



## The Next Chapter: March 2021 Book Recommendations

### [Accidentally Engaged](#) by Farah Heron

**Forever (March 2, 2021)**

“Reena Manji doesn't love her career, her single status, and most of all, her family inserting themselves into every detail of her life. But when caring for her precious sourdough starters, Reena can drown it all out. At least until her father moves his newest employee across the hall—with hopes that Reena will marry him. But Nadim's not like the other Muslim bachelor-du-jours that her parents have dug up. If the Captain America body and the British accent weren't enough, the man appears to love eating her sourdough creations as much as she loves making them. She sure as hell would never marry a man who works for her father, but friendship with a neighbor is okay, right? When Reena's career takes a nosedive, she decides to follow her heart by entering a video cooking contest to win the artisan bread course of her dreams. The one problem? It's couples only. Nadim happily agrees to fake an engagement so they can enter the contest, but as cooking at home together brings them closer and her family gets wind of the situation, Reena can't help thinking her faux fiancé might just be the real deal.”

### ***Becoming Leidah* by Michelle Grierson**

**Simon & Schuster (April 13, 2021)**

“In the hinterlands of old Norway, Leidah Pietersdatter is born blue-skinned, with webbed hands and feet. Upon every turn of season, her mother, Maeva, worries as her daughter's peculiarities blossom—inside the root of the tiny child, a strange power is taking hold. Maeva tries to hide the girl from the suspicious townsfolk of the austere village of Ørken, just as she conceals her own magical ancestry from her daughter. And Maeva's adoring husband, Pieter, wants nothing more than for his new family to be accepted by all. But unlike Pieter, who is blinded by love, Maeva is aware that the villagers, who profess a rigid faith to the new God and claim to have abandoned the old ways, are watching for any sign of transgression—and are eager to pounce and punish. Following both mother and daughter from the shadows and through time, an inquisitive shapeshifter waits for the Fates to spin their web, and for Maeva to finally reclaim who she once was. And as Maeva's elusive past begins to beckon, she realizes that she must help her daughter navigate and control her own singular birthright if the child is to survive the human world. But the protective love Pieter has for his family is threatening the secure life they have slowly built and increasingly becoming a tragic obstacle. Witnessing this, Maeva comes to a drastic conclusion: she must make Leidah promise to keep a secret from Pieter—a perilous one that may eventually free them all.”

**[Every Last Fear](#) by Alex Finlay**

**Minotaur Books (March 2, 2021)**

"In one of the year's most anticipated debut psychological thrillers, a family made infamous by a true crime documentary is found dead, leaving their surviving son to uncover the truth about their final days. "They found the bodies on a Tuesday." So begins this twisty and breathtaking novel that traces the fate of the Pine family, a thriller that will both leave you on the edge of your seat and move you to tears. After a late night of partying, NYU student Matt Pine returns to his dorm room to devastating news: nearly his entire family--his mom, his dad, his little brother and sister--have been found dead from an apparent gas leak while vacationing in Mexico. The local police claim it was an accident, but the FBI and State Department seem far less certain--and they won't tell Matt why. The tragedy makes headlines everywhere because this isn't the first time the Pine family has been thrust into the media spotlight. Matt's older brother, Danny--currently serving a life sentence for the murder of his teenage girlfriend Charlotte--was the subject of a viral true crime documentary suggesting that Danny was wrongfully convicted. Though the country has rallied behind Danny, Matt holds a secret about his brother that he's never told anyone: the night Charlotte was killed Matt saw something that makes him believe his brother is guilty of the crime. When Matt returns to his small hometown to bury his parents and siblings, he's faced with a hostile community that was villainized by the documentary, a frenzied media, and memories he'd hoped to leave behind forever. Now, as the deaths in Mexico appear increasingly suspicious and connected to Danny's case, Matt must unearth the truth behind the crime that sent his brother to prison--putting his own life in peril--and forcing him to confront his every last fear. Told through multiple points-of-view and alternating between past and present, *Every Last Fear* is not only a page-turning thriller, it's also a poignant story about a family managing heartbreak and tragedy, and living through a fame they never wanted."

