

September 11: *Commonwealth* by Ann Patchett



Sunday afternoon in Southern California, Bert Cousins shows up at Franny Keating's christening party uninvited. Before evening falls, he has kissed Franny's mother, Beverly—thus setting in motion the dissolution of their marriages and the joining of two families. Spanning five decades, *Commonwealth* explores how this chance encounter reverberates through the lives of the four parents and six children involved. Spending summers together in Virginia, the Keating and Cousins children forge a lasting bond that is based on a shared disillusionment with their parents and the strange and genuine affection that grows up between them.

October 16 (Special Date): *My Name is Lucy Barton* by Elizabeth Stout

Lucy Barton is recovering slowly from what should have been a simple operation. Her mother, to whom she hasn't spoken for many years, comes to see her. Gentle gossip about people from Lucy's childhood in Amgash, Illinois, seems to reconnect them, but just below the surface lie the tension and longing that have informed every aspect of Lucy's life: her escape from her troubled family, her desire to become a writer, her marriage, her love for her two daughters. Knitting this powerful narrative together is the brilliant storytelling voice of Lucy herself: keenly observant, deeply human, and truly unforgettable.

November 13: *News of the World* by Paulette Giles

It's 1870 near Wichita Falls and Captain Jefferson Kyle Kidd, an elderly widower and veteran, has been offered gold to deliver a young orphan to her relatives in San Antonio. Johanna, recently rescued from a band of Kiowa raiders, who after slaughtering her parents, raised her as their own, is once again torn from her home, in search of another. The journey is arduous, with Johanna trying to escape at every opportunity, refusing to succumb to the "civilized" manner expected of her. With each passing mile, a comradery forms between the two travelers. When they reach San Antonio, the reunion is neither happy nor welcome. Does the captain abandon his new traveling companion to a resistant family or become a kidnapper in the eyes of the law? *News of the World* is a brilliant work of historical fiction that explores the boundaries of family, responsibility, honor, and trust.

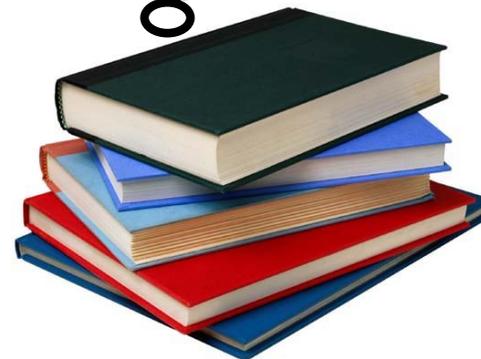
December 11: *A Man Called Ove* by Fredrik Backman



A curmudgeon hides a terrible personal loss beneath a cranky and short-tempered exterior while clashing with new neighbors, a boisterous family whose chattiness and habits lead to unexpected friendship.



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January 9: *The Piano Teacher* by Janice Y.K. Lee

Janice Y.K. Lee's debut novel is a tale of love and betrayal set in war-torn Hong Kong. In 1942, Englishman Will Truesdale falls headlong into a passionate relationship with Trudy Liang, a beautiful Eurasian socialite, but their affair is soon threatened by the invasion of the Japanese as World War II overwhelms their part of the world. Ten years later, Claire Pendleton comes to Hong Kong to work as a piano teacher and also begins a fateful affair. As the threads of this spellbinding novel intertwine, impossible choices emerge—between love and safety, courage and survival, the present, and above all, the past.

February 13: *The Children Act* by Ian McEwan

Fiona Maye is a High Court judge in London presiding over cases in family court. She is fiercely intelligent, well respected, and deeply immersed in the nuances of her particular field of law. Her husband, Jack, asks her to consider an open marriage and, after an argument, moves out of their house. His departure leaves her adrift, wondering whether it was not love she had lost so much as a modern form of respectability; whether it was not contempt and ostracism she really fears. She decides to throw herself into her work, especially a complex case involving a 17-year-old boy whose parents will not permit a lifesaving blood transfusion because it conflicts with their beliefs as Jehovah's Witnesses. But Jack doesn't leave her thoughts, and the pressure to resolve the case—as well as her crumbling marriage—tests Fiona in ways that will keep readers thoroughly enthralled until the last stunning page.

