

1 The Last Chairlift by John Irving

- 912 pages. Maybe it can be a 2 month book.
- A ghost story, a live story, and a lifetime of sexual politics.

In Aspen, Colorado, in 1941, Rachel Brewster is a slalom skier at the National Downhill and Slalom Championships. Little Ray, as she is called, finishes nowhere near the podium, but she manages to get pregnant. Back home, in New England, Little Ray becomes a ski instructor.

Her son, Adam, grows up in a family that defies conventions and evades questions concerning the eventful past. Years later, looking for answers, Adam will go to Aspen. In the Hotel Jerome, where he was conceived, Adam will meet some ghosts; in *The Last Chairlift*, they aren't the first or the last ghosts he sees.

2 Mad Honey by Jodi Picoult

- 464 pages

A soul-stirring novel about what we choose to keep from our past, and what we choose to leave behind.

Olivia McAfee knows what it feels like to start over. Her picture-perfect life—living in Boston, married to a brilliant cardiothoracic surgeon, raising a beautiful son, Asher—was upended when her husband revealed a darker side. She never imagined she would end up back in her sleepy New Hampshire hometown, living in the house she grew up in, and taking over her father's beekeeping business.

Lily Campanello is familiar with do-overs, too. When she and her mom relocate to Adams, New Hampshire, for her final year of high school, they both hope it will be a fresh start.

And for just a short while, these new beginnings are exactly what Olivia and Lily need. Their paths cross when Asher falls for the new girl in school, and Lily can't help but fall for him, too. With Ash, she feels happy for the first time. Yet at times, she wonders if she can she trust him completely . . .

Then one day, Olivia receives a phone call: Lily is dead, and Asher is being questioned by the police. Olivia is adamant that her son is innocent. But she would be lying if she didn't acknowledge the flashes of his father's temper in him, and as the case against him unfolds, she realizes he's hidden more than he's shared with her.

Mad Honey is a riveting novel of suspense, an unforgettable love story, and a moving and powerful exploration of the secrets we keep and the risks we take in order to become ourselves.

3 The Many Daughters of Afong Moy by Jamie Ford

- 384 pages

Dorothy Moy breaks her own heart for a living.

As Washington's former poet laureate, that's how she describes channeling her dissociative episodes and mental health struggles into her art. But when her five-year-old daughter exhibits similar behavior and begins remembering things from the lives of their ancestors, Dorothy believes the past has truly come to haunt her. Fearing that her child is predestined to endure the same debilitating depression that has marked her own life, Dorothy seeks radical help.

Through an experimental treatment designed to mitigate inherited trauma, Dorothy intimately connects with past generations of women in her family: Faye Moy, a nurse in China serving with the Flying Tigers; Zoe Moy, a student in England at a famous school with no rules; Lai King Moy, a girl quarantined in San Francisco during a plague epidemic; Greta Moy, a tech executive with a unique dating app; and Afong Moy, the first Chinese woman to set foot in America.

As painful recollections affect her present life, Dorothy discovers that trauma isn't the only thing she's inherited. A stranger is searching for her in each time period. A stranger who's loved her through all of her genetic memories. Dorothy endeavors to break the cycle of pain and abandonment, to finally find peace for her daughter, and gain the love that has long been waiting, knowing she may pay the ultimate price.

4 The seven husbands of evelyn Hugo by Reid

- 389 pages

Aging and reclusive Hollywood movie icon Evelyn Hugo is finally ready to tell the truth about her glamorous and scandalous life. But when she chooses unknown magazine reporter Monique Grant for the job, no one is more astounded than Monique herself. Why her? Why now?

Monique is not exactly on top of the world. Her husband has left her, and her professional life is going nowhere. Regardless of why Evelyn has selected her to write her biography, Monique is determined to use this opportunity to jumpstart her career.

