

Book Suggestions for January-March 2018

Little Fires Everywhere by Celeste Ng 352 pages

The Richardson family lives in the planned community of Shaker Heights, Ohio—a place of wealth, comfort, and stability—and they are a clan that embodies those traits. But when Mia, a single mother, and her fifteen year old daughter, Pearl, rent a house in the area, their very different lives will merge with those of the Richardson family and begin to contort the carefully laid lattice that supports their views.

Before We Were Yours by Lisa Wingate 339 pages

Memphis, 1939. Twelve-year-old Rill Foss and her four younger siblings live a magical life aboard their family's Mississippi River shanty boat. But when their father must rush their mother to the hospital one stormy night, strangers arrive in force and they are wrenched from all that is familiar and thrown into a Tennessee Children's Home Society orphanage. The Foss children are assured that they will soon be returned to their parents—but they quickly realize the dark truth. At the mercy of the facility's cruel director, Rill fights to keep her sisters and brother together in a world of danger and uncertainty.

Present Day. Born into wealth and privilege, Avery Stafford seems to have it all: a successful career as a federal prosecutor, a handsome fiancé, and a lavish wedding on the horizon. But when Avery returns home to help her father weather a health crisis, a chance encounter leaves her with uncomfortable questions and compels her to take a journey through her family's long-hidden history, on a path that will ultimately lead either to devastation or to redemption.

Based on one of America's most notorious real-life scandals—in which Georgia Tann, director of a Memphis-based adoption organization, kidnapped and sold poor children to wealthy families all over the country.

Kitchens of the Great Midwest, J. Ryan Stradal (310 pages)

When Lars Thorvald's wife, Cynthia, falls in love with wine--and a dashing sommelier--he's left to raise their baby, Eva, on his own. He's determined to pass on his love of food to his daughter--starting with puréed pork shoulder. As Eva grows, she finds her solace and salvation in the flavors of her native Minnesota, each ingredient represents one part of Eva's journey as she becomes the star chef behind a legendary and secretive pop-up supper club, culminating in an opulent and emotional feast that's a testament to her spirit and resilience. Each chapter in J. Ryan Stradal's startlingly original debut tells the story of a single dish and character, at once capturing the zeitgeist of the Midwest, the rise of foodie culture, and delving into the ways food creates community and a sense of identity. By turns quirky, hilarious, and vividly sensory, *Kitchens of the Great Midwest* is an unexpected mother-daughter story about the bittersweet nature of life--its missed opportunities and its joyful surprises.

Midnight at the Bright Ideas Bookstore, Matthew Sullivan (352 pages)

When a bookshop patron commits suicide, it's his favorite store clerk who must unravel the puzzle he left behind in this fiendishly clever debut novel from an award-winning short story writer. Lydia Smith lives her life hiding in plain sight. A clerk at the Bright Ideas bookstore, she

keeps a meticulously crafted existence among her beloved books, eccentric colleagues, and the 'BookFrogs'—the lost and lonely regulars who spend every day marauding the store's overwhelmed shelves. But when youngest BookFrog Joey Molina kills himself in the bookstore's upper level, Lydia's life comes unglued. Always Joey's favorite bookseller, Lydia has been bequeathed his meager worldly possessions: But when Lydia pages through his books, she finds them defaced in ways both disturbing and inexplicable. They reveal the psyche of a young man on the verge of an emotional reckoning. And they seem to contain a hidden message. As Lydia untangles the mystery of Joey's suicide, she unearths a long buried memory from her own violent childhood. Details from that one bloody night begin to circle back. Her distant father returns to the fold, along with an obsessive local cop and the Hammerman, a murderer who came into Lydia's life long ago—and never completely left, as she discovers.

Tell The Wolves I'm Home by Carol Rifka Brunt 384 pages

Tell The Wolves I'm Home is the debut novel of American writer Carol Rifka Brunt, published by Random House in 2012. It follows the life of a girl whose gay uncle had died of AIDS in the 1980s, and the subsequent friendship she develops with his boyfriend.

