

The Opposite of Fate - Amy Tan 416p

SEPTEMBER 11

Guide

<http://us.penguinroup.com/static/rguides/us/opposite_of_fate.html>

Amy Tan's collection of essays that spans her literary career, on a humorous note; she is troubled that her life and novels have become the subject of a "Cliff's Notes" abridgement. Reading the little yellow booklet, she discovers that her work is seen as complex and rich with symbolism. However, Tan assures her readers that she has no lofty, literary intentions in writing her novels--she writes for herself. This self-deprecating stance, coupled with Tan's own clarification of her intentions, makes *The Opposite of Fate* feel like an extended, private conversation with the author. Tan manages to find grace and frequent comedy in her sometimes painful life, and she takes great pleasure in being a celebrity. And "Angst and the Second Book" is a brutally honest, frequently hysterical reflection on Tan's self-conscious attempts to follow the success of *The Joy Luck Club*

A Complicated Kindness, by Miriam Toews 264p

OCTOBER 2

Guide

<<http://search.barnesandnoble.com/booksearch/isbninquiry.asp?z=y&ean=9781582433226&displayonly=RGG#RGG>>

This funny, darkly moving novel is the world according to Nomi Nickel, a vulnerable and defiant sixteen year old trapped in an isolated Mennonite community in rural Manitoba. It won the Governor General's Award and was a Giller Award Finalist in 2004.

Alchemist Daughter -- Katharine McMahon 352p

NOVEMBER 6

Guide

<<http://www.bookmovement.com/app/readingguide/view.php?ratings&readingGuideID=924>>

It's 1727, and 19-year-old Emilie Selden, cloistered since birth at Buckinghamshire's Selden Manor, is docile under the iron rule of her domineering father, John, a scientist by reputation and an alchemist by calling. Under his stern tutelage, Emilie, who narrates, studies nature using the same methods used by their hero, Sir Isaac Newton. While on the verge of formulating her own theory of air and fire, Emilie meets two men: Thomas Shales, a clergyman and natural philosopher who alienates John Selden as much through his regard for Emilie as through his disregard for alchemy, and Robert Aislabie, a London adventurer who calls at Selden Manor to gain the father's secrets and ends up taking the daughter's heart.

The Virgin's Lover Philippa Gregory 464 p

DECEMBER 4

Guide

<http://www.harpercollins.com.au/global_scripts/product_catalog/book_xml.asp?isbn=0007192789&tc=rg>

The story of Elizabeth I coming to the throne in 1558. While Elizabeth's life-long friend and love, Sir Robert Dudley, is thrilled by this, his wife, Amy, is not. Amy sees this as Elizabeth's chance to steal Robert by bending him to her will with the promise of power. Elizabeth knows she needs a strong prince to help govern. Will Robert set aside his marriage to Amy? When Amy is found dead, Elizabeth and Robert fight for their own survival.

Kalahari Typing School Alexander McCall Smith

JANUARY 4, 2007

Guide

<http://www.randomhouse.com/features/mccallsmith/books_kalahari_rgg.html>

The real appeal of this slender novel is Ramotswa's solid common sense, a proficient blend of folk wisdom, experience and simple intelligence. She is a bit of a throwback to the days of courtesy and manners. A dose of easy humor laces the pages.

The Sisters: The Saga of the Mitford Sisters Mary Lovell 640p

FEBRUARY 5, 2007

Guide

<<http://www.seniornet.org/php/readerguide.php?GuideID=29&Version=0&Font=0>>

In her history of England's Mitford sisters, who were major figures in the international political, literary and social scenes for much of the 20th century, Lovell rises with aplomb to the challenges of a group biography, deftly weaving together the narrative threads of six at times radically disparate lives to create a fascinating account of a fascinating family. Born into the ranks of the minor aristocracy and educated at home by eccentric and perennially cash-strapped parents, Nancy, Pamela, Diana, Unity, Jessica and Deborah Mitford hardly seemed the types whose exploits would generate endless fodder for the

sensationalist press. But when Diana left her wealthy young husband to take up with and eventually marry Sir Oswald Mosley, infamous leader of British fascism; when Unity became close friends with Adolf Hitler and a proponent of Nazism; when Jessica, a vocal Communist, eloped with a notorious cousin who was also a nephew of Winston Churchill; when Deborah married the Duke of Devonshire; and when both Nancy (*Love in a Cold Climate*) and Jessica (*The American Way of Death*) became acclaimed, bestselling authors, the world responded with avid, insatiable and at times alarmingly intrusive curiosity.

