

December 2024

FICTION

James by *Percival Everett*. This reimagining of Huckleberry Finn has Jim (James) taking the lead. This entertaining tale casts slaves in a less stereotypical way.

Beach Street (series) by *Gil McNeil*. This is the ongoing story of Jo MacKenzie – a delightful, funny, and relatable tale of survival, single motherhood, and finding one's way.

The Rose Code by *Kate Quinn*. This novel of WWII involves three female code breakers and the spy they must uncover after the war.

The Grand Complication by *Allen Kurtzweil*. This first novel is about a reference librarian with some unusual interests that place her relationship and job in jeopardy. It is funny and intellectually stimulating.

Instructions for a Heatwave by *Maggie O'Farrell*. The author brings her signature style to this novel about a multi-generational family crisis set during the legendary British heatwave of 1976.

The School for Good Mothers by *Jessamine Chan*. This wrenching 2022 novel is set in a dystopian future in which the State can separate parents from their children and consign them to state-run schools to relearn parenting basics using AI robotic children.

Tell Me Everything by *Elizabeth Strout*. This new, deeply insightful story set in Maine is about loneliness and the meaning of love. It features the unforgettable characters of Strout's previous books.

NONFICTION

Night Flyer – Harriet Tubman and the Faith Dreams of a Free People by *Riya Miles*. This biography of Tubman emphasizes the role faith played in her life.

The Escape Artist by *Jonathan Freedland*. This is the true story of Rudolph Vrba and Fred Wetzler, who escaped from Auschwitz in 1944 and broadcast what was happening to Jews. Unfortunately, their report initially did not move world leaders to action.

All I Did Was Ask by *Terry Gross*. The host of NPR's "Fresh Air" presents interesting conversations with writers, actors, musicians, and artists.

The Holy or the Broken by *Alan Light*. This is an entire book about Leonard Cohen's song "Hallelujah."

MYSTERIES

Doctored Evidence by *Donna Leon*. This mystery, one of a series set in Venice, features Commissario Guido Brunetti. Here he slogs his way through Italian bribery and lackluster attention to laws.

World Gone By by *Dennis Lehane*. In this mystery novel, a crime family consigliere in the 1940s has only days to find out who wants him dead.

November 2024

FICTION

Real Americans by *Rachel Khong*. A young Chinese-American woman meets Matthew, her opposite. Love follows, but secrets interfere. This is a story of class differences, and, ultimately, of coming home.

The Road by *Cormac McCarthy*. This survival story is set in a future world that has been mostly destroyed by some unnamed catastrophe. A father and son walk south to escape winter. They scavenge for food and try to avoid the "bad people." Horrors abound.

The Pull of the Stars by *Emma Donoghue*. The flu epidemic in Dublin during World War I finds a nurse in charge of pregnant flu victims. Working 12-hour shifts, she is short of staff and supplies. This is a story of women's relationships, courage, and loyalty. It is a repeat recommendation.

Run, Rose, Run by *Dolly Parton* and *James Patterson*. The hand/voice of each of these luminaries is clearly felt in this novel. A young musician hopes to make it big in Nashville. She gets help from a recently retired country diva. But will the musician's mysterious past ruin everything?

Simon (Sort of) Says by *Erin Bow*. Simon's mother is an undertaker, her father a Catholic deacon. In this hilarious book, they move to Grin and Bear It, Nebraska, in the National Quiet Zone – no TV, radio, or internet allowed. Will this escape from the public eye last?

The Painted Drum by *Louise Erdrich*. A woman discovers a rare ceremonial Ojibwe drum. The book explores lives affected by the drum in the past and present. Relationships between mothers and daughters; strength of family, and rhythms of grief are examined.

NONFICTION

The Tree Collectors by *Amy Stewart*. These are true tales of arboreal obsession.

Devil in the White City by *Erik Larson*. This is the best-selling award winner that describes murder, magic, and madness at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

The Feather Thief by *Kirk Wallace Johnson*. In 2009, a thief stole 299 rare bird skins from the British Natural History Museum in the heist of the century.

