

All the Colors of Dark, by Chris Whitaker. January 22, 2026, by Kay Meyer.

1975 is a time of change in America. The Vietnam War is ending. Muhammad Ali is fighting Joe Frazier. And in the small town of Monta Clare, Missouri, girls are disappearing. When the daughter of a wealthy family is targeted, the most unlikely hero emerges—Patch, a local boy, who saves the girl, and, in doing so, leaves heartache in his wake. Patch and those who love him soon discover that the line between triumph and tragedy has never been finer. And that their search for answers will lead them to truths that could mean losing one another. 608 pages, published June 2024.

Heartland: A Memoir of Working Hard and Being Broke in the Richest Country on Earth, by Sarah Smarsh. February 26, 2026, by Patty Murray.

Sarah Smarsh was born a fifth generation Kansas wheat farmer on her paternal side, and the product of generations of teen mothers on her maternal side. Through her experiences growing up on a farm thirty miles west of Wichita, we are given a unique and essential look into the lives of poor and working-class Americans living in the heartland. During Sarah's turbulent childhood in Kansas in the 1980s and 1990s, she enjoyed the freedom of a country childhood but observed the painful challenges of the poverty around her; untreated medical conditions for lack of insurance or consistent care, unsafe job conditions, abusive relationships, and limited resources and information that would provide for the upward mobility that is the American Dream. By telling the story of her life and the lives of the people she loves with clarity and precision but without judgement, Smarsh challenges us to look more closely at the class divide in our country. Beautifully written, in a distinctive voice, Heartland combines personal narrative with powerful analysis and cultural commentary, challenging the myths about people thought to be less because they earn less. 304 pages, published September 18, 2018.

Sula, by Toni Morrison. March 26, 2026, by Carol Davis McDonald. (Spring Fling is March 28.) Sula and Nel are two young black girls: clever and poor. They grow up together sharing their secrets, dreams and happiness. Then Sula breaks free from their small-town community in the uplands of Ohio to roam the cities of America. When she returns ten years later much has changed. Including Nel, who now has a husband and three children. The friendship between the two women becomes strained and the whole town grows wary as

Sula continues in her wayward, vagabond and uncompromising ways. 192 pages, published 1973.

My Friends, by Fredrik Backman. April 23, 2026, by Jayne Kasten. Most people don't even notice them—three tiny figures sitting at the end of a long pier in the corner of one of the most famous paintings in the world. Most people think it's just a depiction of the sea. But Louisa, an aspiring artist herself, knows otherwise, and she is determined to find out the story of these three enigmatic figures. Twenty-five years earlier, in a distant seaside town, a group of teenagers find refuge from their bruising home lives by spending long summer days on an abandoned pier, telling silly jokes, sharing secrets, and committing small acts of rebellion. These lost souls find in each other a reason to get up each morning, a reason to dream, a reason to love. Out of that summer emerges a transcendent work of art, a painting that will unexpectedly be placed into eighteen-year-old Louisa's care. She embarks on a surprise-filled cross-country journey to learn how the painting came to be and to decide what to do with it. The closer she gets to the painting's birthplace, the more nervous she becomes about what she'll find. Louisa is proof that happy endings don't always take the form we expect in this stunning testament to the transformative, timeless power of friendship and art. 448 pages, published May 6, 2025.

Anna: The Biography, by Amy Odell. May 28, 2026, by Teri Brecht. (Memorial Day is May 25.) As a child, Anna Wintour was a tomboy with no apparent interest in clothing but, seduced by the miniskirts and bob haircuts of swinging 1960s London, she grew into a fashion-obsessed teenager. Her father, an influential newspaper editor, loomed large in her life, and once he decided she should become editor-in-chief of *Vogue*, she never looked back. Impatient to start her career, she left high school and got a job at a trendy boutique in London—an experience that would be the first of many defeats. Undeterred, she found work in the competitive world of magazines, eventually embarking on a journey to New York and a battle to ascend, no matter who or what stood in her way. Once she was crowned editor-in-chief of *Vogue*—in one of the stormiest transitions in fashion magazine history—she continued the fight to retain her enviable position, ultimately rising to dominate all of Condé Nast. Named one of *Time's* 100 Must-Read Books of 2022, this in-depth and revealing biography is based on extensive interviews with Anna Wintour's

closest friends and collaborators. Weaving Anna's personal story into a larger narrative about the hierarchical dynamics of the fashion industry and the complex world of Condé Nast, Anna charts the relentless ambition of the woman who would become an icon. 464 pages, published May 3, 2022.

