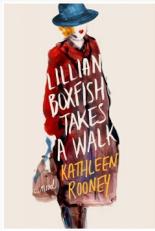


# Lillian Boxfish Takes a Walk



[view in catalog](#)

*Solvitur Ambulande*, solved by walking, could be the motto of this novel. And if you, like me, process the world while strolling through town or the woods, you'll love this book.

Two alternating stories thread through it. In one, it's the 1980s, and New York City still has a crime problem, so people fear walking at night. Most, that is, except for Lillian Boxfish, an octogenarian advertising maven (retired) and a poet. It's New Year's 1985, and a ten-mile, round trip walk from upper Manhattan to the Bowery and the Village is no big deal for her.

The second story first-time novelist Kathleen Rooney weaves tells Lillian's history in the Big Apple. After moving to New York from D.C. in the roaring twenties, Lillian immediately felt at home. She began living in Manhattan in a sheltered rooming house with strict curfews and rules against male visitors. Lillian and her childhood girlfriend got around these rules by organizing Shakespearean theater pieces to which they invited eligible bachelors. Later, they'd head out on the town with them, and coming back hours after curfew, they'd tip the front desk person, and steal back to their rooms. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on March 1, 2017

[Lillian Boxfish Takes a Walk: A Novel](#)

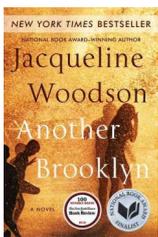
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# Another Brooklyn



[view in catalog](#)

The helplessness and friendships of childhood are topics that many writers have tackled. Fewer have written about African-American girlhood, as Woodson does here. The book centers on August, the intelligent young girl who leaves the lush south for the vibrant and dangerous streets of Bushwick, Brooklyn.

“For a long time my mother wasn’t dead yet.” This sentence opens the novel, which doesn’t proceed chronologically, but follows an inner lyric pulse. Throughout, the whereabouts of August’s missing mother haunt the story.

August’s family lived in Tennessee on a farm called SweetGrove land. It was inherited from her grandparents. After their uncle, Clyde, a Vietnam soldier dies, her mother begins to unravel. Soon, her father rushes north with August and her little brother to Brooklyn, his home town.

It's summer--so for safety, August's father locks her and her little brother, who is only five, inside their third-story apartment. They spend long summer days watching children play on the street: double-Dutch, stick ball games and splashing under open fire hydrants. A colorful parade of adults wearing dashikis and other colorful outfits weave past. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on January 31, 2017

[Another Brooklyn](#)

[African American](#)

[Female Friendships](#)

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## **Britt-Marie Was Here**

[view in catalog](#)

Confession: I'm not much of an audio book junkie. In fact, I seldom listen to one unless it is the only copy of a book available, but Joan Walker's funny and poignant rendition of this Scandinavian novel entranced me.

I couldn't wait to get back to the poor, out of the way Swedish town of Borg--football crazy and poor--where most of the inhabitants were racing to sell their homes and leave after the 2008 financial crises. How did a middle-aged wife who had not worked outside the home or travelled anywhere end up in Borg?

Well, first her husband of four decades began an affair with a much younger woman. So Britt-Marie decided to leave him. When she went to the employment agency, there were no jobs, so she returned the next day and cooked for the young lady who worked there a lovely salmon dinner. Britt was nothing if not persistent. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on December 19, 2016

[Britt-Marie Was Here](#)

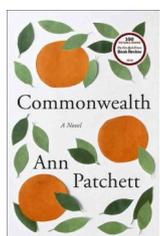
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## **Commonwealth**



[view in catalog](#)

Fifty per cent of all North American children experience the divorce of their parents. Talented author Ann Patchett explores her own family's divorce in this novel, altered, of course, as all fiction is.

A chance meeting at a 1960s christening causes two families to divide and then merge in new ways. The novel jumps around in the lives of the Cousinses and Keatings. Fix Keating is a Los Angeles cop, and Bert Cousins, an attorney who moves to Virginia. When Cousins falls hard for Keating's wife, Beverly, at the christening, two families are forever tied though they end up living across the continent from each other.

The novel proceeds from the perfectly realized christening--where many of the guests are cops and the families of cops, and many of the partiers get drunk including some of the children, to one lakeside

vacation where the blended children of the two families seek their own adventures while their parent and step-parent laze away in bed until mid-afternoon. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on December 6, 2016

[Commonwealth](#)

[Family Relationships](#)

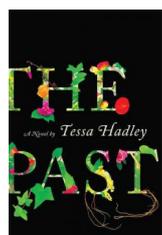
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## The Past



[view in catalog](#)

This novel is a dense, rich celebration of an English family, first in the present time, then in the past--the late 60s and early 70s.

In the first half, four siblings: Harriet, Alice, Roland, and Jane meet at the old family homestead near the sea for a family reunion. The house is being sold, and it will be their last time together at their childhood home.

Accompanying them, are children (Jane's), a new South American wife (Roland's--his third), a young friend, and son of a former lover (Alice's), and all alone, (Harriet).

In the siblings' idiosyncratic fashion, Harriet arrives first; she leaves the house locked and goes wandering in the forest. Alice arrives with Kasim, and then realizes, what she has done, brought an eighteen-year old to a place with nothing going on. Roland calls and says there will be delay, and that he and Pilar will arrive on Sunday.

Alice runs through the house, throwing open windows, picking and placing beautiful bouquets in each of the adults' room, while Jane, the mom, practically begins cooking the evening meal as her two children, Ivy and Arthur explore.

