

## January Theme

### **Fresh Starts & First Chapters**

Kick off the new year with coming-of-age stories or books about self-discovery and transformation. Read about characters finding themselves, coming out, transitioning, or beginning new chapters in their lives. Books should feature LGBTQ+ characters or be written by authors from the LGBTQ+ community. Fiction or nonfiction selections welcome. Books from any category—adult, young adult, etc. —are welcome.

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## **Fiction – Adult**

### **Light From Uncommon Stars – Ryka Aoki (2021)**

A runaway trans violinist crosses paths with an eccentric teacher whose talents come with a dangerous bargain. As music, destiny, and found family intertwine, each character stands on the edge of a life-altering choice. A genre-blending story about courage, transformation, and new beginnings.

Genre: Fantasy, Contemporary

Prompt Connection: Transformation, chosen family, and stepping into a new life.

### **The Pairing – Casey McQuiston (2022)**

In a society built on perfect matches, one woman begins to question what she truly wants. As romance and rebellion collide, she finds herself at the start of an unexpected new chapter.

Genre: Romance, Contemporary

Prompt Connection: Questioning prescribed lives and choosing a new path.

### **Someone You Can Build a Nest In – Claire Christian (2022)**

Two women cautiously explore love, independence, and emotional safety while learning how to build a life together. A tender story about trust, intimacy, and growth.

Genre: Romance, Horror, Sci-Fi

Prompt Connection: New beginnings through connection and mutual support.

### **Confessions of the Fox – Jordy Rosenberg (2018)**

Set in 18th-century London, this genre-defying novel follows a man reclaiming his story and identity. Blending history and experimentation, it explores survival and self-definition.

Genre: Historical Fiction, Literary Fiction

Prompt Connection: Rewriting one's narrative and forging identity.

### **On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous – Ocean Vuong (2019)**

Written as a letter from son to mother, this lyrical novel reflects on family, memory, and the moments that shape who we become. A quiet, powerful exploration of emotional growth.

Genre: Literary Fiction

Prompt Connection: Self-understanding and personal transformation.

### **Less – Andrew Sean Greer (2017)**

Arthur Less travels the world to avoid an uncomfortable milestone, discovering humor, insight, and

unexpected clarity along the way. A bittersweet story of reinvention.

Genre: Contemporary Fiction

Prompt Connection: Starting over and discovering oneself later in life.

**Milk Fed – Melissa Broder (2021)**

A woman's tightly controlled life is disrupted by desire and connection. Darkly funny and deeply introspective, the novel explores obsession, identity, and emotional awakening.

Genre: Contemporary Fiction

Prompt Connection: Transformation through confronting desire and self-image.

**The Kingdom of Sand – Andrew Holleran (1987)**

In 1980s New York, a man reflects on love, loss, and survival during a time of personal and cultural upheaval. A moving portrait of resilience.

Genre: Literary Fiction

Prompt Connection: Growth and transformation after profound change.

**A House Among the Trees – Julia Glass (2017)**

A group of interconnected New Yorkers navigate love, grief, and renewal. Their intersecting lives reveal how relationships can spark new beginnings.

Genre: Contemporary Fiction

Prompt Connection: Reinvention through reflection and connection.

**Luster – Raven Leilani (2020)**

Edie, a young Black woman, struggles through work, relationships, and identity while carving out a life on her own terms. Sharp, raw, and unflinching.

Genre: Contemporary Fiction

Prompt Connection: Coming-of-age and claiming agency.

**The Prophets – Robert Jones, Jr. (2021)**

On a Southern plantation, two men find refuge in love while navigating faith and brutality. A lyrical, powerful novel about courage and self-determination.

Genre: Historical Fiction

Prompt Connection: Claiming one's path despite overwhelming constraints.

**It's Been a Pleasure, Noni Blake – Claire Christian (2021)**

After a breakup, Noni begins redefining her life, friendships, and sense of self. A warm, reflective story about starting over.

Genre: Contemporary Fiction

Prompt Connection: Reinvention after heartbreak.

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## Fiction – YA

**Felix Ever After – Kacen Callender (2020)**

Felix Love navigates friendships, romance, and family while discovering self-worth and identity. A heartfelt story about embracing who you are.

Genre: Contemporary

Prompt Connection: Self-discovery and rebuilding after hardship.

**If I Was Your Girl – Meredith Russo (2016)**

Amanda Hardy starts over at a new school, determined to live authentically. As she forms friendships and experiences first love, she learns to trust herself.

Genre: Contemporary

Prompt Connection: Leaving the past behind to begin again.

**Stay Gold – Tobly McSmith (2020)**

Jude balances family responsibilities and first love while figuring out who he is. A tender coming-of-age story.

Genre: Contemporary

Prompt Connection: Early self-discovery and emotional growth.

**The Girl from the Sea – Molly Knox Ostertag (2021)**

One transformative summer leads Morgan to new friendships and feelings. A gentle graphic novel about self-realization.

Genre: Graphic Novel, Contemporary

Prompt Connection: Emotional growth and self-understanding.

**She Gets the Girl – Alyson Derrick & Rachael Lippincott (2020)**

A charming rom-com about first love, self-expression, and discovering what you want from relationships.

Genre: Contemporary, Romance

Prompt Connection: Beginning a personal journey through romance.

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## Non-Fiction

**Frighten the Horses – Oliver Radclyffe (2022)**

A textured, sharply written memoir about coming of age in the fourth decade of one's life and embracing one's truest self in a world that demands gender fit in neat boxes

Genre: Memoir

Prompt Connection: Facing the future with newfound self-reliance.

**Becoming a Man: Half a Life Story – Paul Monette (1992)**

Monette reflects on love, loss, and identity as a gay man during the AIDS crisis. A powerful memoir of resilience.

Genre: Memoir, History

Prompt Connection: Personal transformation through life-defining chapters.

**Dear Senthuran – Akwaeke Emezi (2021)**

A series of intimate letters exploring queerness, spirituality, and identity. A deeply reflective journey toward self-understanding.

Genre: Memoir, Spiritual

Prompt Connection: New beginnings through reflection and identity work.

**This Book Is Gay – Juno Dawson (2014)**

A witty, informative guide to identity, relationships, and queer history.

Genre: Educational, Contemporary

Prompt Connection: Supporting readers as they begin their journey.

**Sounds Fake but Okay – Alice Oseman (2021)**

Honest reflections on asexuality, aromanticism, and identity, told with warmth and clarity.

Genre: Memoir, Contemporary

Prompt Connection: Embracing one's unique path.

**Gender Queer – Maia Kobabe (2019)**

A graphic memoir chronicling the author's journey toward understanding gender and identity.

Genre: Memoir, Graphic Novel

Prompt Connection: Self-discovery and embracing a new understanding of self.