**Mrs. Hemingway / Naomi Wood**

In the dazzling summer of 1926, Ernest Hemingway and his wife Hadley travel from their home in Paris to a villa in the south of France. They swim, play bridge and drink gin. But wherever they go they are accompanied by the glamorous and irrepressible Fife. Fife is Hadley's best friend. She is also Ernest's lover. Hadley is the first Mrs. Hemingway, but neither she nor Fife will be the last. Over the ensuing decades, Ernest's literary career will blaze a trail, but his marriages will be ignited by passion and deceit. Four extraordinary women will learn what it means to love the most famous writer of his generation, and each will be forced to ask herself how far she will go to remain his wife. Luminous and intoxicating, Mrs. Hemingway portrays real lives with rare intimacy and plumbs the depths of the human heart.

**The Middlesteins / Jami Attenberg**

A moving, hilarious, and deeply perceptive novel of universal themes: family, love and greed. Edie and Richard have been married for over 30 years, living in the Chicago suburbs. Everyone who knew them even their own children Robin and Benny agreed that Edie was a tough woman to love, but no-one expected Richard to walk out on her, especially not in her condition. Edie is 59 years old, she weighs 300 pounds, and her doctors have told her she'll die if she doesn't stop eating. As Richard is shut out by the family and seeks solace in the world of internet dating Robin is dragged back from the city and forced to rebuild a relationship with her mother. Meanwhile Benny and his neurotic wife Rachelle try to take control of the situation. But have any of them stopped to think about whether Edie really wants to be saved? Written with sly humour, warmth and great insight, "The Middlesteins" is a novel about what it means to be part of a family.

**The road to Middlemarch : my life with George Eliot / Rebecca Mead**

What would happen if I stopped to consider how Middlemarch has shaped my understanding of my own life? Why did the novel still feel so urgent, after all these years? And what could it give me now, as I paused here in the middle of things, and surveyed where I had come from, and thought about where I was, and wondered where I might go next? At the age of 17, Rebecca Mead read Middlemarch for the first time, and has read it again every five years since, interpreting and discovering it anew each time. In The Road to Middlemarch she writes passionately about her relationship with this remarkable Victorian novel loved by so many and explores how its characters and their stories, along with George Eliot's own life experiences, can answer some of our fundamental questions about life and love. Middlemarch has at its centre one of literature's most compelling and ill-fated marriages, and some of the most tenderly drawn characters. Mead explores how Middlemarch teaches us to be grown-ups, and to value our ordinary lives.

**A partial history of lost causes : a novel / Jennifer DuBois**

In Jennifer duBois's mesmerizing and exquisitely rendered debut novel, a long-lost letter links two disparate characters, each searching for meaning against seemingly insurmountable odds. In St. Petersburg, Russia, world chess champion Aleksandr Bezetov begins a quixotic quest. With his renowned Cold War-era tournaments behind him, Aleksandr has turned to politics, launching a dissident presidential campaign against Vladimir Putin. He knows he will not win and that he is risking his life in the process but a deeper conviction propels him forward. In Cambridge, Massachusetts, thirty-year-old English lecturer Irina Ellison is on an improbable quest of her own. Certain she has inherited Huntington's disease the same cruel illness that ended her father's life she struggles with a sense of purpose. When Irina finds an old, photocopied letter her father had written to the young Aleksandr Bezetov, she makes a fateful decision.
Dept. of speculation / Jenny Offill
Dept. of Speculation is a portrait of a marriage. It is also a beguiling rumination on the mysteries of intimacy, trust, faith, knowledge, and the condition of universal shipwreck that unites us all. Jenny Offill's heroine, referred to in these pages as simply "the wife," once exchanged love letters with her husband, postmarked Dept. of Speculation, their code name for all the uncertainty that inheres in life and in the strangely fluid confines of a long relationship. As they confront an array of common catastrophes a colicky baby, bedbugs, a faltering marriage, stalled ambitions the wife analyzes her predicament, invoking everything from Keats and Kafka to the thought experiments of the Stoics to the lessons of doomed Russian cosmonauts. She muses on the consuming, capacious experience of maternal love, and the near total destruction of the self that ensues from it, as she confronts the friction between domestic life and the seductions and demands of art. With cool precision, in language that shimmers with rage and wit and fierce longing, Jenny Offill has crafted an exquisitely suspenseful love story that has the velocity of a train hurtling through the night at top speed. Exceptionally lean and compact, Dept. of Speculation can be read in a single sitting, but there are enough bracing emotional insights in these pages to fill a much longer novel.

