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Booklist Reader

May 2026

Book and audiobook recommendations for all ages

Booklist
Leading book discovery

Recent Fiction in Translation

Trend Alert: Hockey Romances

Ears On American History

A Conversation: Laurie Halse Anderson

Painting by Amy Devlin, from *My Friends*, by Fredrik Backman

PBS BOOKS | ALA150 American Library Association | LIBRARY READS

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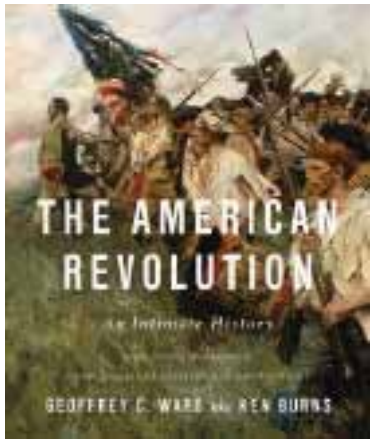

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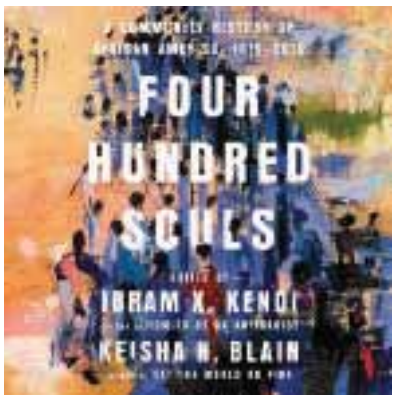

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On the Cover

Painting by Amy Devlin (www.amydevlinart.com; Instagram: @amydevlinart; Facebook: @AmyDevlinArt; TikTok: @amydevlinart), from *My Friends*, by Fredrik Backman, which received a starred *Booklist* review and which appears on Recent Fiction in Translation, p. 6. Reprinted by permission of Atria Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, LLC.

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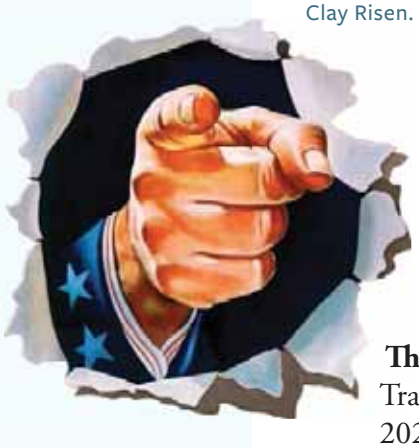
Top 10

History Books

From a CIA operation to flood the USSR with pro-democracy banned books to governmental attacks on our rights to ancient India's global influences, these top history titles are riveting and revelatory.



Art from the cover of *Red Scare*, by Clay Risen.

American Scare: Florida's Hidden Cold War on Black and Queer Lives. By Robert W. Fieseler. 2025. Dutton.

Fieseler reveals the chilling facts about how, between 1956 and 1965, the Florida Legislative Investigation Committee (FLIC) targeted and terrorized U.S. citizens, particularly educators, who were Black and/or queer.

The Art Spy: The Extraordinary Untold Tale of WWII Resistance Hero Rose Valland. By Michelle Young. 2025. HarperOne.

Young recounts in enthralling detail art historian Rose Valland's brilliance, courage, and sangfroid as she risked her life to save the art treasures of Paris from the Nazis.

The CIA Book Club: The Secret Mission to Win the Cold War with Forbidden Literature. By Charlie English. 2025. Random.

English tells the staggering story of the CIA's secret distribution of ten million books banned in the USSR in the early 1980s, books by the likes of George Orwell, Hannah Arendt, Philip Roth, and John le Carré, to advocate for democracy.

The Eyes of Gaza: A Diary of Resilience. By Plestia Alaqad. 2025. Little, Brown.

Student Alaqad became an internationally known journalist in late 2023 when she began video-blogging her experiences under the brutal Israeli assault on Gaza.

A Flower Traveled in My Blood: The Incredible True Story of the Grandmothers Who Fought to Find a Stolen Generation of Children. By Haley Cohen Gilliland. 2025. Simon & Schuster/Avid Reader.

Gilliland portrays the valiant grandmothers who stood up against a tyrannical political regime during Argentina's Dirty War in the 1970s and '80s to search for the "disappeared."

The Great Contradiction: The Tragic Side of the American Founding. By Joseph J. Ellis. 2025. Knopf.

Historian Ellis examines in depth the "two outstanding tragedies the founders oversaw: the failure to end slavery and the failure to avoid Indian removal."

The Golden Road: How Ancient India Transformed the World. By William Dalrymple. 2025. Bloomsbury.

Dalrymple's comprehensive inquiry into ancient India reveals its momentous global influences, from Buddhism to indelible developments in mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and philosophy.

Red Scare: Blacklists, McCarthyism, and the Making of Modern America. By Clay Risen. 2025. Scribner.

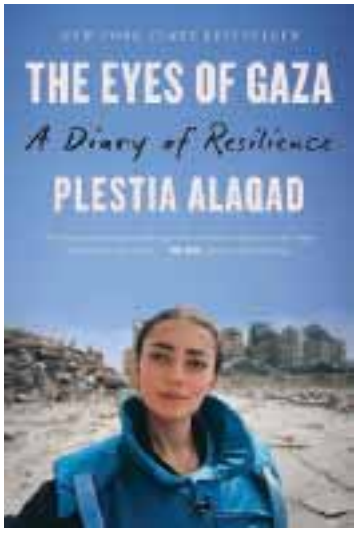
Risen offers a fresh and provocative look at Senator Joe McCarthy's ruinous anti-Communist investigations, blacklists, book bans, and power grabs.

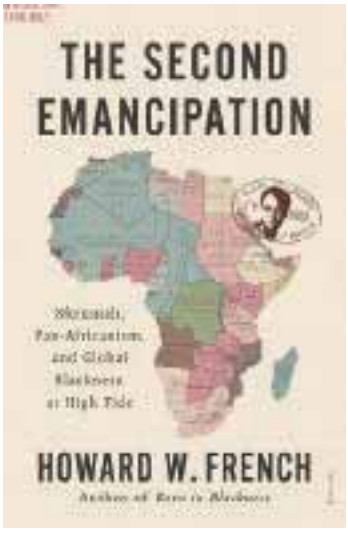
The Second Emancipation: Nkrumah, Pan-Africanism, and Global Blackness at High Tide. By Howard W. French. 2025. Norton/Liveright.

French adeptly traces the life and influence of Kwame Nkrumah, first president of Ghana, the first liberated African colony, on anti-colonial movements in Asia and the Middle East, and the American civil rights movement.

The Stolen Crown: Treachery, Deceit, and the Death of the Tudor Dynasty. By Tracy Borman. 2025. Atlantic Monthly.

Eminent historian Borman explores the quandary that plagued Elizabeth I, the last Tudor monarch, because she made the unconventional choice to remain unmarried: Who would succeed her?





Art from the covers of *Declaration* and *Revolution Song*.

America's 250th Anniversary

by Donna Seaman

With the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on the horizon, we recommend these involving and illuminating biographical and historical inquiries into the American Revolution and the birth of a nation, narratives that deepen our understanding of the people, the founders, and the founding documents, and how the past is shaping the present.

Angelica: For Love and Country in a Time of Revolution. By Molly Beer. 2025. Norton.

Because Angelica Schuyler Church's father was a major general in George Washington's Continental Army, she knew many Revolutionary fighters and leaders, impressing the likes of Thomas Jefferson, the Marquis de Lafayette, and her brother-in-law, Alexander Hamilton, with her intelligence, patriotism, and social diplomacy.

The American Revolution: An Intimate History. By Geoffrey C. Ward and Ken Burns. 2025. Knopf.

In this dynamic mix of text and image, Ward and Burns chronicle the American Revolution in startling detail through remarkably preserved letters, journals, maps, and sketches conveying the experiences of soldiers, women, Native Americans, and African Americans on both sides of the "bloody struggle."

Declaration: The Story of American Independence. By Robert P. Watson. 2026. Bloomsbury Academic.

Deftly incorporating vivid portraits and previously underreported facts, Watson tells the dramatic story of the creation of the Declaration of Independence, tracking how the differing and alienated colonies finally reached agreement.

Franklin & Washington: The Founding Partnership. By Edward J. Larson. 2020. Morrow.

Larson reveals how George Washington and Benjamin Franklin contributed mightily to the success of the war against the British Crown and profoundly shaped the new nation at its 1787 Constitutional Convention.

The Great Contradiction: The Tragic Side of the American Founding. By Joseph J. Ellis. 2025. Knopf.

Ellis takes a fresh approach to "two outstanding tragedies the founders oversaw: the failure to end slavery and the failure to avoid Indian removal" by sharing the voices of various abolitionists, spotlighting the roles enslaved and emancipated people played in the Revolution, and chronicling white settlers' voracious greed for land.

The Greatest Sentence Ever Written. By Walter Isaacson. 2025. Simon & Schuster.

Isaacson cogently honors the wisdom it took to create the indelible second sentence in the Declaration of Independence—the one that begins with "We hold these truths to be self-evident" and ends with "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness"—and inspires deepened appreciation for its significance.

John Hancock: First to Sign, First to Invest in America's Independence. By Willard Sterne Randall. 2025. Dutton.

Randall chronicles the life and times of wealthy and generous Boston patriot John Hancock, president of the Continental Congress, and the one who appointed the "dream team" of John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Robert Livingston, and Roger Sherman to write the Declaration of Independence, to which he added his famously outsized signature.

The Last King of America: The Misunderstood Reign of George III. By Andrew Roberts. 2021. Penguin.

Roberts offers a new portrait of the ill-fated King George III, vilified in the American colonies and harassed at home, characterizing him as well-educated, happily married with 15 children, beset by wars, and plagued with bipolar disorder.

Of Arms and Artists: The American Revolution through Painters' Eyes. By Paul Staiti. 2016. Bloomsbury.

In this innovative history of the American Revolution, Staiti portrays five largely self-taught artists whose paintings helped forge the new American ethos in the midst of war, civic unrest, and vicious partisanship.

The Pursuit of Liberty: How Hamilton vs. Jefferson Ignited the Lasting Battle over Power in America. By Jeffrey Rosen. 2025. Simon & Schuster.

Rosen details Alexander Hamilton's and Thomas Jefferson's lives and their diverging views on how powerful the federal government should be, asserting that their differences have shaped political debate at nearly every crucial point in American history while profoundly influencing the Supreme Court.

Rebels at Sea: Privateering in the American Revolution. By Eric Jay Dolin. 2022. Norton/Liveright.

What do you do when your small, fledgling navy faces a formidable imperial maritime power? You muster any available ships and captains and crews eager to fight and grant them authority to harass, capture, or sink opponents, the very strategy adopted by the American colonies at the start of the Revolutionary War.

Revolution Song: A Story of American Freedom. By Russell Shorto. 2017. Norton.

Shorto explores the philosophical currents of the revolutionary era through an unusual assemblage of lives, including those of George Washington; Seneca military leader and diplomat Cornplanter; Lord George Germain, architect of British policy and strategy; Venture Smith, an African-born Connecticut slave who bought his freedom; New York anti-Federalist politician and activist Abraham Yates Jr.; and memoirist Margaret Moncrieffe Coghlan.

The Ride: Paul Revere and the Night That Saved America. By Kostya Kennedy. 2025. St. Martin's.

Kennedy presents a richly detailed, dryly humorous account of prosperous silversmith and patriot Paul Revere's 1775 ride to Lexington and Concord, as well as that of his compatriot William Dawes, as they evaded British sentries and patrols in the dark on rough, rain-soaked roads, greatly expanding our knowledge and understanding of Revere's legendary heroism.

Tom Paine's War: The Words That Rallied a Nation and the Founder for Our Time. By Jack Kelly. 2026. St. Martin's.

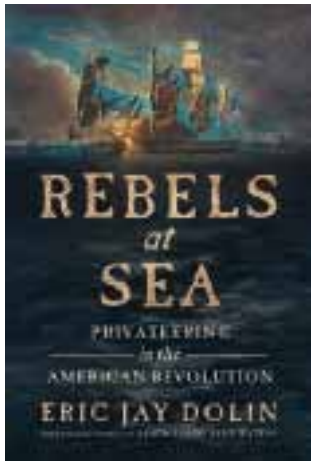
Kelly explains the impact of Thomas Paine's writing 250 years ago, including his most famous saying, "These are the times that try men's souls"—written to strengthen American resolve and morale in 1776 after the British forced George Washington's army to retreat more than 100 miles and across the Delaware River—and why his words matter now.

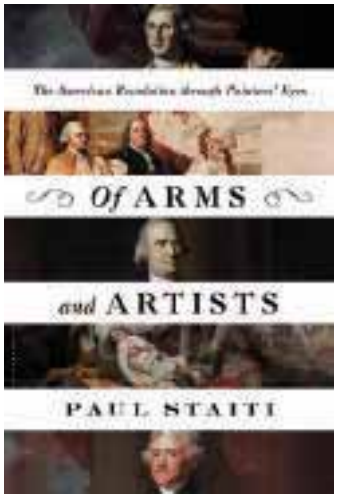
The Tragedy of Benedict Arnold: An American Life. By Joyce Lee Malcolm. 2018. Pegasus.

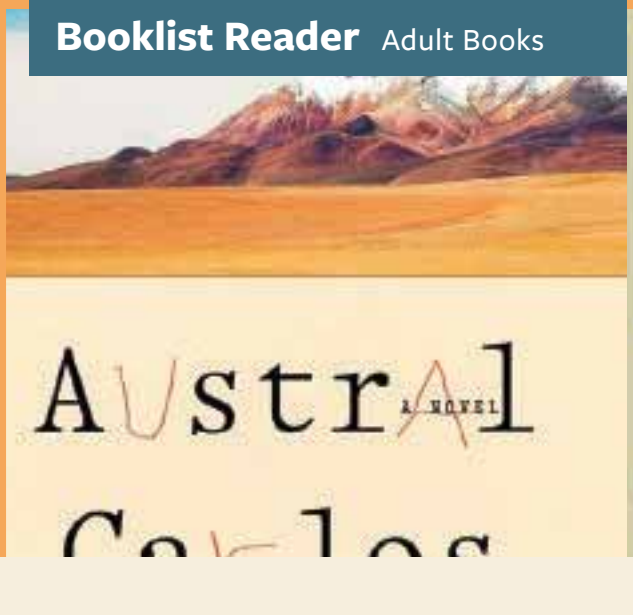
Malcolm transforms American history's best-known villain into a war hero who loved his country so much he gave his all to the American cause during the Revolutionary War, but who also, at his most desperate and vulnerable, joined the British in the belief that this would save his family.

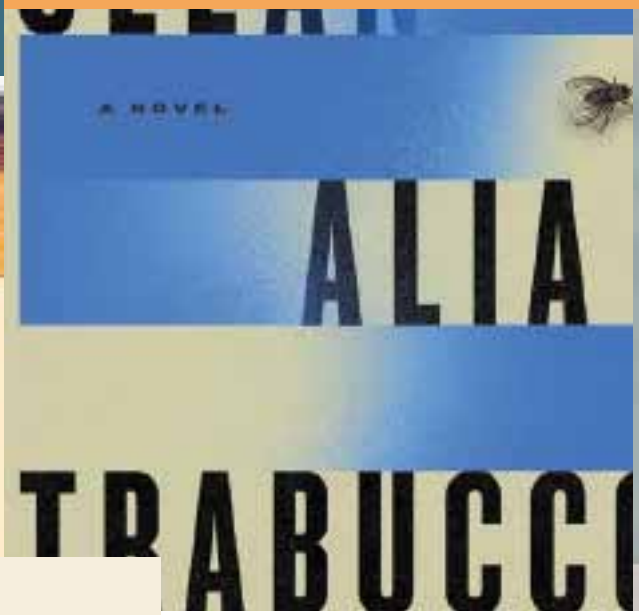
We the People: A History of the U.S. Constitution. By Jill Lepore. 2025. Norton/Liveright.

