



The Next Chapter: October 2021 Book Recommendations

[*A Holly Jolly Diwali*](#) by Sonya Lalli

Berkley (October 5, 2021)

“Twenty-nine-year-old Niki Randhawa has always made practical decisions. Despite her love for music and art, she became an analyst for the stability. She's always stuck close to home in case her family needed her. And she's always dated guys that seem good on paper, rather than the ones who give her butterflies. When she's laid off, Niki realizes that practical hasn't exactly paid off for her. So for the first time ever, she throws caution to the wind and books a last-minute flight for her friend Diya's wedding. Niki arrives in India just in time to celebrate Diwali, the festival of lights, where she meets London musician Sameer Mukherji. Maybe it's the splendor of Mumbai or the magic of the holiday season, but Niki is immediately drawn to Sam. At the wedding, the champagne flows and their flirtatious banter makes it clear that the attraction is mutual. When Niki and Sam join Diya, her husband and their friends on a group honeymoon, their connection grows deeper. Free-spirited Sam helps Niki get in touch with her passionate and creative side, and with her Indian roots. When she gets a new job offer back home, Niki must decide what she wants out of the next chapter of her life—to cling to the straight and narrow like always, or to take a leap of faith and live the kind of bold life the old Niki never would have dreamed of.”

[*An Elderly Lady Must Not Be Crossed*](#) by Helene Tursten (Author), Marlaine Delargy (Translator)

Soho Crime (October 5, 2021)

“Don't let her age fool you. Maud may be nearly ninety, but if you cross her, this elderly lady is more sinister than sweet. Just when things have finally cooled down for 88-year-old Maud after the disturbing discovery of a dead body in her apartment in Gothenburg, a couple of detectives return to her doorstep. Though Maud dodges their questions with the skill of an Olympic gymnast a fifth of her age, she wonders if suspicion has fallen on her, little old lady that she is. The truth is, ever since Maud was a girl, death has seemed to follow her. In these six interlocking stories, memories of unfortunate incidents from Maud's past keep bubbling to the surface. Meanwhile, certain Problems in the present require immediate attention. Luckily, Maud is no stranger to taking matters into her own hands . . . even if it means she has to get a little blood on them in the process.”

[*Christmas by the Book*](#) by Anne Marie Ryan

G.P. Putnam's Sons (October 12, 2021)

“In small-town England, two booksellers facing tough times decide to spread some Christmas cheer through the magic of anonymous book deliveries in this uplifting holiday tale for book lovers everywhere. Nora and her husband, Simon, have run the beautiful oak-beamed book shop in their small British village for thirty years. But times are tough and the shop is under threat of closure--this Christmas season will really decide their fate. When an elderly man visits the store and buys the one book they've never been able to sell, saying it's the perfect gift for his sick grandson, it gives Nora an idea. She and Simon will send out books to those feeling down this Christmas. Maybe they can't save

their bookstore, but at least they'll have one final chance to lift people's spirits through the power of reading. After gathering nominations online, Nora and Simon quietly deliver books to six residents of the village in need of some festive cheer, including a single dad of twins who is working hard to make ends meet, a teenage boy grieving for his big sister, a local Member of Parliament who is battling depression, and a teacher who's newly retired and living on her own. As the town prepares for a white Christmas, the books begin to give the recipients hope, one by one. But with the future of the bookshop still up in the air, Nora and Simon will need a Christmas miracle--or perhaps a little help from the people whose lives they've touched--to find a happy ending of their own....”

[Forever Young: A Memoir](#) by Hayley Mills

Grand Central Publishing (September 7, 2021)

“Iconic actress Hayley Mills shares personal memories from her storied childhood, growing up in a famous acting family and becoming a Disney child star, trying to grow up in a world that wanted her to stay forever young. The daughter of acclaimed British actor Sir John Mills was still a preteen when she began her acting career and was quickly thrust into the spotlight. Under the wing of Walt Disney himself, Hayley Mills was transformed into one of the biggest child starlets of the 1960s through her iconic roles in Pollyanna, The Parent Trap, and many more. She became one of only twelve actors in history to be bestowed with the Academy Juvenile Award, presented at the Oscars by its first recipient, Shirley Temple, and went on to win a number of awards including a Golden Globe, multiple BAFTAs, and a Disney Legacy Award.”

