

# CRASH COURSE

IN RELATIONSHIP  
FICTION



NoveList



# Panelists



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The logo for Library Reads features a stylized 'L' made of a blue vertical bar and an orange horizontal bar. To the right of the 'L' are five vertical bars of varying heights, colored orange and blue. Below this graphic, the words 'LIBRARY' and 'READS' are stacked in a bold, sans-serif font. 'LIBRARY' is in blue and 'READS' is in orange.

The **top ten books** published this month that librarians across the country love.

[libraryreads.org](http://libraryreads.org)

# What is relationship fiction?

- Focus on personal relationships
- Can be about family, friends, or lovers
- Marked by emotional upheaval and self-discovery
- Overall optimistic outlook
- Ends with hope

# What relationship fiction is NOT?

- Not a romance
- Might be romantic elements, but not the main focus
- Not just for (or by or about) women!



# Literary fiction vs. Relationship fiction

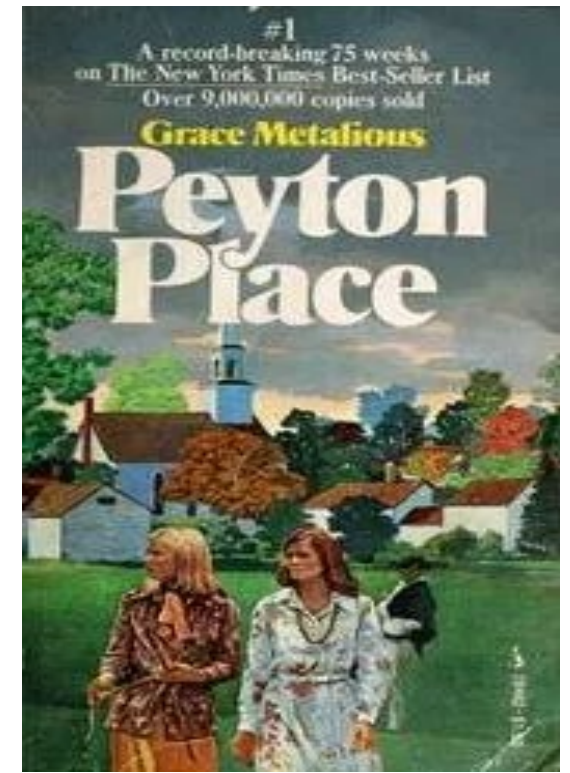
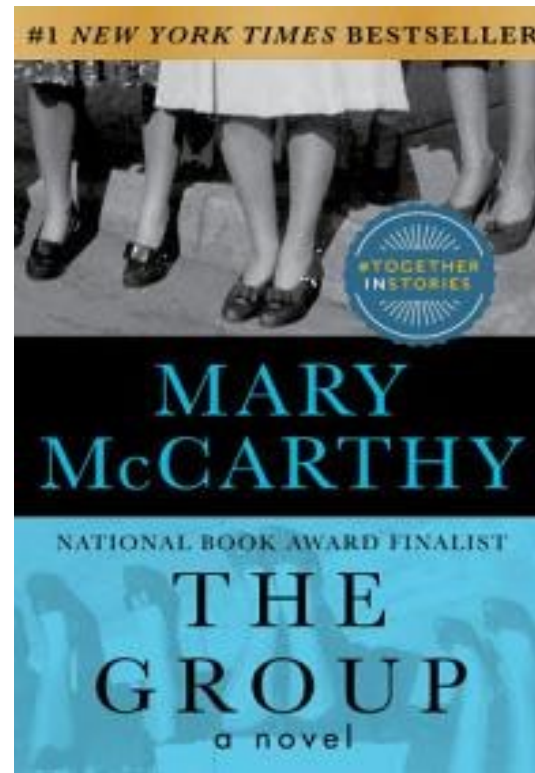
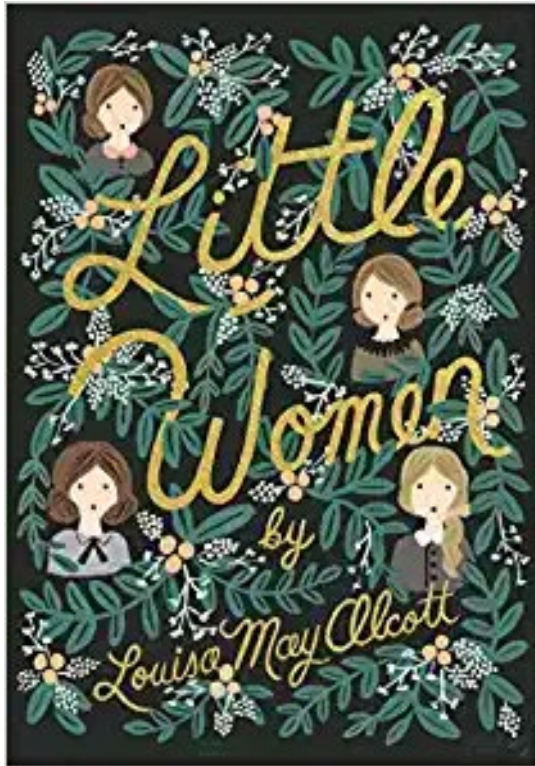


*“Please, something which won’t make me think.”*

# History of the Genre



# “Domestic” Fiction

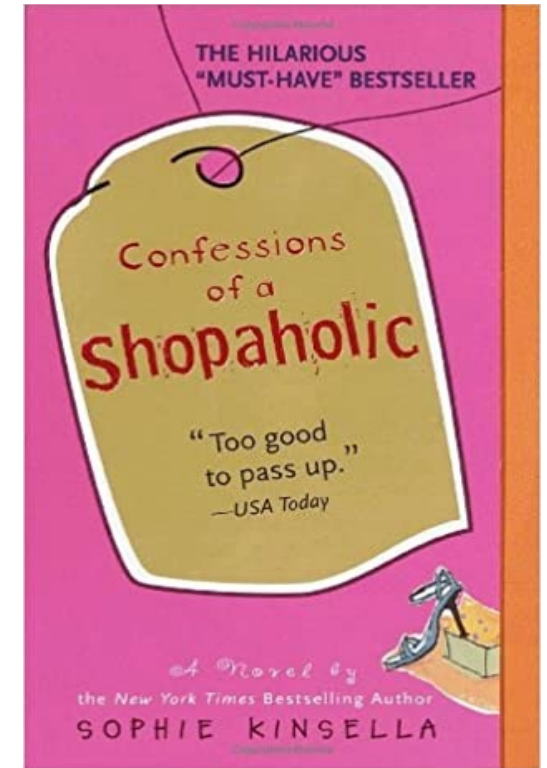
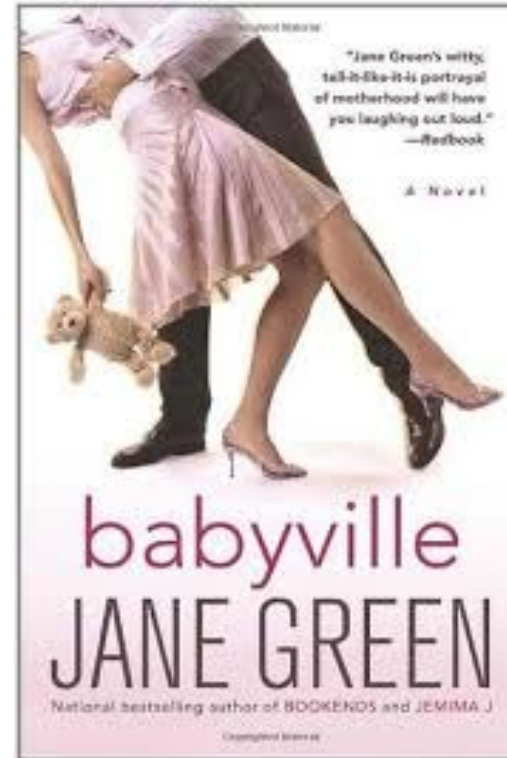
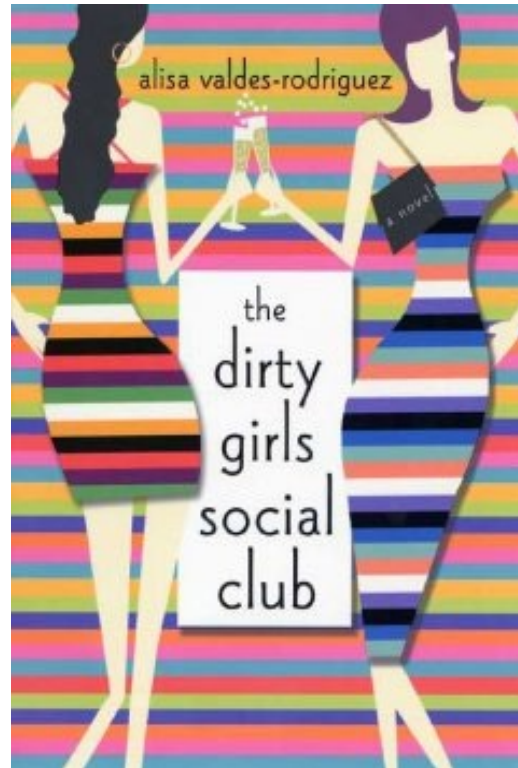
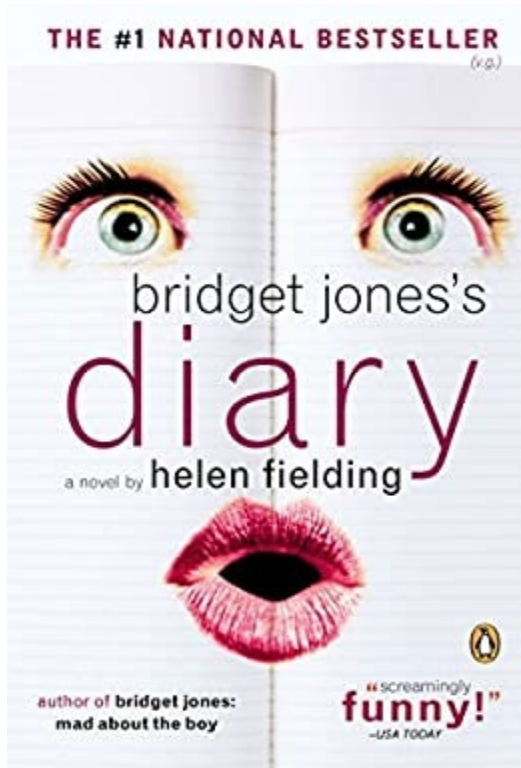




