FICTION

Arranged by Author’s Last Name

Man Called Ove by Fredrik Backman

Ove is a curmudgeon—the kind of man who points at people he dislikes as if they were burglars caught outside his bedroom window. He has staunch principles, strict routines, and a short fuse. People call him "the bitter neighbor from hell." But must Ove be bitter just because he doesn't walk around with a smile plastered to his face all the time? Behind the cranky exterior there is a story and a sadness. So when one November morning a chatty young couple with two chatty young daughters move in next door and accidentally flatten Ove's mailbox, it is the lead-in to a comical and heartwarming tale of unkempt cats, unexpected friendship, and the ancient art of backing up a U-Haul. All of which will change one cranky old man and a local residents' association to their very foundations.

Aviator’s Wife by Melanie Benjamin

Melanie Benjamin pulls back the curtain on the marriage of one of America's most extraordinary couples: Charles Lindbergh and Anne Morrow Lindbergh. Drawing on the rich history of the twentieth century—from the late twenties to the mid-sixties—and featuring cameos from such notable characters as Joseph Kennedy and Amelia Earhart, The Aviator's Wife is a vividly imagined novel of a complicated marriage—revealing both its dizzying highs and its devastating lows. With stunning power and grace, Benjamin provides new insight into what made this remarkable relationship endure.
Moloka’i by Alan Brennert

Young Rachel Kalama, growing up in idyllic Honolulu in the 1890s, is part of a big, loving Hawaiian family, and dreams of seeing the far-off lands that her father, a merchant seaman, often visits. But at the age of seven, Rachel and her dreams are shattered by the discovery that she has leprosy. Forcibly removed from her family, she is sent to Kalaupapa, the isolated leper colony on the island of Moloka’i. In her exile she finds a family of friends to replace the family she’s lost. Rachel's life, though shadowed by disease, isolation, and tragedy, is also one of joy, courage, and dignity.

Language of Flowers by Vanessa Diffenbaugh

Diffenbaugh chronicles the first harrowing steps into adulthood taken by a deeply wounded soul who finds her only solace in an all-but-forgotten language. On her 18th birthday, Victoria Jones ages out of the foster care system, a random series of living arrangements around the San Francisco Bay Area the only home she's ever known. Unable to express herself with words, she relies on the Victorian language of flowers to communicate: dahlias for "dignity"; rhododendron for "beware." Released from care with almost nothing, Victoria becomes homeless, stealing food and sleeping in McKinley Square, in San Francisco, where she maintains a small garden. Her secret knowledge soon lands her a job selling flowers, where she meets Grant, a mystery man who not only speaks her language, but also holds a crucial key to her past. Though Victoria is wary of almost everyone, she opens to Grant, and he reconnected her with the only person who has ever mattered in her life.

All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr

Marie-Laure is a sightless girl who lived with her father in Paris before the occupation; he was a master locksmith for the Museum of Natural History. When German forces necessitate abandonment of the city, Marie-Laure’s father, taking with him the museum’s greatest treasure, removes himself and his daughter and eventually arrives at his uncle’s house in the coastal city of Saint-Malo. Meanwhile, young German soldier Werner is sent to Saint-Malo to track Resistance activity there, and eventually, and inevitably, Marie-Laure’s and Werner’s paths cross. It is through their individual and intertwined tales that Doerr masterfully and knowledgeably re-creates the deprived civilian conditions of war-torn France and the strictly controlled lives of the military occupiers.
**A Hologram for the King** by Dave Eggers

In a rising Saudi Arabian city, far from weary, recession-scarred America, a struggling businessman pursues a last-ditch attempt to stave off foreclosure, pay his daughter's college tuition, and finally do something great. In *A Hologram for the King*, Dave Eggers takes us around the world to show how one man fights to hold himself and his splintering family together in the face of the global economy's gale-force winds. This taut, richly layered, and elegiac novel is a powerful evocation of our contemporary moment -- and a moving story of how we got here.

**Turner House** by Angela Flournoy

The Turners have lived on Yarrow Street for over fifty years. Their house has seen thirteen children grown and gone--and some returned; it has seen the arrival of grandchildren, the fall of Detroit's East Side, and the loss of a father. The house still stands despite abandoned lots, an embattled city, and the inevitable shift outward to the suburbs. But now, as ailing matriarch Viola finds herself forced to leave her home and move in with her eldest son, the family discovers that the house is worth just a tenth of its mortgage. The Turner children are called home to decide its fate and to reckon with how each of their pasts haunts--and shapes--their family's future.

