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JAN 2019

THE A NOVEL PARAGON HOTEL

The spirited new novel from Lyndsay Faye ricochets from Prohibition-era Harlem to a dangerous Portland, Oregon

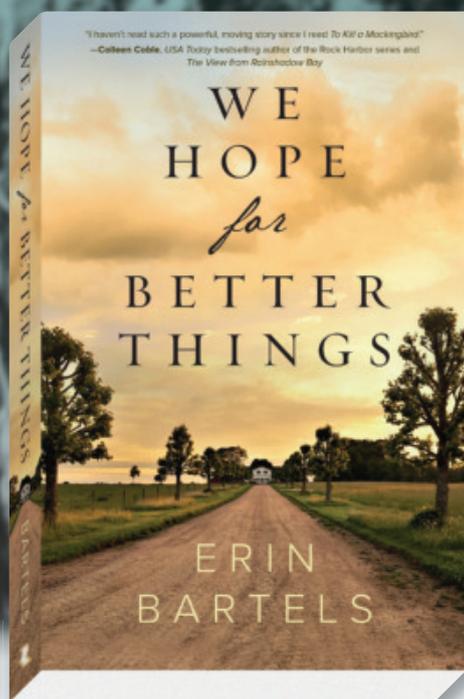
also inside

Dani Shapiro's DNA revelation

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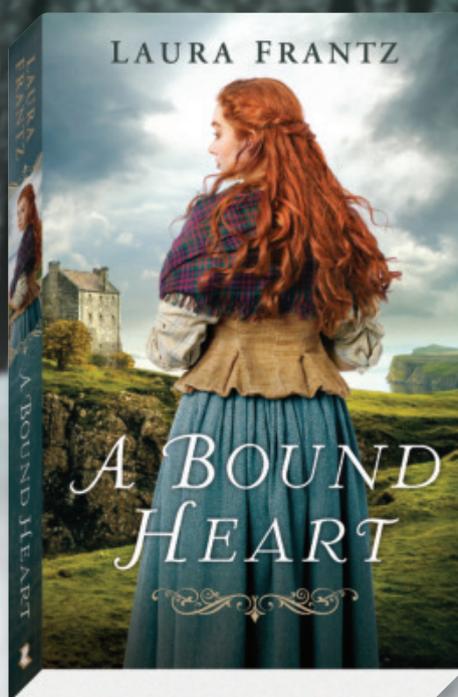
10 books for New Year's resolutions

NEW YEAR. NEW STORIES.



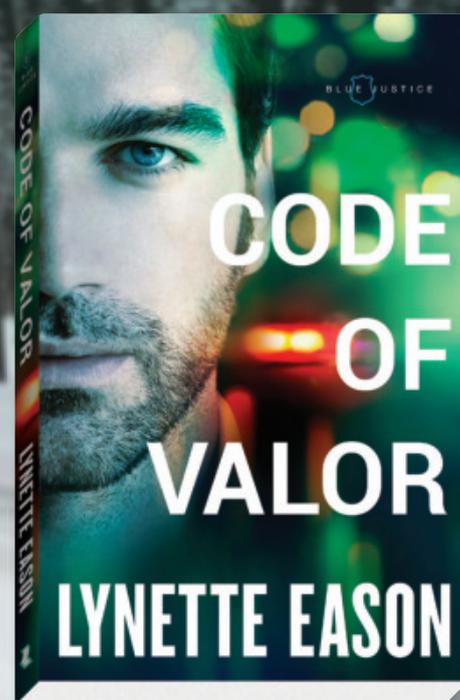
978-0-8007-3491-6

In this richly textured debut novel, a disgraced journalist moves into her great aunt's secret-laden farmhouse and discovers that the women in her family were testaments to true love and courage in the face of war, persecution, and racism.



978-0-8007-2664-5

Their stations could not have been more different: a Scottish laird and a simple lass. When a tragedy forces both to colonial Virginia as indentured servants, can a love thwarted by tradition come to life in a new land?



978-0-8007-2704-8

Detective Brady St. John isn't looking for love—just a few days of rest at his family's cabin. But an attempted murder—and a secretive woman—change all his plans.

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Cover credit Kaitlin Kall

from the editor

In October, BookPage celebrated 30 years in publication—no small accomplishment given the changes experienced by both books and magazines in the digital age. While change can be difficult, it can also reinvigorate. I'm proud to introduce a big change for BookPage—a redesign of our print edition. By reader request, we've expanded our coverage of mystery, sci-fi/fantasy and young adult books. We've also introduced starred reviews to highlight our favorite recommended titles. Thanks to Ryan Darrow at Nashville Public Library for helping us utilize library resources to plan our redesign. I hope you enjoy the new BookPage. Share your thoughts with me at stephanie@bookpage.com. —*Stephanie Koehler, editor*

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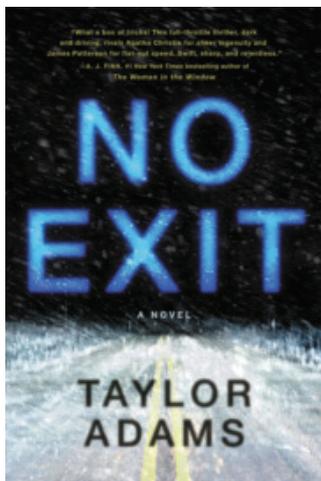
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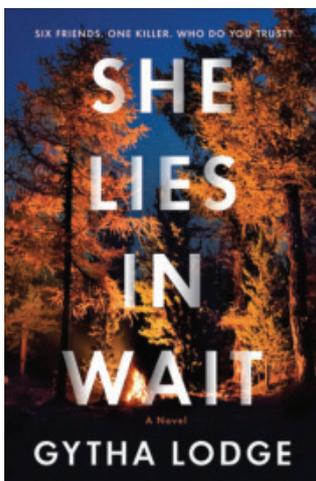
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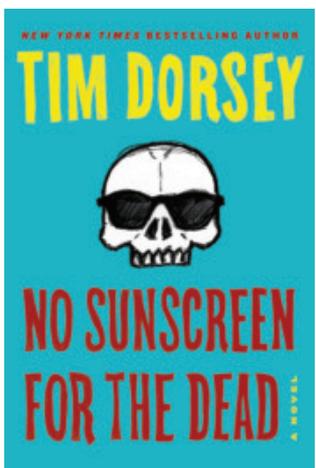
In James Bond movies, one of the many ways of ratcheting up the tension is to introduce a Bad Thing About to Happen in, say, five minutes' time, and to regularly return to the flashing digital countdown amid the action to see how much time is left before the Bad Thing transpires. Author Taylor Adams updates this suspense-building device in his supercharged novel *No Exit* (William Morrow, \$26.99, 352 pages, 9780062875655) with a dwindling cellphone battery peppering the high-tension text. The scene: a lonely snowbound rest area in rural Colorado, a place with little to no cellphone service, and a protagonist who has left her charger at home on what will prove to be the worst night of her life. At risk are a kidnapped child, albeit a rather resourceful one; a pair of innocent (or maybe not) bystanders; and the aforementioned protagonist, a college student named Darby Thorne, who was en route to her mother's hospital bedside before her plans were interrupted by the freakish snowstorm and an even more freakish

group of fellow strandeers at the mountain shelter. Oh, and one last thing, and it really is the last thing—the twist ending is way cool.



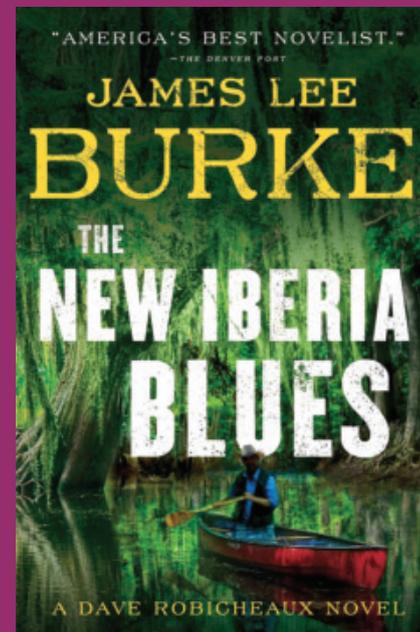
Gytha Lodge's suspenseful new psychological thriller, *She Lies in Wait* (Random House, \$27, 368 pages, 9781984817358), tells the story of a ruinous outing and its aftermath decades later. Thirty-odd years ago, six friends went camping. Only five came home, and there was never a trace of the missing girl, Aurora Jackson. Her friends, a wide-ranging volunteer search party and even police with cadaver dogs turned up nothing—until now, when a young girl on a family holiday discovers a detached finger beneath a hollow tree within steps of the friends' original campsite. Police Detective Chief Inspector Jonah Sheens knew Aurora peripherally from his high school days, but he decided to stay on the investigation—a decision his assistant, Detective Inspector Juliette Hanson, will come to question as the investigation proceeds. This isn't the only secret that comes to light: One of the campers, an Olympic star in later life, displayed a morbid fascination with young women; another of the group, now a well-regarded politician, was

caught by Aurora *in flagrante delicto* with another boy, and more importantly, he had placed a large supply of Dexedrine in the hollow of that tree. I am just scratching the surface of the secrets here. There are plenty more to unearth for yourselves.



In any gathering of mystery writers, Tim Dorsey would be the resident jester, providing more laughs per page than virtually anyone else. His amiably psychopathic protagonist, Serge Storms, is a modern-day Don Quixote, tilting at the windmills of politics, ageism, sexism and any other *-ism* that happens to catch his fancy. In his latest adventure, *No Sunscreen for the Dead* (William Morrow, \$26.99, 336 pages, 9780062795885), Storms invades a Florida retirement community in the wake of a very public sex scandal featuring a 68-year-old retiree and her much younger boy toy. There are two reasons behind Storms' invasion, one being that he is perversely fascinated by this salacious news item, the other being that he wants to find an interesting place to live out his golden years. He has all the necessary gear for that, including plaid shorts and knee-length black socks. And the white belt, without which the ensemble, well, *c'est incomplète*. As the plot develops, Storms gets conscripted into the investigation of some big-dollar swindling in

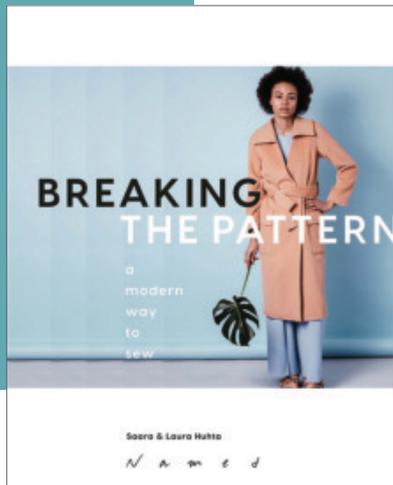
the old folks' community, and high jinks ensue. And because it is Dorsey chronicling said high jinks, be prepared for mirth—lots and lots of mirth.



Top Pick

James Lee Burke is one of a small handful of elite suspense writers whose work transcends the genre, making the leap into capital-L Literature. You don't have to get past the opening paragraph of *The New Iberia Blues* (Simon & Schuster, \$27.99, 464 pages, 9781501176876) to see his mastery of the craft: "Desmond Cormier's success story was an improbable one, even among the many self-congratulatory rags-to-riches tales we tell ourselves in the ongoing saga of our green republic, one that is forever changing yet forever the same, a saga that also includes the graves of Shiloh and cinders from aboriginal villages." First-person narrator Dave Robicheaux is on hand and in fine fettle. Fans have watched Robicheaux age in real time, battling his demons, losing one wife, then another and another, raising the refugee girl he rescued from a submerged airplane when she was a small child and skating close to the edge (and sometimes over the edge) of the law. This time out, he will investigate the ritual slaying of a young black woman, nailed to a cross and left to the vagaries of the rising tide. There is a film company in town, and Robicheaux cannot shake the notion that they are somehow at the epicenter of this homicide, and as he gets closer to proving his thesis, the body count piles up. It is a long book, but I read it slowly, pausing from time to time to digest the first-rate prose, the atmospheric bayou setting and the complex interactions of people I feel I have known for 30-plus years.

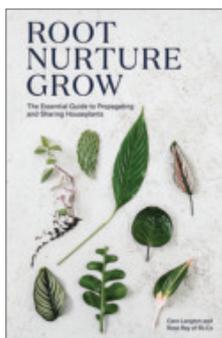
Longtime mystery reviewer Bruce Tierney lives outside Chiang Mai, Thailand, where he bicycles through the rice paddies daily. He recently tallied up the countries he has visited in his years of travel, and was surprised to count exactly 50. He hopes to put 51 and 52 to bed before year's end.



Top Pick

Finnish sisters Saara and Laura Huhta share the wealth of their successful indie clothing pattern brand, Named, in **Breaking the Pattern: A Modern Way to Sew** (Quadrille, \$35, 192 pages, 9781787131835). The nifty thing about their designs is the focus on extreme adaptability: They are “designed to offer as many options for personal customization as possible,” the sisters write. They have included patterns for 10 different garments—

from bags and blouses to classy cocktail dresses and jumpsuits—and claim that “it’s possible to sew at least 50 different variations of the projects,” should you wish to experiment. These garments are built on Scandinavian design—clean lines, minimalist elegance—and they range from drapery styles to more tailored looks. In the back of the book, you’ll find six full-size pattern sheets, which are arranged from easiest to most challenging.



A new friend recently gave me a small pilea plant from one of the “babies” her plant produced. This has quickly become my most beloved houseplant—one with a story behind it. That’s the kind of joy that Caro Langton and Rose Ray, the authors of **Root, Nurture, Grow: The Essential Guide to Propagating and Sharing Houseplants** (Quadrille, \$24.99, 208 pages, 9781787132184), want more people to experience. If you’ve got a good knife and scissors, some old containers, potting mix and a few other simple items, you can turn one houseplant into as many as you like. Langton

and Ray (find them on Instagram at @studio.roco) cover different types of cuttings for a number of common plants, and they also discuss division, grafting and other in-depth aspects of propagation. Even if you stick to plunking stems into jars of water and watching roots form, you’ll enjoy having this pretty guide at your side.



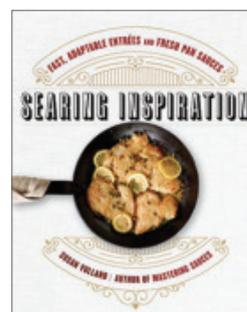
Readers of *Martha Stewart Living* will recognize the concept of **The Martha Manual: How to Do (Almost) Everything** (HMH, \$35, 400 pages, 9781328927323): quick, no-nonsense instructions for home-related tasks. Here, Martha Stewart’s how-tos are organized by themes like “Organize,” “Clean,” “Craft” and “Create.” But I find this guide fascinating to flip through at random to learn things like how to sew an apron, how to hang a tire swing,

how to play lawn games, how to fix and maintain showerheads and how to build a fire. On the whole, the slant of this content may seem a bit gendered, but it’s safe to say *all* humans could amp up their home skills with the help of this book. Light illustrations, bullet points and brisk copy—dip in, dip out, done—are the name of the game here.

Susannah Felts is a Nashville-based writer and co-founder of The Porch, a literary arts organization. She enjoys anything paper-related and, increasingly, plant-related.

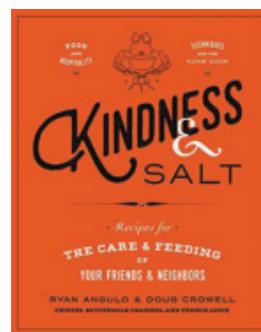
Top Pick

Let’s Eat France! (Artisan, \$50, 432 pages, 9781579658762) by François-Régis Gaudry and friends is a big—as in, six pounds big—boisterously beautiful, ingeniously designed and illustrated book that answers every question you have about French cuisine and all the questions you didn’t know you needed answers to. There’s no table of contents, no chapters, no categories. Every turn of the page invites you to delight in an eclectic, serendipitous survey of France’s edible heritage. You’ll wander from an exploration of the crunchy cornichon pickle and a consideration of the great gastronome Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, to a recipe for an amazing Sardine Pâté, a family-friendly Pot-au-Feu (that’s beef stew, to you), a classic cherry-studded Clafoutis and 372 more remarkable French dishes, plus maps, charts and anecdotes. As a flâneur in the fertile fields of French gastronomy, you’ll learn about wines, hand-crafted liqueurs, cheeses, foie gras, oysters, breads, cakes, galettes, famous chefs and hors d’oeuvres. *C’est merveilleux!*



If “real” cooking is on your agenda for the new year, there’s a fresh cookbook about an old technique that’s a must. **Searing Inspiration: Fast, Adaptable Entrées and Fresh Pan Sauces** (Norton, \$29.95, 234 pages, 9780393292411) by Susan Volland is your ticket to getting fabulous, four-star meals on the table in a flash. Using a skillet and the skills you’ll develop under Volland’s savvy tutelage, making Rib Steaks with Whiskey Béarnaise, a classic Sole Meunière or Tamarind-Glazed Chicken will be a breeze. The

ingredients may vary, but the technique—sear, deglaze, embellish—is the same. You sear ingredients in a hot, oiled skillet and remove; deglaze with wine or another liquid; add the flavor-boosting aromatics you’ve chosen and prepped; re-add the seared ingredients and you’re a dinner diva.



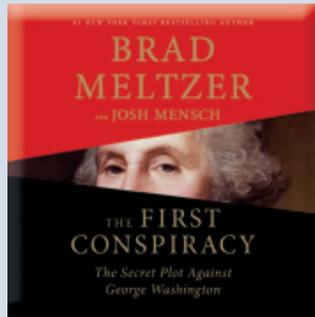
Doug Crowell and chef Ryan Angulo, co-owners of two revered neighborhood restaurants in the restaurant-rich borough of Brooklyn, believe that the most important ingredients in any dish are kindness and salt. Their debut cookbook, appropriately titled **Kindness & Salt: Recipes for the Care and Feeding of Your Friends and Neighbors** (Grand Central Life & Style, \$34, 288 pages, 9781455539987), shows you how to salt early and generously to bring out the best in over 100 recipes, from

Mushroom & Goat Cheese Scramble, Pommes Frites and Seared Scallops to desserts and cocktails. Though you can’t sprinkle kindness on pasta or popovers, you can serve this superbly satisfying bistro food (Duck Meatloaf, Narragansett Mussels, Banana Foster Profiteroles) with warm, cordial confidence.

Sybil Pratt has been eating, cooking and pondering food for many years. She lives in New York City.



Resolve to Listen More!

