



The Next Chapter: December 2022 Book Recommendations

[**Hollywood: The Oral History**](#) by Jeanine Basinger and Sam Wasson

Harper (November 8, 2022) 768 pages.

“The real story of Hollywood as told by such luminaries as Steven Spielberg, Frank Capra, Katharine Hepburn, Meryl Streep, Harold Lloyd, and nearly four hundred others, assembled from the American Film Institute’s treasure trove of interviews, reveals a fresh history of the American movie industry from its beginnings to today. From the archives of the American Film Institute comes a unique picture of what it was like to work in Hollywood from its beginnings to its present day. Gleaned from nearly three thousand interviews, involving four hundred voices from the industry, *Hollywood: The Oral History*, lets a reader “listen in” on candid remarks from the biggest names in front of the camera—Bette Davis, Meryl Streep, Tom Hanks, Harold Lloyd—to the biggest behind it—Frank Capra, Steven Spielberg, Alfred Hitchcock, Jordan Peele, as well as the lesser known individuals that shaped what was heard and seen on screen: musicians, costumers, art directors, cinematographers, writers, sound men, editors, make-up artists, and even script timers, messengers, and publicists. The result is like a conversation among the gods and goddesses of film: lively, funny, insightful, historically accurate and, for the first time, authentically honest in its portrait of Hollywood. It’s the insider’s story. Legendary film scholar Jeanine Basinger and New York Times bestselling author Sam Wasson, both acclaimed storytellers in their own right, have undertaken the monumental task of digesting these tens of thousands of hours of talk and weaving it into a definitive portrait of workaday Hollywood.”

[**JUDAS 62**](#) by Charles Cumming

Mysterious Press (December 6, 2022) 494 pages.

“Thirty years after a deadly attempt to extract a Russian scientist to safety in Ukraine, master spy Lachlan Kite eludes an assassin in the streets of Dubai. After a lifetime working with BOX 88, the transatlantic counterintelligence agency so covert that not even the CIA knows of its existence, master spy Lachlan Kite has made plenty of enemies. And now, as the director of the outfit’s operations in the UK, one of those past enemies has him in their sights...1993: Student Lachlan Kite is sent to post-Soviet Russia, a spy in the guise of a language teacher. Embedded in the town of Voronezh, Kite’s mission is to extract a chemical weapons scientist before the man’s groundbreaking research falls into the wrong hands and shuttle him across the border to freedom in Ukraine. But Kite’s mission soon goes wrong and he is left stranded in a hostile city with a former KGB officer on his trail. 2020: Thirty years after that dangerous mission, Kite discovers that its outcome put his name on the notorious “JUDAS” list—a record of enemies of Russia who have been targeted for assassination. Kite’s fight for survival takes him to Dubai, a city crawling with international intelligence officers, where he enters into a deadly game of cat-and-mouse with the Russian secret state.”

[Nine Liars](#) by Maureen Johnson (A Truly Devious Novel)

Katherine Tegen Books (December 27, 2022) 464 pages.

“Stevie Bell solved the case of Truly Devious, and now she’s taking her detecting skills abroad when she becomes embroiled in a mystery from 1990s England. Another pulse-pounding and laugh-out-loud stand-alone mystery from New York Times bestselling author Maureen Johnson. Senior year at Ellingham Academy for Stevie Bell isn’t going well. Her boyfriend, David, is studying in London. Her friends are obsessed with college applications. With the cold case of the century solved, Stevie is adrift. There is nothing to distract her from the questions pinging around her brain—questions about college, love, and life in general. Relief comes when David invites Stevie and her friends to join him for study abroad, and his new friend Izzy introduces her to a double-murder cold case. In 1995, nine friends from Cambridge University went to a country house and played a drunken game of hide-and-seek. Two were found in the woodshed the next day, murdered with an ax. The case was assumed to be a burglary gone wrong, but one of the remaining seven saw something she can’t explain. This was no break-in. Someone’s lying about what happened in the woodshed. Seven suspects. Two murders. One killer still playing a deadly game.”

