

recommendations for March through June 2026 (select 4)

1...The House Across the Lake ; by Riley Sager (368 pages)

A psychological thriller about a recently widowed actress, Casey Fletcher, who retreats to her family's Vermont lake house and becomes obsessed with watching her glamorous neighbors, Tom and Katherine Royce, across the water, leading to a mystery when Katherine disappears and Casey suspects foul play. The plot, which draws comparisons to Rear Window, follows Casey as she befriends Katherine and uncovers secrets about her seemingly perfect marriage, all while dealing with her own personal struggles.

2.....Heartwood; by Amity Gaige (320 pages)

In the heart of the Maine woods, an experienced Appalachian Trail hiker goes missing. She is forty-two-year-old Valerie Gillis, who has vanished 200 miles from her final destination. Alone in the wilderness, Valerie pours her thoughts into fractured, poetic letters to her mother as she battles the elements and struggles to keep hoping. At the heart of the investigation is Beverly, the determined Maine State Game Warden tasked with finding Valerie, who leads the search on the ground. Meanwhile, Lena, a seventy-six-year-old birdwatcher in a Connecticut retirement community, becomes an unexpected armchair detective. Roving between these compelling narratives, a puzzle emerges, intensifying the frantic search, as Valerie's disappearance may not be accidental.

3.....Time of the Child; By Niall Williams, Historical Fiction

Few contemporary novelists create worlds and characters do amazingly alive and specific. His characters, even those we see only briefly, are unforgettable. Though the Irish town of Faha is full of people, you'll never mix up one with another. The focus is on a town doctor and his daughter, Ronnie, who lives with him. He loves all his daughters but especially Ronnie, whose unmarried state he feels responsible for. When a local boy finds a baby in a churchyard and brings her to the doctor, the floodgates burst. They fall in love with the child, and as unwed Tonnie can't adopt her, they hatch a scheme so harebraided that it warms your heart to think, "Are you serious?" This is where the novel's suspense comes in, as well as Williams' genius for making you laugh out loud while he breaks your heart.

4....Rental House; By Weike Wang

Weike Wong follows married couple Keri and Bate on two vacations: one on Cape Cod, one five years later, in the Catskills. Keru, a Chinese American woman, and Nate,, a white man who grew up in Appalachia, grapple with the usual challenges of marriage and careers, plus two very different sets of parental expectations and hopes.

Rental House uses Keri and Nate's vacation time as its lens and structure, featuring a vacation they take around age 35, during the peak of COVID restrictions, and another they take around 40. During both trips, family members intrude, both invited and uninvited. The story also focuses on the pressure that grown children feel as they navigate between their parents' long held expectations and their own needs and desires. Both Keri and Nate resist their parents directives, yet they also feel guilty, like they're not measuring up. They often wish they could clone themselves and have the clones be the ones who fulfill all the expectations while they go off and do their own thing.

5.....Theo Of Golden; by Allen Levi - 400pg.

One spring morning, a stranger arrives in the small southern city of Golden. No one knows where he has come from...or why...

His name is Theo. And he asks a lot more questions than he answers.

Theo visits the local coffeehouse, where ninety-two pencil portraits hang on the walls, portraits of the people of Golden done by a local artist. He begins purchasing them, one at a time, and putting them back in the hands of their "rightful owners." With each exchange, a story is told, a friendship born, and a life altered.

A story of giving and receiving, of seeing and being seen, Theo of Golden is a beautifully crafted novel about the power of creative generosity, the importance of wonder to a purposeful life, and the invisible threads of kindness that bind us to one another.

6....Borrowed life of Frederick Fife; by Anna Johnston (336pg)

A zany case of mistaken identity allows a lonely old man one last chance to be part of a family in this warm, life-affirming debut novel.

Frederick Fife was born with an extra helping of kindness in his heart. If he borrowed your car, he'd return it washed with a full tank of gas. The problem is, at age eighty-two, there's nobody left in Fred's life to borrow from, and he's broke and on the brink of eviction. But Fred's luck changes when he's mistaken for Bernard Greer, a missing resident at the local nursing home, and takes his place. Now Fred has warm meals in his belly and a roof over his head.

7.....The Midnight Watch; by - (336pg)

As the Titanic and her passengers sank slowly into the Atlantic Ocean after striking an iceberg late in the evening of April 14, 1912, a nearby ship looked on. Second Officer Herbert Stone, in charge of the midnight watch on the SS Californian sitting idly a few miles north, saw the distress rockets that the Titanic fired. He alerted the captain, Stanley Lord, who was sleeping in the chartroom below, but Lord did not come to the bridge. Eight rockets were fired during the dark hours of the midnight watch, and eight rockets were ignored. The next morning, the Titanic was at the bottom of the sea and more than 1,500 people were dead. When they learned of the extent of the tragedy, Lord and Stone did everything they could to hide their role in the disaster, but pursued by newspapermen,

lawyers, and political leaders in America and England, their terrible secret was eventually revealed. The *Midnight Watch* is a fictional telling of what may have occurred that night on the SS Californian, and the resulting desperation of Officer Stone and Captain Lord in the aftermath of their inaction.

Told not only from the perspective of the SS Californian crew, but also through the eyes of a family of third-class passengers who perished in the disaster, the narrative is drawn together by Steadman, a tenacious Boston journalist who does not rest until the truth is found. David Dyer's *The Midnight Watch* is a powerful and dramatic debut novel--the result of many years of research in Liverpool, London, New York, and Boston, and informed by the author's own experiences as a ship's officer and a lawyer.

8..... *Every Day is a Gift*; by Tammy Duckworth (288 pages)

Every day is a gift is a 2021 memoir by US Senator Tammy Duckworth that details her extraordinary life, from her childhood in Southeast Asia and Hawaii to her service as an Iraq war veteran and her career in politics. The book covers her experiences with poverty, discrimination, and the loss of her legs in combat, highlighting the resilience and determination that shaped her path to becoming a decorated soldier, a US Senator, and the first sitting senator to give birth while in office.

9....*The House on Tradd Street*; by Karen White (329 pages)

Practical Melanie Middleton hates to admit she can see ghosts. But she's going to have to accept it. An old man she recently met has died, leaving her his historic Tradd Street home, complete with housekeeper, dog, and a family of ghosts anxious to tell her their secrets. Enter Jack Trenholm, a gorgeous writer obsessed with unsolved mysteries. He has reason to believe that diamonds from the Confederate Treasury are hidden in the house. So he turns the charm on with Melanie, only to discover he's the smitten one... It turns out Jack's search has caught the attention of a malevolent ghost. Now, Jack and Melanie must unravel a mystery of passion, heartbreak, and even murder.