October 2026 Book Recommendations

1. **The Berry Pickers by Amanda Peters (320 pages)**

One family's deepest pain. Another's darkest secret. Who will they be when the truth comes out?
On a hot day in 1960s Maine, six-year-old Joe watches his little sister Ruthie, sitting on her favourite rock at the edge of the blueberry fields, while their family, Mi'kmaq people from Nova Scotia, pick fruit. That afternoon, Ruthie vanishes without a trace. As the last person to see her, Joe will be forever haunted by grief, guilt, and the agony of imagining how his life could have been.
In an affluent suburb nearby, Norma is growing up as the only child of unhappy parents. She is smart, precocious, and bursting with questions she isn't allowed to ask – questions about her missing baby photos; questions about her dark skin; questions about the strange, vivid dreams of campfires and warm embraces that return night after night. Norma senses there are things her parents aren't telling her, but it will take decades to unravel the secrets they have kept buried since she was a little girl.
The Berry Pickers is an exquisitely moving story of unrelenting hope, unwavering love, and the power of family – even in the face of grief and betrayal.

2. **Under the Tulip Tree by Michelle Shocklee (400 pages)**

Sixteen-year-old Lorena Leland's dreams of a rich and fulfilling life as a writer are dashed when the stock market crashes in 1929. Seven years into the Great Depression, Rena's banker father has retreated into the bottle, her sister is married to a lazy charlatan and gambler, and Rena is an unemployed newspaper reporter. Eager for any writing job, Rena accepts a position interviewing former slaves for the Federal Writers' Project. There, she meets Frankie Washington, a 101-year-old woman whose honest yet tragic past captivates Rena.
As Frankie recounts her life as a slave, Rena is horrified to learn of all the older woman has endured—especially because Rena's ancestors owned slaves. While Frankie's story challenges Rena's preconceptions about slavery, it also connects the two women whose lives are otherwise separated by age, race, and circumstances. But will this bond of respect, admiration, and friendship be broken by a revelation neither woman sees coming?

3. **Appalachian Song by Michelle Shocklee (352 pages)**

Always remember, you are perfectly loved.
Bertie Jenkins has spent forty years serving as a midwife for her community in the Great Smoky Mountains of East Tennessee. Out of all the mothers she's tended, none affects her more than the young teenager who shows up on her doorstep, injured, afraid, and expecting, one warm June day in 1943. As Bertie and her four sisters tenderly nurture Songbird back to health, the bond between the childless midwife and the motherless teen grows strong. But soon Songbird is forced to make a heartbreaking decision that will tear this little family apart.
Thirty years later, the day after his father's funeral, Walker Wylie is stunned to learn he was adopted as an infant. The famous country singer enlists the help of adoption advocate Reese Chandler in the hopes of learning why he was abandoned by his birth parents. With the only clue he has in hand, Walker and Reese head deep into the Appalachian Mountains to track down Bertie Jenkins, the midwife who holds the secrets to Walker's past.
For fans of historical and Southern fiction comes a poignant story of love and sacrifice set in the heart of Appalachia, from award-winning author Michelle Shocklee.

4. **Whistler by Ann Patchett (295 pages)**

A moving novel about a 53 year old English teacher, Daphne Fuller, who unexpectedly reunites with her former stepfather, Eddie Triplett, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Eddie was briefly married to Daphne's mother for just over a year when Daphne was nine years old. They haven't seen each other in over forty years, ever since a harrowing, traumatic car accident on a snowy road when Daphne was a child led to a sudden separation and divorce. Whistler refers to a horse and a story that Eddie shared with Daphne during that fateful night of the accident. This beautifully written book provides themes of enduring connection, memory and forgiveness, and the value of being known.

5. **Dandelion Wine by Ray Bradbury (239 pages)**

A coming of age novel that follows twelve year old Douglas Spaulding, growing up in the small town of Green Town, Illinois. Told using recollections of his youth, we explore as Douglas does, the bittersweet magic of adolescence, exploring themes of time, life, death, connections with natural world, and finding joy in the every day. Winner of the 2007 Pulitzer Prize special Citation.

