

**ADDITIONS TO 2011 BOOK DISCUSSION COLLECTION**

<b>Titles as of May 2011</b>	<b>author</b>	<b>pages</b>	<b>copies</b>	<b>large</b>	<b>audi</b>	<b>type</b>	<b>synopsis</b>
<b>Alice I Have Been</b>	<b>Benjamin</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Novel</b>	<b>Benjamin draws on one of the most enduring relationships in children's literature in her excellent debut, spinning out the heartbreaking story of Alice from Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. Her research into the lives of Charles Dodgson (aka Lewis Carroll) and the family of Alice Liddell is apparent as she takes circumstances shrouded in mystery and colors in the spaces to reveal a vibrant and passionate Alice. Born into a Victorian family of privilege, free-spirited Alice catches the attention of family friend Dodgson and serves as the muse for both his photography and writing. Their bond, however, is misunderstood by Alice's family, and though she is forced to sever their friendship, she is forever haunted by their connection as her life becomes something of a chain of heartbreaks. As an adult, Alice tries to escape her past, but it is only when she finally embraces it that she truly finds the happiness that eluded her. Focusing on three eras in Alice's life, Benjamin offers a finely wrought portrait of Alice that seamlessly blends fact with fiction.</b>
<b>Boardwalk Empire</b>	<b>Nelson</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>NF</b>	<b>This riveting and wide-reaching history explores the sordid past of Atlantic City—forever a freewheeling town long-dedicated to the fast buck—from the city's heyday as a Prohibition-era mecca of lawlessness to its rebirth as a legitimate casino resort in the modern era. A colorful cast of powerful characters, led by “Commodore” Kuehnle and “Nucky” Johnson, populates this stranger-than-fiction account of corrupt politics and the toxic power structure that grew out of guile, finesse, and extortion. Atlantic City's shadowy past—through its rise, fall, and rebirth—is given new light in this revealing, and often appalling, study of legislative abuse and organized crime.</b>

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<b>Breath: A Memoir</b>	<b>Mason</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Biograp</b>	<p>After contracting polio as a young girl Martha Mason of tiny Lattimore, North Carolina, lived a record sixty-one of her seventy-one years in an iron lung until her death in 2009, but she never let the 800-pound cylinder define her. The subject of a documentary film, an NPR feature, an ABC News piece, and a widely syndicated New York Times obituary, Martha enjoyed life, and people. From within her iron lung, she graduated first in her class in high school and at Wake Forest University, and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. She was determined to be a writer and, with her devoted mother taking dictation, she became a journalist—but had to give up her career when her father became ill. Still, Martha created for herself a vast and radiant world—holding dinner parties with the table pushed right up to her iron lung, voraciously reading, running her own household, and caring for her mother when she became ill with Alzheimer's and increasingly abusive to Martha. When voice-activated computers became available, Martha wrote <i>Breath</i>, in part as a tribute to her mother. "This book is her story," writes Anne Rivers Siddons in her preface, "told in the rich words of a born writer. That she told it is a gift to everyone who will read it. That she told it is also as near to a miracle as most are likely to encounter."</p>

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Confession (The)	Grisham	418	25	Y	Y	Suspens	<p>For every innocent man sent to prison, there is a guilty one left on the outside. He doesn't understand how the police and prosecutors got the wrong man, and he certainly doesn't care. Time passes and he realizes that the mistake will not be corrected: the authorities believe in their case and are determined to get a conviction. He may even watch the trial of the person wrongly accused of his crime. He is relieved when the verdict is guilty. He laughs when the police and prosecutors congratulate themselves. He is content to allow an innocent person to go to prison, to serve hard time, even to be executed. Travis Boyette is such a man. In 1998, in the small East Texas city of Sloan, he abducted, raped, and strangled a popular high school cheerleader. He buried her body so that it would never be found, then watched in amazement as police and prosecutors arrested and convicted Donté Drumm, a local football star, and marched him off to death row. Now nine years have passed. Travis has just been paroled in Kansas for a different crime; Donté is four days away from his execution. Travis suffers from an inoperable brain tumor. For the first time in his miserable life, he decides to do what's right and confess. But how can a guilty man convince lawyers, judges, and politicians that they're about to execute an innocent man?</p>