**Gone Girl** by Gillian Flynn

Marriage can be a real killer. One of the most critically acclaimed suspense writers of our time, takes that statement to its darkest place in this gripping masterpiece about a marriage gone terribly, terribly wrong. On a warm summer morning in North Carthage, Missouri, it is Nick and Amy Dunne's fifth wedding anniversary. Presents are being wrapped and reservations are being made when Nick's clever and beautiful wife disappears from their rented McMansion on the Mississippi River. Under mounting pressure from the police and the media--as well as Amy's fiercely doting parents--the town golden boy parades an endless series of lies, deceits, and inappropriate behavior. Nick is oddly evasive, and he's definitely bitter--but is he really a killer? Gillian Flynn delivers a fast-paced, devilishly dark, and ingeniously plotted thriller that confirms her status as one of the hottest writers around.
Little Paris Bookshop by Nina George

A book is both medic and medicine at once. It makes a diagnosis as well as offering therapy. Putting the right novels to the appropriate ailments: that's how I sell books." Monsieur Perdu calls himself a literary apothecary. From his floating bookstore in a barge on the Seine, he prescribes novels for the hardships of life. Using his intuitive feel for the exact book a reader needs, Perdu mends broken hearts and souls. The only person he can't seem to heal through literature is himself; he's still haunted by heartbreak after his great love disappeared.

Fault in Our Stars by John Green

Despite the tumor-shrinking medical miracle that has bought her a few years, Hazel has never been anything but terminal, her final chapter inscribed upon diagnosis. But when a gorgeous plot twist named Augustus Waters suddenly appears at Cancer Kid Support Group, Hazel's story is about to be completely rewritten. Insightful, bold, irreverent, and raw, The Fault in Our Stars is award-winning-author John Green's most ambitious and heartbreaking work yet, brilliantly exploring the funny, thrilling, and tragic business of being alive and in love. Be prepared for a story of romance and anger, excitement and humor, and friendship and bravery.

Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time by Mark Haddon

Christopher John Francis Boone knows all the countries of the world and their capitals and every prime number up to 7,057. He relates well to animals but has no understanding of human emotions. He cannot stand to be touched. Although gifted with a superbly logical brain, Christopher is autistic. And herein lies the key to the brilliance of Mark Haddon's choice of narrator. The most wrenching of emotional moments are chronicled by a boy who cannot fathom emotion. The effect is dazzling, making for a novel that is deeply funny, poignant, and fascinating in its portrayal of a person whose curse and blessing is a mind that perceives the world literally.

Loving Frank by Nancy Horan

I have been standing on the side of life, watching it float by. I want to swim in the river. I want to feel the current. So writes Mamah Borthwick Cheney in her diary as she struggles to justify her clandestine love affair with Frank Lloyd Wright. Four years earlier, in 1903, Mamah and her husband, Edwin, had commissioned the renowned architect to design a new home for them. During the construction of the house, a powerful attraction developed between Mamah and Frank, and in time the lovers, each married with children, embarked on a course that would shock Chicago society and forever change their lives.
Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro

As a child, Kathy—now thirty-one years old—lived at Hailsham, a private school in the scenic English countryside where the children were sheltered from the outside world, brought up to believe that they were special and that their well-being was crucial not only for themselves but for the society they would eventually enter. Kathy had long ago put this idyllic past behind her, but when two of her Hailsham friends come back into her life, she stops resisting the pull of memory. And so, as her friendship with Ruth is rekindled, and as the feelings that long ago fueled her adolescent crush on Tommy begin to deepen into love, Kathy recalls their years at Hailsham. With the dawning clarity of hindsight, the three friends are compelled to face the truth about their childhood—and about their lives now. A tale of deceptive simplicity, Never Let Me Go slowly reveals an extraordinary emotional depth and resonance—and takes its place among Kazuo Ishiguro's finest work.

Requiem by Frances Itani

Itani traces the lives, loves, and secrets in one Japanese-Canadian family during and after their internment in the 1940s. In retaliation for the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Canadian government removed Bin Okuma's family from their home on British Columbia's west coast and forced them into internment camps. They were allowed to take only the possessions they could carry, and Bin, as a young boy, was forced to watch neighbors raid his family's home before the transport boats even undocked. Fifty years later, Bin embarks on an unforgettable journey into his past that will throw light on a dark time in history.

