

Little Black Book of Stories

A.S. Byatt

FIC BYATT

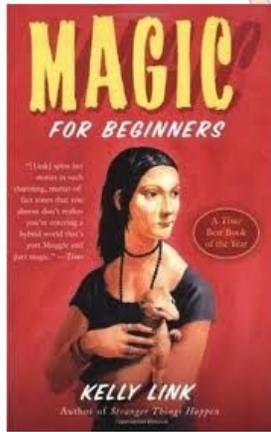
Leaves rustle underfoot in a dark wood; two middle-aged women walk into a forest, as they did when they were girls, confronting their childhood fears and memories and the strange thing they saw so long ago. A man meets the ghost of his living wife; a woman turns to stone. These unforgettable stories are by turns haunting, funny, sparkling, and scary. Offering shivers along with magical thrills, Byatt's Little Black Book adds a deliciously dark note to her skill in mixing folk and fairy tales with everyday life.

Magic For Beginners

Kelly Link

FIC LINK

Call it kitchen sink magical realism: Fantastic and bizarre but funny and down to earth, there is something for everyone. An all-night convenience store's regular customers include zombies and a beautiful woman who drives a car full of ghost dogs. Some middle-aged guys in a basement playing cards call up one of those phone lines and listen to a little-girl's voice tell about how one of them is being haunted by many versions, at different ages, of his ex-wife. Each of these stories is much stranger than it sounds.



Magical Realism:

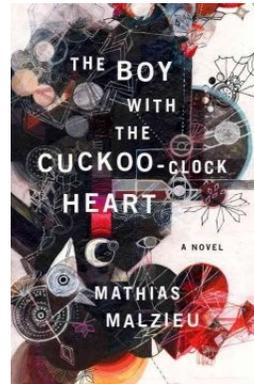
Stories Where Magic And Reality Intertwine

The Boy With the Cuckoo-Clock Heart

Mathias Malzieu

FIC MALZIEU

Edinburgh, 1874. Born with a frozen heart, Jack is near dead when his mother abandons him to the care of Dr. Madeleine, who saves Jack by placing a cuckoo clock in his chest. Jack grows up in her orphanage, amid tear-filled flasks, eggs containing memories, and a man with a musical spine. Dr. Madeleine warns Jack that his heart is too fragile, that he must never fall in love.

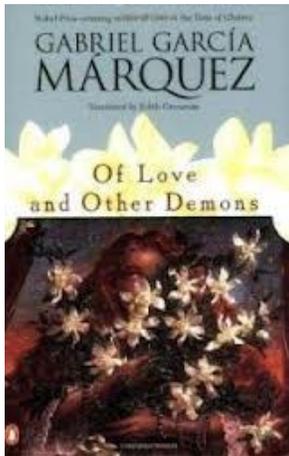
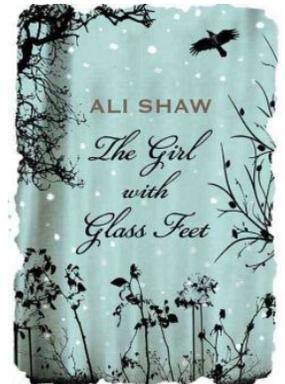


The Girl With the Glass Feet

Ali Shaw

FIC SHAW

After a visit to a remote, snowbound archipelago where unusual winged creatures flit about, Ida Maclaird begins to turn into glass, and she must get help from Midas Crook, a young loner and native to the islands, if she is to stop the transformation.



Of Love and Other Demons

Gabriel Garcia Marquez

FIC GARCIA

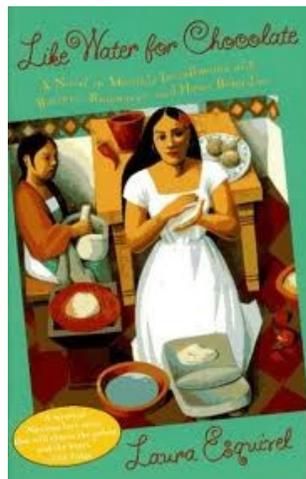
Amid the lush, coastal tropics of a South American seaport, an unruly, copper-haired girl and a bookish priest are caught in a chaste, ill-fated love affair. Compelling and unforgettable, this remarkable, bittersweet story of the doomed love affair set in the colonial era, follows the priest who, when hired to exorcize the young girl, realizes that she is not sick but instead horrified after living with superstitious nuns in their convent.