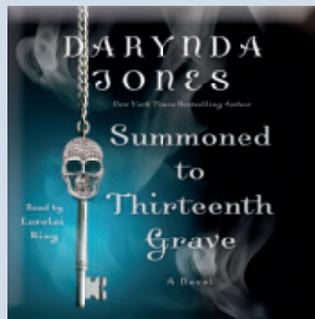
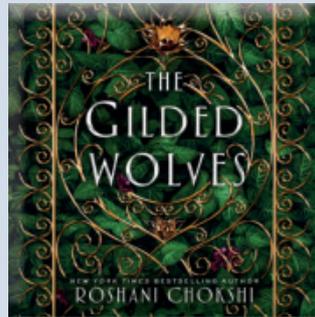


"A tale of spies and treason, conspiracy and counterintelligence... A lively political thriller."
—Kirkus Reviews

Read by Scott Brick

"Dazzling new fantasy...an opulent heist adventure that will leave readers voracious for more." —Kirkus, starred review

Read by P. J. Ochlan and Laurie Catherine Winkel

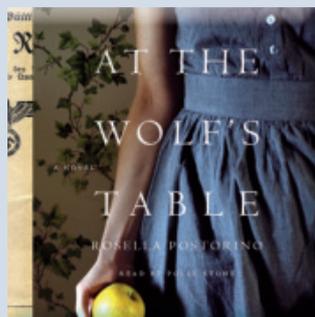
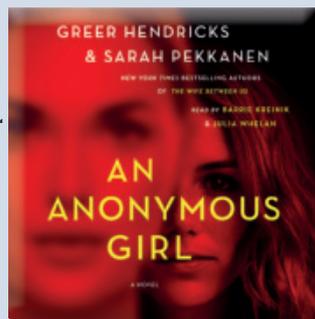


The final installment of Darynda Jones's New York Times bestselling paranormal series!

Read by Lorelei King

"Gasp-worthy final twists...major league suspense."
—Publishers Weekly, starred review

Read by Barrie Kreinik and Julia Whelan



The untold true story of the young woman forced to move to Hitler's headquarters to become one of his food tasters.

Read by Polly Stone

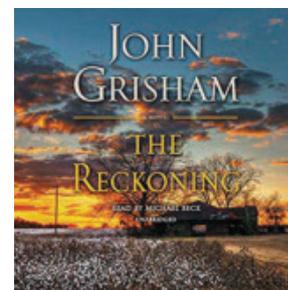
Available From  MACMILLAN AUDIO  

Top Pick

Six Four, Hideo Yokoyama's U.S. debut, was a hit thriller. **Seventeen** (Macmillan Audio, 12.5 hours), Yokoyama's latest book, engagingly performed by Tom Lawrence, is not a thriller, but it is an extraordinarily gripping news-room drama. It's also an intensely personal look at a man who must deal with the ethical predicaments of journalism as well as his inner demons and perceived inadequacies. In 2003, as he's attempting to climb a treacherous rock face, Kazumasa Yuuki, the protagonist and narrator, relives his days following the story of a catastrophic airline crash many years prior that killed almost all of the passengers. In 1985, Yuuki is a veteran reporter for the provincial newspaper in the prefecture where the plane went down, and he is made desk chief for the story. Determined to get as much information to the public and to the victims' families as he can, he becomes embroiled in vicious office politics and power struggles that lead him to re-examine human nature. Yokoyama's fast-paced procedural practically bristles with tension.

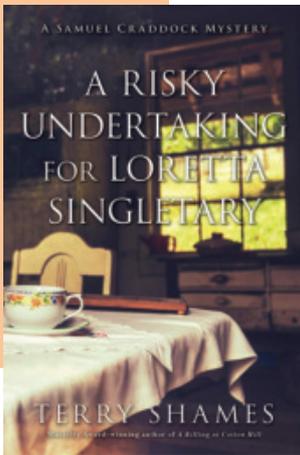


Lovely is not a word usually associated with Stephen King. But **Elevation** (Simon & Schuster Audio, 3 hours), his latest novella, which he narrates, is lovely. It is not a horror tale meant to provoke screaming—instead, it's a beguiling parable with lessons our uncivil society would do well to learn. Scott Carey, a resident of Castle Rock, is losing large amounts of weight, yet his outward appearance doesn't change, and he's never felt better. His good friend, a retired doctor, doesn't think there's a medical explanation. That's fine with Scott, who accepts his fate with grace. In the time left to him, he takes on the small-town bigotry aimed at his neighbors, a married lesbian couple. No details to spoil your fun—just know that when Scott goes into the dying of the light, he's greeted with a rainbow of sparklers.



Pardon the pun, but there's a lot to reckon with in **The Reckoning** (Random House Audio, 18 hours), John Grisham's new thriller, including courtroom complications that of course won't be set straight until the last few minutes of the audiobook. So settle in for a long, satisfying listen as you sift through the lives and lies, sins and secrets, grief and guilt of the proud Banning family of Clanton, Mississippi. On a fall morning in 1946, Pete Banning, husband, father, head of a prominent cotton-farming family and revered World War II hero who lived through hell, walked to town, murdered the Methodist pastor and would never say why, though his silence might mean dying in the electric chair. His reasons for the murder and its consequences for Pete's two children unfold vividly as Michael Beck reads in a remarkable array of authentic accents.

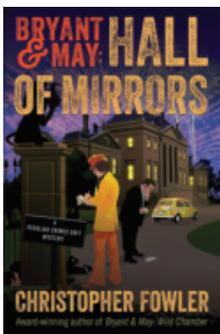
Sukey Howard, an audio aficionado who's gone from cassettes to discs to downloads, has been BookPage's audio reviewer for over 30 years.



Top Pick

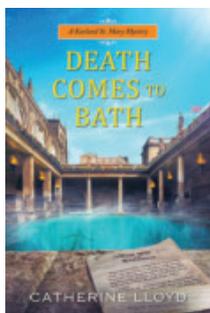
Jarrett Creek, Texas, exemplifies small-town living. Neighbors look out for one another, or so you'd think. When a beloved local baking wizard, Loretta Singletary, turns up missing, police Chief Samuel Craddock realizes he missed several changes in his friend's appearance that may have been clues. **A Risky Undertaking for Loretta Singletary** (Seventh Street, \$15.95, 272 pages, 9781633884908) is an old-fashioned story with a modern problem at its center. Terry Shames' latest book finds the town divided over church involvement in a goat

rodeo when Loretta goes missing. The discovery that she was considering online matchmaking services is mildly scandalous, and Craddock must explore the world of online dating in order to begin the investigation. The tension ratchets up when a body is found and linked back to the same dating sites, and the search for Loretta intensifies. The resolution to this tale is a bit offbeat, but the setting is lush and absorbing, and the tension builds perfectly along the way.



Bryant & May: Hall of Mirrors (Bantam, \$27, 432 pages, 9781101887097) is Christopher Fowler's 16th tale of the Peculiar Crimes Unit, and this time we're off to London in the swinging '60s. Even in their youth, detectives Bryant and May had a habit of doing things their own way, and a simple assignment—keep a man alive for a weekend and get him to court to testify on Monday morning—takes several hard left turns. There's slapstick comedy and swift wordplay (the duo's word games are briefly upstaged by Bryant dangling upside down

from a trellis during a window escape) as well as food for thought. Stand-out moments include exchanges between hippies in love with the idea of freedom and the elders who fought in World War II but don't see their own definition of "freedom" in loose morals and patchouli fumes. If this is your first outing with Bryant and May, you'll want to read them all.



It seems that Major Sir Robert and Lady Lucy Kurland need only drop in on a new city for a death to occur. Thankfully they've become so adept at sleuthing they can almost schedule it alongside their travel itinerary. In **Death Comes to Bath** (Kensington, \$26, 304 pages, 9781496702128), the sixth in Catherine Lloyd's series, Robert has had a medical setback, so the pair, along with Lucy's sister, travels to "take the waters" in England's famed Roman baths. After befriending an older gentleman, the pair is dismayed when he drowns, and foul play is apparent. Lloyd

balances period history (Robert was injured in the Battle of Waterloo), a tense romantic subplot and some extravagant vacation shopping while respecting the grave nature of the crime. Class divisions—and the way money can help one surmount them—make for a rich suspect pool. It may be cruel to hope Robert and Lucy keep visiting new cities, given what tends to happen, but watching this duo in action is a joy.

Heather Seggel is a longtime bookseller, reviewer and occasional library technician in Ukiah, California.

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BookPage
AMERICA'S BOOK REVIEW

Try not to lose your head

When a new Scandinavian mystery hits the shelves, you pretty much know it's going to be good, and Swedish author Camilla Grebe's *The Red Beneath Her* (Ballantine, \$27, 368 pages, ISBN 978-0-399-16322-2), translated by Elizabeth Clark Wines, does not let the team down. All the

measured and, of course, graphically violent. The scene is set at a beautiful woman has died in the home of a much-widowed Swedish businessman—and not peacefully deceased, but beloved, with the head artfully arranged adjacent to the body. The crime bears disturbing similarities to an unsolved murder from 10 years earlier. To

invest done. And that's just the start. Through it all, the true killer remains elusive, making for a breezy day and when

the chief suspect

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The Banished Immortal

National Book Award-winning novelist and poet Ha Jin explores the life and work of one of his homeland's greatest writers—the eighth-century Chinese poet Li Bai.

American readers' Western bias has left the Chinese poet Li Bai less well-known here than in his native land, where he is considered a foundational writer. **The Banished Immortal: A Life of Li Bai** (Pantheon, \$28, 320 pages, 9781524747411), a new biography of the poet by author Ha Jin (*Waiting, The Boat Rocker*), is a worthy corrective and an engaging introduction to the poet's life and work.

Considering that Bai (also known as Li Po) lived from 700-762 B.C., a surprising amount is known about his life, although much of that information is shrouded in inconsistencies, myths and questions with answers that are forever lost to time. Jin does an admirable job sorting the wheat from the chaff. He asserts that there are three versions of Bai: the actual man, the self-created image and the legend shaped by history and culture.

There is little information available about Bai's childhood, but it is believed that his father was Han Chinese while his mother was from an ethnic minority tribe. This mixed parentage, Jin feels, allowed Bai room for self-invention. Bai's father was a successful merchant in China's western frontier, and he hoped his son would secure an influential government position. Bai had other ideas, however, and he spent much of his life traveling as a kind of minstrel, seeking Daoist enlightenment and composing poems, about a thousand of which survive today. Jin tells us

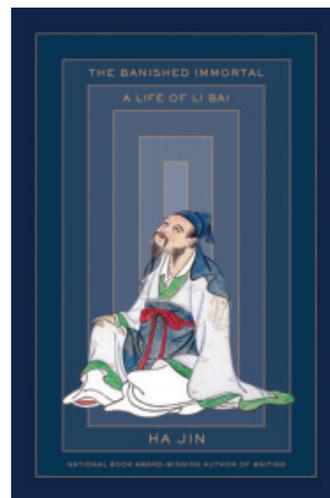
that Bai had no strong feelings of attachment to any one place, and his rootlessness is central to much of his poetry.

"As a constant traveler, his essence would exist in his endless wanderings and in his yearning for a higher order of existence," Jin writes. "He was to roam through the central land as a miraculous figure of sorts, as people later fondly nicknamed him the Banished Immortal."

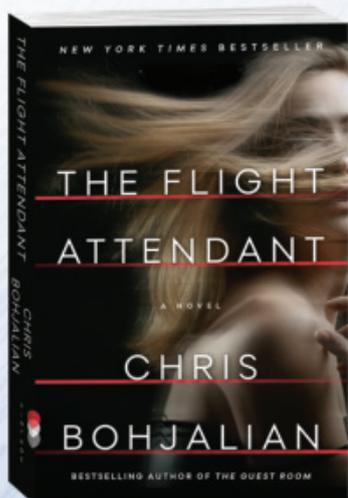
Yet Bai had an earthy side—he drank freely, married numerous times and fathered children. He was a lover of women, but while he was the quintessential romantic poet, he did not seem to love any real woman with the level of passion that appears in his poems.

As Jin traces Bai's lifelong journey, he provides a healthy sampling of poems, which are meditative and philosophical, often sensual, sometimes rapturous. Jin acknowledges that the perfection of the poems is frequently lost in translation (the original Chinese versions are also provided), but readers will still see why Bai's poems have spoken for centuries to other poets (Ezra Pound's loose translation of "The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter" is one of the modernist's most famous poems) and readers alike.

The Banished Immortal is an affectionate and thoughtful portrait of a complicated man and a master poet.



Curl Up with THRILLING READS

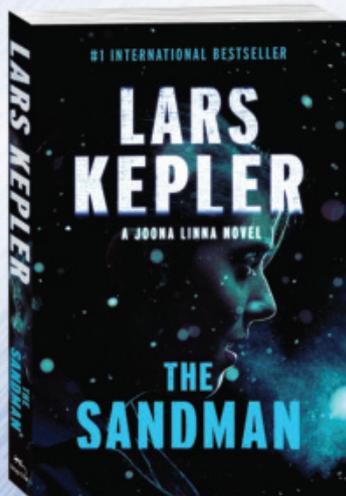


"An expertly turned thriller."
—USA Today

"Bohjalian twists the tension tight and keeps the surprises startling."
—The Wall Street Journal

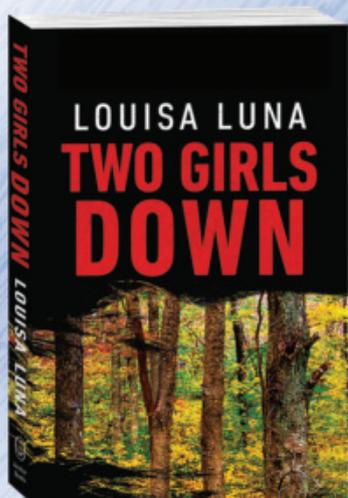
A *Washington Post* Best Thriller of the Year

"[A] marvel: utterly unnerving ... dripping with suspense throughout."
—Entertainment Weekly



"Sensational.... Psychological revelations that pierce the heart."
—The Wall Street Journal

"The suspense is relentless and the payoff is spectacular."
—Lee Child

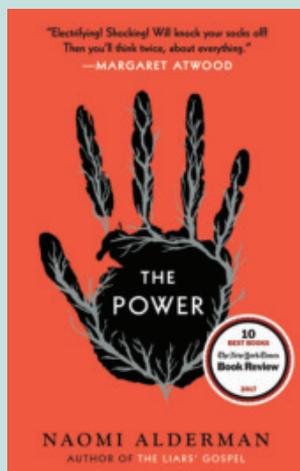


New in Paperback and eBook

Read excerpts and more at
ReadingGroupCenter.com



Robert Weibezaahl is a publishing industry veteran, playwright, novelist and occasional poet who has been a contributor to BookPage for more than 20 years.



Top Pick

Set in the not-too-distant future, **The Power** (Back Bay, \$16.99, 400 pages, 9780316547604) is a chilling sci-fi novel expertly executed by award-winning British author Naomi Alderman. In Alderman's alternate world, women have recently gained the ability to release waves of electricity through their fingertips—and the jolts can kill. Their lethal facility grants them physical supremacy over men, altering the fabric of society. The novel focuses on a few central characters, including Margot, a politician who learns through her young daughter that she,

too, has the power; Allie, an orphan who falls in with a circle of nuns and begins touting a new religion; and Tunde, a would-be journalist whose video of a woman unleashing electricity goes viral. Alderman's convincing and disturbing vision of the future has been compared to *The Handmaid's Tale*. Selected as a best book of 2017 by NPR and the *New York Times*, this hypnotic novel offers futuristic thrills even as it explores important questions of gender and identity.

No Time to Spare by Ursula K. Le Guin

Mariner, \$14.99, 240 pages, 9781328507976

This delightful volume brings together the late, beloved author's crisply composed meditations on aging, cats and the craft of writing.

Everything Here Is Beautiful by Mira T. Lee

Penguin, \$16, 384 pages, 9780735221970

The future looks bright for Lucia Bok—until she is beset by a recurring mental illness. The resulting turmoil upends her and her family's lives as they struggle with important questions about tradition and marriage.

Love and Ruin by Paula McLain

Ballantine, \$17, 432 pages, 9781101967393

In this exhilarating novel, McLain delivers an unforgettable portrait of pioneering reporter Martha Gellhorn, who holds her own against a formidable husband—literary titan Ernest Hemingway.

Tangerine by Christine Mangan

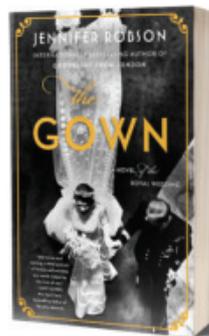
Ecco, \$16.99, 336 pages, 9780062686695

It's 1956 in Morocco, and a twisted friendship between two women is about to explode. Exotic and suspenseful, Mangan's bestselling debut novel is a true page-turner.



A BookPage reviewer since 2003, Julie Hale selects the best new paperback releases for book clubs every month.

BOOK CLUB READS FOR WINTER



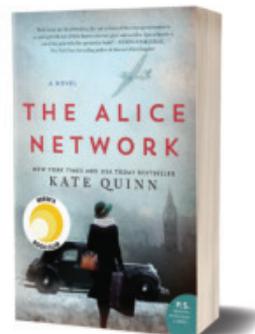
The Gown by Jennifer Robson

"A moving story about the power of female friendship and renewal in the face of adversity. Perfect for fans of *The Crown!*"

— LAUREN WILLIG, *New York Times* bestselling author

The Alice Network by Kate Quinn

The Alice Network is the *New York Times* bestseller that book clubs are raving about. Look for Kate Quinn's next historical novel *The Huntress*, on sale in February!



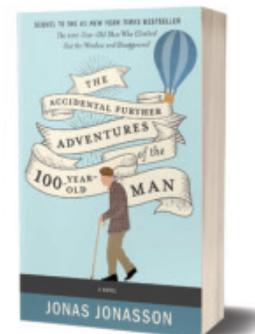
On the Same Page by N. D. Galland

"With a satirist's eye and a pitch-perfect ear for the social nuances of small-town life, this is *Pride and Prejudice* for the Bumble generation."

— GERALDINE BROOKS, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *March*

The Accidental Further Adventures of the 100-Year-Old Man by Jonas Jonasson

The hysterical, clever, and unforgettable sequel to Jonas Jonasson's international bestseller *The Hundred-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out of the Window and Disappeared*.



@Morrow_PB

William Morrow

@bookclubgirl

Book Club Girl

Perfect for fans of Kristin Hannah's *The Nightingale*!

"A poignant reminder that there is no limit to what women can do."

—JULIA LONDON, *New York Times* bestselling author



"This sweeping, stirring tale of one of WWII's courageous and enigmatic Gunner Girls will take your breath away."

—KRISTIN HARMEL, Internationally bestselling author of *The Room on Rue Amélie*

"Deftly weaving together past and present, Kelly tells a fresh, heartfelt story of sisterhood and sacrifice."

—MICHELLE GABLE, *New York Times* bestselling author of *A Paris Apartment*

GALLERY BOOKS

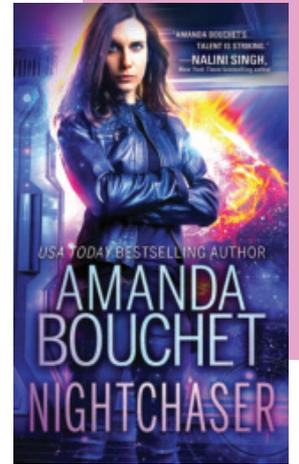
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SimonandSchuster.com

Top Pick

Brace for adventure when reading Amanda Bouchet's **Nightchaser** (Sourcebooks Casablanca, \$7.99, 416 pages, 9781492667131), the first in a new sci-fi romance series. Captain Tess Bailey is on the run, having stolen a valuable, dangerous serum from a conformist galactic government that brutally insists on order and restraint. Finding temporary refuge after a particularly close call, the captain meets cocky and charming Shade Ganavan, who says he can provide much-needed repairs to her ship and perhaps some personal diversion, as Tess is weary of always watching over her shoulder.

