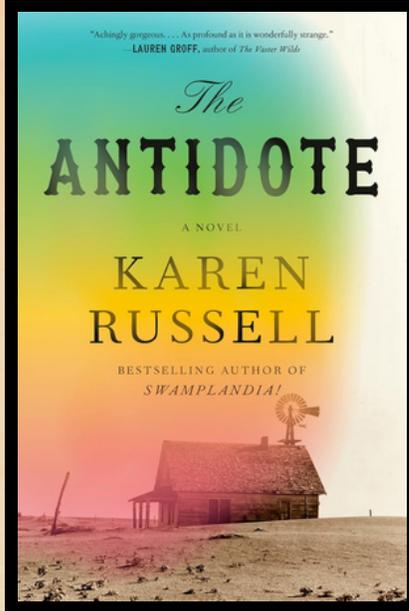


2025 Fall Book Club Bags

Contact Nicole at 308-233-3281 or
nwhipkey@kearneygov.org to reserve a title!

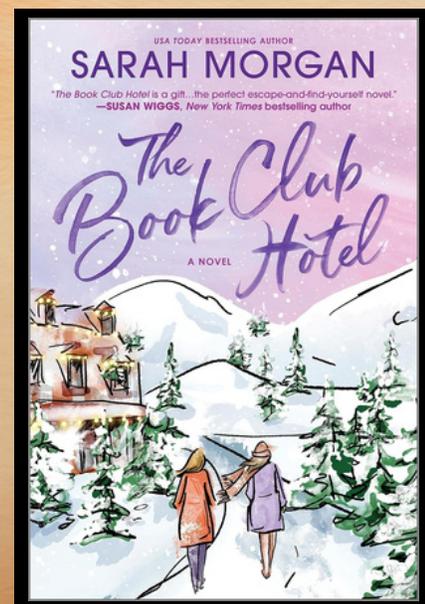


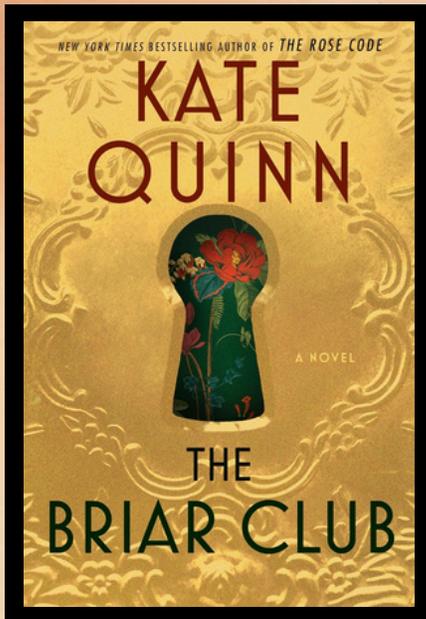
The Antidote opens on Black Sunday, as a historic dust storm ravages the fictional town of Uz, Nebraska. But Uz is already collapsing—not just under the weight of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl drought, but beneath its own violent histories. The Antidote follows a "Prairie Witch," whose body serves as a bank vault for peoples' memories and secrets; a Polish wheat farmer who learns how quickly a hoarded blessing can become a curse; his orphan niece, a basketball star and witch's apprentice in furious flight from her grief; a voluble scarecrow; and a New Deal photographer whose time-traveling camera threatens to reveal both the town's secrets and its fate.

Russell's novel is above all a reckoning with a nation's forgetting—enacting the settler amnesia and willful omissions passed down from generation to generation, and unearthing not only horrors but shimmering possibilities. *The Antidote* echoes with urgent warnings for our own climate emergency, challenging readers with a vision of what might have been—and what still could be.

With its historic charm and picture-perfect library, the Maple Sugar Inn is considered the winter destination. As the holidays approach, the inn is fully booked with guests looking for their dream vacation. But widowed far too young, and exhausted from juggling the hotel with being a dedicated single mom, Hattie Coleman dreams only of making it through the festive season.

But when Erica, Claudia and Anna—lifelong friends who seem to have it all—check in for a girlfriends' book club holiday, it changes everything. Their close friendship and shared love of books have carried them through life's ups and downs. But Hattie can see they're also packing some major emotional baggage, and nothing prepares her for how deeply her own story is about to become entwined in theirs. In the span of a week over the most enchanting time of the year, can these four women come together to improve each other's lives and make this the start of a whole new chapter?