Summoned to Evelyn's luxurious apartment, Monique listens in fascination as the actress tells her story. From making her way to Los Angeles in the 1950s to her decision to leave show business in the '80s, and, of course, the seven husbands along the way, Evelyn unspools a tale of ruthless ambition, unexpected friendship, and a great forbidden love. Monique begins to feel a very real connection to the legendary star, but as Evelyn's story near its conclusion, it becomes clear that her life intersects with Monique's own in tragic and irreversible ways.

5 The orphan sisters by Shirley Dickson

- 367 pages

A heartbreaking, unputdownable and utterly unforgettable story of two young sisters cruelly abandoned by their mother at an orphanage. Fans of *Wives of War*, Lisa Wingate and Diney Costeloe will lose their hearts to this stunning World War Two novel.

1929: Four-year-old Etty and eight-year-old Dorothy are abandoned at Blakely Hall orphanage by their mother, never to see her again. With no other family to speak of, the sisters worship their beloved mam – confused and heartbroken to be deserted by her when they need her the most.

1940: Etty and Dorothy are finally released from the confines of Blakely Hall – but their freedom comes when the country is in the grip of World War Two and its terrors. Amidst a devastating backdrop of screaming air-raid sirens and cold nights huddled in shelters, the sisters are desperate to put their broken childhoods behind them.

But trouble lies ahead. Dorothy must bid goodbye to her beloved husband when he's sent to war and Etty must nurse a broken heart as she falls in love with the one man she can never be with.

Etty and Dorothy survived the orphanage with the help of one another and neither sister can forget the awful betrayal of their mother, which has haunted them their whole lives. But when a shocking secret about their painful childhood comes to light, will the sisters ever be the same again?

6 **The Marriage of Opposites** by Alice Hoffman

- Author of *The Dovekeepers* that we read already. A forbidden love story set on the tropical island of St. Thomas about the extraordinary woman who gave birth to painter Camille Pissarro; the Father of Impressionism — is deeply concerned with **the development of an artist and his work, and the familial experiences that shape an artist's vision**. His grandparents were pillars of their small refugee community of Jews who escaped the Inquisition, but his mother a rebel who is married off to a widower with three children to save her father's business. When he dies suddenly she begins a defiant, passionate love affair that sparks a scandal that affects all of her family. 371 pages; published August 4th 2015 by Simon Schuster

7 **The Paris Library** by Janet Skeslien Charles

An instant *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *USA TODAY* bestseller—based on the true story of the heroic librarians at the American Library in Paris during World War II—*The Paris Library* is a moving and unforgettable “ode to the importance of libraries, books, and the human connections we find within both” (Kristin Harmel, *New York Times* bestselling author). Paris, 1939: Young and ambitious Odile Souchet seems to have the perfect life with her handsome police officer beau and a dream job at the American Library in

Paris. When the Nazis march into the city, Odile stands to lose everything she holds dear, including her beloved library. Together with her fellow librarians, Odile joins the Resistance with the best weapons she has: books. But when the war finally ends, instead of freedom, Odile tastes the bitter sting of unspeakable betrayal. Montana, 1983: Lily is a lonely teenager looking for adventure in small-town Montana. Her interest is piqued by her solitary, elderly neighbor. As Lily uncovers more about her neighbor's mysterious past, she finds that they share a love of language, the same longings, and the same intense jealousy, never suspecting that a dark secret from the past connects them.

- Publisher: Atria Books (March 1, 2022)
- Length: 384 pages

8 Horse by Geraldine Brooks

Pulitzer winner Geraldine Brooks's latest book is a sweeping tale that uses the true story of a famous 19th-century racehorse to explore the roots and legacy of enslavement. Publisher: Viking (June 14, 2022); Length: 461 pages

9 Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver (newer publication/longer book)

Book compared to Charles Dickens' David Copperfield. Set in the mountains of southern Appalachia, this is the story of a boy born to a teenaged single mother in a single-wide trailer, with no assets beyond his dead father's good looks and copper-colored hair, a caustic wit, and a fierce talent for survival. In a plot that never pauses for breath, relayed in his own unsparing voice, he braves the modern perils of foster care, child labor, derelict schools, athletic success, addiction, disastrous loves, and crushing losses. Through all of it, he reckons with his own invisibility in a popular culture where even the superheroes have abandoned rural people in favor of cities., 560 pages