# Women's Fiction



# The Rise of Chick Lit

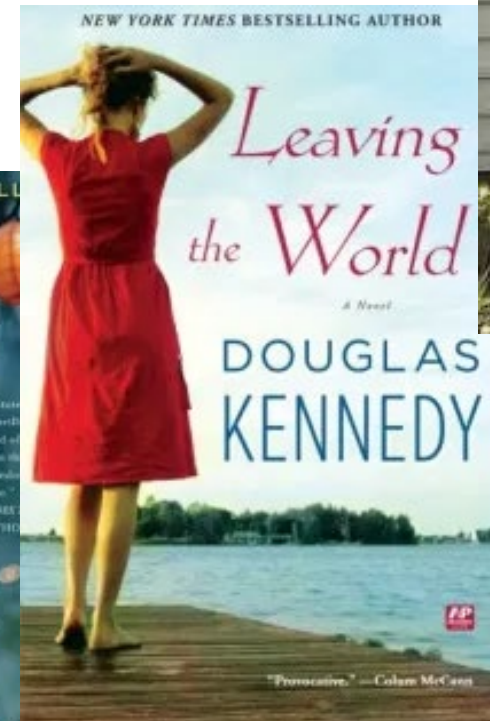
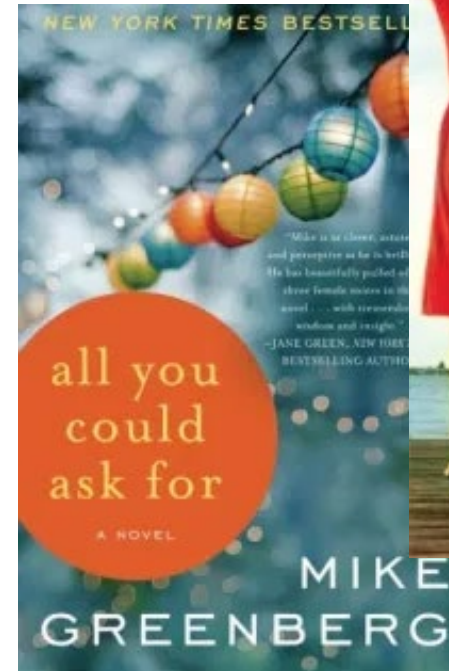




# Un-gendering Women's Lives and Relationships



- The main character (or characters) is a female, and the story is character-driven.
- The author is female—there are rarely exceptions to this rule.
- A woman's relationships are of highest plot importance
- The setting is usually contemporary. That isn't to say that some historical fiction has women's-fiction appeal, but if you are looking to slot a book into one category or another, historical fiction usually gets higher billing.
- Love and romance may be present but are not the heart of the story.



# Why read relationship fiction?

- Stories are full of emotions and connections
- Characters are recognizable and relatable
- Focus on the relationships between the characters
- Live other experiences
- Make rich book discussion fodder

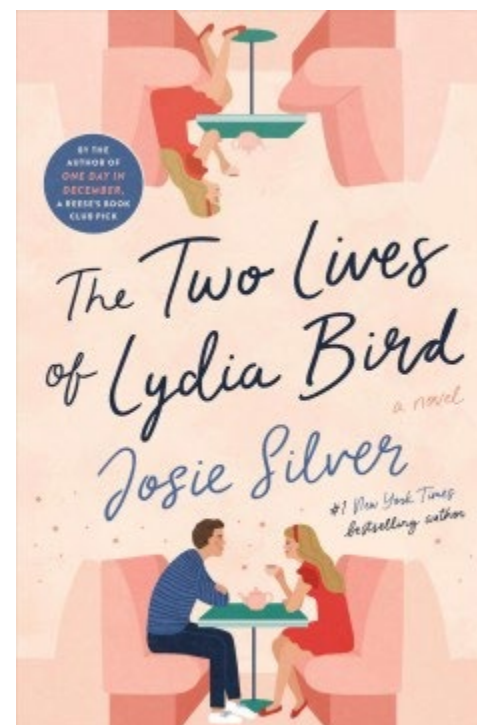
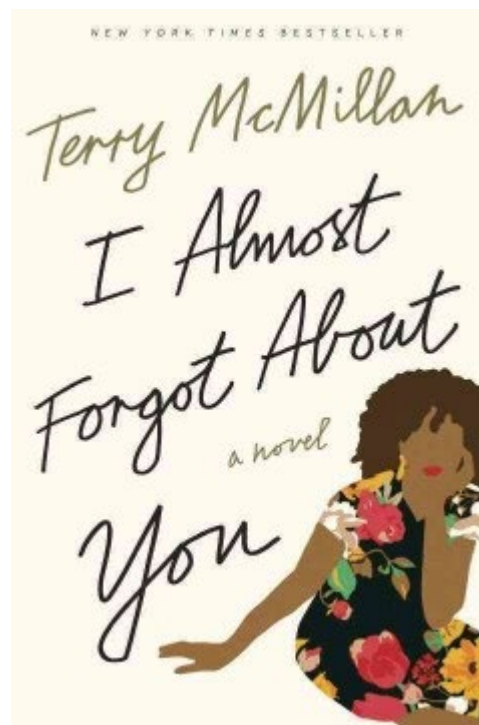
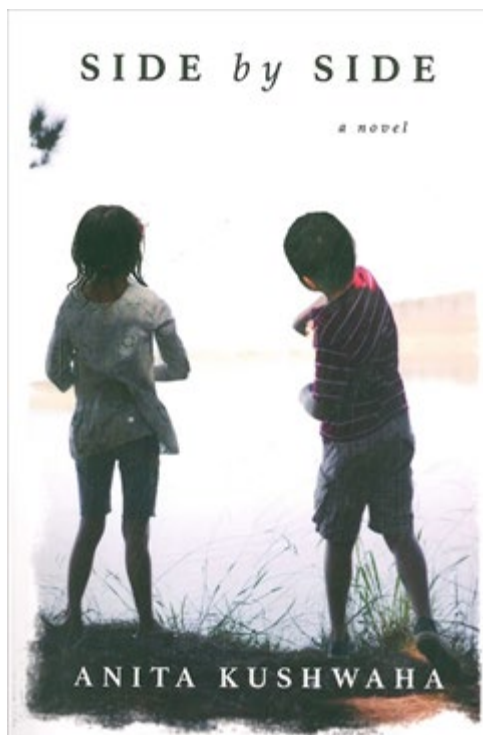


# Themes



# Bouncing back

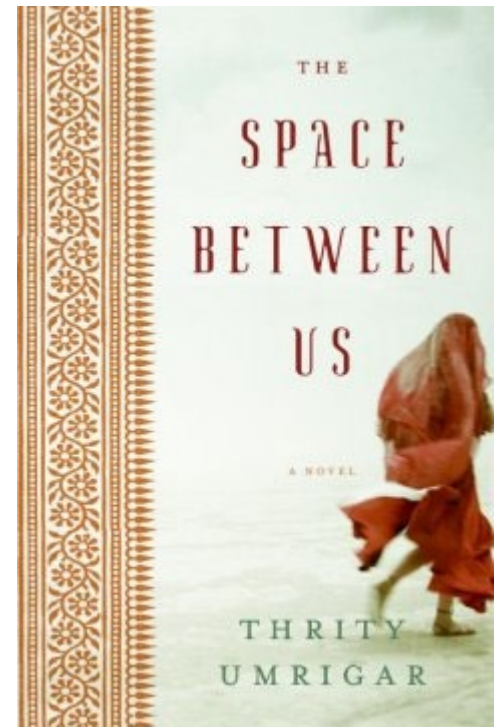
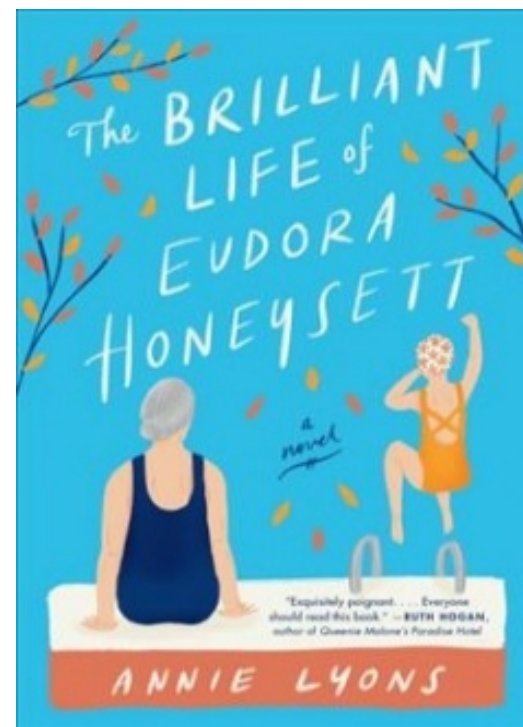
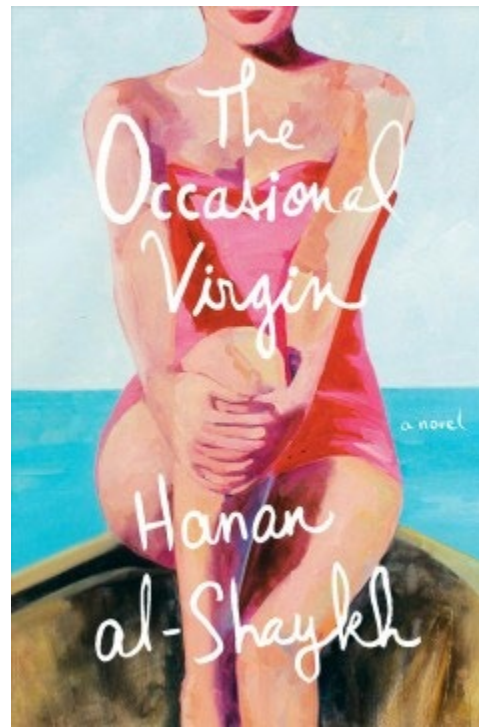
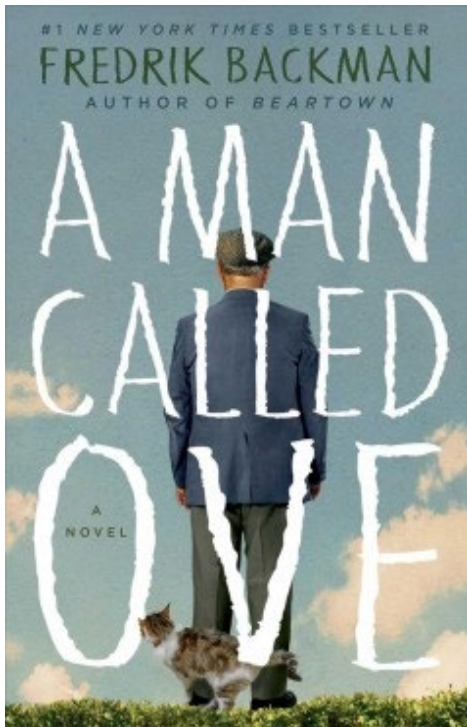
Characters in these stories get knocked down, but they get up again.