Stupid Things I Won't Do When I Get Older and **Things I Would Do Differently When I Get Older** by *Steven Petrow*. Two books with humorous comments on aging.

MYSTERIES

Everyone Knows But You by *Thomas E. Ricks*. After a family tragedy, an FBI agent transfers to Maine, gets involved in a murder case, and learns about the Maine way of life, including land issues and local history.

Penne Dreadful by *Catherine Burns*. First in a series. Tessa takes a job at the local pizza place after her husband dies in a car accident that wasn't an accident.

Righteous by *Joe Ide*. An LA private eye named IQ takes a case in Vegas.

Murder in the Marais by *Cara Black*. First in a series of mysteries set in Paris; Detective Aimee Leduc is asked to deliver an old photo to a woman in the Marais, an old Jewish quarter. She finds a corpse with a swastika on her forehead.

October 2024

FICTION

Our Missing Hearts by *Celeste Ng*. A 12-year-old boy grows up in a culture where books thought to be unpatriotic, including his mother's poetry, are removed from libraries.

The Midwife of Hope River by *Patricia Harman*. The author, a midwife, tells the story of Elizabeth Snyder, who ran from the law after accidentally killing her husband during violence at a coal miners' union uprising in the Appalachian Mountains of West Virginia.

Crossroads by *Jonathan Franzen*. In 1971, members of a family headed by an associate pastor of a liberal church in suburban Chicago come to moral crossroads.

The Lost Year by *Katherine Marsh*. A 13-year-old boy opens a box of his grandmother's and discovers the history of her life during the famine years of the 1930s in the Ukraine. The book follows two story lines. It is primarily for young adults, but is of interest to all readers.

The Patron Saint of Liars by *Ann Patchett*. In the first of her novels, the author tells the story of a woman who can't find contentment and continually runs from her troubles. It is about selfishness, love, and the mysteries of life we all face.

NONFICTION

The Opposite of Fate by *Amy Tan*. This is a memoir of the writer's life and career.

The Zookeeper's Wife by *Diane Ackerman*. This work is the tragic true story of the keepers of the Warsaw zoo before and during the German invasion of Poland, and the eventual destruction of Warsaw.

Making It So by *Patrick Stewart*. Stewart's autobiography of a working-class British northerner who rises to the heights of Shakespearian acting and then becomes a pop icon as Captain Picard of "The Enterprise" in Star Trek.

An Army at Dawn by *Rick Atkinson*. This book is the first of a trilogy that tells part of the history of the U.S. Army in World War II. It covers the war in North Africa, which shaped the American army and prepared it for future success.

The Cat Who Came for Christmas by *Cleveland Amory*. A man who lives in New York City rescues a stray cat. A story of their turbulent early relationship, it contains lots of information about cats and their behavior.

HISTORICAL MYSTERY

The Frozen River by *Ariel Lawhon*. This historical mystery novel was inspired by the diary of a midwife who investigated a murder and rape in Maine in the 1790s.

September 2024

FICTION

The Glass Lake by *Maeve Binchy*. This story is set in Ireland and London. A woman disappears. Her daughter is haunted by a memory of her mother crying. She finds a letter her mother left, but burns it without reading it. Then things change forever. This is a story of love, deception, and finding strength.

Crossroads by *Jonathan Franzen*. This is a tale of a Midwestern family at a pivotal moment of moral crisis.

Good Eggs by *Rebecca Hardiman*. This is a hilarious family drama. Just when you think things can't get any worse in the life of Kevin Gogarty, they do.

Next Time Forever by *Sherryl Woods*. A woman who lives in Atlanta meets a man from New York City in Savannah. This is a feel-good love story involving personal differences and different cities.

Secret Christmas Twins by *Lee Tobin McClain*. A young woman who had an alcoholic mother raises herself. She befriends a user who has twins. The mother of the twins asks the woman to take the twins to her grandparents' home.