Published October 18th 2022 by Harper

10 The Dirty Life: On Farming, Food, and Love by Kristin Kimball

Single, thirtysomething, working as a writer in New York City, Kristin Kimball was living life as an adventure. But she was beginning to feel a sense of longing for a family and for home. When she interviewed a dynamic young farmer, her world changed. Kristin knew nothing about growing vegetables, let alone raising pigs and cattle and driving horses. But on an impulse, smitten, if not yet in love, she shed her city self and moved to five hundred acres near Lake Champlain to start a new farm with him. The Dirty Life is the captivating chronicle of their first year on Essex Farm, from the cold North Country winter through the following harvest

season—complete with their wedding in the loft of the barn. Hardcover, 276 pages; Published October 12th 2010 by Scribner. Memoir available online cheaply.

11 NOT YET RELEASED: With My Little Eye by Joshua Spence.

From the New York Times bestselling author of **Never Have I Ever** comes the hair-raising story of a mother who moves herself and her daughter across the country to lose a dangerous stalker—only to discover that it will take more than distance to escape him. Hardcover, 336 pages; Expected publication: April 25th 2023 by William Morrow

12 Lady Clementine by Marie Benedict (two recommendations)

Historical Fiction
322 pages

In 1909, Clementine Churchill steps off a train with her new husband, Winston. An angry woman emerges from the crowd to attack, shoving him in the direction of an oncoming train. Just before he stumbles, Clementine grabs him by his suit jacket. This will not be the last time Clementine Churchill saves her husband.

Lady Clementine is the ferocious story of the brilliant and ambitious woman beside Winston Churchill, the story of a partner who did not flinch through the sweeping darkness of war, and who would not surrender either to expectations or to enemies.

13 In Five Years by Rebecca Serle

Fiction
288 pages

Dannie Kohan lives her life by the numbers. She is nothing like her lifelong best friend--the wild, whimsical, believes-in-fate Bella. Her meticulous planning seems to have paid off after she nails the most important job interview of her career and accepts her boyfriend's marriage proposal in one fell swoop, falling asleep completely content.

But when she awakens, she's suddenly in a different apartment, with a different ring on her finger, and beside a very different man. Dannie spends one hour exactly five years in

the future before she wakes again in her own home on the brink of midnight--but it is one hour she cannot shake. *In Five Years* is an unforgettable love story, but it is not the one you're expecting.

14 The Cartographers by Peng Shepard

fiction

404 pages.

What is the purpose of a map? Nell Young's whole life and greatest passion is cartography. Her father, Dr. Daniel Young, is a legend in the field and Nell's personal hero. But she hasn't seen or spoken to him ever since he cruelly fired her and destroyed her reputation after an argument over an old, cheap gas station highway map.

But when Dr. Young is found dead in his office at the New York Public Library, with the very same seemingly worthless map hidden in his desk, Nell can't resist investigating. To her surprise, she soon discovers that the map is incredibly valuable and exceedingly rare. In fact, she may now have the only copy left in existence... because a mysterious collector has been hunting down and destroying every last one—along with anyone who gets in the way. But why? To answer that question, Nell embarks on a dangerous journey to reveal a dark family secret and discovers the true power that lies in maps...

15 The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue by V.E. Schwab

Fantasy

507 pages

Goodreads Choice Award Nominee for Best Fantasy (2020)

France, 1714: in a moment of desperation, a young woman makes a Faustian bargain to live forever and is cursed to be forgotten by everyone she meets. Thus begins the extraordinary life of Addie LaRue, and a dazzling adventure that will play out across centuries and continents, across history and art, as a young woman learns how far she will go to leave her mark on the world. But everything changes when, after nearly 300 years, Addie stumbles across a young man in a hidden bookstore and he remembers her name. (Comment: historical without being boring).