[Cackle](#) by Rachel Harrison

Berkley (October 5, 2021)

“All her life, Annie has played it nice and safe. After being unceremoniously dumped by her longtime boyfriend, Annie seeks a fresh start. She accepts a teaching position that moves her from Manhattan to a small village upstate. She’s stunned by how perfect and picturesque the town is. The people are all friendly and warm. Her new apartment is dreamy too, minus the oddly persistent spider infestation. Then Annie meets Sophie. Beautiful, charming, magnetic Sophie, who takes a special interest in Annie, who wants to be her friend. More importantly, she wants Annie to stop apologizing and start living for herself. That’s how Sophie lives. Annie can’t help but gravitate toward the self-possessed Sophie, wanting to spend more and more time with her, despite the fact that the rest of the townsfolk seem...a little afraid of her. And like, okay. There are some things. Sophie’s appearance is uncanny and ageless, her mansion in the middle of the woods feels a little unearthly, and she does seem to wield a certain power...but she couldn’t be...could she?”

***Miss Eliza's English Kitchen: A Novel of Victorian Cookery and Friendship* by Annabel Abbs**

William Morrow Paperbacks (October 26, 2021)

“Before Mrs. Beeton and well before Julia Child, there was Eliza Acton, who changed the course of cookery writing forever. England, 1835. London is awash with thrilling new ingredients, from rare spices to exotic fruits. But no one knows how to use them. When Eliza Acton is told by her publisher to write a cookery book instead of the poetry she loves, she refuses—until her bankrupt father is forced to flee the country. As a woman, Eliza has few options. Although she’s never set foot in a kitchen, she begins collecting recipes and teaching herself to cook. Much to her surprise she discovers a talent – and a passion – for the culinary arts. Eliza hires young, destitute Ann Kirby to assist her. As they cook together, Ann learns about poetry, love, and ambition. The two develop a radical friendship, breaking the

boundaries of class while creating new ways of writing recipes. But when Ann discovers a secret in Eliza's past, and finds a voice of her own, their friendship starts to fray. Based on the true story of the first modern cookery writer, Miss Eliza's English Kitchen is a spellbinding novel about female friendship, the struggle for independence, and the transcendent pleasures and solace of food."

[Taste: My Life Through Food](#) by Stanley Tucci

Gallery Books (October 5, 2021)

"From award-winning actor and food obsessive Stanley Tucci comes an intimate and charming memoir of life in and out of the kitchen. Stanley Tucci grew up in an Italian American family that spent every night around the kitchen table. He shared the magic of those meals with us in *The Tucci Cookbook* and *The Tucci Table*, and now he takes us beyond the savory recipes and into the compelling stories behind them. *Taste* is a reflection on the intersection of food and life, filled with anecdotes about his growing up in Westchester, New York; preparing for and shooting the foodie films *Big Night* and *Julie & Julia*; falling in love over dinner; and teaming up with his wife to create meals for a multitude of children. Each morsel of this gastronomic journey through good times and bad, five-star meals and burned dishes, is as heartfelt and delicious as the last. Written with Stanley's signature wry humor, *Taste* is for fans of Bill Buford, Gabrielle Hamilton, and Ruth Reichl—and anyone who knows the power of a home-cooked meal."

[The Apollo Murders](#) by Colonel Chris Hadfield

Mulholland Books (October 12, 2021)

An exceptional debut thriller and "exciting journey" into the dark heart of the Cold War and the space race from *New York Times* bestselling author and astronaut Chris Hadfield (Andy Weir, author of *The Martian* and *Project Hail Mary*). 1973: a final, top-secret mission to the Moon. Three astronauts in a tiny spaceship, a quarter million miles from home. A quarter million miles from help. NASA is about to launch Apollo 18. While the mission has been billed as a scientific one, flight controller Kazimieras "Kaz" Zemeckis knows there is a darker objective. Intelligence has discovered a secret Soviet space station spying on America, and Apollo 18 may be the only chance to stop it. But even as Kaz races to keep the NASA crew one step ahead of their Russian rivals, a deadly accident reveals that not everyone involved is quite who they were thought to be. With political stakes stretched to the breaking point, the White House and the Kremlin can only watch as their astronauts collide on the lunar surface, far beyond the reach of law or rescue. Full of the fascinating technical detail that fans of *The Martian* loved, and reminiscent of the thrilling claustrophobia, twists, and tension of *The Hunt for Red October*, *The Apollo Murders* is a high-stakes thriller unlike any other. Chris Hadfield captures the fierce G-forces of launch, the frozen loneliness of space, and the fear of holding on to the outside of a spacecraft orbiting the Earth at 17,000 miles per hour as only someone who has experienced all of these things in real life can. Strap in and count down for the ride of a lifetime."

