

# 2025 Book Descriptions

## **The Women** by Kristen Hannah

The story of one woman gone to war, but it shines a light on all women who put themselves in harm's way and whose sacrifice and commitment to their country has too often been forgotten. A novel about deep friendships and bold patriotism. An intimate portrait of coming of age in a dangerous time and an epic tale of a nation divided.

## **The River We Remember** by William Kent Krueger

In 1958, a small Minnesota town is rocked by the murder of its most powerful citizen, pouring fresh fuel on old grievances. Both a complex, spellbinding mystery and a masterful portrait of mid century American life is an unflinching look at the wounds left by the wars we fight abroad and at home, a moving exploration of the ways in which we seek to heal, and a testament to the enduring power of the stories we tell about the places we call home.

## **My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry** by Fredrik Backman

Elsa is seven years old and different. Her grandmother is seventy-seven years old and crazy—as in standing-on-the-balcony-firing-paintball-guns-at-strangers crazy. She is also Elsa's best, and only, friend. At night Elsa takes refuge in her grandmother's stories, in the Land-of-Almost-Awake and the Kingdom of Miamas, where everybody is different and nobody needs to be normal. When Elsa's grandmother dies and leaves behind a series of letters apologizing to people she has wronged, Elsa's greatest adventure begins. Her grandmother's instructions lead her to an apartment building full of drunks, monsters, attack dogs, and old crones but also to the truth about fairy tales and kingdoms and a grandmother like no other.

## **The Frozen River** by Ariel Lawhon

A gripping historical mystery inspired by the life and diary of Martha Ballard, a renowned 18th-century midwife who defied the legal system and wrote herself into American history. An unsung heroine who refused to accept anything less than justice at a time when women were considered best seen and not heard. A thrilling, tense and tender story about a remarkable woman who left an unparalleled legacy yet remains nearly forgotten to this day.

## **The Last Thing He Told Me** by Laura Dave

Before Owen Michaels disappears, he smuggles a note to his beloved wife of one year: Protect her. Despite her confusion and fear, Hannah Hall knows exactly to whom the note refers: Owen's 16-year-old daughter, Bailey. Bailey, who lost her mother tragically as a child. Bailey, who wants absolutely nothing to do with her new stepmother. As Hannah's increasingly desperate calls to Owen go unanswered, as the FBI arrests Owen's boss, as a US marshal and federal agents arrive at her Sausalito home unannounced, Hannah quickly realizes her husband isn't who he said he was. And that Bailey just may hold the key to figuring out Owen's true identity --- and why he really disappeared. Hannah and Bailey set

out to discover the truth. But as they start putting together the pieces of Owen's past, they soon realize they're also building a new future --- one neither of them could have anticipated.

**Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow** by Gabrielle Zevin

Two college friends become creative partners in a dazzling and intricately imagined world of video game design, where success brings them fame, joy, tragedy, duplicity and ultimately a kind of immortality. It is a love story but not one you have read before. Spanning 30 years, from Cambridge, Massachusetts to Venice Beach, California, and lands in between and far beyond, Zevin examines the multifarious nature of identity, disability, failure, the redemptive possibilities in play, and above all, our need to connect: to be loved and to love.

**The Briar Club** by Kate Quinn

Historical fiction novel about a group of women who form close friendships at a boarding house in Washington, DC during the 1950s. The story is told across multiple time periods, with the present focusing on a police investigation into two dead bodies at the boarding house. The past provides insight into the lives of the women, their loves, struggles, and secrets. The women form a supper club called The Briar Club, where they bond over their shared secrets and realize they have more in common than they thought.

**The Book of Lost Names** by Kristin Harmel

Eva Traube Abrams, a semi-retired librarian in Florida, is shelving books when her eyes lock on a photograph in the *New York Times*. She freezes; it's an image of a book she hasn't seen in more than 60 years - a book she recognizes as *The Book of Lost Names*. The accompanying article discusses the looting of libraries by the Nazis across Europe during World War II - an experience Eva remembers well - and the search to reunite people with the texts taken from them so long ago. The book in the photograph, an 18th-century religious text thought to have been taken from France in the waning days of the war, is one of the most fascinating cases. Now housed in Berlin's Zentral- und Landesbibliothek library, it appears to contain some sort of code, but researchers don't know where it came from - or what the code means. Only Eva holds the answer, but does she have the strength to revisit old memories?

**West with Giraffes** by Lynda Rutledge

It's 1938. The Great Depression lingers. Hitler is threatening Europe, and world-weary Americans long for wonder. They find it in two giraffes who miraculously survive a hurricane while crossing the Atlantic. What follows is a twelve-day road trip in a custom truck to deliver Southern California's first giraffes to the San Diego Zoo. Behind the wheel is the young Dust Bowl rowdy Woodrow. Inspired by true events, the tale weaves real-life figures with fictional ones, including the world's first female zoo director, a crusty old man with a past, a young female photographer with a secret, and assorted reprobates as spotty as the giraffes.

**My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult**

Emotionally riveting story of a family torn apart by conflicting needs and a passionate love that triumphs over human weakness. It examines what it means to be a good parent, a good sister, a good person. Is it morally correct to do whatever it takes to save a child's life, even if that means infringing upon the rights of another? Is it worth trying to discover who you really are, if that quest makes you like yourself less? Should you follow your own heart, or let others lead you?

**Our Missing Hearts by Celeste Ng**

Twelve-year-old Bird Gardner lives a quiet existence with his loving but broken father, a former linguist who now shelves books in a university library. Bird knows to not ask too many questions, stand out too much, or stray too far. For a decade, their lives have been governed by laws written to preserve "American culture" in the wake of years of economic instability and violence. To keep the peace and restore prosperity, the authorities are now allowed to relocate children of dissidents, especially those of Asian origin, and libraries have been forced to remove books seen as unpatriotic --- including the work of Bird's mother, Margaret, a Chinese American poet who left the family when he was nine years old.

**The Stolen Hours by Allen Eskens**

Lila Nash is on the verge of landing her dream job - working as a prosecutor under the Hennepin County Attorney - and has settled into a happy life with her boyfriend, Joe Talbert. But when a woman is pulled from the Mississippi River, barely alive, things in the office take a personal turn. The police believe the woman's assailant is local photographer Gavin Spenser, but the case quickly flounders as the evidence wears thin. It seems Gavin saw this investigation coming - and no one can imagine how carefully he has prepared. The more determined Lila is to put Gavin behind bars, the more elusive justice becomes. Battling a vindictive new boss and haunted by the ghosts of her own unspeakable attack, which she's kept a dark secret for eight long years, Lila knows the clock is ticking down. In a race against an evil mastermind, it will take everything Lila's got to outsmart a killer - and to escape the dark hold of her own past.