16 The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo by Taylor Jenkins Reid (two recommendations)

Fiction

389 pages

Goodreads Choice Award Nominee for Best Historical Fiction (2017)

Aging and reclusive Hollywood movie icon Evelyn Hugo is finally ready to tell the truth about her glamorous and scandalous life. But when she chooses unknown magazine reporter Monique Grant for the job, no one is more astounded than Monique herself. Why her? Why now? Monique is not exactly on top of the world. Her husband has left her, and her professional life is going nowhere. Regardless of why Evelyn has selected her to write her biography, Monique is determined to use this opportunity to jumpstart her career.

Summoned to Evelyn's luxurious apartment, Monique listens in fascination as the actress tells her story. From making her way to Los Angeles in the 1950s to her decision to leave show business in the '80s, and, of course, the seven husbands along the way, Evelyn unspools a tale of ruthless ambition, unexpected friendship, and a great forbidden love. Monique begins to feel a very real connection to the legendary star, but as Evelyn's story near its conclusion, it becomes clear that her life intersects with Monique's own in tragic and irreversible ways.

17 The Only Woman in the Room by Marie Benedict

She wrote Carnegie's maid and The Other Einstein.

Historical fiction

256 pages

She was beautiful. She was a genius. Could the world handle both? A novel about Hedy Lamarr.

Hedy Kiesler is lucky. Her beauty leads to a starring role in a controversial film and marriage to a powerful Austrian arms dealer, allowing her to evade Nazi persecution despite her Jewish heritage. But Hedy is also intelligent. At lavish Vienna dinner parties, she overhears the Third Reich's plans. One night in 1937, desperate to escape her controlling husband and the rise of the Nazis, she disguises herself and flees her husband's castle.

She lands in Hollywood, where she becomes Hedy Lamarr, screen star. But Hedy is keeping a secret even more shocking than her Jewish heritage: she is a scientist. She has an idea that

might help the country and that might ease her guilt for escaping alone—if anyone will listen to her.

18 Other birds by Sarah Addison Allen

Fiction, fantasy

290 pages

An enchanting tale filled with magical realism and moments of pure love that won't let you go.

Between the real and the imaginary, there are stories that take flight in the most extraordinary ways.

Right off the coast of South Carolina, on Mallow Island, The Dellawisp sits—a stunning old cobblestone building shaped like a horseshoe, and named after the tiny turquoise birds who, alongside its human tenants, inhabit an air of magical secrecy.

When Zoey comes to claim her deceased mother's apartment at the Dellawisp she meets her quirky and secretive neighbors, including a young woman with a past, two estranged middle-aged sisters, and a lonely chef, and three ghosts. The sudden death of one of Zoey's new neighbors sets off a search that leads to the island's famous author and to a long-estranged relative of the sisters.

Each of them has a story, and each story has an ending which hasn't yet been written.

19 The princess spy by Larry loftis

Nonfiction, history

384 pages

When Aline Griffith was born in a quiet suburban New York hamlet, no one had any idea that she would go on to live “a life of glamour and danger that Ingrid Bergman only played at in Notorious” (Time). As the US enters the Second World War, the young college graduate is desperate to aid in the war effort, but no one is interested in a bright-eyed young woman whose only career experience is modeling clothes.

Aline's life changes when, at a dinner party, she meets a man named Frank Ryan and reveals how desperately she wants to do her part for her country. Within a few weeks, he helps her join the Office of Strategic Services—forerunner of the CIA. With a code name and expert training under her belt, she is sent to Spain to be a coder, but is soon given the additional assignment of infiltrating the upper echelons of society, mingling with high-ranking officials, diplomats, and

titled Europeans, any of whom could be an enemy agent. Against this glamorous backdrop of galas and dinner parties, she recruits sub-agents and engages in deep-cover espionage to counter Nazi tactics in Madrid.

Even after marrying the Count of Romanones, one of the wealthiest men in Spain, Aline secretly continues her covert activities, being given special assignments when abroad that would benefit from her impeccable pedigree and social connections.

