Popular Historical Fiction Titles
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1. Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens
   For years, rumors of the "Marsh Girl" have haunted Barkley Cove, a quiet town on the North Carolina coast. So in late 1969, when handsome Chase Andrews is found dead, the locals immediately suspect Kya Clark, the so-called Marsh Girl. But Kya is not what they say. Sensitive and intelligent, she has survived for years alone in the marsh that she calls home, finding friends in the gulls and lessons in the sand. Then the time comes when she yearns to be touched and loved. When two young men from town become intrigued by her wild beauty, Kya opens herself to a new life--until the unthinkable happens.

2. Before We Were Yours by Lisa Wingate
   Memphis, Tennessee, 1936. The five Foss children find their lives changed forever when their parents leave them alone on the family shantyboat one stormy night. Rill Foss, just twelve years old, must protect her four younger siblings as they are wrenched from their home on the Mississippi and thrown into the care of the infamous Georgia Tann, director of the Tennessee Children's Home Society. South Carolina, Present Day. Avery Stafford has lived a charmed life. Loving daughter to her father, a U.S. Senator, she has a promising career as an assistant D.A. in Baltimore and is engaged to her best friend. But when Avery comes home to help her father weather a health crisis and a political attack, a chance encounter with a stranger leaves her deeply shaken. Avery's decision to learn more about the woman's life will take her on a journey through her family's long-hidden history"--

A tale inspired by firsthand accounts about the notoriously corrupt Tennessee Children's Home Society follows the efforts of a Baltimore assistant D.A. to uncover her parents' fateful secrets in the wake of a political attack and a chance encounter with a stranger. By the best-selling author of Tending Roses.

3. The Water Dancer by Ta-Nehisi Coates
   "Young Hiram Walker was born into bondage--and lost his mother and all memory of her when he was a child--but he is also gifted with a mysterious power. Hiram almost drowns when he crashes a carriage into a river, but is saved from the depths by a force he doesn't understand, a blue light that lifts him up and lands him a mile away. This strange brush with death forces a new urgency on Hiram's private rebellion. Spurred on by his improvised plantation family, Thena, his chosen mother, a woman of few words and many secrets, and Sophia, a young woman fighting her own war even as she and Hiram fall in love, he becomes determined to escape the only home he's ever known. So begins an unexpected journey into the covert war on slavery that takes Hiram from the corrupt grandeur of Virginia's proud plantations to desperate guerrilla cells in the wilderness, from the coffin of the deep South to dangerously utopic movements in the North. Even as he's enlisted in the underground war between slavers and the enslaved, all Hiram wants is to return to the Walker Plantation to free the family he left behind--but to do so, he must first master his magical gift and reconstruct the story of his greatest loss. This is a bracingly original vision of the world of slavery, written with the narrative force of a great adventure. Driven by the author's bold imagination and striking ability to bring readers deep into the interior lives of his brilliantly rendered characters, The Water Dancer is the story of America's oldest struggle--the struggle to tell the truth--from one of our most exciting thinkers and beautiful writers"--
4. **One Good Deed** by David Baldacci

   It's 1949. When war veteran Aloysius Archer is released from Carderock Prison, he is sent to Poca City on parole with a short list of do's and a much longer list of don'ts: do report regularly to his parole officer, don't go to bars, certainly don't drink alcohol, do get a job--and don't ever associate with loose women. The small town quickly proves more complicated and dangerous than Archer's years serving in the war or his time in jail. Within a single night, his search for gainful employment--and a stiff drink--leads him to a local bar, where he is hired for what seems like a simple job: to collect a debt owed to a powerful local businessman, Hank Pittleman. Soon Archer discovers that recovering the debt won't be so easy. The indebted man has a furious grudge against Hank and refuses to pay; Hank's clever mistress has her own designs on Archer; and both Hank and Archer's stern parole officer, Miss Crabtree, are keeping a sharp eye on him. When a murder takes place right under Archer's nose, police suspicions rise against the ex-convict, and Archer realizes that the crime could send him right back to prison . . . if he doesn't use every skill in his arsenal to track down the real killer. The #1 New York Times bestselling author David Baldacci introduces a new, unforgettable character: Archer, a straight-talking former World War II soldier fresh out of prison for a crime he didn't commit.

5. **Summer of 69'** by Elin Hilderbrand

   Welcome to the most tumultuous summer of the twentieth century. It's 1969, and for the Levin family, the times they are a-changing. Every year the children have looked forward to spending the summer at their grandmother's historic home in downtown Nantucket. But like so much else in America, nothing is the same: Blair, the oldest sister, is marooned in Boston, pregnant with twins and unable to travel. Middle sister Kirby, caught up in the thrilling vortex of civil rights protests and, determined to be independent, takes a summer job on Martha's Vineyard. Only-son Tiger is an infantry soldier, recently deployed to Vietnam. Thirteen-year-old Jessie suddenly feels like an only child, marooned in the house with her out-of-touch grandmother and her worried mother, each of them hiding a troubling secret. As the summer heats up, Ted Kennedy sinks a car in Chappaquiddick, man flies to the moon, and Jessie and her family experience their own dramatic upheavals along with the rest of the country.