Privately, Jane and Harriet discuss whether Kazim is more than a friend to wild, actress Alice. Kazim reads on the porch terribly bored. But on Sunday when Roland, Pilar and Molly, Roland's sixteen year old daughter, arrive. Kazim immediately perks up at Molly's appearance. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on August 18, 2016

[The Past: A Novel](#)

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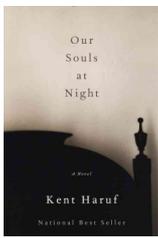
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## Our Souls at Night



[view in catalog](#)

This moving book describes a love affair late in life. It's set in the fictional county of Holt, Colorado. One day Addie Moore visits her neighbor Louis. Louis almost falls off his chair when she asks him if he will come to her house and sleep with her that night. To share conversation, Addie adds, "not sex." Shortly after their night visits have begun (pajamas and toothbrush, paper bag will travel), Louis asks Addie, "Why me?" She answers with a question, do you think I'd just invite anyone. Because you're a good man, that's why I chose you.

Haruf, writes laconically, the kind of conversation you might expect from a man raised in a small agricultural town two hours east of Colorado Springs. Yet he succeeds masterfully at tackling the deep subjects: love, death, marriage, the friction between adult children and their parents. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on July 27, 2016

[Our Souls at Night: A Novel](#)

[Friendship](#)

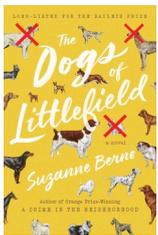
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## The Dogs of Littlefield



[view in catalog](#)

Something is happening to the dogs of Littlefield, Mass. Is someone poisoning them or does the blame fall on something more supernatural? A cast of delightful, small-town characters suffers through this travesty as circumstance and personality pit one against each other.

It begins with the posting of warnings: pet-owners should not let their dogs roam free in the park. The signs start off politely, then denigrate into meaner advice: "Leash your beast or else." Then a white bull-mastiff is found poisoned in the park woods. Soon the aldermen schedule a meeting to discuss two diametrically-opposed proposals: ban all dogs from the park, or create a leash-free area for the dogs to play and have freedom.

Littlefield, long on the top ten list of best small communities to live in America, appears to be coming apart in myriad ways. Most of the teens and adults have therapists. The veneer of social niceness quickly disappears. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on June 21, 2016

[The Dogs of Littlefield: A Novel](#)

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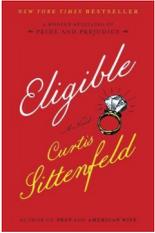
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# Eligible



[view in catalog](#)

What do jogging, hate sex, cross fit gyms, and reality TV have to do with Jane Austen? Don't be so 19<sup>th</sup> century. So what if Austen is rolling over in her grave. Sittenfeld has made a delightful pastiche of *Pride and Prejudice*, much more to my fiction-reading tastes than *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*.

In this reimagined version of the classic, it's 2013 and the Bennet family has relocated to a spider-infected old Tudor in an upscale neighborhood of Cincinnati. Country club lunches, anyone?

The five unmarried daughters still ground the story although all of them have turned very 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Even Mrs. Bennet has been modernized, she's now a shopaholic busybody. However, she still remains in determined pursuit of worthy husbands (rich, upper class) for her daughters.

Jane and Liz have flown the nest for New York City where gentle Jane teaches yoga, and Liz, writes for the entertainment mag, *Mascara*. She also sleeps with her married boyfriend. At thirty-nine, Jane has given up on finding a man, and has begun *in vitro* fertilization treatments in the hopes of having a child.

Alas, no wedding bells in the offing for both Jane and Liz. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on June 13, 2016

[Eligible](#)

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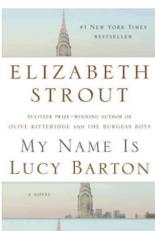
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# My Name is Lucy Barton



[view in catalog](#)

If you ever worried as a child about bringing other children home from school and their possible reaction to your home and family life, this book will resonate with you. If you ever reconnected with a close relative after a long absence, ditto.

Lucy Barton had a pretty horrific childhood: dirt-poor for many years the family lived in an actual garage without running water. And not only was there little money, food, or clothes, but her parents provided little emotional sustenance.

Strout takes you deep into the mind and heart of her protagonist, a young mother in her twenties, recently hospitalized after an operation. Lucy is happily married with two young children whom she feels she has abandoned because of her illness. She also is a new writer, proud of her work, but still not at ease calling herself an author.

The present time of the book occurs in a New York City hospital where Lucy is amazed to see her mother, who's come all the way from Iowa to take care of her daughter. But this is so out of character for her, that Lucy can scarcely believe she has arrived. Neither parent has ever visited Lucy before and neither attended her wedding. At his one meeting with their future son-in-law, Lucy's father flipped out because her fiancée was German. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on June 1, 2016

[My Name is Lucy Barton: A Novel](#)

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## The Nest



[view in catalog](#)

Tolstoy's quote from Anna Karenina applies to this book: "All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way."

*The Nest* is about three generations of Plumbs: Francie, the matriarch, the middle generation that consists of Leo, Bea, Jack, and Melody, plus two of their spouses, and Melody's two girls, the twins, Nora and Louise.

At novel's opening we find Leo, the eldest, who long ago made a bundle on a trendy magazine, and has just been released from rehab, wandering through Central Park trying to score some drugs.

The twins, who are playing hooky from their senior year SAT prep class, watch as their uncle falls to the ground. They decide not to rescue him because he will most likely tell their mom, Melody, where he saw them, thus getting them into trouble.

At that very moment, Leo was supposed to be attending a family lunch. It's about the nest, which is the money their Dad set aside for them in trust that comes due at Melody's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. The elder Mr. Plumb wanted his kids to inherit something but not a grand inheritance, nothing that would create havoc in their lives or make them too dependent on his money. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on May 12, 2016

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