The Tin Can Tree by *Anne Tyler*. This early Tyler novel revolves around a small cast of characters over three days, as they react to a sudden upheaval in their lives. The main characters live in a three-family row house in a tiny town in North Carolina.

The Story of Arthur Truluv by *Elizabeth Berg*. This book centers on three people contending with loss. It is about compassion and the possibility of achieving happiness at any age.

NONFICTION

The Age of Grievance by *Frank Bruni*. This new political book details how grievances by individuals on all sides are amplified by politicians and social media for electoral and financial gain, likely to the detriment of American democracy.

The Rebel Yell and the Yankee Hurrah, edited by *Ruth Silliker*. This is the Civil War journal written by Maine volunteer John W. Haley.

Groucho and Me by *Groucho Marx*. This book contains hilarious stories told by Groucho about his career in Vaudeville, Hollywood, radio, and TV.

I Shouldn't Even Be Doing This by *Bob Newhart*. This work contains reminiscences with Bob's unique perspective on "things that strike me as funny."

Northeast by *Cathie Pelletier*. This book describes the great blizzard of 1952 in Maine. It follows the impact on the lives of people in coastal Maine and Bath.

MYSTERY

The Mayors of New York by *S. J. Rozan*. This is one of the series featuring private investigators Bill Smith and Lydia Chin. Who really runs the city? Maybe not the politicians.

SCIENCE FICTION/MYSTERY/HUMOR

To Say Nothing of the Dog by *Connie Willis*. This is an extremely funny book about the manners of Victorian England, as time travelers attempt to find a hideous Victorian vase called the "bishop's bird stump" to right a disturbance in the time continuum caused when one of the travelers brought a cat back to the present.

August 2024

FICTION

The Spies of Warsaw by *Alan Furst*. Warsaw in 1937 is the center of espionage for the French, Germans, and Russians. This atmospheric novel is set in old-world hotels, restaurants, and train coaches.

The Berry Pickers by *Amanda Peters*. The story, set in Nova Scotia and Maine, features indigenous Mi'kmaq workers employed to pick blueberries. A family's youngest child disappears. A side-by-side story tells of an affluent family with a child who has visions and nightmares as she grows up and discovers her roots.

The Swan's Nest by *Laura McNeal*. This is beautifully written historical fiction of the meeting and marriage of Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Robert Browning.

The Passionate Tudor, a novel of Queen Mary I by *Allison Weir*. In this fictional history, Mary, the daughter of Henry VIII, changes from a dutiful daughter into a cruel and fanatical religious zealot who believes she is doing God's work.

How to Read a Book by *Monica Wood*. An uplifting story of a woman who leads a book club in a women's prison in Maine, written by a Maine author. Sing You Home by *Jodi Picoult*. A look at struggles with identity, infertility, complex love relationships, and the difficulty of doing what is right when doing that conflicts with one's own personal desires.

NONFICTION

New England's Most Notable Women by *Patricia Harris*. The women featured include writers, poets, artists, historians, educators, scientists, and many others. For some reason, Margaret Chase Smith is left out.

Slightly Offshore by *Caskie Stinnett*. The author appeared frequently in Downeast magazine. He lived on a small island just off the coast of Maine. These essays are very like those of E. B. White.

Faith and Madness: A Spiritual and Psychological Journey by *Sarah Slagle Arnold*. A young woman gripped with depression gets help from an astute psychiatrist, an Anglican priest, and a department store. Illustrates the interplay between financial, psychological, and spiritual resources.

Harriet Beecher Stowe: Woman and Artist by *Edward M. Holmes*.

MYSTERIES

Lightning Strikes the Silence by *Iona Whishaw*. The latest book in the Lane Winslow series, set near Vancouver, Canada, features an explosion, a young Japanese girl, and a burglary.

The Trespasser by *Tana French*. The Dublin Murder Squad takes on a case that appears to be a lovers' quarrel gone wrong. The female detective on the case is the subject of harassment by her coworkers.

