

## HISTORICAL FICTION

**Atkinson, Kate. *Life After Life*.** Originally born in 1910, Ursula Todd is fated to die and be reborn again and again and again until she gets it right. This is a darkly comic novel not easily forgotten.

**Baker, Jo. *Longbourn*.** Members of Jane Austen's Bennet Family are but bit players in the fascinating stories that take place "downstairs" at the Bennet estate. Should be especially enjoyable for fans of Miss Austen, *Downton Abbey* and *Upstairs/Downstairs*.

**Barry, Sebastian. *The Secret Scripture*.** Roseanne McNulty, once one of the most beautiful and beguiling girls in County Sligo, Ireland and now a patient at Roscommon Regional Mental Hospital, is nearing her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Kept secreted beneath the floorboards of her bedroom is her autobiography-in-progress. Roseanne's manuscript alternates with narration from her doctor to present a tale of one lone women in an Ireland besieged by political, social and religious conflict. A memorable story by one of Ireland's most poetic writers.

**Benjamin, Melanie. *The Aviator's Wife*.** This fictionalized biography of Anne Morrow Lindbergh presents a woman who, though plagued by tragedy and often stifled by her domineering husband, managed to carve out an independent life and career for herself.

**Chevalier, Tracy. *Remarkable Creatures*.** The author of *The Girl with a Pearl Earring* returns with a historical novel about Mary Anning, a pioneering Victorian scientist who defies gender norms and religious orthodoxy to bring the true nature of fossils to light.

**Fowler, Therese Anne. *Z: A Novel of Zelda Fitzgerald*.** This story of the frenzied lives and complicated relationship of the 1920's dazzling literary "It" couple, Zelda and F. Scott Fitzgerald, is alternately touching and funny -- but always fascinating.

**Galloway, Steven. *The Cellist of Sarajevo*.** From his window, a musician sees twenty-two of his friends and neighbors waiting in a breadline. Then, in a flash, they are killed by a mortar attack. In an act of defiance, the man picks up his cello and decides to play at the site of the shelling for twenty-two days, honoring their memory.

**Gregory, Philippa. *The White Princess*.** Elizabeth of York was daughter, sister, niece, wife, and mother to a string of English monarchs. As such her life became a series of tricky balancing acts needed to successfully and delicately weave her way through the personality clashes and political machinations of the Tudor Court. (This is the fifth novel in *The Cousins' War Series*. The first is *The White Queen*.)

**Grimwood, Jonathan. *The Last Banquet*.** Jean-Marie d'Aumout is eating beetles outside of the house where his parents have been killed when he is rescued by le Regent and given his first taste of Roquefort cheese. So begins this story of a man and his love for food – and women and adventure. Follow this hedonistic but likeable hero through the years of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution.

**Keneally, Thomas. *The Daughters of Mars*.** From the author of **Schindler's List** comes the story of two Australian sisters who bond while serving as military nurses on the western front during World War I. An epic, sweeping book with a surprise ending – actually, two surprise endings.

**Kent, Hannah. *Burial Rites*.** A haunting tale of the final months of Agnes Magnúsdóttir, the last person legally executed in Iceland. Agnes spent these months of 1829, not in prison, but at the isolated farmhouse of a resentful and fearful local family. Convicted of murder and condemned to death, all she has left is her story – this story. Lyrical, very well researched, and compelling.

**Konar, Affinity. *Mischling*.** This “beautiful novel about the most odious of crimes,” (Anthony Doerr) explores the world of twin sisters, Stasha and Pearl, two subjects of Nazi doctor Josef Mengele's horrifying experiments at Auschwitz, their refusal to be separated and their struggle to imagine their place in the post-war world.

**Lansdale, Joe R. *The Thicket*.** Sixteen-year-old Jack Parker hires two slightly atypical bounty hunters to rescue his abducted fourteen-year-old sister, Lula, in what one critic called “about as perfect a western as you'll find.” Part **True Grit**, part **The Wizard of Oz**, part Mark Twain, and all parts enjoyable.

**Mathis, Ayana. *The Twelve Tribes of Hattie*.** In 1923, fifteen-year-old Hattie Shepherd flees Georgia for the North. She is full of hope, but finds only disappointment. Vowing to prepare her children for a world of pain, she raises them with courage, strength, and not an ounce of the tenderness they crave. Their various voices tell the story of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century through the eyes of one African-American family.

**McBride, James. *The Good Lord Bird*.** Little Onion (real name Henry) is an escaped slave, disguised as a girl, who travels with John Brown as he prepares for his raid on Harper's Ferry. An impressively deep comedy.

**McCann, Colum. *TransAtlantic*.** Three journeys between Ireland and America (Frederick Douglass' 1845 trip to raise money for the abolitionist movement, the 1919 flight of aviators Alcock and Brown, and Senator George Mitchell's attempt to bring peace to Northern Ireland in 1998) are all tied together through the lives of Irish housemaid Lily Duggan of Cork and her family. Lushly and beautifully written.

**Meyer, Philipp. *The Son*.** A refreshing absence of hyperbole and Western clichés marks this realistic saga of the settlement of the American West, as told from the points of view of flinty 100-year-old Eli, his struggling great-grand-daughter, Jeanne, and soft-hearted Peter, “The Son” and moral compass of the novel. bf 1/17