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Thankful That's Not My Family (Stories about Families)

***California Golden* by Melanie Benjamin**

FIC BENJAMIN (LP, CD, ebook/audio via Libby)

Southern California, 1960s. In an era when women are expected to be housewives, Carol Donnelly is breaking the mold as a legendary female surfer struggling to compete in a male-dominated sport--and her daughters, Mindy and Ginger, bear the weight of her unconventional lifestyle. The Donnelly sisters grow up enduring their mother's absence--physically, when she's at the beach, and emotionally, the rare times she's at home. To escape questions about Carol's whereabouts--and chase their mom's elusive affection--they cut school to spend their days in the surf. From her first time on a board, Mindy shows a natural talent, but Ginger, two years younger, feels out of place in the water.

As they grow up and their lives diverge, Mindy and Ginger's relationship ebbs and flows. Mindy finds herself swept up in celebrity, complete with beachside love affairs, parties at the Playboy Club, and USO tours to Vietnam. Meanwhile, Ginger--desperate for a community of her own--is tugged into the vibrant counterculture of drugs and cults. Through it all, their sense of duty to each other survives, as the girls are forever connected by the emotional damage they carry from their unorthodox childhood.

A gripping, emotional story set at a time when mothers were expected to be Donna Reed, not Gidget, *California Golden* is an unforgettable novel about three women living in a society that was shifting as tempestuously as the breaking waves.

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***The Dutch House* by Ann Patchett**

FIC PATCHETT (LP, CD, ebook/audio via Libby, audio via Hoopla)

At the end of the Second World War, Cyril Conroy combines luck and a single canny investment to begin an enormous real estate empire, propelling his family from poverty to enormous wealth. His first order of business is to buy the Dutch House, a lavish estate in the suburbs outside of Philadelphia. Meant as a surprise for his wife, the house sets in motion the undoing of everyone he loves.

The story is told by Cyril's son Danny, as he and his older sister, the brilliantly acerbic and self-assured Maeve, are exiled from the house where they grew up by their stepmother. The two wealthy siblings are thrown back into the poverty their parents had escaped from and find that all they have to count on is one another. It is this unshakable bond between them that both saves their lives and thwarts their futures.

Set over the course of five decades, *The Dutch House* is a dark fairy tale about two smart people who cannot overcome their past. Despite every outward sign of success, Danny and Maeve are only truly comfortable when they're together. Throughout their lives, they return to the well-worn story of what they've lost with humor and rage. But when at last they're forced to confront the people who left them behind, the relationship between an indulged brother and his ever-protective sister is finally tested.

***Educated* by Tara Westover**

270.092 WES (LP, CD, ebook/audio via Libby)

Tara Westover was 17 the first time she set foot in a classroom. Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, she prepared for the end of the world by stockpiling home-canned peaches and sleeping with her "head-for-the-hills bag". In the summer she stewed herbs for her mother, a midwife and healer, and in the winter she salvaged in her father's junkyard.

Her father forbade hospitals, so Tara never saw a doctor or nurse. Gashes and concussions, even burns from explosions, were all treated at home with herbalism. The family was so isolated from mainstream society that there was no one to ensure the children received an education and no one to intervene when one of Tara's older brothers became violent.

Then, lacking any formal education, Tara began to educate herself. She taught herself enough mathematics and grammar to be admitted to Brigham Young University, where she studied history, learning for the first time about important world events like the Holocaust and the civil rights movement. Her quest for knowledge transformed her, taking her over oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge. Only then would she wonder if she'd traveled too far, if there was still a way home.

Educated is an account of the struggle for self-invention. It is a tale of fierce family loyalty and of

the grief that comes with severing the closest of ties. With the acute insight that distinguishes all great writers, Westover has crafted a universal coming-of-age story that gets to the heart of what an education is and what it offers: the perspective to see one's life through new eyes and the will to change it.

***Everything I Never Told You* by Celeste Ng**

FIC NG (LP, CD via STELLA, ebook/audio via Libby)

“Lydia is dead. But they don’t know this yet.”

So begins this exquisite novel about a Chinese American family living in 1970s small-town Ohio. Lydia is the favorite child of Marilyn and James Lee, and her parents are determined that she will fulfill the dreams they were unable to pursue. But when Lydia’s body is found in the local lake, the delicate balancing act that has been keeping the Lee family together is destroyed, tumbling them into chaos.

A profoundly moving story of family, secrets, and longing, *Everything I Never Told You* is both a gripping page-turner and a sensitive family portrait, uncovering the ways in which mothers and daughters, fathers and sons, and husbands and wives struggle, all their lives, to understand one another.

