

Historical Fiction Book List

- *The Courtesan*, by Alexandra Gambrill
 - The year is 1881. Seven-year-old Jinhua is left an orphan, alone and unprotected after her mandarin father's summary execution for the crime of speaking the truth. For seven silver coins, she is sold to a brothel-keeper and subjected to the worst of human nature. When an elegant but troubled scholar takes Jinhua as his concubine, she enters the close world of his jealous first wife. Yet it is Jinhua who accompanies him--as Emissary to the foreign devil nations of Prussia, Austro-Hungary, and Russia--on an exotic journey to Vienna.
- *Ellis Island*, by Kate Kerrigan
 - In 1920s New York, a young Irish woman must choose between her new life and her husband back home in Ireland.
- *Year of Wonders: A Novel of the Plague*, by Geraldine Brooks
 - Eighteen-year-old Anna Frith tells the story of her remote English village, Eyam, which was infected by the plague in 1666 and where, persuaded by their vicar, the townspeople decided to quarantine themselves.
- *Nefertiti*, by Michelle Moran
 - In 1351 B.C., Prince Amunhotep secretly kills his older brother and becomes next in line to Egypt's throne: he's 17, and the 15-year-old Nefertiti soon becomes his chief wife. He already has a wife, but Kiya's blood is not as royal, nor is she as bewitching as Nefertiti. As Nefertiti's sister Mutnodjmet, two years younger, looks on (and falls in love), Amunhotep and the equally ambitious Nefertiti worship a different main god, displace the priests who control Egypt's wealth and begin building a city that boasts the royal likenesses chiseled in stone. Things get tense when Kiya has sons and the popular Nefertiti has only daughters, and they come to a boil when the army is used to build temples to the pharaoh and his queen instead of protecting Egypt's borders.
- *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*, by Lisa See
 - In nineteenth century China, in a remote Hunan county, a girl named Lily, at the tender age of seven, is paired with a laotong, or "old same," in an emotional match that will last a lifetime. The two women exchange messages written on silk fans and handkerchiefs using *nu shu*—a unique language that women created in order to communicate in secret—to share their experiences. But when a misunderstanding arises, their friendship threatens to tear apart.
- *Outlander*, by Diana Gabaldon
 - Hurlled back through time more than two hundred years to 1743 Scotland, Claire Randall finds herself caught in the midst of an unfamiliar world torn apart by violence, pestilence, and revolution and haunted by her growing feelings for a young soldier, James Fraser.
- *The Painted Girls*, by Cathy Marie Buchanan
 - In belle époque Paris, the Van Goethem sisters struggle for survival after the sudden death of their father, a situation that prompts young Marie's ballet training and her introduction to a genius painter.
- *The White Queen*, by Philippa Gregory
 - A tale of the Wars of the Roses follows Elizabeth Woodville, who ascends to royalty and fights for the well-being of her family, including two sons whose imprisonment in the Tower of London precedes a devastating unsolved mystery.
- *The Red Tent*, by Anita Diamant
 - The story of the biblical Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, is told from her point of view, beginning with the story of her mothers, Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, and Bilhah. These wives of Jacob give her the gifts that are to sustain her through a damaged youth, a calling to midwifery, and a new home in a foreign land.
- *The American Heiress*, by Daisy Goodwin
 - In the 1890s, American heiress Cora Cash is married to an English duke and earns the title Duchess of Wareham. However, her husband Ivo is not exactly who he appears to be and Cora quickly discovers that she may have to decide between money and happiness.
- *Flight of the Sparrow: A Novel of Early America*, by Amy Belding Brown
 - Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1676. Even before Mary Rowlandson was captured by Indians on a winter day of violence and terror, she sometimes found herself in conflict with her rigid Puritan community. Now, her home destroyed, her children lost to her, she has been sold into the service of a powerful woman tribal leader, made a pawn in the ongoing bloody struggle between English settlers and native people. Battling cold, hunger, and exhaustion, Mary witnesses harrowing brutality but also unexpected kindness. To her confused surprise, she is drawn to her captors' open and straightforward way of life. Now, having lived on the other side of the forest, she begins to question the edicts that have guided her, torn between the life she knew and the wisdom the natives have shown her.
- *The Last Kingdom*, by Bernard Cornwell