[Number One Is Walking: My Life in the Movies and Other Diversions](#) by Steve Martin

Celadon Books (November 15, 2022) 256 pages.

“*Number One Is Walking* is Steve Martin’s cinematic legacy—an illustrated memoir of his legendary acting career, with stories from his most popular films and artwork by New Yorker cartoonist Harry Bliss. Steve Martin has never written about his career in the movies before. In *Number One Is Walking*, he shares anecdotes from the sets of his beloved films—*Father of the Bride*, *Roxanne*, *The Jerk*, *Three Amigos*, and many more—bringing readers directly into his world. He shares charming tales of antics, moments of inspiration, and exploits with the likes of Paul McCartney, Diane Keaton, Robin Williams, and Chevy Chase. Martin details his forty years in the movie biz, as well as his stand-up comedy, banjo playing, writing, and cartooning, all with his unparalleled wit. With gorgeously illustrated cartoons and single-panel “diversions” in Steve and Harry’s signature style, *Number One Is Walking* is full of the everyday moments that make up a movie star’s life, capturing Steve Martin’s singular humor and acclaimed career in film.”

[Smitten Kitchen Keepers: New Classics for Your Forever Files: A Cookbook](#) by Deb Perelman

Knopf (November 15, 2022) 320 pages.

“The long-awaited new book from the best-selling and beloved author of *The Smitten Kitchen Cookbook* and *Smitten Kitchen Every Day*—a collection of essential recipes for meals you’ll want to prepare again and again, from Cozy Chicken and Dumplings to Fettuccine with White Ragú, and from Chocolate Peanut Butter Cup Cookies to Strawberry Summer Stack Cake. Deb Perelman is the author of two best-selling cookbooks; one of the internet’s most successful food bloggers; the creator of a homegrown brand with more than a million Instagram followers; and the self-taught cook with the tiny kitchen who obsessively tests her recipes to make sure that no bowls are wasted and that the results are always worth the effort. Here, in her third book, *Smitten Kitchen Keepers: New Classics for Your Forever Files*, Perelman gives us 100 recipes (including a few favorites from her site) that aim to make shopping easier, preparation more

practical and enjoyable, and food more reliably delicious for the home cook. These are the fail-safe, satisfying recipes you'll rely on for years to come—from Perelman's forever files to yours."

***The Christmas Murder Game* by Alexandra Benedict**

Poisoned Pen Press (October 4, 2022) 288 pages.

"Twelve clues. Twelve keys. Twelve days of Christmas. But how many will die before Twelfth Night? Agatha Christie meets Clue in this delightful, tense manor house murder mystery. The annual Christmas Game is afoot at Endgame House, the Armitages' grand family home. This year's prize is to die for—deeds to the house itself—but Lily Armitage has no intention of returning. She hasn't been back to Endgame since her mother died, twenty-one years ago, and she has no intention of claiming the house that haunts her dreams. Until, that is, she receives a letter from her aunt promising that the game's riddles will give her the keys not only to Endgame, but to its darkest secrets, including the identity of her mother's murderer. Now, Lily must compete with her estranged cousins for the twelve days of Christmas. The snow is thick, the phone lines are down, and no one is getting in or out. Lily will have to keep her wits about her, because not everyone is playing fair, and there's no telling how many will die before the winner is declared. Including additional scavenger hunts for the reader, this clever murder mystery is the perfect gift for fans of classic mysteries, festive Christmas books, and armchair detective work."

[The Light Pirate](#) by Lily Brooks-Dalton

Grand Central Publishing (December 6, 2022) 336 pages.

