



The Next Chapter: December Book Recommendations

[Alright, Alright, Alright: The Oral History of Richard Linklater's Dazed and Confused](#) by Melissa Maerz

Harper (November 17, 2020)

“Written in cooperation with Oscar-nominated director Richard Linklater, an oral history of the “Dazed and Confused” cult classic provides behind-the-scenes cast and crew stories about its unlikely production and commercial success.”

[Better Luck Next Time](#) by Julia Claiborne Johnson

Custom House (January 5, 2021)

“It’s 1938 and women seeking a quick, no-questions split from their husbands head to the “divorce capital of the world,” Reno, Nevada. There’s one catch: they have to wait six-weeks to become “residents.” Many of these wealthy, soon-to-be divorcees flock to the Flying Leap, a dude ranch that caters to their every need. Twenty-four-year-old Ward spent one year at Yale before his family lost everything in the Great Depression; now he’s earning an honest living as a ranch hand at the Flying Leap. Admired for his dashing good looks--“Cary Grant in cowboy boots”--Ward thinks he’s got the Flying Leap’s clients all figured out. But two new guests are about to upend everything he thinks he knows: Nina, a St Louis heiress and amateur pilot back for her third divorce, and Emily, whose bravest moment in life was leaving her cheating husband back in San Francisco and driving herself to Reno. A novel about divorce, marriage, and everything that comes in between (money, class, ambition, and opportunity), *Better Luck Next Time* is a hilarious yet poignant examination of the ways friendship can save us, love can destroy us, and the family we create can be stronger than the family we come from.”

[Clanlands: Whisky, Warfare, and a Scottish Adventure Like No Other](#) by Sam Heughan and Graham McTavish

Quercus (November 3, 2020)

“From their faithful camper van to boats, kayaks, bicycles, and motorbikes, join stars of *Outlander* Sam and Graham on a road trip with a difference, as two Scotsmen explore a land of raw beauty, poetry, feuding, music, history, and warfare. Unlikely friends Sam and Graham begin their journey in the heart of Scotland at Glencoe - the site of a great massacre and major clan feud - and travel from there all the way to Inverness and Culloden battlefield, where along the way they experience adventure and a cast of highland characters. In this story of friendship, finding themselves, and whisky, they discover the complexity, rich history and culture of their native country.”

[Confessions of a Curious Bookseller](#) by Elizabeth Green

Lake Union Publishing (January 1, 2021)

“Without question, Fawn Birchill knows that her used bookstore is the heart of West Philadelphia, a cornerstone of culture for a community that, for the past twenty years, has found the quirkiness absolutely charming. When an amicable young indie bookseller invades her

block, Fawn is convinced that his cushy couches, impressive selection, coffee bar, and knowledgeable staff are a neighborhood blight. Misguided yet blindly resilient, Fawn readies for battle. But as she wages her war, Fawn is forced to reflect on a few unavoidable truths: the tribulations of online dating, a strained relationship with her family, and a devoted if not always law-abiding intern—not to mention what to do about a pen pal with whom she hasn't been entirely honest and the litany of repairs her aging store requires. Through emails, journal entries, combative online reviews, texts, and tweets, Fawn plans her next move. Now it's time for her to dig deep and use every trick at her disposal if she's to reclaim her beloved business—and her life."

[Dear Child](#) by Romy Hausmann

Flatiron Books (October 6, 2020)

"A windowless shack in the woods. A dash to safety. But when a woman finally escapes her captor, the end of the story is only the beginning of her nightmare. She says her name is Lena. Lena, who disappeared without a trace 14 years prior. She fits the profile. She has the distinctive scar. But her family swears that she isn't their Lena. The little girl who escaped the woods with her knows things she isn't sharing, and Lena's devastated father is trying to piece together details that don't quite fit. Lena is desperate to begin again, but something tells her that her tormentor still wants to get back what belongs to him...and that she may not be able to truly escape until the whole truth about what happened in the woods finally emerges."