In the Lake of the Woods by *Tim O'Brien*. A Vietnam veteran and recent candidate for the U.S. Senate retreats with his wife to a lakeside cabin. The wife vanishes within days.

Death in Captivity by *Michael Gilbert*. A death occurs in an Italian prison camp at the time of the Allied invasion during World War II. Most of the prisoners are British. The author was a prisoner in a similar camp. The description of camp life, escape attempts, and treachery is very interesting.

SCIENCE FICTION/FANTASY

The Man in the High Castle by *Philip K. Dick*. It has been almost 20 years since the Allies lost WW II. The former USA is split into parts by the Japanese and Germans, with the Japanese mostly on the West Coast and the Germans on the East Coast. The middle of the country is lightly controlled. Life goes on there with the defeated Americans adjusting to the situation.

July 2024

FICTION

Lessons in Chemistry by *Bonnie Garmus*. A young female chemist is not taken seriously. Her unpredictable life in the 1960s provides a wonderfully funny read.

Life Without Children by *Roddy Doyle*. This is a collection of pandemic-era short stories written from an Irish perspective.

Wish You Were Here by *Jodi Picoult*. This is a "can't put down" book. A woman in the Galapagos and her fiancé in New York City are separated during COVID. There is a big plot surprise.

Long Island by *Colm Toibin*. This follow-up to the author's Brooklyn continues the story of a young Irish woman who emigrated to New York 20 years ago. She returns to Ireland for a visit – this has surprising results.

The Reading List by *Sara Nisha Adams*. Set in the Indian section of London, this book looks at how books can change lives, connect people, and even bring those who have gone before near again.

Diamond Eye by *Kate Quinn*. Based on a true story. A Russian woman sniper records over 300 kills against the Germans during WW2. She is sent to the U.S. on a goodwill mission and meets Eleanor Roosevelt.

NONFICTION

The Splendid and the Vile by *Erik Larson*. The story of England and Winston Churchill during the Blitz of WW2. This is a fascinating read, containing much interesting detail.

After the Miracle by *Max Wallace*. This biography of Hellen Keller focuses on Helen's remarkable political crusades. She was an activist who fought racism, poverty, apartheid, and McCarthyism. She also advocated for those differently abled.

Faces of Maine by *Bob Niss*. This is a book of two-page biographies of the men and women who molded Maine over the last two centuries.

Up From Slavery. This is the autobiography of *Booker T. Washington*. He taught himself to read, funded his own education, and was an admired speaker.

MYSTERIES

The Secret History by *Donna Tartt*. A murder investigation involves an elite group of college students in New England.

Marcus Didius Falco series by *Lindsey Davis*. This series is set in ancient Rome; Falco is a private investigator.

June 2024

FICTION

Close to Bold by *Anthony Horowitz*. A new family moves into a small neighborhood in England, causing upsets for everyone. When there is a murder, everyone has the same motive.

Paddy Clark Ha Ha Ha by *Roddy Doyle*. The story of a 10-year-old boy growing up in Dublin in 1968. Booker Prize winner.

Good Harbor by *Anita Diamant*. This book, by the author of *The Red Tent*, is all about relationships with a close look at the treasure of friendship between women.

The Bridge of San Luis Rey by *Thornton Wilder*. This classic Pulitzer Prize-winner is the story of five people who die when a bridge collapses in Peru.

Ordinary Grace by *William Kent Krueger*. This is a novel about a boy experiencing a summer in which death visits frequently in many forms.

NONFICTION

All About Me! by *Mel Brooks*. The autobiography of the EGOT-winning writer, producer, and performer.

All the Beauty in the World: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Me by *Patrick Bringley*. The very interesting tale of a museum guard's time at the museum

The Stranger in the Woods by *Michael Finkel*. The true story of the "North Pond Hermit" who lived isolated in the Maine woods for 27 years.

