

# Fangirl



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Over Christmas after a Griffy walk, gift-giving and catching a new flick, I picked up this this YA book about a Nebraska college freshman obsessed with writing fan fiction. Now if you don't know what that is? I didn't until a patron explained it to me a couple of years ago--it's a new trend where people (mostly young) write new endings, beginnings, and middles, sequels and prequels for books they love in the style of the author.

"Fan Fiction is what literature might look like if it were reinvented from scratch after a nuclear apocalypse by a band of brilliant pop-culture junkies trapped in a sealed bunker," Lev Grossman said in *Time* magazine. Cath loves the Simon Snow series--magical fantasy--and the book includes many postings from the invented FanFixx.net where her tag-name is Magicath.

But when Cath enters college, life gets complicated. First of all, her twin Wren decides not to room with her. And Wren already abandoned fan fiction as too juvenile for a college student. Do you notice the wordplay in the twins' names? Their parents had expected one child whom they planned to call Catherine. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on December 26, 2013

[Fangirl](#)

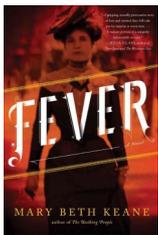
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# Dispelling Dark Myths



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Did you ever hear the story of 'Typhoid Mary' as a child? I remember a gaggle of us neighborhoods kids scaring each other with stories of the woman whose myth lived long after she died. It's not a person we learned about in school, yet just the mention of her name culled up disease, darkness and death. That's one reason I was happy to come across this sympathetic portrait of an Irish-American woman who was much maligned by the press.

Not a biography, this fictional account relies on many true-to-life details to make its story highly believable. Young Mary Mallon emigrated from Ireland at age fifteen to stay with an aunt. She soon went to work and started as a laundress--hot dirty work that offered no hope of advancement. Being smart and clever, Mary noticed that the cooks were paid much more and had more freedom. She also liked the creative aspect of crafting fine meals for the wealthy of early 1900s New York City.

Mary got her big break as a substitute cook, and she turned one success into a career. By the time she was 17, she received an excellent summer gig in Oyster Bay, but unfortunately fever swept through the summer place leaving the baby she loved and several other members of the household dead. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on December 3, 2013

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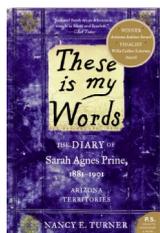
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## Read-A-Likes for *These Is My Words: the Diary of Sarah Agnes Prine, 1881-1901, Arizona Territories* by Nancy Turner



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In August 2013, the Books Plus library book club read the book *These Is My Words: the Diary of Sarah Agnes Prine, 1881-1901, Arizona Territories* by Nancy Turner. The book is very loosely based on her grandmother's memories of moving to the Arizona Territory and what life was like there on the frontier. Fast paced and character driven, the author brings to life the hardships of ranching before electricity and cars. Sarah is a no nonsense woman who survives and thrives through happy times and sad.

Other books featuring pioneer women include:

*A Lantern in Her Hand* by Bess Streeter Aldrich. Written in 1928, this has become an American classic and was a best seller at the time of publication. The story is also based on the author's ancestor, in this case her mother who traveled by covered wagon to Nebraska in 1865. Another woman who was not broken by hardship and strife on the great plains.

*Boone's Lick* by Larry Mc Murtry. Beginning in 1865, Mary Margaret Cecil is ready to call it quits? with her freight hauler husband, but first she has to find him. With her extended family of kids, Pa, brother-in-law and others, they head West from Missouri.

And just for fun, *How the West Was Won* by Louis L'Amour. Noone writes sweeping sagas like L'Amour. You may remember the 1962 movie starring some of the biggest names of the day. It won three Oscars. The book is even better. Remember Linus Rawlings, survivor of Indian Country or Lilith Prescott who ran away from home and married a gambler. The book features many characters with great stories.

Compared with the challenges faced by these women, the stories in the books makes frozen computers, cars that won't start and clogged up drains seem like a minor inconvenience.

Posted by Luann D. on October 31, 2013

*These is My Words: The Diary of Sarah Agnes Prine, 1881-1901: Arizona Territories: A Novel*

[Fiction](#)

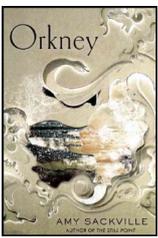
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## Bride of the Sea



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If you like the sea, especially bordering isolated northern islands, this novel might appear to you. It's atmospheric and literary with beautiful descriptions of the light, the beach and the Atlantic. Throughout the book, the sea is more threatening than warming.

It's also very similar to a modern fairy tale. A literature professor, who by the way studies fairy tales, falls in love with his young student. He invents an end-of-term party to get to know her better and then begins to date her. In fine restaurants, she is half-wild and licks her fingers and then his while eating lobster. She is mum about her past and her family. She often arrives with wet hair that is so blond it looks white; he later discovers that she has webbed feet. They marry, but without any family or friends to witness it. Her choice of a honeymoon spot is the wild Orkney coast where it is cold, rainy and remote. Richard is obsessed with his young wife who is never named. Instead of working on his new book, he gazes at her through their vacation cottage's wide windows. She spends most of her days outside wandering the beach or just watching the sea. Nights they have sex, and then she wakes up terrified by her dreams. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on October 31, 2013

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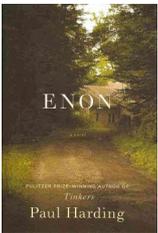
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## A Year of Loss



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Paul Harding's second novel after his Pulitzer-prize winning *Tinkers* is heartbreak of a novel. One Sunday in the lovely New England village of Enon, Charlie Crosby takes a solitary walk at a bird sanctuary. He had invited his 13 year-old daughter Kate but she chose to go swimming instead with her girlfriend. That afternoon while she is biking home from the lake, a distracted mother runs over her. Charlie's life changes forever.