**[Everything After](#) by Jill Santopolo**

**G.P. Putnam's Sons (March 9, 2021)**

"*Two loves. Two choices. One chance to follow her dreams.* Emily has come a long way since she lost her two passions fifteen years ago: music, and Rob. She's a psychologist at NYU who helps troubled college students like the one she once was. Together with her caring doctor husband, Ezra, she has a beautiful life. They're happy. They hope to start a family. But when a tragic event in Emily's present too closely echoes her past, and parts of her story that she'd hoped never to share come to light, her perfect life is suddenly upturned. Then Emily hears a song on the radio about the woman who got away. The melody and voice are hauntingly familiar. Could it be? As Emily's past passions come roaring back into her life, she'll find herself asking: Who is she meant to be? Who is she meant to love?"

***Feelings: A Story in Seasons* by Manjit Thapp**

**Random House (March 2, 2021)**

"A stunning illustrated journey through one young woman's year of feelings—from the saturated highs of early summer to the gray isolation of late winter. Enter Manjit Thapp's *Feelings*, where you'll find moods that change as quickly as the weather; the different shades of anxiety and hope that each new season brings; and the stages of joy and pain that fuel our growth. From the spark of possibility and jolt of creativity in High Summer, to the need for release from anxiety and pressure during Monsoon, to the

desolation and numbness of Winter, *Feelings* implores us to consider the seasons of our own emotional journeys. Articulating and validating the range of feelings we all experience, this is a book that allows us to feel connected and comforted by the experiences that make us human.”

**[Good Eggs](#) by Rebecca Hardiman**

**Atria Books (March 2, 2021)**

“When Kevin Gogarty's irrepressible eighty-three-year-old mother, Millie, is caught shoplifting yet again, he has no choice but to hire a caretaker to keep an eye on her. Kevin, recently unemployed, is already at his wits' end tending to a full house while his wife travels to exotic locales for work, leaving him to tussel solo with their rebellious teenaged daughter, Aideen, whose troubles escalate at her new boarding school. Into the Gogarty fray steps Sylvia, Millie's upbeat home aide, who appears at first to be their saving grace--until she catapults the Gogarty clan into their greatest crisis yet, and an unexpected adventure. With charm, humor, and pathos to spare, *Good Eggs* is a delightful study in self-determination; the notion that it's never too late to start living; and the unique redemption that family, despite its maddening flaws, can offer.”

**[Raft of Stars](#) by Andrew Graff**

**Ecco (March 23, 2021)**

“It's the summer of 1994 in Claypot, Wisconsin, and the lives of ten-year-old Fischer “Fish” Branson and Dale “Bread” Breadwin are shaped by the two fathers they don't talk about. One night, tired of seeing his best friend bruised and terrorized by his no-good dad, Fish takes action. A gunshot rings out and the two boys flee the scene, believing themselves murderers. They head for the woods, where they find their way onto a raft, but the natural terrors of Ironsforge gorge threaten to overwhelm them. Four adults track them into the forest, each one on a journey of his or her own. Fish's mother Miranda, a wise woman full of fierce faith; his granddad, Teddy, who knows the woods like the back of his hand; Tiffany, a purple-haired gas station attendant and poet looking for connection; and Sheriff Cal, who's having doubts about a life in law enforcement. The adults track the boys toward the novel's heart-pounding climax on the edge of the gorge and a conclusion that beautifully makes manifest the grace these characters find in the wilderness and one another. This timeless story of loss, hope, and adventure runs like the river itself amid the vividly rendered landscape of the Upper Midwest.”

**[The Arsonists' City](#) by Halan Alyan**

**Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (March 9, 2021)**

“A rich family story, a personal look at the legacy of war in the Middle East, and an indelible rendering of how we hold on to the people and places we call home. The Nasr family is spread across the globe—Beirut, Brooklyn, Austin, the California desert. A Syrian mother, a Lebanese father, and three American children: all have lived a life of migration. Still, they've always had their ancestral home in Beirut—a constant touchstone—and the complicated, messy family love that binds them. But following his father's recent death, Idris, the family's new patriarch, has decided to sell. The decision brings the family to Beirut, where everyone unites against Idris in a fight to save the house. They all have secrets—lost loves, bitter jealousies, abandoned passions, deep-set shame—that distance has helped smother. But in

a city smoldering with the legacy of war, an ongoing flow of refugees, religious tension, and political protest, those secrets ignite, imperiling the fragile ties that hold this family together.”