[The Ex Hex](#) by Erin Sterling

Avon (September 1, 2021)

"New York Times bestselling author Rachel Hawkins, writing as Erin Sterling, casts a spell with a spine-tingling romance full of wishes, witches, and hexes gone wrong. Nine years ago, Vivienne Jones nursed her broken heart like any young witch would: vodka, weepy music, bubble baths...and a curse on the horrible boyfriend. Sure, Vivi knows she shouldn't use her magic this way, but with only an "orchard hayride" scented candle on hand, she isn't worried it will cause him anything more than a bad hair day

or two. That is until Rhys Penhallow, descendent of the town's ancestors, breaker of hearts, and annoyingly just as gorgeous as he always was, returns to Graves Glen, Georgia. What should be a quick trip to recharge the town's ley lines and make an appearance at the annual fall festival turns disastrously wrong. With one calamity after another striking Rhys, Vivi realizes her silly little Ex Hex may not have been so harmless after all. Suddenly, Graves Glen is under attack from murderous wind-up toys, a pissed off ghost, and a talking cat with some interesting things to say. Vivi and Rhys have to ignore their off the charts chemistry to work together to save the town and find a way to break the break-up curse before it's too late."

***The Gods of Green County: A Novel* by Mary Elizabeth Pope Blair (October 5, 2021)**

"Coralee Harper struggles for justice for her dead brother and her own sanity in Depression-era rural Arkansas. In 1926 in rural Green County, Arkansas, where cotton and poverty reign, young Coralee Harper hopes for a family and a place in her community, but when her brother Buddy is killed by a powerful sheriff, she can't recover from his death or the injustice of his loss. When she begins to spot her dead brother around town, she wonders—is she clairvoyant, mistaken, or is she losing her mind? What Coralee can't fathom is that there are forces at work that threaten her and the very fabric of the town: Leroy Harrison, a newly minted, ambitious lawyer who makes a horrible mistake, landing him a judgeship and a guilty conscience for life; an evangelical preacher and his flock of snake-handling parishioners; the women of the town who, along with Coralee's own mother, make up their own kind of jury for Coralee's behavior; Sheriff Wiley Slocum who rules the entire field, harboring dark secrets of his own; and finally, Coralee's husband Earl, who tries to balance his work at the cotton gin with his fight for family and Coralee's life. When Coralee ends up in a sanity hearing before Judge Leroy Harrison, the judge must decide both Coralee's fate and his own. The chain of events following his decision draws him more deeply into the sheriff's far-reaching sphere of influence, and reveals the destructive nature of power, even—and especially—his own."

***The Holiday Swap* by Maggie Knox
G.P. Putnam's Sons (October 5, 2021)**

"All they want for Christmas is a different life. When chef Charlie Goodwin gets hit on the head on the L.A. set of her reality baking show, she loses a lot more than consciousness; she also loses her ability to taste and smell—both critical to her success as show judge. Meanwhile, Charlie's identical twin, Cass, is frantically trying to hold her own life together back in their quaint mountain hometown while running the family's bustling bakery and dealing with her ex, who won't get the memo that they're over. With only days until Christmas, a desperate Charlie asks Cass to do something they haven't done since they were kids: switch places. Looking for her own escape from reality, Cass agrees. But temporarily trading lives proves more complicated than they imagined, especially when rugged firefighter Jake Greenman and gorgeous physician assistant Miguel Rodriguez are thrown into the mix. Will the twins' identity swap be a recipe for disaster, or does it have all the right ingredients for getting their lives back on track?"

**[*The Night of Many Endings*](#) by Melissa Payne
Lake Union Publishing (October 19, 2021)**

"Orphaned at a young age and witness to her brother's decline into addiction, Nora Martinez has every excuse to question the fairness of life. Instead, the openhearted librarian in the small Colorado community of Silver Ridge sees only promise. She holds on to the hope that she'll be reunited with her

missing brother and does what she can at the town library. It's her home away from home, but it's also a sanctuary for others who, like her brother, could use a second chance. There's Marlene, an elderly loner who believes that, apart from her husband, there's little good left in the world; Jasmine, a troubled teen; Lewis, a homeless man with lost hope and one last wish; and Vlado, the security guard who loves a good book and, from afar, Nora. As a winter storm buries Silver Ridge, this collection of lonely hearts takes shelter in the library. They'll discover more about each other, and themselves, than they ever knew—and Nora will be forced to question her brother's disappearance in ways she never could have imagined. No matter how stranded in life they feel, this fateful night could be the new beginning they didn't think was possible."