The first casualty of Kate's death is Charlie's marriage to Susan. Apparently, Kate had been the glue holding their union together, and when he is so overcome with grief that he can do nothing but lie on the couch and cry, his wife first begs for his help then gets angry.

Then in an intense moment of grief, wanting to feel real physical pain, he pounds the stairway wall and breaks his wrist. Susan takes him to the emergency room but a few days later leaves for her parent's house in Minnesota.

The novel is essentially focused on two characters, the village of Enon?it's presence is almost human and palpable--and Charlie, who has long studied the village's history. Charlie, who starts to abuse prescription drugs and alcohol, wanders the village mostly under cover of night. [Read more](#)

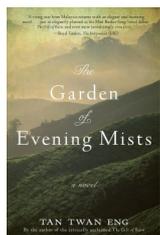
Posted by Dory L. on October 15, 2013

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## The Garden of Evening Mists



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This beautiful historical novel is set in an exotic place, rural Malaya, after World War II before it became the country of Malaysia. It's also one of the rare novels that is centered on a Japanese garden.

The narrator, Teoh Jun Ling, a woman of Straits Chinese heritage, has just retired from her career judging war criminal cases. Previous to that, she was a prisoner of war in a Japanese camp. In fact, she was the only person to survive; after being tortured there, she developed a great hatred for all things Japanese. Yet her dear sister, Yun Hong, who died at camp, always had a passion for Japanese gardens after she had visited the island nation as a child.

Yun Ling returns to the highlands to see old friends and also to visit the tea plantation of Yugiri where an ex-Japanese, Aritomo, has long worked a spectacular garden. Although she is repulsed at asking a favor from someone Japanese, she requests that Aritomo build a Japanese garden in her sister's memory.

He adamantly refuses. But then a few days later suggests an alternative. If she is willing to serve as his apprentice, he will teach her how to create her own. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on October 7, 2013

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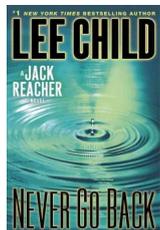
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## While You're Waiting For ?.. Never Go Back by Lee Child



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In this 17<sup>th</sup> Jack Reacher novel, Child gives his antihero some things to think about. He is on his way to D. C. to take Major Susan Turner to dinner, a first. When he arrives, she is in the brig and he is arrested on trumped up charges. In Jack Reacher style, they break out and head cross country to clear their names. Meanwhile a woman from his past is suing him for child support for his alleged daughter.

Lee Child's novels can be described as bleak, edgy, suspenseful, fast paced with complex plots and violent action. His hero, Jack Reacher, can be described as an introspective loner, tough and macho, but with a strong moral code. The following authors have similar heroes. Try some of these series? while you wait for Reacher.

[James Lee Burke](#) with hero Dave Robicheaux, [Michael Connelly](#) with hero Harry Bosch, [Barry Eisler](#) with hero John Rain, [Vince Flynn](#) with hero Mitch Rapp and [Stephen Hunter](#) with heroes Bob Lee Swagger and Ray Cruz.

Posted by Luann D. on September 26, 2013

[Never Go Back: A Jack Reacher Novel](#)

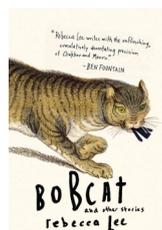
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## Bobcat and Other Stories



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If you like short stories don't skip this new collection, *Bobcat*. Rebecca Lee's stories about architects, matchmakers, academics, depressed children, a writer's spouse, and student plagiarists are absorbing and continually offer fresh surprises. Lee writes fluid yet beautiful prose that cuts immediately to the chase.

In the story 'Min,' the title character's father, Albert, works in Hong Kong to resettle Vietnamese refugees for the UN. One summer Min invites his college friend to visit Asia with him for the summer. Although they are close friends, Min and Sarah are not in love.

While there, Sarah discovers that the promised job that Albert has chosen for her is to find Min a wife. Sarah's only training is to read the notes Albert's mother left when she selected her own son's bride.

Here are a couple examples: 'Possibility' Midnight black hair, walk is like a leopard, carnal desires strong,? and 'Monkey woman, scurries through the day, loves confusion.' [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on September 21, 2013

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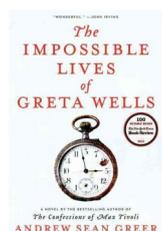
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## Many Eras, Many Lives



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Have you ever wondered how different you would have been if you'd lived during Napoleonic times, the First World War, or the Second? This novel explores how much the era a person lives in affects his or her personality, and choices in life.

In the autumn of 1985, Greta Wells loses her twin brother to AIDS. She's also been injured in a serious car accident that has also harmed her dear Aunt Ruth. Because Greta sloughs through a deep depression that will not lift, her psychiatrist recommends an old treatment that is becoming new again. Greta calls it electric shock therapy. Dr. Cerletti corrects her? It's called electric convulsive therapy.?

During my college years, I worked as a psychiatric aide at two mental hospitals, and I watched this procedure several times. It struck me as something medieval and horrifying, but luckily in [The Impossible Lives of Greta Wells](#), ECT is not described in great physical detail. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on September 11, 2013

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