

Notable Books, 2005

This list has been compiled for use by the general reader and by librarians who work with adults. The Notable Books Council, ALA Reference and User Services Association, has selected the titles for their significant contribution to the expansion of knowledge or for the pleasure they can provide to adult readers. Titles were selected from books published from November 2003 through October 2004.

Nonfiction

Chernow, Ron. Alexander Hamilton. Penguin, \$35 (1-59420-009-2).

This monumental biography presents a modern perspective on the Founding Father most responsible for the current state of American industry, economy, and government.

Ehrlich, Paul R. and Ehrlich, Anne E. One with Nineveh: Politics, Consumption, and the Human Future. Island, \$27 (1-55963-879-6).

Relayed in a clarion voice, this powerful argument for saving the environment from disaster links social and economic policies with the empirical evidence of overpopulation and materialistic consumption.

Fischer, David Hackett. Washington's Crossing. Oxford, \$30 (0-19-517034-2).

The full story of George Washington's crossing of the Delaware is brought vividly to life in this revisionist retelling of an iconic event in American history.

Henig, Robin Marantz. Pandora's Baby: How the First Test Tube Babies Sparked the Reproductive Revolution. Houghton, \$25 (0-618-22415-7).

A journalist engagingly presents the history of in vitro fertilization and the moral, ethical, and political controversies of reproductive technologies.

Hersh, Seymour M. Chain of Command: The Road from 9/11 to Abu Ghraib. HarperCollins, \$25.95 (0-06-019591-6).

Hersh exposes the military abuse in Abu Ghraib prison and the events leading up to it in this groundbreaking report.

Hughes, Robert. Goya. Knopf, \$40 (0-394-58028-1).

With thoughtfulness and wit, Hughes refracts the art and life of Goya through the culture and history of Spain.

Kurlansky, Mark. 1968: The Year That Rocked the World. Ballantine, \$26.95 (0-345-45581-9).

This engrossing account tells the complete story of the global, social, and political upheaval, warfare, and assassinations that define one year in a tumultuous decade.

Lansky, Aaron. Outwitting History: How One Man Rescued a Million Books and Saved a Civilization. Algonquin, \$24.95 (1-56512-429-4).

A 23-year-old student of Yiddish embarks on a crusade to save books in that language and succeeds in preserving the stories and culture of a vanishing world.

Moats, David. Civil Wars: A Battle for Gay Marriage. Harcourt, \$25 (0-15-101017-X).

Moats offers an insightful account of the fierce battle that led to the legalization of civil unions in Vermont in 2001.

National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States. The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorists Attacks upon the United States. Authorized ed. Norton, \$10 (0-393-32671-3).

This report, written with measure and depth, achieves a distinctly unified voice to explicate the traumas of 9/11 and the events leading up to it.

Philbrick, Nathaniel. *Sea of Glory: America's Voyage of Discovery: The U.S. Exploring Expedition, 1838–1842.* Viking, \$27.95 (0-670-03231-X).

This dramatic account chronicles the little-known story of a six-vessel, 346-man U.S. exploring expedition that took four years, covered more than 84,000 miles, and expanded the role of science in the U.S.

Sokolove, Michael. *The Ticket Out: Darryl Strawberry and the Boys of Crenshaw.* Simon & Schuster, \$24.95 (0-7432-2673-9).

The individual stories of a vastly talented 1979 L.A. high-school baseball team come to life in this heartbreaking account of the players' last season and the difficulties they faced in the years that followed.

Vine, Phyllis. *One Man's Castle: Clarence Darrow in Defense of the American Dream.* HarperCollins/Amistad, \$24.95 (0-06-621415-7).

Dr. Ossiam Sweet, an African American physician, was defended by Clarence Darrow in a murder trial that is recounted as a stark reminder of U.S. racial hatred in the 1920s.

Fiction

Barnes, Julian. *The Lemon Table.* Knopf, \$22.95 (1-4000-4214-3).

Eleven witty and dazzling stories share the common theme of aging but diverge in time, place, mood, and social milieu.

Christensen, Lars Saabye. *The Half Brother.* Arcade, \$27 (1-55970-715-1).

In this epic Norwegian novel, Oslo, an accomplished storyteller, traces the lives of a matriarchal family over 50 years.

De Bernières, Louis. *Birds without Wings.* Knopf, \$25.95 (1-4000-4341-7).

The harmony of life in an Anatolian village, with its quirky mix of Greek, Turkish, and Armenian ethnicities, is shattered by the nationalist politics of the early 1900s.

Dybek, Stuart. *I Sailed with Magellan.* Farrar, \$24 (0-374-17407-5).

Dybek connects gently ironic stories of growing up and getting out in Polish American Chicago in the 1960s and 1970s.

Khadra, Yasmina. *The Swallows of Kabul.* Doubleday/Nan A. Talese, \$18.95 (0-385-51001-2).

Kabul under the Taliban provides the backdrop for this riveting, intimate novel of human frailty and societal degeneracy.

Mda, Zakes. *The Madonna of Excelsior.* Farrar, \$23 (0-374-20008-4).

A family at the center of an apartheid-era sex scandal confronts racial and social issues as South Africa moves from oppression to freedom.

Mitchell, David. *Cloud Atlas.* Random, \$14.95 (0-375-50725-6).

This tour de force of literary inventiveness weaves six tales written in six completely different styles into one richly resonant whole.

Munro, Alice. *Runaway.* Knopf, \$25 (1-4000-4281-X).

Flawless prose and peerless insight into human nature are Munro's gifts to the reader in eight short stories.

Niemi, Mikael. *Popular Music from Vittula. Seven Stories,* \$21.95 (1-58322-523-4).

The narrator's transition to adulthood on the Swedish-Finnish border in the 1960s juxtaposes magical and mundane experiences in a world long gone.

Roth, Philip. *The Plot against America.* Houghton, \$26 (0-618-50928-3).

In a chilling alternate history set in 1940s America, hero and anti-Semite Charles Lindbergh wins the presidency over FDR, and a Jewish family endures life in a new society.

Wolff, Tobias. Old School. Knopf, \$22 (0-375-40146-6).

A scholarship student with literary ambitions and a shameful secret experiences an unforgettable year when his prep school is visited by Robert Frost and Ayn Rand.

Poetry

Giovanni, Nikki. The Collected Poetry of Nikki Giovanni, 1968–1998. HarperCollins, \$24.95 (0-06-054133-4).

African American activist Giovanni observes and embraces the world like few other poets; seize on these poems spanning three decades, and listen to her sing.

Kooser, Ted. Delights and Shadows. Copper Canyon, \$15 (1-55659-201-9).

These carefully crafted poems reflect a joy for life through powerful human images and intimate observations of everyday things.