Wesley the Owl by *Stacey O'Brien*. A fascinating story of the intimate relationship between O'Brien and the 4-year-old injured barn owl she nurtures and loves for 18 years.

MYSTERIES

Dream Town by *David Baldacci*. Private detective Archer meets a woman in LA who thinks someone is trying to kill her. When he goes to check on her, he finds a body in her home.

A Traitor in Whitehall by *Julia Kelly*. Murder and espionage in the bunkers under London during WWII. A look at living where Churchill spent a lot of time.

May 2024

FICTION

Homestead by *Melissa Moustakis*. This is a debut novel set near Anchorage in the 1950s as Alaska moves toward statehood. A couple meets and marries within a few days, then begin homesteading 150 acres. Problems ensue.

The Paris Wife by *Paula McClain*. This is a work of historic fiction which tells the story of Ernest Hemingway's life in Paris with his first wife, Hadley Richardson.

The Ball at Versailles by *Danielle Steel*. Four young debutantes from America are invited to a cotillion at Versailles in 1959. Their lives are changed.

NONFICTION

A Walk in the Woods by *Bill Bryson*. This classic tale of tackling the Appalachian Trail does not disappoint. It is educational, thought-provoking, and very funny. It is a good read which can lift your spirits.

Dark City: The Lost World of Film Noir by *Eddie Muller*. This is a thorough and fun study of the all-American film genre of the 1940s and 50s. The films featured tough guys and gals in a world that won't give them a break.

The Black Angels by *Maria Smilios*. The Untold Story of the Nurses Who Helped Cure Tuberculosis. In 1929, white nurses were refusing to work at the Sea View Municipal Hospital on Staten Island. The city recruited black nurses from the South. The book covers the time from 1929-1952, highlighting social, cultural, and medical changes as the cure for TB was found.

The Doctors Blackwell by *Janice P. Nimura*. In 1849, Elizabeth Blackwell became the first woman in America to get an MD degree. Her sister, Emily, also became a doctor. They founded the first hospital staffed by women in New York City.

POETRY

Selected Poems of *May Sarton* edited by Hilsinger and Brynes. These were chosen from the first 40 years of Sarton's long career, nicely organized by category.

MYSTERY

The Proof of the Pudding by *Rhys Bowen*. One in the Royal Spyness series. Lady Rannoch is the hostess at a party at her home. A murder occurs during the festivities.

JANE AUSTEN

Here are three books for Jane Austen fans: **Jane Austen: The World of Her Novels** by *Deirdre Le Faye*; **Jane's Fame** by *Claire Harman*; **The Real Jane Austen: A Life in Small Things** by *Paula Byrne*.

April 2024

FICTION

Our Missing Hearts by *Celeste Ng*. An Asian woman goes on the run when an a 1984-type dictator takes over America. Children are taken from their homes. Will she be able to reunite with her son?

Chronicle of a Death Foretold by *Gabriel Garcia Marquez*. This novella is a fictional reconstruction of a murder that was foreseen by many people in a town, but nobody attempted to prevent it.

Lady Clementine by *Marie Benedict*. This historical fiction is the story of Winston Churchill's wife, her background and her role in the events of his life.

A Symmetry by *Lisa Halliday*. This book explores inequities in age, power, talent, wealth, fame, geography, and justice. The story is told in several

sections, with the characters experiencing different situations.

Night of the Living Rez by *Morgan Talty*. This is short- story fiction about modern Native American life by a citizen of the Penobscot Nation in Maine.

The Guest List by *Lucy Foley*. This story is set on a remote island off Ireland's west coast. Wedding guests arrive in a gale. Disaster erupts during

the reception. A fun read.

NONFICTION

To Wake the Giant by *Jeff Scharra*. An excellent book examining both sides – the U.S. and Japan – of the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Call Me American by *Abdi Nor Iftin*. A young Somali man fights his way out of Africa to gain freedom in the U.S. A good book about war-torn conditions.