Filled with twists, romance, and plenty of white-knuckled adventures fit for a James Bond film, *The Princess Spy* brings to vivid life the dazzling adventures of a remarkable American woman who risked everything to serve her country.

20 The lost airmen a true story of escape from nazi occupied France by [Seth Meyerowitz](#)

History, nonfiction
320 pages

For fans of *Unbroken*, the remarkable, untold story of World War II American Air Force turret-gunner Staff Sergeant Arthur Meyerowitz, who was shot down over Nazi-occupied France and evaded Gestapo pursuers for more than six months before escaping to freedom.

Bronx-born top turret-gunner Arthur Meyerowitz was on his second mission when he was shot down in 1943. He was one of only two men on the B-24 Liberator known as “Harmful Lil Armful” who escaped death or immediate capture on the ground.

After fleeing the wreck, Arthur knocked on the door of an isolated farmhouse, whose owners hastily took him in. Fortunately, his hosts not only despised the Nazis but had a tight connection to the French resistance group Morhange and its founder, Marcel Taillandier. Arthur and Taillandier formed an improbable bond as the resistance leader arranged for Arthur’s transfers among safe houses in southern France, shielding him from the Gestapo.

Based on recently declassified material, exclusive personal interviews, and extensive research into the French Resistance, *The Lost Airman* tells the tense and riveting story of Arthur’s trying months in Toulouse—masquerading as a deaf mute and working with a downed British pilot to evade the Nazis—and of his hair-raising journey to freedom involving a perilous trek over the Pyrenees and a voyage aboard a fishing boat with U-boats lurking below and Luftwaffe fighters looming above. With photographs and maps included, this is a never-before-told true story of endurance, perseverance, and escape during World War II.

21 Between Two Kingdoms - Suleika Jaoua

Memoir

352 pages

A searing, deeply moving memoir of illness and recovery that traces one young woman's journey from diagnosis to remission and, ultimately, a road trip of healing and self-discovery.

In the summer after graduating from college, Suleika Jaouad was preparing, as they say in commencement speeches, to enter “the real world”. She had fallen in love and moved to Paris to pursue her dream of becoming a war correspondent. The real world she found, however, would take her into a very different kind of conflict zone.

It started with an itch—first on her feet, then up her legs, like a thousand invisible mosquito bites. Next came the exhaustion, and the six-hour naps that only deepened her fatigue. Then a trip to the doctor and, a few weeks shy of her twenty-third birthday, a diagnosis: leukemia, with a 35 percent chance of survival. Just like that, the life she had imagined for herself had gone up in flames. By the time Jaouad flew home to New York, she had lost her job, her apartment, and her independence. She would spend much of the next four years in a hospital bed, fighting for her life and chronicling the saga in a column for The New York Times.

When Jaouad finally walked out of the cancer ward—after three and a half years of chemo, a clinical trial, and a bone marrow transplant—she was, according to the doctors, cured. But as she would soon learn, a cure is not where the work of healing ends; it's where it begins. She had spent the past 1,500 days in desperate pursuit of one goal—to survive. And now that she'd done so, she realized that she had no idea how to live.

How would she reenter the world and live again? How could she reclaim what had been lost? Jaouad embarked—with her new best friend, Oscar, a scruffy terrier mutt—on a 100-day, 15,000-mile road trip across the country. She set out to meet some of the strangers who had written to her during her years in the hospital: a teenage girl in Florida also recovering from cancer; a teacher in California grieving the death of her son; a death-row inmate in Texas who'd spent his own years confined to a room. What she learned on this trip is that the divide between sick and well is porous, that the vast majority of us will travel back and forth between these realms throughout our lives. *Between Two Kingdoms* is a profound chronicle of survivorship and a fierce, tender, and inspiring exploration of what it means to begin again.