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Crooked Letter, Crooked Letter	Franklin	320	25	Y	Y	Suspens	<p>Rural Mississippi in the 1970s was rife with racial tension, but skin color didn't matter to boyhood companions Silas Jones and Larry Ott. Silas, the son of a poor, single black mother, and Larry, the child of white lower-middle-class parents, were both outsiders, Silas because of his color, Larry because he was quiet and a little odd, his nose always buried in horror novels. The young men's bond strengthened over time, until the night a pretty local girl went on a date with Larry to the drive-in movies and was never heard from again. No body was found and Larry never confessed, but that didn't keep the townspeople from suspecting him. Estranged from his friend, Silas heads off to college in Oxford, Mississippi, and more than 20 years later, returns to take a job as town constable. He sees no reason to contact Larry, who's settled into a lonely existence as a mechanic, unable to escape the relentless whispers and dirty looks. The disappearance of another girl brings the two former friends back together, forcing them to come to terms with buried secrets and dark truths. Edgar Award winner Franklin renders luminous prose and a cast of compelling characters in this moody, masterful entry.</p>
Cutting For Stone	Verghese	688	25	N	Y	Novel	<p>Abraham Verghese turns his formidable talents to fiction, mining his own life and experiences in a magnificent, sweeping novel that moves from India to Ethiopia to an inner-city hospital in New York City over decades and generations. Sister Mary Joseph Praise, a devout young nun, leaves the south Indian state of Kerala in 1947 for a missionary post in Yemen. During the arduous sea voyage, she saves the life of an English doctor bound for Ethiopia, Thomas Stone, who becomes a key player in her destiny when they meet up again at Missing Hospital in Addis Ababa. Seven years later, Sister Praise dies birthing twin boys: Shiva and Marion, the latter narrating his own and his brothers long, dramatic, biblical story set against the backdrop of political turmoil in Ethiopia, the life of the hospital compound in which they grow up and the love story of their adopted parents, both doctors at Missing. The boys become doctors as well and Vergheses weaving of the practice of medicine into the narrative is fascinating even as the story bobs and weaves with the power and coincidences of the best 19th-century novel.</p>

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Every Last One	Quindlen	299	25	Y	Y	Novel	<p>Unforeseen catastrophe and how we cope with it is fiction's raison d'être, yet few novelists can turn the innocent "before" and the shattered "after" into fiction as accessible, specific, authentic, graceful, touching, and radiant as Quindlen's. In her sixth magnetizing novel, we know early on that something horrible is going to happen in the Latham household, which we experience through the keen senses and swirling thoughts of Mary Beth. Contentedly married to an ophthalmologist (an ironic profession, given how many clues to the impending tragedy she and her husband fail to see), she runs a landscape design business and attends ardently to her children: beautiful and creative teen Ruby, and slightly younger twin sons, who are so unlike they barely seem related. Kiernan, Ruby's boyfriend, is also an integral part of the hectic, happy household. Mary Beth's narrative voice is not only reliable but also irresistible, and after she survives the unthinkable, her struggle to reconstruct her life evolves into a penetrating inquiry into the bewilderment of grief. But for all of Quindlen's bold and invaluable insights into anguish and recovery, what stands out most are her charming and insightful portrayals of mercurial, marvelous teenagers, her fluency in the complexity of family dynamics, and her deep understanding of mother love.</p>
Forgotten Garden (The)	Morton	560	25	Y	N	Novel	<p>A tiny girl is abandoned on a ship headed for Australia in 1913. She arrives completely alone with nothing but a small suitcase containing a few clothes and a single book—a beautiful volume of fairy tales. She is taken in by the dockmaster and his wife and raised as their own. On her twenty-first birthday, they tell her the truth, and with her sense of self shattered and very little to go on, "Nell" sets out to trace her real identity. Her quest leads her to Blackhurst Manor on the Cornish coast and the secrets of the doomed Mountrachet family. But it is not until her granddaughter, Cassandra, takes up the search after Nell's death that all the pieces of the puzzle are assembled. A spellbinding tale of mystery and self-discovery, The Forgotten Garden will take hold of your imagination and never let go.</p>