The Day The World Came To Town: 9/11 in Gander, New Foundland by Jim DeFede 256 pages

When 38 jetliners bound for the United States were forced to land at Gander International Airport in Canada by the closing of U.S. airspace on September 11, the population of this small town on Newfoundland Island swelled from 10,300 to nearly 17,000. The citizens of Gander met the stranded passengers with an overwhelming display of friendship and goodwill. As the passengers stepped from the airplanes, exhausted, hungry and distraught after being held on board for nearly 24 hours while security checked all of the baggage, they were greeted with a feast prepared by the townspeople. Local bus drivers who had been on strike came off the picket lines to transport the passengers to the various shelters set up in local schools and churches. Linens and toiletries were bought and donated. A middle school provided showers, as well as access to computers, email, and televisions, allowing the passengers to stay in touch with family and follow the news.

George and Lizzie by Nancy Pearl 288 pages

George and Lizzie have radically different understandings of what love and marriage should be. George grew up in a warm and loving family—his father an orthodontist, his mother a stay-at-home mom—while Lizzie grew up as the only child of two famous psychologists, who viewed her more as an in-house experiment than a child to love. Over the course of their marriage, nothing has changed—George is happy; Lizzie remains...unfulfilled. When a shameful secret from Lizzie's past resurfaces, she'll need to face her fears in order to accept the true nature of the relationship she and George have built over a decade together.

The Namesake by Jhumpa Lahiri

The Namesake follows the Ganguli family through its journey from Calcutta to Cambridge to the Boston suburbs. A Shima and Ashore Ganguli arrive in America at the end of the 1960's.

Behold the Dreamers: A Novel, by Imbolo Mbue (382 pp, 2016)

A compulsively readable debut novel about marriage, immigration, class, race, and the trapdoors in the American Dream—the unforgettable story of a young Cameroonian couple making a new life in New York just as the Great Recession upends the economy during the financial crisis of 2007-08. Jende Jonga, has come to the United States to provide a better life for himself, his wife, Neni, and their six-year-old son. In the fall of 2007, Jende lands a job as a chauffeur for Clark Edwards, a senior executive at Lehman Brothers. Clark's wife, Cindy, offers Neni temporary work at their summer home in the Hamptons. With these opportunities, Jende and Neni can at last gain a foothold in America and imagine a brighter future. However, the world of great power and privilege conceals troubling secrets, and soon Jende and Neni notice cracks in their employers' facades. Then the financial world is rocked by the collapse of Lehman Brothers. Desperate to keep Jende's job, which grows more tenuous by the day, the Jongas try to protect the Edwards from certain truths, even as their own marriage threatens to fall apart.

Killing Reagan by Bill O'Reilly & Martin Dugard, 320 pp. - Nonfiction

From the bestselling team of Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugard comes *Killing Reagan*, a page-turning epic account of the career of President Ronald Reagan that tells the vivid story of his rise to power -- and the forces of evil that conspired to bring him down.

Just two months into his presidency, Ronald Reagan lay near death after a gunman's bullet came within inches of his heart. His recovery was nothing short of remarkable -- or so it seemed. But Reagan was grievously injured, forcing him to encounter a challenge that few men ever face. Could he silently overcome his traumatic experience while at the same time carrying out the duties of the most powerful man in the world?

Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte, 412 pp. - Classic

Wuthering Heights tells the story of a romance between two youngsters: Catherine Earnshaw and an orphan boy, Heathcliff. After she rejects him for a boy from a better background he develops a lust for revenge that takes over his life. In attempting to win her back and destroy those he blames for his loss Heathcliff creates a living hell for those who live at Wuthering Heights. This tale of hauntings, passion and greed remains unsurpassed in its depiction of the dark side of love.

A Time To Be Born, by Dawn Powell, 327 pp.

Set against an atmospheric backdrop of New York City in the months just before America's entry into World War II, *A Time To Be Born* is a scathing and hilarious study of cynical New Yorkers stalking each other for various selfish ends. At the center of the story are a wealthy, self-involved newspaper publisher and his scheming, novelist wife, Amanda Keeler. Powell always denied that Amanda Keeler was based upon the real-life Clare Boothe Luce, until years later when she discovered a memo she'd written to herself in 1939 that said, "Why not do a novel on Clare Luce?" Which prompted Powell to write in her diary "Who can I believe? Me or myself?"