[Deep Flakes Christmas](#) by Joy Ann Ribar

Ten16 Press (October 7, 2020)

"Baker/vintner Frankie Champagne is named coordinator for the Deep Lakes Holiday Festival in the unexpected absences of the town officials. What should be a piece of cake for the confident multi-tasker is a half-baked fiasco when the town is buried by snowstorms, and the official Christmas tree and its delivery truck driver go missing. With the help of an enchanting stranger, can Frankie and her cohorts save the holiday season for everyone?"

[Ghosts of Christmas Past](#) by Neil Gaiman, M. R. James, et al.

John Murray (October 2, 2018)

"A present contains a monstrous secret. An uninvited guest haunts a Christmas party. A shadow slips across the floor by firelight. A festive entertainment ends in darkness and screams. Who knows what haunts the night at the dark point of the year? This collection of seasonal chillers looks beneath Christmas cheer to a world of ghosts and horrors, mixing terrifying modern fiction with classic stories by masters of the macabre. From Neil Gaiman and M. R. James to Muriel Spark and E. Nesbit, there are stories here to make the hardiest soul quail - so find a comfy chair, lock the door, ignore the cold breath on your neck and get ready to welcome in the real spirits of Christmas."

[Home Body](#) by Rupi Kaur

Andrews McMeel Publishing (November 17, 2020)

"Rupi Kaur constantly embraces growth, and in home body, she walks readers through a reflective and intimate journey visiting the past, the present, and the potential of the self. *Home Body* is a collection of raw, honest conversations with oneself - reminding readers to fill up on love, acceptance, community, family, and embrace change. Illustrated by the author, themes of nature and nurture, light and dark, rest here."

[Murder in Old Bombay](#) by Nev March

Minotaur Books (November 10, 2020)

"In 1892, Bombay is the center of British India. Nearby, Captain Jim Agnihotri lays in Poona military hospital recovering from a skirmish on the wild northern frontier, with little to read but newspapers. The case that catches Jim's attention is being called the crime of the century: Two women fell from the busy university's clock tower in broad daylight. Moved by the widower of one of the victims--his certainty that his wife and sister did not commit suicide--Jim approaches the Framjis and is hired by the Parsee family to investigate what happened that terrible afternoon. But in a land of divided loyalties, asking questions is dangerous. Jim's investigation disturbs the shadows that seem to follow the Framji family and triggers an ominous chain of events. Based on real events, and set against the vibrant backdrop of colonial India, Nev March's lyrical debut *Murder in Old Bombay* brings this tumultuous historical age to life."

[The Best of Me](#) by David Sedaris

Little, Brown and Company (November 3, 2020)

"The American humorist, author, and radio contributor shares his most memorable work in a collection of stories and essays that feature him shopping for rare taxidermy, hitchhiking with a quadriplegic, and hand-feeding a carnivorous bird."

[The Duke and I](#) by Julia Quinn

Avon Books (January 1, 2000) Reissued in 2020 for Netflix Series Adaption.

"The rakish Duke of Hastings will stop at nothing to hold the marriage-mongers and matchmakers of his town at bay, even if it means pretending to be engaged to the lovely Daphne Bridgerton, but strong feelings soon intervene on both sides of this convenient arrangement."

[The Flip Side](#) by James Bailey

William Morrow Paperbacks (November 17, 2020)

"To coin a phrase, Josh is suffering a quarter-life crisis. He just broke up with his long-term girlfriend, lost his job, and moved back home with his parents (shudder). Welcome to rock bottom in Bristol. As Josh starts questioning all his life choices, he has a mad thought: Maybe he would just be better flipping a coin. After all, careful planning has landed him homeless, jobless, and single. What starts as a joke soon becomes serious and Josh decides to start putting his faith in the capriciousness of currency. He doesn't have anything to lose. But when the chance of a lifetime and the girl of his dreams are on the line, will the coin guide him to a rich love life or leave him flat broke?"