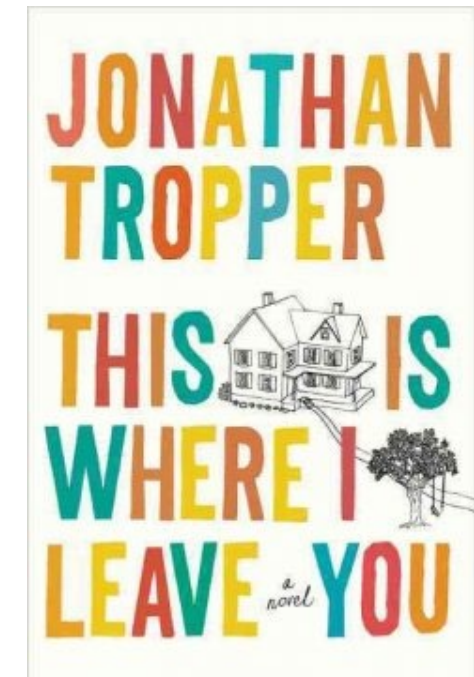
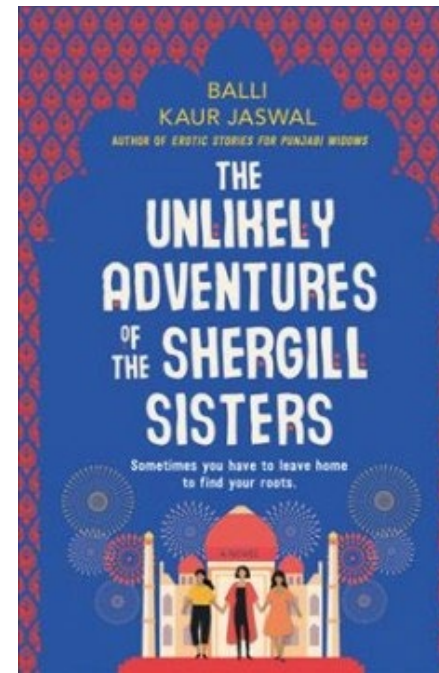
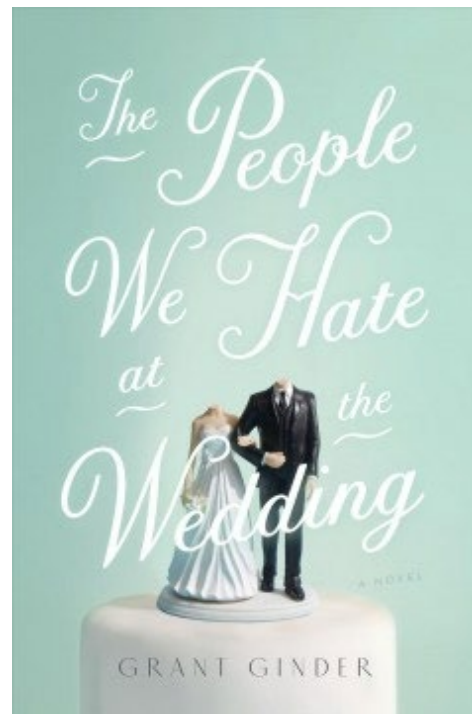
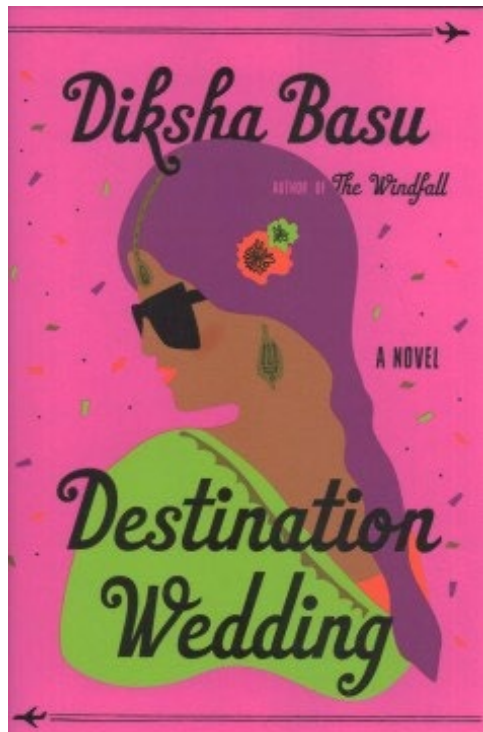
# Unlikely friendships

Despite their differences, these characters are the best of friends.



# Family gatherings

When families get together, personal histories collide.

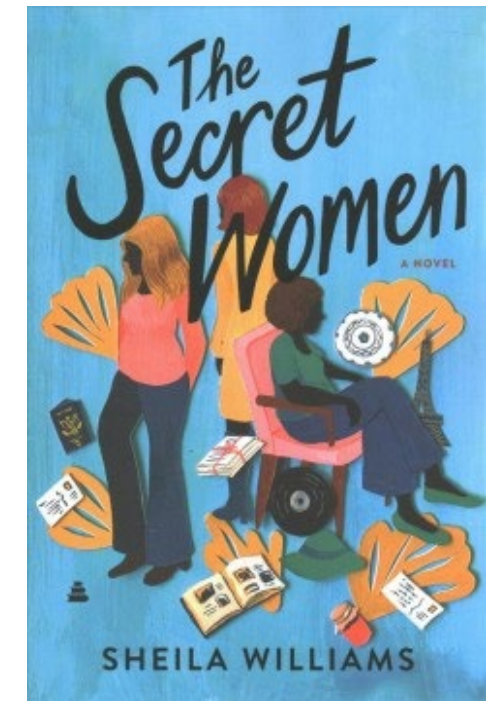
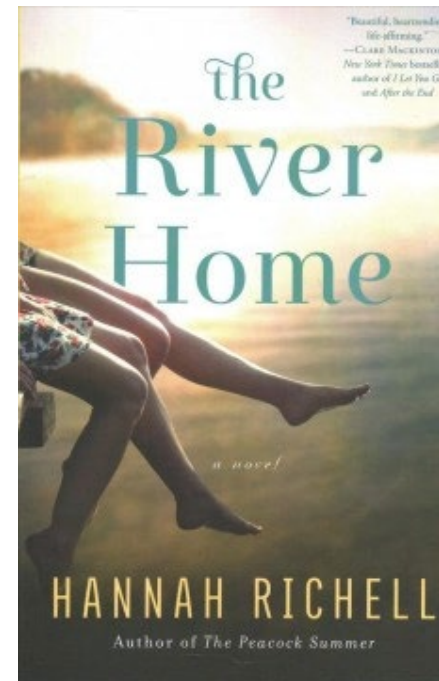
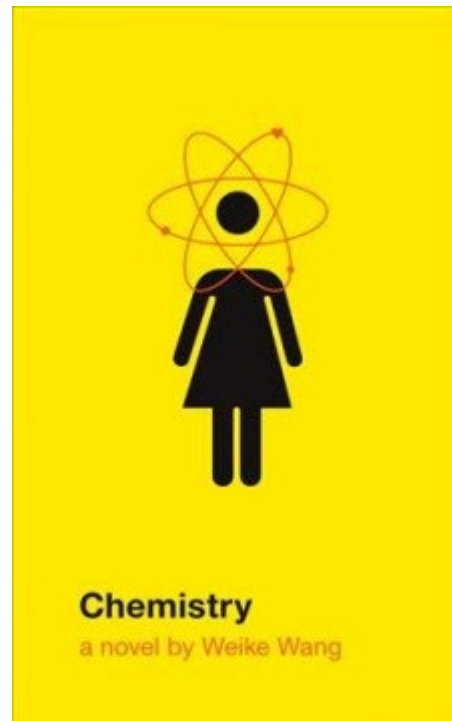
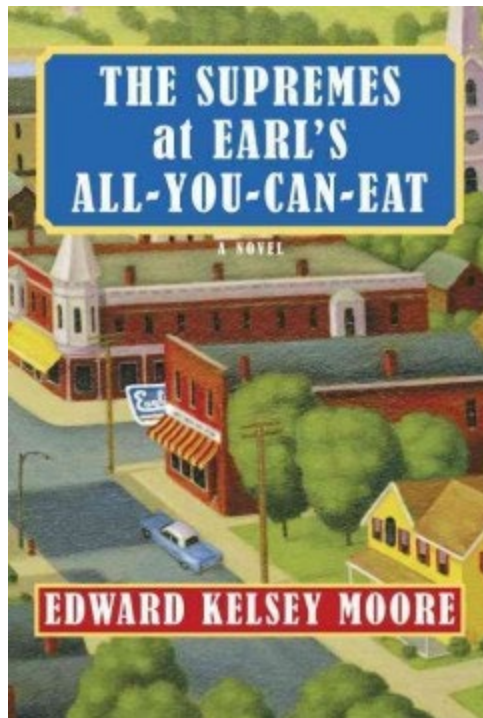




# Appeals

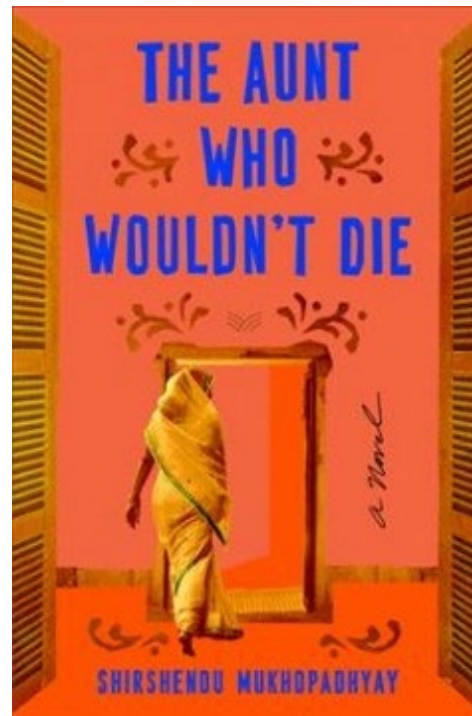
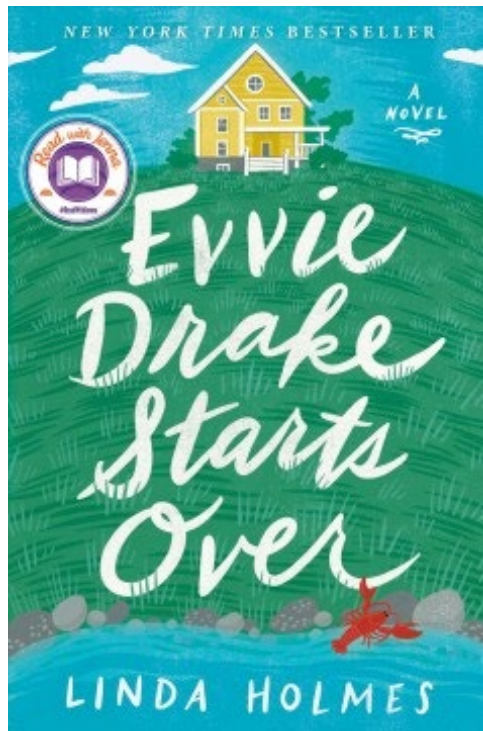