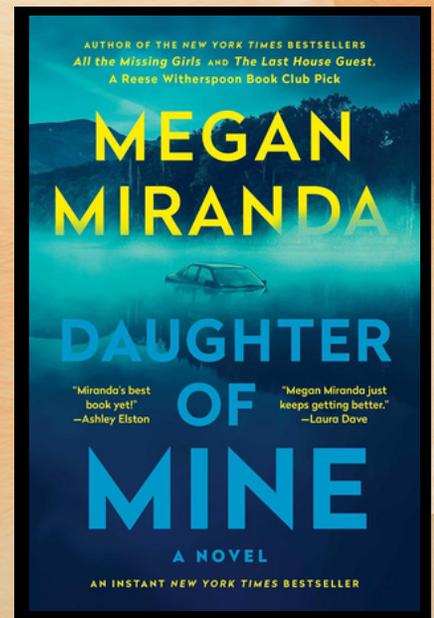




Washington, D.C., 1950. Everyone keeps to themselves at Briarwood House, a down-at-the-heels all-female boardinghouse in the heart of the nation's capital, where secrets hide behind white picket fences. But when the lovely, mysterious widow Grace March moves into the attic, she draws her oddball collection of neighbors into unlikely friendship: poised English beauty Fliss whose facade of perfect wife and mother covers gaping inner wounds; police officer's daughter Nora, who is entangled with a shadowy gangster; frustrated baseball star Bea, whose career has ended along with the women's baseball league of WWII; and poisonous, gung-ho Arlene, who has thrown herself into McCarthy's Red Scare.

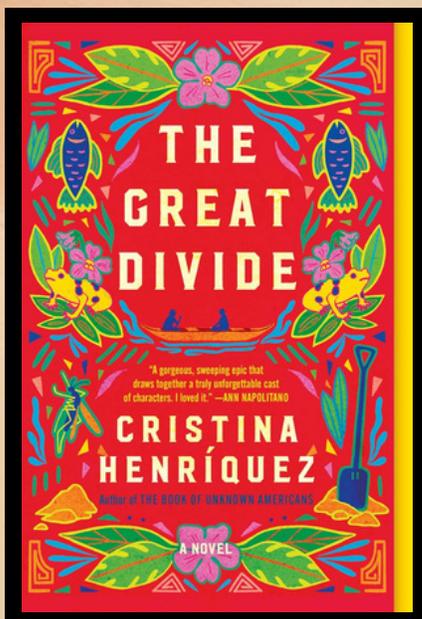
Grace's weekly attic-room dinner parties and window-brewed sun tea become a healing balm on all their lives, but she hides a terrible secret of her own. When a shocking act of violence tears apart the house, the Briar Club women must decide once and for all: Who is the true enemy in their midst?

When Hazel Sharp, daughter of Mirror Lake's longtime local detective, unexpectedly inherits her childhood home, she's warily drawn back to the town—and people—she left behind almost a decade earlier. But Hazel's not the only relic of the past to return: a drought has descended on the region, and as the water level in the lake drops, long-hidden secrets begin to emerge...including evidence that may help finally explain the mystery of her mother's disappearance.



- View all book club bag titles, synopses, and availability online.
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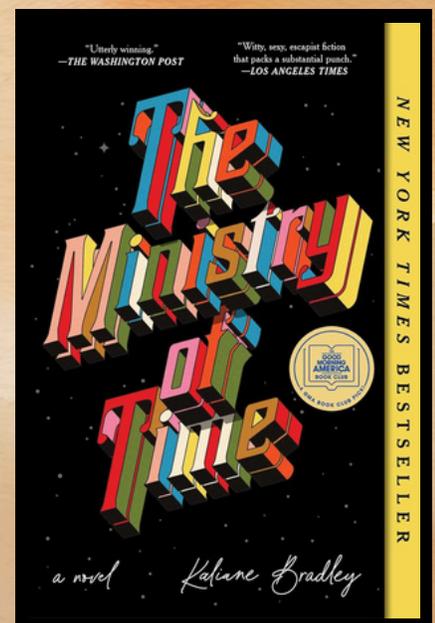
It is said that the Canal will be the greatest feat of engineering in history. But first, it must be built. Ada Bunting, a bold sixteen-year-old from Barbados, arrives alone in Panama as a stowaway alongside thousands of other West Indians seeking work in the grand building project of the Canal. Francisco, a local fisherman, resents the foreign nations clamouring for a slice of his country, but nothing is more upsetting for him than his son Omar's decision to work as a digger. For Omar, whose upbringing was quiet and lonely, this job offers a chance to finally find connection and independence. Scientist John Oswald has come from further afield. He has journeyed to Panama in pursuit of one goal: eliminating malaria. But everything hangs in the balance as his wife Marian falls ill herself. When John witnesses an act of bravery and compassion from Ada one day, he hires her on the spot as a caregiver for his wife.