[The Harpy](#) by Megan Hunter

Grove Press (November 3, 2020)

"Lucy and Jake live in a house by a field where the sun burns like a ball of fire. Lucy has set her career aside in order to devote her life to the children, to their finely tuned routine, and to the house itself, which comforts her like an old, sly friend. But then a man calls one afternoon with a shattering message: his wife has been having an affair with Lucy's husband, Jake.

The revelation marks a turning point: Lucy and Jake decide to stay together, but make a special arrangement designed to even the score and save their marriage--she will hurt him three times. As the couple submit to a delicate game of crime and punishment, Lucy herself begins to change, surrendering to a transformation of both mind and body from which there is no return.

Told in dazzling, musical prose, *The Harpy* is a dark, staggering fairy tale, at once mythical and otherworldly and fiercely contemporary. It is a novel of love, marriage and its failures, of power, control and revenge, of metamorphosis and renewal."

[The Mystery of Mrs. Christie](#) by Marie Benedict

Sourcebooks Landmark (December 29, 2020)

"In December 1926, Agatha Christie goes missing. Investigators find her empty car on the edge of a deep, gloomy pond, the only clues some tire tracks nearby and a fur coat left in the car -- strange for a frigid night. Her World War I veteran husband and her daughter have no knowledge of her whereabouts, and England unleashes an unprecedented manhunt to find the up-and-coming mystery author. Eleven days later, she reappears, just as mysteriously as she disappeared, claiming amnesia and providing no explanations for her time away. The puzzle of those missing eleven days has persisted. With her trademark historical fiction exploration into the shadows of the past, acclaimed author Marie Benedict brings us into the world of Agatha Christie, imagining why such a brilliant woman would find herself at the center of such murky historical mysteries."

[The Other Bennet Sister](#) by Janice Hadlow

Henry Holt and Co. (March 31, 2020)

"What if Mary Bennet's life took a different path from that laid out for her in *Pride and Prejudice*? What if the frustrated intellectual of the Bennet family, the marginalized middle daughter, the plain girl who takes refuge in her books, eventually found the fulfillment enjoyed by her prettier, more confident sisters? This is the plot of *The Other Bennet Sister*, a debut novel with exactly the affection and authority to satisfy Austen fans. Ultimately, Mary's journey is like that taken by every Austen heroine. She learns that she can only expect joy when she has accepted who she really is. She must throw off the false expectations and wrong ideas that have combined to obscure her true nature and prevented her from what makes her happy. Only when she undergoes this evolution does she have a chance at finding fulfillment; only then does she have the clarity to recognize her partner when he presents himself--and only at that moment is she genuinely worthy of love. Mary's destiny diverges from that of her sisters. It does not involve broad acres or landed gentry. But it does include a man; and, as in all Austen novels, Mary must decide whether he is the truly the one for her. In *The Other Bennet Sister*, Mary is a fully rounded character--complex, conflicted, and often uncertain; but also vulnerable, supremely sympathetic, and ultimately the protagonist of an uncommonly satisfying debut novel."

[The Heiress: The Revelations of Anne de Bourgh](#) by Molly Greeley

William Morrow (January 5, 2021)

"As a fussy baby, Anne de Bourgh's doctor prescribed laudanum to quiet her, and now the young woman must take the opium-heavy tincture every day. Growing up sheltered and confined, removed from sunshine and fresh air, the pale and overly slender Anne grew up with few companions except her cousins, including Fitzwilliam Darcy. Throughout their childhoods, it was understood that Darcy and Anne would marry and combine their vast estates of Pemberley and Rosings. But Darcy does not love Anne or want her. After her father dies unexpectedly, leaving her his vast fortune, Anne has a moment of clarity: what if her life of fragility and illness isn't truly real? What if she could free herself from the medicine that clouds her sharp mind and leaves her body weak and lethargic? Might there be a better life without the medicine she has been told she cannot live without? In a frenzy of desperation, Anne discards her laudanum and

flees to the London home of her cousin, Colonel John Fitzwilliam, who helps her through her painful recovery. Yet once she returns to health, new challenges await. Shy and utterly inexperienced, the wealthy heiress must forge a new identity for herself, learning to navigate a “season” in society and the complexities of love and passion. The once wan, passive Anne gives way to a braver woman with a keen edge—leading to a powerful reckoning with the domineering mother determined to control Anne’s fortune . . . and her life.”