March 13: *Claire of the Sea Light* by Edwidge Danticat



Claire Limyè Lanmè—Claire of the Sea Light—is an enchanting child born into love and tragedy in Ville Rose, Haiti. Claire's mother died in childbirth, and on each of her birthdays Claire is taken by her father, Nozias, to visit her mother's grave. Nozias wonders if he should give away his young daughter to a local shopkeeper, who lost a child of her own, so that Claire can have a better life, but on the night of Claire's 7th birthday, when at last he makes the wrenching decision to do so, she disappears. As Nozias and others look for her, painful secrets, haunting memories, and startling truths are unearthed among the community of men and women whose individual stories connect to Claire, to her parents, and to the town itself.

April 10: *The Last Painting of Sara de Vos* by Dominic Smith

Amsterdam, 1631: Sara de Vos, the first female master painter in the Guild of St. Luke, defies convention by painting a haunting landscape. New York City, 1957: Her only known surviving work, *At the Edge of a Wood* hangs in the bedroom of wealthy lawyer descended from the original owner. Ellie Shipley, a struggling art history student, paints a forgery for an art dealer. Sydney, 2000: Now a celebrated art historian and curator, Ellie mounts an exhibit of female Dutch painters and finds that both versions are en route to her museum.



= Dine and Discuss

May 8: *This is Your Life, Harriet Chance* by Jonathan Evison

With Bernard, her husband of 55 years, now in the grave, 78-year-old Harriet Chance impulsively sets sail alone on an Alaskan cruise that her late husband had planned. But what Harriet hoped would be a voyage leading to a new lease on life becomes a wildly surprising and revelatory journey into her past. Part dysfunctional love story, part poignant exploration of mother-daughter relationships, nothing is what it seems in this bittersweet tale.

June 12: *Prodigal Summer* by Barbara Kingsolver (Summer Theme)



Barbara Kingsolver's fifth novel is a hymn to wildness that celebrates the prodigal spirit of human nature, and of nature itself. It weaves together three stories of human love within a larger tapestry of lives amid the mountains and farms of southern Appalachia. Over the course of one humid summer, this novel's intriguing protagonists face disparate predicaments but find connections to one another and to the flora and fauna with which they necessarily share a place.



July 10: *The Course of Love* by Alain de Botton

We all know the headiness and excitement of the early days of love. But what comes after? In Edinburgh, a couple, Rabih and Kirsten, fall in love. They get married and they have children, but no long-term relationship is as simple as "happily ever after." *The Course of Love* is a novel that explores what happens after the birth of love, what it takes to maintain love, and what happens to our original ideals under the pressures of an average existence. You experience, along with Rabih and Kirsten, the first flush of infatuation, the effortless of falling into romantic love, and the course of life thereafter. Interwoven with their story and its challenges is an overlay of philosophy—an annotation and a guide to what we are reading.

August 14: *The Time it Never Rained* by Elmer Kelton (Classic)

Rio Seco, meaning "dry river" in Spanish, symbolizes the biggest enemy of the ranchers and farmers in 1950s Texas, an enemy they can't control: drought. To cranky Charlie Flagg, an honest, decent rancher, the drought of the early 1950s is a battle that he must fight on his own grounds. Refusing the questionable "assistance" of federal aid programs and their bureaucratic regulations, Charlie and his family struggle to make the ranch survive until the time it rains again—if it ever rains again. Charlie Flagg, among the strongest of Elmer Kelton's memorable creations, is no pasteboard hero. He is courageous and self-sufficient but as real as his harsh and unforgiving West Texas home country. His battle with an unfathomable foe is the stuff of epics and legends.

Meets 2nd Monday each month @ noon

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