



THE BOOK NOOK

Classics in our collection

Willa Cather, *A Lost Lady* (fiction, shelved in Women's Studies)

"Marian Forrester is the symbolic flower of the Old American West. She draws her strength from that solid foundation, bringing delight and beauty to her elderly husband, to the small town of Sweet Water where they live, to the prairie land itself, and to the young narrator of her story, Neil Herbert. All are bewitched by her brilliance and grace, and all are ultimately betrayed. For Marian longs for "life on any terms," and in fulfilling herself, she loses all she loved and all who loved her. This, Willa Cather's most perfect novel, is not only a portrait of a troubling beauty, but also a haunting evocation of a noble age slipping irrevocably into the past."

"This beguiling and influential book is an overlooked gem, the book Jane Smiley in her introduction calls 'the Cather work that moves me the most.' Originally published in 1923, it followed on the success of Cather's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *One of Ours* and was held in high regard by F. Scott Fitzgerald who once admitted to H. L. Menken 'in comparison to *My Ántonia* and *The Lost Lady* [sic] it [*The Great Gatsby*, 1925] is a failure."

Harriett Doerr, *Stones for Ibarra* (fiction, shelved in Women's Studies)

Winner of the National Book Award for First Work of Fiction

"A very good novel indeed, with echoes of Gabriel García Márquez, Katherine Anne Porter, and even Graham Greene." (*The New York Times*)

"Richard and Sara Everton, just over and just under forty, have come to the small Mexican village of Ibarra to reopen a copper mine abandoned by Richard's grandfather fifty years before. They have mortgaged, sold, borrowed, left friends and country, to settle in this remote spot; their plan is to live out their lives here, connected to the place and to each other. The two Americans, the only foreigners in Ibarra, live among people who both respect and misunderstand them. And gradually the villagers—at first enigmas to the Evertons—come to teach them much about life and the relentless tide of fate."

"Doerr is a marvelous writer. Her observations are clear sighted, her writing spare but graceful, and she creates telling images. . . . A wonderful book." (*Publishers Weekly*)

John Fowles, *The Magus* (pbk fiction)

"Filled with shocks and chilling surprises, *The Magus* is a masterwork of contemporary literature. In it, a young Englishman, Nicholas Urfe, accepts a teaching position on a Greek island where his friendship with the owner of the island's most magnificent estate leads him into a nightmare. As reality and fantasy are deliberately confused by staged deaths, sensual encounters, and terrifying violence, Urfe becomes a desperate man fighting for his sanity and his life.

A work rich with symbols, conundrums and labyrinthine twists of event, *The Magus* is as thought-provoking as it is entertaining, a work that ranks with the best novels of modern times."

"Widely considered John Fowles's masterpiece, *The Magus* is "a dynamo of suspense and horror...a dizzying, electrifying chase through the labyrinth of the soul....Read it in one sitting if possible-but read it." (New York Times)

Ivan Doig, *This House of Sky: Landscapes of a Western Mine* (memoir, shelved in pbk fiction)

"A haunting, magnificently written memoir by Ivan Doig about growing up in the American West"

"Ivan Doig is the author of ten previous books. Seven are novels, including *English Creek* and *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*, and three are nonfiction, including this highly acclaimed memoir, which was a finalist for the National Book Award"

"Ivan Doig grew up in the rugged wilderness of western Montana among the shepherders and denizens of small-town saloons and valley ranches. What he deciphers from his past with piercing clarity is not only a raw sense of land and how it shapes us but also of the ties to our mothers and fathers, to those who love us, and our inextricable connection to those who shaped our values in our search for intimacy, independence, love, and family. A powerfully told story, *This House of Sky* is at once especially American and universal in its ability to awaken a longing for an explicable past."

E.M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (pbk fiction)

"A classic of modern fiction about colliding cultures—teeming with complexity, mystery, and menace."

"Hailed as one of the finest novels of the twentieth century and transformed into an Academy Award-winning film, *A Passage to India* hauntingly evokes India at the peak of the British colonial era, complete with the racial tension that underscores every aspect of daily life. Into this setting, Forster introduces Adela Quested and Mrs. Moor, British visitors to Chandrapore who, despite their strong ties to the elusive colonial community there, are eager for a more authentic taste of India. But when their fates tangle with those of Cecil Fielding and his local friend, Dr. Aziz, at the nearby Marabar Caves, the community of Chandrapore is split wide open and everyone's life—British and Indian alike—is inexorably altered."

Daniel Keyes, *Flowers for Algernon* (pbk fiction)

"Winner of both the Hugo and Nebula Awards, this is the powerful, classic story about a man who receives an operation that turns him into a genius . . . and introduces him to heartache. Charlie Gordon is about to embark upon an unprecedented journey. Born with an unusually low IQ, he has been chosen as the perfect subject for an experimental surgery that researchers hope will increase his intelligence—a procedure that has already been highly successful when tested on a lab mouse named Algernon."