Lepore provides a phenomenally researched, eminently accessible, and acutely relevant history of the U.S. Constitution, tracking how, over two-and-a-half centuries, debate has never waned as to how the Constitution is to be viewed and applied.





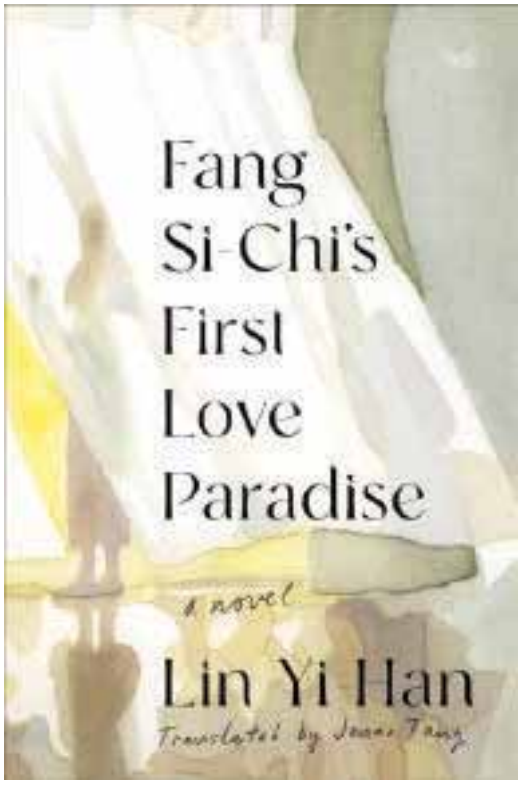




Recent Fiction in Translation

by Donna Seaman

From Costa Rica to Austria, Chile, Argentina, Korea, Japan, Egypt, Canada, Taiwan, and beyond, these transfixing and surprising novels and short-story collections translated into English delve into historic, social, and intimate aspects of the human experience with profound imagination, satire, concern, and compassion.



Austral. By Carlos Fonseca. Tr. by Megan McDowell. 2023. Farrar.

Before she died, Costa Rican literature professor Julio Gamboa's first love asked him to edit and publish her final book, sending him on an ever-deeper quest to understand how language, culture, and memory survived the brutal annihilation of Indigenous communities in the Southern Hemisphere after WWII.

The Café with No Name. By Robert Seethaler. Tr. by Katy Derbyshire. 2025. Europa.

Robert Simon opens his café in a struggling neighborhood in Vienna in 1966, hiring Mila after she passes out from hunger on the curb, and serving laborers, market-traders, and shift-workers contending with their woes as the city is transformed around them.

Canoes. By Maylis de Kerangal. Tr. by Jessica Moore. 2024. Archipelago.

Canoes make curious appearances in each surprising story in this exquisite collection by French writer de Kerangal; these are sensitive, witty, and imaginative dramas propelled by speech and silence, self and voice.

Clean. By Alia Trabucco Zerán. Tr. by Sophie Hughes. 2024. Riverhead.

Chilean author Zerán's narrator, domestic worker Estela García, keeps an upper-class household running in Santiago, cleaning up every mess and witnessing many secrets while being dehumanized as her links to her own family in a hardscrabble coastal village are stretched thin.

The Director. By Daniel Kehlmann. Tr. by Ross Benjamin. 2025. Summit.

Smarting after a Hollywood flop, Austrian-born director G. W. Pabst returns home as WWII breaks out and becomes caught in Goebbels' propaganda machine, launching Kehlmann's unnerving and timely account of one man's often-surreal descent into fascist complicity.

Fang Si-Chi's First Love Paradise. By Lin Yi-Han. Tr. by Jenna Tang. 2024. HarperVia.

Friends and neighbors, preteens Liu Yi-Ting and Fang Si-Chi share a love of literature while romanticizing the adults in their apartment building, including a respected teacher. Years later, Yi-Ting discovers that teacher Lee raped her friend and subjected her to years of further abuse. Lin's powerful, haunting novel and death by suicide influenced the #MeToo movement in Taiwan.

Hunchback. By Saou Ichikawa. Tr. by Polly Barton. 2025. Hogarth.

Narrator Shaka Izawa must be on a ventilator to breathe. Undaunted, she thrives via online education, freelance writing, and a social media account on which she unabashedly posts controversial comments on women's concerns.

Invisible Kitties: A Feline Study of Fluid Mechanics or the Spurious Incidents of the Cats in the Night-Time. By Yu Yoyo. Tr. by Jeremy Tiang. 2024. HarperVia.

Chinese poet Yu's fiction debut is utterly charming, with 60 pithy chapters of endless kitty antics, whimsical black-and-white sketches, and a narrator who happens upon a "delicate little kitten, which she hugs as she runs home."

Mina's Matchbox. By Yoko Ogawa. Tr. by Stephen B. Snyder. 2024. Pantheon.

While her widowed mother spends a year in Tokyo studying, 12-year-old Tomoko is sent to her aunt and uncle's immense coastal mansion where a pygmy hippopotamus is the family pet and Tomoko grows close to her cousin Mina, who counters her debilitating asthma with creativity.

My Friends. By Fredrik Backman. Tr. by Neil Smith. 2025. Atria.

Free of the foster-care system now that she's 18, aspiring artist Louisa is homeless, but a chance meeting with a frail and dying man propels Louisa on an unimaginable journey as Backman does for obstreperous teens what he did for curmudgeonly seniors in his *A Man Called Ove*: render them lovable beyond all reason while celebrating art's power to heal and nurture.

My Name Is Emilia del Valle. By Isabel Allende. Tr. by Frances Riddle. 2025. Ballantine.

Allende's latest engrossing saga about the extended del Valle family centers on adventurous Emilia, the illegitimate daughter of a Chilean aristocrat and the Irish novice nun he seduced, who grows up in San Francisco and overcomes gender restrictions to become a foreign correspondent covering the impending Chilean Civil War of 1891.

A Sunny Place for Shady People. By Mariana Enríquez. Tr. by Megan McDowell. 2024. Hogarth.

Enríquez's darkly humorous world view shapes these weird and riveting stories set mostly around Buenos Aires and evoking the horrors of Argentina's past military dictatorship via an evil presence that permeates the characters' lives and surroundings.

The Tokyo Suite. By Giovana Madalosso. Tr. by Bruna Dantas Lobato. 2025. Europa.

Brazilian writer Madalosso's novel begins as nanny Maju takes her charge, four-year-old Cora, from São Paulo to Paraguay, then to the southern Brazilian state where Maju spent her impoverished childhood. Cora's mother, Fernanda, distracted by her high-profile TV job and a scorching affair, doesn't learn anything is amiss until late that evening.

The Unworthy. By Agustina Bazterrica. Tr. by Sarah Moses. 2025. Scribner.

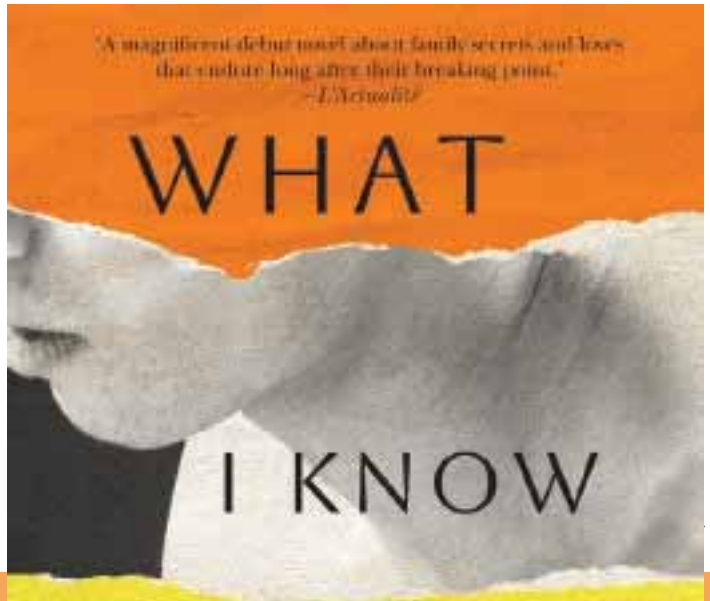
In Bazterrica's satiric, feminist literary horror novel, the unnamed narrator, who records her struggles in an illicit diary, fled climate chaos and lawlessness and landed in a twisted hierarchical commune governed by a tyrannical woman posing as a pseudo prioress alongside her brother, the only male allowed.

We Do Not Part. By Han Kang. Tr. by e. yaewon and Paige Aniyah Morris. 2025. Hogarth.

Nobel laureate Kang's protagonist is plagued by nightmares after writing about "mass killings and torture." When a close friend, a photographer and documentary filmmaker, is hospitalized and asks Kyungha to go to Jeju Island, more shocking historical truths are mysteriously revealed.

What I Know about You. By Éric Chacour. Tr. by Pablo Strauss. 2024. Coach House.

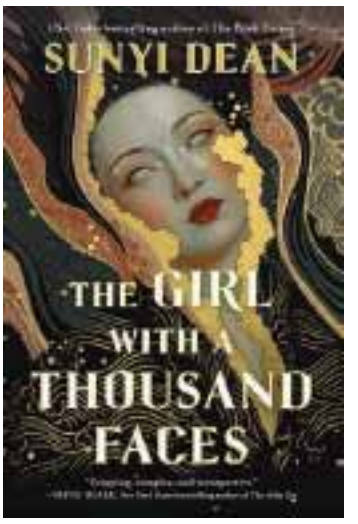
Neurosurgeon Tarek operates a weekly charity clinic in Cairo, where he meets and falls for Ali, a sex worker. When Tarek hires Ali to be his regular assistant, his practice suffers, prompting Tarek's mother to pay Ali to fake his death. Devastated, Tarek emigrates to Montreal, eventually learning two life-altering truths. Chacour, from Quebec, offers a beautiful first novel of melancholy and heartbreak.

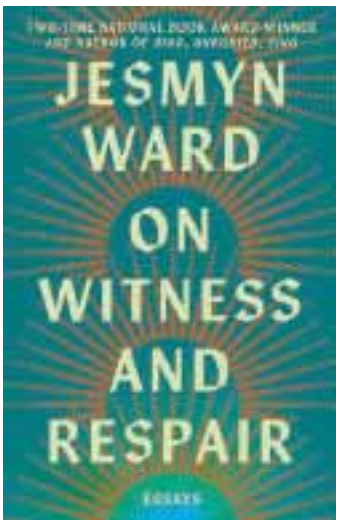


Reserve These Reads

Adult

Get your hands on these hotly anticipated books, all out this month.





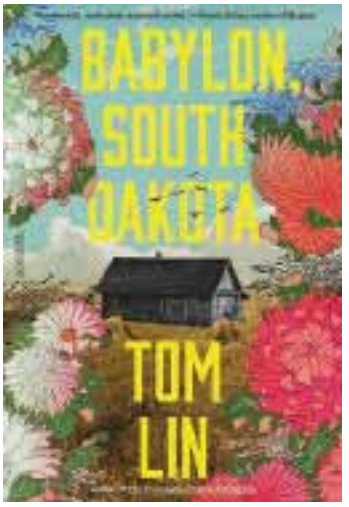
Fiction

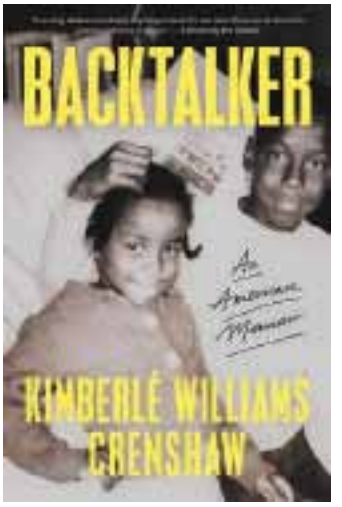
Babylon, South Dakota. By Tom Lin. Little, Brown.

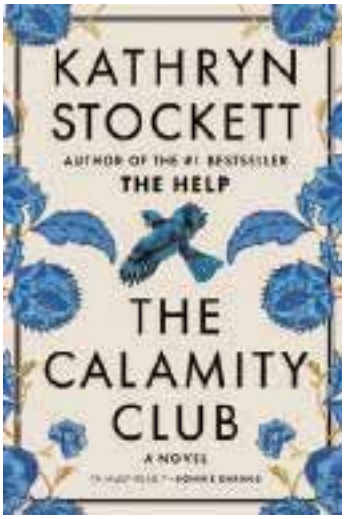
Following up his Carnegie Medal–winning Western epic, *The Thousand Crimes of Ming Tsu*, Lin offers the story of a Chinese family that immigrates to an inherited Dakota farm and finds life upended again when the government purchases an acre of their land.

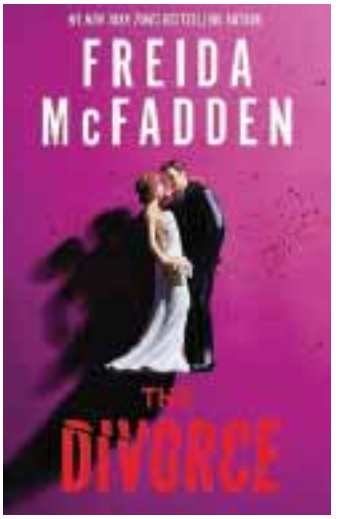
The Calamity Club. By Kathryn Stockett. Spiegel & Grau.

Stockett, author of the multimillion copy–selling, book-turned-film, *The Help*, returns to the historical U.S. South, this time following a group of female characters in Depression-era Mississippi who learn the power and fragility of friendship.









The Divorce. By Freida McFadden. Poisoned Pen.

Brace yourselves for another banger from thriller-writer McFadden. A woman whose husband files for divorce and takes up with a new twentysomething girlfriend refuses to take her circumstances lying down.

The Final Target. By Nora Roberts. St. Martin's.

A young, debut author who connects with an eager fan finds herself the victim of a stalker, so she moves to a small Oregon town where she can hide away in peace, befriending an ex-detective in the latest sure-to-be-a-smash from the illustrious Roberts.

Ghalen: A Romance in Black. By Walter Mosley. Amistad.

Mosley's latest follows a brilliant Black man's coming-of-age, starting with his parents' unconventional love story, in a novel that offers a lush, cinematic exploration of family.

The Girl with a Thousand Faces. By Sunyi Dean. Tor.

Following her hit debut, *The Book Eaters*, Dean creates a gothic and ghostly setting in WWII-era Hong Kong, where a woman with no past appears and makes a living by dealing with the spirits who haunt the slum of Kowloon Walled City, some more malignant than others.

Ironwood. By Michael Connelly. Little, Brown.

In the second novel featuring Detective Sergeant Stilwell of Catalina Island (after *Nightshade*), Stilwell, defying orders after an operation goes sideways, teams up with another Connelly favorite, LAPD Detective Renée Ballard, to solve the case of a missing woman.

The Last Mandarin. By Louise Penny and Mellissa Fung. Minotaur.