But danger is headed their way—will Shade prove to be ally or foe? This is pure, engrossing entertainment as Bouchet deftly builds a galactic world that desperately needs rebel champions like Tess and her crew. Characters' backgrounds and motivations are slowly revealed throughout what is otherwise a fast-paced, action-packed story. There's mystery, tension and more than enough romance to grab the heart.



Jayne Ann Krentz offers a smooth blend of romance and suspense in **Untouchable** (Berkley, \$27, 320 pages, 9780399585296). Cold case investigator Jack Lancaster is making strides in overcoming his horrifying nightmares with the help of Winter Meadows, a hypnotist and meditation guide. He might not know exactly what lies beneath her positive attitude and bright smile, but he's intrigued enough to take their business relationship in a different direction. But when Winter's life is threatened, Jack becomes worried that someone from his past might have tried to hurt him through her. In order to protect Winter, he must hunt down the man who tried to burn him alive many years ago. Some satisfyingly creepy villains, the atmospheric Pacific Northwest setting and a splash of potent sexual chemistry between the two leads let the reader know they're in the hands of a master storyteller.



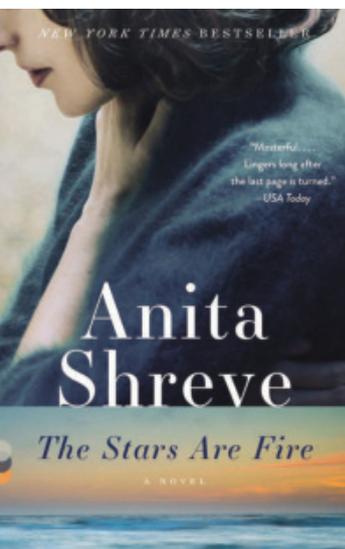
First loves find another chance in **The Duke I Once Knew** (St. Martin's, \$7.99, 336 pages, 9781250174376) by Olivia Drake. The youngest daughter of landed gentry, Abigail Linton devoted her early life to caring for her invalid mother. Now her parents are gone, and at nearly 30, Abby opts to take a governess position on a neighboring estate. Caring for the absent duke's younger sister will give her a new and independent life, so she ignores her worries that she'll encounter the lord of the manor, Maxwell Bryce. Max was Abby's first love, but she hasn't seen him in 15 years. Then, unexpectedly, the duke returns and is astonished when he meets the newest member of his household. Learning to trust one another is the essence of all good romances, and that's what Abby and Max must do, or else lose out on an opportunity for lasting love in this sweet and tender tale.

Christie Ridgway is a lifelong romance reader and a published romance novelist of over 60 books.

the hold list: books to warm you from inside out

Each month, BookPage editors share special reading lists—our personal favorites, old and new.

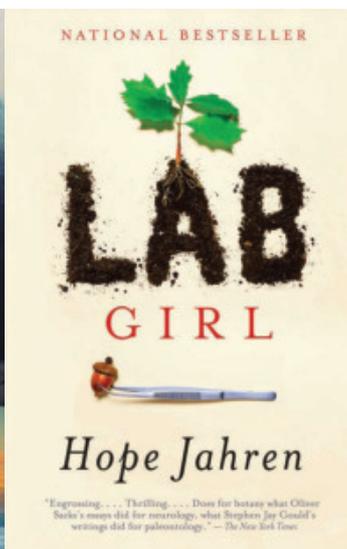
If your primary tactic for surviving the winter is to drag a big blanket into a cozy chair and hibernate with the most inspiring books you can find, then these five reads, selected in partnership with Vintage Books, are for you.



The Stars Are Fire

By Anita Shreve

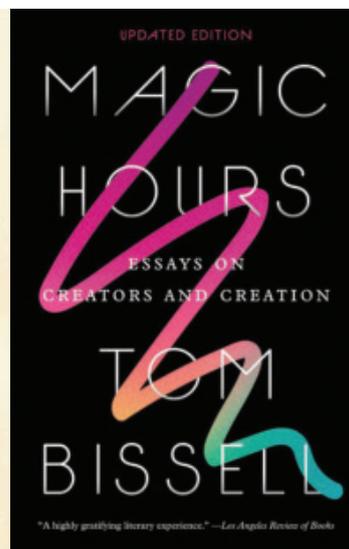
Shreve's novel draws inspiration from Maine's history and follows a young woman as she comes into her own after a devastating fire in 1947. The disaster destroys over a quarter of a million acres and ushers in a new life for Grace Holland, whose husband goes missing during the fire. Now effectively a widow with children to raise by herself, Grace begins to build something new from the ashes. As she slowly realizes how stifling her marriage was, she tentatively opens herself up to a new life and new love. Shreve captures the joy of self-discovery in this stunning novel.



Lab Girl

By Hope Jahren

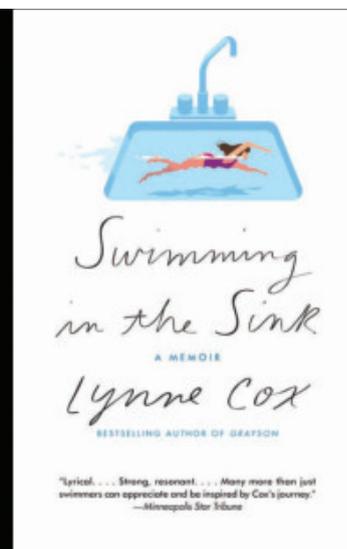
Laugh, cry and fall madly in love with the world around you while reading paleobiologist Jahren's bestselling memoir, an entertaining, spirited look into the world of plant researchers. Whether she's sharing the challenges of being a female scientist or the unique relationship she has with her lab partner, Jahren displays an effervescent, clear-eyed delight in her subjects, and never more so than in her insights into the natural world. Even if science and nature books aren't your cuppa, Jahren's descriptive writing style makes this an enjoyable reading experience for just about anyone.



Magic Hours

By Tom Bissell

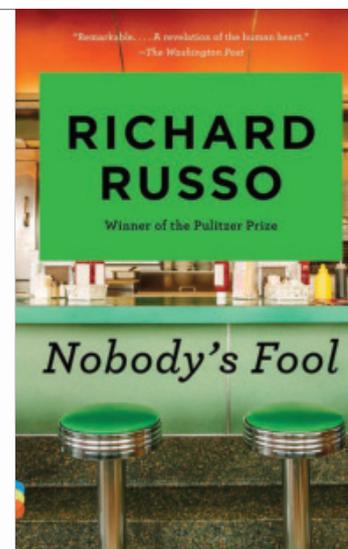
Take a break from wintry binge-watching with this updated edition of celebrated cultural critic Bissell's 2012 collection of essays on the act of creating. The 18 passionate essays are an aerobic dance between highbrow and lowbrow, exploring our culture through its creations, whether it's a sitcom, a documentary on the Iraq War, the cult classic film *The Room*, David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest* or a movie made in Bissell's hometown in northern Michigan. There's so much to enjoy here, but it's a particular pleasure to read his gleeful takedown of how-to books, especially those that will (supposedly) tell you how to write.



Swimming in the Sink

By Lynne Cox

In a straightforward, candid style, Cox shares a comeback tale that'll have you flipping the pages like you're reading a thriller instead of an inspiring sports memoir. Legendary open-water swimmer Lynne Cox has a unique ability to acclimatize to extreme cold (jealous, much?), which has allowed her to swim the Bering Strait, among other frigid waters. But after the deaths of her parents, Cox was diagnosed with broken heart syndrome, which seemed to mark the end of her swimming life. But behold the power of mindfulness and positivity, because Cox learns to swim again—beginning in her sink.



Nobody's Fool

By Richard Russo

Pulitzer Prize-winning author Russo knows a little something about the human heart, and hope blooms like your most stubborn houseplant in this folksy, poignant tale set in the blue-collar town of North Bath, New York. Centering on down-on-his-luck, 60-year-old Donald "Sully" Sullivan (his knee is bad, he drinks a little too much), it's a perfect balance of little tragedies and dark comic relief. Once you've gotten well acquainted with the town's wonderful characters—as well as you might any neighbor in a small town—you can pick up *Everybody's Fool*, which returns to Sully's world, 10 years later, for another old-fashioned tale.



in partnership with **Vintage Books**

Since 1954, Vintage Books has published contemporary fiction and nonfiction trade paperbacks as a division of Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.

A Jazz Age sanctuary

Lyndsay Faye draws from Hemingway and the racial history of the Pacific Northwest for *The Paragon Hotel*

The year is 1921, the start of Prohibition. Mafia runaway Alice “Nobody” James has escaped trouble in Harlem by traveling cross-country by train while bleeding from a bullet wound. Max, a black porter, intervenes and checks the white Alice into the Paragon Hotel in Portland, Oregon. The hotel is an exclusively African-American sanctuary in a segregated city under siege by the Ku Klux Klan. There, Alice meets a host of compatriots who soon become like family as they bond together to search for one of their own, a biracial boy they fear may have fallen into the hands of the Klan.

With her sixth novel, stage actress-turned-novelist Faye, known for her Edgar-nominated *Jane Eyre* spoof *Jane Steele*, offers a surprising historical mystery that addresses America’s sexism, racism and anti-immigrant white power movements.

“I always write about something that’s pissing me off right now,” Faye says by phone from her New York home. “I find parallels to what was happening a very long time ago, because I don’t think anybody would be particularly interested if I just stood on a soapbox and said, ‘Racism is bad.’ But if I can set stories in other time periods, it’s sort of like Shakespeare setting *Macbeth* out of town: ‘Don’t get confused, this is not about you—this is those *Scottish* guys!’”

Alice’s escape to Portland allows Faye to write about a piece of history that she has long hoped to ponder in fiction. Born in San Jose, California, Faye moved with her family to Longview, Washington, a small town close to Portland, when she was 6 and remained there for 12 years. The move from her racially diverse San Jose birthplace to the predominantly white Longview revealed to Faye a dark section of American history—the Pacific Northwest’s deeply racist roots. The original Oregon settlers envisioned a utopia free from crime, poverty—and any nonwhite persons. Prior to statehood, any blacks who refused to leave the territory were sentenced to flogging every six months. In 1870, Oregon refused to ratify the 15th Amendment, which guaranteed voting

rights to people of color, and didn’t correct this error until 1959. For black people, Oregon was hell with only a few havens. One of these was Portland’s Golden West Hotel, upon which the Paragon Hotel is based.

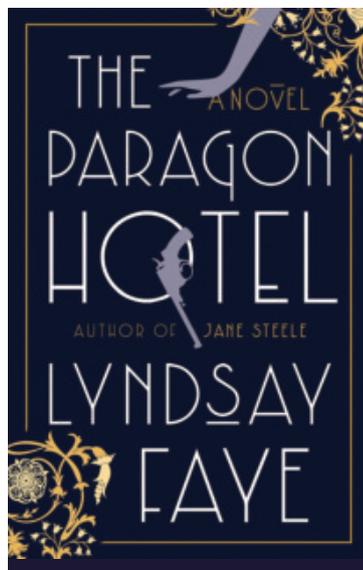
Along with exploring present-day social and cultural upheavals through a historical lens, *The Paragon Hotel* also allowed Faye to re-create the spoken language of 1921, both in Harlem and Portland. Faye proudly admits to having a passion for historical accuracy.

“Slang is very, very much a part of my research process,” she says. “If you’re just looking through the boilerplate slang of the 1920s, you’re going to be finding a lot of words that didn’t really come into vogue until 1925, -6, -7. That was really the height of the flapper era, and I was not interested in those words; I was only interested in how you spoke in 1921.”

Lacking a lexicon embedded in the arts and music of the pre-flapper era, Faye struggled until she stumbled upon an unlikely helping hand from someone who also knew how to sling the slang. “I was at a loss for quite some time,” she says, “until I attended a writer’s residency for a month down in Key West, Florida. There is tons of stuff from Hemingway down there for obvious reasons, and I found a huge volume with all of his [World War I] war correspondence.” She explains that a large percentage of the slang in *The Paragon Hotel* comes straight out of Hemingway’s 1918 letters.

Faye also credits her own years on stage with giving her the ear to recognize slang and use it effectively in her fiction. “I’ve never taken a creative writing class,” she says. “I was trained as an actor and worked as a professional stage actor for 10 years, and I was also trained as a singer, and there’s a real lilt in the ’20s stuff. I think that the rhythm of it is almost as important as some of the words. Even where they’re talking about very serious things, there’s this glib overtone to where they’re even replacing words with almost nonsense words. It’s fascinating.”

“That’s why this is a love letter. It’s very much not just a quest for identity but a quest to actually love that identity.”



Putnam, \$26, 432 pages, 9780735210752
Audio, eBook available

Mystery

To voice the Portland perspective, Faye created Blossom Fontaine, the Paragon’s residential club chanteuse, whose sultry, outgoing stage personality belies the inner turmoil and discomfort she and many of her friends feel about America’s history of racism and sexism.

“In the case of Blossom, whose life has been defined by what society says, the question of who she is has been so important her whole life that when she meets Nobody, who has been taking advantage of hiding in plain sight, it’s such an asset to her,” Faye says. “Nobody lived in such a dangerous environment that she didn’t spend a lot of time really sitting down and defining herself. Blossom, on the other hand, has been so assertive and determined about who she is and so locked into a system. You’ve got two women who are coming at it from completely different directions. That’s why this is a love letter. It’s very much not just a quest for identity but a quest to actually love that identity.”

Will we see a sequel to *The Paragon Hotel*?

“I would love to say yes, but I never really know. So far, this is a standalone, but I wouldn’t rule it out,” Faye replies. “However, at the moment, what I’m working on is turning *Hamlet* into a modern-day crime novel. The working title? *The King of Infinite Space*. I’m very excited about it.”

—Jay MacDonald

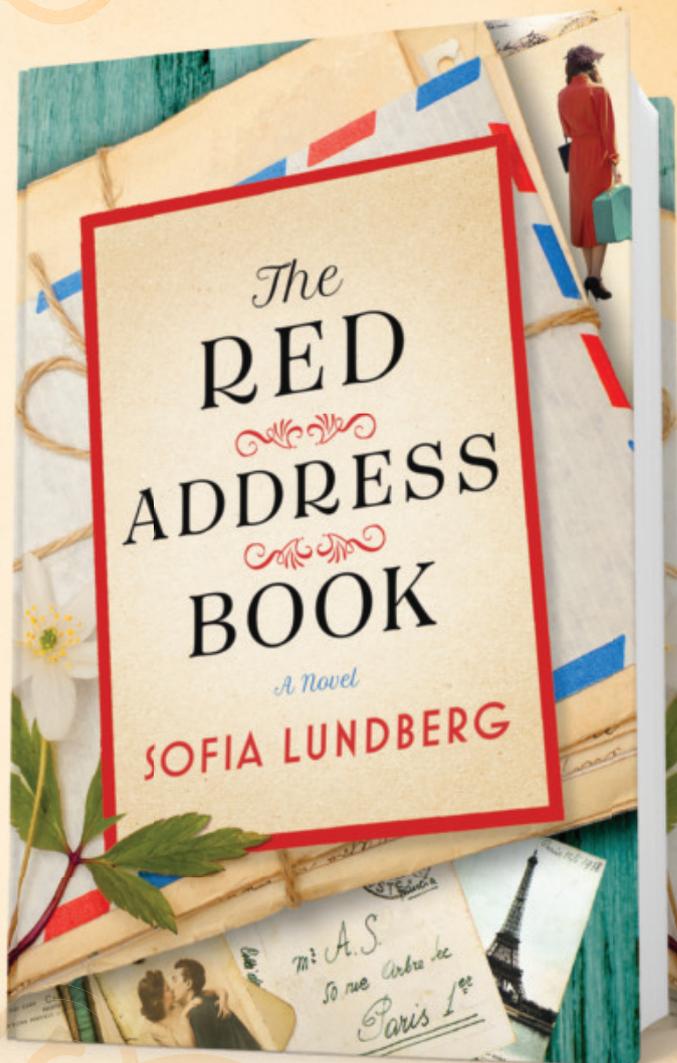
Meet Doris, who writes down the memories of her eventful life as she pages through her decades-old address book. *But the most profound moment of her life is still to come...*

“Written with *love*,
told with *joy*. Very
easy to enjoy.”

—FREDRIK BACKMAN, author of *A Man Called Ove*

“In a reader’s lifetime, there are a few books that will be companions forever. For me, *The Red Address Book* is one of them. It will comfort you, and remind you of all the moments when you grabbed life with both hands.”

—NINA GEORGE, author of *The Little Paris Bookshop*



Enter to win copies of *The Red Address Book* for you and a friend, plus a writing kit to help you keep in touch with loved ones.

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No purchase necessary. Entries must be received by January 31, 2019 at 11:59 PM ET. One grand-prize winner will receive two copies of THE RED ADDRESS BOOK and a writing kit, including notecards, a journal, and more.

“*The Red Address Book* is my way of saying listen, listen to the people around you. They will take you on an adventure.” —SOFIA LUNDBERG



new year, new you!

You've got goals, and we've got the books to help you achieve them. Tackle your resolutions with these 10 books.

The Formula: The Universal Laws of Success

By Albert-László Barabási

Little, Brown, \$29, 320 pages, 9780316505499

RESOLUTION: Work better, not harder, to reach your goals.

FRESH TAKE: If life were a fair fight, talent plus work ethic is all you'd need to succeed—but we've all been passed over for opportunities we're qualified for. With this data-driven book, Albert-László Barabási explores the universal forces that affect our likelihood of success or failure.

GOOD ADVICE: The differences among top contenders in any category are so tiny that they're essentially immeasurable—which means wine connoisseurs only know so much, and a nice Pinot can come at any price.

Love for Imperfect Things: How to Accept Yourself in a World Striving for Perfection

By Haemin Sunim

Penguin, \$24, 272 pages, 9780143132288

RESOLUTION: Practice self-love (beyond just buying bath bombs).

FRESH TAKE: In this gentle, kindhearted guide to inner peace, the Zen Buddhist teacher Haemin Sunim argues that if one begins with self-acceptance, one will have greater empathy for others and an easier time

adapting to life's trials.

GOOD ADVICE: When beset with negative emotions, observe your own feelings and then try to trace them back to their roots. You might realize that a bad experience in your past or a subconscious insecurity is influencing your behavior.

How to Hold a Grudge: From Resentment to Contentment—the Power of Grudges to Transform Your Life

By Sophie Hannah

Scribner, \$20, 272 pages, 9781982111427

RESOLUTION: Embrace your negative side.

FRESH TAKE: Novelist Sophie Hannah believes that nursing one's grudges can lead to greater self-knowledge, personal growth and healthier boundaries.

