



## The Next Chapter: June 2021 Book Recommendations

### [\*Drunk: How We Sipped, Danced, and Stumbled Our Way to Civilization\*](#) by Edward Slingerland Little, Brown Spark (June 1, 2021)

“While plenty of entertaining books have been written about the history of alcohol and other intoxicants, none have offered a comprehensive, convincing answer to the basic question of why humans want to get high in the first place. *Drunk* elegantly cuts through the tangle of urban legends and anecdotal impressions that surround our notions of intoxication to provide the first rigorous, scientifically-grounded explanation for our love of alcohol. Drawing on evidence from archaeology, history, cognitive neuroscience, psychopharmacology, social psychology, literature, and genetics, Slingerland shows that our taste for chemical intoxicants is not an evolutionary mistake, as we are so often told. In fact, intoxication helps solve a number of distinctively human challenges: enhancing creativity, alleviating stress, building trust, and pulling off the miracle of getting fiercely tribal primates to cooperate with strangers. Our desire to get drunk, along with the individual and social benefits provided by drunkenness, played a crucial role in sparking the rise of the first large-scale societies. We would not have civilization without intoxication. From marauding Vikings and bacchanalian orgies to sex-starved fruit flies, blind cave fish, and problem-solving crows, *Drunk* is packed with fascinating case studies and engaging science, as well as practical takeaways for individuals and communities. The result is a captivating and long overdue investigation into humanity's oldest indulgence—one that explains not only *why* we want to get drunk, but also how it might actually be good for us to tie one on now and then.”

### [\*For the Wolf\*](#) by Hannah Whitten Orbit (June 1, 2021)

“As the only Second Daughter born in centuries, Red has one purpose—to be sacrificed to the Wolf in the Wood in the hope he'll return the world's captured gods. Red is almost relieved to go. Plagued by a dangerous power she can't control, at least she knows that in the Wilderwood, she can't hurt those she loves. Again. But the legends lie. The Wolf is a man, not a monster. Her magic is a calling, not a curse. And if she doesn't learn how to use it, the monsters the gods have become will swallow the Wilderwood—and her world—whole.”

### [\*Heaven: A Novel\*](#) by Mieko Kawakami (Author), Sam Bett (Translator), David Boyd (Translator) Europa Editions (May 25, 2021)

“Hailed as a bold foray into new literary territory, Kawakami's novel is told in the voice of a 14-year-old student subjected to relentless torment for having a lazy eye. Instead of resisting, the boy chooses to suffer in complete resignation. The only person who understands what he is going through is a female classmate who suffers similar treatment at the hands of her tormenters. These raw and realistic portrayals of bullying are counterbalanced by textured exposition of the philosophical and religious

debates concerning violence to which the weak are subjected. Kawakami's simple yet profound new work stands as a dazzling testament to her literary talent. There can be little doubt that it has cemented her reputation as one of the most important young authors working to expand the boundaries of contemporary Japanese literature.”

**[I Don't Forgive You](#) by Aggie Blum Thompson**

**Forge Books (June 8, 2021)**

“An accomplished photographer and the devoted mom of an adorable little boy, Allie Ross has just moved to an upscale DC suburb, the kind of place where parenting feels like a competitive sport. Allie’s desperate to make a good first impression. Then she’s framed for murder. It all starts at a neighborhood party when a local dad corners Allie and calls her by an old, forgotten nickname from her dark past. The next day, he is found dead. Soon, the police are knocking at her door, grilling her about a supposed Tinder relationship with the man, and pulling up texts between them. She learns quickly that she's been hacked and someone is impersonating her online. Her reputation—socially and professionally—is at stake; even her husband starts to doubt her. As the killer closes in, Allie must reach back into a past she vowed to forget in order to learn the shocking truth of who is destroying her life.”

**[Malibu Rising](#) by Taylor Jenkins Reid**

**Ballantine Books (June 1, 2021)**

“Malibu: August 1983. It’s the day of Nina Riva’s annual end-of-summer party, and anticipation is at a fever pitch. Everyone wants to be around the famous Rivas: Nina, the talented surfer and supermodel; brothers Jay and Hud, one a championship surfer, the other a renowned photographer; and their adored baby sister, Kit. Together the siblings are a source of fascination in Malibu and the world over—especially as the offspring of the legendary singer Mick Riva. The only person not looking forward to the party of the year is Nina herself, who never wanted to be the center of attention, and who has also just been very publicly abandoned by her pro tennis player husband. Oh, and maybe Hud—because it is long past time for him to confess something to the brother from whom he’s been inseparable since birth. Jay, on the other hand, is counting the minutes until nightfall, when the girl he can’t stop thinking about promised she’ll be there. And Kit has a couple secrets of her own—including a guest she invited without consulting anyone. By midnight the party will be completely out of control. By morning, the Riva mansion will have gone up in flames. But before that first spark in the early hours before dawn, the alcohol will flow, the music will play, and the loves and secrets that shaped this family’s generations will all come rising to the surface. *Malibu Rising* is a story about one unforgettable night in the life of a family: the night they each have to choose what they will keep from the people who made them . . . and what they will leave behind.”