# Moving

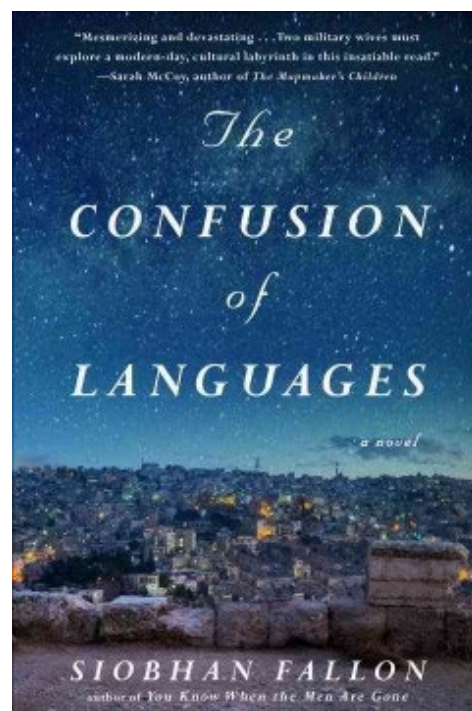
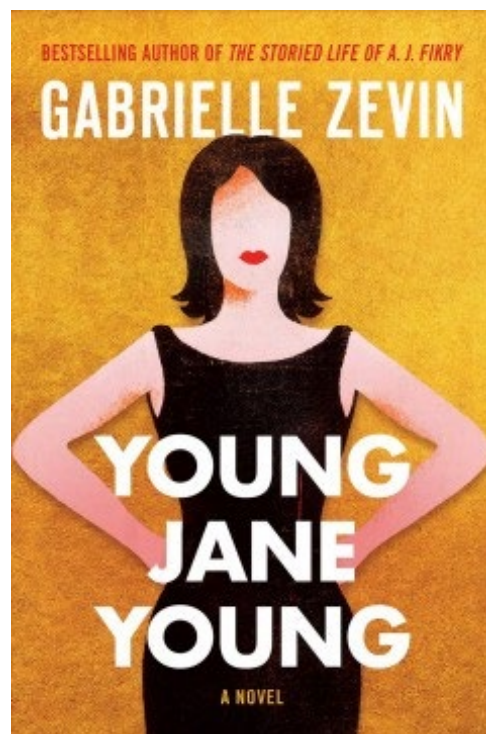




# Heartwarming or Upbeat



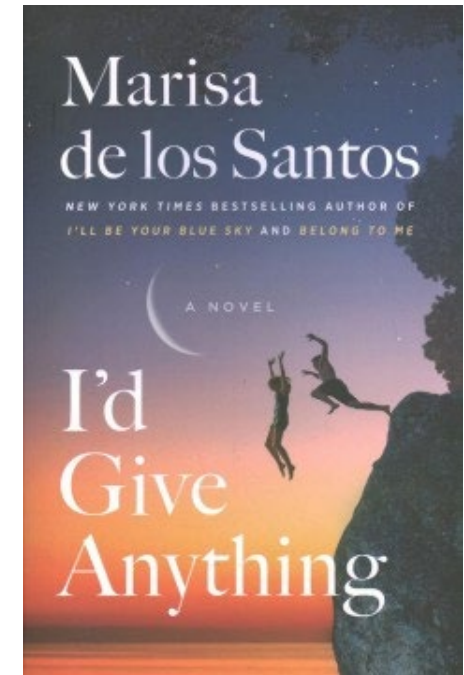
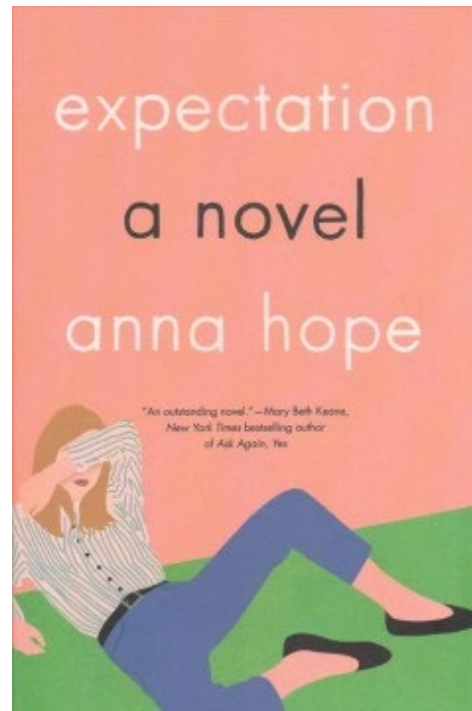
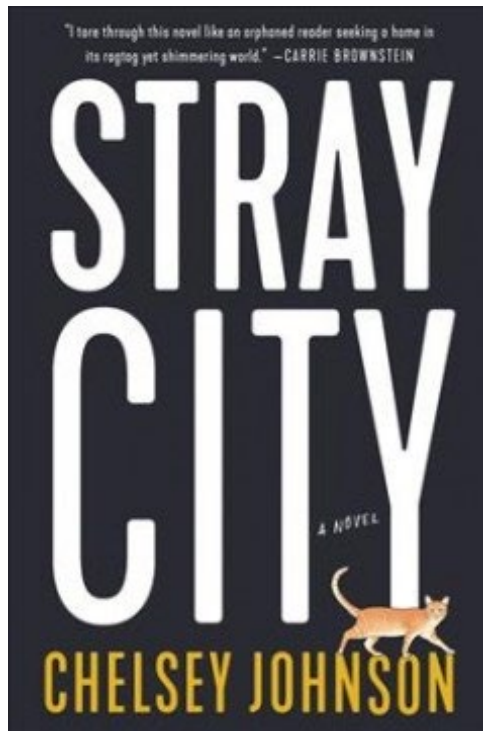
# Thought-provoking





# Characters

Relatable and sympathetic

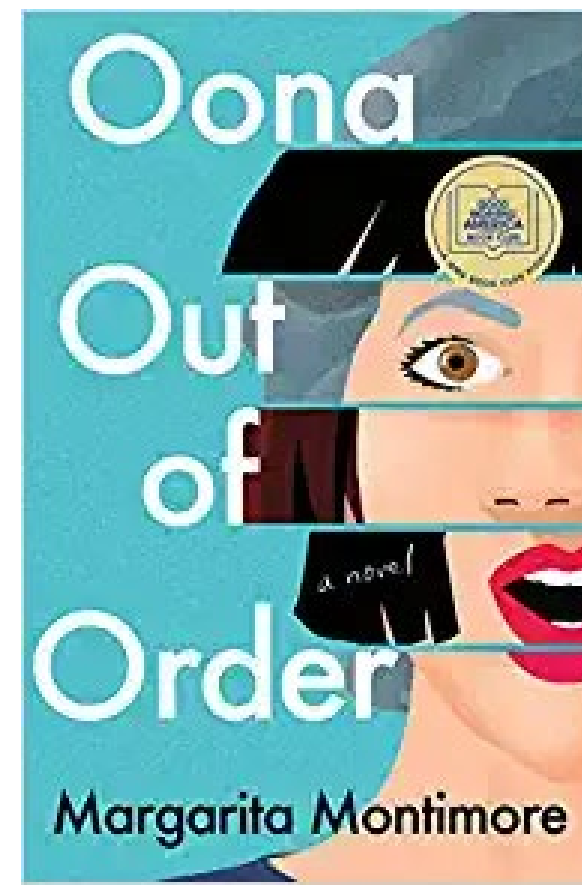
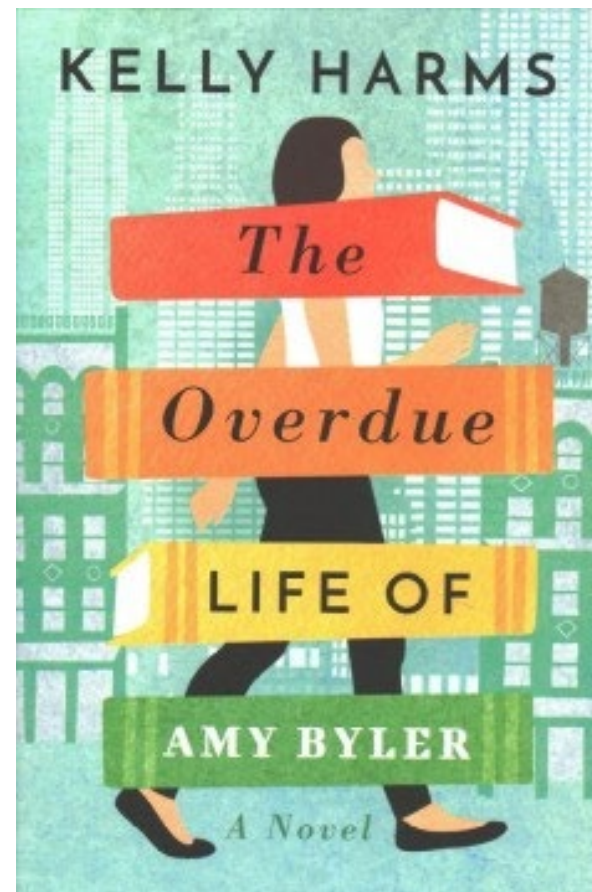
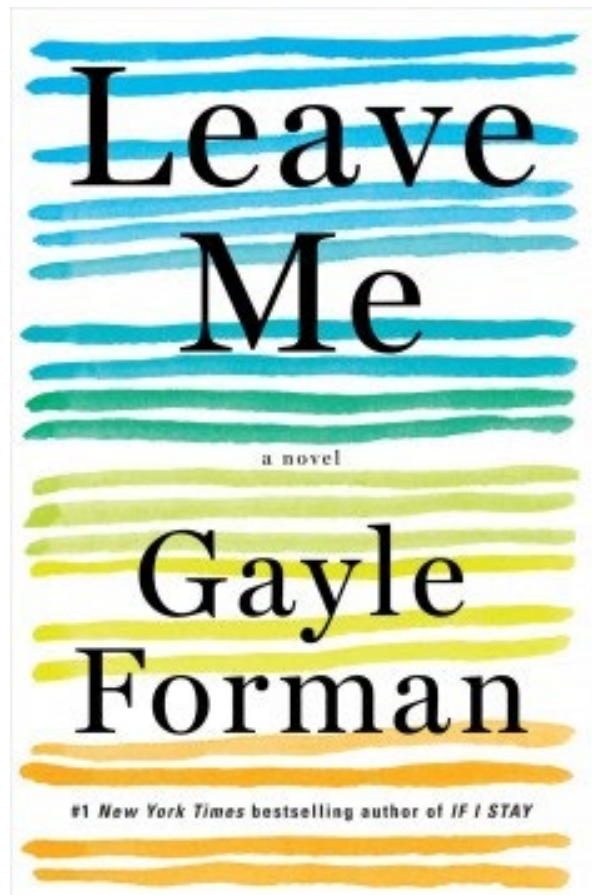


