OCTOBER

Personal Librarian by Marie Benedict and Victoria Murray. 347p, 4.5s Black historical fiction. In her twenties, Belle is hired by J. P. Morgan to curate a collection of rare manuscripts, books, and artwork for his newly built library. Belle must hide the fact that she is the daughter of the first Black graduate of Harvard. The book is inspired by the true story of a woman hired by JP Morgan who passes for white as she becomes Morgan’s trusted employee, moving in the highest circles as librarian and agent of his future museum.

NOVEMBER

Ten Days in a Mad-House: The Original 1887 Edition (Nellie Bly's Experience on Blackwell's Island) by Nelly Bly 4.4s. 104p. The book was based on articles written while Bly was on an undercover assignment for the New York World, feigning insanity at a women's boarding house, so as to be involuntarily committed to an insane asylum. She then investigated the reports of brutality and neglect at the Women's Lunatic Asylum on Blackwell's Island

DECEMBER

Last Apothecary by Sarah Penner 4.3s, 319p. Historical Mystery. In eighteenth-century London, a secret apothecary shop caters to an unusual kind of clientele. But the apothecary’s fate is jeopardized when her newest patron, a precocious twelve-year-old, makes a fatal mistake, sparking a string of consequences that echo through the centuries.

JANUARY

Telephone Tales by Gianni Rodari 4.6s, 212p. Young Adult. Every night, Mr. Bianchi, an accountant who often travels for work, calls his daughter, and tells her a bedtime story. But since it's still the 20th century world of pay phones, each story has to be told in the time that a single coin will buy. The seventy short stories are set in different place and time, with unconventional characters and a wonderful mix of reality and fantasy.

FEBRUARY

Age of Innocence by Edith Wharton 4.2s, 379p. Classic. Archer, an eligible young man from New York high society, is about to announce his engagement to May, a suitable match from a good family, when the beautiful and exotic Countess Ellen Olenska, is introduced into their circle. Written in 1920, Wharton’s Pulitzer Prize-winning novel about 1870s New York City, beautifully captures the complexities of passion, independence, and fulfillment, and how painfully hard it can be for individuals to truly see one another and their place in the world.

MARCH

Giver of Stars by JoJo Moyes. Women’s friendships; historical fiction. 400p, 4.6s. Alice marries a handsome American hoping to escape her stifling life in England.  But small-town Kentucky quickly proves equally claustrophobic, so when a call goes out for a team of women to deliver books as part of Eleanor Roosevelt’s new traveling library, Alice signs on. She and 4 other remarkable other women become known as the Packhorse Librarians of Kentucky. A novel about the real traveling librarians in the 1930’s in Appalachia.

APRIL

The Only Woman in the Room by Marie Benedict 4.4s, 336p. Her beauty saved her from the Nazis and led to marriage with an Austrian arms dealer. She fled in disguise from their castle and landed in Hollywood. She became Hedy Lamarr, screen star. She was also a scientist. With an idea that might help the country fight the Nazis and revolutionize modern communication...if anyone would listen to her. A powerful book based on the incredible true story of the glamour icon and scientist; this book is a masterpiece that celebrates the many women in science that history has overlooked.

MAY

Immigrant Voices: New Lives in America, 1773-2000 by Thomas Dublin 4.5s. 304p. The book includes a selection of letters from Irish immigrants fleeing the famine of the 1840s, writings from an immigrant who escaped the civil war in Liberia during the 1980s, and letters that crossed the U.S.-Mexico border during the late 1980s and early '90s. In this updated edition, Dublin shows the commonalities of the U.S. immigrant experience across lines of gender, nation of origin, race, and even time.