[These Violent Delights](#) by Chloe Gong

Margaret K. McElderry Books (November 17, 2020)

“The year is 1926, and Shanghai hums to the tune of debauchery. A blood feud between two gangs runs the streets red, leaving the city helpless in the grip of chaos. At the heart of it all is eighteen-year-old Juliette Cai, a former flapper who has returned to assume her role as the proud heir of the Scarlet Gang—a network of criminals far above the law. Their only rivals in power are the White Flowers, who have fought the Scarlets for generations. And behind every move is their heir, Roma Montagov, Juliette's first love...and first betrayal. But when gangsters on both sides show signs of instability culminating in clawing their own throats out, the people start to whisper. Of a contagion, a madness. Of a monster in the shadows. As the deaths stack up, Juliette and Roma must set their guns--and grudges--aside and work together, for if they can't stop this mayhem, then there will be no city left for either to rule.”

[This Time Next Year](#) by Sophie Cousens

G.P. Putnam's Sons (December 1, 2020)

“Their lives began together, but their worlds couldn't be more different. After thirty years of missed connections, they're about to meet again... Minnie Cooper knows two things with certainty: that her New Year's birthday is unlucky, and that it's all because of Quinn Hamilton, a man she's never met. Their mothers gave birth to them at the same hospital just after midnight on New Year's Day, but Quinn was given the cash prize for being the first baby born in London in 1990--and the name Minnie was meant to have, as well. With luck like that, it's no wonder each of her birthdays has been more of a disaster than the one before. When Minnie unexpectedly runs into Quinn at a New Year's party on their mutual thirtieth birthday, she sees only more evidence that fortune has continued to favor him. The gorgeous, charming business owner truly seems to have it all--while Minnie's on the brink of losing her pie-making company and her home. But if Quinn and Minnie are from different worlds, why do they keep bumping into each other? And why is it that each fraught encounter leaves them both wanting more?”

[The Twelve Dates of Christmas](#) by Jenny Bayliss

G.P. Putnam's Sons (October 13, 2020)

“When it comes to relationships, thirty-four-year-old Kate Turner is ready to say “Bah, humbug.” The sleepy town of Blexford, England, isn't exactly brimming with prospects, and anyway, Kate's found fulfillment in her career as a designer, and in her delicious side job baking for her old friend Matt's neighborhood café. But then her best friend signs her up for a dating agency that promises to help singles find love before the holidays. Twenty-three days until Christmas. Twelve dates with twelve different men. The odds must finally be in her favor... right? Yet with each new date more disastrous than the one before--and the whole town keeping tabs on her

misadventures--Kate must remind herself that sometimes love, like mistletoe, shows up where it's least expected. And maybe, just maybe, it's been right under her nose all along..."

***Written in the Stars* by Alexandria Bellefleur**

Avon (November 10, 2020)

"After a disastrous blind date, Darcy Lowell is desperate to stop her well-meaning brother from playing matchmaker ever again. Love--and the inevitable heartbreak--is the last thing she wants. So she fibs and says her latest set up was a success. Darcy doesn't expect her lie to bite her in the ass. Elle Jones, one of the astrologers behind the popular Twitter account, Oh My Stars, dreams of finding her soul mate. But she knows it is most assuredly not Darcy... a no-nonsense stick-in-the-mud, who is way too analytical, punctual, and skeptical for someone as free-spirited as Elle. When Darcy's brother--and Elle's new business partner--expresses how happy he is that they hit it off, Elle is baffled. Was Darcy on the same date? Because... awkward. When Darcy begs Elle to play along, she agrees to pretend they're dating to save face. But with a few conditions: Darcy must help Elle navigate her own overbearing family over the holidays and their arrangement expires on New Year's Eve. The last thing they expect is to develop real feelings during a fake relationship. But maybe opposites can attract when true love is written in the stars?"



Book descriptions provided by publishers.

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