Mudbound by Hillary Jordan

Prejudice takes many forms, both subtle and brutal. It is 1946, and city-bred Laura McAllan is trying to raise her children on her husband’s Mississippi Delta farm—a place she finds foreign and frightening. In the midst of the family's struggles, two young men return from the war to work the land. Jamie McAllan, Laura's brother-in-law, is everything her husband is not—charming, handsome, and haunted by his memories of combat. Ronsel Jackson, eldest son of the black sharecroppers who live on the McAllan farm, has come home with the shine of a war hero. But no matter his bravery in defense of his country, he is still considered less than a man in the Jim Crow South. It is the unlikely friendship of these brothers-in-arms that drives this powerful novel to its inexorable conclusion. The men and women of each family relate their versions of events and we are drawn into their lives as they become players in a tragedy on the grandest scale.
Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry by Rachel Joyce

Meet Harold Fry, recently retired. He lives in a small English village with his wife, Maureen, who seems irritated by almost everything he does, even down to how he butters his toast. Little differentiates one day from the next. Then one morning the mail arrives, and within the stack of quotidian minutiae is a letter addressed to Harold in a shaky scrawl from a woman he hasn't seen or heard from in twenty years. Queenie Hennessy is in hospice and is writing to say goodbye. Harold pens a quick reply and, leaving Maureen to her chores, heads to the corner mailbox. But then, Harold has a chance encounter that convinces him that he absolutely must deliver his message to Queenie in person. And thus begins the unlikely pilgrimage. Harold Fry is determined to walk six hundred miles from Kingsbridge to the hospice in Berwick-upon-Tweed because, he believes, as long as he walks, Queenie Hennessey will live. Still in his yachting shoes and light coat, Harold embarks on his urgent quest across the countryside. Along the way he meets one fascinating character after another. And, then there is the unfinished business with Queenie Hennessy.

Lilac Girls by Martha Hall Kelly

"Inspired by the life of a real World War II heroine, this powerful debut novel reveals an incredible story of love, redemption, and terrible secrets that were hidden for decades. New York socialite Caroline Ferriday has her hands full with her post at the French consulate and a new love on the horizon. But Caroline's world is forever changed when Hitler's army invades Poland in September 1939--and then sets its sights on France. An ocean away from Caroline, Kasia Kuzmerick, a Polish teenager, senses her carefree youth disappearing as she is drawn deeper into her role as courier for the underground resistance movement. In a tense atmosphere of watchful eyes and suspecting neighbors, one false move can have dire consequences."
**Invention of Wings** by Sue Monk Kidd

Hetty "Handful" Grimke, an urban slave in early nineteenth century Charleston, yearns for life beyond the suffocating walls that enclose her within the wealthy Grimke household. The Grimke's daughter, Sarah, has known from an early age she is meant to do something large in the world, but she is hemmed in by the limits imposed on women. Kidd's sweeping novel is set in motion on Sarah's eleventh birthday, when she is given ownership of ten year old Handful, who is to be her handmaid. We follow their journey over the next thirty five years, as both strive for a life of their own, dramatically shaping each other's destinies and forming a complex relationship marked by guilt, defiance, estrangement and the uneasy ways of love.

**Orphan Train** by Christina Baker Kline

Kline weaves contemporary and historical fiction into a compelling story about loss, adaptability, and courage. Molly is a rebellious 17-year-old foster child sentenced to community service for stealing a copy of Jane Eyre. She finds a position cleaning out the attic of Vivian, an elderly woman in their coastal Maine town. As Molly sorts through old trunks and boxes, Vivian begins to share stories from her past. Born in County Galway, Vivian immigrated to New York City in 1929. When her family perished in a tenement fire, she was packed off on one of the many orphan trains intended to bring children to Midwestern families who would care for them. Each orphan's lot was largely dependent on the luck of the draw. In this, Vivian's life parallels Molly's, and an unlikely friendship blossoms.

**Defending Jacob** by William Landay

Andy Barber has been an assistant district attorney in his suburban Massachusetts County for more than twenty years. But when a shocking crime shatters their New England town, Andy is blindsided when his fourteen-year-old son is charged with the murder of a fellow student. As damning facts and shocking revelations surface, as a marriage threatens to crumble and the trial intensifies, as the crisis reveals how little a father knows about his son, Andy will face a trial of his own--between loyalty and justice, between truth and allegation, between a past he's tried to bury and a future he cannot conceive.
**Station Eleven** by Emily St. John Mandel

Station Eleven tells the spellbinding story of a Hollywood star, his would-be savior, and a nomadic group of actors roaming the scattered outposts of the Great Lakes region, risking everything for art and humanity. On one snowy night Arthur Leander, a famous actor, has a heart attack onstage during a production of King Lear. Jeevan Chaudhary, a paparazzo-turned-EMT, is in the audience and leaps to his aid. Child actress, Kirsten Raymonde watches in horror as Jeevan performs CPR, pumping Arthur's chest as the curtain drops, but Arthur is dead. That same night, as Jeevan walks home from the theater, a terrible flu begins to spread. Hospitals are flooded and Jeevan and his brother barricade themselves inside an apartment, watching out the window as cars clog the highways, gunshots ring out, and life disintegrates them. Years later, Kirsten is an actress with the Traveling Symphony. Together, this small troupe moves between the settlements of an altered world, performing Shakespeare and music for scattered communities of survivors.