6. **Strangers: A Memoir of Marriage by Belle Burden (256 pages)**

In March 2020, Belle Burden was safe and secure with her family at their house on Martha's Vineyard, navigating the early days of the pandemic together. Then, with no warning or explanation, her husband of twenty years announced that he was leaving her. Overnight, her caring, steady partner became a man she hardly recognized. He exited his life with her like an actor shrugging off a costume. In Strangers, Burden revisits her marriage, searching for clues that her husband was not who she always thought he was. As she examines her relationship through a new lens, she reckons with her own family history and the lessons she intuited about how a woman is expected to behave in the face of betrayal. Through all of it, she is transformed. The discreet, compliant woman she once was—someone nicknamed "Belle the Good"—gives way to someone braver, someone determined to use her voice.

7. **The Briar Club by Kate Quinn (432 pages)**

Washington, D.C., 1950. Everyone keeps to themselves at Briarwood House, a down-at-the-heels all-female boardinghouse in the heart of the nation's capital, where secrets hide behind white picket fences. But when the lovely, mysterious widow Grace March moves into the attic, she draws her oddball collection of neighbors into unlikely friendship: poised English beauty Fliss whose facade of perfect wife and mother covers gaping inner wounds; police officer's daughter Nora, who is entangled with a shadowy gangster; frustrated baseball star Bea, whose career has ended along with the women's baseball league of WWII; and poisonous, gung-ho Arlene, who has thrown herself into McCarthy's Red Scare. Grace's weekly attic-room dinner parties and window-brewed sun tea become a healing balm on all their lives, but she hides a terrible secret of her own. When a shocking act of violence tears apart the house, the Briar Club women must decide once and for all: Who is the true enemy in their midst? Capturing the paranoia of the McCarthy era and evoking the changing roles for women in postwar America, The Briar Club is an intimate and thrilling novel of secrets and loyalty put to the test.

8. **Secret of Secrets by Dan Brown (677 pages)**

"Robert Langdon, esteemed professor of symbology, travels to Prague to attend a groundbreaking lecture by Katherine Solomon--a prominent noetic scientist with whom he has recently begun a relationship. Katherine is on the verge of publishing an explosive book that contains startling discoveries about the nature of human consciousness and threatens to disrupt centuries of established belief. But a brutal murder catapults the trip into chaos, and Katherine suddenly disappears --along with her manuscript."

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 axious 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, onl 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, heatbreak, and even murder.

10. **The Best Dog in the world - Edited by Alice Hoffman.** (Essays on Love, short stories)

Anyone who has ever been fortunate enough to share their life with a dog knows the experience is both profound and transformative. Here, in this charming collection of essays, fourteen celebrated authors share unforgettable tales of the dogs who left their pawprints on their hearts.
With contributions from Isabel Allende, Chris Bohjalian, Bonnie Garmus, Roxane Gay, Emily Henry, Ann Leary, Tova Mirvis, Jodi Picoult, Elizabeth Strout, Amy Tan, Adriana Trigiani, Nick Trout, Paul Yoon, and Laura Zigman, *The Best Dog in the World* captures the full range of the canine-human connection, from the joy of welcoming a new puppy to the heartache of saying goodbye to a beloved friend.
A love letter to the loyal companions who enrich our lives and teach us about empathy, joy, and unconditional love, this anthology is the perfect gift for dog lovers everywhere, offering a blend of laughter, tears, and inspiration that will resonate with anyone who has been fur-ever touched by the love of a dog.

13. **Mercy's Child by Richard Paul Evans. (expected release date 10/20/2026)**

In 1874, Etta Wheeler leaves her quiet upstate New York farm town behind to follow her husband into the bustling and sometimes brutal world of Gilded Age New York City. Surrounded by wealth, power, and ambition, Etta struggles to find where she belongs until a chance encounter in the tenements of Hell's Kitchen changes everything.
There she meets a young girl trapped in conditions no child should endure. What began as one woman's determination to help a single child soon draws Etta into a battle against the city's most powerful institutions, forcing her to discover a courage she never knew she possessed.
Set against the stark contrasts of Gilded Age Manhattan, this uplifting historical novel of compassion and moral courage tells the extraordinary story of how a singular act of courage ignited lasting change that still impacts the world today.

