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**2015**

**Acevedo, Chantel. *The Distant Marvels***

**FIC ACEVEDO**

Cuba, 1963. Hurricane Flora, one of the deadliest hurricanes in recorded history, is bearing down on the island. Seven women have been forcibly evacuated from their homes and herded into the former governor's mansion, where they are watched over by another woman, a young soldier of Castro's new Cuba named Ofelia. Outside the storm is raging and the floodwaters are rising. On the top floor of the governor's mansion, Maria Sirena begins to tell the incredible story of her childhood during Cuba's Third War of Independence.

**Enright, Anne. *The Green Road***

**FIC ENRIGHT**

When the four adult Madigan children come home to County Clare for Christmas to visit their widowed mother for the last time before the family house is sold, a familiar landscape of tensions is renewed and reordered. Rosaleen's children are now middle-aged, and only one of them, Constance, stayed local, marrying into the McGrath family. This is prime Enright territory, the fertile soil of home and history, cash and clan; or, in the case of the Madigan reunion, "all the things that were unsayable: failure, money, sex and drink."

**Gregory, Philippa. *The Taming of the Queen***

**FIC GREGORY**

This novel reimagines the story of Henry VIII's sixth wife, Kateryn Parr, who after being forced to marry the king, struggles against dangerous adversaries to observe her own faith and promote religious reforms. Kateryn is a beauty: learned, kind, twice-widowed yet young enough to bear the sons crucial to securing the succession; she is also passionately in love with another.

**Hannah, Kristin. *The Nightingale***

**FIC HANNAH**

This is an engrossing tale of two sisters' bravery in occupied France during WWII. Viann and Isabelle Rossignol took very different paths after their mother's death devastated their family and war turned their father into a distant and withdrawn parent. Older sister Viann sought comfort in the arms of a schoolmate, getting pregnant and marrying at just 16. Rebellious Isabelle gets herself kicked out of multiple boarding schools. Then the Germans conquer France, and the sisters' lives change drastically.

**Hoffman, Alice. *The Marriage of Opposites***

**FIC HOFFMAN**

The dramatic family history of a seminal French painter shows a rare look at nineteenth-century Jewish life in the Caribbean. The novel begins in 1807 on the island of St. Thomas, a glorious natural paradise shadowed by the horrors of

slavery, which, though outlawed, persists amid virulent racism. The Jewish community, made up of refugees from anti-Semitic atrocities in Europe, seeks safety in strict religious conformity. Young and headstrong, Rachel embodies two evocative traits; she is awestruck by nature, reveling in and revering the island's vital, lush beauty, and she is mystically attuned to mysterious forces, especially the spirits of the dead. Ardent independent and sharp-tongued, she refuses to abide by racial or gender restrictions.

### **Hornby, Nick. *Funny Girl***

#### **FIC HORNBY**

Barbara is a blonde bombshell who flees the Miss Blackpool pageant for London in the 1960s, intent on stardom as a comedienne like her idol, Lucille Ball. A talent agent mistakes Barbara for a minor celebrity and has designs on transforming her into a glamour girl but realizes her broad northern accent is best suited for comedy after all. Hence, Sophie Straw is born. It's the early days of television and Sophie shows up for an audition in which she charms writers Bill and Tony (both closeted homosexuals, this is the 1960s) into writing a sitcom expressly for her.

### **Kanon, Joseph. *Leaving Berlin***

#### **FIC KANON**

A sweeping, atmospheric novel of postwar East Berlin, a city caught between political idealism and the harsh realities of Soviet occupation: Berlin 1948. Almost four years after the war's end, the city is still in ruins, a physical wasteland and a political symbol about to rupture. In the West, a defiant, blockaded city is barely surviving on airlifted supplies; in the East, the heady early days of political reconstruction are being undermined by the murky compromises of the Cold War. Espionage, like the black market, is a fact of life. Alex Meier, a young Jewish writer, fled the Nazis for America before the war. But the politics of his youth have now put him in the crosshairs of the McCarthy witch-hunts. Faced with deportation, he makes a bargain with the CIA: he will earn his way back to America by acting as their agent in his native Berlin.

### **Klaussman, Liza. *Villa America***

#### **FIC KLAUSSMAN**

Gerald and Sara Murphy are the main characters, whose 1920s golden years on the French Riviera inspired F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender Is the Night*. Her novel begins with Gerald's loveless childhood in 1890s Manhattan and his bond with Sara, first seen as a bored post-debutante in pre-World War I London. Their early love is touchingly depicted as shared desire for a life "entirely of our own creation," which is what they achieve at the villa. Klaussmann uses several fine biographies of the Murphys (cited in an author's note) to capture the magic of a privileged, bohemian existence dedicated to the pleasures of fine food and drink, friendship, and self-expression.

### **Pataki, Allison. *The Accidental Empress***

#### **FIC PATAKI**

Fifteen-year-old Elisabeth ("Sisi"), heroine, is utterly enchanted by her sister's intended fiancé, Franz Joseph, the dashing young Emperor of the Habsburgs. Franz is equally attracted to her, and before long the free-spirited Sisi has married Franz and taken her sister's planned place as Empress, to her sister's relief, but to her controlling mother-in-law's horror. Unprepared for the realities of her new role, particularly the stifling rules of protocol and lack of control over her environment, Sisi repeatedly clashes with the wishes of both her mother-in-law and, more dangerously, her husband.

### **Pulley, Natasha. *The Watchmaker of Filigree Street***

#### **FIC PULLEY**

As a telegraph operator in 1880s London, Nathaniel Steepleton works in the Home Office, lives in a small, spare apartment, and has a quiet life. The anonymous gift of a beautifully intricate watch changes everything. Terrorists set off a bomb using elaborate clockworks and Steepleton's device narrowly saves him from injury. He tracks down the watchmaker, Keita Mori, despite his policeman friend's suspicions that Mori might be behind the bombing. Mori is a genius craftsman with an unusual talent: he remembers the future.

### **Smiley, Jane. *Early Warning***

#### **FIC SMILEY**

In the second book of the Langdon trilogy, the Pulitzer Prize winning novelist follows the next generation of the unforgettable Iowa family introduced in *Some Luck*. Beginning with the death of the patriarch Walter in 1953, Smiley chronicles the social consciousness in America of the 1960s. Each chapter covers a year, this time from 1953 to 1986, and Smiley adeptly meshes diverse personal experiences with landmark events and seismic shifts in social consciousness. *Golden Age*, the last book in the trilogy, will be out in October.

### **Weir, Alison. *The Marriage Game: a novel of Queen Elizabeth I***

#### **FIC WEIR**

This novel brings to life one of England's most scandalous royal love affairs: the romance between the "Virgin Queen" Elizabeth I and her courtier Lord Robert Dudley. Only twenty-five and newly crowned, Elizabeth vows to rule the country as both queen and king. But her counselors continually press her to form an advantageous marriage and produce an heir. The dashing, though married, Lord Robert lays claim to Elizabeth's heart. Their flagrant flirting, their unescorted outings, and the appointment of Lord Robert to Master of Horse inspire whispers through the court, and even rumors that Elizabeth has secretly given birth to Lord Robert's child.

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Annotations from Novelist & Amazon Book descriptions.