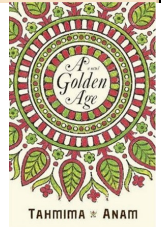


Women in History



[A Golden Age](#) by Tahmima Anam

As Rehana Haque awakes one March morning excited about the party she will host that evening. In the garden of the house she has built, her roses are blooming; her children are almost grown-up; and beyond their doorstep, the city is buzzing with excitement after recent elections. Change is in the air. But none of the guests at Rehana's party can foresee what will happen in the days and months that follow. For this is East Pakistan in 1971, a country on the brink of war. And this family's life is about to change for ever. Set against the backdrop of the Bangladesh War of Independence, *A Golden Age* is a story of passion and revolution, of hope, faith and unexpected heroism.

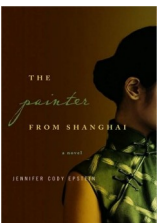
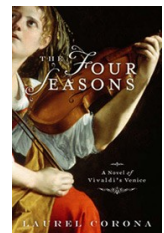


[The Dark Lantern](#) by Gerri Brightwell

Victorian London comes vividly to life. Housemaid Jane Wilbred has snared her new post with the Bentley family with a forged letter of reference, omitting any mention that her late mother was a notorious murderer. A fascinating portrayal of a vanished England as well as an unconventional mystery, *The Dark Lantern* exposes the grand "upstairs" of a Victorian home and the darker underbelly of its servants' quarters. The clash between the classes makes for a suspenseful novel of mistaken identities, intriguing women, and dangerous deceptions.

[The Four Seasons: a novel of Vivaldi's Venice](#) by Laurel Corona

In 1695, three-year-old Maddalena and her infant sister, Chiaretta, are abandoned on the doorstep of Venice's Pieta founding hospital. Groomed for the Pieta's renowned music academy, Chiaretta earns a place as celebrated soloist and marriage to an aristocrat. Dark, quiet Maddalena remains in the shadows until she takes up the violin, and a controversial musician and cleric, Antonio Vivaldi, becomes her teacher. Vivaldi represses his romantic feeling for Maddalena and instead writes concert pieces into which they can both put their hearts. Fans of Tracy Chevalier's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* will welcome another novel about how a masterpiece is created.

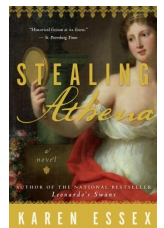


[The Painter from Shanghai](#) by Jennifer Cody Epstein

Pan Yuliang, born Xiuqing, is orphaned at a young age and sold into prostitution by her uncle, who needs the money to support his opium habit. She becomes the brothel's top girl and soon snags the attention of Pan Zanhua, who makes her his concubine. He sets her up in Shanghai, where she enrolls in the Shanghai Art Academy, eventually winning a scholarship to study in Europe. But when she returns to China, itself inching toward revolution, the conservative establishment criticizes Yuliang, balking as she adopts Western-style dress and becomes known for her scandalous nudes. Based on a true story.

[Stealing Athena](#) by Karen Essex

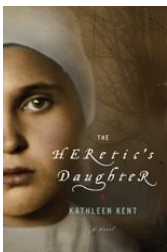
More about money than sex, and more about art than either, this novel alternates the story of Scottish heiress Mary Hamilton Nisbet Bruce, countess of Elgin, with that of Aspasia, courtesan lover of the great Pericles and the inspiration for the Parthenon's Athena. *Stealing Athena* is the story of two women separated by centuries but united by their association with some of the world's greatest and most controversial works of art. A tale of romance, intrigue, greed, and glory.



[The Sister Frevisse Medieval Mystery Series](#) by Margaret Frazer

Beginning with *The Novice's Tale*, this series features Sister Frevisse, the niece of Chaucer (a relationship which inspires the titles of the books of the series and also gives her entrance into the worldly sphere of those who are well-to-do or well-connected politically). Although she has a genuine vocation and entered the convent of her own will, she is also in frequent rebellion against the constraints of her life, and, like a medieval Jessica Fletcher, is always having to solve a murder. Medieval English society, culture, and politics come to life in Margaret Frazer's skillful application of vivid imagery, complex characterizations, and intriguing murder



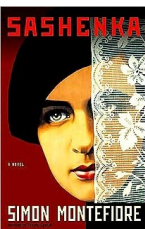
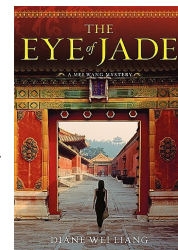


The Heretic's Daughter by Kathleen Kent

After a bout of smallpox, 10-year-old Sarah Carrier resumes life with her mother on their family farm in Andover, Ma., dimly aware of a festering dispute between her mother and her uncle about the plot of land where they live. The fight takes on a terrifying dimension when reports of supernatural activity in nearby Salem give way to mass hysteria, and Sarah's uncle is the first person to point the finger at Martha. Soon, neighbors struggling to eke out a living and a former indentured servant step forward to name Martha as the source of their woes. Sarah's front-row view of the trials and the mayhem that sweeps the close-knit community provides a fresh, bracing and unconventional take on a much-covered episode.