- In the middle years of the ninth century, the fierce Danes stormed onto British soil, hungry for spoils and conquest. Kingdom after kingdom fell to the ruthless invaders until only one realm remained. Suddenly the fate of all England--and the course of history--depended upon one man, one king.
- *Mistress of Nothing*, by Kate Pullinger
 - When her mistress departs from Victorian London society to seek relief from tuberculosis symptoms in Egypt, maid Sally throws herself into their new culture and comes to know freedoms she has never experienced before she is harshly reminded of her humble station in life.
- *In Need of a Good Wife*, by Kelly O'Connor McNeese
 - For Clara Bixby, brokering mail-order brides is a golden business opportunity--and a desperately needed chance to start again. If she can help New York women find husbands in a far-off Nebraska town, she can build an independent new life away from her own loss and grief. Clara's ambitions are shared by two other women, who are also willing to take any risk. Quiet immigrant Elsa hopes to escape her life of servitude and at last shape her own destiny. And Rowena, the willful, impoverished heiress, jumps at the chance to marry a humble stranger and repay a heartbreaking debt. All three struggle to find their true place in the world, leaving behind who they were in order to lay claim to the person they want to be.
- *Memoirs of a Geisha*, by Arthur Golden
 - Nitta Sayuri, a young Japanese woman who was taken from her home at the age of nine and sold into slavery as a geisha, discovers a rare opportunity for freedom when the outbreak of World War II forces an end to the only life she has ever known.
- *The Lost Sisterhood*, by Anne Fortier
 - While a band of ancient-world Amazon priestesses in training embark on a brave quest to rescue their kidnapped companions, a modern-day scholar is led by an enigmatic Middle Easterner on a dangerous search for an Amazonian treasure in the Sahara.
- *The Traitor's Wife*, by Allison Pataki
 - Socialite Peggy Shippen is half Benedict Arnold's age when she seduces the war hero during his stint as military commander of Philadelphia. Blinded by his young bride's beauty and wit, Arnold does not realize that she harbors a secret: loyalty to the British. Nor does he know that she hides a past romance with the handsome British spy John André. Peggy watches as her husband, crippled from battle wounds and in debt from years of service to the colonies, grows ever more disillusioned with his hero, Washington, and the American cause. Together with her former love and her disaffected husband, Peggy hatches the plot to deliver West Point to the British and, in exchange, win fame and fortune for herself and Arnold.
- *The Clan of the Cave Bear*, by Jean M. Auel
 - Ayla is a tall, blond, blue-eyed girl lost her family in an earthquake. She is nurtured and protected by some members of the Clan, but there are those who would cast her out because of her strange and threatening ways. Ayla's adventures 25,000 years ago include exquisite details of our world as it might have been.
- *Belle Cora*, by Phillip Margulies
 - A sweeping historical tale based on the life and times of the daughter of a New York merchant finds the orphaned Belle suffering at the hands of a rival cousin before working as a prostitute and transforming herself repeatedly to win the love and life she desires.
- *The Fever Tree*, by Jennifer McVeigh
 - South Africa, 1880. Frances Irvine, destitute in the wake of her father's sudden death, is forced to abandon her life of wealth and privilege in London and emigrate to the Cape. In this remote and inhospitable land she becomes entangled with two very different men, leading her into the dark heart of the diamond mines. Torn between passion and integrity, she makes a choice that has devastating consequences.
- *The Pillars of the Earth*, by Ken Follett
 - Set in twelfth-century England, this epic of kings and peasants juxtaposes the building of a magnificent church with the violence and treachery that often characterized the Middle Ages.
- *At the Water's Edge*, by Sara Gruen
 - While her husband, Ellis, and his friend try to find the Loch Ness monster in an attempt to get back into his father's good graces, Maddie is left on her own in World War II-era Scotland and experiences a social awakening.
- *Outlaw*, by Angus Donald
 - When he's caught stealing, young Alan Dale is forced to leave his family and go to live with a notorious band of outlaws in Sherwood Forest. Their leader is the infamous Robin Hood. A tough, bloodthirsty warrior, Robin is more feared than any man in the county. And he becomes a mentor for Alan; with his fellow outlaws, Robin teaches Alan

how to fight - and how to win. But Robin is a ruthless man - and although he is Alan's protector, if Alan displeases him, he could also just as easily become his murderer...

- *Circling the Sun*, by Paula McLain
 - Kenya in the 1920s. Brought to Kenya from England as a child and then abandoned by her mother, Beryl is raised by both her father and the native Kipsigis tribe who share his estate. Her unconventional upbringing transforms Beryl into a bold young woman with a fierce love of all things wild and an inherent understanding of nature's delicate balance. But even the wild child must grow up, and when everything Beryl knows and trusts dissolves, she is catapulted into a string of disastrous relationships. Set against the majestic landscape of early-twentieth-century Africa, McLain's powerful tale reveals the extraordinary adventures of a woman before her time, the exhilaration of freedom and its cost, and the tenacity of the human spirit.
- *The Heretic's Daughter*, by Kathleen Kent
 - Martha Carrier was one of the first women to be accused, tried and hanged as a witch in Salem, Massachusetts. Like her mother, young Sarah Carrier is bright and willful, openly challenging the small, brutal world in which they live. Often at odds with one another, mother and daughter are forced to stand together against the escalating hysteria of the trials and the superstitious tyranny that led to the torture and imprisonment of more than 200 people accused of witchcraft. This is the story of Martha's courageous defiance and ultimate death, as told by the daughter who survived.
- *Cleopatra's Shadows*, by Emily Holleman
 - This novel reimagines the beginnings of Cleopatra's epic saga through the eyes of her younger sister.
- *All the Light We Cannot See*, by Anthony Doerr
 - From the highly acclaimed, multiple award-winning Anthony Doerr, a stunningly ambitious and beautiful novel about a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France as both try to survive the devastation of World War II.
- *The Kite Runner*, by Khaled Hosseini
 - Amir is the son of a prominent and wealthy man, while Hassan, the son of Amir's father's servant, is a Hazara--a shunned ethnic minority. Their intertwined lives, and their fates, reflect the eventual tragedy of the world around them. When Amir and his father flee the country for a new life in California, Amir thinks that he has escaped his past. And yet he cannot leave the memory of Hassan behind him.
- *The Help*, by Kathryn Stockett
 - In Jackson, Mississippi, in 1962, there are lines that are not crossed. With the civil rights movement exploding all around them, three women start a movement of their own, forever changing a town and the way women, black and white, mothers and daughters, view one another.
- *Pompeii*, by Robert Harris
 - When the aqueduct that brings fresh water to thousands of people around the bay of Naples fails, Roman engineer Marius Primus heads to the slopes of Mount Vesuvius to investigate, only to come face to face with an impending catastrophe.