Journalist Fung and needs-no-introduction Penny collaborate in this stand-alone thriller about a woman who gets pulled in to aid the U.S. government in untangling a Chinese plot with her mother, a renowned Chinese dissident and human rights activist.

A Murder in Hollywood. By Michael Crichton. Blackstone.

A newly discovered thriller from the late Crichton takes readers to the sleazy underbelly of 1970s Hollywood, where a publicist is trying to keep his movie on track after the death of the film's writer, and a detective is hot on the heels of the killer.

Platform Decay. By Martha Wells. Tor.

Everybody's favorite Murderbot (now seen in the Apple TV series) is back, and this time, the autonomous security robot volunteers to run a rescue mission and finds himself spending time with human children and being forced to make dreaded eye contact.

The Shippers. By Katherine Center. St. Martin's.

A woman faints at her wedding (and calls off the marriage) only to be rescued by an old flame. Her sister then uses her own destination wedding—to which the old flame is also invited—to find the fainter a match in Center's latest rom-com that promises hijinks and fruity drinks.

The Things We Never Say. By Elizabeth Strout. Random.

Once again, Pulitzer-winner Strout artfully examines the human condition, in this tale of a high-school history teacher who uncovers a secret that upends his life.

We Dance Upon Demons. By Vaishnavi Patel. S&S/Saga.

Overwhelmed by the state of reproductive healthcare, a Chicago clinic worker finds herself inexplicably changed by an Indian statue at her favorite art museum in Patel's fantasy follow-up to the best-selling *Kaikeyi*.

Nonfiction

Backtalker: An American Memoir. By Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw. Simon & Schuster.

Crenshaw tells her life story, sharing with readers the girl who became the noted legal scholar who introduced Americans to the groundbreaking ideas of intersectionality and critical race theory.

The Land and Its People. By David Sedaris. Little, Brown.

New essays from beloved Sedaris, need we say more? Amid the predictably funny topics, this time he also gets real about losing friends and being caretaker for his boyfriend, Hugh.

On Witness and Respair: Essays. By Jesmyn Ward.

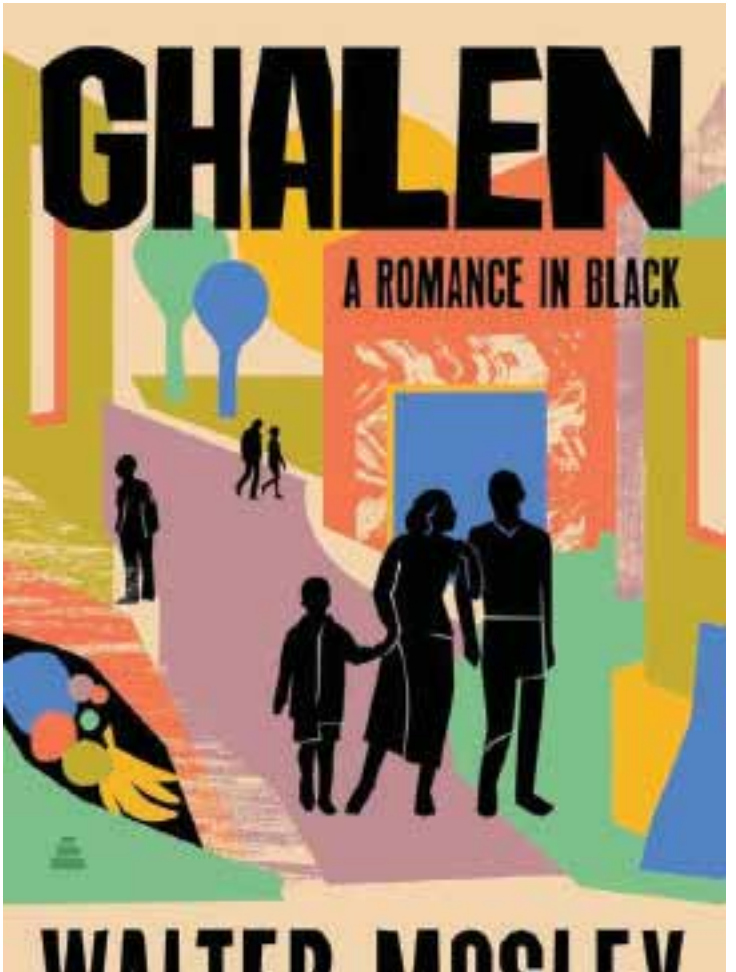
The collected nonfiction work of award-winning novelist Ward includes unpublished speeches and reveals another side of one of our greatest literary luminaries.

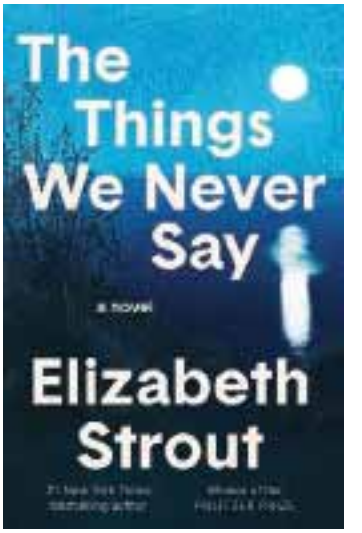
The Steps. By Sylvester Stallone. Morrow.

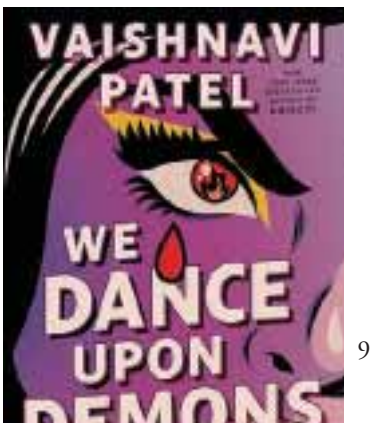
It's been almost 50 years since Stallone ran up the steps of the Philadelphia Art Museum in *Rocky*, and here he chronicles the ups and downs of his life before and after that iconic scene.

True Crime. By Patricia Cornwell.

In her first memoir, Cornwell gets candid about her rough childhood and her early days as a reporter, when she embedded herself in a morgue, which led to the creation of her best-known character, Dr. Kay Scarpetta.



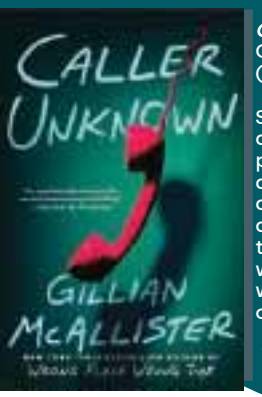




May 2026

The Top Ten Adult Fiction and Nonfiction Chosen Monthly by America's Library Staff

Find out more at www.LibraryReads.org



Caller Unknown
Gillian McAllister
(William Morrow)

TOP PICK

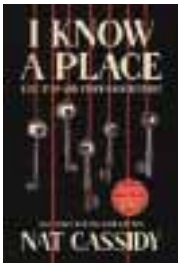
Simone comes to Texas from the UK to visit her daughter, Lucy. Lucy is kidnapped, and the perpetrators force Simone into trafficking drugs into Mexico for Lucy's safe return. When a confrontation goes wrong, Lucy and Simone are reunited, but are suddenly on the run from the law. The story is breathtaking, and readers will constantly be on edge, wondering if and when the pair will be caught—and what the consequences will be.

—Cari Dubiel, Twinsburg Public Library, OH
NoveList read-alike: *Mother, May I?* by Joshilyn Jackson

Five: A Novel
Ilona Bannister
(Crown)

Five strangers meet at a train station, but only four will leave alive. Readers are challenged to predict the victim from among a cast of flawed, unlikable characters whose backstories are unexpectedly gripping. This thought-provoking thriller is an ideal book club pick that will spark a different debate for every reader.

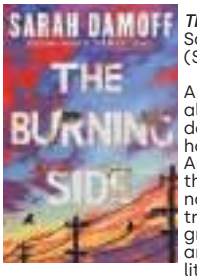
—Marika Zemke, Commerce Twp Community Library, MI
NoveList read-alike: *59 Minutes* by Holly Seddon



I Know A Place: Rest Stop and Other Dark Detours
Nat Cassidy
(Shortwave Publishing)

Nat Cassidy is one of horror's more unique voices. This short story collection is terrifying and filled with relatable characters. These wild, grim, violent stories unfold as if the author has sidled up to you at a bar and started sharing them. And you simply can't stop listening.

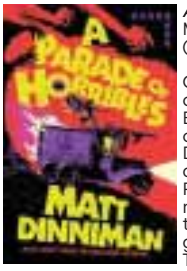
—Lila Denning, St Petersburg Library System, FL
NoveList read-alike: *Midnight Somewhere* by Johnny Compton



The Burning Side
Sarah Damoff
(Simon & Schuster)

April and Leo's marriage is already on the brink when a devastating fire levels their home. Forced to retreat to April's childhood home with their children, they must navigate generational trauma and deep-seated grief alongside her parents and siblings. Amidst the literal and figurative ashes, the couple struggles to determine if their relationship is worth salvaging.

—Emily Orth, Surprise Public Library, AZ
NoveList read-alike: *The Heart of Winter* by Jonathan Evison



A Parade of Horribles
Matt Dinniman
(Ace)

Coming in off the back of a complex and scope-changing Book 7, Book 8 reminds readers of the horrible truth of the Dungeon: for all of their drive and cleverness, Carl and Princess Donut are still just a man and his talking cat trapped in an AI-controlled game that is trying to kill them. This interesting shift in scope and pacing reminds readers of the players' predicament.

—Aaron Mason, Radford Public Library, VA
NoveList read-alike: Delicious in Dungeon series by Ryoko Kui

The Last Page
Katie Holt
(Alcove Press)

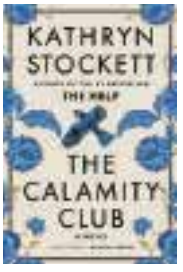
Ella thinks she's going to inherit the used bookstore where she has worked for years, but is devastated when a grandson shows up as the new owner. Now they must put aside their rivalry, and their off-the-charts chemistry, to save the store. The characters' clever book reviews at the start of every chapter also serve to carry the plot forward.

— Migdalia Jimenez, Chicago Public Library, IL
NoveList read-alike: *Battle of the Bookstores* by Ali Brady

A Fortune of Sand
Ruta Sepetys
(Ballantine Books)

When Marjorie covertly joins an artists' residency in Prohibition Era Detroit run by a secretive benefactor, she finds both inspiration and compelling secrets. Intriguing family dynamics and cons-within-cons abound in this novel set among monied families with ties to the growing auto industry.

—Jessica Trotter, Capital Area District Libraries, MI
NoveList read-alike: *Crucible* by John Sayles



The Calamity Club
Kathryn Stockett
(Spiegel & Grau)

In Depression-era Mississippi, a girl trapped in a Dickensian orphanage and a young woman trying to lift her family out of financial ruin cross paths. Young Meg feels trapped, while Birdy is faced with family issues that run deep. This dual-narrated story is totally engrossing, and readers will be rooting for the characters.

—Donna Ballard, LibraryReads Ambassador, NJ
NoveList read-alike: *The Truth According to Us* by Annie Barrows

John of John
Douglas Stuart
(Grove Atlantic)

Aimless art student Cal returns to his isolated Scottish home, forced to navigate his grandmother's illness and a community that won't accept his sexuality. The story leans into incredible dialogue and raw, evolving relationships with complicated people readers can't help but care about.

—Magan Szwarek, LibraryReads Ambassador, IL
NoveList read-alike: *Family Meal* by Bryan Washington

Bone of My Bone
Johanna van Veen
(Poisoned Pen Press)

Sister Ursula, a nun fleeing brutal soldiers in 1635, meets Elsebeth, a peasant surviving the Thirty Years' War. They escape into the Bavarian forest, experiencing the horrors of the undead while followed by a necromancer. This atmospheric, haunting folk horror read is told from multiple points of view.

—Kristin Skinner, Flat River Community Library, MI
NoveList read-alike: *Angel Down* by Daniel Kraus

Bonus pick:

The Last Contract of Isako
Fonda Lee
(Orbit)

Notable Nonfiction:

Make Believe: On Telling Stories to Children
Mac Barnett
(Little, Brown and Company)

Be sure to check out our social media for the Bonus Pick annotations!

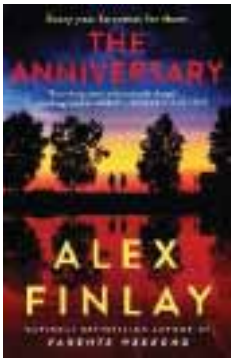
Made in LibraryAware - www.libraryaware.com

May 2026
HALL OF FAME TITLES

The LibraryReads Hall of Fame designation honors authors who have had multiple titles appear on the monthly list since 2013.

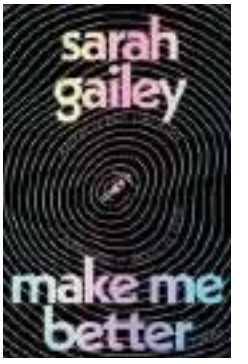
Find out more at www.LibraryReads.org/HOF

The Shippers
Katherine Center
(St. Martin's Press)



The Anniversary
Alex Finlay
(Minotaur Books)

Our Perfect Storm
Carley Fortune
(Berkley)

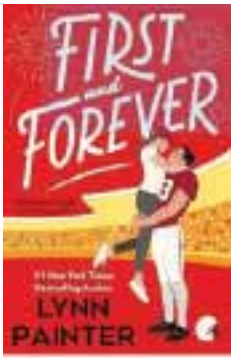


Make Me Better
Sarah Gailey
(Tor Books)

The Midnight Train: A Novel
Matt Haig
(Viking)

The Divorce
Freida McFadden
(Poisoned Pen Press)

Dolly All the Time
Annabel Monaghan
(G.P. Putnam's Sons)



First and Forever
Lynn Painter
(Berkley)

The Final Target
Nora Roberts
(St. Martin's Press)

Seek the Traitor's Son
Veronica Roth
(Tor Books)

The Things We Never Say: A Novel
Elizabeth Strout
(Random House)

Platform Decay
Martha Wells
(Tor Books)

10 Questions

Mia P. Manansala

by John Charles

Mia P. Manansala is an award-winning writer and book coach from Chicago who loves books, baking, and badass women. She uses humor (and murder) to explore aspects of the Filipino diaspora, queerness, and her millennial love for pop culture.

1. Who is Mia P. Manansala when she is at home?
Very chill and extremely geeky. A lot of people who've met me in real life or have seen me speak at events are surprised when I say I'm an introvert, but that's because I used to teach and I know how to turn it on and off when I'm in public. I love talking to other readers and writers, I love meeting people I vibe with, but it takes a lot of energy out of me. As soon as I get home, you better believe I'm changing into comfy clothes and lying down in complete silence. If I'm not writing, I'm spending my time in bed reading (books, manga, Webtoons) and playing single-player video games.

2. What can you tell us about Death and Dinuguan*?*
It is the last book in the Tita Rosie's Kitchen Mystery series, and I think it brings closure to these characters I've followed across six books while not tying everything up too nice and neat.

It takes place around Valentine's Day and centers on a series of burglaries targeting successful women-owned businesses in the fictional town of Shady Palms. Unfortunately, these burglaries eventually escalate to assault and murder and hit way too close to home when the co-owners of the town's new chocolate shop, two women close to my protagonist, are attacked.

3. What five words best describe the flavor of Death and Dinuguan*?*
Bittersweet, nostalgic, earthy, comforting, and spicy (as in, lots of spices and a hint of danger, not romance-wise! This is a cozy!).