**[The Barbizon: The Hotel that Set Women Free](#) by Paulina Bren**

**Simon & Schuster (March 2, 2021)**

“*The Barbizon* tells the story of New York's most glamorous women-only hotel, and the women—both famous and ordinary—who passed through its doors. World War I had liberated women from home and hearth, setting them on the path to political enfranchisement and gainful employment. Arriving in New York to work in the dazzling new skyscrapers, they did not want to stay in uncomfortable boarding houses; they wanted what men already had—exclusive residential hotels that catered to their needs, with daily maid service, cultural programs, workout rooms, and private dining. The Barbizon would become the most famous residential hotel of them all, welcoming everyone from aspiring actresses, dancers, and fashion models to seamstresses, secretaries, and nurses. The Barbizon's residents read like a who's who: Titanic survivor Molly Brown; actresses Rita Hayworth, Joan Crawford, Grace Kelly, Tippi Hedron, Liza Minelli, Ali McGraw, Jaclyn Smith, and Phylicia Rashad; writers Sylvia Plath, Joan Didion, Diane Johnson, Gael Greene, and Meg Wolitzer; and so many more. But before they were household names, they were among the young women arriving at the Barbizon with a suitcase, and hope. Beautifully written and impeccably researched, *The Barbizon* weaves together a tale that has, until now, never been told. It is an epic story of women's ambition in the 20th century. The Barbizon Hotel offered its residents a room of their own and air to breathe, unfettered from family obligations and expectations. It gave women a chance to remake themselves however they pleased. No place had existed like it before, or has since.”

**[The Code Breaker](#) by Walter Isaacson**

**Simon & Schuster (March 9, 2021)**

“The bestselling author of *Leonardo da Vinci* and *Steve Jobs* returns with a gripping account of how the pioneering scientist Jennifer Doudna, along with her colleagues and rivals, launched a revolution that will allow us to cure diseases, fend off viruses, and enhance our children.”

**[The Eagle and the Viper](#) by Loren Estleman**

**Forge Books (March 2, 2021)**

“This much is history: On Christmas Eve, 1800, an “infernal machine” exploded in one of the busiest streets in Paris, France, destroying buildings and killing innocent civilians. It wasn't the first attempt on the life of Napoleon Bonaparte, First Consul of the newly minted Republic of France. This much is exclusive to our story: Upon the failure of the Christmas Eve plot, the conspiracy takes a new and more diabolical turn. Posterity knows what became of Napoleon: He led France into a series of military adventures that ended in his defeat, followed by decades of peace. But this future hung on a precarious thread. One man can make history; another can change it. Part high-octane suspense, part dire warning, this novel reveals how close our world came—at the dawn of a promising new century—to total war.”

**[The Lamplighters](#) by Emma Stonex**

**Viking (March 16, 2021)**

“Inspired by a haunting true story, a gorgeous and atmospheric novel about the mysterious disappearance of three lighthouse keepers from a remote tower miles from the Cornish coast--and about the wives who were left behind. What strange fate befell these doomed men? The heavy sea whispers their names. Black rocks roll beneath the surface, drowning ghosts. And out of the swell like a finger of light, the salt-scratched tower stands lonely and magnificent. It's New Year's Eve, 1972, when a boat pulls up to the Maiden Rock lighthouse with relief for the keepers. But no one greets them. When the entrance door, locked from the inside, is battered down, rescuers find an empty tower. A table is laid for a meal not eaten. The Principal Keeper's weather log describes a storm raging round the tower, but the skies have been clear all week. And the clocks have all stopped at 8:45. Two decades later, the wives who were left behind are visited by a writer who is determined to find the truth about the men's disappearance. Moving between the women's stories and the men's last weeks together in the lighthouse, long-held secrets surface and truths twist into lies as we piece together what happened, why, and who to believe. In her riveting and suspenseful novel, Emma Stonex writes a story of isolation and obsession, of reality and illusion, and of what it takes to keep the light burning when all else is swallowed by dark.”