6. **Outlander** by Diana Gabaldon

   Hurtled back through time more than two hundred years to Scotland in 1743, Claire Randall finds herself caught in the midst of an unfamiliar world torn apart by violence, pestilence, and revolution and haunted by her growing feelings for James Fraser, a young soldier. Now a Starz TV original series.

7. **The Nickel Boys** by Colson Whitehead

   In this bravura follow-up to the Pulitzer Prize, and National Book Award-winning #1 New York Times bestseller *The Underground Railroad*, Colson Whitehead brilliantly dramatizes another strand of American history through the story of two boys sentenced to a hellish reform school in Jim Crow-era Florida.

   As the Civil Rights movement begins to reach the black enclave of Frenchtown in segregated Tallahassee, Elwood Curtis takes the words of Dr. Martin Luther King to heart: He is "as good as anyone." Abandoned by his parents, but kept on the straight and narrow by his grandmother, Elwood is about to enroll in the local black college. But for a black boy in the Jim Crow South of the early 1960s, one innocent mistake is enough to destroy the future. Elwood is sentenced to a juvenile reformatory called the Nickel Academy, whose mission statement says it provides "physical, intellectual and moral training" so the delinquent boys in their charge can become "honorable and honest men."
In reality, the Nickel Academy is a grotesque chamber of horrors where the sadistic staff beats and sexually abuses the students, corrupt officials and locals steal food and supplies, and any boy who resists is likely to disappear "out back." Stunned to find himself in such a vicious environment, Elwood tries to hold onto Dr. King's ringing assertion "Throw us in jail and we will still love you." His friend Turner thinks Elwood is worse than naive, that the world is crooked, and that the only way to survive is to scheme and avoid trouble.

The tension between Elwood's ideals and Turner's skepticism leads to a decision whose repercussions will echo down the decades. Formed in the crucible of the evils Jim Crow wrought, the boys' fates will be determined by what they endured at the Nickel Academy.

Based on the real story of a reform school in Florida that operated for one hundred and eleven years and warped the lives of thousands of children, The Nickel Boys is a devastating, driven narrative that showcases a great American novelist writing at the height of his powers.

8. Lilac Girls by Martha Hall Kelly
   On a September day in Manhattan in 1939, twenty-something Caroline Ferriday is consumed by her efforts to secure the perfect boutonniere for an important French diplomat and resisting the romantic advances of a married actor. Meanwhile across the Atlantic, Kasia Kuzmerick, a Polish Catholic teenager, is nervously anticipating the changes that are sure to come since Germany has declared war on Poland. As tensions rise abroad - and in her personal life - Caroline's interest in aiding the war effort in France grows and she eventually comes to hear about the dire situation at the Ravensbruck all-female concentration camp. At the same time, Kasia's carefree youth is quickly slipping away, only to be replaced by a fervor for the Polish resistance movement. Through Ravensbruck - and the horrific atrocities taking place there told in part by an infamous German surgeon, Herta Oberheuser - the two women's lives will converge in unprecedented ways and a novel of redemption and hope emerges that is breathtaking in scope and depth

9. The Secrets We Kept by Lara Prescott
   A thrilling tale of secretaries turned spies, of love and duty, and of sacrifice--inspired by the true story of the CIA plot to infiltrate the hearts and minds of Soviet Russia, not with propaganda, but with the greatest love story of the twentieth century: Doctor Zhivago.

   At the height of the Cold War, two secretaries are pulled out of the typing pool at the CIA and given the assignment of a lifetime. Their mission: to smuggle Doctor Zhivago out of the USSR, where no one dare publish it, and help Pasternak's magnum opus make its way into print around the world. Glamorous and sophisticated Sally Forrester is a seasoned spy who has honed her gift for deceit all over the world--using her magnetism and charm to pry secrets out of powerful men. Irina is a complete novice, and under Sally's tutelage quickly learns how to blend in, make drops, and invisibly ferry classified documents.

   The Secrets We Kept combines a legendary literary love story--the decades-long affair between Pasternak and his mistress and muse, Olga Ivinskaya, who was sent to the Gulag and inspired Zhivago's heroine, Lara--with a narrative about two women empowered to lead lives of extraordinary intrigue and risk. From Pasternak's country estate outside Moscow to the brutalities of the Gulag, from Washington, D.C. to Paris and Milan, The Secrets We Kept captures a watershed moment in the history of literature--told with soaring emotional intensity and captivating historical detail. And at the center of this unforgettable debut is the powerful belief that a piece of art can change the world.

10. The Underground Railroad by Colson Whitehead
Chronicles the daring survival story of a cotton plantation slave in Georgia, who, after suffering at the hands of both her owners and fellow slaves, races through the Underground Railroad with a relentless slave-catcher close behind.

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