***Glitter and Glue* by Kelly Corrigan**

B Corrigan (LP via STELLA, ebook/audio via Libby)

When Kelly Corrigan was in high school, her mother neatly summarized the family dynamic as “Your father’s the glitter but I’m the glue.” This meant nothing to Kelly, who left childhood sure that her mom—with her inviolable commandments and proud stoicism—would be nothing more than background chatter for the rest of Kelly’s life, which she was carefully orienting toward adventure. After college, armed with a backpack, her personal mission statement, and a wad of traveler’s checks, she took off for Australia to see things and do things and Become Interesting. But it didn’t turn out the way she pictured it. In a matter of months, her savings shot, she had a choice: get a job or go home. That’s how Kelly met John Tanner, a newly widowed father of two looking for a live-in nanny. They chatted for an hour, discussed timing and pay, and a week later, Kelly moved in. And there, in that house in a suburb north of Sydney, 10,000 miles from the house where she was raised, her mother’s voice was suddenly everywhere, nudging and advising, cautioning and directing, escorting her through a terrain as foreign as any she had ever trekked. Every day she spent with the Tanner kids was a day spent reconsidering her relationship with her mother, turning it over in her hands like a shell, straining to hear whatever messages might be trapped in its spiral.

This is a book about the difference between travel and life experience, stepping out and stepping

up, fathers and mothers. But mostly it's about who you admire and why, and how that changes over time.

***Hidden Valley Road: Inside the Mind of an American Family* by Robert Kolker**

616.898 KOL (LP via STELLA, ebook/audio via Libby)

The heartrending story of a midcentury American family with twelve children, six of them diagnosed with schizophrenia, that became science's great hope in the quest to understand the disease.

Don and Mimi Galvin seemed to be living the American dream. After World War II, Don's work with the Air Force brought them to Colorado, where their twelve children perfectly spanned the baby boom: the oldest born in 1945, the youngest in 1965. In those years, there was an established script for a family like the Galvins—aspiration, hard work, upward mobility, domestic harmony—and they worked hard to play their parts. But behind the scenes was a different story: psychological breakdown, sudden shocking violence, hidden abuse. By the mid-1970s, six of the ten Galvin boys, one after another, were diagnosed as schizophrenic. How could all this happen to one family?

What took place inside the house on Hidden Valley Road was so extraordinary that the Galvins became one of the first families to be studied by the National Institute of Mental Health. Their story offers a shadow history of the science of schizophrenia, from the era of institutionalization, lobotomy, and the schizophrenogenic mother to the search for genetic markers for the disease, always amid profound disagreements about the nature of the illness itself. And unbeknownst to the Galvins, samples of their DNA informed decades of genetic research that continues today, offering paths to treatment, prediction, and even eradication of the disease for future generations.

With clarity and compassion, bestselling and award-winning author Robert Kolker uncovers one family's unforgettable legacy of suffering, love, and hope.

***Home for Erring and Outcast Girls* by Julie Kibler**

FIC KIBLER

An emotionally raw and resonant story of love, loss, and the enduring power of friendship, following the lives of two young women connected by a home for "fallen girls," and inspired by historical events.

In turn-of-the-20th century Texas, the Berachah Home for the Redemption and Protection of Erring Girls is an unprecedented beacon of hope for young women consigned to the dangerous poverty of the streets by birth, circumstance, or personal tragedy. Built in 1903 on the dusty outskirts of Arlington, a remote dot between Dallas and Fort Worth's red-light districts, the progressive home bucks public opinion by offering faith, training, and rehabilitation to prostitutes,

addicts, unwed mothers, and "ruined" girls without forcibly separating mothers from children. When Lizzie Bates and Mattie McBride meet there--one sick and abused, but desperately clinging to her young daughter, the other jilted by the beau who fathered her ailing son--they form a friendship that will see them through unbearable loss, heartbreak, difficult choices, and ultimately, diverging paths.

A century later, Cate Sutton, a reclusive university librarian, uncovers the hidden histories of the two troubled women as she stumbles upon the cemetery on the home's former grounds and begins to comb through its archives in her library. Pulled by an indescribable connection, what Cate discovers about their stories leads her to confront her own heartbreaking past, and to reclaim the life she thought she'd let go forever. With great pathos and powerful emotional resonance, *Home for Erring and Outcast Girls* explores the dark roads that lead us to ruin, and the paths we take to return to ourselves.

***I See You Everywhere* by Julia Glass**

FIC GLASS (LP via STELLA, CD via STELLA, audio via Libby)

From the author of the best-selling *Three Junes* comes an intimate new work of fiction: a tale of two sisters, together and apart, told in their alternating voices over twenty-five years.