GOOD ADVICE: By using Hannah's hilarious grudge-grading system, you can channel your angry feelings into a deeper understanding of your own values and set necessary boundaries.

No Hard Feelings: The Secret Power of Embracing Emotions at Work

By Liz Fosslien & Mollie West Duffy

Portfolio, \$27, 304 pages, 9780525533832

RESOLUTION: Feel great about your work.

FRESH TAKE: Two former tech workers offer a fresh, funny approach to handling workplace relationships. By leaning on emotional intelligence, you, too, can navigate the pitfalls of modern office life.

GOOD ADVICE: Establish context and trust with colleagues by using "richer communication" channels like voice chat before relying on written, and often misinterpreted, methods like email and instant messages.

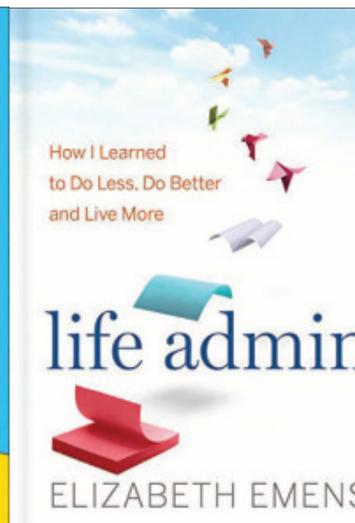
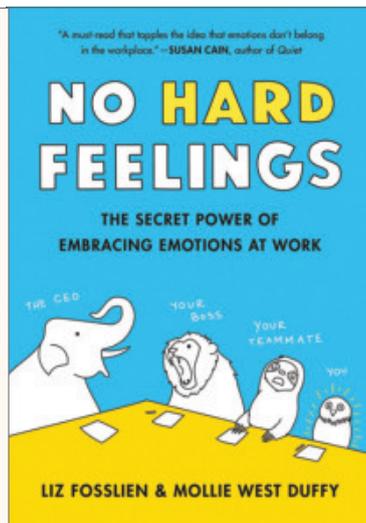
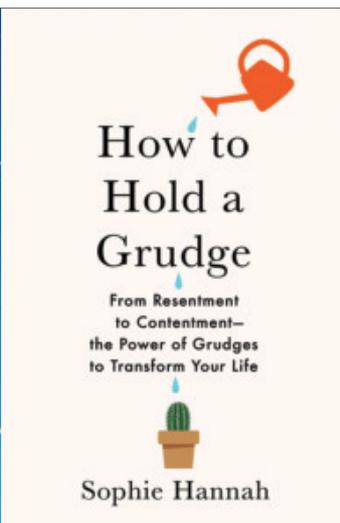
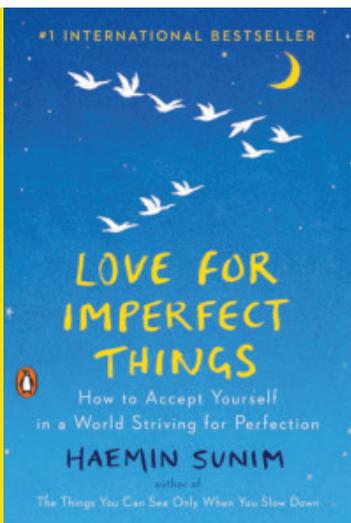
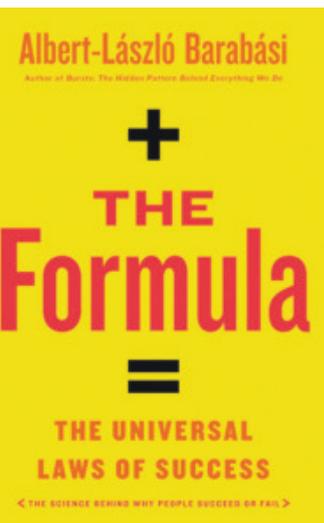
Life Admin: How I Learned to Do Less, Do Better, and Live More

By Elizabeth Emens

HMH, \$26, 288 pages, 9780544557239

RESOLUTION: Overcome invisible labor.

FRESH TAKE: From disputing bills to planning a vacation, Elizabeth Emens introduces readers to the concept of *admin*, our sometimes



onerous daily to-do list. Through relatable anecdotes, she breaks down the types of admin in our lives and offers advice on balancing tasks and relationships.

GOOD ADVICE: Talk with your partner about how to divvy up household duties before moving in together or getting married.

Women Rowing North: Navigating Life's Currents and Flourishing as We Age

By Mary Pipher

Bloomsbury, \$27, 272 pages, 9781632869609

RESOLUTION: Chart the course for the next phase of your life.

FRESH TAKE: Women face many challenges as they age: misogyny, ageism and physical changes. Yet psychologist Mary Pipher shows that most older women are more content than their younger selves. Pipher offers warm, empathetic guidelines for navigating aging and for recognizing its unexpected gifts.

GOOD ADVICE: Every life stage is filled with pain and difficulties. The challenges and changes presented by aging are different, but they also present new ways to learn about yourself and cultivate empathy.

The Monkey Is the Messenger: Meditation and What Your Busy Mind Is Trying to Tell You

By Ralph De La Rosa

Shambhala, \$16.95, 288 pages, 9781611805840

RESOLUTION: Finally get into mindfulness and meditation.

FRESH TAKE: Everyone knows we should be meditating, but what if your thoughts just won't *shut up*? Ralph De La Rosa draws on Buddhism, neuroscience and psychology to posit that instead of growing increasingly frustrated with these intrusive thoughts, we should accept them as a part of ourselves and use them as a tool to understand ourselves better.

GOOD ADVICE: Try not to allow circumstances to dictate your emotions. Instead, accept circumstances and view them as an opportunity for growth and learning.

Sober Curious: The Blissful Sleep, Greater Focus, Limitless Presence, and Deep Connection Awaiting Us All on the Other Side of Alcohol

By Ruby Warrington

HarperOne, \$27.99, 240 pages, 9780062869036

RESOLUTION: Be more mindful of your alcohol intake.

FRESH TAKE: Going without alcohol may sound like an extreme lifestyle change and, frankly, a really dull one. But Ruby Warrington is here to tell you, nonjudgmentally, that cutting out alcohol doesn't mean you'll become boring, and it can lead to a happier life, filled with better sleep, health and relationships.

GOOD ADVICE: If you're worried about all the fun you'll miss out on while sober, remind yourself of the phenomenon known as "euphoric recall," in which an experience is misremembered in a far more positive light than the reality. That epic bachelor party five years ago? It perhaps wasn't as epic as you remember—but the hangover you're forgetting no doubt was.

Craftfulness: Mend Yourself by Making Things

By Rosemary Davidson & Arzu Tahsin

Harper Wave, \$23.99, 208 pages, 9780062883544

RESOLUTION: Pick up a creative hobby.

FRESH TAKE: Rosemary Davidson and Arzu Tahsin have crafted (sorry) a well-researched guide to the meditative, restorative and mood-lifting effects of working with your hands on a craft or creative pursuit. Filled with advice on how to let go of the pressure of Pinterest perfection, how to make time for crafting in your busy schedule and even a couple of quick beginner projects to get you started, this book is as warm as the scarf you'll be knitting.

GOOD ADVICE: For too long, we've all been focused on the finished product of our artistic pursuits, which can often lead us to abandon less than perfect-looking projects. But there's joy to be found in the process of making and mending, regardless of our perceived abilities.

If You Ask Me: Essential Advice from Eleanor Roosevelt

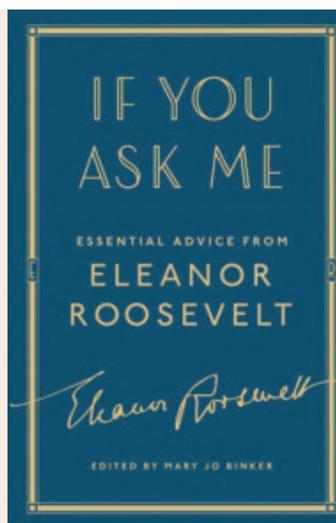
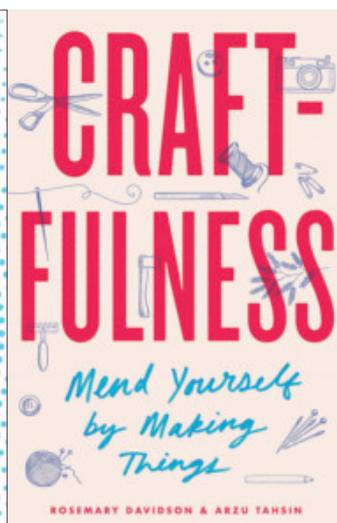
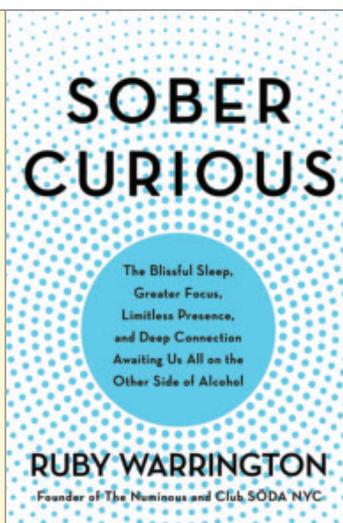
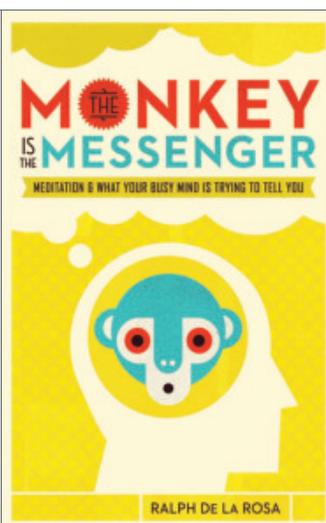
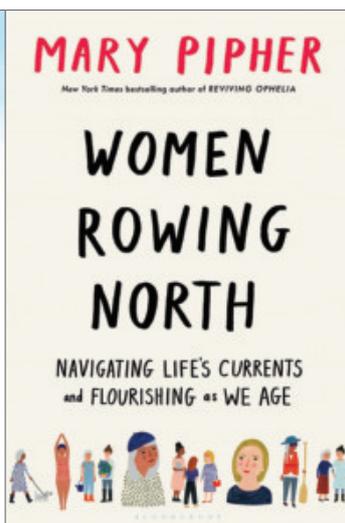
Edited by Mary Jo Binker

Atria, \$25, 272 pages, 9781501179792

RESOLUTION: Sail through life with presidential aplomb.

FRESH TAKE: In 1941, the outspoken first lady Eleanor Roosevelt started an advice column. For 20 years, she doled out clever, pithy advice on love, etiquette and issues like gender and race equality. These lovely columns, collected and annotated by Mary Jo Binker, provide sound advice as well as a look into the life and thinking of a legendary first lady.

GOOD ADVICE: Roosevelt was adamant about gender equality in her personal life, writing that she thinks "people are happier in marriage when neither is the boss" and that all relationships are best built on "unselfishness and flexibility."



Far from the tree

A DNA revelation transforms family and identity

Dani Shapiro has been thinking about secrets all of her life, exploring the theme repeatedly in five novels and four memoirs. But it wasn't until a few years ago that she unwittingly uncovered the biggest secret of all: Her beloved, late father wasn't her biological father.

"I needed every single brain cell to focus on this discovery and to try to understand what it meant," she says, speaking from her home in the Connecticut countryside.

Growing up as an only child in 1960s and '70s New Jersey, Shapiro couldn't help feeling partially like an outsider as the pale, blue-eyed, blond-haired daughter of her darker, Jewish parents. In fact, a family friend and Holocaust survivor was so startled by her unlikely features that she peered into her eyes and announced, "We could have used you in the ghetto, little blondie. You could have gotten us bread from the Nazis." The dramatic proclamation made a searing imprint on Shapiro.

When Shapiro was 23, her father died from injuries he suffered in a devastating car crash, a tragedy she chronicled in her 1998 memoir, *Slow Motion*. Years later, when Shapiro's husband decided to order a DNA kit, he asked her if she wanted one as well. She gamely agreed, and gave it little thought until several months later, when the kit's shocking results showed that she was only half Jewish. Furthermore, she wasn't biologically related to her half-sister, her father's child from a previous marriage. An offhand remark made decades earlier by Shapiro's now-deceased mother provided a clue to the puzzle: She told Shapiro that she had been conceived in Philadelphia.

With astonishing speed, Shapiro and her husband unraveled the mystery. Her parents had traveled to Philadelphia for artificial insemination; an anonymous sperm donor was Shapiro's biological father. The DNA results and some internet sleuthing allowed Shapiro and her husband to track down the identity of her father, a now-retired physician who specialized in, of all things, medical ethics.

"All my life I had known there was a secret. What I hadn't known: the secret was me," Shapiro writes in her mesmerizing account of that revelation and its aftermath, **Inheritance: A Memoir of Genealogy, Paternity, and Love**.

"You can't make this stuff up; I could never write this in a novel." Shapiro says. She also explains that there was no way she could've

made sense of the experience without writing through it. "Thank God it's my 10th book. I had a toolbox. I had a set of skills and craft, both as a writer and someone who teaches writing, to be able to shape it and understand that it needed to be shaped. I recognized that it was an astounding story, and I wanted to do it justice."

Shapiro contacted and eventually met her donor father, Ben, and his family, whose names and identifying details have been changed to preserve their privacy. As a medical student, Ben had donated his sperm at the Farris Institute in Philadelphia, which was operated by Edmond Farris, a renegade scientist who was practicing medicine without a license. Farris mixed Ben's semen with that of Shapiro's father—not an uncommon practice at the time. Ben went on with his life, forgetting about the procedure, never imagining a future in which his role could be identified.

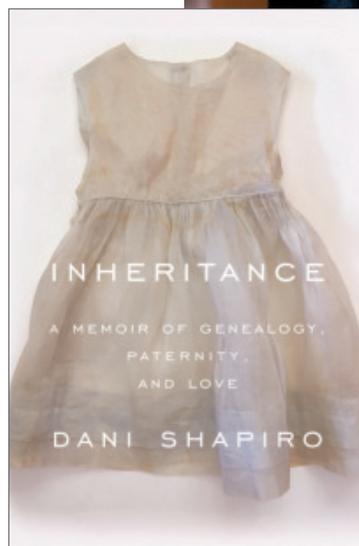
As strange as this story is, Shapiro explains that it's not that uncommon. "There's no anonymity anymore," she says. "These stories are happening. They're just tumbling out. Because of DNA testing, many people are having to reimagine family to some degree. . . . One of the beautiful things about this whole story is that ultimately it's

about people being kind to each other. Doing the right thing by each other. Ben and I have a relationship for which there is no playbook. He doesn't feel like he's my father. I don't imagine that I feel to him like I'm his daughter. And yet we do share a very powerful bond."

The question that haunts Shapiro is how much her parents knew. "To me, the story is not about what happened," she says. "The much richer part is about what's underneath all that—the lies, what did my parents go through, what they know, our shared lives together, what was the truth of that? Everything thrumming underneath was what I wanted to really be the heart and soul of the story."

Shapiro recognizes that she'll never have definitive answers to these questions, but she

"All my life I had known there was a secret. What I hadn't known: the secret was me."



Knopf, \$24.95, 272 pages
9781524732714
Audio, eBook available

Memoir

does have some ideas. She characterizes her mother as "not entirely mentally well" and "capable of bending reality to her will." She concludes, "I think she decided from the moment that she was pregnant that I was my father's child and that was that. I believe she would have passed a polygraph." As for her father, to whom she dedicates the book, Shapiro believes that he may have thought he was her biological father during his wife's pregnancy but thinks he undoubtedly realized the truth over the years.

"I don't think he cared," she says. "I know he loved me, but I think that was part of the knowledge that he carried around."

So far, she hasn't uncovered any additional half-siblings besides the children of Ben and his wife. "It wouldn't surprise me at all if there are a few out there," she admits.

Might **Inheritance** help turn some up?

"I think a lot of people, when they hear the story, will immediately go order a DNA kit," Shapiro acknowledges. Noting that unlike her, most people make "fairly benign discoveries" with such kits, but the author cautions, "It's powerful stuff. You have to decide whether you're open to the potential of a big surprise."

—Alice Cary

★ Top Pick: Late in the Day

By Tessa Hadley

Harper, \$26.99, 288 pages, 9780062476692

Audio, eBook available

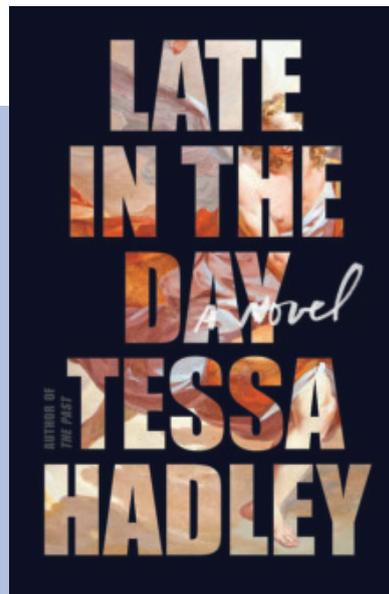
Literary Fiction

The 30-year bond between two couples is irrevocably broken when one of the friends abruptly dies in Tessa Hadley's **Late in the Day**. This well-drawn and absorbing character study bears all the hallmarks of Hadley's best work: It's perceptive, intelligent and written with astonishing emotional depth.

Serious but artistic Christine and dreamy, sensuous Lydia have been friends since school. During college, Lydia nursed an unrequited crush on their married French teacher, Alexander, and Christine began a romance with his friend Zachary. Over the years, the relationships slowly shifted, and the women reallocated their affections without any apparent bitterness or jealousies. Lydia and Zachary eventually married and had a daughter; shortly

after, Alex and Christine did the same. The two couples remained active in each other's lives, socializing, traveling together and eventually working together when Christine began to show her art in Zachary's gallery. Even their daughters became good friends.

But Zachary's sudden death from a massive heart attack disturbs the equilibrium. At first, the remaining three are committed to providing comfort and solace for each other. Lydia moves in with Alex and Christine, and Alex goes to Glasgow to bring Lydia and Zachary's daughter home from college. But without Zachary to stabilize the quartet, old grievances rise up and unhealed wounds are opened. For Christine, Zachary's



death means that she can no longer find a reason to make art. She locks the door to her studio and grows quietly resentful of her husband and best friend. On the other hand, Lydia finds new strength, deciding to be more involved in the business of the gallery and her departed husband's family trust.

As in Hadley's earlier novels (*The Past* and *Clever Girl*), sexual desire proves an overwhelming force that shapes decisions and actions, but **Late in the Day** is also about the remaking of an artist

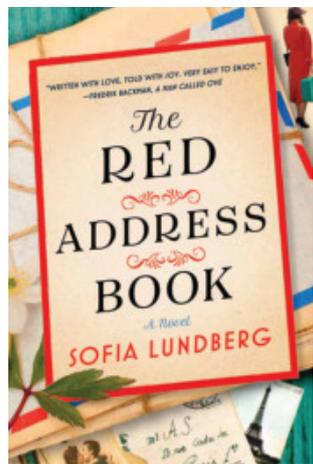
and the emergence of self, even in middle age. A master of interpersonal dynamics, Hadley captures the complexity of loss, grief and friendship with a clarity of vision that brings the natural and material worlds into sharp focus.

