

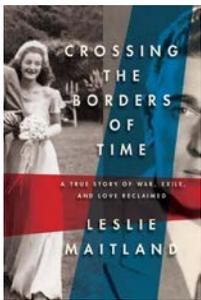
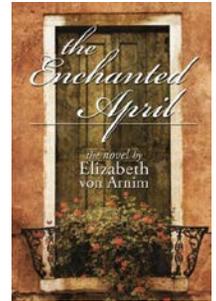
Love Stories . . . of all kinds

Fay Minor Bethany Books Talk Feb 14, 2014 & Gere Books Talk Feb 24, 2014

[The Enchanted April](#) by Elizabeth von Arnim (1923)

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 at San Salvatore 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. (Made into a movie in 1990.)

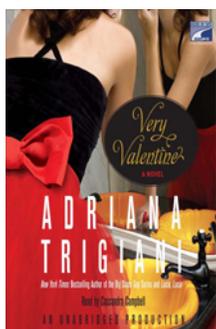
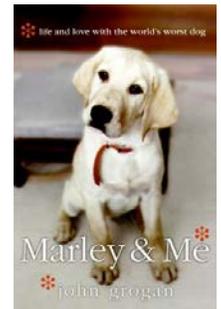


[Crossing the Borders of Time](#) by Leslie Maitland (2012)

Investigative reporter Leslie Maitland grew up enthralled by her mother's accounts of forbidden romance and harrowing flight from the Nazis. Her book is both a journalist's vivid depiction of a world at war and a daughter's pursuit of a haunting question: what had become of the handsome Frenchman whose picture her mother continued to treasure almost fifty years after they parted? It is a tale of memory made real and a story of undying love that crosses the borders of time.

[Marley & Me](#) by John Grogan (2005)

The heartwarming and unforgettable story of a family and the wondrously neurotic dog who taught them what really matters in life.

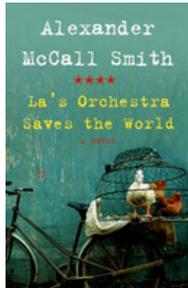
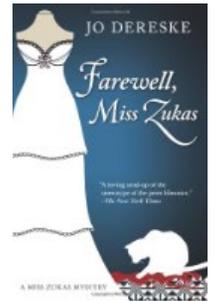


[Very Valentine](#) by Adriana Trigiani (Feb. 2009)

The family-owned Angelini Shoe Company where Valentine Roncalli and her grandmother work is going under. The small business, started by her late grandfather in 1903, is best known for handcrafting beautiful wedding shoes. Valentine vows to continue the family legacy and enters the shop in a design contest at a well-known department store. Amidst her struggles, Valentine meets an Italian chef. Just when she thinks he might be “the one,” she is sent to Tuscany on a buying trip and becomes entranced by the charm and sophistication of Italy, and another romantic options in the person of Gianluca, one of her grandmother's business associates.

Farewell, Miss Zukas by Jo Dereske (2011)

This is the reported final episode of a series about librarian/super sleuth, Helma Zukas. She has just accepted the oft-repeated proposals of marriage from Bellehaven (WA) Chief of Police, Wayne Gallant, when a robbery/death at her mother and aunt's apartment draws her into one more (will it be the last?) case. Ties to the Zukas' roots in Lithuania add ethnic flavor to this wry and whimsical mystery.



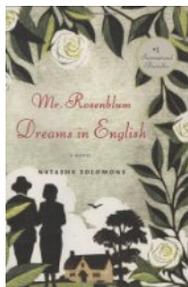
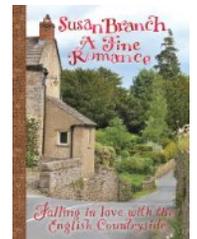
La's Orchestra Saves the World by Alexander McCall Smith (2008)

A heart-warming stand alone novel about the life-affirming powers of music and company during a time of war.

When Lavender, La to her friends, moves to the Suffolk countryside, it's not just to escape the London Blitz but also to flee the wreckage of a disastrous marriage. But as she starts to become a part of the community, she detects a sense of isolation. Her deep love of music and her desire to bring people together inspire her to start an orchestra. Little did she know that through this orchestra she would not only give hope and courage to the people of the community, but also that she would meet a man, Feliks, a shy upright Pole, who would change her life forever.

