Benjamin, Melanie.  The Aviator’s Wife (2013) Covering the late twenties to the mid-sixties, featuring cameos from such notable characters as Joseph Kennedy and Amelia Earhart, The Aviator’s Wife is a vividly imagined novel of a complicated marriage. With stunning power and grace, Melanie Benjamin provides new insight into what made this remarkable relationship endure.

Bohjalian, Chris.  The Sandcastle Girls: A Novel (2012) Between April 1915 and April 1916, one and one-half million Armenians were killed by the Ottoman Empire during WWI. Bohjalian uses this as the backdrop for his novel. In spite of the loss and horror around them, two people fall desperately in love, and the woman makes profound discoveries about her ancestors and herself. This is a powerful and moving story based on real events seldom discussed.


Carter, Stephen L.  The Impeachment of Abraham Lincoln (2012) Carter draws on historical documents and a vivid imagination to render a fascinating mix of murder mystery, political thriller and courtroom drama.

Conklin, Tara.  The House Girl (2013) Moving between antebellum Virginia (1852) and modern-day New York (2004), this searing, suspenseful and heartbreaking tale of art and history, love and secrets, explores what it means to repair a wrong and asks whether truth is sometimes more important than justice.

Fowler, Therese. Z: A Novel of Zelda Fitzgerald (2013) Novelist Fowler (Exposure, 2011) considered it fate that she would write about Zelda, the wife of celebrated writer Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald: the author’s mother and the famous flapper passed away on the same day. Fowler renders rich period detail in this portrayal of a fascinating woman blessed—and cursed—by fame.

Godwin, Gail.  Flora (2013) Godwin presents a classic Southern tale charged with decorous yet stabbing sarcasm and jolting tragedy at the dawn of the atomic age.

Grindle, Lucretia.  Villa Triste (2013) Florence, 1943. Two sisters find themselves surrounded by terror and death; with Italy trapped under the heel of a brutal Nazi occupation, bands of partisans rise up. In the present day, a senior policeman agrees to oversee a murder investigation after it emerges the victim was once a partisan hero. He finds himself working to uncover a crime lost in the twilight of war, the consequences of which are as deadly today as they were over sixty years ago.

Helprin, Mark.  In Sunlight and in Shadow (2012) In this prodigious saga of exalted romance in corrupt, post-WWII New York, the author creates a supremely gifted and principled hero.

Keane, Mary Beth.  Fever (2013) In this compelling historical novel, the infamous Typhoid Mary is given great depth and humanity by the gifted Keane.

Mantel, Hilary.  Bring Up the Bodies (2012) The sequel to Wolf Hall (2009) takes the dramatic story of Thomas Cromwell, chief secretary to King Henry VIII, through the edge-of-your-seat events in the fall of Anne Boleyn, the monarch’s second and doomed consort.


Oates, Joyce Carol.  The Accursed (2013) Oates brings her dark humor and extraordinary fluency in eroticism and violence to this effective novel – set in Princeton, New Jersey, in the early years of the twentieth century – about the devastating toll of repression, prejudice, sexism and class warfare.

Rideout, Tanis.  Above All Things (2013) The Paris Wife meets Into Thin Air in this breathtaking debut novel of obsession and divided loyalties, which brilliantly weaves together the harrowing story of George Mallory’s ill-fated 1924 attempt to be the first man to conquer Mount Everest, with that of a single day in the life of his wife as she waits at home in England for news of his return.

Sepetys, Ruta.  Out of the Easy (2013) It’s 1950, and as the French Quarter of New Orleans simmers with secrets, seventeen-year-old Josie Moraine is silently stirring a pot of her own. Known among locals as the daughter of a brothel prostitute, Josie wants more out of life than the Big Easy has to offer.

Tekulve, Susan.  In the Garden of Stone (2013) Shortly before daybreak in War, West Virginia, a passing train derails and spills an avalanche of coal over sixteen-year-old Emma Palmisano’s house, trapping her sleeping family inside. The year is 1924. This is a haunting multi-generational saga of endurance and redemption.

Thomas, Sam.  The Midwife’s Tale (2013) It is 1644, and civil war has erupted in York, England. The author is a historian, and his period detail creates a vivid atmosphere. The strong female characters and action-packed plot will please historical-mystery readers.

Thompson, Victoria.  Murder in Chelsea (2013) In late 19th century NYC, a woman has inquired after an abandoned child that Sarah had taken as her daughter. When Malloy went to interview her, he’d learned she’d been murdered. The investigation leads Sarah and Malloy from the marble mansions of the Upper West Side to the dilapidated dwellings of lower Manhattan and into past deep and dark secrets.

Toibin, Colm.  The Testament of Mary (2012) This stunning interpretation of Mary, the mother of Jesus, is as beautiful in its presentation as it is provocative in its intention.

Tremain, Rose.  Merivel: A Man of His Time (2013) In this wonderful sequel to Restoration (1990), set 16 years later, Tremain’s lovingly flawed protagonist, Sir Robert Merivel, pens a second riveting memoir as King Charles II’s once glorious reign winds down.