**[One Last Stop](#) by Casey McQuiston**

**Griffin (June 1, 2021)**

“Cynical twenty-three-year old August doesn't believe in much. She doesn't believe in psychics, or easily forged friendships, or finding the kind of love they make movies about. And she certainly doesn't believe her ragtag band of new roommates, her night shifts at a 24-hour pancake diner, or her daily subway commute full of electrical outages are going to change that. But then, there's Jane. Beautiful, impossible

Jane. All hard edges with a soft smile and swoopy hair and saving August's day when she needed it most. The person August looks forward to seeing on the train every day. The one who makes her forget about the cities she lived in that never seemed to fit, and her fear of what happens when she finally graduates, and even her cold-case obsessed mother who won't quite let her go. And when August realizes her subway crush is impossible in more ways than one—namely, displaced in time from the 1970s—she thinks maybe it's time to start believing.”

**[Outline: A Novel](#) (Outline Trilogy, 1) by Rachel Cusk**

**Farrar, Straus and Giroux (January 13, 2015)**

“Rachel Cusk's *Outline* is a novel in ten conversations. Spare and stark, it follows a novelist teaching a course in creative writing during an oppressively hot summer in Athens. She leads her students in storytelling exercises. She meets other visiting writers for dinners and discourse. She goes swimming with an elderly Greek bachelor. The people she encounters speak, volubly, about themselves: their fantasies, anxieties, pet theories, regrets, and longings. And through these disclosures, a portrait of the narrator is drawn by contrast, a portrait of a woman learning to face a great loss. *Outline* is Cusk's finest work yet, and one of the most startling, brilliant, original novels of recent years.”

**[Second Place](#) by Rachel Cusk**

**Farrar, Straus and Giroux (May 4, 2021)**

“A haunting fable of art, family, and fate from the author of the *Outline* trilogy. A woman invites a famous artist to use her guesthouse in the remote coastal landscape where she lives with her family. Powerfully drawn to his paintings, she believes his vision might penetrate the mystery at the center of her life. But as a long, dry summer sets in, his provocative presence itself becomes an enigma—and disrupts the calm of her secluded household. *Second Place*, Rachel Cusk's electrifying new novel, is a study of female fate and male privilege, the geometries of human relationships, and the moral questions that animate our lives. It reminds us of art's capacity to uplift—and to destroy.”

**[The Missing Treasures of Amy Ashton](#) by Eleanor Ray**

**Gallery Books U.S. Edition (June 8, 2021)**

“Amy Ashton once dreamed of becoming an artist and creating beautiful objects. But now she simply collects them. Aquamarine bottles, bright yellow crockery, deep Tuscan red pots (and the odd slow-cooker) take up every available inch of space in her house. Having suffered a terrible tragedy—one she staunchly refuses to let herself think about, thank you very much—she's decided that it's easier to love things instead of people. But when a new family moves in next door with two young boys, one of whom has a collection of his own, Amy's carefully managed life starts to unravel, prompting her to question why she began to close herself off in the first place. As Amy embarks on a journey back into her past, she has to contend with nosy neighbors, a meddling government worker, the inept police, and a little boy whose love of bulldozers might just let Amy open up her heart—and her home—again. Quirky and charming, big-hearted and moving, *The Missing Treasures of Amy Ashton* proves that it's never too late to let go of the things that don't matter...and welcome the people who do.”

[\*\*\*The Ride of Her Life: The True Story of a Woman, Her Horse, and Their Last-Chance Journey Across America\*\*\*](#) by Elizabeth Letts