4. Why is food a key ingredient in your Tita Rosie's Kitchen Mysteries?
At events, I like to joke that every culture believes it invented the idea of "food and family." However, we are often more similar than we are different, and my joke holds extra true for Filipinos. A common greeting in Tagalog is "Kumain ka na ba?" or "Have you eaten yet?" which shows you how important the act of not just eating but feeding other people can be to many Filipinos.

Tita Rosie's Kitchen Mysteries may be my only series that focuses explicitly on food, but all my writing includes food in some shape or form because it's a topic that's important to me personally, culturally, and creatively. I even teach a workshop titled "Food in Fiction."

5. In addition to writing mysteries for adults, you have authored your first mystery for teens, Death in the Cards*. What inspired you to try your hand at YA fiction?*
It's actually really interesting because my (now) YA editor contacted my literary agent after reading my debut, *Arsenic and Adobo*. She thought my voice was well-suited to YA and wanted to know if I had any interest in writing for that age category. I sent her a bunch of possible YA mystery ideas I had, and she told me which one she liked best as well as a bunch of feedback to incorporate. It was a very collaborative process that allowed me to put my own spin on something I've always loved: the teen detective.

I pitched it as a queer Filipino Veronica Mars, but was also greatly inspired by two diverse teen detective shows from the '90s: *Ghostwriter* and *The Mystery Files of Shelby Woo.* I dedicated the book to my younger self because it's exactly what I wanted and needed as a teen, and I hope it resonates with other young readers!

6. What are the books that made you fall in love with mysteries as a reader?

The Encyclopedia Brown series: *Encyclopedia Brown Takes the Cake* was my first introduction to food + mystery.

Anything by Mary Higgins Clark: my mom used to work at Walden Books, and she would bring the latest Mary Higgins Clark home and we'd buddy read it.

The Perry Mason books: I spent a summer in the Philippines with my grandparents when I was 11, and I read every book in my paternal grandfather's home library, which was mostly Perry Mason novels.

7. What role have libraries played in your life?

I didn't grow up in a great neighborhood, so my family didn't frequent the local library. From my childhood all the way through college, I relied on my school libraries and my mom's former job at Walden Books to provide me with stories and a safe space.

However, my mom now works as a page at a Chicago public library. One day, she was shelving books and the title *Chocolate Chip Cookie Murder*, by Joanne Fluke, caught her eye. She messaged me, saying she found a book that combined our two loves (food and mysteries) and we started buddy reading the series together. That was my first introduction to culinary cozies and what set me on my path to becoming a cozy mystery writer.

I worked in the Youth Services department at my local library from 2020–2022.

8. What is the best piece of life advice you have been given?

Build your community, and build it early. A strong support network has been crucial for me in my personal and professional lives, and I can say without exaggeration that I never would've made it this far as a writer if I hadn't taken the time to intentionally create various communities/safe spaces for myself.

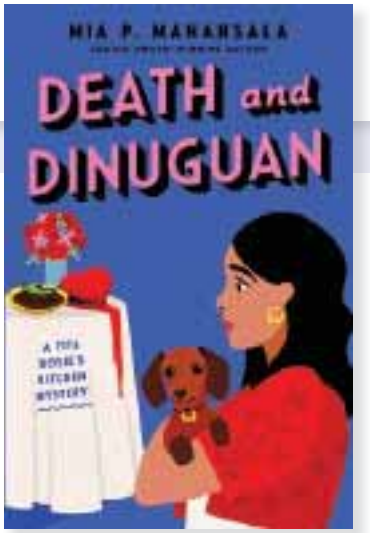
9. What is next for you as an author?

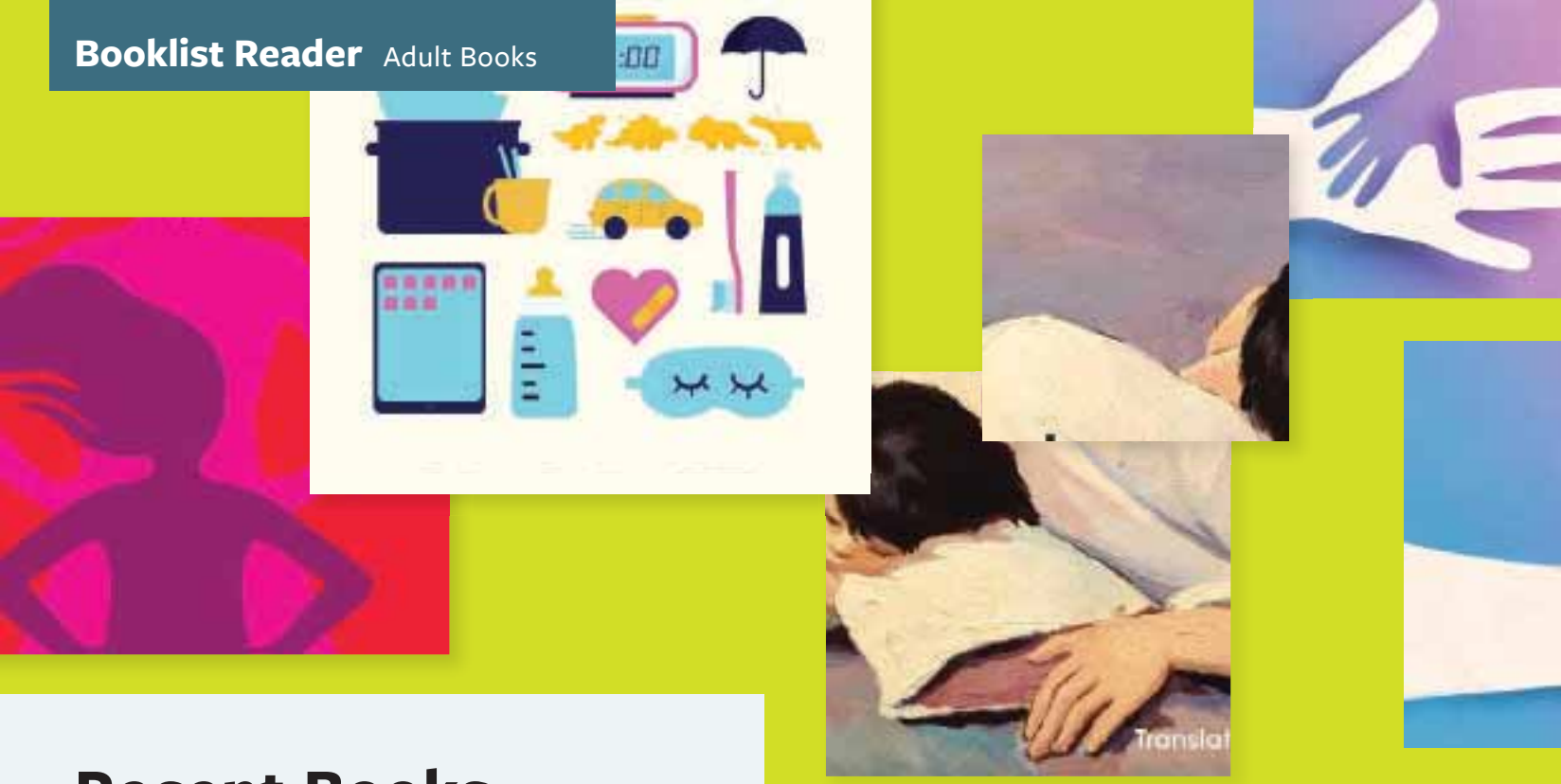
The sequel to my YA mystery, *Death in the Cards, Murder under the Full Moon*, comes out Spring 2027.

I also have an adult project in a new genre tentatively scheduled for Summer/Fall 2027, and I can't wait until I'm able to share more about it!

10. How can readers learn more about you and your books?

They can follow me on Instagram (@MPMtheWriter), check out my website (https://miapmanansala.com/), subscribe to my monthly newsletter (sign-up form is on my website), and/or support me on Ko-fi (https://ko-fi.com/mpmthewriter).



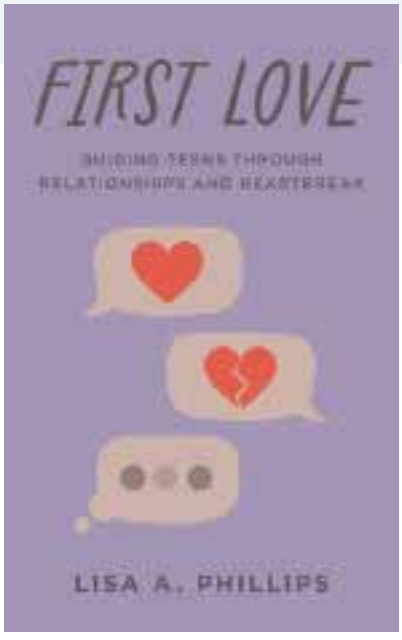


Recent Books about Family Life & Parenting

by Donna Seaman

Raising children and nurturing a family in a world of countless challenges requires a robust toolkit augmented by expert and compassionate advice. These well-sourced guides and candid personal ruminations offer useful information, witty insights, and enlightening and encouraging perspectives, techniques, and experiences.

Art from the covers of *Sexism & Sensibility, Am I Doing This Right?, The Abandoners* and *Parent Yourself First.*



The Abandoners: On Mothers and Monsters. By Begoña Gómez Urzaiz. 2024. Norton.

Spanish journalist Urzaiz shares her fascination with mothers who shirked or neglected their maternal duties in 16 relatable, wise, surprising, and sometimes even humorous essays about women, famous and not, who stretched or escaped the bonds of motherhood. Anyone trying to be a good mother and a creative, free, self-contained person will feel seen.

Am I Doing This Right? Making Choices without Mom Guilt. By Rebecca Fox Starr. 2025. Familius.

In this banish-the-mom-guilt guide, Starr, a clinical therapist and a licensed clinical social worker, provides a nonfiction variation on "choose your own adventure" novels, offering various scenarios for parents coping with various challenges.

First Love: Guiding Teens through Relationships and Heartbreak. By Lisa A. Phillips. 2025. Rowman & Littlefield.

Phillips presents a realistic and helpful guidebook for parents of teens who are wading into new emotional waters, providing them with solid instruction, tips for healthy modeling, and recommended communication strategies in chapters covering early crushes, the typical trajectory of nascent relationships, signs of unhealthy patterns and abuse, unique challenges for queer and nonbinary teens, and ways to provide support when a relationship ends.

Group Living and Other Recipes. By Lola Milholland. 2024. Spiegel & Grau.

Milholland shares her experiences growing up in an "open" house in Portland, Oregon, where she was shaped by the diverse worldviews of her biological family and the many others who lived with them, portraying key figures, summarizing essential lessons gleaned in this nontraditional household, and sharing recipes.

Happy to Help: Adventures of a People Pleaser. By Amy Wilson. 2025. Zibby.

For all the women who do too much, Wilson, host of the popular podcast about motherhood, *What Fresh Hell*, delivers insightful, humorous essays on the pandemic's far-reaching effects, the pressure for productivity, assumptions about motherhood and gender, the bewildering healthcare system, and the unique challenges of raising adolescents.

How to Dungeon Master Parenting: A Guidebook for Gamifying the Child-Rearing Quest, Leveling Up Your Skills, and Raising Future Adventurers. By Shelly Mazzanoble. 2024. Univ. of Iowa.

You and your band of adventurers are embarking on a perilous journey filled with unpredictable foes, and you must rely on your wits, weapons, and a fair bit of good fortune to see your way through. Sound like *Dungeons & Dragons*? Mazzanoble, cohost of the official D&D podcast, *Dragon Talk*, brings her love of the game to a fun-filled exploration of the travails of parenting in this humorous and heartening parental guide.

Parent Yourself First: Raise Confident, Compassionate Kids by Becoming the Parent You Wish You'd Had. By Bryana Kappadakunnel. 2025. Putnam.

Licensed marriage and family therapist Kappadakunnel offers her perspective on raising children by asking parents to reflect upon their own childhoods in order to identify unhealthy patterns from the past and how they may be negatively affecting their relationships with their own children.

Parenting in a Climate Crisis: A Handbook for Turning Fear into Action. By Bridget Shirvell. 2025. Workman.

Parents need help navigating climate change, both to assuage anxiety and to offer actionable solutions. Environmental journalist and parent Shirvell offers smart and friendly advice for specific age groups to encourage kids to experience, enjoy, and cherish nature.

The Road Is Good: How a Mother's Strength Became a Daughter's Purpose. By Uzo Aduba. 2024. Viking.

In her thoughtful memoir, actress Aduba recalls growing up Nigerian American in a family of five kids in one of the only Black families in a Boston suburb, traveling to Nigeria to meet her grandmother, and paying her dues as a young actress and waitress in New York.

Sexism & Sensibility: Raising Empowered, Resilient Girls in the Modern World. By Jo-Ann Finkelstein. 2024. Harmony.

Clinical psychologist Finkelstein's engaging, detailed overview of how ingrained misogyny negatively affects girls and women offers thoughtful analysis and helpful mitigating strategies for parents raising daughters with forays into cultural conditioning, social media and beauty-culture expectations, and sexual harassment and gender bias, while providing suggestions to facilitate conversations about sex and sexuality.

Steadfast Parenting: How to Raise Children of Character. By Patricia McGann. 2024. Rowman & Littlefield.

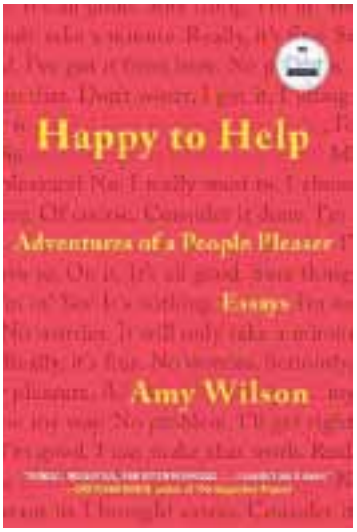
McGann, an educator, mother, and grandmother, offers commonsense advice for every stage of child development, addressing family, school, and social issues through high school, with an emphasis on a loving, respectful relationship between parents and children.

The Way of Play: Using Little Moments of Big Connection to Raise Calm and Confident Kids. By Tina Payne Bryson and Georgie Wisen-Vincent. 2025. Harmony.

Bryson and Wisen-Vincent believe that play is the "secret language" of children. They share valuable wisdom gleaned from decades of clinical experience and research that shows how play helps children build skills and process and express emotions, and how when adults gain fluency and share in the language of play, they can help children develop neurologically, relationally, and emotionally.

We Grow the World Together: Parenting toward Abolition. By Maya Schenwar and Kim Wilson. 2024. Haymarket.

This powerful, visionary collection gathers a wide variety of essays and interviews about family life, incarceration, and working toward restorative justice.



Trend Alert

Hockey Romances

by Stephanie Howes

Thanks to the mega success of the steamy streaming show *Heated Rivalry*, hockey romances are having a moment. Based on Rachel Reid's Game Changers series, the show follows hockey rivals Shane and Ilya, who find themselves fighting their intense attraction off the ice and dealing with the repercussions of keeping a secret relationship in the competitive world of hockey. There's a hockey romance for everyone, so strap on your skates and check out these ice-melting love stories.

The Au Pair Affair. By Tessa Bailey. 2024. Avon.

Au pair Tallulah Aydin has second thoughts about working for divorced dad and hockey player Burgess Abraham after seeing a video of him busting up an opposing team member on the ice, but soon she has a different concern: Can she keep things professional?