**Paris Wife** by Paula McClain

The Paris Wife captures the love affair between two unforgettable people: Ernest Hemingway and his wife Hadley. Chicago, 1920: Hadley Richardson is a quiet twenty-eight-year-old who has all but given up on love and happiness--until she meets Ernest Hemingway. Following a whirlwind courtship and wedding, the pair set sail for Paris, where they become the golden couple in a lively and volatile group--the fabled "Lost Generation"--that includes Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. Though deeply in love, the Hemingway’s are ill prepared for the hard-drinking, fast-living, and free-loving life of Jazz Age Paris. As Ernest struggles to find the voice that will earn him a place in history and pours himself into the novel that will become The Sun Also Rises, Hadley strives to hold on to her sense of self as her roles as wife, friend, and muse become more challenging. Eventually they find themselves facing the ultimate crisis of their marriage--a deception that will lead to the unraveling of everything they've fought so hard for.

**Me Before You** by Jo Jo Moyes

Despite her lack of nursing experience, former waitress Louisa Clark lands a job as daytime caretaker for recently paralyzed quadriplegic businessman Will Traynor. Will's wealthy family prays that this cheerful young woman can dispel Will’s depression and determination to end his own life. Louisa is horrified when she learns that euthanasia has been scheduled and sets out to enrich Will's life enough to restore his will to live.
**Suite Francaise** by Irene Nemirovsky  
Beginning in Paris on the eve of the Nazi occupation in 1940, this book tells the remarkable story of men and women thrown together in circumstances beyond their control. As Parisians flee the city, human folly surfaces in every imaginable way; a wealthy mother searches for sweets in a town without food, a couple is terrified at the thought of losing their jobs, even as their world begins to fall apart. Moving on to a provincial village now occupied by German soldiers, the locals must learn to coexist with the enemy -- in their town, their homes, even in their hearts.

**Things they carried** by Tim O'Brien  
O'Brien relates personal stories, among them a story that he had never divulged before about how he planned to flee to Canada to avoid the draft. O'Brien, who spent the summer before he had to report to the Army working in a meatpacking factory, left work early one day and drove toward Canada, stopping at a fishing lodge to rest and devise a plan. He is taken in by the lodge owner, who helps him confront the issue of evading the draft by taking him out on the lake that borders Canada. Ultimately, O'Brien yields to what he perceives as societal pressures to conform to notions of duty, courage, and obligation, and he returns home instead of continuing on to Canada. Through the telling of this story, O'Brien struggles with what he considers a failure of his convictions: He was a coward because he went to participate in a war in which he did not believe.

**Where’d you go, Bernadette** by Maria Semple  
Bernadette Fox is notorious. To her Microsoft-guru husband, she's a fearlessly opinionated partner; to fellow private-school mothers in Seattle, she's a disgrace; to design mavens, she's a revolutionary architect, and to 15-year-old Bee, she is a best friend and, simply, Mom. Then Bernadette disappears. It began when Bee aced her report card and claimed her promised reward: a family trip to Antarctica. But Bernadette's intensifying allergy to Seattle--and people in general--has made her so agoraphobic that a virtual assistant in India now runs her most basic errands. A trip to the end of the earth is problematic. To find her mother, Bee compiles email messages, official documents, secret correspondence--creating a compulsively readable and touching novel about misplaced genius and a mother and daughter's role in an absurd world.
Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress by Dai Sijie

At the height of Mao's infamous Cultural Revolution, two boys are among hundreds of thousands exiled to the countryside for "re-education." The narrator and his best friend, Luo, guilty of being the sons of doctors, find themselves in a remote village where, among the peasants of Phoenix Mountain, they are made to cart buckets of excrement up and down precipitous winding paths. Their meager distractions include a violin—as well as, before long, the beautiful daughter of the local tailor. But it is when the two discover a hidden stash of Western classics in Chinese translation that their re-education takes its most surprising turn. While ingeniously concealing their forbidden treasure, the boys find transit to worlds they had thought lost forever. From within the hopelessness and terror of one of the darkest passages in human history, Dai Sijie has fashioned a beguiling and unexpected story about the resilience of the human spirit, the wonder of romantic awakening and the magical power of storytelling.