"Set in the near future, this hopeful story of survival and resilience follows Wanda—a luminous child born out of a devastating hurricane—as she navigates a rapidly changing world: A "symphony of beauty and heartbreak" (Associated Press). Florida is slipping away. As devastating weather patterns and rising sea levels wreak gradual havoc on the state's infrastructure, a powerful hurricane approaches a small town on the southeastern coast. Kirby Lowe, an electrical line worker, his pregnant wife, Frida, and their two sons, Flip and Lucas, prepare for the worst. When the boys go missing just before the hurricane hits, Kirby heads out into the high winds in search of his children. Left alone, Frida goes into premature labor and gives birth to an unusual child, Wanda, whom she names after the catastrophic storm that ushers her into a society closer to collapse than ever before. As Florida continues to unravel, Wanda grows. Moving from childhood to adulthood, adapting not only to the changing landscape, but also to the people who stayed behind in a place abandoned by civilization, Wanda loses family, gains community, and ultimately, seeks adventure, love, and purpose in a place remade by nature. Told in four parts—power, water, light, and time—The Light Pirate mirrors the rhythms of the elements and the sometimes quick, sometimes slow dissolution of the world as we know it. It is a meditation on the changes we would rather not see, the future we would rather not greet, and a call back to the beauty and violence of an untamable wilderness."

[The Seamstress of Sardinia](#) by Bianca Pitzorno

Harper Perennial (December 6, 2022) 304 pages.

“A bestselling Italian writer makes her American debut with this delightful dramedy of manners, family, romance, and fashion that is set on the island of Sardinia at the end of the nineteenth century—a dazzling and original literary blend of Jane Austen and Adriana Trigiani. In 1900 Sardinia, a young woman’s remarkable talent with a needle earns her a position as a seamstress with a wealthy family. Inside this privileged world far different from her own humble beginnings, the skilled sewer quietly takes measurements, sketches designs, mends hems—and in the silence, hears whispered secrets and stories of all those around her. Through the watchful young seamstress’s eyes, this small Italian city and its residents emerge in all their vitality, vanity, and fragility—flawed yet congenial people who are not quite what they pretend to be. There is the Marchesa Esther, who rides horses and studies mechanics and ancient Greek; Miss Lily Rose, a spirited American journalist who commissions a special corset—with pockets to hide more than just her flaws; the Provera sisters with their expensive Parisian fashions that belie their financial hardships; and Assuntina, the wild child. There are men, young, old, and in between; love affairs and broken hearts; and even a murder (or was it suicide?). And at the center, watching and waiting is the seamstress herself, an intelligent, ambitious girl with a tender heart and her own impossible dream. An irresistible literary confection rich in atmosphere and period detail and packed with compelling characters. *The Seamstress of Sardinia* transports us to a long-ago world not so removed from our own—to a society rigidly divided by wealth and shaped by passion, hope, ambition, and love—the elemental forces that drive human lives.”

[The Spice Master at Bistro Exotique](#) by Samantha Vérant

Berkley (December 6, 2022) 352 pages.

“A talented chef discovers how spices and scents can transport her—and, more importantly, how self-confidence can unlock the greatest magic of all: love—in this perfectly seasoned new novel by Samantha Vérant. Kate Jenkins doesn't believe in fate. She believes in a clear vision, meticulous planning, and hard work in order to achieve her culinary dreams. On the cusp of opening her own Parisian restaurant, Bistro Exotique, she isn't even concerned when her standoffish—and annoyingly sexy—neighbor dismisses her as a crazy American tourist or when she meets the wildly eccentric Garrance, the self-proclaimed Spice Master of Paris, who ominously warns her of the previous owner's failures. Confident and optimistic, Kate keeps calm and cooks on. Until a series of unfortunate events derail her plans and her entire staff quits. Kate is about to throw in the kitchen towel on her lifelong dream when Garrance offers to use her mastery of scents and spices to help her, but it comes at a price: Kate must work with Garrance's son, Charles, a world-class chef and total jerk. After Kate hesitantly concedes to the deal, she slowly learns to open her heart and mind to new concepts, not quite sure if the magic she's experiencing comes from Garrance's spices, from within herself, or from the growing chemistry with Charles. One thing is certain, though: her kitchen is getting increasingly hot.”

[The Vibrant Years](#) by Sonali Dev, Introduction by Mindy Kaling

Mindy's Book Studio (December 1, 2022) 315 pages.