# trends



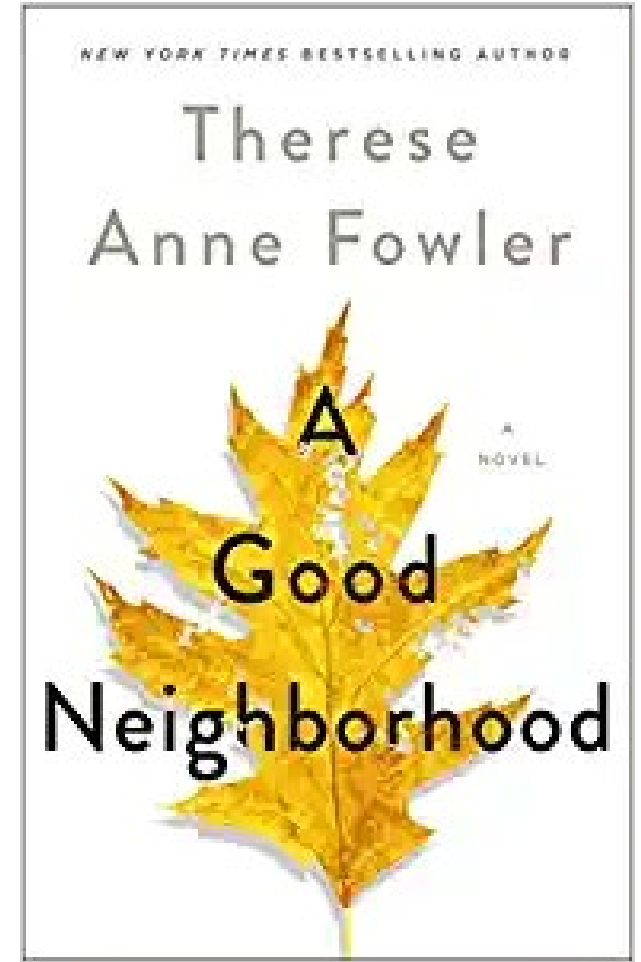
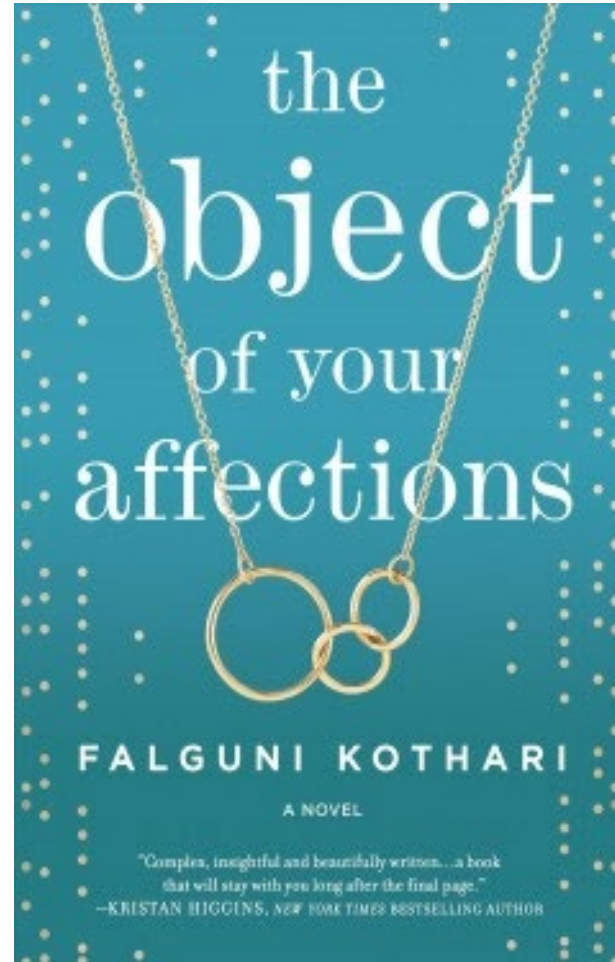
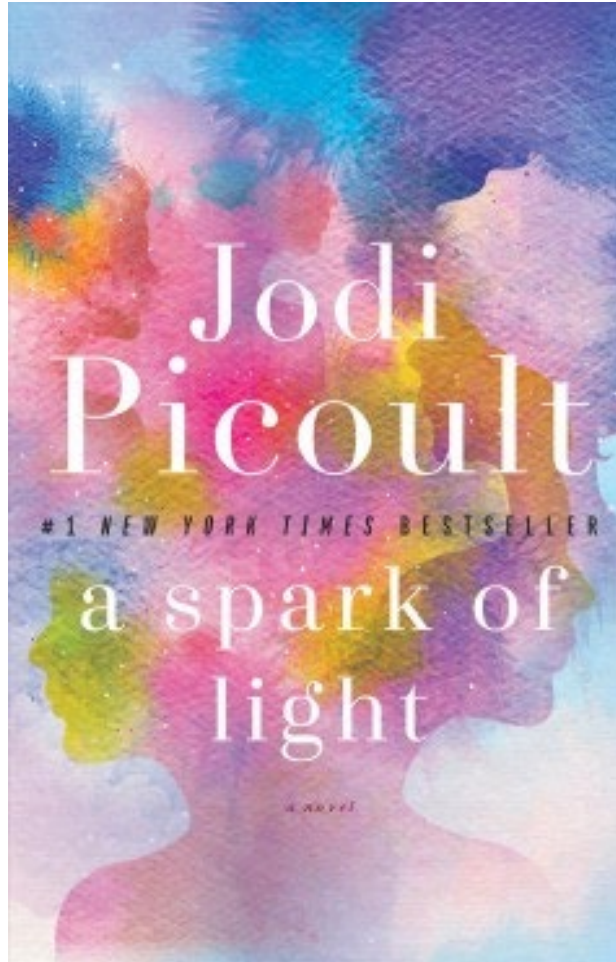
LOADING...

# What if/what could be?



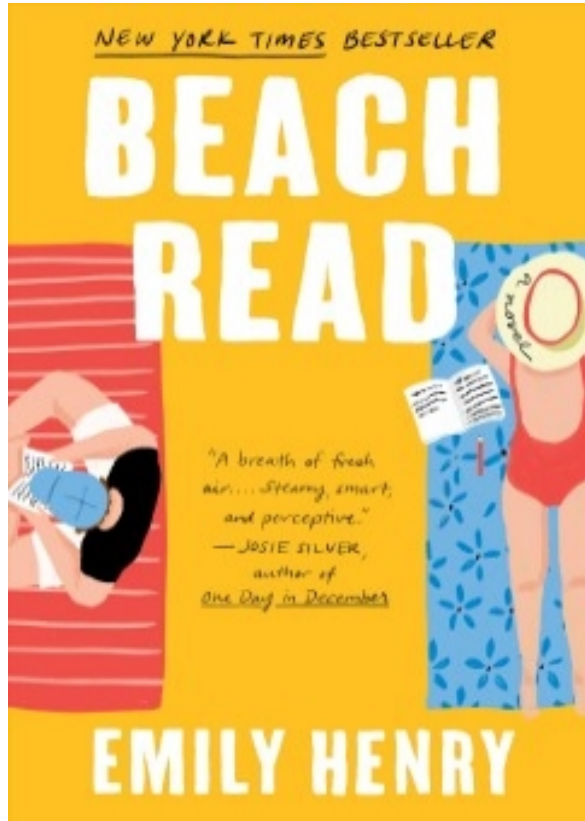
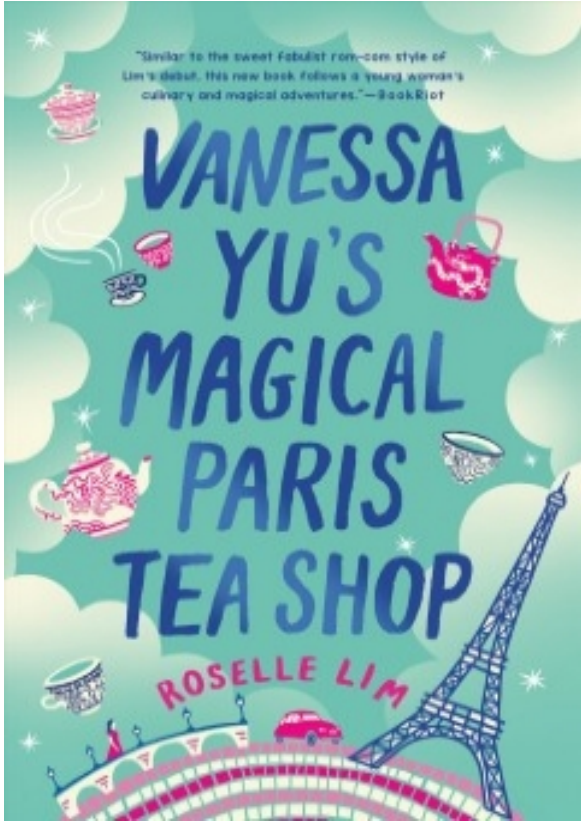
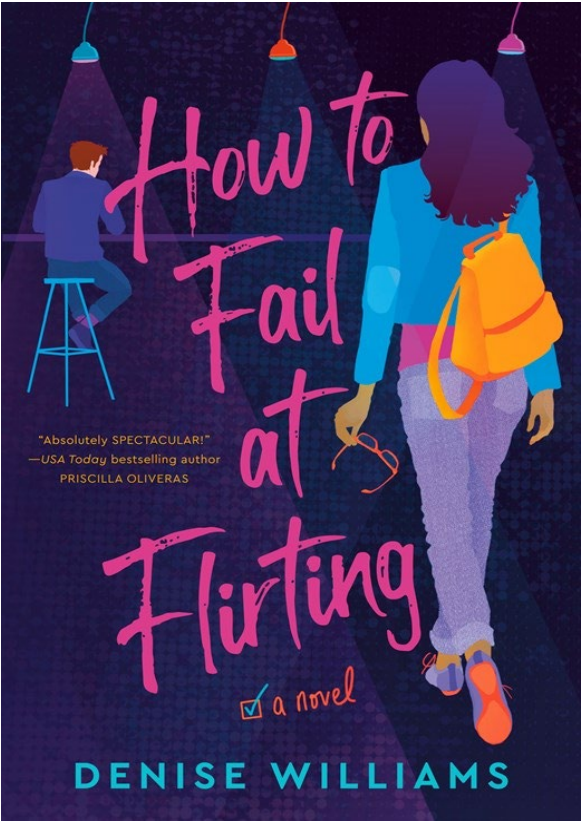