Light Between Oceans by M. L. Stedman

After four harrowing years on the Western Front, Tom Sherbourne returns to Australia and takes a job as the lighthouse keeper on Janus Rock, nearly half a day's journey from the coast. To this isolated island, where the supply boat comes once a season, Tom brings a young, bold, and loving wife, Isabel. Years later, after two miscarriages and one stillbirth, the grieving Isabel hears a baby's cries on the wind. A boat has washed up onshore carrying a dead man and a living baby. Tom, who keeps meticulous records and whose moral principles have withstood a horrific war, wants to report the man and infant immediately. But Isabel insists the baby is a "gift from God," and against Tom's judgment, they claim her as their own and name her Lucy. When she is two, Tom and Isabel return to the mainland and are reminded that there are other people in the world. Their choice to keep the child as their own has devastating results.

Help by Kathryn Stockett

Skeeter, is back home after graduating from Ole Miss. She has a degree, but it is 1962, Mississippi, and her mother will not be happy till Skeeter has a ring on her finger. Aibileen is a black maid, a wise, regal woman raising her seventeenth white child. Something has shifted inside her after the loss of her own son. She is devoted to the little girl she looks after, though she knows both their hearts may be broken. Minny, Aibileen's best friend, is the sassiest woman in Mississippi. She can cook like nobody's business, but she can't mind her tongue, so she's lost yet another job. Minny finally finds a position working for someone too new to town to know her reputation. But her new boss has secrets of her own. Seemingly as different from one another as can be, these women will come together for a clandestine project that will put them all at risk.
Rules of Civility by Amor Towles

Set in New York City in 1938, Rules of Civility tells the story of a watershed year in the life of an uncompromising twenty-five-year-old named Katey Kontent. Armed with little more than a formidable intellect, a bracing wit, and her own brand of cool nerve, Katey embarks on a journey from a Wall Street secretarial pool through the upper echelons of New York society in search of a brighter future. Elegant and captivating, Rules of Civility turns a Jamesian eye on how spur of the moment decisions define life for decades to come.

NON-FICTION

Arranged by Dewey number classification

Power of Habit by Charles Duhigg (158.1D)

In The Power of Habit, Pulitzer Prize-winning business reporter Charles Duhigg takes us to the thrilling edge of scientific discoveries that explain why habits exist and how they can be changed. Distilling vast amounts of information into engrossing narratives that take us from the boardrooms of Procter & Gamble to sidelines of the NFL to the front lines of the civil rights movement, Duhigg presents a whole new understanding of human nature and it’s potential. At its core, The Power of Habit contains an exhilarating argument: The key to exercising regularly, losing weight, being more productive, and achieving success is understanding how habits work. Duhigg shows, by harnessing this new science, we can transform our businesses, our communities, and our lives.
Modern Romance by Aziz Ansari (306.73A)

A hilarious, thoughtful, and in-depth exploration of the pleasures and perils of modern romance from one of this generation's sharpest comedic voices. At some point, every one of us embarks on a journey to find love. We meet people, date, and get into and out of relationships, all with the hope of finding someone with whom we share a deep connection. This seems standard now, but it's wildly different from what people did even just decades ago. Single people today have more romantic options than at any point in human history. With technology, our abilities to connect with and sort through these options are staggering. So why are so many people frustrated?

Detroit City is the Place to Be by Mark Binelli (307.121B)

Once America's capitalist dream town, Detroit has been called our country's greatest urban failure, having fallen the longest and the farthest. But the city's worst crisis yet (and that's saying something) has managed to do the unthinkable: turn the end of days into a laboratory for the future. Urban planners, land speculators, neopastoral agriculturalists, and utopian environmentalists—all have been drawn to Detroit's baroquely decaying, nothing-left-to-lose frontier. With an eye for both the darkly absurd and the radically new, Detroit-area native Mark Binelli has chronicled this convergence. Sharp and impassioned, Detroit City Is the Place to Be is alive with the sense of possibility that comes when a city hits rock bottom. Beyond the usual portrait of crime, poverty, and ruin, we glimpse a longshot future Detroit that is smaller, less segregated, greener, economically diverse, and better functioning. This could be the boldest reimagining of a post-industrial city in our new century.

Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson (345.077S)

A powerful true story about the potential for mercy to redeem us, and a clarion call to fix our broken system of justice—from one of the most brilliant and influential lawyers of our time Bryan Stevenson was a young lawyer when he founded the Equal Justice Initiative, a legal practice dedicated to defending those most desperate and in need: the poor, the wrongly condemned, and women and children trapped in the farthest reaches of our criminal justice system. One of his first cases was that of Walter McMillian, a young man who was sentenced to die for a notorious murder he insisted he didn't commit. The case drew Bryan into a tangle of conspiracy, political machination, and legal brinksmanship—and transformed his understanding of mercy and justice forever. Just Mercy is at once an unforgettable account of an idealistic, gifted young lawyer's coming of age, a moving window into the lives of those he has defended, and an inspiring argument for compassion in the pursuit of true justice.
Deep Down Dark by Hector Tobar (363.119T)

When the San José mine collapsed outside of Copiapó, Chile, in August 2010, it trapped thirty-three miners beneath thousands of feet of rock for a record-breaking sixty-nine days. The entire world watched what transpired above-ground during the grueling and protracted rescue, but the saga of the miners' experiences below the Earth's surface--and the lives that led them there--has never been heard until now. These thirty-three men came to think of the mine, a cavern inflicting constant and thundering torment, as a kind of coffin, and as a church where they sought redemption through prayer. Even while still buried, they all agreed that if by some miracle any of them escaped alive, they would share their story only collectively. Deep Down Dark brings to haunting, tactile life the experience of being imprisoned inside a mountain of stone, the horror of being slowly consumed by hunger, and the spiritual and mystical elements that surrounded working in such a dangerous place. In its stirring final chapters, it captures the profound way in which the lives of everyone involved in the disaster were forever changed.

Full Body Burden by Kristen Iversen (363.17I)

Full Body Burden is a haunting work of narrative nonfiction about a young woman, Kristen Iversen, growing up in a small Colorado town close to Rocky Flats, a secret nuclear weapons plant once designated "the most contaminated site in America." It's the story of a childhood and adolescence in the shadow of the Cold War, in a landscape at once startlingly beautiful and--unknown to those who lived there--tainted with invisible yet deadly particles of plutonium. It's also a book about the destructive power of secrets--both family and government. Based on extensive interviews, FBI and EPA documents, and class-action testimony, this taut, beautifully written book promises to provoke thoughtful discussion.

Smartest Kids in the world by Amanda Ripley (370.9R)

How do other countries create "Smarter" Kids? In a handful of nations, virtually all children are learning to make complex arguments and solve problems they've never seen before. They are learning to think, in other words, and to thrive in the modern economy. What is it like to be a child in the world's new education superpowers (Finland, Poland, and South Korea)? In a global quest to find answers for our own children, author and Time magazine journalist Amanda Ripley follows three American exchange students embedded in these countries for one year. Their stories, along with groundbreaking research into learning in other cultures, reveals a pattern of startling transformation: none of these countries had many "smart" kids a few decades ago. Teaching had become more rigorous; parents had focused on things that mattered; and children had bought into the promise of education.
*Hidden Figures* by Margot Lee Shetterly (510.92S)

The phenomenal true story of the black female mathematicians at NASA at the leading edge of the feminist and civil rights movement, whose calculations helped fuel some of America’s greatest achievements in space—a powerful, revelatory contribution that is as essential to our understanding of race, discrimination, and achievement in modern America. Among these problem-solvers were a group of exceptionally talented African American women, some of the brightest minds of their generation. Originally relegated to teaching math in the South’s segregated public schools, they were called into service during the labor shortages of World War II, when America’s aeronautics industry was in dire need of anyone who had the right stuff. Suddenly, these overlooked math whizzes had a shot at jobs worthy of their skills, and they answered Uncle Sam’s call, moving to Hampton, Virginia and the fascinating, high-energy world of the Langley Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory.

*Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot (616.027S)

Scientists know her as HeLa. Henrietta Lacks was a poor Southern tobacco farmer who worked the same land as her slave ancestors, yet her cells—taken without her knowledge—became one of the most important tools in medicine. The first "immortal" human cells grown in culture, are still alive today, though she has been dead for more than sixty years. If you could pile all HeLa cells ever grown onto a scale, they'd weigh more than 50 million metric tons—as much as a hundred Empire State Buildings. HeLa cells were vital for developing the polio vaccine; uncovered secrets of cancer, viruses, and the atom bomb's effects; helped lead to important advances like in vitro fertilization, cloning, gene mapping; and have been bought and sold by the billions. Yet Henrietta Lacks remains virtually unknown, buried in an unmarked grave. Now Rebecca Skloot takes us on an extraordinary journey, from the "colored" ward of Johns Hopkins Hospital in the 1950s to stark white laboratories with freezers full of HeLa cells. Henrietta's family did not learn of her "immortality" until more than twenty years after her death, when scientists investigating HeLa began using her husband and children in research without informed consent.