**Ballantine Books (June 1, 2021)**

“The incredible true story of a woman who rode her horse across America in the 1950s, fulfilling her dying wish to see the Pacific Ocean, from the #1 New York Times bestselling author of, *The Perfect Horse* and *The Eighty-Dollar Champion*. In 1954, Annie Wilkins, a sixty-three-year-old farmer from Maine, embarked on an impossible journey. She had no relatives left, she'd lost her family farm to back taxes, and her doctor had just given her two years to live--but only if she "lived restfully." He offered her a spot in the county's charity home. Instead, she decided she wanted to see the Pacific Ocean just once before she died. She bought a cast-off brown gelding named Tarzan, donned men's dungarees, loaded up her horse, and headed out from Maine in mid-November, hoping to beat the snow. She had no map, no GPS, no phone. But she had her ex-racehorse, her faithful mutt, and her own unfailing belief that Americans would treat a stranger with kindness. Between 1954 and 1956, Annie, Tarzan, and her dog, Depeche Toi, journeyed more than 4,000 miles, through America's big cities and small towns, meeting ordinary people and celebrities--from Andrew Wyeth (who sketched Tarzan) to Art Linkletter and Groucho Marx. She received many offers--a permanent home at a riding stable in New Jersey, a job at a gas station in rural Kentucky, even a marriage proposal from a Wyoming rancher who loved animals as much as she did. As Annie trudged through blizzards, forded rivers, climbed mountains, and clung to the narrow shoulder as cars whipped by her at terrifying speeds, she captured the imagination of an apprehensive Cold War America. At a time when small towns were being bypassed by Eisenhower's brand-new interstate highway system, and the reach and impact of television was just beginning to be understood, Annie and her four-footed companions inspired an outpouring of neighborliness in a rapidly changing world.”

[\*\*\*The Sweetness of Water\*\*\*](#) by Nathan Harris

**Little, Brown and Company (June 15, 2021) Oprah's Book Club Pick**

“In the waning days of the Civil War, brothers Prentiss and Landry, freed by the Emancipation Proclamation, seek refuge on the homestead of George Walker and his wife, Isabelle. The Walkers, wracked by the loss of their only son to the war, hire the brothers to work their farm, hoping through an unexpected friendship to stanch their grief. Prentiss and Landry, meanwhile, plan to save money for the journey north and a chance to reunite with their mother, who was sold away when they were boys. Parallel to their story runs a forbidden romance between two Confederate soldiers. The young men, recently returned from the war to the town of Old Ox, hold their trysts in the woods. But when their secret is discovered, the resulting chaos, including a murder, unleashes convulsive repercussions on the entire community. In the aftermath of so much turmoil, it is Isabelle who emerges as an unlikely leader, proffering a healing vision for the land and for the newly free citizens of Old Ox.”

[\*\*\*The Woman They Could Not Silence: One Woman, Her Incredible Fight for Freedom, and the Men Who Tried to Make Her Disappear\*\*\*](#) by Kate Moore

**Sourcebooks (June 22, 2021)**

“From the New York Times, USA Today, and Wall Street Journal bestselling author of, *The Radium Girls* comes another dark and dramatic but ultimately uplifting tale of a forgotten woman hero whose

inspirational journey sparked lasting change for women's rights and exposed injustices that still resonate today. 1860: As the clash between the states rolls slowly to a boil, Elizabeth Packard, housewife and mother of six, is facing her own battle. The enemy sits across the table and sleeps in the next room. Her husband of twenty-one years is plotting against her because he feels increasingly threatened—by Elizabeth's intellect, independence, and unwillingness to stifle her own thoughts. So he makes a plan to put his wife back in her place. One summer morning, he has her committed to an insane asylum. The horrific conditions inside the Illinois State Hospital in Jacksonville, Illinois, are overseen by Dr. Andrew McFarland, a man who will prove to be even more dangerous to Elizabeth than her traitorous husband. But most disturbing is that Elizabeth is not the only sane woman confined to the institution. There are many rational women on her ward who tell the same story: they've been committed not because they need medical treatment, but to keep them in line—conveniently labeled "crazy" so their voices are ignored. No one is willing to fight for their freedom and, disenfranchised both by gender and the stigma of their supposed madness, they cannot possibly fight for themselves. But Elizabeth is about to discover that the merit of losing everything is that you then have nothing to lose..."

**[When a Stranger Comes to Town](#) by Michael Koryta, Mystery Writers of America  
Hanover Square Press (April 20, 2021)**

"It's been said that all great literature boils down to one of two stories - a man takes a journey, or a stranger comes to town. While mystery writers have been successfully using both approaches for generations, there's something undeniably alluring in the nature of a stranger: the uninvited guest, the unacquainted neighbor, the fish out of water. No matter how or where they appear, strangers are walking mysteries, complete unknowns in once-familiar territories who disrupt our lives with unease and wonder. In the newest collection of stories by the Mystery Writers of America, each author weaves a fresh tale surrounding the eerie feeling that comes when a stranger enters our midst, featuring stories by prolific mystery writers such as Michael Connelly, Lisa Unger and Joe Hill."



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