March Geraldine Brooks 288 p.

MARCH 5, 2007 Guide

<<http://search.barnesandnoble.com/booksearch/isbninquiry.asp?z=y&ean=9780143036661&displayonly=RGG>>

During the dark first year of the Civil War, one man leaves behind his family to aid the Union cause. His experiences will utterly change his marriage and challenge his most ardently held beliefs. From Louisa May Alcott's beloved classic *Little Women*, Geraldine Brooks has taken the character of the absent father, Mr March, who has gone off to war leaving his wife and daughters to make do in mean times. To evoke his voice, she turned to the letters and journals of Bronson Alcott, Louisa May's father, a friend and confidant of Emerson and Thoreau.

Broken for You Stephanie Kallos 400 p

APRIL 2, 2007 Guide

<http://www.bookbrowse.com/reading_guides/detail/index.cfm?book_number=1477>

Margaret Hughes is in her 70s and lives alone in a Seattle mansion with her valuable antiques. Wanda Schultz is a young, sad woman searching for her wandering boyfriend. Both women have secrets, but when they meet and decide to live together, they become friends. This novel is full of eccentric characters and is proof that, "the tiniest repair jobs can right the world's wrongs."

God Don't Like Ugly -- Mary Monroe 340p

MAY 7, 2007 Guide

<<http://www.literaryessence.com/GodDontLikeUglyQuestions.htm>>

In using a young girl's innocent voice to narrate, Monroe recounts a tale of extreme hardship with a hopeful, uplifting tone. Annette Goode, born in the racist South of the 1950s, is the heroine of Monroe's strong second novel (after *The Upper Room*), a coming-of-age journey depicted with wit, poignancy and bite. Up until 1963, when 13-year-old, overweight Annette Goode meets beautiful Rhoda Nelson, only daughter of the Richland, Ohio, town undertaker, Annette's life has been a nightmare.

The Glass Castle -- Jeannette Walls 304p

JUNE 4, 2007 Guide

<<http://www.bookmovement.com/app/readingguide/view.php?ratings&readingGuideID=897>>

The Glass Castle is the saga of the restless, indomitable Walls family, led by a grand eccentric and his tempestuous artist wife. Jeannette Walls has survived poverty, fires, and near starvation to triumph. She has written this amazing tale with honesty and love.

A Girl Named Zippy – Growing Up Small in Mooreland, Indiana Haven Kimmel 282p **JULY 2,** Guide

<http://www.bookbrowse.com/reading_guides/detail/index.cfm?book_number=756>

In this first book, Kimmel has written a love letter to her hometown of Mooreland, IN, a town with an unchanging population of 300 in America's heartland.

The Accidental By Ali Smith 320 P

AUGUST 6, 2007 **Guide Not Yet Available**

Smith's work is absolutely original, with a trademark quirky style, with whole passages that seem to have been bound into the wrong book and occasional historical asides completely outside the narrative line. Don't be fooled; with Smith, every word has a purpose.

Amber is the catalyst who makes the novel happen. She appears on the doorstep of the Smart's rented summer cottage in Norfolk, England, barefoot and unexpected. Eve Smart, a third-rate author suffering writer's block, believes that she is a friend of her husband's. Michael is a womanizing University professor, but he doesn't usually drag his quarry home. He thinks that she must be a friend of Eve's. Everyone is politely confused and Amber is invited to dinner. She is a consummate liar and manipulator who manages to seduce everyone in the family in some significant way.