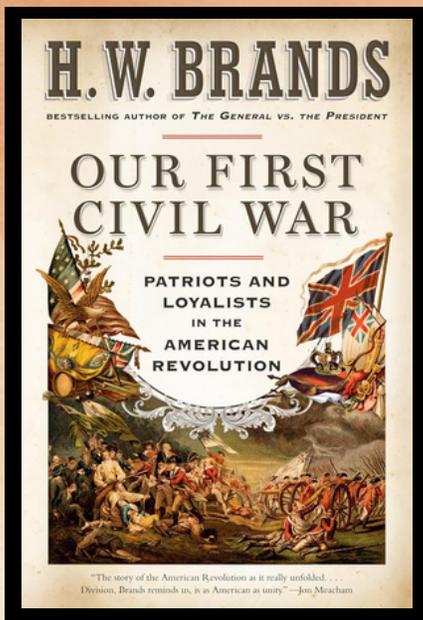
This fateful decision sets in motion a sweeping tale of ambition, loyalty, and sacrifice. Breathtaking and impossible to put down, *The Great Divide* explores the lives of the labourers, fishmongers, journalists, protesters, doctors and soothsayers who lived alongside the construction of the Canal - those rarely acknowledged by history even as they carved out its course.

In the near future, a civil servant is offered the salary of her dreams and is, shortly afterward, told what project she'll be working on. A recently established government ministry is gathering "expats" from across history to establish whether time travel is feasible—for the body, but also for the fabric of space-time.

She is tasked with working as a "bridge": living with, assisting, and monitoring the expat known as "1847" or Commander Graham Gore. As far as history is concerned, Commander Gore died on Sir John Franklin's doomed 1845 expedition to the Arctic, so he's a little disoriented to be living with an unmarried woman who regularly shows her calves, surrounded by outlandish concepts such as "washing machines," "Spotify," and "the collapse of the British Empire." But with an appetite for discovery, a seven-a-day cigarette habit, and the support of a charming and chaotic cast of fellow expats, he soon adjusts.

Over the next year, what the bridge initially thought would be, at best, a horrifically uncomfortable roommate dynamic, evolves into something much deeper. By the time the true shape of the Ministry's project comes to light, the bridge has fallen haphazardly, fervently in love, with consequences she never could have imagined. Forced to confront the choices that brought them together, the bridge must finally reckon with how—and whether she believes—what she does next can change the future.





What causes a man to forsake his country and take arms against it? What prompts others, hardly distinguishable in station or success, to defend that country against the rebels? That is the question H. W. Brands answers in his original new narrative history of the American Revolution.

George Washington and Benjamin Franklin were the unlikeliest of rebels. Washington in the 1770s stood at the apex of Virginia society. Franklin was more successful still, having risen from humble origins to world fame. John Adams might have seemed a more obvious candidate for rebellion, being of cantankerous temperament. Even so, he revered the law. Yet all three men became rebels against the British Empire that fostered their success.

William Franklin might have been expected to join his father, Benjamin, in rebellion but remained loyal to the British. So did Thomas Hutchinson, a royal governor and friend of the Franklins, and Joseph Galloway, an early challenger to the Crown. They soon heard themselves denounced as traitors--for not having betrayed the country where they grew up. Native Americans and the enslaved were also forced to choose sides as civil war broke out around them.

After the Revolution, the Patriots were cast as heroes and founding fathers while the Loyalists were relegated to bit parts best forgotten. *Our First Civil War* reminds us that before America could win its revolution against Britain, the Patriots had to win a bitter civil war against their sons and neighbors.

Sara Marsala barely knows who she is anymore after the failure of her business and marriage. On top of that, her beloved great-aunt Rosie passes away, leaving Sara bereft with grief. But Aunt Rosie's death also opens an escape from her life and a window into the past by way of a plane ticket to Sicily, a deed to a possibly valuable plot of land, and a bombshell family secret. Rosie believes Sara's great-grandmother Serafina, the family matriarch who was left behind while her husband worked in America, didn't die of illness as family lore has it . . . she was murdered.

Thus begins a twist-filled adventure that takes Sara all over the picturesque Italian countryside as she races to solve a mystery and prove her birthright. Flashing back to the past, we meet Serafina, a feisty and headstrong young woman in the early 1900s thrust into motherhood in her teens, who fought for a better life not just for herself but for all the women of her small village. Unsurprisingly it isn't long before a woman challenging the status quo finds herself in danger.

As Sara discovers more about Serafina she also realizes she is coming head-to-head with the same menacing forces that took down her great-grandmother. At once an immersive multigenerational mystery and an ode to the undaunted heroism of everyday women, *The Sicilian Inheritance* is an atmospheric, page-turning delight.