[The Orphan Witch: A Novel](#) by Paige Crutcher

St. Martin's Griffin (September 28, 2021)

"A deeper magic. A stronger curse. A family lost...and found. Persephone May has been alone her entire life. Abandoned as an infant and dragged through the foster care system, she wants nothing more than to belong somewhere. To someone. However, Persephone is as strange as she is lonely. Unexplainable things happen when she's around—changes in weather, inanimate objects taking flight—and those who seek to bring her into their family quickly cast her out. To cope, she never gets attached, never makes friends. And she certainly never dates. Working odd jobs and always keeping her suitcases half-packed, Persephone is used to moving around, leaving one town for another when curiosity over her eccentric behavior inevitably draws unwanted attention. After an accidental and very public display of power, Persephone knows it's time to move on once again. It's lucky, then, when she receives an email from the one friend she's managed to keep, inviting her to the elusive Wile Isle. The timing couldn't be more perfect. However, upon arrival, Persephone quickly discovers that Wile is no ordinary island. In fact, it just might hold the very things she's been searching for her entire life. Answers. Family. Home. And some things she did not want. Like 100-year-old curses and an even older family feud. With the clock running out, love might be the magic that saves them all."

***This Is Ear Hustle: Unflinching Stories of Everyday Prison Life* by Nigel Poor and Earlonne Woods Crown (October 19, 2021)**

"When Nigel Poor and Earlonne Woods met, Nigel was a photography professor volunteering with the Prison University Project and Earlonne was serving thirty-one years to life at California's San Quentin State Prison. Initially drawn to each other by their shared interest in storytelling, neither had podcast production experience when they decided to enter Radiotopia's contest for new shows . . . and won. Using the prize for seed money, Nigel and Earlonne launched *Ear Hustle*, named after the prison term for "eavesdropping." It was the first podcast created and produced entirely within prison and would go on to be heard millions of times worldwide, garner Peabody and Pulitzer award nominations, and help earn Earlonne his freedom when his sentence was commuted in 2018. In *This Is Ear Hustle*, Nigel and Earlonne share their own stories of how they came to San Quentin, how they created their phenomenally popular podcast amid extreme limitations, and what has kept them collaborating season after season. They present new stories, all with the same insight, balance, and rapport that distinguish the podcast. In an era when more than two million people are incarcerated across the United States—a number that grows by 600,000 annually—Nigel and Earlonne explore the full and often surprising realities of prison life. With characteristic candor and humor, their moving portrayals include unexpected moments of self-discovery, unlikely alliances, inspirational resilience, and ingenious work-arounds. One personal narrative at a time, framed by Nigel's and Earlonne's distinct perspectives, *This Is*

Ear Hustle reveals the complexity of life for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people while illuminating the shared experiences of humanity that unite us all.”

[We Are Not Like Them: A Novel](#) by Christine Pride and Jo Piazza

Atria Books (October 5, 2021)

“Told from alternating perspectives, an evocative and riveting novel about the lifelong bond between two women, one Black and one white, whose friendship is indelibly altered by a tragic event—a powerful and poignant exploration of race in America today and its devastating impact on ordinary lives. Jen and Riley have been best friends since kindergarten. As adults, they remain as close as sisters, though their lives have taken different directions. Jen married young, and after years of trying, is finally pregnant. Riley pursued her childhood dream of becoming a television journalist and is poised to become one of the first Black female anchors of the top news channel in their hometown of Philadelphia. But the deep bond they share is severely tested when Jen’s husband, a city police officer, is involved in the shooting of an unarmed Black teenager. Six months pregnant, Jen is in freefall as her future, her husband’s freedom, and her friendship with Riley are thrown into uncertainty. Covering this career-making story, Riley wrestles with the implications of this tragic incident for her Black community, her ambitions, and her relationship with her lifelong friend. Like Tayari Jones’s *An American Marriage* and Jodi Picoult’s *Small Great Things*, *We Are Not Like Them* explores complex questions of race and how they pervade and shape our most intimate spaces in a deeply divided world. But at its heart, it’s a story of enduring friendship—a love that defies the odds even as it faces its most difficult challenges.”



Book descriptions provided by publishers.

Neenah Public Library

920-886-6315

library@neenahlibrary.org

neenahlibrary.org/thenextchapter