Midnight in Chernobyl by *Adam Higginbotham*. The book describes the causes and aftermath of the 1986 meltdown of the nuclear reactor in Chernobyl, Ukraine, featuring the USSR bureaucracy and the mistake of a single operator.

Sins of the Shovel by *Rachel Morgan*. This is about the evolution of American archeology – a tale of robbery and murder, leading to legislation.

MYSTERY

Lightseekers by *Kemi Kayode*. An investigative psychologist travels to a Nigerian town to uncover the truth about the murder of university students.

The Spy Coast by *Tess Gerritsen*. This book by a Maine author is set in the town of Purity, Maine. Former spy Maggie Bird and the "Martini Club" of former operatives investigate when a body turns up on Maggie's driveway. She knows her past has come back – former foes have not forgotten.

March 2024

FICTION

The Man from St Petersburg by *Ken Follett*. This novel is set against the background of the Anglo-German arms race just before World War I.

Demon Copperhead by *Barbara Kingsolver*. This book, inspired by "David Copperfield" of Charles Dickens fame, dives deeply into some of our modern-day societal evils: opioid addictions, harmful child services, and prejudice. Set in Appalachia.

Kate Meader by *Deborah Gould*. This Brunswick author created an engaging story based on real people who lived in a Gardiner, Maine, almshouse in 1900. Very well researched.

Bernard Malamud: The Complete Stories. Intensely human tales about people coping with difficult lives, often made more difficult by they people themselves.

Among the Beautiful Beasts by *Lori McMullen*. This historical fiction is the story of the early life of Marjory Stoneman Douglas, who later became a tireless activist for the Florida Everglades.

A Different Sun by *Elaine Neil Orr*. The daughter of a prosperous slave owner becomes a missionary in Africa.

NONFICTION

Braiding Sweetgrass by *Robin Wall Kimmerer*. This professor of environmental biology and founder of the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment believes ecological consciousness requires a reciprocal relationship with nature. In her writing, she embraces the idea that plants and animals are our teachers.

First in His Class: A Biography of Bill Clinton by *David Maraniss*. This book covers Clinton's life from his birth in 1946 to the day he announced his run for President in October, 1991.

Think Again by *Adam Grant*. The author wants us to rethink our beliefs, thoughts, and identity – and asks why we believe in certain things and also encourages us to question old assumptions and embrace new ideas and perspectives.

A Mighty Long Way: My Journey to Justice at Little Rock Central High School by *Carlotta Walls LaNier with Lisa Fraiser Page*. The story of the desegregation of this Arkansas high school told by the youngest of the first nine students to attend.

MYSTERIES

The Best Man to Die by *Ruth Rendell*. In this British mystery a bridegroom's best man is murdered the night before the wedding. Suspects include small-time gangsters, "loose" women, and cheating men. What's not to like?

The Ghost Orchid by *Jonathan Kellerman*. This is the 39th book in a terrific series set in southern California. A psychologist and a police detective work to solve a double homicide. Which victim was the target?

Desert Star. This is *Michael Connelly's* 37th book. Harry Bosch and Renee Ballard resume a partnership which they had years ago before they split up. They go after two killers.

SCIENCE FICTION

Selected Stories of *Philip K. Dick*. Dark stories by the author behind the movie "Blade Runner."

February 2024

FICTION

The Perfect Girl by *Gilly Macmillan*. Set in 2014, a 17-year-old musical prodigy is bullied at school in England. She makes a tragic mistake in which three people die, serves time, and then gets a chance at a new life. The story is told from the perspective of several characters.

The Winter House by *Joan MacCracken*. This Maine author tells the story of four older women who decide to combat the long, cold winter by living together. Each has her own story, and there are surprises along the way.

The Midcoast by *Adam White*. This novel, set in Damariscotta, is by an author who lived there. It features ambition, class, family drama, and criminal enterprise while going back and forth in time.

The Magic Kingdom by *Russell Banks*. The title of this historical novel implies the story is about Disney World, but it is about the lives of people in the Shaker community of New Bethany, Fla., in the swamp-lands near what is now Disney World.

