



Biographical Fiction

Available in the El Segundo Public Library

Alice I Have Been by Melanie Benjamin

Call #: BENJ

Part love story, part literary mystery, this spellbinding historical novel leads readers on an unforgettable journey down the path of Alice Liddell Hargreaves' life, the girl who followed the White Rabbit into a wonderland of Mad Hatters, Queens of Hearts, and Cheshire Cats. In her nearly eighty-one years, Alice recounts adventures as a young woman, then as a wife, mother, and widow, the likes of which not even her fictional counterpart could have imagined.

The Autobiography of Mrs. Tom Thumb by Melanie Benjamin

Call #: BENJ

Set in the Gilded Age, this book chronicles the fascinating life of 19th century icon and inspiration Mercy Lavinia "Vinnie" Bump, the two-foot eight-inch tall wife of Charles Stratton, AKA Tom Thumb, whose most daunting limitation became her greatest strength.

Before Versailles: a Novel of Louis XIV by Karleen Koen

Call #: KOEN

This book explores the forces that shaped one of the most iconic monarchs of France, Louis XIV. Coming to the throne at just twenty-two, Louis willfully takes everything he can, including his brother's wife Princess Henriette. The resulting scandal and conflicts with the Vatican are just a few of the struggles Louis faces during his reign, and that eventually determined the fate of the empire he ruled.

Caleb's Crossing by Geraldine Brooks

Call #BROO

Told from the perspective of Caleb's friend Bethia Mayfield, this crossing of cultures novel recounts how a young man from Martha's Vineyard became the first Native American to graduate from Harvard College in 1665.

Clara and Mr. Tiffany by Susan Vreeland

Call #: VREE

This book describes the individuals, relationships and circumstances behind the creation of the beautiful hand crafted Tiffany lamps during the turn of the twentieth century. While creating these works of art, Clara, like many professional women of the period, struggled with her desire for artistic recognition and seemingly insurmountable challenges such as Louis Comfort Tiffany's policy to not employ married women.

Claude & Camille: a Novel of Monet by Stephanie Cowell

Call #: COWE

A vividly-rendered portrait of Claude Monet, the artist at the center of the rise of the Impressionism movement, this book is also a love story recounting his relationship with muse, best friend and the mother of his two children, Camille.

Doc: a Novel by Mary Doria Russell

Call #: RUSS

Set in the saloon-filled cow town of Dodge City, Kansas, this rendition of Doc Holliday's life reveals the man behind the American West legend. His story recounts infamous showdowns such as the gunfight at the O.K. Corral, Doc's progression from frontier town dentist to professional gambler, and his unlikely friendship with fearless lawman Wyatt Earp.



The Fort: a Novel of the Revolutionary War by Bernard Cornwell

Call #: CORN

This Revolutionary War story chronicles the conflict arising from a British force of Scottish infantry establishing a garrison and naval base at Penobscot Bay in the summer of 1779. After a mortifying defeat brought on by ineptitude and irresolution, two men on opposite sides of the conflict face the differing consequences – young Scottish lieutenant John Moore at the beginning of an illustrious military career and Boston silversmith and patriot Paul Revere, who risks court-martial for disobedience and cowardice.



Ghost Light by Joseph O’Conner

Call #: OCON

Taking place in post-World War II London, this turbulent story is loosely based on the relationship between Irish playwright John Synge and actress Molly Allgood. Told from the perspective of an older Molly looking back on her life, the narrator recounts their struggles with the differences in their ages, class, religion, and with their respective temperaments and expectations.

Leaving Van Gogh by Carol Wallace

Call #: WALL

This riveting novel navigates the mysteries surrounding the master artist Vincent Van Gogh’s final days and death, as narrated by his personal physician, mental illness specialist and lover of the arts, Dr. Gachet. This luminous story tackles haunting questions about Van Gogh’s fate, what it means to live authentically and the power and limits of friendship.

Madame Tussaud: a Novel of the French Revolution by Michelle Moran

Call #: MORA

Spanning five years during the burgeoning revolution of the Reign of Terror, this book brings us into the world of a smart and ambitious heroine, Marie Tussaud, whose wax modeling talent saved her life during tumultuous times and preserved the faces of a vanished kingdom.

The Paris Wife by Paula Mclain

Call #: MCLA

Taking place in the roaring 1920’s, this story begins in Chicago, where Hadley Richardson’s life changes forever when she meets and falls in love with Ernest Hemingway. Their relationship continues in the hard-drinking, fast living life of Jazz Age Paris, where traditional values of family and monogamy are challenged, and the couple struggles to overcome heartbreaking deceptions and torn loyalties.

The Raven’s Bride by Lenore Hart

Call #: HART

Part ghost story, part love story, this book explores the mysterious, often scandalous relationship between Edgar Allan Poe and his young cousin, muse and great love, Virginia “Sissy” Clemm. Tracing Sissy’s courtship and life with a troubled Eddy that was prone to abrupt disappearances, self-destructive moods, and alcoholic binges, this story imagines the beating heart of the woman whose illness drives Poe to both madness and his greatest literary achievement.

The Winter Palace: a novel of Catherine the Great by Eva Stachniak

Call #: STAC

This passionate book illuminates the early life of history’s boldest women, Catherine the Great as seen through the ever-watchful eyes of an all-but-invisible servant close to the throne named Barbara, or Varvara in Russian. Filled with dazzling details and intense drama, Varvara’s secret alliance with the then princess Catherine helps her become the legend that will assume the throne of all of Russia.