—Lauren Bufferd



Visit BookPage.com to read a Q&A with Tessa Hadley.

The Red Address Book



By Sofia Lundberg

HMH

\$25, 304 pages

9781328473011

eBook available

Debut Fiction

Many of us think of the past as the "good old days," and for 96-year-old Doris Alm, there is almost a century's worth of good days to keep track of. Feeling that her end is near, Doris decides to revisit the names in her address book and unload her memories of each person on paper, with the hope that they are passed down to her only living family, her grandniece Jenny, who has loved and admired Doris all her life.

So begins Sofia Lundberg's **The Red Address Book**, with a very fragile Doris recalling a life with people long dead. We start in 1928 Stockholm, when Doris is only 10 years old, and move on to her days as a model in Paris in the 1930s, then to New York City, where she hopes to reunite with the love of her life. She later heads to England, where she is rescued off a sinking ship, and finally returns to Stockholm, where

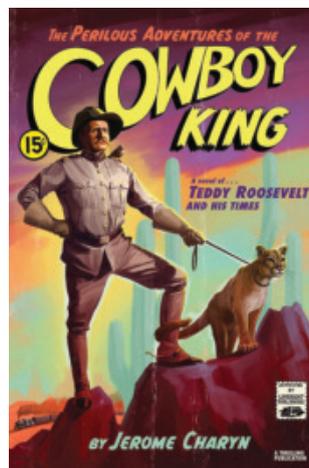
she types her final pages for Jenny.

With love and humor, Doris' stories prove that the good old days are often filled with a lot of regret, pain and heartache. But what the heart chooses to remember is our perseverance through the most impossible of challenges. Just when Lundberg has led you to believe that Doris has said all there is to say, Jenny delivers an ending that even Doris could have never imagined.

Like a cozy conversation with your grandma, **The Red Address Book** warms your heart and soul.

—Chika Gujarathi

★ The Perilous Adventures of the Cowboy King



By Jerome Charyn

Liveright

\$26.95, 320 pages

9781631493874

eBook available

Historical Fiction

In so much of American history—or in so much of America's interpretation of its own history—there is an air of pulp

fiction. In retellings of the lives and doings of grand, almost mythological figures who shaped this country, the real and fantastical commingle, overlap, become inseparable. It is this fundamental inseparability that makes Jerome Charyn's novel about the life and times of Theodore Roosevelt so much fun to read.

With its dime-store-comic cover design, **The Perilous Adventures of the Cowboy King** is presented as a kind of pulp pastiche of the 26th president's thoroughly inimitable life. The book, which begins with Roosevelt's childhood and follows him to the cusp of his presidency, leans hard on the real (and in many cases, likely inflated) events of the man's life. But it is also a surprisingly poignant assessment of smaller, more universally human moments.

Two-thirds of the novel is set during the early and middle years of Roosevelt's life—the years he fought in the sewer-dirty wars of New York City politics. Here, Charyn does his most impressive scene-setting work, placing the reader in the heart of late 19th-century Manhattan. The sense of place and the fundamentally ugly nature of big-city politics are consistent and convincing. By focusing on this part of Roosevelt's life, rather than his Rough Rider days or his time as president, the bulk of the book works very well, and makes for a much more kinetic and less well-worn story.

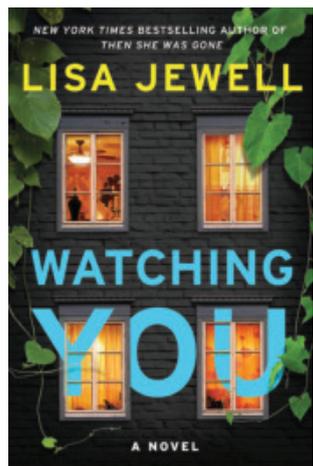
Charyn has a gift for the unexpected, both linguistically and narratively: A snake wraps itself around a boy's arm "like a living bandage," and President McKinley has "the soft, sunken heart

of a chocolate éclair.” The most emotionally resonant relationship in the book is between Roosevelt and Josephine, his pet mountain lion.

Deftly, Charyn interweaves what is real and invented about Roosevelt’s life, and the result is at once surprising and very entertaining.

—Omar El Akkad

Watching You



By Lisa Jewell

Atria
\$26, 336 pages
9781501190070
Audio, eBook
available

Thriller

Lisa Jewell’s domestic thrillers regularly show up on bestseller lists, and her latest, *Watching You*, should be no exception.

The mysterious murder at its center unfolds gradually, as piece by piece the past and present relationships between her intriguing cast of characters begin to fit together.

Tom Fitzwilliam is the new headmaster of the Melville Academy in Bristol, England, and he’s called Superhead by the local newspaper due to his many postings to failing schools and his reputation for quickly turning them around. Tom lives with his wife, Nicola, in an upscale neighborhood. Nicola is an enigmatic, unhappy woman with a troubled past. Their only child, 14-year-old Freddie, believes he has Asperger’s. He hopes to work for MI5 one day and spends all his free time spying on the neighbors from his upstairs window, documenting what he sees with his camera and keeping a logbook of the neighborhood comings and goings.

One of Freddie’s voyeuristic targets is Joey Mullen, a young woman who lives two doors down from the Fitzwilliams. Joey is newly married and drifting from job to job. She and her husband live with Joey’s older brother, Jack, a physician, and his wife, Rebecca, a “strait-laced systems analyst.” Rebecca is pregnant, but she’s apparently not overjoyed about becoming a mother. Joey is completely smitten with Tom Fitzwilliam and begins planning how to meet him “accidentally,” which is all documented by Freddie’s watchful eyes.

Sixteen-year-old Jenna, a student at the Academy, and her mother live nearby, and they’re also subjects of Freddie’s surveillance. Jenna’s mother, who increasingly shows signs of paranoia, seems to believe she saw the Fitzwilliam family on holiday years ago, and that they were

involved in an unpleasant incident that she can’t quite remember.

From the novel’s early pages, Jewell includes excerpts from police interviews conducted at the Bristol police station. The reader knows someone has been murdered but not their identity. Little by little, Jewell sprinkles clues about the pasts of each of her characters, and these hidden connections to the victim may turn out to be motives to commit murder. But only near the end does one suspect emerge as the killer—and a shocking final revelation completely takes the reader by surprise.

Jewell’s latest will be quickly devoured by readers of Gillian Flynn, A.J. Finn and Ruth Ware.

—Deborah Donovan

Elsey Come Home



By Susan Conley

Knopf
\$25.95, 256 pages
9780525520986
Audio, eBook
available

Literary Fiction

Elsey once had a strong sense of self. She was an artist, an American expat in Ireland whose paintings drew acclaim. But she’s now lost in marriage, motherhood and alcohol.

Elsey moved from Ireland to China to settle in with Lukas, the Danish DJ she met at a rave. Two children later, Elsey knows who is supposed to take precedence in her life—and it’s no longer herself. When Lukas suggests Elsey participate in a weeklong yoga retreat in the mountains, Elsey sees it as an ultimatum. If she doesn’t take this time away, their marriage will unravel. So she accepts.

The retreat is a challenge. Elsey struggles to be vulnerable during the regular Talking Circles, and her mind is constantly focused on drinking—or not drinking. Elsey thinks, “I had two small girls. I would stop drinking. I know this is what Lukas thought. But drinking doesn’t work like that, and my need for it was stronger than I realized.”

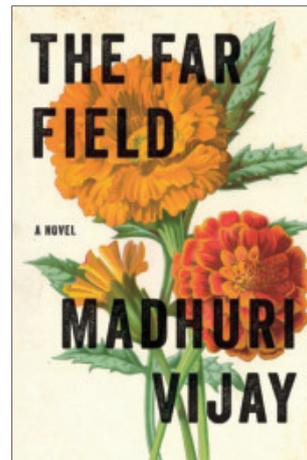
Throughout the retreat, Elsey reflects on her sense of self and the people around her. They become touchstones of sorts, pointing Elsey back to herself. One of the women, Mei, is also wrestling with a marriage that isn’t what she’d hoped. “I want to be the heroine of my story. And you, too, Elsey. You, too, be the heroine,” Mei says. “Not the victim. Understand?

Because the heroine is the one who owns the story.”

Susan Conley’s *Elsey Come Home* is a quiet, contemplative portrait of a woman searching for herself in the midst of the mundane.

—Carla Jean Whitley

★ The Far Field



By Madhuri Vijay

Grove
\$27, 448 pages
9780802128409
Audio, eBook
available

Debut Fiction

An unexpected friendship between a traveling Muslim garment seller from a remote Himalayan

village and the aloof wife of a wealthy Hindu businessman from the southern Indian city of Bangalore forms the basis of *The Far Field*, the dazzling debut novel from Madhuri Vijay.

The salesman, Bashir Ahmed, is warm and charismatic, and his unlikely friend is the volatile mother of Shalini, a privileged young woman and the first-person narrator of the novel. After her mother’s death, Shalini, listless and troubled, goes off in search of Ahmed to find closure. At first it seems like an odd, reckless decision, to travel to the troubled northern end of the country—to Jammu and then Kashmir—in search of someone whom she only barely remembers from childhood and about whom she has only scant information.

In Jammu, Shalini lodges with a Muslim family that has been shattered by the loss of a son at the hands of the Indian Army. She then tracks down Ahmed’s family, who take her to their remote Indian village and treat her as one of their own. However, Shalini is in the midst of a fractured landscape, and nothing is what it seems. Hindus and Muslims are at loggerheads, and the army appears responsible for a series of disappearances. Foreign militants have been infiltrating the area, increasing tensions. Shalini’s longing for connection and love within this tumultuous setting only exacerbates her problems.

The story is told in chapters alternating between the present (Shalini’s cross-country trek in search of Ahmed) and the past (her youth and relationship with her parents, especially her difficult mother), and only as the story unfolds do the reasons for her journey start to become apparent. Through it all, Vijay’s prose is equi-



Journey into an eye-opening India with an absorbing debut novel

Bangalore-born author Madhuri Vijay covers a lot of ground in **The Far Field**: politics, corruption, mental illness and coming of age, not to mention India's vast landscape. The story is narrated by Shalini, a young woman who hopes to find closure after her mother's death by tracking down a charismatic figure from her youth, Bashir Ahmed, a traveling salesman and one of the few people with whom her erratic mother seemed to connect.

I found *The Far Field* fascinating. What was the novel's journey?

Thank you for saying that. I suspect most novelists think of their first novels as a culmination, in one way or another, of their entire lives up to that point, and I certainly agree. **The Far Field** feels to me like the inevitable result of all the books I read as a child, all the places I traveled, the influence of teachers and mentors and friends, my social and family circumstances, the news I watched and, of course, a substantial portion of luck. But I know that is an unhelpfully vague answer, so I'll try to be specific: In 2010, I wrote a short story about a mother and a daughter and a Kashmiri man. It was a maudlin story—abysmal, really—but I grew interested in writing a novel about Kashmir. It took a few years of false starts before I arrived at anything resembling a draft, and several subsequent years of work with my extraordinary (and extraordinarily patient) editors at Grove to bring the novel to its current form.

The novel tackles many different themes: mental illness, the Kashmir conflict, army corruption, sexism. Did you have these things in mind when you first came up with the plot, or did they evolve in the writing?

All I told myself when I began the novel was that I wouldn't try to control any part of it, so those themes emerged naturally as part of the writing. I didn't come up with the plot beforehand either. I just put Shalini on the train to Jammu. The rest of it . . . was a surprise to me. Insofar as there *was* a plot, I vaguely knew Shalini would return to Bangalore at the end of the novel, so I kept writing until she did.

Where did the character of Bashir Ahmed come from?

All through my childhood, a succession of different Kashmiri salesmen visited our neighborhood to sell clothes and carpets. Some visited several times, others only once. None of them was remotely like Bashir Ahmed in terms of personality, but the pattern of their visits was certainly the model for his.

Shalini seems very conflicted. Her intentions are good, but she makes bad choices along the way. How did you craft her personality?

Shalini's voice and character were, without question, my biggest challenges in writing the book. She seemed so closed-off and remote, even to me, which often made her frustrating to write. What helped in the end was understanding that the novel could function in some way as a *criticism* of Shalini and of people like her: intelligent, educated people with the means to travel, who nonetheless remain willfully oblivious to the injustices around them, as well as their part in those injustices. This is not to say that I think of her as some cold tool of social instruction. I have a lot of affection for Shalini, actually, and a lot of sympathy. She is the way she is because of a number of factors, her mother being the most influential. Shalini's mother casts a long, dubious shadow over her life,

and realizing that—and more importantly, allowing *her* to realize it—was an important turning point in the novel.

I felt bad for Amina, Bashir Ahmed's daughter-in-law. It seemed like she couldn't catch a break. What inspired her character?

I truly had no idea that Amina would walk around the corner until she did. The second she was on the page, though, she breathed life and fun into everything around her, and I knew she would be a vital character. Amina is a funny, capable, generous, gregarious person who manages to surround herself with selfish, bitter recluses, and that doesn't turn out well for her. But she freely offers to Shalini what nobody else in the novel

does: genuine, uncomplicated friendship. It was important to me that someone offer her that, even if she proves in the end unable to reciprocate.

The novel is particularly unflinching in its depiction of the Indian army and its corruption. Do you fear a backlash?

I started writing the novel roughly six years ago, and India, as a country, has changed since then. There's no way to escape noticing the proliferation of chest-beating, nationalist politicians; the lynchings of Muslims and Dalits; the attacks (sometimes fatal) on writers who challenge the

status quo. If there is any backlash to my book, it would be foolish of me to be totally surprised.

As Ben Fountain has said, it's hard to believe you're a first-time novelist. The prose is really strong, and the plot keeps turning until the last page. Not an easy feat. How did you develop as a writer?

Thank you. I wish I had a more original answer, but like so many writers, I spent the major part of my childhood inside books. I read everything I could get my hands on, from P.G. Wodehouse to R.L. Stine to Jane Austen to a *very* steamy biography of Marilyn Monroe that was lying about our house for some reason. My two years in graduate school were also invaluable, because there I was forced, for the first time, to articulate to other people what I valued and admired in fiction and what disgusted me. Above all, I'm lucky to have found friends and readers far smarter than I am. If there is any fluidity or economy to my prose, it's the direct result of their refusal to be satisfied with bullshit.

You attended the Iowa Writers' Workshop after attending Lawrence University. Was it always your intention to study fiction in the U.S.?

It couldn't have been further from my intention, actually. At Lawrence, I majored in Psychology as well as in English, and I was all set to be an academic; I even had an acceptance in hand to a graduate program in social psychology at Northwestern. How I ended up in Iowa will, I think, be forever a matter of some astonishment to me, but I'm very glad I did.

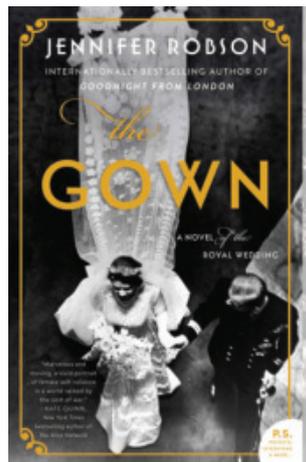
—Jeff Vasishta

“If there is any backlash to my book, it would be foolish of me to be totally surprised.”

site—florid and descriptive at times, spare and pared back at others. The story keeps twisting unexpectedly until the end, keeping emotions fraught, questions percolating. It's a scintillating novel from a truly gifted writer.

—Jeff Vasishtha

The Gown



By Jennifer Robson

William Morrow
\$26.99, 400 pages
9780062884275
Audio, eBook available

Historical Fiction

England after World War II was a grim place, and the winter of 1947 was one of the nastiest

Britain had seen, which is saying something. The major cities, especially London, had been bombed to smithereens by Hitler's Luftwaffe. There was still rationing of fuel to heat tiny rooms, and even soap and potatoes were scarce. The one bright spot was the upcoming wedding of the heiress presumptive to the throne, Princess Elizabeth. Then, as now, the royals gave good value in troubled times.

Jennifer Robson's latest novel focuses on three women, with a few men and glimpses of royalty on the side. Ann Hughes is an embroiderer at the salon of Norman Hartnell, couturier to the royal ladies and designer of the princess's wedding gown. Ann considers herself a plain girl that no one would notice. Her roommate and friend Miriam Dassin, another embroiderer, is a French émigré who arrived in London with a recommendation from Christian Dior in hand. She's also a Jew and a Holocaust survivor, something she reveals but sparingly; this was a time and place when anti-Semitism was casual even after the Nazis had been routed.

Both women live to great old age, and when Ann finally dies, she leaves a box of embroidered flowers to her Canadian granddaughter, Heather. Heather has no idea why she's received the box, or that Ann worked for Norman Hartnell and helped put together the royal wedding ensemble. Ann never spoke of her life in England or her friendship with Miriam, now a world-famous artist—why?

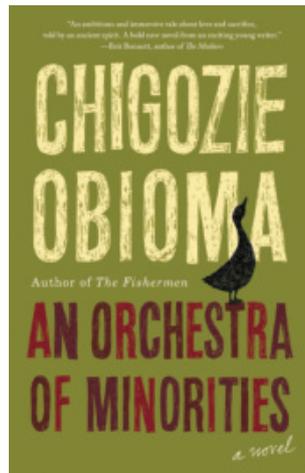
Robson, bestselling author of *Somewhere in France*, makes the reader eager to find out Ann's secret. Ultimately, it's one of those things you see coming, and yet you hope you're mistaken. Did Queen Elizabeth know what Ann went

through to make her wedding gown? Of course not. Nor does Heather. But Ann does the British thing: stiffens her upper lip and soldiers on.

The Gown is an inspiring story about strength, resilience and creativity.

—Arlene McKanic

★ An Orchestra of Minorities



By Chigozie Obioma

Little, Brown
\$28, 464 pages
9780316412391
Audio, eBook available

World Fiction

After making an international splash with his 2015 debut, *The Fishermen*, and receiving a nomination for the

Man Booker prize, Chigozie Obioma returns with an engrossing new epic. In **An Orchestra of Minorities**, Obioma blends the folklore of his country's Igbo people with the narrative framework of Homer's Greek classic *The Odyssey* to produce a multicultural fable that heralds a new master of magical realism.

Set in southeastern Nigeria, **An Orchestra of Minorities** tells the story of Chinonso, a lonely and humble poultry farmer who makes the mistake of falling in love with the wrong woman, one who enjoys a much more privileged socioeconomic status and background than himself. Unnerved by her family's strenuous objections to their match, Chinonso sells all his worldly possessions and travels overseas in order to secure an education, prove his worth and gain their approval to marry. Alas, misfortune plagues Chinonso as soon as he departs from Nigeria, and the fate that once drew the two lovers together now seems determined to keep them apart and break Chinonso's spirit in the process.