The Eye of the Jade by Diane Wei Liang

After resigning from the ministry of public security, Mei Wang launches a private investigative agency, a technically illegal business in China, much to her family's dismay. After an old family friend hires Mei to track down a jade seal from the Han dynasty, previously believed to be destroyed, Mei and her assistant follow slim leads to a shady dealer who might have connections to the same museum collection supposedly incinerated by the Red Guard. Readers familiar with Jacqueline Winspear's Maisie Dobbs will find many parallels between that independent and unconventional PI and Mei. Mei's challenging family life nicely complements the puzzle of the missing jade and the shifting Chinese political climate.

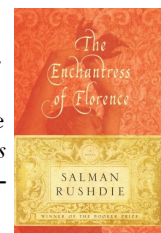


Sashenka by Simon Montefiore

The novel's first section, set in 1916, describes how, under the tutelage of her Bolshevik uncle, Sashenka becomes a naive, idealistic revolutionary charmed by her role as a courier for the underground and rejecting her own bourgeois background. Skip forward to 1939, when Sashenka and her party apparatchik husband are at the zenith of success until Sashenka's affair with a disgraced writer leads to arrests and accusations; in vivid scenes of psychological and physical torture, Sashenka is forced to choose between her family, her lover and her cause.

The Enchantress of Florence by Salman Rushdie

At its heart this novel is about the power of story—whether it is the imagined life of a Mughal queen, or the devastating secret held by a silver-tongued Florentine. Make no mistake, it is Rushdie who is the true "enchanter" of this story, conjuring readers into his gilded fairy tale from the very first sentence: "In the day's last light the glowing lake below the palace-city looked like a sea of molten gold." At once bawdy, gorgeous, gory, and hilarious, *The Enchantress of Florence* is a study in contradiction, highlighted in its barbarian philosopher-king who detests his bloodthirsty heritage even while he carries it out. Full of rich sentences running nearly the length of a page, Rushdie's 10th novel blends fact and fable into a challenging but satisfying read.

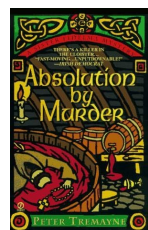
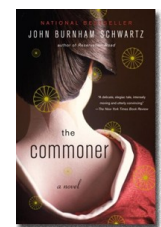


The Dreamers of the Day by Mary Doria Russell

Told in the exuberant, posthumous voice of Agnes Shanklin, a 38-year-old schoolteacher from Cedar Glen, Ohio. After the influenza epidemic of 1919 strikes down Agnes's family, a childless and unmarried Agnes settles the family estate, acquires financial independence and adopts an affable dachshund named Rosie. Accompanied by Rosie, Agnes travels to Cairo during the Cairo Peace Conference, where she befriends Winston Churchill and Lawrence of Arabia among other historical heavy hitters. She also falls in love with the charismatic Karl Weilbacher, a German spy whose interest in Agnes may have less to do with romance than Agnes will allow herself to believe.

The Commoner by John Burnham Schwartz

In 1959, a young woman, Haruko marries the Crown Prince of Japan. She is the first nonaristocratic woman to enter the mysterious, hermetic monarchy. Met with cruelty and suspicion by the Empress, Haruko is controlled at every turn, suffering a nervous breakdown after finally giving birth to a son. Thirty years later, now Empress herself, she plays a crucial role in persuading another young woman to accept the marriage proposal of her son, with tragic consequences. Based on extensive research, *The Commoner* is a stunning novel about a brutally rarified and controlled existence, and the complex relationship between two isolated women who are truly understood only by each other.



The Sister Fidelma Mystery series by Peter Tremayne

Sister Fidelma is an Irish religieuse of the 7th Century AD who is also a trained advocate of the ancient Irish law system of the time - the Laws of the Fenechus, popularly called the Brehon law system, and the heroine-sleuth of this fantastic series. Though you may want to begin with the first, *Absolution by Murder*, the series can be read as individual works, since each provides enough background to prevent confusion. Tremayne weaves Celtic legends and customs throughout each solidly built mystery, completely transporting the reader to another time and place, so very different from ours.

My Enemy's Cradle by Sara Young

Cyrla, half-Jewish, is no longer safe hiding in the home of her Dutch relatives under the increasingly harsh Nazi occupation. When cousin Annika, whom Cyrla closely resembles, becomes pregnant by a German soldier, Annika's father enrolls her in a Lebensborn, a birthing center for Aryan children, where the slogan is Have one baby for the Führer. In a tragic turn of events, Cyrla discovers her only chance of survival is to hide in plain sight: she must assume Annika's identity and live in the German Lebensborn until rescued. Within the Lebensborn's walls, mothers-to-be receive proper nutrition and medical care until their children are taken from them for adoption into Aryan families. The horrors Cyrla witnesses are softened only by her resounding optimism and strength.

