

## 2021 Holiday Gift-Book Recommendations

by Catherine Lawrence  
[Midtown Scholar Bookstore](#), Harrisburg, PA

### HISTORY

**Hero of Two Worlds: The Marquis de Lafayette in the Age of Revolution** by Mike Duncan: From the renowned host of the *Revolutions* podcast comes the thrilling story of the Marquis de Lafayette's lifelong quest to defend the principles of liberty and equality.

**The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story** by Nikole Hannah-Jones: The New York Times Magazine's award-winning "1619 Project" issue reframed our understanding of American history by placing slavery and its continuing legacy at the center of our national narrative. This new book substantially expands on that work, weaving together eighteen essays that explore the legacy of slavery in present-day America with thirty-six poems and works of fiction that illuminate key moments of oppression, struggle, and resistance.

**When France Fell: The Vichy Crisis and the Fate of the Anglo-American Alliance** by Michael Neiberg: "The fall of France shattered the illusion that the United States could stay on the sidelines while Nazi Germany carved up Europe. Writing with clarity and verve, deep knowledge of French sources, and a keen eye for human foibles, Neiberg explains how the defeat of June 1940 transformed America's relationship with France and compelled a rethinking of America's world role. A smart and fresh analysis of Franco-American relations in the darkest hour of our long friendship." Neiberg is Professor of History and the inaugural Chair of War Studies at the US Army War College in Carlisle, PA.

**Our First Civil War: Patriots and Loyalists in the American Revolution** by H.W. Brands: From best-selling historian and Pulitzer Prize finalist H. W. Brands comes a gripping, page-turning narrative of the American Revolution that shows it to be more than a fight against the British: it was also a violent battle among neighbors forced to choose sides, Loyalist or Patriot.

### FICTION

**Matrix** by Lauren Groff: Cast out of the royal court by Eleanor of Aquitaine, deemed too coarse and rough-hewn for marriage or courtly life, seventeen-year-old Marie de France is sent to England to be the new prioress of an impoverished abbey, its nuns on the brink of starvation and beset by disease. Equally alive to the sacred and the profane, Matrix gathers currents of violence, sensuality, and religious ecstasy in a mesmerizing portrait of consuming passion, aberrant faith, and a woman that history moves both through and around. Lauren Groff's new novel, her first since *Fates and Furies*, is a defiant and timely exploration of the raw power of female creativity in a corrupted world.

**Crossroads** by Jonathan Franzen: A tour de force of interwoven perspectives and sustained suspense, its action largely unfolding on a single winter day, *Crossroads* is the story of a Midwestern family at a pivotal moment of moral crisis. Jonathan Franzen's gift for melding the small picture and the big picture has never been more dazzlingly evident.

**Cloud Cuckoo Land** by Anthony Doerr: Set in Constantinople in the fifteenth century, in a small town in present-day Idaho, and on an interstellar ship decades from now, Anthony Doerr's gorgeous third novel is a triumph of imagination and compassion, a soaring story about children on the cusp of adulthood in worlds in peril, who find resilience, hope—and a book. In *Cloud Cuckoo Land*, Doerr has created a magnificent tapestry of times and places that reflects our vast interconnectedness—with other species, with each other, with those who lived before us, and with those who will be here after we're gone.

**Klara and the Sun** by Kazuo Ishiguro: Once in a great while, a book comes along that changes our view of the world. This magnificent novel from the Nobel laureate and author of *Never Let Me Go* is “an intriguing take on how artificial intelligence might play a role in our futures...a poignant meditation on love and loneliness”

## MEMOIR

**Crying in H Mart** by Michelle Zauner: From the indie rockstar of Japanese Breakfast fame, and author of the viral 2018 New Yorker essay that shares the title of this book, this is an unflinching, powerful memoir about growing up Korean American, losing her mother, and forging her own identity.

## SELF-HELP

**Atlas of the Heart: Mapping Meaningful Connection and the Language of Human Experience** by Brené Brown: In her latest book, five-time #1 *New York Times* bestselling author Dr. Brené Brown writes, “If we want to find the way back to ourselves and one another, we need language and the grounded confidence to both tell our stories and to be stewards of the stories that we hear. This is the framework for meaningful connection.”

## CHILDREN'S

**Change Sings** by Amanda Gorman: In this stirring, much-anticipated picture book by presidential inaugural poet and activist Amanda Gorman, anything is possible when our voices join together. As a young girl leads a cast of characters on a musical journey, they learn that they have the power to make changes—big or small—in the world, in their communities, and in most importantly, in themselves.

**Bear is a Bear** by Jonathan Stutzman: A gorgeous, classic gift book about the enduring love between a little girl and her childhood friend, Bear, from popular author Jonathan Stutzman and Caldecott Medal-winning and #1 *New York Times* bestselling illustrator Dan Santat.

## POETRY

**I Hope This Finds You Well** by Kate Baer: The author of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *What Kind of Woman* returns with a collection of erasure poems created from notes she received from followers, supporters and detractors—an artform that reclaims the vitriol from online trolls and inspires readers to transform what is ugly or painful in their own lives into something beautiful. Baer is from Central PA.

## ROMANCE

**Wild Women: Women Who Dare** by Beverly Jenkins: A *USA Today* bestselling author's new novel about a female rancher after the Civil War. A reporter has come to Wyoming to do a story on doctors for his Black newspaper back east. He thinks Colton Lee will be an interesting subject...until he meets Colton's sister Spring. She runs her own ranch, wears denim pants instead of dresses, and is the most fascinating woman he's ever met. But Spring, who has overcome a raucous and scandalous past, isn't looking for, nor does she want, love. As their attraction grows, will their differences come between them or unite them for an everlasting love?

**Hana Khan Carries On** by Uzma Jalaluddin: For fans of "You've Got Mail," a young woman juggles pursuing her dream job in radio while helping her family compete with the new halal restaurant across the street. A sparkling new rom-com by the award-winning author of *Ayesha at Last*, a retelling of *Pride and Prejudice* set in the Toronto Muslim community. Sales are slow at Three Sisters Biryani Poutine, the only halal restaurant in the close-knit Golden Crescent neighborhood of Toronto. A radio-station intern, indie podcaster, and part-time waitress carries on a virtual friendship relationship with one of her podcast's listeners, then discovers he's the owner behind the upscale restaurant that's threatening to put Three Sisters out of business.