

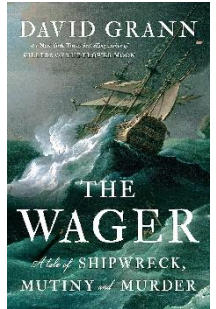
The last remains by Elly Griffiths

The Last Remains is the latest in the Ruth Galloway Mystery series by Elly Griffiths. Not having read any of the previous 14 novels in the series, I jumped in anyway. I was intrigued by the main character, Dr. Ruth Galloway, a respected professor of archeology at the University of North Norfolk. She teams up with Detective Chief Inspector Nelson to unlock a cold case in which a mutual friend is a prominent suspect in a murder.

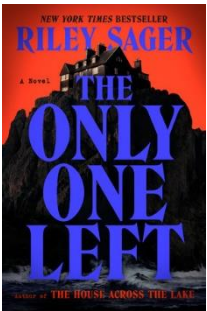
I definitely felt like I could follow the story without the background of the previous novels, but I did miss out on how the characters evolved to where they are today. Regardless, the mystery was intriguing, and the combination of smart detective work and archeology kept my attention. This series is absolutely worth another look in my book. ~Mary Hartwig~

The wager: A tale of shipwreck, mutiny and murder by David Grann

It would not be a stretch to declare David Grann the preeminent writer of nonfiction today. His works share consistent traits: scrupulously researched, deeply informative, and completely engrossing. He unearths stories from unique corners in history and presents them with thrilling relevance. *The Wager* is just the latest. The story of a doomed British naval expedition in the 1740s, 'tis a tale rife with interesting facts, historical context, and torrents of action and intrigue. Relive the origins of the mission, the preparation of the ships, meet a colorful cast of sailors, and ride along on a journey bound for shipwreck and its incredible aftermath. Grann has meticulously reconstructed as much of the story possible from captain's logs, journals, manifests, and historical records. It will be up to you to piece together the rest. My favorite book of 2023 so far, and simply masterful on audio. ~Noah Weckwerth~



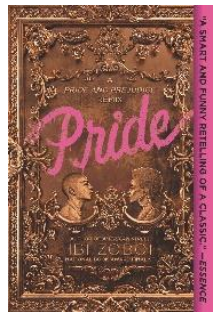
The only one left by Riley Sager

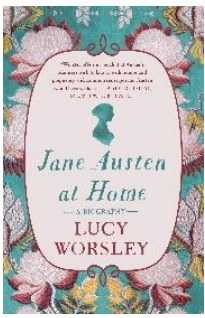


In 1929, Lenora Hope was the sole survivor of a family massacre. Although the police were never able to connect her to the crime, the court of public opinion deemed her guilty. Despite this cloud of suspicion, Lenora has never publicly spoken about that night, nor has she left her family's cliffside mansion, Hope's End. In 1983, Kit McDeere comes to serve as Lenora's live-in caregiver. It's a desperate arrangement that neither of them particularly likes. Kit is barely hanging onto employment after recovering from her own brush with bad publicity, and Lenora needs a new caregiver after her previous one disappeared under mysterious circumstances. Now in her seventies, Lenora is mute and confined to a wheelchair. Her only way of communicating with Kit is by typing out messages on an old typewriter. Lenora tells Kit she wants to reveal the truth of what happened the night of the Hope murders. But the truth at Hope's End is not a straight line, it is as jagged and unpredictable as the cliffs the house sits upon. With enough plot twists to give you whiplash, this story had me questioning everything and everyone right up until the end. ~Jay Robillard~

Pride by Ibi Zoboi

I'm not always a fan of a Jane Austen remix, but Ibi Zoboi's YA-oriented *Pride and Prejudice* retelling *Pride* hits the right notes for a quick summer read. Jane Austen's original story is now set in Brooklyn, New York. Spunky, observant, opinionated Elizabeth Bennet has been replaced with equally spunky, observant, opinionated Zuri Benitez. Zuri loves her neighborhood of Bushwick, her Haitian-Dominican roots, her parents, and her four sisters. This is the community and these are the people who built her. So when the wealthy Darcy family moves in from Manhattan, she's resentful of the part they play in gentrifying her beloved home, and she won't pay any attention to their teenage sons. While the storyline is familiar to fans, Zoboi's version is updated and given a fresh take that is as relevant today as Austen's version was for the late 1700s. She also makes a few changes, my favorite being some adjustments to the relationship between Zuri's parents. ~Keegan Taylor~