Issue-driven: “ripped from the headlines”



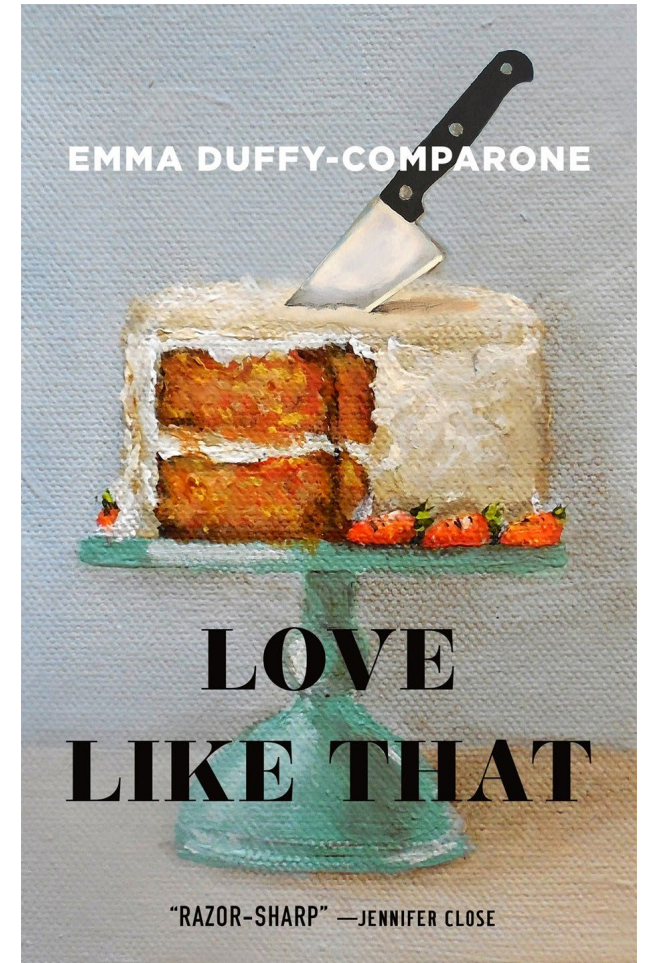
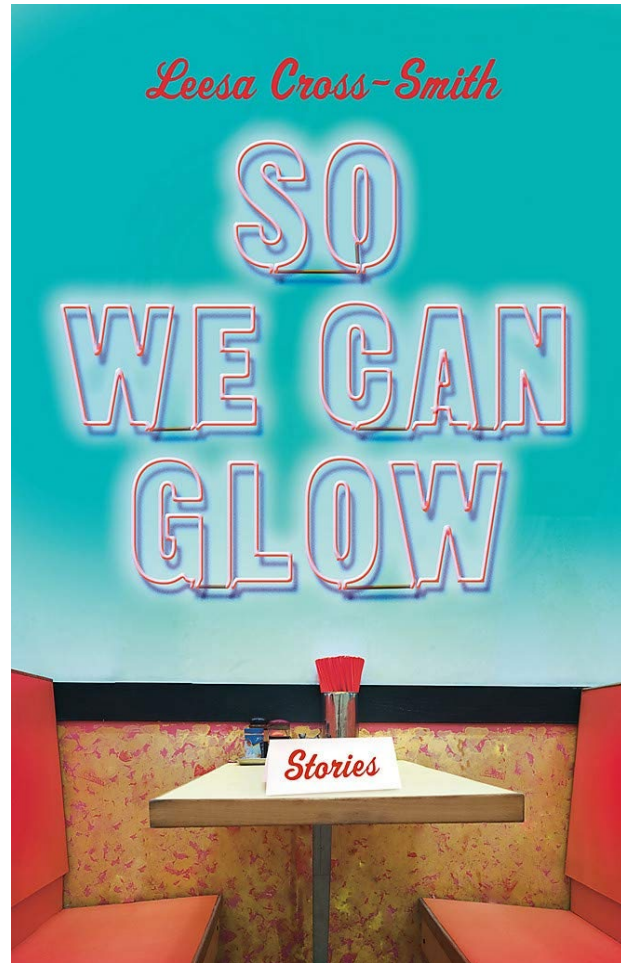
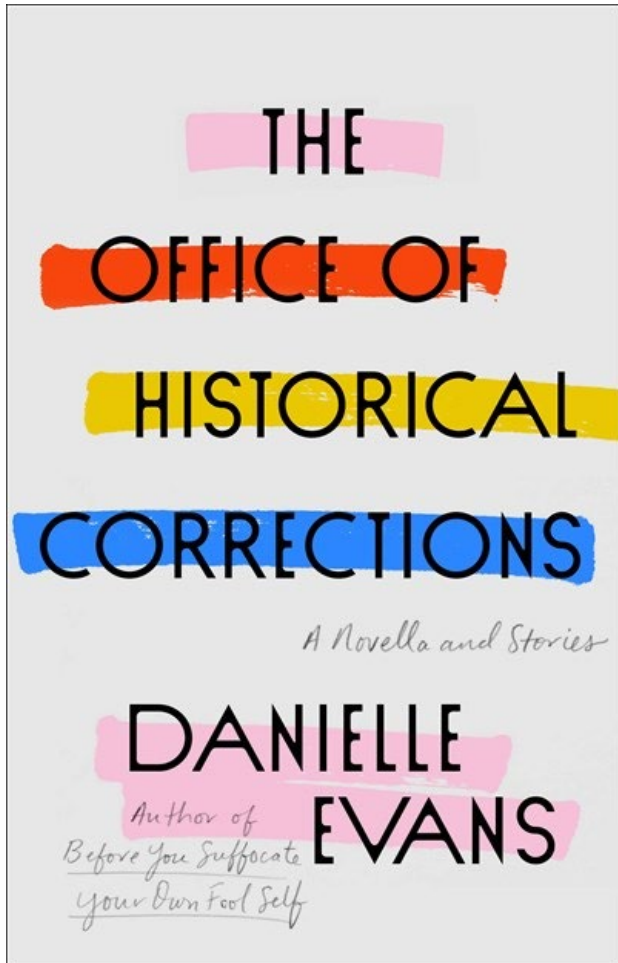


# Crossover with rom coms





# Essays/Short stories



# Other authors to know



Elin Hilderbrand



Kimberla Lawson Roby



Carol Anshaw



Anissa Gray



Claire Lombardo



JoJo Moyes



Elizabeth Berg



Carmen Rita



Helping  
readers





# Ask Questions!

**BIG MOOD.**  
Do you want  
to laugh?  
To cry?

**Compare to other  
books or movies?**

**No, the book  
jackets don't have  
to be pink with  
shoes or legs on  
the cover!**

**Similar  
authors?**

**Interested in any  
romance/sex in  
the story?**

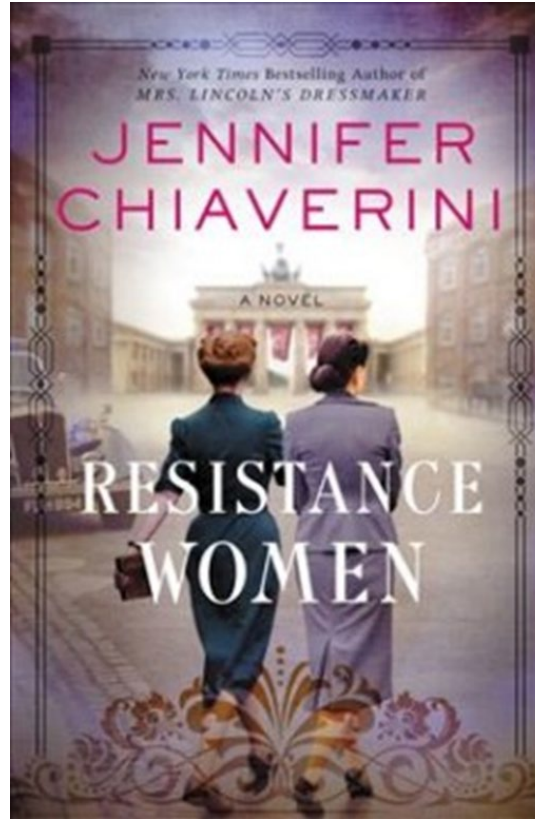
Try... a different genre!