*Concussion* by Jeanne Marie Laskas (617.51L)

Jeanne Marie Laskas first met forensic pathologist Dr. Bennet Omalu while reporting a story for *GQ* that would go on to inspire the movie *Concussion*. Omalu told her about the day he picked up a scalpel and made a discovery that would rattle America in ways he'd never intended. Omalu was new to America, chasing the dream, a deeply spiritual man escaping the wounds of civil war in Nigeria. The body before him on the slab belonged to a Hall of Fame center for the Pittsburgh Steelers, fifty-year-old named Mike Webster, aka "Iron Mike" one of the greatest ever to play the game. After retiring in 1990, Webster had suffered a dizzyingly steep decline.
Toward the end of his life, he was living out of his van, tasering himself to relieve his chronic pain, and fixing his teeth with Super Glue. How did this happen? How did a young man like Mike Webster end up like this? The search for answers would change Omalu's life forever and put him in a battle with one of the most powerful corporations in America: the National Football League.

*Boys in the Boat* by Daniel James Brown (797.123B)

Brown's book tells the story of the University of Washington's 1936 eight-oar crew and their epic quest for an Olympic gold medal, a team that transformed the sport and grabbed the attention of millions of Americans. The sons of loggers, shipyard workers, and farmers, the boys defeated elite rivals first from eastern and British universities and finally the German crew rowing for Adolf Hitler in the Olympic Games in Berlin, 1936. The emotional heart of the story lies with one rower, Joe Rantz, a teenager without family or prospects, who rows not for glory, but to regain his shattered self-regard and to find a place he can call home. The crew is assembled by an enigmatic coach and mentored by a visionary, eccentric British boat builder, but it is their trust in each other that makes them a victorious team. They remind the country of what can be done when everyone quite literally pulls together—a perfect melding of commitment, determination, and optimism.

*Jane Austen Education* by William Deresiewicz (823.7D)

This is an eloquent memoir of a young man's life transformed by literature. Austen's devotion to the everyday, and her belief in the value of ordinary lives, ignited something in Deresiewicz. He began viewing the world through Austen's eyes and treating those around him as generously as Austen treated her characters. Along the way, Deresiewicz was amazed to discover that the people in his life developed the depth and richness of literary characters—that his own life had suddenly acquired all the fascination of a novel. His real education had finally begun. Weaving his own story—and Austen's—around the ones her novels tell, Deresiewicz shows how her books are both about education and themselves an education.
**In the Garden of Beasts by Erik Larson (943.086L)**

The time is 1933, the place, Berlin, when William E. Dodd becomes America’s first ambassador to Hitler's Germany in a year that proved to be a turning point in history. A mild-mannered professor from Chicago, Dodd brings along his wife, son, and flamboyant daughter, Martha. At first Martha is entranced by the parties and pomp, and the handsome young men of the Third Reich with their enthusiasm for restoring Germany to a position of world prominence. Enamored of the "New Germany," she has one affair after another, including with the surprisingly honorable first chief of the Gestapo, Rudolf Diels. But as evidence of Jewish persecution mounts, confirmed by chilling first-person testimony, her father telegraphs his concerns to a largely indifferent State Department back home. Dodd watches with alarm as Jews are attacked, the press is censored, and drafts of frightening new laws begin to circulate. As that first year unfolds and the shadows deepen, the Dodd’s experience days of excitement, intrigue, romance, and ultimately, horror, when a climactic spasm of violence and murder reveals Hitler's true character and ruthless ambition.

**Liar, Temptress, Solider, Spy by Karen Abbott (973.785A)**

Seventeen-year-old Belle Boyd, an avowed rebel with a dangerous temper, shot a Union soldier in her home, and became a courier and spy for the Confederate army. Emma Edmonds disguised herself as a man to enlist as a Union Private named Frank Thompson, witnessing the bloodiest battles of the war and infiltrating enemy lines. Widow Rose O'Neal Greenhow engaged in affairs with powerful Northern politicians and used her young daughter to send information to Southern generals. Elizabeth Van Lew, a wealthy Richmond abolitionist, hid behind her proper Southern manners as she orchestrated a far-reaching espionage ring—even placing a former slave inside the Confederate White House—right under the noses of increasingly suspicious rebel detectives. Abbott's narrative weaves the adventures of these four forgotten daredevils into the tumultuous landscape of a broken America, evoking a secret world that will surprise even the most avid enthusiasts of Civil War-era history.
Girls of Atomic City by Denise Kiernan (976.873K)

At the height of World War II, Oak Ridge, Tennessee, was home to 75,000 residents, consuming more electricity than New York City. But to most of the world, the town did not exist. Thousands of civilians--many of them young women from small towns across the South--were recruited to this secret city, enticed by solid wages and the promise of war-ending work. Kept very much in the dark, few would ever guess the true nature of the tasks they performed each day in the hulking factories in the middle of the Appalachian Mountains. That is, until the end of the war--when Oak Ridge's secret was revealed.

