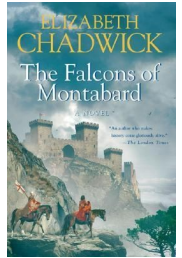


The Middle Ages

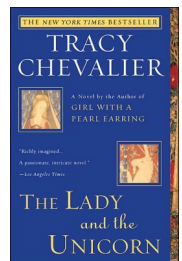
The Falcons of Montabard by Elizabeth Chadwick

Readers will immediately be swept away by a masterful telling of a story spanning the borderlands of Scotland across the desert to the courts of twelfth-century Jerusalem. Sabin FitzSimon, an amorous knight in King Henry's court, loses his powerful position when discovered in a dalliance with the king's favorite mistress. Attached to Sir Edmund Strongfist, FitzSimon will accompany the aging knight and his convent-educated daughter, Annais, on a crusade to the Holy Land.



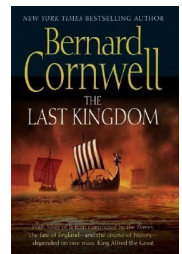
The Lady and the Unicorn by Tracy Chevalier

In 1490s France, nobleman Jean le Viste commissions Nicolas des Innocents, a skillful and virile painter, to design a set of six tapestries centered on a unicorn. Nicolas, enraptured by the beauty of Le Viste's daughter Claude, includes her image in his designs. His story intertwines with that of a family of Flemish weavers, who have never created anything of such magnitude before. Little is known of the tapestries' true history, but they can be seen today at the Musée de Cluny in Paris.



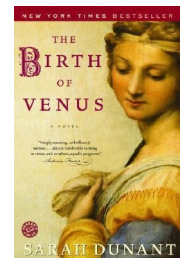
The Last Kingdom by Bernard Cornwell

Captured and raised by Danes in the ninth century, dispossessed nobleman Uhtred witnesses the unexpected defeat of his adoptive Viking clan by Alfred of Wessex and longs to recover his father's land. Pale Horseman is book 2 of this series.



Pope Joan by Donna Woolfolk Cross

In the ninth century, as legend has it, a young woman disguised as a man claimed St. Peter's throne and served as Pope for two years. Cross's well-researched interpretation of the life of Pope Joan features a young woman, Joan of Ingelheim, who is taught Latin by her brother and takes his place after he is killed in a Viking raid. Disguised as the Christian scholar Brother John Anglicus, Joan heads to Rome, where she becomes a part of the papal inner circle. Her secret is revealed at a most inopportune moment.



The Birth of Venus by Sarah Dunant

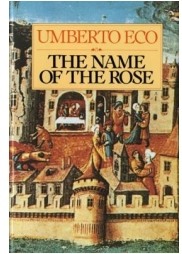
Fourteen-year-old Alexandra Cecchi, a cloth merchant's daughter, comes of age in fifteenth-century Florence. She dreams of a career as an artist, encouraged by a young painter in her household, but her dreams are dashed when her parents arrange her marriage to a much older man. At the same time, the fanatical monk Savonarola comes to power, loudly preaching that love of art and "pagan" books leads only to damnation.



The Middle Ages

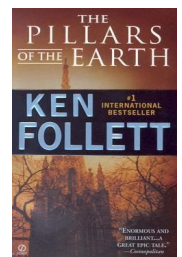
The Name of the Rose by Umberto Eco

In 1327, Brother William of Baskerville is sent to investigate a wealthy Italian abbey whose monks are suspected of heresy. When his mission is overshadowed by seven bizarre deaths patterned on the book of Revelation, Brother William turns detective, following the trail of a conspiracy that brings him face-to-face with the abbey's labyrinthine secrets, the subversive effects of laughter, and the medieval Inquisition. Caught in a power struggle between the emperor he serves and the pope who rules the Church, Brother William comes to see that what is at stake is larger than any mere political dispute.



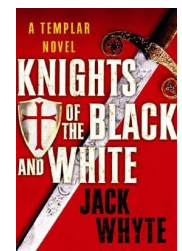
Pillars of the Earth by Ken Follett

A radical departure from Follett's novels of international suspense and intrigue, this chronicles the vicissitudes of a prior, his master builder, and their community as they struggle to build a cathedral and protect themselves during the tumultuous 12th century, when the empress Maud and Stephen are fighting for the crown of England after the death of Henry I.



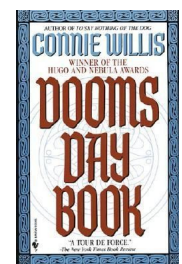
Knights of the Black and White by Jack Whyte

This novel begins in 1088, as Hugh St. Clair, a French nobleman, joins a mysterious society known as the Order. Soon Hugh is hip deep in the blood and gore of the First Crusade, which so scars him that he dedicates the rest of his life to serving God. But things don't go exactly according to plan, and soon Hugh is part of an elite band of monks whose religious devotion is matched by their skill at hand-to-hand combat. Whyte, a master at painting pictures on an epic-sized canvas, pulls the reader into the story with his usual deft combination of historical drama and old-fashioned adventure. (Book 1 of 3)



The Domsday Book by Connie Willis

This new book by Hugo- and Nebula-award-winning author Willis (Lincoln's Dreams) is an intelligent and satisfying blend of classic science fiction and historical reconstruction. Kivrin, a history student at Oxford in 2048, travels back in time to a 14th-century English village, despite a host of misgivings on the part of her unofficial tutor. When the technician responsible for the procedure falls prey to a 21st-century epidemic, he accidentally sends Kivrin back not to 1320 but to 1348--right into the path of the Black Death.



Brethren by Robyn Young

Debut novelist Young climbs aboard the Templar bandwagon, but sets the bar high in this initial installment of a trilogy on the Knights and the last crusade. Christendom's desperate attempts to maintain a foothold in the Holy Land against a furious Muslim jihad is embodied by Sir William Campbell, a young, idealistic Knight Templar, and the devout Baybars Bundukdari, the sultan of Egypt, determined to rid the region of Western influence. Young shifts between the rival camps; there is plenty of battlefield action, and a romantic interest for William in Elwen, the beautiful young niece of his fallen mentor.