Canadian Boyfriend. By Jenny Holiday. 2024. Forever.

Teenager Aurora met cute Canadian hockey player Mike at the Mall of America and invented an imaginary Canadian boyfriend based on him to help avoid uncomfortable situations and stay focused on ballet. When they meet again years later, she worries that her secret may destroy everything.

Free Falling. By Jill Shalvis. 2026. Sourcebooks/Casablanca.

After Caleb Colburn's hockey career is sidelined by an injury, his job restoring historic buildings unites him with architect Emma Summer, a former college classmate now fighting an unfortunate attraction to the tattooed Caleb.

Hearts on the Fly. By Toni Shiloh. 2026. Bethany House.

After he's benched from playing hockey for the Washington Warriors, Jabari's friends set him up with Val Elliott, but one date seems like enough until Jabari realizes his true feelings.

Him. By Sarina Bowen and Elle Kennedy. 2021. Rennie Road.

Jamie and Ryan used to be best friends and hockey teammates, until the weird, final night of hockey camp. Now that they're on rival college teams in the national championship, will Ryan finally get over his crush?

Puck and Prejudice. By Lia Riley. 2024. Avon.

In Riley's time-travel Austen-homage romance, Austin Regals goalie Tucker Taylor, sidelined by health woes, goes to England to visit his sister, where after an accidental plunge in an icy pond, the oddly dressed Lizzy Wooddash tells him the year is 1812.

Pucking Strong. By Emily Rath. 2025. Kensington.

Dr. Teddy O'Connor has had a crush on NHL player Henrik Karlsson ever since Teddy was an intern for the team. Now Hendrik asks Teddy for a big favor: a fake marriage so he can have custody of his niece.

Puck You. By Flynn Novak. 2025. Wattpad/W.

College hockey player Grace transfers to a new school to play for a top-tier women's team. When she objects to how the women players are treated, Sebastian, star of the men's team, becomes an adversary on and off the ice.

Spiral. By Bal Khabra. 2025. Forever.

In the second book in Khabra's Off the Ice series, hockey player Elias is struggling with the downside of fame, and aspiring ballerina Sage needs to increase her online presence. Will fake dating help them both?

Touch. By Kris Bryant. 2018. Bold Strokes.

After an injury, hockey player Elizabeth Stone enlists the help of physical therapist Dr. Hayley Sims. As she falls for her intense patient, Hayley must decide if Elizabeth is worth the risk.

Wake Up, Nat & Darcy. By Kate Cochrane. 2024. Harlequin/Carina Adores.

After two-time Olympian Natalie is cut from the women's hockey team, she becomes guest host on *Wake Up*, a show covering the Olympics, unaware that she'll have to work with Darcy, her former adversary and ex-girlfriend.

Writing Mr. Wrong. By Kelley Armstrong. 2025. Forever.

Debut romance author Gemma is excited to appear on a popular Vancouver morning show, but she'll be sharing the stage with pro-hockey star Mason, who made her a laughingstock in high school. Mason's publicist suggests Mason and Gemma go on a fake date, paving the way for all kinds of disasters.

Trade Secrets

Try a Translation

by Milena Durek

Works in translation have been opening wide the global gates of knowledge for centuries.

Oh, it's only a translation . . ." Have you ever moved past an originally tempting-looking audiobook because the original was not written in English? No judgement intended; don't feel bad. Your mistrust was probably based on a past betrayal! A careless, unprofessional translation can sink any text, including titanic books! As a native speaker of a language smaller than minor, I depend on translations more than most, and I have had many moments when a work's quality is "concealed" from me. I remember watching *Ben Hur* for the first time in my late teens. The dubbing in English was poorly done, and I couldn't finish watching that classic. Years later, when I chanced upon the original English version, I was swept away by the beauty and dignity of a film previously "lost in translation."

Have you ever listened to an audiobook without realizing it was a translation? Perhaps the audio was rich and authentic, the language felt brilliant in its familiarity, and there were subtle twists and linguistic playfulness, which, in the context of a work of fiction, felt quite welcome. Did you look for the name of the translator? And have you noticed that quite often, you will not be able to find their name?

Translators are inconspicuous, serving authors and literature. They do not miss the limelight (besides, many of them are authors themselves). Their translating work is an adventure so comprehensive and rewarding that they are, in many cases, content to disappear behind it. No one knows the author's "kitchen" as well as translators do: the strengths, the weaknesses, the points of genius and originality. The translator's skills, the craft, reaches beyond fluency in two languages with their vocabulary, syntactic structures, and stylistic devices; these factors are merely the audible part of the cultural iceberg. As a proverb suggests, *a language is a dialect with an army and navy,* and a translator is trained to bridge both distance and time, to interpret and transpose linguistic, cultural, and social factors. Master translators create works that are personal and unique, evoking the same feelings as original pieces, preserving wordplay, irony, and style of humor. The key concept of literary translation is, therefore, creative interpretation, not a word-for-word corresponding change. A responsible translator is aware that the author's dialogue with listeners must be made fully accessible to the new audience, so that the listener is able to enjoy the same communication with the text. Sticking to this rule, the translator is the conscientious guardian of the riches of the original, making sure no messages go missing.

Being well-read in the canon of world literature is another must for a translator of fiction. I still recall how displeased our professor looked if we missed a well-worked-in quote from or an allusion to Shakespeare or the Bible or a major poet. With the need for such knowledge to do right by the author, reader, and listener, the responsibility of a translator is high. Making ethical decisions is also necessary. Is it acceptable to "improve" the original work, e.g., by correcting an awkward formulation, or even a factual mistake like a date or a technical detail? Translators are modest workers because they do not exploit their power. They are expert problem solvers—creative, knowledgeable, and playful—wishing to serve well. Chances are, they will invent new words that may enter the target language, and they also suggest which loanwords can be adopted. In general, literary translators are language nerds and passionate lovers of the tapestry of human communication. Beyond the crushing responsibility, they have immense creative fun.

Works in translation have been opening wide the global gates of knowledge for centuries. They enable an understanding of a world not immediately surrounding us, or that has already vanished into the abyss of time. They invite comparison and contemplation of our own cultures. The exchange of cultural values and heritage brings us closer to a global understanding of humanity. Translations, windows into cultures around the world, play a significant role in suppressing xenophobia.

One last question to open an intricate topic: Is the translation of an artistic work definitive? Hardly ever! Languages are living organisms created by their users, evolving fast and altering our sensitivity for language, the way we connect with words. Classics and other significant literary works deserve updated translations to keep up with the listener. If a text has been enchanting generations of readers and listeners, a new translation should be offered as frequently as possible. Each generation deserves its own translation of a novel as beautiful and fundamental as Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. I suggest that next time you listen to a translated classic, be picky about the translation. Try several if they are available, and choose the one that seems to be the best fit for you. It is, after all, all about the choice of language.

Milena Durek is a world-language teacher at Morton East High School in Cicero, Illinois, teaching trilingual classes. She is an author and translator in her home country, Czech Republic.

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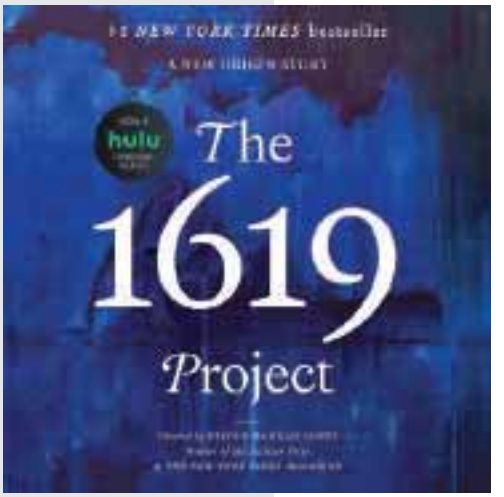
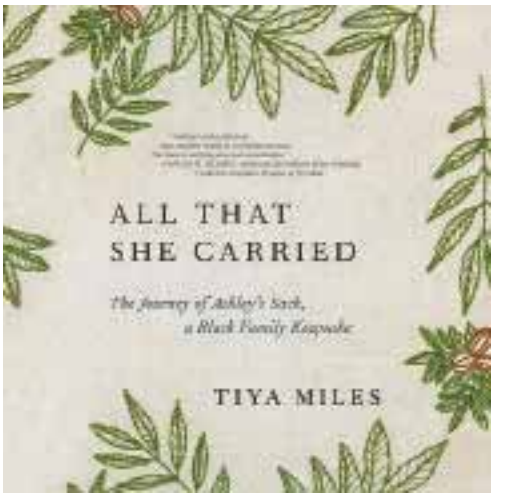
- **Independent Lens** and **American Experience** dive deep into the movements and people who continue to influence the country today.

Find these conversations and more at **pbsbooks.org/collections** then select Filmmaker Talks

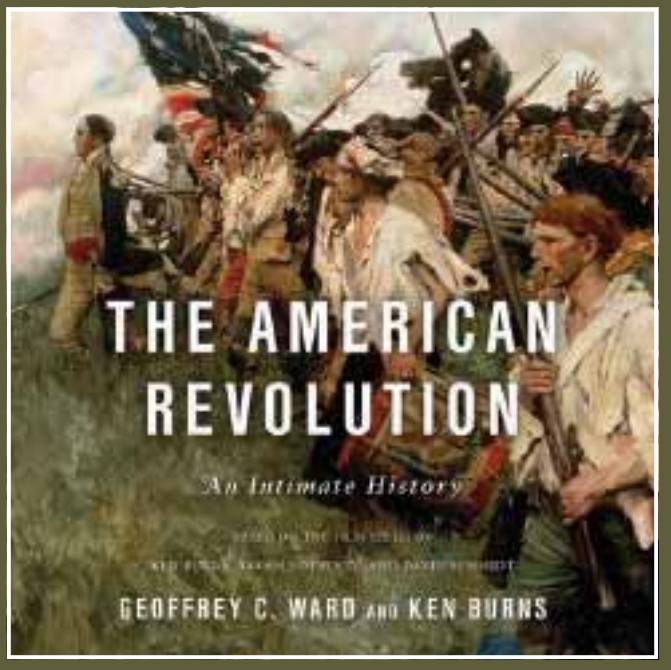
Ears on American History

by Heather Booth





It's a year of looking back to examine the path our country has walked, so this issue's "Ears On" takes listeners along on that journey of American history, spotlighting popular titles and expanding the wealth of options for exploring the nation's complex past.



The American Revolution: An Intimate History. By Geoffrey C. Ward and Ken Burns. Read by a full cast. 2025. 23hr. Books on Tape.

PBS viewers are awed by Burns' epic documentary, the basis for this audiobook. Expansive as it is, the full-cast narration helps keep listeners engaged in the details, whether they are familiar tales of the founders or well-researched information that deepens our understanding of the events of 250 years ago that still echo today. The listen-alikes below similarly engage with full casts narrating significant moments in American history.

Listen-alikes:

The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story. By Nikole Hannah-Jones. Read by a full cast. 2021. 19hr. Books on Tape.

Audiobook readers who want more detailed American histories from fresh perspectives will have likely encountered this powerhouse history. By 1776, enslaved people had already spent a century-and-a-half building a nation that refused to even recognize their humanity. Readers will quickly realize that knowledge of this origin story is crucial for a divided nation seeking a shared path toward equity and justice.

Black AF History: The Un-Whitewashed Story of America. By Michael Harriot. Read by the author. 2023. 16hr. HarperAudio.

Combine Neil deGrasse Tyson's professorial encouragement with Kevin Hart's stinging snark and you've got journalist/storyteller Harriot streaming through the headset. Harriot debunks the "fantastical, overwrought, and fictive tale" called American history and threads an illuminating (and occasionally jaw-dropping) Q&A format throughout to educate.

The Civil War: In Their Own Words. By Anna Lyse Erickson. Read by a full cast. 2023. 5hr. Alison Larkin Presents.

Excerpts from significant speeches, snippets of important literature of the era that still resonate, letters, and more writings of the Civil War era vividly portray this important time. Familiar voices (Scott Brick as Abraham Lincoln, Moira Quirk as Harriet Beecher Stowe) recur throughout the work in an arrangement that gives the audio a theatrical feel while offering listeners moments for reflection on the issues at play and how we might address them now.

Four Hundred Souls: A Community History of African America, 1619–2019. Ed. by Ibram X. Kendi and Keisha N. Blain. Read by a full cast. 2021. 14hr. Books on Tape.

Kendi and Blain bring together a collective of authors and poets to chronicle the journey of "Africa America"

spanning 400 years, from 1619 to 2019. In what could almost be described as ceremonial, a full cast of over 80 narrators partakes in community-style storytelling, with each narrator giving voice to a specific moment in history. Listeners will find every moment of this presentation moving and well-executed.

George Washington's Secret Six: The Spies Who Saved America. By Brian Kilmeade and Don Yaeger. Read by Stephen Graybill. 2019. 2.5hr. Listening Library. Gr. 5–9.

This young reader's edition of Kilmeade and Yaeger's best-seller tells the story of the Culper Ring, a group that is credited with helping Washington track the British movements in New York. A steady narration helps listeners follow the military maneuvers and historical documents. Eye-opening for all ages!

History Smashers: The American Revolution. By Kate Messner. Read by Donna Allen. 2022. 3hr. Listening Library. Gr. 6–8.

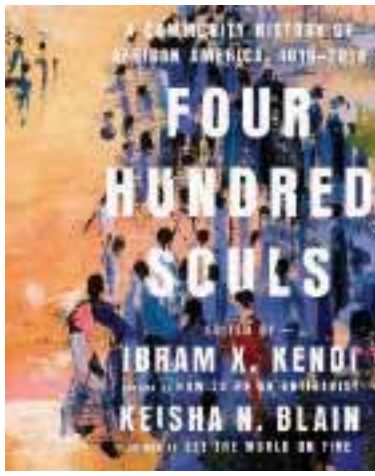
Messner's entry into the History Smashers series is recommended on the companion site to *The American Revolution* and it is an excellent entry-point for young listeners who are eager to understand more about the era. Like the TV series, this brief but engaging nonfiction title debunks fables, elevates unsung voices, and helps kids see this pivotal moment in our country's development from many sides. Allen's narration is a great guide through the details, making this a title that will work well either as a stand-alone audio or a nice companion to the peppy illustrations.

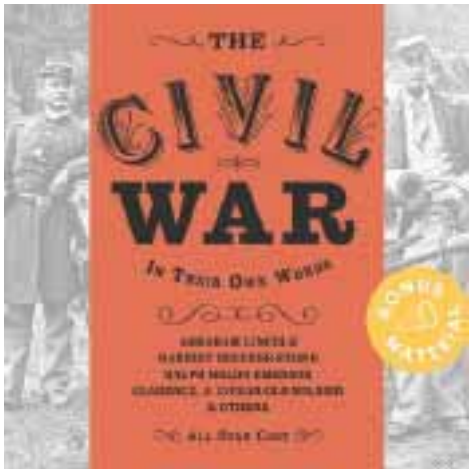
Revolution Song: A Story of American Freedom. By Russell Shorto. Read by the author. 2017. 19hr. Recorded Books.