Louisa Jardine is the older one, the conscientious student, precise and careful: the one who yearns for a good marriage, an artistic career, a family. Clem, the archetypal youngest, is the rebel: uncontainable, iconoclastic, committed to her work but not to the men who fall for her daring nature. Louisa resents that the charismatic Clem has always been the favorite; yet as Clem puts it, "On the other side of the fence--mine--every expectation you fulfill . . . puts you one stop closer to that Grand Canyon rim from which you could one day rule the world--or plummet in very grand style."

In this vivid, heartrending story of what we can and cannot do for those we love, the sisters grow closer as they move farther apart. Louis settles in New York while Clem, a wildlife biologist, moves restlessly about until she lands in the Rocky Mountains. Their complex bond, Louisa observes, is "like a double helix, two souls coiling around a common axis, joined yet never touching."

Alive with all the sensual detail and riveting characterization that mark Glass's previous work, *I See You Everywhere* is a piercingly candid story of life and death, companionship and sorrow, and the nature of sisterhood itself.

***The Latecomer* by Jean Hanff Korelitz**

The Latecomer is a layered and immersive literary novel about three siblings, desperate to escape one another, and the upending of their family by the late arrival of a fourth. The Latecomer follows the story of the wealthy, New York City-based Oppenheimer family, from the first meeting of

parents Salo and Johanna, under tragic circumstances, to their triplets born during the early days of IVF. As children, the three siblings Harrison, Lewyn, and Sally feel no strong familial bond and cannot wait to go their separate ways, even as their father becomes more distanced and their mother more desperate. When the triplets leave for college, Johanna, faced with being truly alone, makes the decision to have a fourth child. What role will the latecomer play in this fractured family? A complex novel that builds slowly and deliberately, *The Latecomer* touches on the topics of grief and guilt, generational trauma, privilege and race, traditions and religion, and family dynamics. It is a profound and witty family story from an accomplished author, known for the depth of her character studies, expertly woven storylines, and plot twists.

***The Nest* by Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney**

FIC SWEENEY (LP, CD via STELLA, audio via Libby, ebook/audio via Hoopla)

On a wintry afternoon in New York City, Melody, Beatrice and Jack Plumb gather to confront their charismatic and reckless older brother, Leo, who has just been released from rehab. Leo's bad behaviour, culminating in a car crash while under the influence—a nineteen-year-old waitress beside him—has endangered the Plumbs' joint trust fund, or "the Nest," as they've taken to calling it. The four siblings are at very different places in their lives, but all believe that this money will solve a host of self-inflicted problems and their consequences. And until Leo's accident, they'd been mere months away from receiving it.

Can Leo get the Plumbs out of this mess, as he's always been able to do for himself before? Or will the Plumb siblings have to do without the money and the future lives they've envisioned? As the siblings grapple with family tensions, old histories and the significant emotional and financial cost of the accident, Sweeney introduces an unforgettable cast of supporting characters: Leo's stalwart ex-girlfriend who now thinks that maybe, just maybe, he is capable of change; the waitress whose life was shattered in the accident and the Iraqi war veteran who falls in love with her; and a retired, grieving firefighter with a very big secret.

Tender, funny and deftly written, *The Nest* explores what money does to relationships, what happens to our ambitions over the course of our lives, and the fraught but unbreakable ties we have with our families.

***Paper Palace* by Miranda Cowley Heller**

On a perfect July morning Elle, a fifty-year-old happily married mother of three, awakens at "The Paper Palace"—the family summer place which she has visited every summer of her life. This morning is different: last night Elle and her oldest friend Jonas crept out the back door into the darkness and had sex with each other for the first time, all while their spouses chatted away

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inside. Over the next 24 hours Elle will have to decide between the life she has made with her genuinely beloved husband, Peter, and the life she always imagined she would have had with her childhood love, Jonas, if a tragic event hadn't forever changed the course of their lives.

***Pearly Everlasting* by Tammy Armstrong**

FIC ARMSTRONG

In a narrative sown with rural folklore and superstition, *Pearly Everlasting* is an enchanting woodland Gothic about the triumph of good over evil and the forgotten beauty of the natural world.

New Brunswick, 1934. When a cook in a logging camp finds an orphaned baby bear, he brings it home to his wife, who names the cub Bruno and raises him alongside her newborn daughter, Pearly Everlasting.

During the Great Depression, amidst severe poverty and dangerous work conditions, Pearly's family and the woodsmen form a close-knit community that embraces the tame, young bear in their camp.