Eden’s Outcasts by John Matteson (BIOG Alcott)

Louisa May Alcott and her father, A. Bronson Alcott, died within three days of each other in March, 1888. For most of their lives, it was Bronson, a self-educated philosopher and controversial education reformer, who was known to the public for both good and ill. One of the earliest Transcendentalists, he was a close friend of Emerson and Thoreau. He was also regarded by many as an impractical idealist who could not provide for his family. It was late in Louisa's life—with the publication of Little Women, followed by Little Men and Jo's Boys—that she far exceeded her father in notoriety receiving much critical acclaim, best-selling success and substantial financial rewards. Their father-daughter relationship was not always easy, and for both "life was a persistent but failed quest for perfection."

Bootstrapper by Mardi Jo Link (BIOG Link)

It's the summer of 2005, and Mardi Jo Link's dream of living the simple life has unraveled into debt, heartbreak, and perpetually ragged cuticles. She and her husband of nineteen years have just called it quits, leaving her with serious cash-flow problems and a looming divorce. Poorer than ever, Link makes a seemingly impossible resolution: to hang on to her century-old farmhouse in northern Michigan and continue to raise her three boys on well water and wood chopping and dirt. With an infectious optimism that would put Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm to shame and a deep appreciation of the natural world, Link tells the story of how, over the course of one long year, she holds on to her sons, saves the farm from foreclosure, and finds her way back to a life of richness and meaning on the land she loves.
*Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace* by Jeff Hobbs (BIOG Peace)

When author Jeff Hobbs arrived at Yale University, he became fast friends with the man who would be his college roommate for four years, Robert Peace. Rob's life was rough from the beginning in the crime-ridden streets of Newark in the 1980s, with his father in jail and his mother earning less than $15,000 a year. But Rob was a brilliant student, and it was supposed to get easier when he was accepted to Yale, where he studied molecular biochemistry and biophysics. But it didn't get easier. Robert carried with him the difficult dual nature of his existence, "fronting" in Yale, and at home. Through an honest rendering of Rob's relationships- with his struggling mother, with his incarcerated father, with his teachers and friends and fellow drug dealers- *The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace* encompasses the most enduring conflicts in America: race, class, drugs, community, imprisonment, education, family, friendship, and love. But most all the story is about the tragic life of one singular brilliant young man. His end, a violent one, is heartbreaking and powerful and unforgettable.

*Wild* by Cheryl Strayed (BIOG Strayed)

*Wild* is the story of an eleven-hundred-mile solo hike that broke down a young woman reeling from catastrophe--and built her back up again. At twenty-two, Cheryl Strayed thought she had lost everything in the wake of her mother's death, her family scattered and her own marriage destroyed and four years later, with nothing more to lose, she made the most impulsive decision of her life - to hike the Pacific Crest Trail from the Mojave Desert through California and Oregon to Washington State--and to do it alone. She had no experience as a long-distance hiker, and the trail was little more than "an idea, vague and outlandish and full of promise." Strayed faced down rattlesnakes black bears, intense heat and record snowfalls, and both the beauty and loneliness of the trail. Told with great suspense and style, sparkling with warmth and humor, *Wild* vividly captures the terrors and pleasures of one young woman forging ahead against all odds on a journey that maddened, strengthened, and ultimately healed her.
I am Malala by Malala Yousafzai (BIOG Yousafzai)

Malala Yousafzai was only ten years old when the Taliban took control of her region. Raised in a once-peaceful area of Pakistan transformed by terrorism, Malala was taught to stand up for what she believes. So she fought for her right to be educated. And on October 9, 2012, she nearly lost her life for the cause. Now Malala is an international symbol of peaceful protest and the youngest ever Nobel Peace Prize winner.

Unbroken by Laura Hillenbrand (BIOG Zamperini)

In boyhood, Louis Zamperini was an incorrigible delinquent. As a teenager, he channeled his defiance into running, discovering a prodigious talent that had carried him to the Berlin Olympics. But when World War II began, the athlete became an airman, embarking on a journey that led to a doomed flight on a May afternoon in 1943. When his Army Air Forces bomber crashed into the Pacific Ocean, against all odds, Zamperini survived, adrift on a foundering life raft driven to the limits of endurance, Zamperini would answer desperation with ingenuity; suffering with hope, resolve, and humor; brutality with rebellion. Unbroken is an unforgettable testament to the resilience of the human mind, body, and spirit, brought vividly to life by author Laura Hillenbrand.