NONFICTION

Not to Be Missed by *Kenneth Turan*. The well-known NPR critic looks back on a lifetime of film viewing and makes his unconventional choices for the best film of each decade.

The Last Winter of the Weimar Republic by *Rudiger Barth and Hauke Friedericks*. Similar to a diary, the book gives a day-to-day account of the final 2 1/2 months of democracy in 1930s Germany.

A Fever in the Heartland: The Klu Klux Klan's Plot to Take Over America, and the Woman Who Stopped Them by *Timothy Egan*. This is the story of The Klan's meteoric rise in the 1920s, the efforts of D.C. Stephenson, its leader in Indiana, to take over the national government, and the woman who stopped him.

MYSTERIES/THRILLERS

The Silent Patient by *Alex Michaelides*. A well-known artist gruesomely murders her husband and remains silent thereafter. A psycho-therapist works with her to uncover her story in this gripping story with a dramatic ending.

The Last House Guest by *Morgan Miranda*. The story is set in Littleport, Maine, a harbor community which attracts wealthy summer visitors. A summer guest who befriends a local girl dies unexpectedly. The girl comes under suspicion and must clear her name.

A Dangerous Business by *Jane Smiley*. Two young women who work in brothels in California during the gold rush try to catch a killer. They are inspired by reading Poe's mysteries

January 2024

FICTION

Barkskins by *Annie Proulx*. This is the story of 300 years of the timber industry in the US and Canada, and the descendants of two woodcutters who traveled from France to Canada to work for a feudal lord in exchange for land.

Amy and Isabelle by *Elizabeth Strout*. This 1998 award winner was Strout's first book. It looks at some of the people and their relationships in a small Maine town. The two main characters are a single mom and her teenage daughter who both live with secrets.

A Painted House by *John Grisham*. The story is set in 1952 in the Arkansas delta. A seven year old boy lives on a farm in a small rural town. He and his family pick cotton, aided by local "Hill People" and Mexican laborers. They struggle to meet their debts. It was inspired by Grisham's childhood.

North Woods by *Daniel Mason*. This best seller follows the lives of five generations living in the same house in northwestern Massachusetts. It is an interesting, fast read.

Unsheltered by *Barbara Kingsolver*. This is the tale of two families living through precarious times at the same address in New Jersey.

Lessons in Chemistry by *Bonnie Garmus*. The story is set in the 1960s, focusing on the life of Elizabeth Zott, a brilliant chemist, who believes that a woman should be treated with respect and dignity. It is told with great humor.

NONFICTION

Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents by *Isabel Wilkerson*. This book posits that an unacknowledged caste system exists in America. The author backs up her claims through a historical review of the treatment of American minorities. This treatment, sadly, became a model for the Nazis to copy.

For Small Creatures Such As We: Rituals for Finding Meaning in Our Unlikely Worlds by *Sasha Sagan*. This book, written by the daughter of Carl Sagan, discusses the rituals shared by all humanity, regardless of religious beliefs or backgrounds.

Boostrapped by *Alisa Quart*. While discussing the American obsession with self-reliance, the author examines our belief that you can "pull yourself up by your bootstraps," and finds it comes up short and, in fact, harms us. Through her research, she reveals how interdependent we are and that is the basis for a healthy society.

MYSTERIES

Stargazer by *Anne Hillerman*. This work features a Navaho police-woman. It is written in the tradition of Hillerman's father, Tony. Officer Bernadette Manuelito searches for an old friend who has confessed to the murder of an astronomer.

Spy Coast by *Tess Gerritsen*. This is the first book in the Martini Club series. It is set in a small Maine town where retired CIA agents hope to live quietly. Unfortunately, the past comes to call.

MEMOIR

The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating by *Elisabeth Tova Bailey*. This short, award-winning book describes the bed-ridden author's close observations of a snail. It brings her to an appreciation of her own existence and nature's lessons.