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Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life, by Barbara Kingsolver

Animal, Vegetable, Miracle follows the family through the first year of their experiment. They find themselves eager to move away from the typical food scenario of American families: a refrigerator packed with processed, factory-farmed foods transported long distances using nonrenewable fuels. In their search for another way to eat and live, they begin to recover what Kingsolver considers our nation's lost appreciation for farms and the natural processes of food production. American citizens spend less of their income on food than has any culture in the history of the world, but pay dearly in other ways -- losing the flavors, diversity and creative food cultures of earlier times. The environmental costs are also high, and the nutritional sacrifice is undeniable: on our modern industrial food supply, Americans are now raising the first generation of children to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents. (Publisher's Review)—**NON-FICTION**

American Wife, by Curtis Sittenfeld

A kind, bookish only child born in the 1940s, Alice Lindgren has no idea that she will one day end up in the White House, married to the president. In her small Wisconsin hometown, she learns the virtues of politeness, but a tragic accident when she is seventeen shatters her identity and changes the trajectory of her life. More than a decade later, when the charismatic son of a powerful Republican family sweeps her off her feet, she is surprised to find herself admitted into a world of privilege. And when her husband unexpectedly becomes governor and then president, she discovers that she is married to a man she both loves and fundamentally disagrees with—and that her private beliefs increasingly run against her public persona. As her husband's presidency enters its second term, Alice must confront contradictions years in the making and face questions nearly impossible to answer. (Publisher's Review)—**FICTION**

Atonement, by Ian McEwan

Briony Tallis, a precocious 13-year-old with an overactive imagination, witnesses an incident between Cecilia, her older sister, and Robbie Turner, son of the Tallis family's charwoman. Already startled by the sexual overtones of what she has seen, she is completely shocked that evening when she surreptitiously reads a suggestive note Robbie has mistakenly sent Cecilia. It then becomes easy for her to believe that the shadowy figure who assaults her cousin Lola late that night is Robbie. Briony's testimony sends Robbie to prison and, through an early release, into the army on the eve of World War II. Gradually understanding what she has done, Briony seeks atonement first through a career in nursing and then through writing, with the novel itself framed as a literary confession it has taken her a lifetime to write. Moving deftly between styles, this is a compelling exploration of guilt and the struggle for forgiveness. (Library Journal Review)—**FICTION**

Can't Wait To Get To Heaven, by Fannie Flagg

Life is the strangest thing. One minute, Mrs. Elnor Shimfissle is up in her tree, picking figs, and the next thing she knows, she is off on an adventure she never dreamed of, running into people she never in a million years expected to meet. Meanwhile, back home, Elnor's nervous, high-strung niece Norma faints and winds up in bed with a cold rag on her head; Elnor's neighbor Verbena rushes immediately to the Bible; her truck driver friend, Luther Griggs, runs his eighteen-wheeler into a ditch -- and the entire town is thrown for a loop and left wondering, "What is life all about, anyway?" Except for Tot Whooten, who owns Tot's Tell It Like It Is Beauty Shop. Her main concern is that the end of the world might come before she can collect her Social Security.

In this comedy-mystery, those near and dear to Elnor discover something wonderful: Heaven is actually right here, right now, with people you love, neighbors you help, friendships you keep. *Can't Wait to Get to Heaven* is proof once more that Fannie Flagg "was put on this earth to write" (*Southern Living*), spinning tales as sweet and refreshing as iced tea on a summer day, with a little extra kick thrown in. (Publisher's Review)—**FICTION**

84, Charing Cross Road, by Helene Hanff

It all began with a letter inquiring about second-hand books, written by Helene Hanff in New York, and posted to a bookshop at 84, Charing Cross Road in London. As Helene's sarcastic and witty letters are responded to by the stodgy and proper Frank Doel of 84, Charing Cross Road, a relationship blossoms into a warm, charming, feisty love affair. (Publisher's Review)—**NON-FICTION**

