



## If You Like Amy Tan



### **Moloka'i by Alan Brennert**

This richly imagined novel, set in Hawaii more than a century ago, is an extraordinary epic of a little-known time and place - and a deeply moving testament to the resiliency of the human spirit. Rachel Kalama, a spirited seven-year-old Hawaiian girl, dreams of visiting far-off lands like her father, a merchant seaman. Then one day a rose-colored mark appears on her skin, and those dreams are stolen from her. Taken from her home and family, Rachel is sent to Kalaupapa, the quarantined leprosy settlement on the island of Moloka'i. Here her life is supposed to end---but instead she discovers it is only just beginning. With a vibrant cast of vividly realized characters, *Moloka'i* is the true-to-life chronicle of a people who embraced life in the face of death.

### **Sister of My Heart by Chitra Divakaruni**

This Indian novel is an intricate modern drama in which generations and castes struggle over old and new mores. Anju and Sudha are cousins, born in the same household in Calcutta on the same day - which is also the day on which their mothers learn that both their husbands have been killed in a reckless quest for a cave full of rubies. Sudha grows up believing her father was a no-good schemer who brought ruin on his cousin, Anju's upper-class father. As they mature, Anju dreams of college, Sudha of children, but arranged marriages divide and thwart them. Also try [\*The Vine of Desire\*](#).

### **Memoirs of a Geisha by William Golden**

Because her mother is dying and her father old, Chiyo, nine, is sold to a wealthy geisha house in Gion where she learns her trade and works it in the 1930s and 1940s.

### **The Love Wife by Gish Jen**

The arrival of a "cousin" from mainland China, arranged by Mama Wong to serve as a nanny, throws the household of Carnegie Wong, a second-generation Chinese American, his WASP wife Blondie, and their three children into turmoil.

### **Poisonwood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver**

Although not about Asia or Asian women, many people feel that this novel is Kingsolver's most significant book to date and is told in a style similar to Tan's own; an extraordinarily dramatic and forthright novel of family, faith and fate, set in Africa. The year is 1959; the Congo is fighting for independence from Belgium, and Nathan Price has uprooted his wife and their four daughters from their Georgia home and delivered them to the tiny village of Kilanga without the full blessing of his church or, indeed, of the villagers.

### **The Namesake by Jhumpa Lahiri**

This first novel is an Indian-American saga, covering several generations of the Ganguli family across three decades. Newlyweds Ashoke and Ashima leave India for the Boston area shortly after their traditional arranged marriage. The young husband, an engineering graduate student, is ready to be part of U.S. culture, but Ashima, disoriented and homesick, is less taken with late-Sixties America. She develops ties with other Bengali expatriates, forming lifelong friendships that help preserve the old ways in a new country. Also try the award-winning [\*Interpreter of Maladies\*](#).

### **[The Middle Heart](#) by Bette Bao Lord**

This work opens in 1932, when the Japanese have conquered Manchuria. Three children united in their antagonism for the Japanese begin their lifelong friendship. Two of them live in the same household: the young master, Steel Hope, and his servant, or "bookmate," Mountain Pine. Joining them is a creature called Firecrackers, a scrappy boy who can race like the wind, but before long it becomes clear that Firecrackers is not a boy at all. Later, Firecrackers becomes an actress named Summer Wishes, whose loving involvement with both Steel Hope and Mountain Pine adds a subtext of romance to this historical novel.

### **[Falling Leaves](#) by Adeline Yen Mah (Biography)**

Born in 1937 in a port city a thousand miles north of Shanghai, Adeline Yen Mah was the youngest child of an affluent Chinese family who enjoyed rare privileges during a time of political and cultural upheaval. But wealth and position could not shield Adeline from a childhood of appalling emotional abuse at the hands of a cruel and manipulative Eurasian stepmother. Determined to survive through her enduring faith in family unity, Adeline struggled for independence as she moved from Hong Kong to England and eventually to the United States to become a physician and writer. A compelling, painful and ultimately triumphant true story of a girl's journey into adulthood, Adeline's story is a testament to the most basic of human needs: acceptance, love and understanding.

### **[Piano Tuner](#) by Daniel Mason**

This debut novel begins in October 1886, when Edgar Drake receives a strange request from the British War Office: he must leave his wife and his quiet life in London to travel to the jungles of Burma, where a rare Erard grand piano is in need of repair. The piano belongs to an army surgeon-major whose unorthodox peacemaking methods: poetry, medicine, and now music, have brought a tentative quiet to the southern Shan States but have elicited questions from his superiors. On his journey through Europe, the Red Sea, India and into Burma, Edgar meets soldiers, mystics, bandits and tale-spinners, as well as an enchanting woman as elusive as the surgeon-major. Sensuous, lyrical, rich with passion and adventure, this is a hypnotic tale of myth, romance and self-discovery: an unforgettable novel.

### **[The Pearl Diver](#) by Jeff Talarigo**

In 1948, a 19-year-old Japanese pearl diver is in her fourth season of perfecting the techniques of her age-old occupation. But her dreams of spending her life diving in the waters of the Inland Sea are shattered when she discovers that she has leprosy. She knows that the shame attached to the disease is inescapable: rejection by her family is imminent, exile unavoidable. No more than two months elapse before authorities send her off to a leprosarium on the island of Nagashima, and although it is only seven miles from her home, it is a world away from all that is familiar to her.

### **[Women of the Silk](#) by Gail Tsukiyama**

An auspicious debut, this sensitively written, impressively researched novel covers 20 years in the life of Pei, a Chinese girl sent to work in a silk factory during the first decades of the 20th century. Quick-witted, inquisitive, spirited Pei spends her early childhood on a poverty-stricken fish farm; her uncommunicative parents consign her to the factory for the wages she will send home. Initially terrified, Pei soon settles into the communal routine and finds the 12-hour factory day made bearable by the kindness of supervisors and fellow workers. Also try [The Language of the Threads](#) and [The Samurai's Garden](#).

### **[Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood](#) by Rebecca Wells**

When Siddi inadvertently reveals some revealing things about her Southern childhood in a newspaper interview, her mother, Vivi, virtually disowns her. Vivi's lifelong friends, the Ya-Ya's, set in motion a plan to bring the mother and daughter back together using a scrapbook of childhood memories that they ask Vivi to put together.