Like Water For Chocolate

Laura Esquivel

FIC ESQUIVEL

A romantic, poignant tale, touched with moments of magic, graphic earthiness, bittersweet wit - and recipes. A sumptuous feast of a novel, it relates the bizarre history of the all-female De La Garza family. Tita, the youngest daughter of the house, has been forbidden to marry, condemned by Mexican tradition to look after her mother until she dies. But Tita falls in love with Pedro, and he is seduced by the magical food she cooks. In desperation Pedro marries her sister Rosaura so that he can stay close to her.



Swamplandia!

Karen Russell

FIC RUSSELL

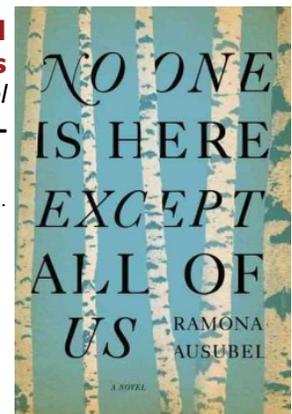
Swamplandia!, a gator-wrestling theme park, is being encroached upon by a competitor called the World of Darkness. The park's headliner, has just died. Ava, a resourceful but terrified 13-year-old, is left to manage 98 gators and her own grief. Her sister, Ossie, has fallen in love with a spooky character, who may or may not be a ghost, and her brother, Kiwi, has defected to a rival park called The World of Darkness.

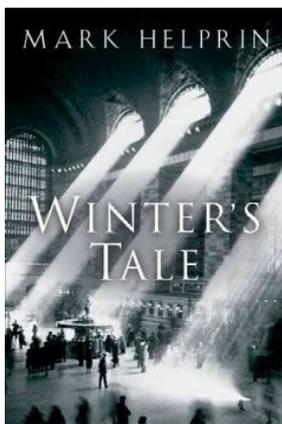
No One is Here Except All of Us

Ramona Ausubel

FIC AUSUBEL

In 1939, the families in a remote Jewish village in Romania feel the war close in on them. Danger is imminent in every direction. At the suggestion of an 11-year-old girl and a mysterious stranger who has washed up on the riverbank, the villagers decide to reinvent the world: deny any relationship with the known and start over from scratch. Time and history are forgotten. For years, there is boundless hope. But the real world continues to unfold alongside the imagined one, eventually overtaking it.



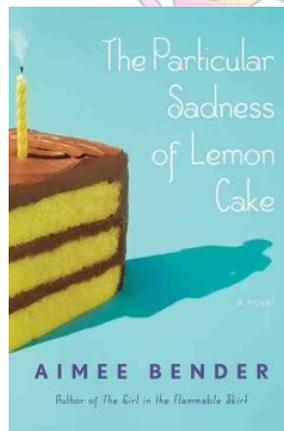


Winter's Tale

Mark Helprin

FIC HELPRIN

New York City is subsumed in arctic winds, dark nights, and white lights, its life unfolds, for it is an extraordinary hive of the imagination, the greatest house ever built, and nothing exists that can check its vitality. One night in winter, Peter Lake--orphan and master-mechanic, attempts to rob a fortress-like mansion on the Upper West Side. Though he thinks the house is empty, the daughter of the house is home. Thus begins the love between Peter Lake, a middle-aged Irish burglar, and Beverly Penn, a young girl, who is dying.



The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake

Aimee Bender

FIC BENDER

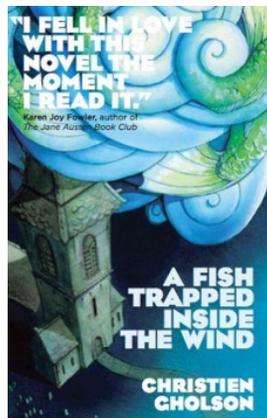
On her 9th birthday, unassuming Rose bites into her mother's homemade lemon cake and discovers she has a magical gift: she can taste her mother's emotions. She discovers this gift to her horror, for her cheerful, can-do mother, tastes of despair and desperation. Suddenly food becomes a threat to Rose. Her curse is the secret knowledge all families keep hidden--her mother's life outside the home, her father's detachment, her brother's clash with the world. Yet Rose learns to harness her gift and becomes aware that there are secrets even her taste buds cannot discern.