22 The Vanishing Half - Brit Bennett

Historical Fiction

343 pages

The Vignes twin sisters will always be identical. But after growing up together in a small, southern black community and running away at age sixteen, it's not just the shape of their daily lives that is different as adults, it's everything: their families, their communities, their racial identities. Many years later, one sister lives with her black daughter in the same southern town she once tried to escape. The other passes for white, and her white husband knows nothing of her past. Still, even separated by so many miles and just as many lies, the fates of the twins remain intertwined. What will happen to the next generation, when their own daughters' storylines intersect?

Weaving together multiple strands and generations of this family, from the Deep South to California, from the 1950s to the 1990s, Brit Bennett produces a story that is at once a riveting, emotional family story and a brilliant exploration of the American history of passing. Looking well beyond issues of race, *The Vanishing Half* considers the lasting influence of the past as it shapes a person's decisions, desires, and expectations, and explores some of the multiple reasons and realms in which people sometimes feel pulled to live as something other than their origins.

23 Broken Horses - Brandi Carlile

Memoir

336 pages

The critically acclaimed singer-songwriter, producer, and six-time Grammy winner opens up about a life shaped by music in this candid, heartfelt, and intimate story.

Brandi Carlile was born into a musically gifted, impoverished family on the outskirts of Seattle and grew up in a constant state of change, moving from house to house, trailer to trailer, 14 times in as many years. Though imperfect in every way, her dysfunctional childhood was as beautiful as it was strange, and as nurturing as it was difficult. At the age of five, Brandi contracted bacterial meningitis, which almost took her life, leaving an indelible mark on her formative years and altering her journey into young adulthood.

As an openly gay teenager, Brandi grappled with the tension between her sexuality and her faith when her pastor publicly refused to baptize her on the day of the ceremony. Shockingly, her small town rallied around Brandi in support and set her on a path to salvation where the rest of the misfits and rejects find it: through twisted, joyful, weird, and wonderful music.

In *Broken Horses*, Brandi Carlile takes listeners through the events of her life that shaped her very raw art - from her start at a local singing competition where she performed Elton John's

“Honky Cat” in a bedazzled white polyester suit, to her first break opening for Dave Matthews Band, to many sleepless tours over 15 years and six studio albums, all while raising two children with her wife, Catherine Shepherd. This hard-won success led her to collaborations with personal heroes like Elton John, Dolly Parton, Mavis Staples, Pearl Jam, Tanya Tucker, and Joni Mitchell, as well as her peers in the supergroup The Highwomen, and ultimately to the Grammy stage, where she converted millions of viewers into instant fans.

Evocative and piercingly honest, *Broken Horses* is at once an examination of faith through the eyes of a person rejected by the church’s basic tenets and a meditation on the moments and lyrics that have shaped the life of a creative mind, a brilliant artist, and a genuine empath on a mission to give back.

24 Pachinko - Min Jin Lee

Historical Fiction
496 pages

In the early 1900s, teenaged Sunja, the adored daughter of a crippled fisherman, falls for a wealthy stranger at the seashore near her home in Korea. He promises her the world, but when she discovers she is pregnant — and that her lover is married — she refuses to be bought. Instead, she accepts an offer of marriage from a gentle, sickly minister passing through on his way to Japan. But her decision to abandon her home, and to reject her son's powerful father, sets off a dramatic saga that will echo down through the generations.

Richly told and profoundly moving, *Pachinko* is a story of love, sacrifice, ambition, and loyalty. From bustling street markets to the halls of Japan's finest universities to the pachinko parlors of the criminal underworld, Lee's complex and passionate characters — strong, stubborn women, devoted sisters and sons, fathers shaken by moral crisis — survive and thrive against the indifferent arc of history.

Other recommendations...

City of Girls - Elizabeth Gilbert

Untamed - Glennon Doyle

The Book of Hope - Jane Goodall

The Paris Apartment - Lucy Foley

American Dirt - Jeanine Cummins

The Flight Attendant - Chris Bohjalian

The Patron Saint of Liars - Ann Patchett

Nomadland - Jessica Bruder