After enduring much hardship and many years away in Cyprus, Chinonso returns home to discover that the only woman he has ever loved is perhaps even further out of reach than before, and he may also have lost the man that he once was during his time away.

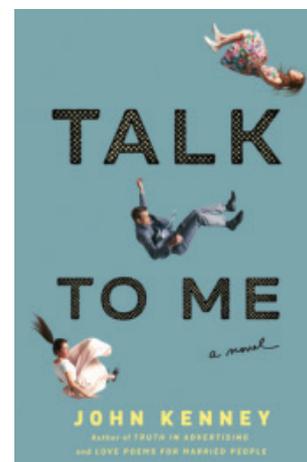
It's a special writer who can take the familiar tropes found within **An Orchestra of Minorities** and infuse them with new life, transforming them into something exciting and unexpected. Happily, Obioma is exactly such an author. Not only does the Nigerian backdrop add depth and interest to the tale, but the story itself is told

from the perspective of Chinonso's *chi*, a protector from the spirit realm who weaves in Igbo mythology and guides the narrative through both mortal and metaphysical dimensions, resulting in a unique and unforgettable reading experience.

Written in lambent prose and ambitious in scope, **An Orchestra of Minorities** is no fairy tale, but rather a tragic masterpiece.

—Stephenie Harrison

Talk to Me



By John Kenney

Putnam
\$26, 320 pages
9780735214378
eBook available

Satirical Fiction

It's a phenomenon that has become all too familiar in the age of YouTube: An embarrassing video of a celebrity

goes viral, obliterating a reputation with the speed and thoroughgoing devastation of an F5 tornado. In **Talk to Me**, his sly second novel, John Kenney (author of *Truth in Advertising*, which won the Thurber Prize for American Humor in 2014) dives into the muck of one such scandal, exploring its human toll while raising troubling questions about what it means to produce and consume news today.

The anchor of a highly rated network news show for two decades, Ted Grayson looks like he's on top of his game. But when his ire at a young immigrant woman leads to a meltdown that's captured on video, he's launched on a downward spiral that threatens his career and causes him to question everything he thought he knew about being a journalist. Compounding Ted's crisis is an impending divorce and the fact that his daughter, Franny, works as a reporter at the bottom-feeding website *scheisse.com*, run by a young German billionaire whose motto is "NO RULES. JUST CLICKS," and who's only too happy to capitalize on Ted's sudden fall.

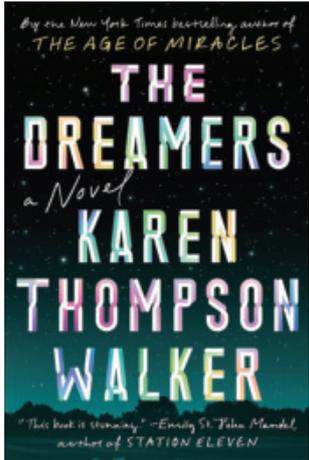
Kenney takes the reader inside the maelstrom of the 24/7 news cycle, as an increasingly bewildered Ted watches his world collapse around him, helpless to counteract the forces fueling his destruction. In *Ted*, Kenney has created a sympathetic and fully realized protagonist who's haunted by the price he's paid for a success that now seems hollow, by the decay of his marriage to a woman he still loves and by an estrangement from his daughter that's deep

enough to allow her to become complicit in his downfall.

For all the fast-paced and knowing entertainment it provides, **Talk to Me** may also serve as a useful antidote to rushed judgment when the next celebrity scandal erupts.

—Harvey Freedenberg

The Dreamers



By **Karen Thompson Walker**

Random House
\$27, 320 pages
9780812994162
Audio, eBook available

Speculative Fiction

For genre geeks such as myself, one of the most ex-

citing developments in 21st-century fiction is the embrace of sci-fi, fantasy and horror by so-called “literary” authors. Karen Thompson Walker epitomized this elevating trend in her first genre-bending debut novel, *The Age of Miracles* (2012). Walker takes on the horror genre with **The Dreamers**, the tale of an inexplicable sleeping sickness that consumes an entire college town, beginning with a freshman dorm.

Soon after the first student is stricken, several of her classmates also fall prey to the plague, including a young woman whose social awkwardness takes on fatal significance, and another who has just had sex for the first time and is now pregnant. The development of new life in her womb becomes a crucial theme throughout the novel, an affirmation of vitality in stark contrast to the mother’s dreadful slumber.

As the disease spreads beyond campus, panic rises. The panorama of these afflictions exposes a range of memorable characters. There are no heroes. In fact, the foolishness of “heroism” is diagnosed with devastating impact. There are many different ways that Walker’s victims succumb to the mysterious sleep, while others attempt to cope with their loved ones’ collapse. Worst of all, some sleepers come out of their uncanny dream state permanently unhinged. In every case, a basic principle of human nature unfolds: A person realizes their truest self when confronted with a crisis of mortality.

The Dreamers does more than satisfy both the horror geek and the literary nerd. With clin-

The mountains are calling

Certain places have a tremendous power to influence people, informing their choices and inspiring their lives, past and present. For the lead characters in two remarkable novels from Jess Montgomery and Mesha Maren, the Appalachian Mountains hold sway.

In Montgomery’s **The Widows** (Mino-taur, \$26.99, 336 pages, 9781250184528), the coal mining industry of Rossville, Ohio, in 1925 serves as the ominous backdrop to the lives of Lily Ross and Marvena Whitcomb. The story opens with a catastrophic mining explosion of methane gas that kills Marvena’s husband, John, which is soon followed by the death of Lily’s husband, Sheriff Daniel Ross, at the hands of an escaped inmate.

While Marvena fights to unionize mine workers for safer conditions and better wages, Lily assumes the mantle of acting sheriff in order to track down and apprehend her husband’s killer. Unaware that Daniel has been killed, Marvena goes to his house to ask his help in finding her missing 16-year-old daughter, Eula. Lily promises to help in Marvena’s search, oblivious to the fact that Marvena sought out Daniel’s assistance because of their prior relationship. Standing in their respective ways is the coal company and its Pinkerton detectives, thugs hired as enforcers to keep the coal miners in line, even as local politicians and law enforcement officials look the other way.

Inspired by the real lives of Ohio’s first female sheriff, Maude Collins, and community organizer Mary Harris “Mother” Jones, **The Widows** is told in alternating chapters from the two women’s points of view. This is the first book published by author Sharon Short under the pseudonym Jess Montgomery, and her writing is brisk, yet it lingers long enough to indulge readers with beautiful prose along the way.

In Maren’s debut novel, **Sugar Run** (Algonquin, \$26.95, 320 pages, 9781616206215), characters looking for a fresh start are also drawn to the Appalachian Mountains, specifically a tiny village

in rural West Virginia, where fracking and drug running have all but replaced coal mining and moonshining.

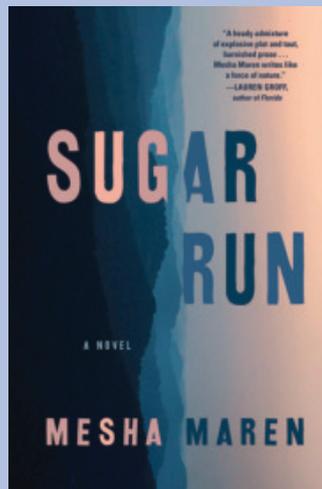
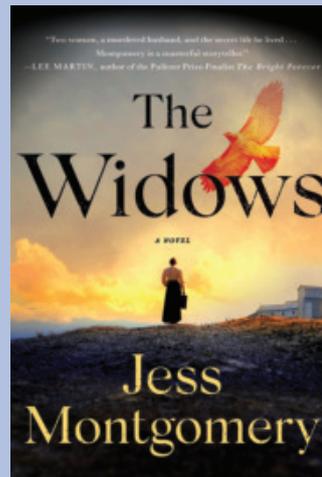
The novel follows two eras in the life of Jodi McCarty, with the bulk of the story set in 2007 as she tries to acclimate to freedom after 18 years in prison for manslaughter. Guilt-ridden over the death of her former lover, Paula Dulett, Jodi is compelled to seek out and then look after Paula’s younger brother, Ricky, now grown but mentally handicapped as a result of a beating he took at the hands of his abusive father.

Along the way, Jodi meets Miranda Matheson, the young mother of three children, who has left her country music-star husband and his drug-addicted lifestyle. Jodi, perhaps yearning for what she once had with Paula and a chance at a do-over, brings Miranda and her boys home with her. But Jodi’s hopes for a fresh start are almost immediately dashed when she learns that the West Virginia

property her grandmother left to her has been snatched up by a Florida investor. As Jodi struggles to find a job and resorts to the drug trade just to make ends meet, Miranda once again falls for her former husband.

An accomplished short story writer, Maren makes her debut count with emotionally charged prose and a sense of the yearning we all have for home.

—G. Robert Frazier

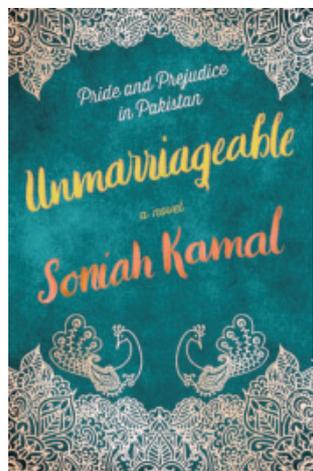


Visit BookPage.com to read a Behind the Book feature from Jess Montgomery.

ical precision and psychological depth, Walker delivers a vivid embodiment of our ongoing national anxiety.

—Michael Alec Rose

Unmarriageable



By Soniah Kamal

Ballantine
\$27, 352 pages
9781524799717
eBook available

Popular Fiction

If marriage is the prize, you'd better be skilled in the art of "grabbing it," it being an eligible bachelor.

In her *Pride and Prejudice* adaptation, Soniah Kamal transports Jane Austen's narrative to early-2000s Pakistan, imbuing the often-reimagined story with a fresh lexicon. **Unmarriageable** proves the timelessness of Austen and how her centuries-old plotline finds a home in many cultures.

The Binat family has fallen far, deceived out of their fortunes by Mr. Binat's own brother, and have been making due with reduced circumstances for more than a decade. To Mrs. Binat's chagrin, her two oldest daughters must work, finding employment as teachers at the local school. All five Binat girls—Jena, Alys, Mari, Qitty and Lady—await their (mother's) longed-for fate of a good marriage.

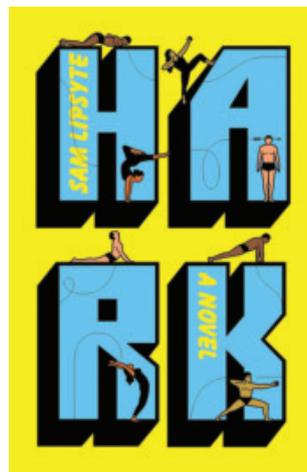
Though her prose lacks Austen's sardonic bite and subtlety, Kamal paints endearing relationships between Jena and Alys, and between Alys and her best friend, Sherry Looclus. Due to the lack of well-developed chemistry, love matches between Alys and Valentine Darsee, and Jena and Fahad "Bungles" Bingla, unfortunately fall flat, but the real spark to Kamal's writing comes whenever Mrs. Binat opens her mouth. The mother's hysterics over appearances and the father's frequent retreat to his garden (plants can't talk, after all) provide much of the comic relief. Kamal skewers Pakistani society over their obsessions and hypocrisies much in the same way Austen did hers. Alys, told at one point by the condescending Beena dey Bagh that it must be hard for her mother to have two 30-year-old daughters unmarried, retorts that it "seems to be even harder on absolute strangers."

As an admirer of Austen's work, I appreciate how others want to emulate her. It is a truth universally acknowledged, however, that it is

quite the undertaking. Altogether, **Unmarriageable** is light and entertaining. Meddling mothers, conniving sisters, arrogant men and a marriage-minded society provide plenty of fodder, and in the end, class clashes and societal expectations transcend the ages as well as geography.

—Melissa Brown

Hark



By Sam Lipsyte

Simon & Schuster
\$27, 304 pages
9781501146060
Audio, eBook
available

Satirical Fiction

What's a guru to do when he loses control of his own inspirational movement?

This question drives **Hark**, Sam Lipsyte's trenchant satire about the quest for meaning and the extremes to which some people will go to achieve it.

If ever there lived an accidental messiah, it's Hark Morner. His original goal—in one of Lipsyte's many sly commentaries—was to be a stand-up comic. He wasn't all that good, but a club owner booked him to perform his act on "the pitfalls of office life" at corporate gatherings. Hark quickly began to take his own words seriously. He had found his calling.

Hark calls his method "mental archery," or "a few tricks, or tips, to help people focus," which include everything from yoga and New Age speak to literal bows and arrows. It's not long before he attracts adherents, who are feverishly devoted to Hark's vision. Among them are Fraz Penzig, an unhappily married father of twins who is "rich in nutrients, solid from the gym," yet perpetually feeling "on the verge of the verge of death"; Kate Rumpler, a young heiress who funds the nascent Harkist institute; and Teal Baker-Cassini, former Fulbright scholar and erstwhile embezzler, who now handles the group's marketing.

Give the world a popular movement, and mercenaries are sure to follow. That's what happens here, as social media tycoons and others try to monetize Hark's movement, leaving the former comic to wonder what sort of joke he has unleashed on the world.

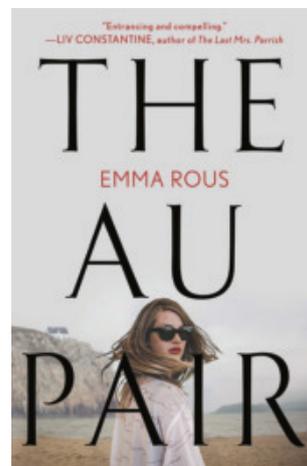
Oddly enough for a novel about the power of focus, **Hark** sometimes strays from its central story. But Lipsyte lands plenty of jabs at his targets, from internet trolls and conspiracy theo-

rists to the desire for quick fixes to complicated problems.

If acidic satire helps you fend off life's challenges, then put **Hark** in your quiver.

—Michael Magras

The Au Pair



By Emma Rous

Berkley
\$16, 384 pages
9780440000457
eBook available

Debut Fiction

Emma Rous' debut novel, **The Au Pair**, is a delightfully paced gothic tale about a family's snarled secrets and what happens when

you start pulling at their strings.

Seraphine is staying at Summerbourne, her family's manor on the Norfolk coast, mourning the death of her father and reminiscing about her childhood. While rifling through old family photo albums, she is shocked to stumble across a chilling image. In it, her mother holds a baby, and Seraphine's older brother and father stand smiling in the picture. The photograph is picture-perfect: a family posing proudly with their newborn. But Seraphine is a twin, and hours after she and her twin brother, Danny, were born, her mother tragically threw herself from the cliffs behind their luxurious home.

The mourning daughter begins a hunt for clues as to what happened on that dreadful day and why only one baby is in the photograph. Her search leads her to Laura, the family's former au pair, who mysteriously left Summerbourne the same day Seraphine and Danny were born and their mother died. Then messages—at first subtle and then explicit—are sent to stop Seraphine from digging any deeper. Her brothers begin to worry for her sanity and then her safety, as odd events start to unfold throughout her search for the truth.

Told in interweaving narratives of Seraphine's present and Laura's past, **The Au Pair** is a thrilling tale that plays on local folklore, hidden family histories and the small decisions that alter the trajectories of many lives. With vivid characters, a magical setting and a tightly knitted plot, **The Au Pair** is a splendid read that will be best enjoyed with a book club or a buddy, as you'll be itching to digest the tale's twists with someone else, especially when you reach the jaw-dropping climax.

—Jessica Bates

★ Top Pick: The Unwinding of the Miracle

By Julie Yip-Williams

Random House, \$27, 336 pages, 9780525511359

Audio, eBook available

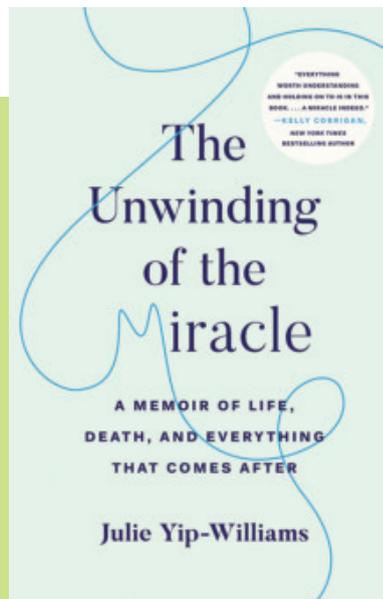
Memoir

Julie Yip-Williams always sensed that she was living on borrowed time. After she was born blind with cataracts in 1976 in Vietnam, her grandmother ordered her parents to take her to an herbalist to procure poison that would end Yip-Williams' life. Thankfully, the herbalist refused. Yip-Williams went on to live an extraordinary life until she died of colon cancer at age 42 on March 19, 2018. Her book, **The Unwinding of the Miracle: A Memoir of Life, Death, and Everything That Comes After**, is equally exceptional.

After immigrating to America as a child,

Yip-Williams underwent surgery that restored partial sight. She later graduated from Harvard Law School, traveled the world alone, married, had two daughters and worked at a prestigious New York City law firm, only to be diagnosed with Stage IV cancer in 2013. Her exquisite, honest memoir about living with and dying of cancer is equal parts practical and philosophical.

Yip-Williams writes unflinchingly of learning

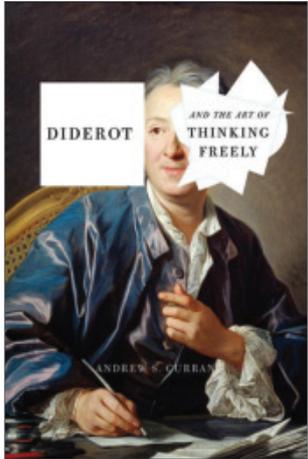


to move forward with the disease. “Life can and does go on after an appalling diagnosis, even an incurable one,” she writes. She never sugarcoats, however. She purposefully aims “to depict the dark side of cancer and debunk the overly sweet, pink-ribbon facade of positivity and fanciful hope and rah-rah-rah nonsense spewed by cancer patients and others, which I have come to absolutely loathe.” She plans her death carefully, just as she planned her life, teaching her children not to be afraid, that death is part of life. In the last chapter she writes, “I have lived even as I am dying, and therein lies a certain beauty and wonder.”

Full of love, humor, insight and tragedy, her book resonates with wisdom. As her husband so aptly notes, “For the little girl born blind, she saw more clearly than any of us.”

—Alice Cary

★ Diderot and the Art of Thinking Freely



By Andrew S. Curran

Other Press
\$28.95, 528 pages
9781590516706
eBook available

Philosophy

The ambitious effort to publish the world's most comprehensive encyclopedia was completed in the late 18th century with the *Encyclopédie*, which clocked in at 35 volumes. Its creators sought, in the midst of severe censorship by the French government and much controversy, not only to educate but also to raise questions about the established orders of knowledge, including the monarchy, the institution of slavery and religious belief. The *Encyclopédie* is now considered the supreme achievement of the French Enlightenment. It was an instant bestseller and was influential throughout Europe and beyond.