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<b>Game Change</b>	<b>Heilemann</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>NF</b>	<b>In 2008 , the presidential election became blockbuster entertainment. Everyone was watching as the race for the White House unfolded like something from the realm of fiction. The meteoric rise and historic triumph of Barack Obama. The shocking fall of the House of Clinton—and the improbable resurrection of Hillary as Obama’s partner and America’s face to the world. The mercurial performance of John McCain and the mesmerizing emergence of Sarah Palin. But despite the wall-to-wall media coverage of this spellbinding drama, remarkably little of the real story behind the headlines had been told—until now. In Game Change, John Heilemann and Mark Halperin pull back the curtains on the Obama, Clinton, McCain, and Palin campaigns. Based on hundreds of interviews with the people who lived the story, Game Change is a reportorial tour de force that reads like a fast-paced novel.</b>
<b>Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest (The)</b>	<b>Larsson</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Mystery</b>	<b>The stunning third and final novel in Stieg Larsson’s internationally best-selling trilogy. Lisbeth Salander—the heart of Larsson’s two previous novels—lies in critical condition, a bullet wound to her head, in the intensive care unit of a Swedish city hospital. She’s fighting for her life in more ways than one: if and when she recovers, she’ll be taken back to Stockholm to stand trial for three murders. With the help of her friend, journalist Mikael Blomkvist, she will not only have to prove her innocence, but also identify and denounce those in authority who have allowed the vulnerable, like herself, to suffer abuse and violence. And, on her own, she will plot revenge—against the man who tried to kill her, and the corrupt government institutions that very nearly destroyed her life. Once upon a time, she was a victim. Now Salander is fighting back.</b>

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<b>Glorious</b>	<b>McFadden</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Novel</b>	<p>After her sister's rape and her mother's death of a broken heart, Easter walked away from Waycross, Georgia, and spent most of the rest of her life trying to walk away from pain and hate. She'd witnessed a lynching, joined a traveling vaudeville show, and fallen in love with a heartless woman, before she eventually ended up in Harlem just on the brink of its renaissance. She is there when Marcus Garvey is enthraling crowds of black folks longing for a respite from racism in America, including her West Indian-born husband, and when striving writers are finding white benefactors. She joins in the ebb and flow of life in Harlem, rising and falling, sorting out her emotions and the sundry heartaches of life in her writing, until she is caught in a scandal that ends the glorious if unstructured life she has been living. <b>McFadden interweaves fiction with the historic period of the Harlem Renaissance in this novel about a woman's struggle against hate and disappointment.</b></p>
<b>Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet</b>	<b>Ford</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Novel</b>	<p>Henry Lee is a 12-year-old Chinese boy who falls in love with Keiko Okabe, a 12-year-old Japanese girl, while they are scholarship students at a prestigious private school in World War II Seattle. Henry hides the relationship from his parents, who would disown him if they knew he had a Japanese friend. His father insists that Henry wear an "I am Chinese" button everywhere he goes because Japanese residents of Seattle have begun to be shipped off by the thousands to relocation centers. This is an old-fashioned historical novel that alternates between the early 1940s and 1984, after Henry's wife Ethel has died of cancer. A particularly appealing aspect of the story is young Henry's fascination with jazz and his friendship with Sheldon, an older black saxophonist just making a name for himself in the many jazz venues near Henry's home. Other aspects of the story are more typical of the genre: the bullies that plague Henry, his lack of connection with his father, and later with his own son. Readers will care about Henry as he is forced to make decisions and accept circumstances that separate him from both his family and the love of his life.</p>