Like Water for Chocolate, by Laura Esquivel

Earthy, magical, and utterly charming, this tale of family life in turn-of-the-century Mexico became a best-selling phenomenon with its winning blend of poignant romance and bittersweet wit. The classic love story takes place on the De la Garza ranch, as the tyrannical owner, Mama Elena, chops onions at the kitchen table in her final days of pregnancy. While still in her mother's womb, her daughter to be weeps so violently she causes an early labor, and little Tita slips out amid the spices and fixings for noodle soup. This early encounter with food soon becomes a way of life, and Tita grows up to be a master chef. She shares special points of her favorite preparations with listeners throughout the story. (Publisher's Review)—**FICTION**

Loving Frank, by Nancy Horan

In 1904, architect Frank Lloyd Wright designed a house for Edwin and Mamah Borthwick Cheney, respectable members of Oak Park, IL, society. Five years later, after a clandestine affair, Frank and Mamah scandalized that society by leaving their families to live together in Europe. Stunned by the furor, Mamah wanted to stay there, particularly after she met women's rights advocate Ellen Key, who rejected conventional ideas of marriage and divorce. Eventually, Frank convinced her to return to Wisconsin, where he was building Taliesin as a home and retreat. Horan's extensive research provides substantial underpinnings for this engrossing novel, and the focus on Mamah lets readers see her attraction to the creative, flamboyant architect but also her recognition of his arrogance. (Library Journal Review)—**FICTION**

People of the Book, by Geraldine Brooks

In 1996, Hanna Heath, an Australian rare-book expert, is offered the job of a lifetime: analysis and conservation of the famed Sarajevo Haggadah, which has been rescued from Serb shelling during the Bosnian war. Priceless and beautiful, the book is one of the earliest Jewish volumes ever to be illuminated with images. When Hanna, a caustic loner with a passion for her work, discovers a series of tiny artifacts in its ancient binding—an insect wing fragment, wine stains, salt crystals, a white hair—she begins to unlock the book's mysteries. The reader is ushered into an exquisitely detailed and atmospheric past, tracing the book's journey from its salvation back to its creation. (Publisher's Review)—**FICTION**

TeacherMan, by Frank McCourt

In *Teacher Man* Frank turns his attention to the subject that he most often talks about in his lectures-teaching: why it's so important, why it's so undervalued. He describes his own coming of age-as-a teacher, a storyteller, and, ultimately, a writer. He is alternately humble and mischievous, downtrodden and rebellious. He instinctively identifies with the underdog; his sympathies lie more with students than administrators. It takes him almost fifteen years to find his voice in the classroom, but what's clear in the thrilling pages of *Teacher Man* is that from the beginning he seizes and holds his students' attention by telling them memorable stories. And then it takes him another fifteen years to find his voice on the page. (Publisher's Review)—**NON-FICTION**

The Camel Bookmobile, by Masha Hamilton

Fiona Sweeney wants to do something that matters, and she chooses to make her mark in the arid bush of northeastern Kenya. By helping to start a traveling library, she hopes to bring the words of Homer, Hemingway, and Dr. Seuss to far-flung tiny communities where people live daily with drought, hunger, and disease. Her intentions are honorable, and her rules are firm: due to the limited number of donated books, if any one of them is not returned, the bookmobile will not return. But, encumbered by her Western values, Fi does not understand the people she seeks to help. And in the impoverished small community of Mididima, she finds herself caught in the middle of a volatile local struggle when the bookmobile's presence sparks a dangerous feud between the proponents of modernization and those who fear the loss of traditional ways. (Publisher's Review)—**FICTION**

The Lost City of Z: A Tale of Deadly Obsession In the Amazon, by David Grann

In 1925, the legendary British explorer Percy Fawcett ventured into the Amazon jungle, in search of a fabled civilization. He never returned. Over the years countless perished trying to find evidence of his party and the place he called "The Lost City of Z." In this masterpiece of narrative nonfiction, journalist David Grann interweaves the spellbinding stories of Fawcett's quest for "Z" and his own journey into the deadly jungle, as he unravels the greatest exploration mystery of the twentieth century. (Publisher's Review)—**NON-FICTION**

The Reluctant Fundamentalist, by Mohsin Hamid

At a café in Lahore, a bearded Pakistani man converses with an uneasy American stranger. As dusk deepens into night, he begins his tale of the American dream. Changez is a Princeton grad, successful business man and romantic. But in the wake of 9/11, we see how Changez's identity shifts, as he quickly loses all that he has gained and questions his allegiances. (Publisher's Review)—**FICTION**