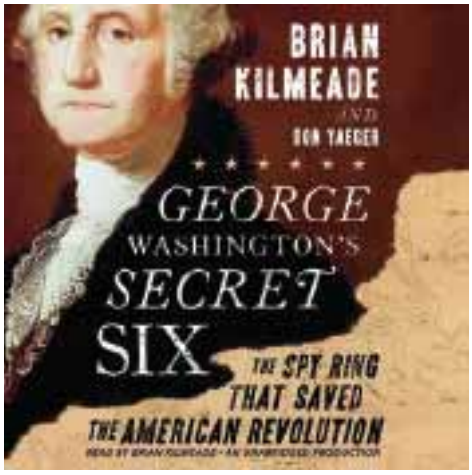
Acclaimed historian Shorto weaves together the fascinating lives of six people—some well-known and others more obscure—from different walks of life and how they experienced the American Revolution, creating a fresh and compelling narrative about the founding of the U.S.

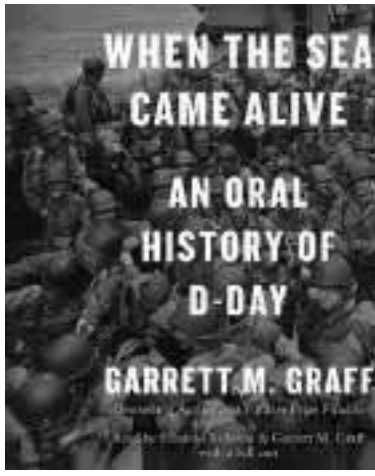
When the Sea Came Alive: An Oral History of D-Day. By Garrett M. Graff. Read by a full cast. 2024. 19.5hr. Simon & Schuster Audio.

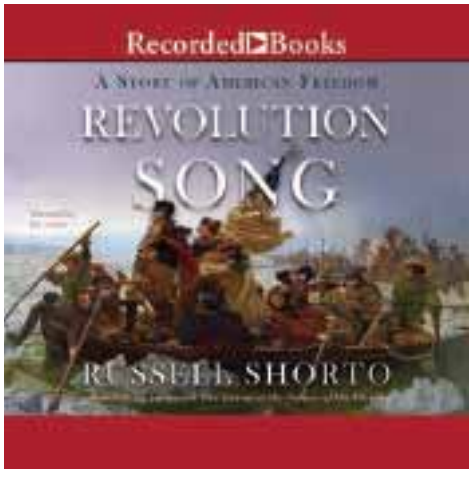
A slew of polished readers (both men and women) recount the first-person reflections, observations, and personal testimonies of military personnel, politicians, journalists, and civilians, meticulously gleaned from videos, audio, memoirs, speeches, and military histories. Accents are impeccably natural with the ultimate emphasis on the values of leadership, courage, bravery, and sacrifice.

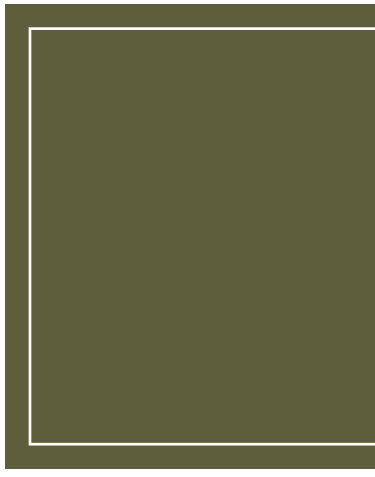












Listen Up

Home and Family Stories on Audio for Youth

by Heather Booth

Family relationships and finding meaning and comfort in home are common themes in fiction for youth. These audiobooks enhance the emotional experiences of the young characters seeking, enriching, and enjoying family ties.

Young Adult

Few Blue Skies. By Carolina Ixta. Read by Karla Serrato. 2026. HarperCollins/Quill Tree. Gr. 8–12.

Paloma and Julia are deeply passionate about their community as it's being imperiled by rapid industrialization. Serrato's voice encompasses the story's complexity as the pair navigates the difficult issues related to protecting loved ones and home.

Sisters in the Wind. By Angeline Boulley. Read by Isabella Star LaBlanc. 2025. Macmillan Audio. Gr. 9–12.

Family lost and family found are at the core of Lucy's life. Interspersed with the present-day drama of learning about her Ojibwe family's legacy and recovering from a fire, Lucy remembers stories of loss, foster homes, and abuse of power. LaBlanc's narration makes Lucy's evolution real.

Middle-Grade

The Birchbark House. By Louise Erdrich. Read by the author. 2024. HarperAudio. Gr. 4–7.

A new audio version of this classic, narrated by the author, is a treat. Erdrich's sparse narration gives the historical family story a sense of gravitas and realism that makes it seem as if the reader is experiencing life alongside Omakayas and her family.

Deer Run Home. By Ann Clare LeZotte. Read by Sarah Tubert. 2024. Scholastic. Gr. 5–7.

Effie is Deaf and mistreated in her family of origin but blooms, becoming healthy and trusting enough to share her whole truth, in a new home. Deaf activist Tubert's interpretation of Effie's character and voice genuinely conveys a memorable story through well-crafted rhythms and verse.

Finding Lost. By Holly Goldberg Sloan. Read by Khaya Fraites. 2025. Listening Library. Gr. 4–7.

Life since Cordy's father's death in a workplace boating accident has been marked by change for her small family. It's a dog named Lost who helps her find the heart of her home once again. Fraites' empathy with Cordy is clear, consistent, and convincing.

Young

Bad Badger. By Maryrose Wood. Read by Chris Devon. 2025. Dreamscape. Gr. 1–4.

Septimus, a spotted badger, lives a peaceful, if lonely, life until he finds Gully, a laconic seagull (and a bit of an odd duck like Septimus), and the two quickly form a deep, true friendship. Devon's narration is delightfully quirky, drawing on each animal's attributes in this warm tale.

Bread is Love. By Pooja Makhijani. Read by the author. 2026. Macmillan Audio.

Nothing warms a home like fresh baked bread. This audiobook, narrated by the author, offers a wholesome experience and gently guides listeners through the emotions of the child character as they watch the bread change.

Five Stories. By Ellen Weinstein. Read by Eva Kaminsky and others. 2024. Live Oak. PreS–Gr. 3.

In a New York building, families in five different eras make their home and start new lives as Americans and New Yorkers. A lovely jumping-off point for family conversations about immigration, ancestors, community, and connections.

Heart of Our Home. By Janelle Washington. Read by Melinda Sewak. Mar. 2026. Macmillan Audio.

This gentle picture book invites readers to reflect on the places in the home that tie little moments together and on all the moments our own kitchen table has witnessed. A gentle narration and soft music set the right tone for cozy shared moments.

The Interpreter. By Olivia Abtahi. Read by a full cast. 2025. Listening Library. K–Gr. 3.

Cecilia is a youngster with a hard job. Like many kids, she is her Spanish-speaking parents' translator. But can she keep it up with all of the demands of being a kid, too? Rare is the picture book that gets this sort of fully realized production with music, sound effects, and an impressively virtuoso veteran cast.

Art from the cover of *Sisters in the Wind.*

Top 10

History for Youth

The following accounts of historical events or figures reveal valuable perspectives and bring new life to common accounts of history.

Across the Ice: How We Saved the Ojibwe Horse. By Darcy Whitecrow and Heather M. O'Connor. Illus. by Natasha Donovan. 2025. Candlewick. K–Gr. 2.

An Indigenous elder of Lac La Croix shares the story of living symbiotically with wild ponies and ultimately saving the species when settler colonialism destroyed their way of life.

Are You a Friend of Dorothy? The True Story of an Imaginary Woman and the Real People She Helped. By Kyle Lukoff. Illus. by Levi Hastings. 2025. Simon & Schuster. K–Gr. 4.

Lukoff explores the relatively recent era when, because it was both illegal and dangerous to be queer, the titular question was a sort of secret handshake.

Did You Hear What Happened in Salem? The Witch Trials of 1692. By Katie Kennedy. Illus. by Nick Thornborrow. 2025. Workman. Gr. 3–7.

The connection between witch hunts and modern misinformation, paired with Thornborrow's unsettling, engaging full-page illustrations, works well in this gripping exploration of the Salem Witch Trials.

The History of We. By Nikkolas Smith. Illus. by the author. 2025. Penguin/Kokila. K–Gr. 3.

This sweeping history of the human race begins hundreds of thousands of years ago, tracing our development and subverting the idea of white origins of civilization.

How the Word Is Passed (Adapted for Young Readers): Remembering Slavery and How It Shaped America. By Clint Smith and Sonja Cherry-Paul. 2025. Little, Brown. Gr. 7–12.

Though Smith didn't originally plan to adapt his adult title about the history of slavery in the U.S., he was motivated to reconsider by recent national developments, creating a deeply engaging and accessible young readers' version.

Lighthouse Ladies: Shining a Spotlight on Hardy Heroines. By Kris Coronado. Illus. by Islenia Mil. 2025. Clarion. PreS–Gr. 3.

This nonfiction debut upends the idea that only men helmed lighthouses by showcasing four of the many women who did this grueling, lifesaving work.

A Most Perilous World: The True Story of the Young Abolitionists and Their Crusade Against Slavery. By Kristina R. Gaddy. 2025. Dutton. Gr. 7–12.

Gaddy explores the lives of four young adult abolitionists, two Black and two white, before and during the Civil War in short, intertwined chapters fueled by extensive research of primary sources.

The True Story of Vanilla: How Edmond Albius Made History. By Ann Richards. Illus. by Arden Taylor. 2025. Orca. Gr. 4–7.

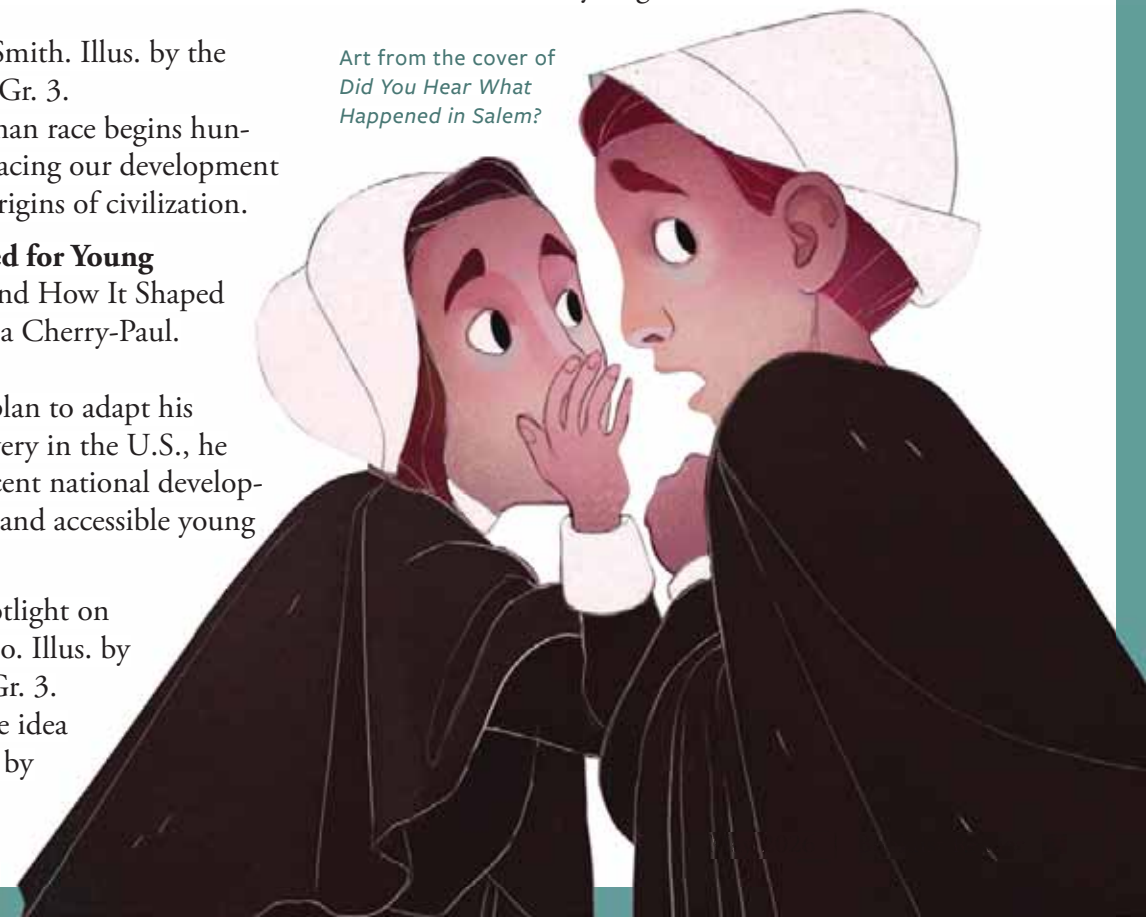
This moving and bittersweet biography recounts how 12-year-old Edmond Albius, an enslaved houseboy on a sugar plantation on the island of Réunion, discovered how to hand-pollinate vanilla orchid plants.

White Lies: How the South Lost the Civil War, Then Rewrote the History. By Ann Bausum. 2025. Roaring Brook. Gr. 8–12.

Wielding well-researched facts and true stories, Bausum presents—and then dismantles—20 lies about race and slavery historically pushed by white Americans.

Worthy: The Brave and Capable Life of Joseph Pierce. By Andrea Wang. Illus. by Youa Vang. 2025. Levine Querido/Arthur A. Levine. K–Gr. 3.

Wang traces Chinese American Pierce's experiences attending school, fighting in the Union Army during the Civil War, and becoming a citizen and the prejudice he encountered at every stage.



Art from the cover of *Did You Hear What Happened in Salem?*

Art from the cover of *Anna Strong.*

Before, During, and After: The American Revolution

by Sarah Hunter

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, and there will doubtlessly be many conversations, school lessons, articles, and more about this important anniversary. But the Declaration of Independence wasn't an isolated event; more than a century of history led up to that moment, and, inevitably, that moment profoundly continues to shape not only the boundaries of our country but our culture, values, and identity as a nation. As young readers confront the meaning of America's 250th birthday, it's important to allow them to see the wider picture beyond the keystone document and the familiar roster of "founding fathers" that fill the pages of history textbooks. The following titles together offer a rich variety of perspectives on the decades leading up to the American Revolution, the important events of America's fight for independence, and the early days of the new nation as it expanded it borders and wrestled with what life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness mean in practice.

Before

The Extraordinary Suzy Wright: A Colonial Woman on the Frontier. By Teri Kanefield. 2016. Abrams. Gr. 5–8.

Lawyer, scientist, Quaker diplomat, poet, and frontier settler are among the identities easy to attach to Suzy Wright, an eighteenth-century colonial American. Incorporating ample primary-source materials, this lush volume offers a robust account of both Wright and the decades leading up to the Revolution.

Ghost Walls: The Story of a 17th-Century Colonial Homestead. By Sally M. Walker. 2014. Carolrhoda. Gr. 7–11.

While this book deals largely with archeology, the findings of the researchers Walker follows paint a vivid picture of a late-seventeenth-century homestead in Maryland and the people who lived and struggled there.

An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States for Young People. By Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz and others. 2019. Beacon. Gr. 7–12.

The history of Indigenous people in North America is an inextricable part of any discussion of the founding of the U.S., and this sharp, comprehensive history does an excellent job of laying bare the historical facts while neatly tying together past and present. Important and deeply thought provoking.

The Mayflower. By Kate Messner. Illus. by Dylan Meconis. 2020. Random. Gr. 4–7.

Messner and Meconis' excellent History Smashers series here takes on the familiar story of the Pilgrims' arrival at Plymouth Rock, debunking common myths, asking powerful questions about how we learn about the past, and engagingly revealing the truth in an entertaining and fact-packed package.

During

Anna Strong: A Spy during the American Revolution. By Sarah Glenn Marsh. Illus. by Sarah Green. 2020. Abrams. Gr. 2–4.