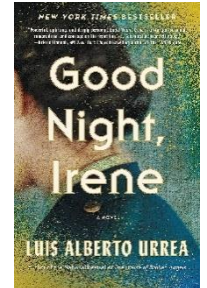


Jane Austen at home by Lucy Worsley

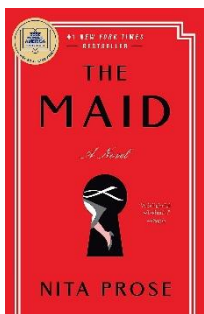
If you are among the millions of Jane Austen fans in the world and you would like to know about the great novelist herself, I highly recommend *Jane Austen at Home* by Lucy Worsley. This biography is some amazing storytelling about one of the most amazing storytellers of all time. The detail and research are incredible! Worsley has so many direct quotes from relatives, neighbors, acquaintances, friends, admirers, critics, and historians through Austen's correspondence. My one complaint is that sometimes she doesn't tell whom she is quoting: she says "a relative" but I would love at least a little more specific -- cousin, aunt, uncle, etc. Of course, you can always find the source in the references in the back if you want to clear up any confusion. Otherwise, I loved everything about this book. I learned so much! ~Keegan Taylor~

Good night, Irene by Luis Alberto Urrea

A little-known aspect of WWII was the American Red Cross Clubmobile Service, created to boost the morale of US troops by offering them coffee, donuts, good cheer and a reminder of home. Often referred to as "Donut Dollies," the women who volunteered to man the Clubmobiles were first stationed in England and then sent to Europe after the D-Day invasion to accompany troops as they moved through France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany. Eighty Clubmobiles landed on French soil, each one with a three-woman crew. Unaware of what awaited her, Irene Woodward volunteers for the Red Cross Clubmobile on a whim. How hard could it be to serve coffee? Transported to England with her fellow recruits, they are taught the skills needed to make immense quantities of donuts and coffee, trained to drive the truck and assigned to a crew to dish out banter to the troops. Irene and Dorothy, a farm girl from Indiana, are undaunted by the hard work and daily inconveniences, aware that the men in uniform they serve may or may not return from their nightly bombing missions. Their service becomes still more essential as they arrive in France, driving the Clubmobile with no guarantee of safety, and going wherever they are sent.



This story is not a light one, but the bonds formed between the women and their courage to carry on despite danger and suffering make for an epic tale. The author's prose thrusts the reader into the action and his descriptions are nearly poetic at times. The author's mother was a member of the Red Cross Clubmobile service, and Luis Alberto Urrea's extensive research makes the book an effective tribute to her and the other brave women who served in that capacity. ~Nancy Arevalo~



The maid by Nita Prose

Molly Gray has a difficult time reading social cues and responding appropriately. However, she loves her job as a maid at the Regency Grand. Her grandmother, who passed away a few months ago, was her touchstone for figuring out the world. Therefore, when she finds a body in the suite she has cleaned many times for the couple who occupied it on a regular basis, life takes on a twist leaving her accused of murder. Even though Molly believes she is all alone in the world she discovers there really are people she can trust. The trick is finding out who is who. Fun twists in a murder mystery for any Columbo lover. ~Sharon Passick~

A house with good bones by T. Kingfisher

Sam and her brother Brad are worried about their mother. It's not just her advanced age, or how she lives alone in their childhood home. During a work break, Sam decides to stay with her mother to check up on her. What she discovers is deeply disturbing: Mrs. Montgomery has lost an unnerving amount of weight, she's painted all her walls white, and vultures circle the property. And these are not just the "quirks" of old age. The longer Sam stays in the house, the stronger her concerns grow. Paintings are falling off the walls; the rose garden is eerily insect-free. And Sam swears she keeps hearing the whispered voice of her long-deceased grandmother. Something is wrong in the Montgomery home, but is there time to stop it? Considering how short a book this is, a lot of time is spent building the tension. So many other haunted house stories jump into the horror right away, like diving into the deep end. It's as if this book is trying to "make up" for all those other novels by stretching it out, only to realize how far along it is in its own storyline, then rushing to get the rest of the words on the page. There are great creeps and scares here, but the rising action could have been streamlined. ~Jay Robillard~