By Any Other Name, by Jodi Picoult. **June 25, 2026, by Kay Meyer or another group member.** Young playwright Melina Green has just written a new work inspired by the life of her Elizabethan ancestor Emilia Bassano. But seeing it performed is unlikely, in a theater world where the playing field isn't level for women. As Melina wonders if she dares risk failure again, her best friend takes the decision out of her hands and submits the play to a festival under a male pseudonym. In 1581, young Emilia Bassano is a ward of English aristocrats. Her lessons on languages, history, and writing have endowed her with a sharp wit and a gift for storytelling, but like most women of her day, she is allowed no voice of her own. Forced to become a mistress to the Lord Chamberlain, who oversees all theatre productions in England, Emilia sees firsthand how the words of playwrights can move an audience. She begins to form a plan to secretly bring a play of her own to the stage—by paying an actor named William Shakespeare to front her work. 544 pages, published August 20, 2024.

Accidentally, on Purpose, by Kristin Kish. **September 24, 2026, by Jayne Kasten or another group member.** *Accidentally, on Purpose* dives into Kristen Kish's childhood as a Korean adoptee in the Midwest, finding purpose in kitchens, and becoming the season 10 winner of—and now host—of *Top Chef* all the while navigating life in the spotlight, coming out in her adult years, and all the life lessons in between. Kristen Kish never set out to live a public life—not when she was a carefree softball-tossing kid, not in high school working at a pretzel stand, not even, briefly, as a working model. And definitely not when she finally landed her true calling as a chef. But in those early days, becoming a chef meant tethering oneself to a restaurant, not a television set. But it happened naturally (or as naturally as possible, given all the technology and TV magic involved), even if it was totally unanticipated. Of course, like most things in life, the road to this full circle moment—from *Top Chef* season 10 winner to now hosting—was so much more winding and complicated than it may have appeared from the outside. From growing up as an adoptee in the Midwest, to trying to fit in with all the other girls who were busy dating boys, to coming out and finding love when she least expected it, Kristen learned that,

unlike a map, no set of plans or definitions can dictate or explain a life. In fact, accidents happen. That curveballs will come. And they will often be consequential to one's path. In *Accidentally on Purpose*, what defines Kristen's story aren't the missteps or even the pleasant surprises that crop up. It's how to respond when they do, and the decisions made at those intersections. Because while accidents may be unexpected, they don't have to be at odds with purpose. And as Kristen approaches life's milestones, big and small, with intention—the ones she expected, and those she didn't—she realizes she can write her own definitions and chart her own course. 352 pages, published April 22, 2025.

The Queens of Crime, by Marie Benedict. **October 22, 2026, by Nancy Hutchins.** London, 1930. The five greatest women crime writers have banded together to form a secret society with a single goal: to show they are no longer willing to be treated as second class citizens by their male counterparts in the legendary Detection Club. Led by the formidable Dorothy L. Sayers, the group includes Agatha Christie, Ngaio Marsh, Margery Allingham and Baroness Emma Orczy. They call themselves the Queens of Crime. Their plan? Solve an actual murder, that of a young woman found strangled in a park in France who may have connections leading to the highest levels of the British establishment. May Daniels, a young English nurse on an excursion to France with her friend, seemed to vanish into thin air as they prepared to board a ferry home. Months later, her body is found in the nearby woods. The murder has all the hallmarks of a locked room mystery for which these authors are famous: how did her killer manage to sneak her body out of a crowded train station without anyone noticing? If, as the police believe, the cause of death is manual strangulation, why is there an extraordinary amount of blood at the crime scene? What is the meaning of a heartbreaking secret letter seeming to implicate an unnamed paramour? Determined to solve the highly publicized murder, the Queens of Crime embark on their own investigation, discovering they're stronger together. But soon the killer targets Dorothy Sayers herself, threatening to expose a dark secret in her past that she would do anything to keep hidden. Inspired by a true story in Sayers' own life, New York Times bestselling author Marie Benedict brings to life the lengths to which five talented women writers will go to be taken seriously in the male-dominated world of letters as they unpuzzle a mystery torn from the pages of their own novels. 320 pages, published February 11, 2025.