The only woman in the Culper Ring, Anna Strong rebelled against her loyalist family by eavesdropping on the British army and cleverly leaving encoded messages, which is the focus of this engaging picture book.

Answering the Cry for Freedom: Stories of African Americans and the American Revolution. By Gretchen Woelfle. Illus. by R. Gregory Christie. 2016. Astra/Calkins Creek. Gr. 5–8.

In showcasing the lives of 13 eighteenth-century figures, this collective biography examines the challenges and contradictions of life for African Americans in the founding

era and offers an honest look at the complicated, often hypocritical ideas Americans had about liberty.

Forgotten Founders: Black Patriots, Women Soldiers, and Other Thinkers and Heroes Who Shaped Early America. By Mifflin Lowe. Illus. by Wiliam Luong. 2022. Bushel & Peck. Gr. 4–6.

Shining a light on overlooked figures from the Revolutionary War era is the goal of this splashy, illustrated overview, which covers familiar individuals, such as Abigail Adams, as well as such lesser-known people as Cuffee Saunders and Deborah Sampson.

A Kids' Guide to the American Revolution. By Kathleen Krull. Illus. by Anna DiVito. 2018. Harper. Gr. 4–7.

This concise guide helpfully walks readers through an easy-to-comprehend chronology of the war while introducing key figures and raising important questions about how women, Indigenous people, and enslaved individuals were treated at the time.

Revolutionary Mary: The True Story of One Woman, the Declaration of Independence, and America's Fight for Freedom. By Karen Blumenthal and Jen McCartney. Illus. by Elizabeth Baddeley. 2025. Roaring Brook. Gr. 1–4.

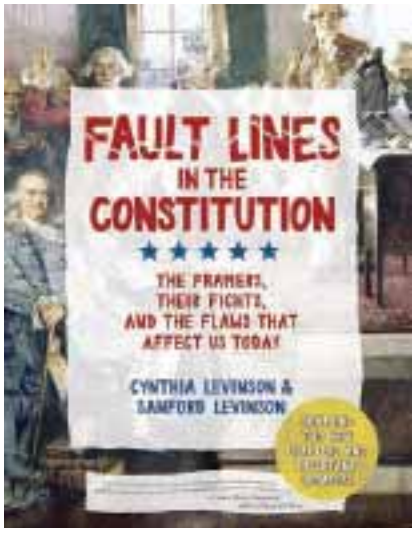
This lively picture book introduces printer Mary Katharine Goddard, who published copies of the Declaration of Independence—an act considered treason. Biographical information and historical context are neatly folded together in this account that emphasizes the vital importance of a free press.

Thomas Paine and the Dangerous Word. By Sarah Jane Marsh. Illus. by Edwin Fotheringham. 2018. Disney/Hyperion. Gr. 2–5.

Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, which rallied colonists to break from England, gets strong, smart treatment here. Marsh presents Paine as a fully fleshed-out individual, whose often overlooked abolitionist views were integral to his story.

We the People: Big Ideas that Changed the World #4. By Don Brown. Art by the author. 2022. Abrams/Amulet. Gr. 4–7.

Brown walks readers through the big idea of democracy in this fact-driven, deeply humane history. Narrated by Abigail Adams, the book introduces the original Greek concept of "people power" before turning to the U.S. and concluding with our continued struggle for true equality.



The World Turned Upside Down: The Yorktown Victory That Won America's Independence. By Tim Grove. 2022. Abrams. Gr. 5–8.

This engaging, well-researched, and at times suspenseful book explains the history of the American Revolution, focusing on the decisive battle at Yorktown, Virginia, and depicting the actions of American, British, and French figures—including many enslaved individuals—on both sides of the fight.

After

Fault Lines in the Constitution: The Framers, Their Fights, and the Flaws That Affect Us Today, 3rd ed. By Cynthia Levinson and Sanford Levinson. 2025. Peachtree. Gr. 6–10.

Though this volume covers a wealth of contemporary topics, its coverage of the Articles of Confederation and the creation of the Constitution offers deep, poignant insight into the framers' intents and concerns as they tried to create a functional government for a brand new country.

Many Voices: Building Erie, the Canal That Changed America. By Laurie Lawlor. 2025. Holiday. Gr. 4–7.

Through the lens of the Erie Canal, Lawlor elucidates the many political, financial, and geographical challenges facing a young America. Simultaneously, Lawlor details the devastating impact on Indigenous tribes in the area and the mistreatment of immigrant and enslaved laborers in the canal's construction.

We Are Still Here! Native American Truths Everyone Should Know. By Traci Sorell. Illus. by Frané Lessac. 2021. Charlesbridge. Gr. 2–4.

This general overview of important concepts in Native American history and culture highlights the impact of westward expansion on Indigenous populations. Thoughtfully presented for younger readers, the topics here strongly emphasize that Native Americans are essential to America's history and present.

Why Longfellow Lied: The Truth about Paul Revere's Midnight Ride. By Jeff Lantos. 2021. Charlesbridge. Gr. 5–8.

This stanza-by-stanza debunking of notable abolitionist Longfellow's famed "Paul Revere's Ride" not only details the facts but explains Longfellow's larger aim—to galvanize Northern citizens as the Civil War loomed—and explores the effects of making myths out of American history.

A Conversation

Laurie Halse Anderson

by Aryssa Damron

The magic of a good book can transport readers through time, and the power that resonates through a historical novel in particular allows readers to interrogate a moment, an idea, a revolution through each and every page. As America prepares to celebrate its 250th birthday in the summer of 2026, it's a meaningful time to invite readers to consider what the books we read teach us about the history we know—and the history we don't know. Acclaimed author Laurie Halse Anderson's sharp, well-researched novels are the perfect example of how historical fiction can bridge the gap between classroom textbooks and narratives that excite readers, illuminating history—especially American history—while making it feel alive and human. We spoke with Anderson about why historical fiction about America's founding is so important right now and what readers can gain from understanding the history of our country.

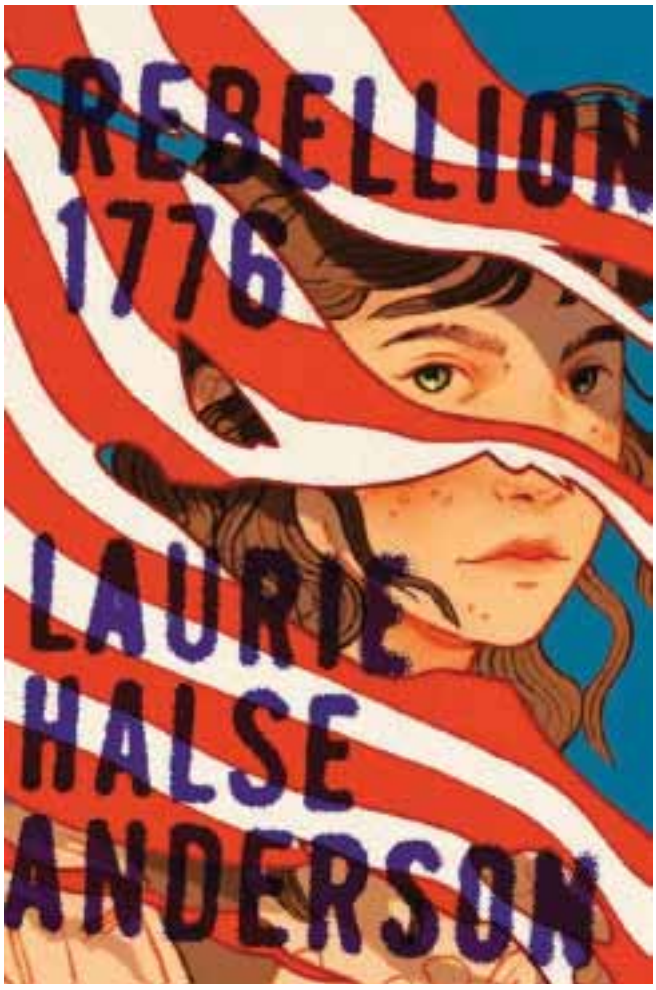
Damron: You've written across several different historical periods over your career. Why come back to the American Revolution? What does that time period offer to readers today that other historical periods might not as readily?
Anderson: Studies by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) show that today's students learn much less American history than their parents and grandparents did. That horrifies and enrages me. How can anyone expect our children to grow into functional adults if they don't understand the history of our country? That's why I wrote *Rebellion 1776* and my other historical novels: to spark curiosity about our past. The choices made during and immediately after the American Revolution still affect our lives today. I hope my books can shed some light on that.

Damron: Can you talk a little bit about how you weave genealogy, historical research, fiction writing, and narrativization of history into a book like Rebellion 1776 *in a way that's both accessible for younger readers and creates an accurate picture of a particular time period like the American Revolution?*
Anderson: As a writer of historical fiction, I have two responsibilities: to tell a story that is engaging and entertaining, and to ground every aspect of that story in reliable primary sources. That means I am always reading historical sources with the eyes of a 12-year-old. I studied the real families who lived in Boston in 1776 and plotted them out on a map of the town. That gave me a sense of the different neighborhoods as well as the feel of the town itself. Louisa May Alcott's grandfather, Joseph May, for example, was 16 years old back then, working with his brothers at their family's lumber yard. The bookstore of Patriot Henry Knox—a rowdy, quick-fisted Boston boy who left school early to support his family—was slowly being repaired after having been gutted by the British army. The smells of low tide and fish markets at the end of a hot day; the cool salt breeze atop Beacon Hill; the sounds of wagon wheels, hooves, and boots on the cobblestones; the taste of cider cold from the cellar . . . all of these hints of memory wove themselves into a new tapestry in the shape of my book.

Damron: How has your research process—both for Rebellion 1776 *and any other books you're currently working on—been impacted by the modern political climate, attempts at changing signs, erasure of particular sources, etc.?*
Anderson: Thankfully, most of the research I did was at historical societies, libraries, and museums whose budgets had not yet been impacted by blundering, overreaching bureaucrats intent on destroying both public education and cultural archives.

But that situation is rapidly changing. The attacks on libraries, librarians, and digitization projects that make primary sources accessible to everyone threaten not just books like mine but the foundational concept of equal access to information. Totalitarians who want to seize control of a country know that destroying education and cultural institutions is an important first step. That's what we are living through right now.

Damron: Why do you think it's important for young people to understand not only the facts of the past but also the humanity? Do you think that's impacted your storytelling through characterization?
Anderson: When young readers connect to a story, their



brains light up with empathy and understanding. Books help readers grow emotionally as well as intellectually. That is as true for historical novels as it is for books set in the world of today. The details of life have certainly changed in the last 250 years—not just technology but food, cultural celebrations, science, politics—you name it. But what hasn't changed is the condition of the human heart. We love our families. We can also be very irritated with our families, or disappointed by them, or worried about them. Children on the cusp of adolescence and later adulthood have always had conflicting and confusing storms of emotion. They want friends, sometimes they have enemies, and they all want more time to play. The kids in 1776 had those very same feelings as kids do today. I try to craft period-accurate characters who wrestle with the same joys and fears that my readers have. If I've done my job, my readers will finish my book with an understanding of our history and a little bit of insight into their own world.

Damron: Have you found that **Rebellion 1776** *has received different or similar engagement from readers, and perhaps book banners, as* **Chains***? How do you think the two stories are in conversation together, and how have you changed as a writer and researcher in the years since* **Chains** *was published?*
Anderson: What a wonderful question! I think of my five historical-fiction novels as a group of siblings or cousins. They all have characters who come of age within the same time period and in fairly close proximity to one another. The characters are all children whose families and lives are devastated by institutions and events beyond their control. And they all emerge from the fires of war as young adults ready to take their place in a new world. With every book I write, I learn new information and improve my research skills. *Chains* stands on the shoulders of *Fever 1793*. The entire Seeds of America trilogy laid the foundation for *Rebellion 1776*. I'm not sure what I'll write next, but I know it will be another adventure of research and imagination.

Damron: What historical period do you wish we had more books about for young readers—fiction or nonfiction—as we head into America 250 and look back at over two centuries of American history? Why do you think that period isn't as well explored in books?
Anderson: I wish there were more books by and about the Indigenous peoples of the American continent. Louise Erdrich's wonderful Birchbark House series has opened the door for those stories. But we need more! There are more than 500 tribal nations in the U.S., each with its own history and stories that deserve to be told. I'd also love to read more books about the people who lived in the regions of Mexico that became part of the U.S. in 1848, after the Mexican-American War. Finally, I think there are many stories and books waiting to be written about the Great Depression.

Damron: As we look forward to the next 250 years of America, what do you hope it holds for books, writing, and the stories we tell for and with children?
Anderson: First of all, I hope our nation will survive that long. Assuming we do, I hope that our courts and communities will affirm the First Amendment and bring some common sense to the dangerous, manipulated hysteria around book banning. Then we need to recommit resources and respect to public education and libraries. Once we've course-corrected those vital aspects, we can return to the work of lifting up all stories and all creators in children's literature. I look forward to celebrating the day when every child in America can see their experiences in a book and read about all the other experiences that are a part of being an American.

Aryssa Damron is a school librarian in Washington, DC, and the proven descendant of seven Revolutionary War patriots, none of which has made an appearance in a historical-fiction book yet. She's a member of the *Booklist* Advisory Board, a longtime reviewer, and served as the chair of the 2024 Carnegie Medals committee. When she's not reading, she's visiting historical houses and museums and crocheting.

Reserve These Reads

Children & Teens

Get your hands on these hotly anticipated books, all out this month.

Older

As I Dream of You. By Jennifer Lee. Art by LeUyen Pham. 352p. First Second. Gr. 9–12.

This graphic novel from the writer and director of Disney's *Frozen* tells a supernatural love story between Sam and Franny, whom he thought he'd lost forever after a terrible accident.

Change of Plans. By Sarah Dessen. 368p. Simon & Schuster. Gr. 7–12. May.

A trip with her mother to an old vacation home leads Finley to reconnect with her roots, unravel family secrets, and discover a new direction for her life post high school.

Holloway. By Elana K. Arnold. 352p. Clarion. Gr. 9–12. May.

Award-winning Arnold returns to YA with a take on the pandemic, following Nora in 2021 who, after losing everything, finds herself transported through time after a dire encounter.

Landing in Place. By Sherine Hamdy. Art by Myra El Mir. 320p. Penguin/Kokila. Gr. 7–12.

After struggling through her first year of college, Egyptian American Anisa travels to Cairo to reconnect with her culture in this graphic novel rendered in expressive black-and-white art that mirrors Anisa's own illustrations.

We Could Be Anyone. By Anna-Marie McLemore. 288p. Feiwel and Friends. Gr. 8–12.

Siblings Lola and Lisandro put their haunted-con skills to the ultimate test when targeting tycoon Bixby Fairfax, in a tale that's told with distinct voice and an incredible grip on naturalistic magical realism.

Young World. By Soman Chainani. 2026. 480p. Random. Gr. 9–12.

This new YA series starter from the author of *The School of Good and Evil* portrays a dystopian America that elects a teenager as president, launching a global revolution.

Middle

Diamond Fever! A True Crime Story in the Wild West. By Steve Sheinkin. Illus. by Jon Chad. 256p. Roaring Brook. Gr. 5–8.