**[The Postscript Murders](#) by Elly Griffiths**

**Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (March 2, 2021)**

“Murder leaps off the page when crime novelists begin to turn up dead in this intricate new novel by internationally best-selling author Elly Griffiths, a literary mystery perfect for fans of Anthony Horowitz and Agatha Christie. The death of a ninety-year-old woman with a heart condition should not be suspicious. Detective Sergeant Harbinder Kaur certainly sees nothing out of the ordinary when Peggy's caretaker, Nataalka, begins to recount Peggy Smith's passing. But Nataalka had a reason to be at the police station: while clearing out Peggy's flat, she noticed an unusual number of crime novels, all dedicated to Peggy. And each psychological thriller included a mysterious postscript: *PS: for PS*. When a gunman breaks into the flat to steal a book and its author is found dead shortly thereafter—Detective Kaur begins to think that perhaps there is no such thing as an unsuspecting death after all. And then things escalate: from an Aberdeen literary festival to the streets of Edinburgh, writers are being targeted. DS Kaur embarks on a road trip across Europe and reckons with how *exactly* authors can think up such realistic crimes.”

**[This is the Fire](#) by Don Lemon**

**Little, Brown and Company (March 16, 2021)**

“The host of CNN Tonight with Don Lemon is more popular than ever. As America's only Black prime-time anchor, Lemon and his daily monologues on racism and antiracism, on the failures of the Trump administration and of so many of our leaders, and on America's systemic flaws speak for his millions of fans. Now, in an urgent, deeply personal, riveting plea, he shows us all how deep our problems lie, and what we can do to begin to fix them.

**[We Begin at the End](#) by Chris Whitaker**

**Henry Holt & Co. (March 2, 2021)**

“Thirty years ago, a teenage Vincent King was sent to prison. But now, he's served his sentence and is returning to his hometown. The hometown where his childhood best friend, Walk, is now the chief of police. The town where his childhood sweetheart, Star Radley, still lives. The same Star Radley whose sister he killed. Duchess, Star's daughter, is a self-proclaimed outlaw. She needs to be. Who else is going to take care of her and her five-year-old brother? Star is still dazzling, still beautiful, but she hasn't shined as bright since Vincent was sent away. Too often it's Duchess and Walk who are the ones taking care of her. But when Duchess exacts her own vigilante revenge, she will set into motion a series of events that threatens not only her own family, but everyone she grows close to. A crime thriller that will break your heart and a literary novel with a mystery at its core, *We Begin at the End* unforgettably examines how the choices we make can nudge us into the dangerous ground between good and evil.”

**[What's Mine and Yours](#) by Naima Coster**

**Grand Central Publishing (March 2, 2021)**

“From the author of *Halsey Street*, a sweeping novel of legacy, identity, the American family—and the ways that race affects even our most intimate relationships. A community in the Piedmont of North Carolina rises in outrage as a county initiative draws students from the largely Black east side of town into predominantly white high schools on the west. For two students, Gee and Noelle, the integration sets off a chain of events that will tie their two families together in unexpected ways over the next twenty years. On one side of the integration debate is Jade, Gee's steely, ambitious mother. In the aftermath of a harrowing loss, she is determined to give her son the tools he'll need to survive in America as a sensitive, anxious, young Black man. On the other side is Noelle's headstrong mother, Lacey May, a white woman who refuses to see her half-Latina daughters as anything but white. She strives to protect them as she couldn't protect herself from the influence of their charming but unreliable father, Robbie. When Gee and Noelle join the school play meant to bridge the divide between new and old students, their paths collide, and their two seemingly disconnected families begin to form deeply knotted, messy ties that will shape the trajectory of their adult lives. And their mothers—each determined to see her child inherit a better life—will make choices that will haunt them for decades to come. As love is built and lost, and the past never too far behind, *What's Mine and Yours* is an expansive, vibrant tapestry that moves between the years, from the foothills of North Carolina, to Atlanta, Los Angeles, and Paris. It explores the unique organism that is every family: what breaks them apart and how they come back together.”



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