A Fine Romance by Susan Branch (2013)

Part love story, part travel guide, it is a hand-written and watercolored personal travel journal. Travel with Susan as she makes her way through wildflower hedgerows to visit the homes and gardens of her literary and artistic heroes including Beatrix Potter and Jane Austen. It's a travel guide that will help you with your own trip, lovely for the armchair traveler because Susan really does take you there, and it's perfect for all Downton Abbey anglophiles.

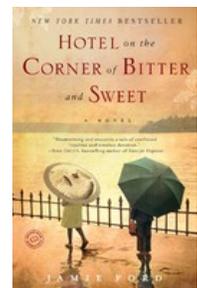


Mr. Rosenblum Dreams in English by Natasha Solomons (2011)

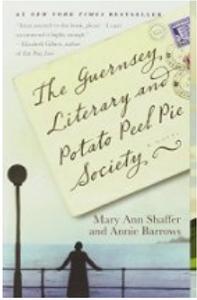
At the outset of World War II, Jack Rosenblum and his family escape Berlin for London. Jack embraces the welcome pamphlet instructing immigrants how to act like "the English." He acquires Saville Row suits and a Jaguar. But one key item – membership in a golf club – remains elusive. So Jack hatches a **wild idea: he'll build his own.** Jack's wife, Sadie, does not share this obsession. She wants to cook her mother's recipes and remember the families they left behind.

Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet by Jamie Ford (2009)

Ford's debut concerns Henry Lee, a Chinese-American in Seattle who, in 1986, has just lost his wife to cancer. After Henry hears that the belongings of Japanese immigrants interned during WWII have been found in the basement of the Panama Hotel, the narrative shuttles between 1986 and the 1940s in a story that chronicles the losses of old age and the bewilderment of youth. Henry recalls the difficulties



of life in America during WWII, when he and his Japanese-American school friend, Keiko, wandered through wartime Seattle. Keiko and her family are later interned in a camp, and Henry, horrified by America's anti-Japanese hysteria...

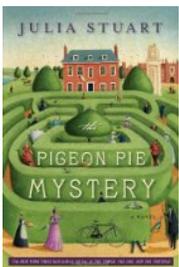
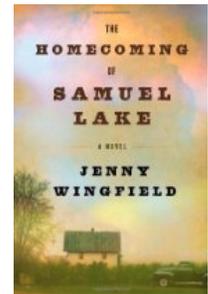


[The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society](#) by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows (2008)

From Bookmarks Magazine – “Traditional without seeming stale, and romantic without being naïve” (*San Francisco Chronicle*), this epistolary novel, based on Mary Ann Shaffer’s painstaking, lifelong research, is an homage to booklovers and a nostalgic portrayal of an era. As her quirky, loveable characters cite the works of Shakespeare, Austen, and the Brontës, Shaffer subtly weaves those writers’ themes into her own narrative. However, it is the tragic stories of life under Nazi occupation that animate the novel and give it its urgency; furthermore, the novel explores the darker side of human nature without becoming maudlin. Most critics agree that, with its humor and optimism, *Guernsey* “affirms the power of books to nourish people during hard times” (*Washington Post*).

[The Homecoming of Samuel Lake](#) by Jenny Wingfield (2011)

A rural heart-warmer set in 1956 southern Arkansas with a teeming cast of memorable characters and an often heartbreaking story line. When he loses his latest pulpit, idealistic Methodist preacher Samuel Lake, his lovingly pragmatic wife Willadee and their three spunky kids move in with Willadee's newly widowed mother Calla Moses, on what used to be the family farm. As the family reaches out to neighbors in need, especially one small boy, their lives are forever altered.



[The Pigeon Pie Mystery](#) by Julia Stuart (2012)

When Indian Princess Alexandrina – nickname “Mink” – is left penniless by the sudden death of her father, Queen Victoria grants her a grace-and-favor home in Hampton Court Palace. Though it’s rumored to be haunted, Mink and her lady’s maid, Pooki, have no choice but to take the Queen up on her offer and join the palace’s eccentric collection of guests. But when a reviled General-Major dies after eating a pie Pooki made, it makes her the number one suspect in a murder investigation.

Other possibilities:

They Came Like Swallows by William Maxwell (1937)

Beatrix Potter Cottage series by Susan Wittig Albert

Dorothy Sayers – Lord Peter Wimsey mystery series