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<b>Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks (The)</b>	<b>Skloot</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Non-Fic</b>	<p>The “first immortal human cells,” code-named HeLa, have flourished by the trillions in labs all around the world for more than five decades, making possible the polio vaccine, chemotherapy, and many more crucial discoveries. But where did the HeLa cells come from? Science journalist Skloot spent 10 years arduously researching the complex, tragic, and profoundly revealing story of Henrietta Lacks, a 31-year-old African American mother of five who came to Johns Hopkins with cervical cancer in 1951, and from whom tumor samples were taken without her knowledge or that of her family. Henrietta died a cruel death and was all but forgotten, while her miraculous cells live on, “growing with mythological intensity.” Skloot travels to tiny Clover, Virginia; learns that Henrietta’s family tree embraces black and white branches; becomes close to Henrietta’s daughter, Deborah; and discovers that although the HeLa cells have improved countless lives, they have also engendered a legacy of pain, a litany of injustices, and a constellation of mysteries. Writing with a novelist’s artistry, a biologist’s expertise, and the zeal of an investigative reporter, Skloot tells a truly astonishing story of racism and poverty, science and conscience, spirituality and family driven by a galvanizing inquiry into the sanctity of the body and the very nature of the life force.</p>
<b>King's Speech (The)</b>	<b>Logue</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>NF</b>	<p>This official film tie-in is written by London Sunday Times journalist Peter Conradi and Mark Logue--grandson of Lionel Logue, one of the movie's central characters. It's the eve of World War II, and King Edward VIII has abdicated the throne of England to marry the woman he loves. Never has the nation needed a leader more. But the new monarch, George VI--father of today's Queen Elizabeth II--is painfully shy and cursed with a terrible stammer. How can he inspire confidence in his countrymen when he cannot even speak to them? Help arrives in speech therapist Logue, who not only is a commoner, but Australian to boot. Will he be able to give King George his voice? The King's Speech tells an inspiring tale of triumph over adversity and the unlikely friendship between a reluctant king and the charismatic subject who saved the throne.</p>



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<b>Major Pettigrew's Last Stand</b>	<b>Simonson</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Novel</b>	<b>In her charming debut novel, Simonson tells the tale of Maj. Ernest Pettigrew, an honor-bound Englishman and widower, and the very embodiment of duty and pride. As the novel opens, the major is mourning the loss of his younger brother, Bertie, and attempting to get his hands on Bertie's antique Churchill shotgun—part of a set that the boys' father split between them, but which Bertie's widow doesn't want to hand over. While the major is eager to reunite the pair for tradition's sake, his son, Roger, has plans to sell the heirloom set to a collector for a tidy sum. As he frets over the guns, the major's friendship with Jasmina Ali—the Pakistani widow of the local food shop owner—takes a turn unexpected by the major (but not by readers). The author's dense, descriptive prose wraps around the reader like a comforting cloak, eventually taking on true page-turner urgency as Simonson nudges the major and Jasmina further along and dangles possibilities about the fate of the major's beloved firearms. This is a vastly enjoyable traipse through the English countryside and the long-held traditions of the British aristocracy.</b>
<b>Out Stealing Horses</b>	<b>Petterson</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Novel</b>	<b>We were going out stealing horses. That was what he said, standing at the door to the cabin where I was spending the summer with my father. I was fifteen. It was 1948 and one of the first days of July.  Trond's friend Jon often appeared at his doorstep with an adventure in mind for the two of them. But this morning was different. What began as a joy ride on "borrowed" horses ends with Jon falling into a strange trance of grief. Trond soon learns what befell Jon earlier that day—an incident that marks the beginning of a series of vital losses for both boys. Set in the easternmost region of Norway, Out Stealing Horses begins with an ending. Sixty-seven-year-old Trond has settled into a rustic cabin in an isolated area to live the rest of his life with a quiet deliberation. A meeting with his only neighbor, however, forces him to reflect on that fateful summer.</b>

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Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake (The)	Bender	292	25	Y	Y	Novel	<p>Taking her very personal brand of pessimistic magical realism to new heights (or depths), Bender's second novel (following <i>An Invisible Sign of My Own</i>) careens splendidly through an obstacle course of pathological, fantastical neuroses. Bender's narrator is young, needy Rose Edelstein, who can literally taste the emotions of whoever prepares her food, giving her unwanted insight into other people's secret emotional lives—including her mother's, whose lemon cake betrays a deep dissatisfaction. Rose's father and brother also possess odd gifts, the implications of which Bender explores with a loving and detailed eye while following Rose from third grade through adulthood. Bender has been called a fabulist, but emerges as more a spelunker of the human soul; carefully burrowing through her characters' layered disorders and abilities, Bender plumbs an emotionally crippled family with power and authenticity. Though Rose's gift can seem superfluous at times, and Bender's gustative insights don't have the sensual potency readers might crave, this coming-of-age story makes a bittersweet dish, brimming with a zesty, beguiling talent.</p>