“Living on their own terms means being there for one another. When sixty-five-year-old Bindu Desai inherits a million dollars, she’s astounded—and horrified. The windfall threatens to expose a shameful mistake from her youth. Desperate to keep the secret, Bindu quickly spends it on something unexpected: a condo in a posh retirement community in Florida. The impulsive decision blindsides Bindu’s daughter-in-law, Aly. At forty-seven, Aly still shares a home with Bindu even after her divorce from Bindu’s son. But maybe this change is just the push Aly needs to fight for the segment she’s been promised for years at the news station where she works. As Bindu and Aly navigate their new dynamic, Aly’s daughter, Cullie, is faced with losing the business that made her a tech-world star. The only way to save it is to deliver a new idea to her investors—and of course they want the half-baked dating app she pitched them in a panic. Problem is, Cullie has never been on a real date. Naturally, enlisting her single mother and grandmother to help her with the research is the answer. From USA Today bestselling author Sonali Dev comes a heartfelt novel about three generations of hilarious, unconventional, ambitious women navigating bad dates, a spiteful HOA board, reemerging exes, and secrets that refuse to remain hidden. Join the Desai women on a shared journey of self-discovery as they dare to live their most vibrant lives.”

[Twice in a Lifetime](#) by Melissa Baron

Alcove Press (December 6, 2022) 336 pages.

“*The Time Traveler's Wife* meets *Oona Out of Order* in this imaginative and moving debut novel of a love more powerful than time. Isla has fled the city for small-town Missouri in the wake of a painful and exhausting year. With her chronic anxiety at a fever pitch, the last thing she expects is to meet a genuine romantic prospect. And she doesn’t. But she does get a text from a man who seems to think he’s her husband. Obviously, a wrong number—except when she points this out, the mystery texter sends back a picture. Of them—on their wedding day. Isla cautiously starts up a texting relationship with her maybe-hoax, maybe-husband Ewan, who claims to be reaching out from a few years into the future. Ewan knows Isla incredibly well, and seems to love her exactly as she is, which she can hardly fathom. But he’s also grieving, because in the future, he and Isla are no longer together. Ewan is texting back through time to save her from a fate he is unwilling to share—and all she can do to prevent that fate is to learn to be happy, now, in the body she has, with the mind she has. The only trouble is the steps she takes in that direction might be steps away from a future with Ewan. Melissa Baron’s time-crossed romance features a quintessentially endearing and brave protagonist, and an engrossing plot that will keep you turning pages until its breathtaking finish.”

[Your Table Is Ready: Tales of a New York City Maître D'](#) by Michael Cecchi-Azzolina

St. Martin's Press (December 6, 2022) 304 pages.

“A front-of-the-house Kitchen Confidential from a career maître d’hotel who manned the front of the room in New York City’s hottest and most in-demand restaurants. From the glamorous to the entitled, from royalty to the financially ruined, everyone who wanted to be seen—or just to gawk—at the hottest restaurants in New York City came to places Michael Cecchi-Azzolina helped run. His phone number was passed around among those who wanted to curry favor, during the decades when restaurants replaced

clubs and theater as, well, theater in the most visible, vibrant city in the world. Besides dropping us back into a vanished time, *Your Table Is Ready* takes us places we'd never be able to get into on our own: Raoul's in Soho with its louche club vibe; Buzzy O'Keefe's casually elegant River Café (the only outer-borough establishment desirable enough to be included in this roster), from Keith McNally's Minetta Tavern to Nolita's Le Coucou, possibly the most beautiful room in New York City in 2018, with its French Country Auberge-meets-winery look and the most exquisite and enormous stands of flowers, changed every three days. From his early career serving theater stars like Tennessee Williams and Dustin Hoffman at La Rousse right through to the last pre-pandemic-shutdown full houses at Le Coucou, Cecchi-Azzolina has seen it all. In *Your Table Is Ready*, he breaks down how restaurants really run (and don't), and how the economics work for owners and overworked staff alike. The professionals who gravitate to the business are a special, tougher breed, practiced in dealing with the demanding patrons and with each other, in a very distinctive ecosystem that's somewhere between a George Orwell "down and out in...." dungeon and a sleek showman's smoke-and-mirrors palace. *Your Table Is Ready* is a rollicking, raunchy, revelatory memoir."



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