

1. When Katie Wakes by Connie Mae Fowler

Connie May Fowler is known to the world as the author of bestselling novels and powerful essays—but no one knew that for years she was the victim of brutal abuse and relentless humiliation. Now in this harrowing, spellbinding memoir, Fowler finally tells her own story.

The daughter and grand-daughter of battered women, Fowler found herself irresistibly drawn to a man who was bent on destroying her, physically and emotionally. Despite her youth, spirit, education, and wonderful talent, she was trapped in a cycle of violence and despair with no way out. Until the day she adopted an incredible puppy she named Kateland.

With stunning candor, Connie May Fowler reveals how the unconditional love and loyalty of this dog helped her turn the corner, find a safe place, and reclaim her own life. A work of extraordinary passion and courage, *When Katie Wakes* holds out hope and inspiration to anyone who has ever dreamed of starting over.

2. The Queen's Gambit by Walter Tervis

When eight-year-old Beth Harmon's parents are killed in an automobile accident, she's placed in an orphanage in Mount Sterling, Kentucky. Plain and shy, Beth learns to play chess from the janitor in the basement and discovers she is a prodigy. Though penniless, she is desperate to learn more—and steals a chess magazine and enough money to enter a tournament. Beth also steals some of her foster mother's tranquilizers to which she is becoming addicted.

At thirteen, Beth wins the chess tournament. By the age of sixteen she is competing in the US Open Championship and, like Fast Eddie in *The Hustler*, she hates to lose. By eighteen she is the US champion—and Russia awaits . . .

Fast-paced and elegantly written, *The Queen's Gambit* is a thriller masquerading as a chess novel—one that's sure to keep you on the edge of your seat.

3. The Maid: A Novel. by Nita Prose

Molly Gray is not like everyone else. She struggles with social skills and misreads the intentions of others. Her gran used to interpret the world for her, codifying it into simple rules that Molly could live by.

Since Gran died a few months ago, twenty-five-year-old Molly has been navigating life's complexities all by herself. No matter—she throws herself with gusto into her work as a hotel maid. Her unique character, along with her obsessive love of cleaning and proper etiquette, make her an ideal fit for the job. She delights in donning her crisp uniform each morning, stocking her cart with miniature soaps and bottles, and returning guest rooms at the Regency Grand Hotel to a state of perfection.

But Molly's orderly life is upended the day she enters the suite of the infamous and wealthy Charles Black, only to find it in a state of disarray and Mr. Black himself dead in his bed. Before she knows what's happening, Molly's unusual demeanor has the police targeting her as their lead suspect. She quickly finds herself caught in a web of deception, one she has no idea how to untangle. Fortunately

for Molly, friends she never knew she had unite with her in a search for clues to what really happened to Mr. Black—but will they be able to find the real killer before it's too late?

A *Clue*-like, locked-room mystery and a heartwarming journey of the spirit, *The Maid* explores what it means to be the same as everyone else and yet entirely different—and reveals that all mysteries can be solved through connection to the human heart.

4. The Stranger in the Lifeboat by Mitch Albom

An explosion on a yacht leaves 10 people struggling to survive in a Lifeboat. They pull 2 more people aboard.

"Thank the Lord we found you" a passenger says. "I am the Lord" the Man whispers.
Easy to read and thought provoking...

5. Fifty Words for Rain: A Novel,

By Asha Lemme.

Kyoto, Japan, 1948. "Do not question. Do not fight. Do not resist."

Such is eight-year-old Noriko "Nori" Kamiza's first lesson. She will not question why her mother abandoned her with only these final words. She will not fight her confinement to the attic of her grandparents' imperial estate. And she will not resist the scalding chemical baths she receives daily to lighten her skin.

The child of a married Japanese aristocrat and her African American GI lover, Nori is an outsider from birth. Her grandparents take her in, only to conceal her, fearful of a stain on the royal pedigree that they are desperate to uphold in a changing Japan. Obedient to a fault, Nori accepts her solitary life, despite her natural intellect and curiosity. But when chance brings her older half-brother, Akira, to the estate that is his inheritance and destiny, Nori finds in him an unlikely ally with whom she forms a powerful bond—a bond their formidable grandparents cannot allow and that will irrevocably change the lives they were always meant to lead. Because now that Nori has glimpsed a world in which perhaps there is a place for her after all, she is ready to fight to be a part of it—a battle that just might cost her everything.

6. Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmus

412 pages

Meet Elizabeth Zott, a formidable, unapologetic and inspiring scientist in 1960s California whose career takes a detour when she becomes the unlikely star of a beloved TV cooking show in this novel that is irresistible, satisfying and full of fuel. It reminds you that change takes time and always requires heat.

7. The Four Winds by Kristen Hannah

From the number-one bestselling author of *The Nightingale* and *The Great Alone* comes a powerful American epic about love and heroism and hope, set during the Great Depression, a time when the country was in crisis and at war with itself, when millions were out of work and even the land seemed to have turned against them.

"My land tells its story if you listen. The story of our family."

Texas, 1921. A time of abundance. The Great War is over, the bounty of the land is plentiful, and America is on the brink of a new and optimistic era. But for Elsa Wolcott, deemed too old to marry in a time when marriage is a woman's only option, the future seems bleak. Until the night she meets Rafe Martinelli and decides to change the direction of her life. With her reputation in ruin, there is only one respectable choice: marriage to a man she barely knows.

By 1934, the world has changed; millions are out of work and drought has devastated the Great Plains. Farmers are fighting to keep their land and their livelihoods as crops fail and water dries up and the earth cracks open. Dust storms roll relentlessly across the plains. Everything on the Martinelli farm is dying, including Elsa's tenuous marriage; each day is a desperate battle against nature and a fight to keep her children alive.

In this uncertain and perilous time, Elsa--like so many of her neighbors--must make an agonizing choice: fight for the land she loves or leave it behind and go west, to California, in search of a better life for her family.

The Four Winds is a rich, sweeping novel that stunningly brings to life the Great Depression and the people who lived through it--the harsh realities that divided us as a nation and the enduring battle between the haves and the have-nots. A testament to hope, resilience, and the strength of the human spirit to survive adversity, *The Four Winds* is an indelible portrait of America and the American dream, as seen through the eyes of one indomitable woman whose courage and sacrifice will come to define a generation.

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

France, 1714: in a moment of desperation, a young woman makes a Faustian bargain to live forever and is cursed to be forgotten by everyone she meets. Thus begins the extraordinary life of Addie LaRue, and a dazzling adventure that will play out across centuries and continents, across history and art, as a young woman learns how far she will go to leave her mark on the world. But everything changes when, after nearly 300 years, Addie stumbles across a young man in a hidden bookstore and he remembers her name.