A Fish Trapped Inside the Wind

Christien Gholson

FIC GHOLSON

In a small town in Belgium on the morning of Saint Woeffred's festival, dead fish lie on the ground, scattered everywhere, as if blown in by the wind. The quarries that were once active now stand empty and will soon be used as toxic waste dumps. Are the fish a sign from the saint? Or simply a trick played by Contexture, the dance troupe who once stripped naked at the Vatican? Blending a realistic portrayal of communal life with elements of fantasy and surrealism this story narrates how six lives from this provincial town are changed forever.

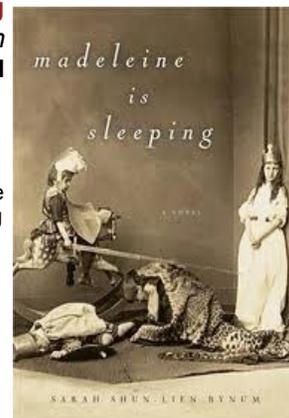


Madeleine is Sleeping

Sarah Shun Lien Bynum

FIC BYNUM

When a girl falls into an impenetrable sleep, the borders between her provincial French village and the peculiar realm of her dreams begin to disappear: A fat woman sprouts delicate wings and takes flight; a beautiful young wife grows to resemble her husband's violin. In their midst travels Madeleine, the dreamer, trying to make sense of her own metamorphosis. Part fairy tale, part coming-of-age, this enchanting novel follows Madeleine as she joins a gypsy circus, and falls into an unexpected triangle of desire and love.

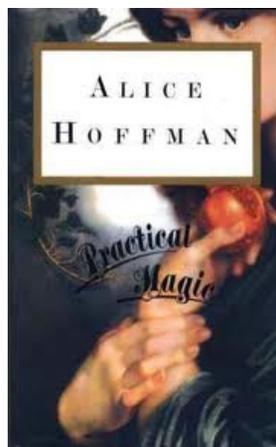


The Master and Margarita

Mikhail Bulgakov

FIC BULGAKOV

A masterpiece of black magic and black humor, the story follows the arrival of the Devil and his entourage in Stalin's Moscow. This event frames a Faustian tale of a suppressed writer (the Master) and his devoted lover (his Margarita), set against a realistic narrative--the Master's rejected manuscript--of Pontius Pilate's police state in Jerusalem.



Practical Magic

Alice Hoffman

FIC HOFFMAN

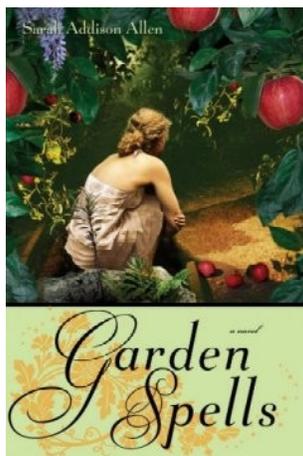
For more than two hundred years, the Owens women had been blamed for everything that went wrong in their Massachusetts town. Gillian and Sally endured that fate as well: as children, the sisters were outsiders, taunted and pointed at. Their elderly aunts almost seemed to encourage the whispers of witchery, with their musty house and their exotic concoctions and their crowd of black cats. But all Gillian and Sally wanted was to escape. One would do so by marrying, the other by running away. But the bonds they shared brought them back--almost as if by magic...

Garden Spells

Sarah Addison Allen

FIC ALLEN

The Waverleys have always been a curious family, endowed with peculiar gifts that make them outsiders even in their hometown. Even their garden has a reputation, famous for its feisty apple tree that bears prophetic fruit, and its edible flowers, imbued with special powers. Claire Waverley prepares dishes made with her mystical plants. Claire's rebellious sister, Sydney, fled the moment she could, abandoning Claire, as their own mother had years before. When Sydney suddenly returns home with a young daughter of her own, Claire's quiet life is turned upside down.



A Wild Sheep Chase

Haruki Murakami

FIC MURAKAMI

A marvelous hybrid of mythology and mystery. A twenty-something advertising executive receives a postcard from a friend, and casually appropriates the image for an insurance company's advertisement. What he doesn't realize is that included in the pastoral scene is a mutant sheep with a star on its back, and in using this photo he has unwittingly captured the attention of a man in black who offers a menacing ultimatum: find the sheep or face dire consequences. Quirky and utterly captivating.