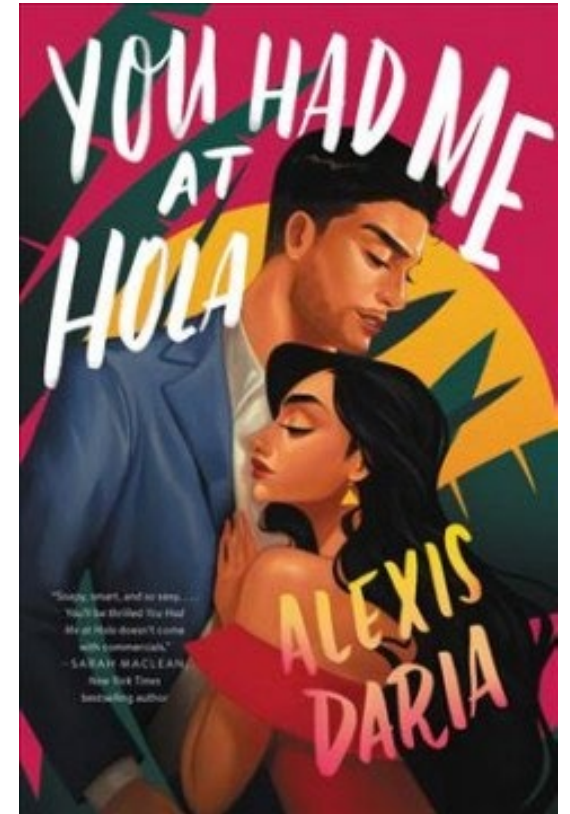
Contemporary fantasy



Literary fiction



Historical fiction



Romance

# Relationship Fiction Starter Pack

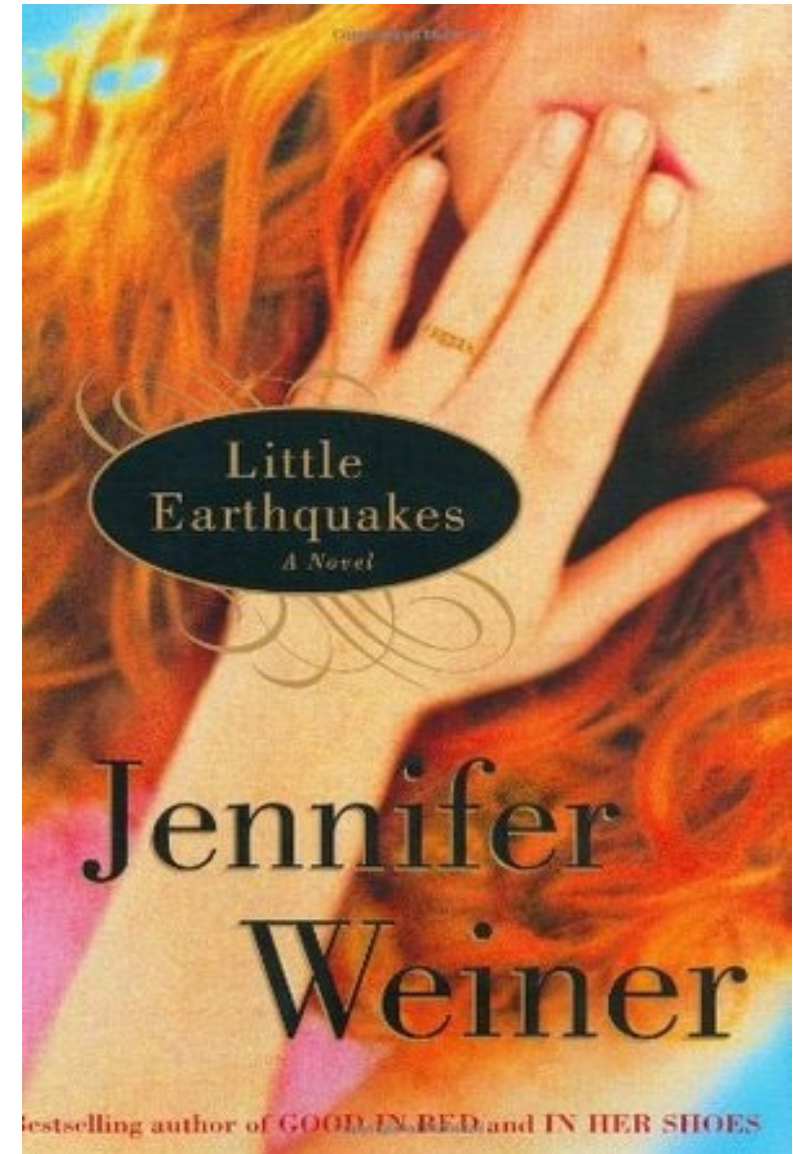
- Representative of genre
- Well-reviewed
- Wide appeal
- Available on audio





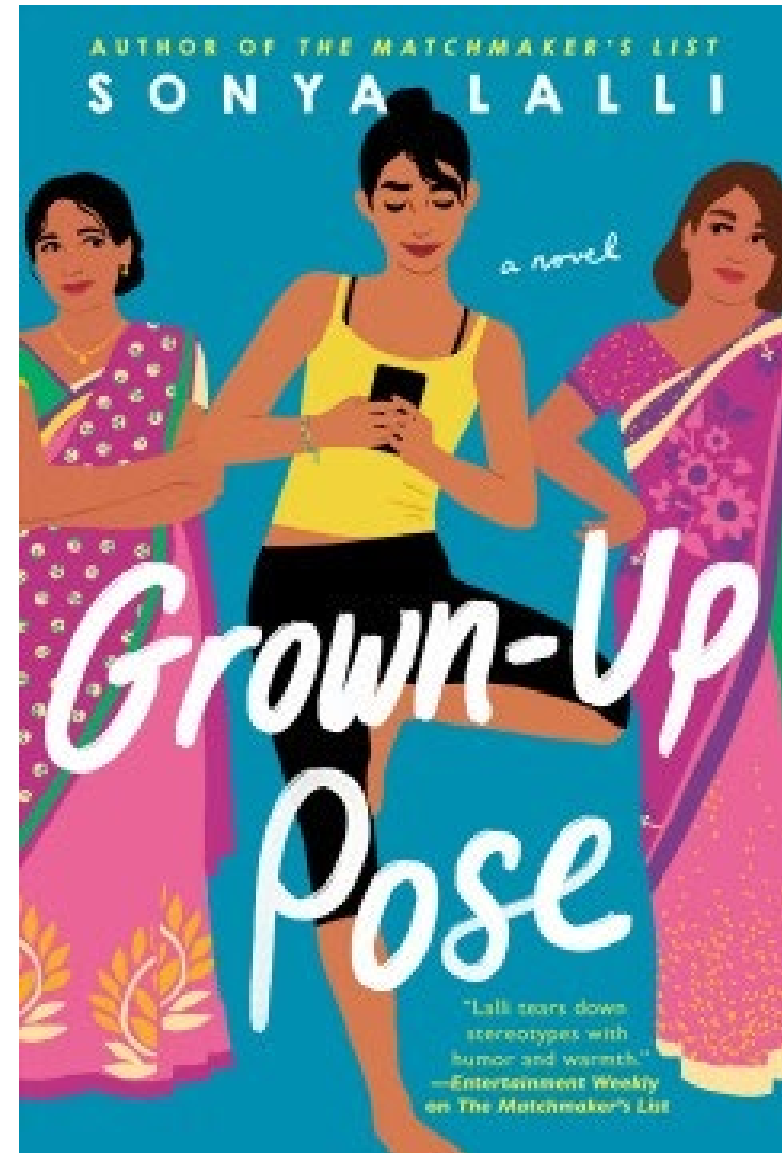
# *Little Earthquakes* by Jennifer Weiner (2006)

- “Ensemble” Fiction
- 4 women
- Unlikely friendships
- New moms



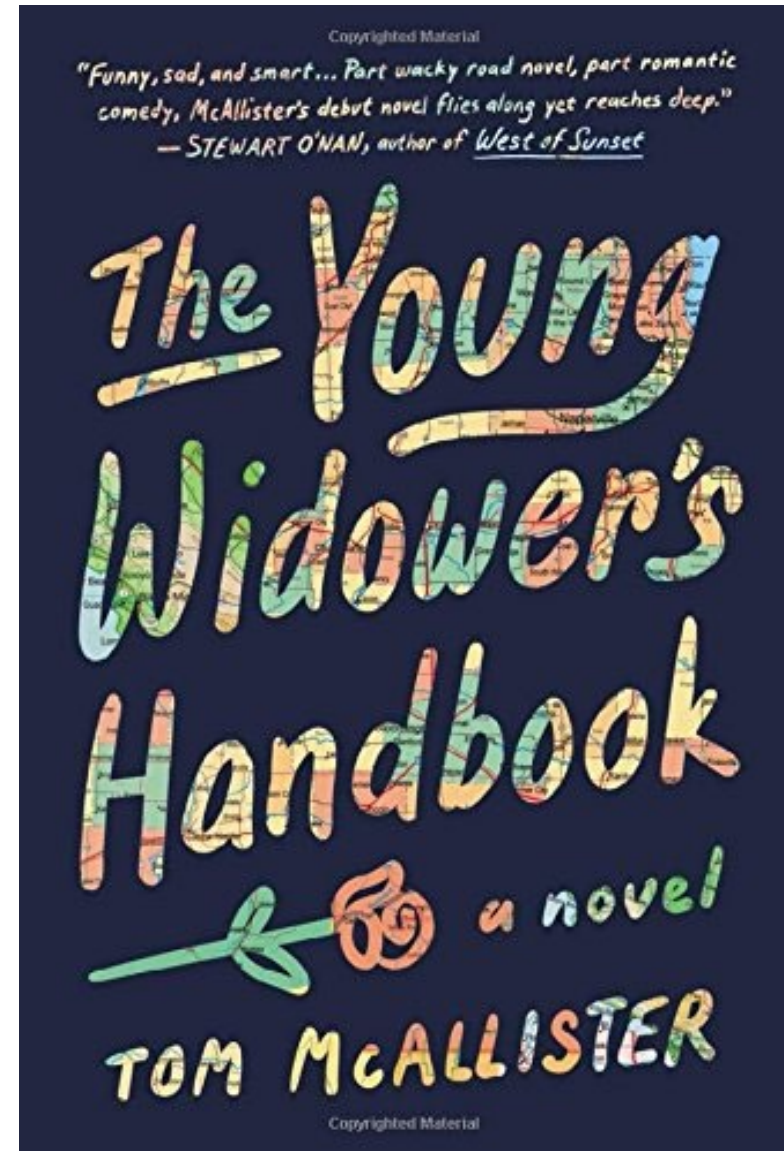
# *Grown-Up Pose* by Sonya Lalli (2020)

- Own voices
- Strong female protagonist
- Family expectations vs. personal desires
- Amusing & moving