But when a new camp supervisor—who increasingly endangers the lives of the loggers for profit—arrives, he is less accepting of Bruno. When the supervisor is found dead, Bruno is blamed, and soon after is kidnapped and sold to an animal trader. Pearly, now a teenager, has no choice but to find Bruno and sets off on a hazardous solo journey through the forest—her first trip to “the Outside”—to rescue him.

To make her way home again, Pearly will have to tramp more than fifty miles through ice and snow, elude the malevolent spirit of Jack in the Dark and confront the modern-day cruelty of villagers fearful of her family's way of life. Over those harrowing miles, Pearly will discover what it really means to be family to a bear.

***Rock Paper Scissors* by Alice Feeney**

FIC FEENEY (LP via STELLA, CD via STELLA, ebook/audio via Libby)

Think you know the person you married? Think again...

Things have been wrong with Mr. and Mrs. Wright for a long time. When Adam and Amelia win a weekend away to Scotland, it might be just what their marriage needs. Self-confessed workaholic and screenwriter Adam Wright has lived with face blindness his whole life. He can't recognize friends or family, or even his own wife.

Every anniversary the couple exchange traditional gifts – paper, cotton, pottery, tin – and each year Adam's wife writes him a letter that she never lets him read. Until now. They both know this weekend will make or break their marriage, but they didn't randomly win this trip. One of them is lying, and someone doesn't want them to live happily ever after.

Ten years of marriage. Ten years of secrets. And an anniversary they will never forget.

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***Seven Days of Us* by Francesca Hornak**

FIC HORNAK (LP via STELLA, CD via STELLA, audio via Libby)

It's Christmas, and for the first time in years the entire Birch family will be under one roof. Even Emma and Andrew's elder daughter—who is usually off saving the world—will be joining them at Weyfield Hall, their aging country estate. But Olivia, a doctor, is only coming home because she has to. Having just returned from treating an epidemic abroad, she's been told she must stay in quarantine for a week . . . and so too should her family.

For the next seven days, the Birches are locked down, cut off from the rest of humanity—and even decent Wi-Fi—and forced into each other's orbits. Younger, unabashedly frivolous daughter Phoebe is fixated on her upcoming wedding, while Olivia deals with the culture shock of being immersed in first-world problems.

As Andrew sequesters himself in his study writing scathing restaurant reviews and remembering his glory days as a war correspondent, Emma hides a secret that will turn the whole family upside down.

In close proximity, not much can stay hidden for long, and as revelations and long-held tensions come to light, nothing is more shocking than the unexpected guest who's about to arrive . . .

***The Two-Family House* by Lynda Cohen Loigman**

FIC LOIGMAN (LP, CD)

Brooklyn, 1947: in the midst of a blizzard, in a two-family brownstone, two babies are born minutes apart to two women. They are sisters by marriage with an impenetrable bond forged before and during that dramatic night; but as the years progress, small cracks start to appear and their once deep friendship begins to unravel. No one knows why, and no one can stop it. One misguided choice; one moment of tragedy. Heartbreak wars with happiness and almost but not quite wins.

From debut novelist Lynda Cohen Loigman comes *The Two-Family House*, a moving family saga filled with heart, emotion, longing, love, and mystery.

***Winter Street (Winter #1)* by Elin Hilderbrand**

FIC HILDERBRAND (LP, CD, ebook/audio via Libby, ebook/audio via Hoopla)

Kelley Quinn is the owner of Nantucket's Winter Street Inn and the proud father of four, all of them grown and living in varying states of disarray. Patrick, the eldest, is a hedge fund manager with a guilty conscience. Kevin, a bartender, is secretly sleeping with a French housekeeper named Isabelle. Ava, a school teacher, is finally dating the perfect guy but can't get him to commit. And Bart, the youngest and only child of Kelley's second marriage to Mitzi, has recently shocked everyone by joining the Marines.

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As Christmas approaches, Kelley is looking forward to getting the family together for some quality time at the inn. But when he walks in on Mitzi kissing Santa Claus (or the guy who's playing Santa at the inn's annual party), utter chaos descends. With the three older children each reeling in their own dramas and Bart unreachable in Afghanistan, it might be up to Kelley's ex-wife, nightly news anchor Margaret Quinn, to save Christmas at the Winter Street Inn.

Before the mulled cider is gone, the delightfully dysfunctional Quinn family will survive a love triangle, an unplanned pregnancy, a federal crime, a small house fire, many shots of whiskey, and endless rounds of Christmas caroling, in this heart-warming novel about coming home for the holidays.