11. All the Broken Places by John Boyne (400 pages)

Ninety-one-year-old Gretel Fernsby has lived in the same well-to-do mansion block in London for decades. She lives a quiet, comfortable life, despite her deeply disturbing, dark past. She doesn't talk about her escape from Nazi Germany at age 12. She doesn't talk about the grim post-war years in France with her mother. Most of all, she doesn't talk about her father, who was the commandant of one of the Reich's most notorious extermination camps.
Then, a new family moves into the apartment below her. In spite of herself, Gretel can't help but begin a friendship with the little boy, Henry, though his presence brings back memories she would rather forget. One night, she witnesses a disturbing, violent argument between Henry's beautiful mother and his arrogant father, one that threatens Gretel's hard-won, self-contained existence.
All The Broken Places moves back and forth in time between Gretel's girlhood in Germany to present-day London as a woman whose life has been haunted by the past. Now, Gretel faces a similar crossroads to one she encountered long ago. Back then, she denied her own complicity, but now, faced with a chance to interrogate her guilt, grief and remorse, she can choose to save a young boy. If she does, she will be forced to reveal the secrets she has spent a lifetime protecting. This time, she can make a different choice than before -- whatever the cost to herself....

12. The Pirate Queen by Ariel Lawton (528 pages)

Grace O'Malley was born to be at sea. Raised alongside her brother by their father, chief of the name of clan O'Malley, Grace learns early that her dreams of the open water are not compatible with the life she's expected to lead as the daughter of a noble family. And when her father marries her to the wrong man, a neighbouring chief named Donhal, Grace's world shifts for the worse.
Undaunted, Grace raises a family without abandoning her passion, aiding her hot-tempered husband in his campaigns against rival tribes. Eventually ousted from her husband's land in the wake of his death, Grace returns to her childhood home and begins her career as a pirate in earnest, claiming new territories and finding deeper love, only to see her livelihood threatened by English incursions into Ireland, and her family endangered in an attempt to check her power.
Tenderly observed and fiercely written, Ariel Lawhon's gripping latest novel channels the natural beauty of sixteenth-century Ireland alongside the brutality of the period as seen through the eyes of an unforgettable heroine and defender of her people, who truly earned the title 'the Pirate Queen.

14. The Liberty Scarf by Aime K. Runyan, etal (368 pages)

In the midst of a seemingly endless war, a scarf connects three women in the cold winter of 1917 . .
As an ambitious scarf maker, Iris Braxton spends her days surrounded by color and luxury not often seen during the dark days of war that promised to be over by Christmas. That promise has come and gone for three years with still no end in sight and her days continue in a monotony of rations and threads while she spins a dream of becoming Liberty's first female pattern designer. She hasn't the time or interest in rakish soldiers, but the temporarily-on-leave Captain Conrad Jones is persistent--and before long his charm wins her over. But war is cruel and all too soon Conrad leaves once more for the Front, but not before vowing to meet again in Strasbourg, France, the most magical of Christmas cities. Iris begins stitching small messages into each of the scarves she makes in hopes that one will find a way into Conrad's hands to let him know she's thinking of him. And when she receives word that he's wounded in

Strasbourg, she rushes to his side. Along the way, she passes a woman wearing one of her scarves . . .
Geneviève Tremblay, a French-Canadian immigrant, is a telephone operator living in Lewiston, Maine. Her beau is a member of a prominent family who has helped to Americanize her in a community often unfriendly to Canadians. As part of this effort, she enlists in the US Army Signal Corps to serve as a bi-lingual operator. Along the way, she meets a French officer who makes her question whether losing her identity is too heavy a price for acceptance.
The Clara Janssens, a Flemish Nurse, and Roman Allaire, an Alsatian violinist, are chosen to play for an orchestra providing morale on the front lines. This is a world they've never known, far beyond their routine provincial and countryside lives--and the expectations in those towns. Their love of music creates a spark between them, but the destruction of battle and the fulfillment of a promise threaten their romance. Still, the appearance of a kind stranger and the unexpected gift of a treasured scarf bind them long beyond their stolen moments and offer them a future beyond what they could have even hoped.