# The Young Widower's Handbook by Tom McAllister (2017)

- Male Protagonist
- Search for Meaning
- Family Issues
- Humor





# *Things You Save in a Fire* by Katherine Center (2019)

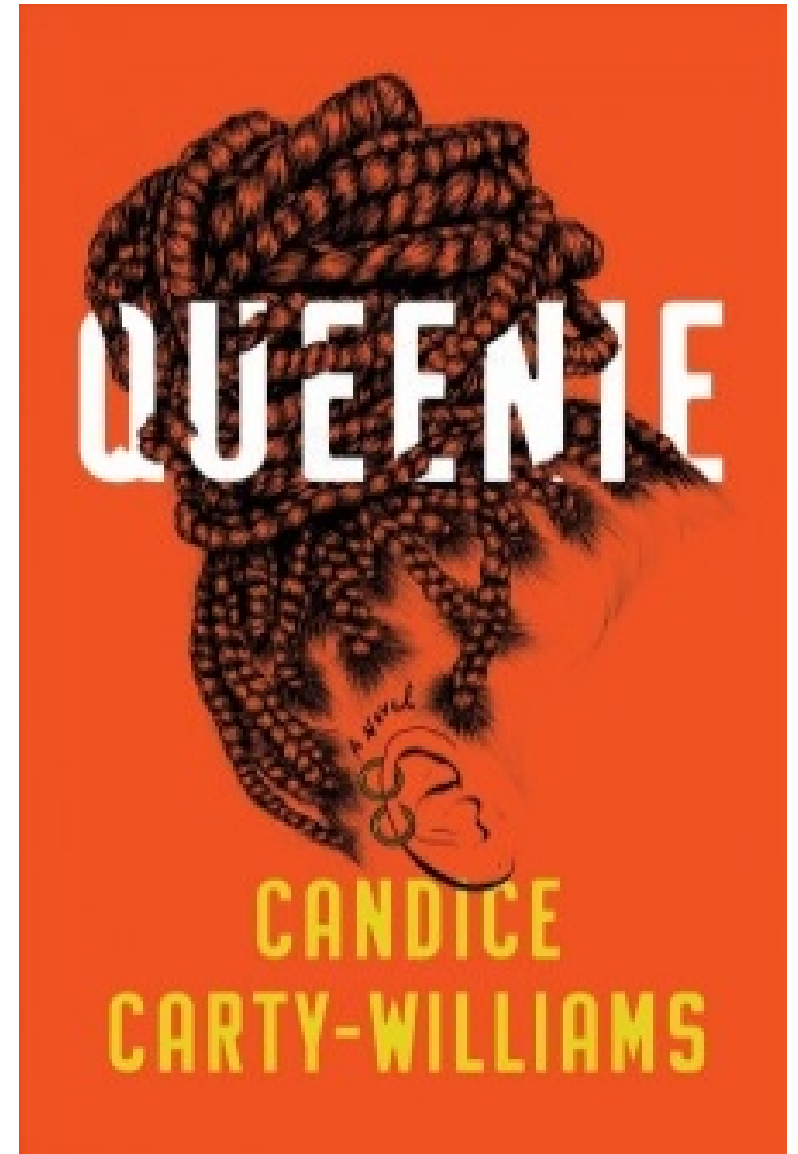
- Strong female character
- Likeable & flawed
- Romantic
- Witty
- Forgiveness, love, and loyalty



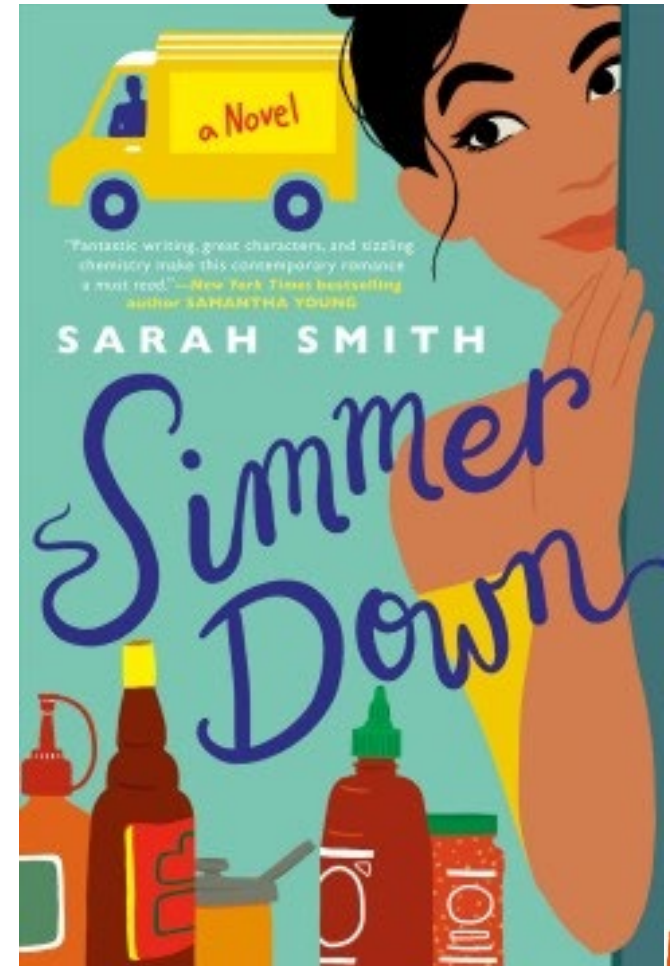
# Queenie

by Candice Carty-Williams  
(2019)

- Young, Jamaican-British woman
- Female Friendships
- Dating and Sex

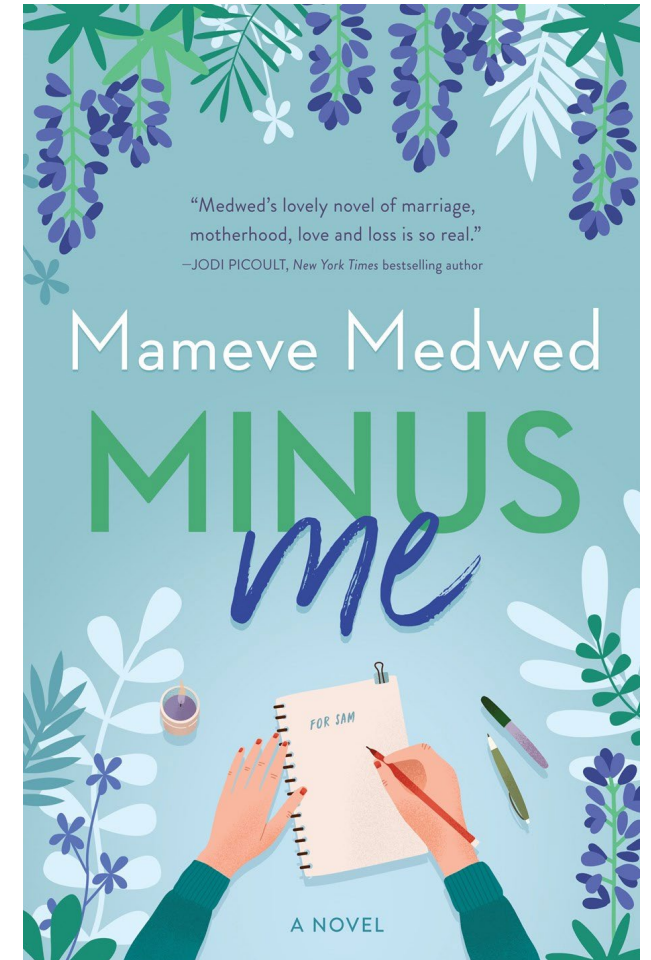
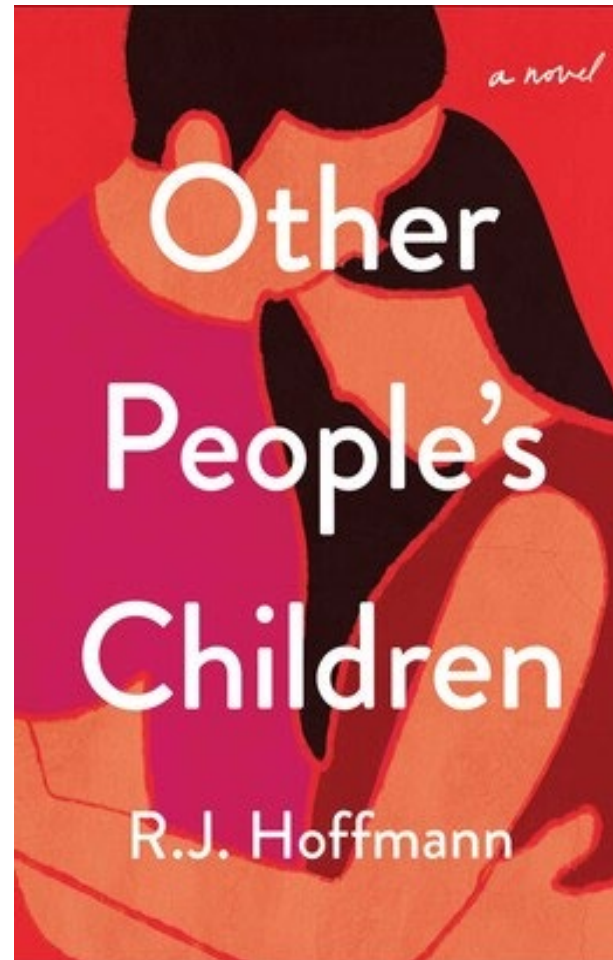
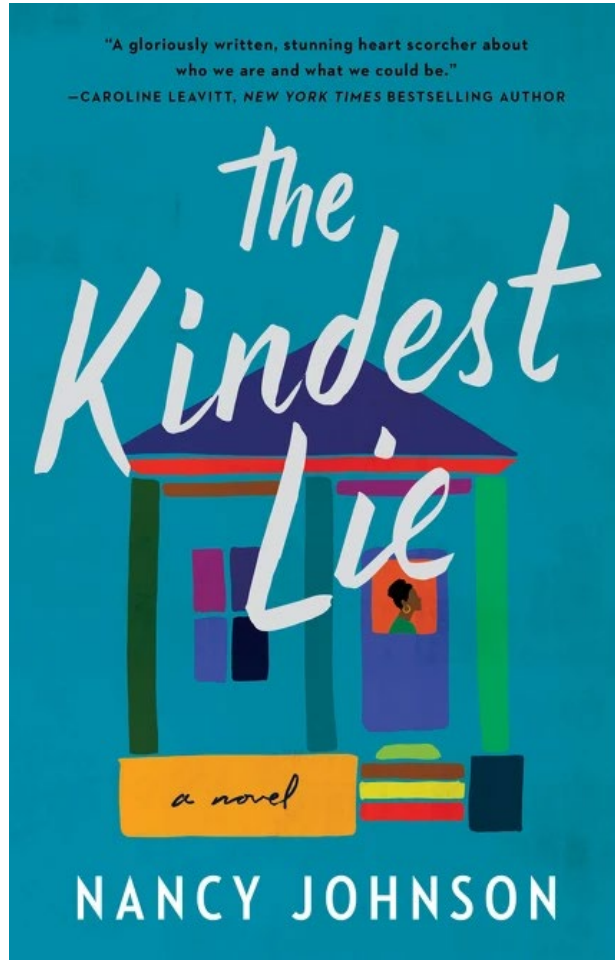


# Books Halle can't wait to read





# Books Rebecca can't wait to read





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# THANK YOU



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# FINDING RELATIONSHIP FICTION

IN NOVELIST



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