Half blood blues / Esi Edugyan
The aftermath of the fall of Paris, 1940. Hieronymous Falk, a rising star on the cabaret scene, was arrested in a cafe and never heard from again. He was twenty years old. He was a German citizen. And he was black. Fifty years later, Sid, Hiero's bandmate and the only witness that day, is going back to Berlin. Persuaded by his old friend Chip, Sid discovers there's more to the journey than he thought.

The cuckoo's calling / Robert Galbraith
When a troubled model falls to her death from a snow-covered Mayfair balcony, it is assumed that she has committed suicide. However, her brother has his doubts, and calls in private investigator Cormoran Strike to look into the case. Strike is a war veteran wounded both physically and psychologically and his life is in disarray. The case gives him a financial lifeline, but it comes at a personal cost: the more he delves into the young model's complex world, the darker things get and the closer he gets to terrible danger. A gripping, elegant mystery steeped in the atmosphere of London from the hushed streets of Mayfair to the backstreet pubs of the East End to the bustle of Soho The Cuckoo's Calling is a remarkable book. Introducing Cormoran Strike, this is a classic crime novel in the tradition of P. D. James and Ruth Rendell, and marks the beginning of a unique series of mysteries.

A story lately told / Anjelica Huston
Anjelica Huston's life, once she turned 15 and moved to London, is a who's who of popular culture from the Rolling Stones in late '60s London to the Chelsea Hotel in New York when she was modelling in the early '70s, to Jack Nicholson and Warren Beatty in '70s and '80s Los Angeles, to Hunter Thompson in Aspen. She is a force who has won every possible acting award, working with some of the greatest directors of her time, and a friend to many of the greatest artists, writers, actors and musicians. One could say it was a charmed life, an enviable life, and she would agree. But it is a life also full of so much tragedy and sadness, and Huston writes about both triumph and hardship with extraordinary eloquence and depth. A stunning achievement, her memoir ranks among the best in the genre.
Under a mackerel sky: a memoir / Rick Stein
All men should strive to learn before they die what they are running from, and to, and why ‘Rick Stein’s childhood in 1950s rural Oxfordshire and North Cornwall was idyllic. His parents were charming and gregarious, their five children much-loved and given freedom typical of the time. As he grew older, the holidays were filled with loud and lively parties in his parents' Cornish barn. But ever-present was the unpredictable mood of his bipolar father, with Rick frequently the focus of his anger and sadness. When Rick was 18 his father killed himself. Emotionally adrift, Rick left for Australia, carrying a suitcase stamped with his father's initials. Manual labour in the outback followed by adventures in America and Mexico toughened up the naive public schoolboy, but at heart he was still lost and unsure what to do with his life. Eventually, Cornwall called him home. From the entrepreneurial days of his mobile disco, the Purple Tiger, to his first, unlikely nightclub where much of the time was spent breaking up drink-fuelled fights, Rick charts his personal journey in a way that is both wry and perceptive; engaging and witty.

Wilkie Collins / Peter Ackroyd
Short and oddly built, with a head too big for his body, extremely short-sighted, unable to stay still, dressed in coloured clothes, ‘as if playing a certain part in the great general drama of life’, Wilkie Collins looked distinctly strange. But he was none the less a charmer, befriended by the great, loved by children, irresistibly attractive to women and avidly read by generations of readers. Ackroyd follows his hero, ‘the sweetest-tempered of all the Victorian novelists’, from his childhood as the son of a well-known artist to his struggling beginnings as a writer, his years of fame and his life-long friendship with the other great London chronicler, Charles Dickens. A true Londoner, Collins, like Dickens, was fascinated by the secrets and crimes the fraud, blackmail and poisonings that lay hidden behind the city’s respectable facade. He was a fighter, never afraid to point out injustices and shams, or to tackle the establishment head on. As well as his enduring masterpieces, “The Moonstone” often called the first true detective novel and the sensational "The Woman in White”, he produced an intriguing array of lesser known works.

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