Smith's sparkling satire and cozy sensibility are the perfect match for Jane Austen's beloved tale. The summer after university, Emma Woodhouse returns home to live with her widowed father and launch her interior design business. Apart from cultivating grand career plans and managing her father's hypochondria, Emma busies herself with the two things she does best: matchmaking and offering advice on everything from texting etiquette to first date destinations.

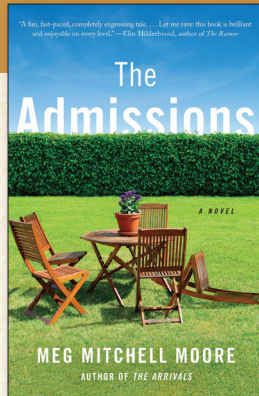
**Other modern novels inspired by the classics:**

*A Thousand Acres*  
by Jane Smiley > *King Lear*  
by William Shakespeare

*Longbourn* by Jo Baker >  
*Pride and Prejudice*  
by Jane Austen

*The Cake House*  
by Latifah Salom > *Hamlet*  
by William Shakespeare

*Love in Idleness*  
by Amanda Craig > *A Midsummer Night's Dream*  
by William Shakespeare



## The Admissions Meg Mitchell Moore

"A fun, fast-paced, completely engrossing tale.... Let me rave: this book is brilliant and enjoyable on every level."

—Elin Hilderbrand, author of *The Rumor*

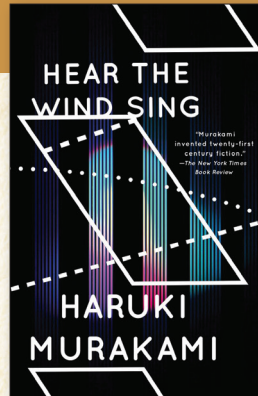
The Hawthorne family has it all: great jobs, a beautiful house in one of the most affluent areas of northern California, and three charming kids. Then comes eldest daughter Angela's senior year of high school.

Suddenly, everyone is floundering. As Angela writes and rewrites her application for Harvard—her father's alma mater—and struggles to maintain her position as valedictorian, Nora Hawthorne's career hits a rough patch. And as the secrets everyone has been keeping will come to light, it sets the family on a final collision course that will force them to reevaluate, with humor and heart, the value of achievement.

**Meg Mitchell Moore says:**

When I write a novel, I never start with a plot.... the characters come first, usually at the same time as the setting, sometimes—but not always—along with some vague idea of the situation the characters are in.

**Read more at**  
[www.readinggroupcenter.com/megmooreinspiration](http://www.readinggroupcenter.com/megmooreinspiration)



## Wind/Pinball: Hear the Wind Sing and Pinball, 1973 Haruki Murakami

"More than anyone, Haruki Murakami invented 21st-century fiction."

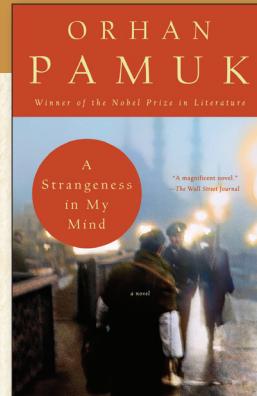
—*The New York Times Book Review*

*Wind/Pinball*, a unique two-in-one volume, includes, on one side, Murakami's first novel *Hear the Wind Sing*. When you flip the book over, you can read his second novel, *Pinball, 1973*. Each book has its own stunning cover.

In the spring of 1978, a young Haruki Murakami sat down at his kitchen table and began to write. The result: two remarkable short novels—*Hear the Wind Sing* and *Pinball, 1973*—that launched the career of one of the most acclaimed authors of our time.

These powerful at times surreal works about two young men coming of age—the unnamed narrator and his friend the Rat—are stories of loneliness, obsession, and eroticism. They bear all the hallmarks of Murakami's later books, and form the first two thirds, with *A Wild Sheep Chase*, of the Trilogy of the Rat.

Widely available in English for the first time ever, newly translated, and featuring a new introduction by Murakami himself, *Wind/Pinball* gives us a fascinating insight into a great writer's beginnings.