Denis Diderot was the lead editor and contributor of the encyclopedia project from 1745 to 1772. However, he considered the project to be the most thankless chore of his life. He neglected his family, his health and his literary

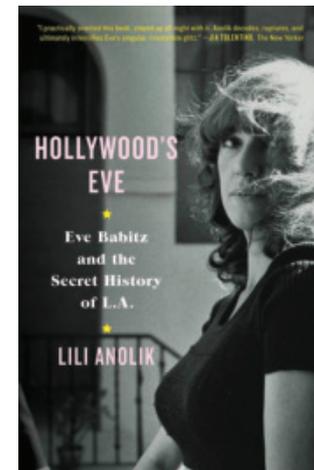
ambitions in the process of creating the *Encyclopédie*. But during the last third of his life, Diderot produced an astonishing range of work. His unedited books of essays, the last cache of which was made public only in 1948, greatly surpassed what he published in his lifetime.

Wesleyan University professor Andrew S. Curran details the life of this extraordinary man—who played the role of philosopher, playwright and novelist, among others—in his absorbing **Diderot and the Art of Thinking Freely**. In his mid-30s, before he began work on what was to become his best-known achievement, Diderot was imprisoned for heretical writings and branded as one of the most dangerous evangelists of freethinking and atheism in France. Upon his release from prison, he promised to never again personally publish heretical works. He kept that promise, but his work on the *Encyclopédie* allowed him to challenge conventional thinking in other ways. Curran notes Diderot's once-close relationship with Jean-Jacques Rousseau and their dramatic break, as well as Diderot's contact with Voltaire, who both admired and distrusted him. The most surprising of his admirers was Catherine the Great, who gave him substantial financial support and hosted him in St. Petersburg, although she was not interested in bringing Diderot's democratic ideal to Russia.

In this extremely well-written biography, Curran vividly portrays Diderot as a brilliant man filled with contradictions and passions who acted as a central figure in the advancement of intellectual freedom.

—Roger Bishop

Hollywood's Eve



By Lili Anolik
Scribner
\$26, 288 pages
9781501125799
Audio, eBook available

Biography

When Joan Didion's iconic novel *Play It as It Lays* came out in 1970, it was widely hailed as the ultimate

Los Angeles story. But Didion's friend Eve Babitz didn't see it that way: Didion was from Sacramento via New York; Babitz was the real LA woman. So she wrote her own book.

Her book of lightly fictionalized autobiographical sketches published in 1974, *Eve's Hollywood*, didn't get the notice that Didion's work did, but it was fresh, witty and buzzy. More books followed—some great, some not. But then Babitz became a drug addict. And after she got clean, she suffered a life-changing accident. The books stopped coming.

Babitz is still very much alive at 75 and is enjoying being rediscovered, thanks largely to Lili Anolik's 2014 *Vanity Fair* article about her. Anolik has now written a smart, fast-paced meditation on Babitz in **Hollywood's Eve**. Unsurprisingly, Babitz remains a complicated subject.

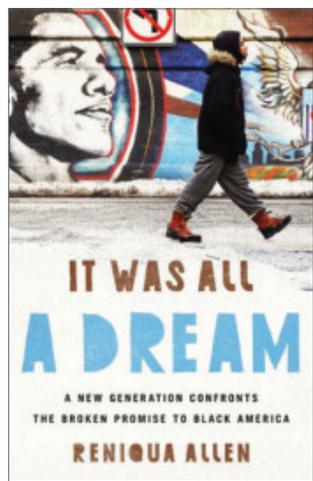
Here's a fractional list of Babitz's lovers, back in the day: Jim Morrison, Steve Martin, Jackson Browne, Ahmet Ertegun, Annie Leibovitz, Warren Zevon—and so on. She appears nude in a photo with Duchamp, playing chess. Igor Stravinsky was her godfather. For a while, her best friend was the guy who inspired BZ in *Play It as It Lies*.

But Anolik argues that Babitz's va-va-voom looks and sexual adventurism belied brains and talent. All those men weren't exploiting her; she was exploiting them for writing fodder, like Proust and his duchesses.

Anolik's own writing is jazzy and insightful, and her quest to find Babitz—both physically and psychologically—is an integral part of the book. Anolik notes that many of Babitz's contemporaries misread her as a 1960s Carrie Bradshaw, yet Anolik sees her as ruthless, unencumbered, unapologetic. In other words, an artist.

—Anne Bartlett

It Was All a Dream



By Reniqua Allen

Nation
\$28, 368 pages
9781568585864
eBook available

Social Science

With the election of President Obama in 2009, many young black men and women saw hope in the promise of the

American dream—the belief that hard work and unrelenting persistence guaranteed a seat at the table. But as the years passed, the envisioned path of upward mobility proved impassable. And yet, the reality of the lives of black millennials in a post-Obama nation isn't a portrait of total despair. For Reniqua Allen, Eisner Fellow at the Nation Institute, the demystifying of the American dream represents a chance to abandon the expectations of white America and forge a new path. **It Was All a Dream: A New Generation Confronts the Broken Promise to Black America** is a portrait of young black people grappling with the enduring legacy of white supremacy. Combining nuanced reporting with the intimacies of personal experience, Allen showcases the lives of black millennials, which are rarely portrayed with accuracy in mainstream media.

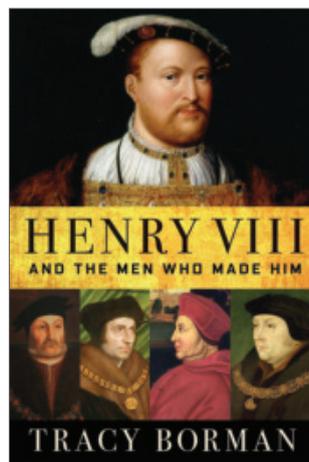
Gathering the stories of more than 75 black Americans living everywhere from sprawling

cities to contained suburbs, Allen dismantles the conditional terms of a lie that has been peddled for decades. The American dream says that the road to success is built upon meritocracy, but black millennials soon discovered that education alone couldn't fully shatter institutional racism and systemic discrimination. Allen shares the experience of Michael, a former college athlete with a crippling amount of undergraduate student debt. Like many of his peers, Michael did everything "right." But Michael lost his athletic scholarship due to injury before graduation. He was determined to finish his education, despite the mounting debt. Although he doesn't consider his experience "a sob story," it's in line with the stories of many black Americans who followed the rules put in place by white America.

In this insightful book, the idea of the American dream is proven to be a fairy tale at best, and a nightmare at worst.

—Vanessa Willoughby

Henry VIII: And the Men Who Made Him



By Tracy Borman

Atlantic Monthly
\$30, 320 pages
9780802128430
eBook available

History

Henry VIII is most often remembered as the king with six wives. But in her fascinating new biography,

Henry VIII: And the Men Who Made Him, Tracy Borman argues that as a monarch and as a man, Henry is best understood by examining his relationships with the men who surrounded him.

Throughout his life, Henry was at the center of a tumultuous group at court, from advisers like Cardinal Wolsey and Thomas Cromwell to scholar Thomas More and the powerful dukes of Buckingham and Norfolk. Borman writes, "It was these men who shaped Henry into the man—and the monster—that he would become."

Borman, who serves as curator of Britain's Historic Royal Palaces, has a long familiarity with the Tudors. She has written a book about their private lives as well as a biography of Cromwell. (A confession: I can no longer imagine him as anyone other than Mark Rylance, thanks to his masterful portrayal in the BBC's

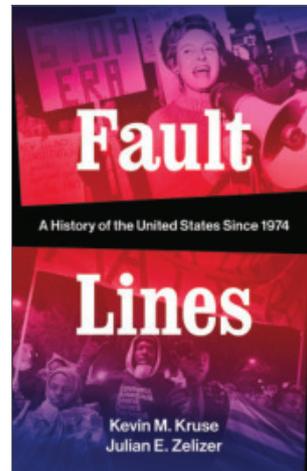
adaptation of Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall*.) Here, Borman's deep background knowledge serves her—and the reader—well. The pages and years fly by, and one has the feeling of stepping into an engaging historical lecture by a master of the subject.

The study follows a chronological approach, and Borman shines a light on some lesser-known characters as well as the major players. We also see more of how those in Henry's inner circle of advisers, aristocrats and servants interacted with one another. Throughout, Borman uses events to peel back layers of Henry's character, arguing that his relationships with men "show him to be capable of fierce, but seldom abiding loyalty; of raising men only to destroy them later."

For readers curious about royal history or fascinated by the styles of leaders in our own time, **Henry VIII: And the Men Who Made Him** makes for a compelling read. And it will hopefully tide committed Tudor fans over until Mantel's *The Mirror and the Light*, the final book in her trilogy about Cromwell, comes out—whenever that may be.

—Deborah Hopkinson

Fault Lines



By Kevin M. Kruse & Julian E. Zelizer

Norton
\$28.95, 400 pages
9780393088663
eBook available

History

When Americans woke up on November 7, 2016, it seemed as if we were not

one country, but two. There were the red states and the blue states; the pro-Trumps and the anti-Trumps; the Republicans and the Democrats. In the aftermath of President Donald Trump's election, it seems to some that we are no longer a united nation, but the uneasy yoking of enemy camps. However, in **Fault Lines: A History of the United States Since 1974**, Princeton professors Kevin M. Kruse and Julian E. Zelizer demonstrate that the current crisis is nothing new. Instead, it is the result of fissures that have been deepening for decades.

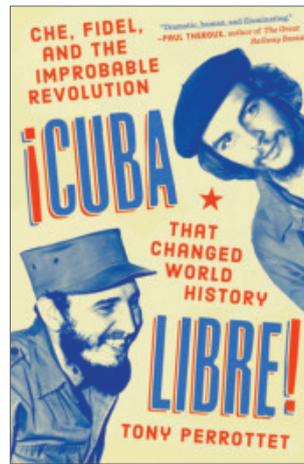
In the 1950s, there was an expectation that middle-class white men would be the dominant breadwinners, women would be relegated to the home, and people of color would continue to be treated as second-class citizens. Howev-

er, as underrepresented groups demanded and fought for equal rights and opportunities, cracks in the status quo began to emerge—sometimes explosively. Like volcanic eruptions along a fault line, the Watts riots in LA, the Stonewall riots in New York City and the Kent State shootings were symptoms of a deeper schism. Aided by advances in technology such as the internet and cable news, along with a growing distrust of politicians in the wake of Watergate and subsequent scandals, the cracks deepened, and American opposition hardened into enmity. President Trump may very well be an accelerant of this process, but he is also a product of it.

Fault Lines started as a series of lectures by Kruse and Zelizer offered at Princeton. Judging from the resulting book, the class was no doubt a wonderful introduction to a critical era in our history. Even for those who lived through these events, **Fault Lines** gives brilliant context to help us understand how Americans have become so fragmented and rigid in our beliefs. Perhaps, with understanding, we can begin to soften our divisions and heal.

—Deborah Mason

Cuba Libre!



By Tony Perrottet

Blue Rider
\$28, 384 pages
9780735218161
eBook available

History

Only the hoariest among us remember when the Cuban revolution was chic and Fidel Castro was feted as a modern-day Robin Hood. In his fast-paced and highly entertaining book **Cuba Libre!**, Tony Perrottet spotlights the bright hopes that propelled the revolution and the herculean effort that enabled a ragtag band to defeat a dictator's army of 40,000 in just over two years.

President Fulgencio Batista began a reign in 1952 that was remarkable for its corruption and

brutality. Castro's career as a rebel against Batista began a year later, with a failed attack on an army barracks. After his release from prison, Castro retreated to Mexico to plan further resistance. There he met and enlisted the Argentinean doctor Ernesto "Che" Guevara. With a band of 82 men, Castro returned to Cuba by sea in late 1956. A disastrous landing led to most of his troops being captured or killed. The few survivors took refuge in the rugged Sierra Maestra range and trained their eyes on distant Havana.

Perrottet relies on contemporary newspaper accounts and journals to depict the perilous living conditions in the mountains, explain the essential roles of female leaders and illustrate Castro's genius in public relations. The victories against Batista grew slowly but inexorably and were, for the most part, chronicled sympathetically by the American media. Finally, Castro made his triumphant entry into Havana on January 8, 1959. His honeymoon with the U.S. lasted only a few months, until it became clear that he really did intend to reform the Cuban economy at the expense of those who had drained it.

—Edward Morris

meet A.J. JACOBS

Describe your book in one sentence.

My quest to thank everyone who had a role in my cup of coffee, from the farmer to the truck driver to the road paver (this could be a long sentence!).
Who has most influenced your work?
Steven Pinker for rationality

What are you most grateful for today?

My kids - specifically for lending me their multi-color pens

What's a simple way for people to share gratitude?

Handwritten thank you notes are the best. Carpal tunnel be damned!

Words to live by?

Just do it*
*as long as you have weighed the costs and benefits and longterm effects to society and aren't rushing into it.

David Sedaris for humor
Friedrich Runge for caffeine (He discovered it)

Most awesome moment of your journey?

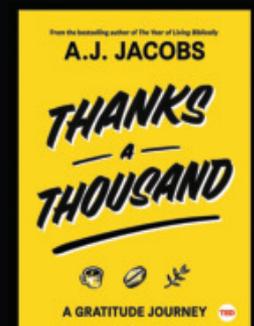
Visiting the coffee farm. Smelled of coffee. And manure. But mostly coffee.

Who was most surprised by your quest to give thanks?

The woman who does pest control for the coffee warehouse.



In **Thanks a Thousand** (Simon & Schuster / TED, \$16.99, 160 pages, 9781501119927), A.J. Jacobs embarks on a transformative journey to thank everyone involved in producing his morning cup of coffee. From baristas and marketers to farmers and steelworkers, his globe-trotting encounters deepen his love of coffee and his appreciation for the healing powers of gratitude and compassion.



Let's make money moves

Taking an honest look at your financial situation can provoke a panoply of unpleasant emotions, and let's be honest—finances are *boring*. Understanding the complex, jargon-filled American financial system can be difficult, but these three new books work to dispel the mysteries and put you on a course to a more stable, realistic financial future.

Personal finance can be a fraught subject for anyone, but if you came of age during the 2008 economic meltdown, it can be downright terrifying. Instead of facing it head-on, many young Americans don't talk about what's going on in their bank accounts, and as a result, they don't know the first thing about personal finance. Pundits are fond of telling the under-35 crowd that they need to stop buying their precious avocado toast if they ever want to buy a house, but in **Bad with Money: The Imperfect Art of Getting Your Financial Sh*t Together** (Atria, \$16, 304 pages, 9781501176333), 30-year-old comedian, author and financial podcast host Gaby Dunn makes it clear that the financial hurdles and morphing job market faced by her fellow millennials are far more difficult to navigate than the ones faced by their parents.

Silently struggling with your finances while feeling guilty and ashamed about your lack of know-how won't get you anywhere, and Dunn advises that letting go of those feelings is the first step toward a brighter, more bountiful bank statement. She lays out the basics of how finances work with good humor and friendly prose, clarifying the perplexing and cryptic language of taxes, 401Ks and investing while offering advice on how to create a budget, choose a credit card, find an insurance plan and manage young America's kryptonite: student loan debt. Dunn admits that she used to be terrible with money, but she learned a lot through her various money missteps, and she wants to share that hard-earned wisdom with the financially clueless out there. Anyone overwhelmed by the murky, flawed system of finances in America will find an honest, helpful guide in Dunn.

Elizabeth White represents a different demographic of the financially unmoored. She has worked at the World Bank, holds an MBA from Harvard and started her own company with her mother. After eight years and the dissolution of that company, she re-entered the job market at age 47, certain that her stellar resume would land her a job fairly quickly. But years went by with no steady source of income. Short, unfulfilling job stints and

freelance work saw her turning 60 with a rapidly dwindling number in her bank account and rapidly rising panic. She was broke, and she was ashamed. Looking around, she realized that her private shame was something many older, former professionals were quietly carrying with them as well. But no one was talking about it, and no one knew what to do.

In **55, Underemployed, and Faking Normal: Your Guide to a Better Life** (Simon & Schuster, \$26, 272 pages, 9781501196805), White offers advice, exercises and tips for the millions of Americans in their 50s and

60s who have unexpectedly found themselves struggling to stay afloat. But perhaps most importantly, she provides hope and empowerment. Throughout this book, White includes quotes and stories from boomers who are figuring out their next step, bringing home the powerful and important message: You are not alone. This is a deeply empathetic, informative and accessible book from a woman who understands—because she's been there.

Perhaps an antidote to financial frustration is to understand, fundamentally, how we arrived at our current financial landscape and where our world economy can go from here. Renowned English economist and social science expert Paul Collier takes a broad view of our economic climate in **The Future of Capitalism: Facing the New Anxieties** (Harper, \$29.99, 256 pages, 9780062748652) and asks the big questions: How did we get here, and what do we do now? Collier lays bare the inherited flaws of Western society's corrupted capitalism and how it has failed us. As the gap between the rich and the poor grows wider, other divisions become more pronounced, and contempt blossoms. In such an environment, something must change—and soon. Collier eschews political partisanship, instead presenting practical, deeply researched arguments for ethics-based capitalism to heal a deeply fissured society. Bringing morality and ethics back into the economic and public-policy discourse is the only solution.

—Lily McLemore



financial statements

From Gaby Dunn, author of *Bad with Money*: “Even when someone seems successful, don’t make assumptions about how much that person is making. It may be a lot; it may not be. You don’t know their expenses or history with

money. Income does not necessarily equal wealth.”

From Elizabeth White, author of *55, Underemployed, and Faking Normal*: “The last thing you need is for the upheaval that you feel on

the inside to be mirrored in your living space. Lord knows, you don’t need another thing to feel bad about. So start somewhere, and do something—anything. Clear the surfaces in the room where you spend the most time.”

From Paul Collier, author of *The Future of Capitalism*: “Talented young people need to be brought face-to-face with the social implications of their career choices: how are mega-incomes actually being generated?”

The cutest towns always have the darkest secrets

A twisted YA thriller from the author of *One of Us Is Lying*

Until recently, Karen M. McManus was essentially working two full-time jobs—as a marketing professional and a writer—and all the while, raising her young son after her husband’s passing. “I was just really burnt out and sleeping for about five hours a night, so something had to give,” McManus says in a call from her home in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Fortunately, her first book, *One of Us Is Lying*, became a *New York Times* bestseller. “It just felt like the time was right to go ahead and take that leap to writing full time,” McManus says. “It’s a big move, but so far, it’s working out.”

But the success of her first book distinctly altered McManus’ writing process for her new standalone novel, **Two Can Keep a Secret**. She was still working full time and writing, but now she also had a chorus of outsider voices—her editor, agent and readers—all echoing in her head with each new page she composed. “I had to learn how to shut all that out and just get back to the story that I wanted to tell,” she says.

With **Two Can Keep a Secret**, McManus has created a layered, twisty tale that enraptures the reader from the very beginning with a big mystery: What’s happening to the girls of Echo Ridge?