Oliver La Farge, *Laughing Boy: A Navajo Love Story* (pbk fiction)

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize

"A romantic idyll played out in the rhythms and meanings of a vanished Navajo world."
(*Denver Post*)

"An enduring American classic, Oliver La Farge's award-winning first novel captures the essence of the Southwest in the early twentieth century."

"Laughing Boy is a model member of his tribe. Raised in old traditions, skilled in silver work, and known for his prowess in the wild horse races, he does the Navajos of *T'ó Tlakai* proud. But times are changing. It is 1914, and the first car has just driven into their country. Then, Laughing Boy meets Slim Girl—and despite her "American" education and the warnings of his family, he gives in to desire and marries her. As Laughing Boy and Slim Girl settle away from traditional villages—their different upbringings clashing within both their relationship and the ever-encroaching culture around them—each of their worlds are thrown into a heart-wrenching turmoil of love, honor, hope, and heritage."

"Compelling in its strength and simplicity, and its fidelity to the deepest impulses of human nature, *Laughing Boy* is an unprecedented look at both the Navajo culture and the enduring legacy of tradition and loss that all Americans share." (*New York Times*)

Alan Paton, *Cry, The Beloved Country* (pbk fiction)

"The greatest novel to emerge out of the tragedy of South Africa, and one of the best novels of our time." (*The New Republic*)

"A beautiful novel...its writing is so fresh, its projection of character so immediate and full, its events so compelling, and its understanding so compassionate that to read the book is to share intimately, even to the point of catharsis, in the grave human experience."
(*The New York Times*)

"An Oprah Book Club selection, *Cry, the Beloved Country*, was an immediate worldwide bestseller when it was published in 1948. Alan Paton's impassioned novel about a black man's country under white man's law is a work of searing beauty, the deeply moving story of the Zulu pastor Stephen Kumalo and his son, Absalom, set against the background of a land and a people riven by racial injustice. Remarkable for its lyricism, unforgettable for character and incident, this is a classic work of love and hope, courage and endurance, born of the dignity of man."

Wallace Stegner, *Angle of Repose* (pbk fiction)

"Wallace Stegner's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel is a story of discovery—personal, historical, and geographical."

"Confined to a wheelchair, retired historian Lyman Ward sets out to write his grandparents' remarkable story, chronicling their days spent carving civilization into the surface of America's western frontier. But his research reveals even more about his own life than he's willing to admit. What emerges is an enthralling portrait of four generations in the life of an American family."

"This book is considered by some to be Stegner's masterpiece. It's a great read that is largely based on the true story of a woman pioneer in the west when so many other books about this era tell the stories of men."

Stendhal, *The Charterhouse of Parma* (pbk fiction)

"*The Charterhouse of Parma* (1839) is a compelling novel of passion and daring, a classic with enduring popularity and power."

"Set at the beginning of the 19th-century in northern Italy, it traces the joyous but ill-starred amorous exploits of a handsome young aristocrat called Fabrice del Dongo. The novel's great achievement is to conjure up the excitement and romance of youth while never losing sight of the harsh realities which beset the pursuit of happiness."

"Headstrong and naïve, the young Italian aristocrat Fabrizio del Dongo is determined to defy the wrath of his right-wing father and go to war to fight for Napoleon. He stumbles on the Battle of Waterloo, ill-prepared, yet filled with enthusiasm for war and glory. Finally heeding advice, Fabrizio sneaks back to Milan, only to become embroiled in a series of amorous exploits, fuelled by his impetuous nature and the political chicanery of his aunt Gina and her wily lover. Judged by Balzac to be the most important French novel of its time, *The Charterhouse of Parma* is a compelling novel of extravagance and daring, blending the intrigues of the Italian court with the romance and excitement of youth."

Elizabeth von Arnim, *The Enchanted April* (pbk fiction)

"A recipe for happiness: four women, one medieval Italian castle, plenty of wisteria, and solitude as needed."

"The women at the center of *The Enchanted April* are alike only in their dissatisfaction with their everyday lives. They find each other—and the castle of their dreams—through a classified ad in a London newspaper one rainy February afternoon. The ladies expect a pleasant holiday, but they don't anticipate that the month they spend in Portofino will reintroduce them to their true natures and reacquaint them with joy. Now, if the same transformation can be worked on their husbands and lovers, the enchantment will be complete."

"*The Enchanted April* was a best-seller in both England and the United States, where it was a Book-of-the-Month Club selection, and set off a craze for tourism to Portofino. More recently, the novel has been the inspiration for a major film and a Broadway play."