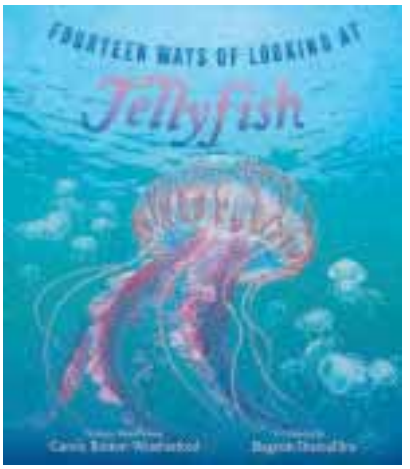
Paneled visuals enhance this rip-roaring account from multi-award honoree Sheinkin of the brief but intense national furor sparked by the reported discovery of a diamond field in 1870.

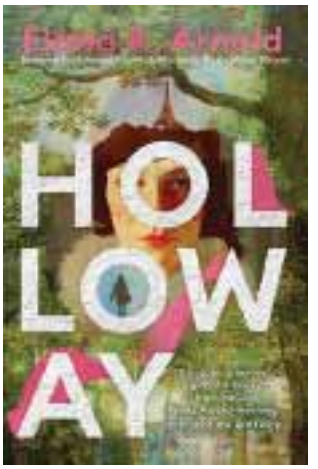
Opting Out. By Maia Kobabe and Swati "Lucky" Srikumar. Art by Maia Kobabe and others. 256p. Scholastic/Graphix. Gr. 5–8.

As Saachi deals with shifting dynamics in middle school, she explores what gender means to her and finds a creative outlet in this thoughtful, important graphic novel.

The Second Life of Snap. By Erin Entrada Kelly. 176p. Greenwillow. Gr. 4–6.

Topical themes run through this poignant dystopian tale, from award-winning Kelly, of the bond that forms between a human girl and a guardian robot with corrupted programming and a rapidly weakening power source.





Styx and Stones. By Gary D. Schmidt and Ron Koertge. 208p. Clarion. Gr. 3–7.

Two award-winning authors co-write this tale of Simon, an orphan in Ancient Greece who, after centuries of trying, finally escapes the Underworld and finds himself in modern times.

Wombat Waiting. By Katherine Applegate. Illus. by Jen Bricking. 304p. HarperCollins/Storytide. Gr. 3–7.

Applegate continues to prove her knack for delightfully resilient animal stories, following an ash-covered dog named Wombat, who is waiting on a bench near a community following a devastating fire.

Young

Beatrix and Her Friends. By Anne Lambelet. Illus. by the author. 48p. Peachtree/Margaret Quinlin. PreS–Gr. 3.

In artwork incorporating the artist's imaginative versions of her beloved animals, this picture-book biography paints an inviting picture of the beloved author and illustrator Beatrix Potter.

Dad. By Christian Robinson. Illus. by the author. 2026. 48p. Balzer+Bray. PreS–Gr. 2. May.

Award-winning, best-selling Robinson writes and illustrates this ode to all kinds of dads, animals as well as humans, just in time for Father's Day.

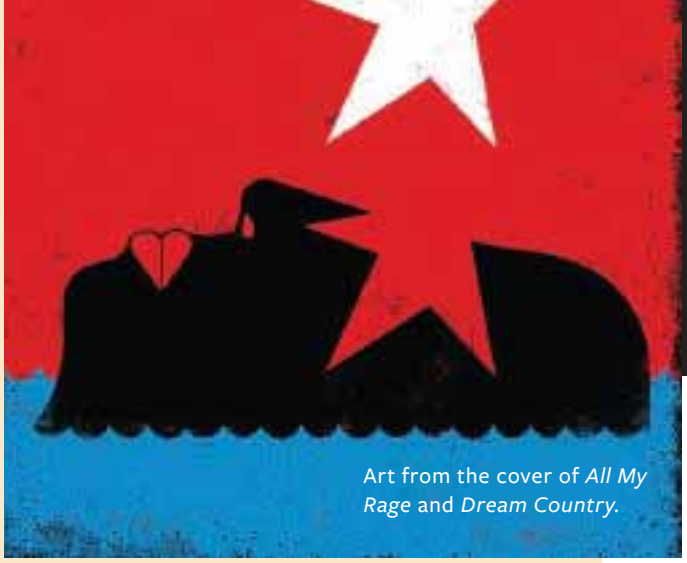
Fourteen Ways of Looking at Jellyfish. By Carole Boston Weatherford. Illus. by Bagram Ibatoulline. 32p. Candlewick. Gr. 1–3. May.

Renowned poet Weatherford lyrically explores jellyfish through 14 beautifully illustrated poems that encompass science as well as myth.

Sixteen Games of Hide and Seek. By Stephen Barr. Illus. by Steve Teare. 48p. Holiday/Neal Porter. PreS–Gr. 1.

Ro and his dad play hide-and-seek on a stormy day in this charming, delightfully deep story about a ubiquitous game from seasoned literary agent Barr and cartoonist Teare.

Art from the cover of *Dad*.

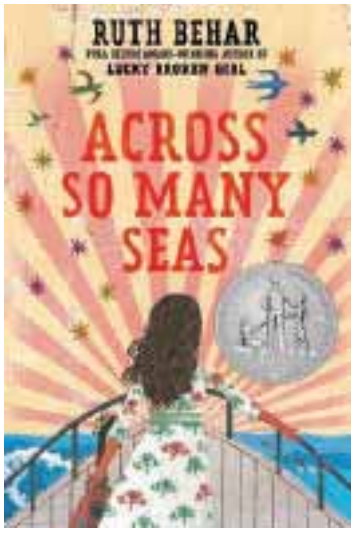


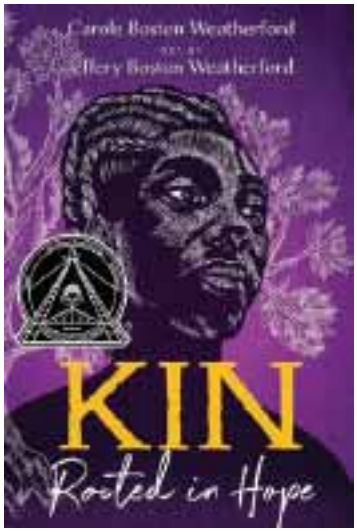
Art from the cover of *All My Rage* and *Dream Country*.

Intergenerational Family Sagas

by Angela Carstensen

The family saga is one of reading's great pleasures. Encountering the sweep of history through the lens of dramatic familial shifts across generations provides young-adult readers with several elements they seek in a good story: loyalty and love, tragedy and secrets, belonging and conflict, and, above all, the struggle to claim a place in this world as one's true self. Just as their audience likes to push against boundaries, the books in this list challenge the expectations of this longstanding genre.





Across So Many Seas. By Ruth Behar. 2024. Penguin/Nancy Paulsen. Gr. 5–8.

Behar follows an extended Sephardic Jewish family expelled from Spain, during the Inquisition by detailing the lives of four 12-year-old girls. Through the centuries, each must travel and find her place in a new land, from Turkey to Cuba and, finally, to Miami. In 2003, young Paloma visits Toledo, Spain, to retrace their history, bringing the novel full circle. Traditional food, poetry, and music—including a beloved stringed instrument, an oud—are passed down through the generations. A beautiful read for younger and older teens alike.

All My Rage. By Sabaa Tahir. 2022. Razorbill. Gr. 10–12.

While not a traditional saga and predominantly focused on two generations of two families, there is no doubt that Tahir's masterpiece belongs with the other stories in this list. Tragic loss, inherited trauma, and virulent racism threaten to destroy Salahudin and Noor, Pakistani best friends living in a small, contemporary California desert town. Readers witness their survival, and the survival of their friendship, against all odds, in first-person chapters alternating with the secrets of the past as told by Sal's mother.

All the Days Past, All the Days to Come. By Mildred D. Taylor. 2020. Viking. Gr. 9–12.

Taylor's classic series, which concludes with *All the Days Past, All the Days to Come,* follows a Black family based on her own, from Reconstruction Georgia to the 1960s Civil Rights movement, in 10 books published out of chronological order. *Roll of Thunder, Hear my Cry* (1976), in which young Cassie and her family confront Jim Crow prejudice in Depression-era Mississippi, is the most celebrated. *The Land* (2001), a prequel, allows Cassie's grandfather, the son of an enslaved woman and her white owner, to tell his own story. This stirring closing volume strives to tell the unvarnished truth with hope and strength.

The Blackwoods. By Brandy Colbert. 2023. Clarion. Gr. 9–12.

The Blackwoods are Hollywood royalty, and their matriarch is Blossom "Bebe" Blackwood, a celebrated actress of the golden years. Readers meet the extended family at her funeral, in the present. Then Bebe's life story is told from the beginning, alternating with chapters about her two great-granddaughters, Hollis and Ardith, teenagers weathering the perils of fame in contemporary L.A. Issues of privacy, addiction, and sexual harassment swirl around one central mystery: Who is the father of Blossom's son? Following her death, gossip upends the family.

Dream Country. By Shannon Gibney. 2018. Dutton. Gr. 9–12.

This intense novel depicts an African American family mired in the complex history of Liberia. Kollie gets caught up in a violent conflict between fellow Liberian refugees and Black American students at his high school in 2008 Minneapolis. In 1926 Liberia, Togar flees his village when men from the Congo arrive to kidnap workers for their plantations. Yasmine and her children run from a Virginia plantation toward a better life across the sea in 1827. And Kollie's parents hope for the coming revolution in 1980 Liberia. An eye-opening narrative of colonialism, enslavement, and the search for a homeland.

Everything We Never Had. By Randy Ribay. 2024. Penguin/Kokila. Gr. 9–12.

Fathers and sons struggle with conflicting expectations across four generations of one Filipino family in America. In 1929, Francisco Maghabol emigrates to California at 16, planning to work the harvests and return to buy back the family land. Instead, he stays to fight for worker's rights. Short first-person chapters rotate among Francisco's story and those of characters in three other generations: Enzo, who lives with anxiety exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic; Chris, whose father refuses to allow him to play football in 1983 Colorado; and Emil, a math prodigy, who feels ignored by his activist father in 1965 Stockton, California. Each feels the weight of "utang na loob," a debt of gratitude to ancestors, to family, and to community.

Kin: Rooted in Hope. By Carole Boston Weatherford. Illus. by Jeffery Boston Weatherford. 2023. Atheneum. Gr. 5–8.

The Weatherfords' painstaking search for their family history is reconstructed in first-person poems alongside striking scratchboard illustrations. The imagined, recreated voices of people, places, and objects intermingle with the author's own experiences. The discovery of two prominent ancestors helped to connect the dots, as did connections to Frederick Douglass and with Wye House Plantation on Maryland's Eastern Seaboard, where their ancestors were enslaved. A work of perseverance, determination, and hope.

Man Made Monsters. By Andrea L. Rogers. Illus. by Jeff Edwards. 2022. Levine Querido. Gr. 10–12.

Like many family sagas, this stunning, illustrated horror collection begins with a family tree (or, more precisely in this case, a pair). Chronological stories follow a Cherokee family, the Wilsons, from 1839 to 2039. The terrors they encounter, and sometimes embody or perpetuate, are both supernatural and human. The book begins in Texas on the night that young Ama is made a monster, allowing her to reappear at crucial moments to guide her family in the future.

Only This Beautiful Moment. By Abdi Nazemian. 2023. HarperCollins. Gr. 9–12.

In 2019, Mahmoud and his father, Saeed, travel from Los Angeles to Tehran to visit Moud's grandfather, Baba, who is dying of cancer. Saeed struggles to accept his son's homosexuality, while Moud is surprised to find a gay underground in Iran. Chapters in the present alternate with 1978 Tehran, where young Saeed meets his future wife at a protest, and 1939 L.A., where Bobby (Baba) is in love with his best friend but must give him up for a shot at film stardom. Nazemian highlights shifting attitudes toward homosexuality and the ways food and the arts shape lives.

The Rebel Girls of Rome. By Jordyn Taylor. 2025. Harper. Gr. 8–12.

A contemporary teen and her grandpa Ralph travel to Rome to uncover a family mystery rooted in the Italian Jewish experience during WWII under Mussolini. In the present, Grandpa shares the story of losing his entire family at age five, gradually releasing the guilt that has marred his relationships. His sister's experiences in 1943 unspool in alternating chapters, revealing truths Ralph could not comprehend as a young child. A cathartic story of self-forgiveness incorporating LGBTQ rights and the resistance in Italy.

You Bring the Distant Near. By Mitali Perkins. 2017. Farrar. Gr. 7–11.

In 1973, teenage sisters Sonia and Tara Das move to Flushing, Queens, with their traditional Indian parents. Their mother, Ranee, distrustful of their neighbors, is horrified when Sonia dates a Black classmate. Tara, a budding actress, falls for an arranged match. In 1998 Harlem, Sonia's daughter, Chantal, proudly claims her mixed identity. Told in clear, chronological order and first-person, alternating chapters, this is an excellent choice for younger teens. Ranee's transformation following 9/11 closes the novel with a moving consideration of what it means to be American.

The Partition of India

In 1947, the partition of India into two independent states displaced millions of people along religious lines and transformed South Asia. An event of such magnitude, producing so many stories that have echoed across the generations since, is woefully underrepresented in children's fiction—but here are some recent fiction titles that bring this powerful historical moment to present-day readers.

Lion of the Sky. By Ritu Hemnani. 2024. Harper. Gr. 4–6.

On the eve of India's Independence Day in 1947, middle child Raj longs for his Baba's approval and anxiously awaits Sindh's annual Kite Festival to prove his skills. When the community is cleaved, almost overnight, by Partition and Sindh declared part of Pakistan, Hindu Raj is separated from his Muslim best friend and beloved Nana as his family flees for Bombay.

The Moon from Dehradun. By Shirin Shamsi. Illus. by Tarun Lak. 2022. Atheneum. Gr. 1–3.

In this tender, semifictional account about starting over, Azra accidentally leaves her doll behind when her Muslim family is forced to leave their town in India to start a new life in Pakistan. As the family resettles in a home probably abandoned by a Hindu family fleeing in the opposite direction, Azra shifts her attention from her doll to taking care of her baby brother.

The Night Diary. By Veera Hiranandani. 2018. Dial. Gr. 5–8.

Twelve-year-old Nisha, half-Hindu, half-Muslim, has always struggled to express herself, so each night she turns to her diary, where she writes entries to her mother, who passed away when she was a baby. It brings Nisha's thoughts and feelings into focus as she sorts through confusion, loss, and terror during her family's dangerous forced migration from Pakistan.

The Partition Project. By Saadia Faruqi. 2024. HarperCollins/Quill Tree. Gr. 4–6.

When Maha's grandmother, Dadi, comes from Pakistan to live with her family, Dadi's memories of the Partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 spark Maha's interest. Maha turns these memories into a documentary project for school, opening her world to Pakistani cooking, the rituals of Ramzan, and a descriptive picture of Dadi's childhood in Ludhiana.

Veena and the Red Roti: A Story of Hope During Partition. By Namita Moolani Mehra. Illus. by Beena Mistry. 2024. Kids Can. PreS–Gr. 2.

In this poignant picture book based on the experience of the author's grandparents, little Veena and her family find themselves displaced in a refugee camp after fleeing the Sindh province during Partition. Hoping to lift people's spirits, she takes it upon herself to make roti, which reminds her of home.

Zarina Divided. By Reem Faruqi. 2025. Harper. Gr. 4–8.

This novel in verse follows 11-year-old Zarina before, during, and after Partition, through her family's harrowing journey from India to Pakistan and onward to boarding school in Murree. Universal coming-of-age themes are interwoven with the time period's specific difficulties, such as Partition separating friends and communities due to religious differences.

Art from the cover of *The Partition Project.*

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