## A Strangeness in My Mind Orhan Pamuk

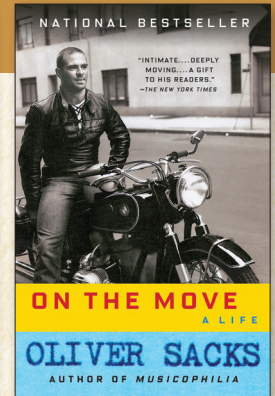
"A glorious and teeming everyman epic."

—*The Boston Globe*

**Winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature**

**A Best Book of the Year:**  
*The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Financial Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*

Arriving in Istanbul as a boy, Mevlut Karatas is enthralled by both the old city that is disappearing and the new one that is fast being built. He becomes a street vendor like his father, hoping to strike it rich, but luck never seems to be on Mevlut's side. He spends three years writing love letters to a girl he has seen just once, only to elope by mistake with her sister. Although he grows to cherish his wife and the family they have together, Mevlut stumbles toward middle age as everyone around him seems to be reaping the benefits of a rapidly modernizing Turkey. Told through the eyes of a diverse cast of characters, *A Strangeness in My Mind* Nobel Prize-winning author Orhan Pamuk paints a brilliant tableau of life among the newcomers who have changed the face of Istanbul over the past fifty years.



## On the Move Oliver Sacks

**A New York Times Notable Book**

**A Best Book of the Year:** NPR, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *BookPage*, *Slate*, *Men's Journal*

"[A] wonderful memoir, which richly demonstrates what an extraordinary life it has been.... A fascinating account—a sort of extended case study, really—of Sacks' remarkably active, iconoclastic adulthood."

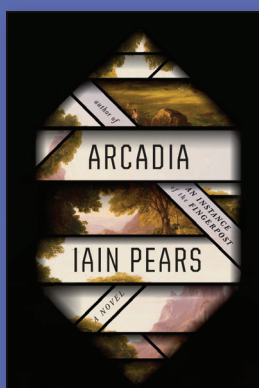
—*Los Angeles Times*

When Oliver Sacks was twelve years old, a perceptive schoolmaster wrote: "Sacks will go far, if he does not go too far." It is now abundantly clear that Sacks has never stopped going. With unbridled honesty and humor, Sacks writes about the passions that have driven his life—from motorcycles and weight lifting to neurology and poetry. He writes about his love affairs, both romantic and intellectual; his guilt over leaving his family to come to America; his bond with his schizophrenic brother; and the writers and scientists—W. H. Auden, Gerald M. Edelman, Francis Crick—who have influenced his work. *On the Move* is the story of a brilliantly unconventional physician and writer, a man who has illuminated the many ways that the brain makes us human.



# Great Book Club Titles

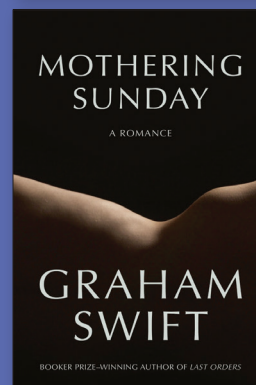
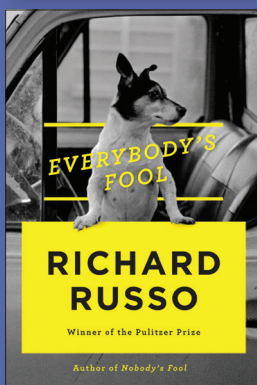
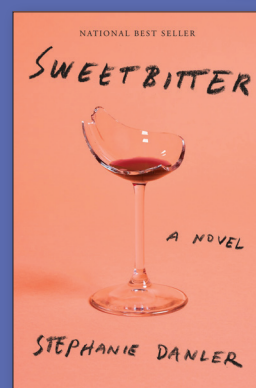
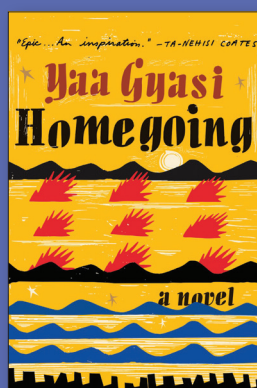
coming in paperback in 2017\*



## American Girls

Social Media and  
the Secret Lives  
of Teenagers

Nancy Jo Sales



\*Hardcover books featured. Check our website for the paperback release date so you can plan your book club's reading.



Discover Wonderful Books • Talk to Interesting Writers • Connect with Other Readers  
Enter Book Giveaway Contests • Find Extensive Resources for Fun and Creative 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

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