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<b>Postmistress (The)</b>	<b>Blake</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Novel</b>	<b>To open Blake's novel of World War II and the convergence of three strong women is to enter a slipstream, so powerful are its velocity, characters, and drama. How can you resist Frankie Bard, an American journalist of gumption and vision who is bravely reporting on the Blitz from London? Her distinctive voice and audacious candor are heard on radios everywhere on the home front, including Cape Cod, where Iris James, in love for the first time at 40, keeps things shipshape at a small-town post office. The third in Blake's triumvirate of impressive women, Emma, the waiflike wife of the town's doctor, is not as obvious a candidate for heroism until a tragedy induces her husband to join the war effort. As Frankie risks her life to record the stories of imperiled Jews, Iris and Emma struggle to maintain order as America goes reluctantly to war. Blake raises unsettling questions about the randomness of violence and death, and the simultaneity of experience—how can people frolic on a beach while others are being murdered? Matching harrowing action with reflection, romance with pathos, Blake's emotional saga of conscience and genocide is poised to become a best-seller of the highest echelon.</b>
<b>Room</b>	<b>Donoghue</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Novel</b>	<b>Five-year-old Jack has never known anything of life beyond Room, the 11-square-foot space he shares with his mother. Jack has learned to read, count, and process an imaginary world Outside through television. At night he sleeps in a wardrobe in case Old Nick comes to visit, bringing supplies and frightening intrusion. Worried about his curiosity and her own desperation, his mother reveals to Jack that the Outside is real and that they must escape. She tells him that she was kidnapped by Old Nick and has been held secluded in Room for seven years. Jack is brave enough to carry out their plan, and the two of them are compelled to adjust to life Outside, with its bright lights and noise and people touching. What is reconnection for his mother is discovery for Jack, who is soon overwhelmed by the changes in his mother and a world coming at him fast and furiously. Room is beautifully written as a first-person narrative from Jack's perspective, and within it, Donoghue has constructed a quiet, private, and menacing world that slowly unbends with a mother and son's love and determination.</b>

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<p><b>Thousand Autumns of Jacob De Zoet (The)</b></p>	<p><b>Mitchell</b></p>	<p><b>512</b></p>	<p><b>25</b></p>	<p><b>Y</b></p>	<p><b>Y</b></p>	<p><b>Novel</b></p>	<p><b>Two-time Booker finalist Mitchell applies his wide-ranging talents to this innovative historical epic. Dejima, an artificial island created as a trading outpost in Nagasaki Harbor, proves fertile ground for exploring intercultural relations, trust and betrayal, racial and gender boundaries, the search for identity, and unexpected love in a changing world. In 1799, when the Netherlands held a trade monopoly with isolationist Japan, Jacob de Zoet, a clerk for the Dutch East Indies Company, is charged with uncovering fraud in his predecessors' ledgers. As Jacob doggedly pursues an honest course, he becomes romantically intrigued by Orito Aibagawa, a gifted, disfigured midwife granted special permission to study on Dejima. Mitchell incorporates diverse styles, and he expertly adapts tone and dialogue to reflect his situations. In the main plotline, incisive commentary on decisions and unforeseen consequences filters through a jaunty, slang-filled tale in which Japanese and Dutchmen arrange public and private deals. Interlinked subplots offer creepy gothic drama, seafaring adventure, and race-against-time suspense. Despite the audacious scope, the focus remains intimate; each fascinating character—interpreter, herbalist, magistrate, slave—has the opportunity to share his or her story. Everything is patched together seamlessly and interwoven with clever wordplay and enlightening historical details on feudal Japan. First-rate literary fiction and a rousing good yarn, too.</b></p>

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