Though Echo Ridge may seem like an idyllic place to call home, Ellery and her twin brother, Ezra, see it differently. After their mother is forced into court-mandated rehab, Ellery and Ezra are shipped off across the country to live with their grandmother in the tiny town where, 17 years ago, their aunt went missing, and five years ago, the homecoming queen was killed.

“I’m fascinated by places that look perfect on the surface but have this darkness underneath, and about

the ripple effect that darkness can cause,” McManus says. So she conjured up a very quaint New England town with a creepy, Halloween-themed amusement park that was once the setting of an actual murder—and yet the townsfolk still treat it like a charming tourist attraction. The twins eventually discover the secrets that everyone is trying to keep and the bodies they want to stay buried.

Prior to leaning fully into her new life as a novelist, McManus had planned on pursuing a career in journalism. She graduated with a master’s degree from Northeastern University’s prestigious journalism program before realizing, “I wasn’t really interested in writing news stories, but it did start percolating in my brain that what I really wanted to be doing was making up stories.”

But a lesson learned is never lost. “My journalism background has been very helpful in constructing mysteries in general because it taught me to look for the holes in the story,” McManus says. “That is so important when you’re trying to write this airtight plot that makes sense at the

end.” She has become very good at spotting the plot holes in her own works—even writing and then shelving two previous “practice novels.”

The first practice novel was what she lovingly calls a “terrible dystopian knockoff” inspired by Suzanne Collins’ *The Hunger Games* series, which reignited in her the desire to write again after her husband’s death. And though she did notice an improvement in her narrative-crafting skills with her second practice novel, both had fundamental plot problems that McManus claims could not be fixed. She has, however, been able to return to her earlier books to mine them for characters. “There are all these little parts of life that you pluck from yourself and weave into each of your characters,” McManus says, “and they ultimately become their own people. But they have those little sparks of their creator inside.”

With those first two practice novels under her belt, McManus’ first published novel, *One of Us Is Lying*, is tech-

“Thrillers give teens a safe space to experience and process the world that we’re living in right now, which is full of conflict and fear. But life is all about balance, right?”



Delacorte, \$19.99, 336 pages, 9781524714727
Audio, eBook available, ages 14 and up

YA Thriller

nically her third book. “I’m really happy it wasn’t my first idea,” she admits humbly, “because I don’t think I had the skills when I first started taking writing seriously to write a complicated plot like that.”

The wait was worth it, as E! Network has since picked up the rights to *One of Us Is Lying* for a TV series, and book two in the series is slated for release next year.

And while McManus’ stories certainly do fall in the darker side of the YA thriller category, they are mixed with lighter elements, humor, and strong relationships and friendships.

“Thrillers give teens a safe space to experience and process the world that we’re living in right now, which is full of conflict and fear,” McManus says. “But life is all about balance, right? So I like to try to weave through my narrative the message that even though it’s sort of inevitable to grapple with pain and loss, there’s also room for growth, hope and optimism.”

Therein lies McManus’ goal as a creator of stories for teen readers, to share this truth: “The unthinkable can happen to anybody, but it doesn’t have to be insurmountable.”

McManus believes writing has helped restore balance in her life and has reminded her that “your story’s not over, there’s more to tell here.” And if she can help lead readers back to their own sense of balance, then she believes that every word—practice or otherwise—was well worth it.

—Justin Barisich

★ Top Pick: The Gilded Wolves

By Roshani Chokshi

Wednesday Books, \$18.99, 400 pages
9781250144546, audio, eBook available
Ages 13 and up

Historical Fantasy

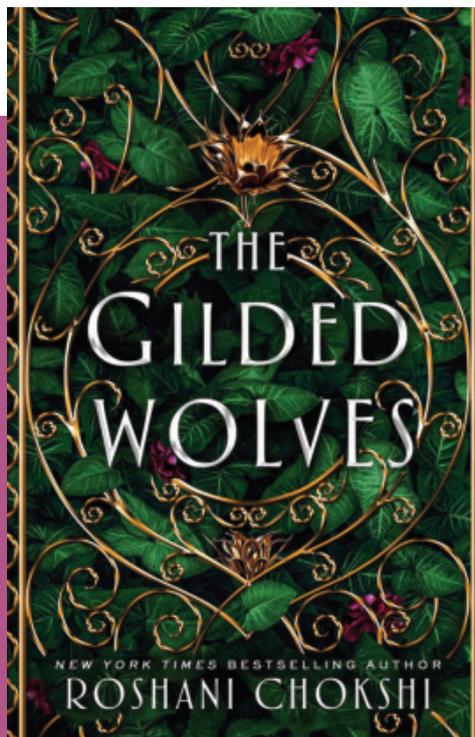
In bestselling author Roshani Chokshi's **The Gilded Wolves**, a crew of young people in an alternate version of belle époque Paris use their wits and daring to restore their leader to his rightful place.

In this world, some have “Forging” power—creative and metamorphic power over matter or minds—which is made possible through fragments of the Tower of Babel. These broken pieces are scattered across the world and safeguarded by the mysterious Order of Babel, which is organized in national factions and then further divided into Houses.

Séverin Montagnet-Alarie is the heir to France's House Vanth, but he was denied his Order inheritance years ago and now watches the two remaining French Houses—Nyx and

Kore—with envy. But Séverin has a plan to claim his right, and a crew of various talents who live with him at his glamorous hotel will help him pull it off. They plot to steal an ancient artifact that will help Séverin buy his way back into the good graces of the Order, but the artifact and its owner turn out to be more than they bargained for.

With a diverse ensemble—characters are multiracial, from different cultural and religious backgrounds, have differing sexualities, and one character is non-neurotypical—Chokshi



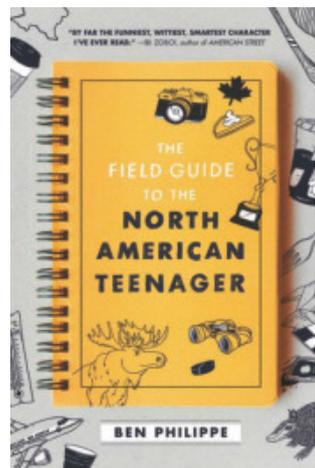
challenges the notion that historical fantasy novels (even those with a European setting) must be populated by mostly white characters. She balances four points of view, although the lack of any significant entry into the psyche of two major characters is awkward, especially in light of their significance to the plot.

The glittering and lavish 1890s setting is the perfect complement to the marvelous possibilities of Forging, and the chemistry between Chokshi's romantic pairs is realistic yet slightly off-script from what readers

may expect. In this delicious first entry in a new series from a veteran YA author, readers will find sumptuous visuals, deep characters and a maddening eleventh-hour twist.

—Annie Metcalf

The Field Guide to the North American Teenager



By Ben Philippe

Balzer + Bray
\$18.99, 384 pages
9780062824110
Audio, eBook available
Ages 13 and up
Fiction

Following his parents' divorce and his mother's decision to take a job at the University of Texas,

black Canadian teen Norris moves to perpetually muggy, burnt sienna-colored Austin, Texas. Leaving behind his ambivalent father and his only friend in Montreal, Norris is catapulted into a typical American public school midway through his junior year, and he finds himself hiding behind sarcasm and surface-level, stereotypical perceptions of everyone he meets. But on prom night, Norris messes up big time, and he realizes it might be time to drop the protective mask and embrace his new life.

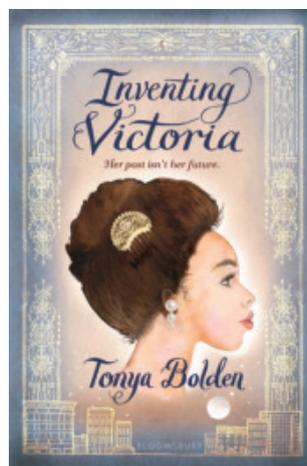
Debut author Ben Philippe's **The Field Guide to the North American Teenager** mirrors his own experience and paints an authentic por-

trait of what it's like to feel like a fish out of water—not only for his protagonist but also for a richly developed cast of supporting characters whose *Breakfast Club*-style stereotypes fall away to reveal teens who are just trying to find their places in the world. Philippe's buoyant prose and Norris' snark allow some of the story's heavier themes (broken families, depression, race) to feel light, poignant and approachable. And with this undercurrent of messy reality, characters are affected by these issues instead of defined by them.

For contemporary YA fans, this witty look at what we learn about ourselves by observing others will be a fantastic back-to-school read.

—Sarah Weber

Inventing Victoria



By Tonya Bolden

Bloomsbury
\$17.99, 272 pages
9781681198071
eBook available
Ages 13 and up
Historical Fiction

Born two decades after the Civil War in segregated Savannah, Geor-

gia, Essie has had the odds against her from the start. And with a formerly enslaved mother who's become bitter and is subsequently not much for nurturing, Essie's pretty much on her own, and her dreams seem impossibly out of reach. Even as she gathers some people into her corner—like Ma Clara, her mother's housekeeper who cares for her, and Binah, the best (and only) friend she's ever had—making something of herself still seems like a long shot.

Essie spends most of her days working as a maid at a boardinghouse, until a wealthy black woman known as Dorcas Vashon shows up and makes her the offer of a lifetime: She will provide Essie with a classical education and a fine wardrobe, and then she will spirit her away to Washington, D.C., where Essie will meet and mingle with the upper echelons of black society. It's everything Essie has ever dreamed of. But the road to her new life is not entirely smooth, and she'll have to decide how much of her former self she's willing to part with. As her dreams begin to become her reality, she decides to gift herself with a new name to suit her new identity, one that embodies all the grace and tenacity she hopes to exhibit: Victoria.

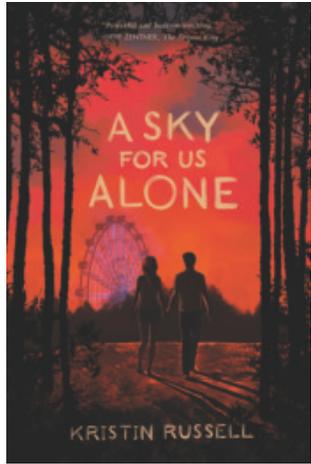
Coretta Scott King Honor-winning author Tonya Bolden (*Maritcha*, *Crossing Ebenezer Creek*) has penned an atmospheric and fresh historical novel with **Inventing Victoria**. Her prose is rich in period detail, evoking both the barren loneliness of Essie's childhood and the

luxurious fortune that her generous benefactor offers. Bolden has created a sweeping and exhilarating story of a teen girl filled with hope and perseverance.

Told from the perspective of a young woman of color in a time period rarely seen in historical fiction for young adults, **Inventing Victoria** is a truly unique and necessary addition to the genre.

—Hannah Lamb

A Sky for Us Alone



By Kristin Russell

Katherine Tegen
\$17.99, 336 pages
9780062697028
eBook available
Ages 13 and up

Fiction

People hear about America's opioid crisis on the news, but author Kristin Russell brings

readers up close and personal to this problem in her debut novel, **A Sky for Us Alone**. Cultural richness and material poverty collide in Russell's fictional Appalachian setting of Strickland County. This is much more than a simple cautionary tale of how opioids can devastate a community. Instead, Russell has created a living, breathing tapestry of Appalachian life that is filled with voices both ancient and youthful.

When 18-year-old Harlowe Compton discovers his older brother Nate's body on their front porch, he vows to figure out who shot him. Nate served as the rock of their family, and his brutal death has devastating consequences for the Comptons. While Harlowe grieves over the loss, he also watches his family disintegrate. Harlowe's mother deals with her physical and mental pain by slipping back into opioid use, and his father, unable to cope with both his wife's addiction and his son's death, simply disappears.

However, Harlowe finds an unexpected bright spot in his life when a new girl named Tennessee Moore moves to town, and despite their overwhelming family issues, the two teens find true friendship, support and love.

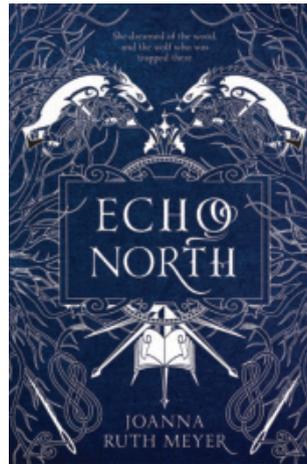
The coal-mining industry and its Mafia-like bosses—the powerful and conniving Prater family—serve as the backdrop for the action and mystery in **A Sky for Us Alone**. All life in Strickland County is viewed through coal's influence. Vivid contrasts abound between the

mining rubble, draglines, polluted runoff and the pristine beauty of the southern Appalachian wilderness.

Readers can expect a satisfying and uplifting ending despite the overall grimness of Russell's well-told teen drama.

—Lori K. Joyce

Echo North



By Joanna Ruth Meyer

Page Street
\$17.99, 400 pages
9781624147159
eBook available
Ages 14 and up

Fantasy

An enchanting story about a book-loving girl who's shunned by gossipy villagers and the

evil stepmother who forces her to leave home may seem more than a little familiar to even the most casual Disney fan, but author Joanna Ruth Meyer (*Beneath the Haunting Sea*) lovingly builds upon recognizable tropes from classic fairy tales while still making her latest YA novel, **Echo North**, feel fresh and original.

When she was a child, Echo Alkaev was mauled by a white wolf in the woods, leaving her with a face covered in scars. Ostracized by her cruel peers, her only sources of companionship are her doting father and older brother, who treasure her intellect and the “echo” of her dead mother's love and beauty that they see within her. But Echo's small happiness is shattered with the arrival of her father's new wife, who mocks Echo in private and plunges the family into debt. When Echo's father sets off to sell his rare books, he becomes lost in the wintry woods. Echo finds him unconscious in the snow with the very white wolf who attacked her so many years ago. To save her father's life, she strikes a curious bargain: She will live alone with the wolf for one full year, and she cannot tell her family where she's going or have any contact with them.

Meyer takes a hard left turn into the fantastical as Echo joins the talking wolf in his house under the mountain, a beautiful but dangerous estate guarded by the North Wind and filled with old magic and enchantment. As Echo learns how to care for the cantankerous old house, including its charmed library and shifting rooms, she makes friends in unexpected new worlds and takes ownership over her life's direction. And of course, the closer

she gets to the wolf, the more determined she is to break the spell that binds him to his animal form.

Based on the Norwegian folk tale “East of the Sun, West of the Moon,” this lyrical and romantic fantasy offers plenty for both YA lovers and fairy-tale connoisseurs to appreciate.

—Hilli Levin

★ The Wicked King



By Holly Black

Little, Brown
\$19.99, 336 pages
9780316310352
Audio, eBook available
Ages 14 and up

Fantasy

High stakes and heartbreak are at the center of award-winning author Holly Black's

The Wicked King, the second book in the Folk of the Air series and the luscious sequel to her *New York Times* bestseller *The Cruel Prince*.

When **The Wicked King** opens, it's been five months since 17-year-old human Jude planted Faerie Prince Cardan on the Elfhome throne. Now, she's struggling to maintain her behind-the-scenes power, and it doesn't help that Cardan is trying to undermine their deal or that her twin sister's marriage to the duplicitous Locke comes with its own set of challenges. On top of all that, Jude's stepfather is strategizing behind her back.

But when the Queen of the Undersea threatens the Faerie kingdom and Cardan's rule, Jude must spy and scheme to protect her family and her hold on the throne. But Jude can't foresee everything, and someone is out to betray her. Despite growing up in a Faerie world, Jude is not one of them. And there's only so much power a mortal girl can wield when fighting monsters.

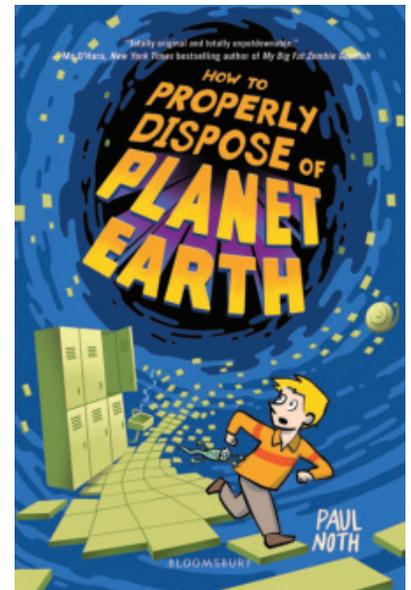
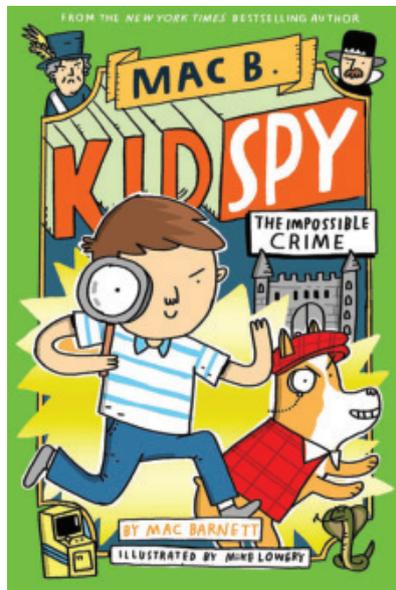
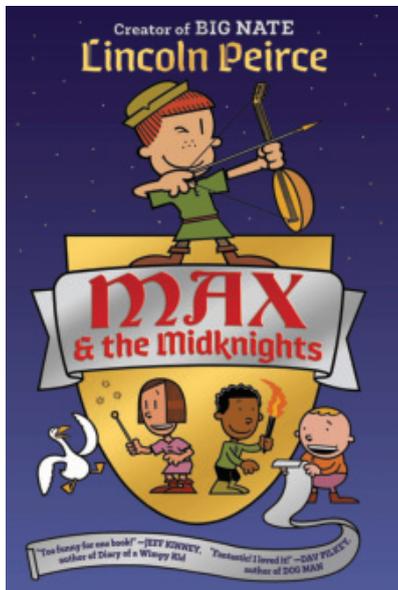
Fans of *The Cruel Prince* have been clamoring for this book, and they will not be disappointed. Black ratchets up the action with even more sinister settings, wicked villains, surprising plot twists and her haunting, melodic prose. Cardan and Jude's infatuation with one another is seductively tense as they continue to fight their feelings. And Jude's ability to steamroll her enemies with violence and wit offers a particularly feminist high.

The Wicked King is intense and entertaining storytelling at its finest.

—Kimberly Giarratano

Illustrated tales of nonstop fun

Playful illustrations make super stories even better, and these three action-packed novels for young readers are chock full of them.



Fans of Lincoln Peirce's *Big Nate* series will adore the author and cartoonist's **Max & the Midnights** (Crown, \$13.99, 288 pages, 9781101931080, ages 8 to 12), a superb hybrid of chapter book and graphic novel that's packed with nonstop adventure, dragons, wizards and flying rats. The daring, wise-cracking Max (who discovers she's actually a girl) is stuck in the Middle Ages, longing to become a knight but acting as an apprentice to bumbling Uncle Budrick, a troubadour who's anything but tuneful. This down-on-their luck pair courts catastrophe when they enter the Kingdom of Byjovia, where the evil King Gastley carts Uncle Budrick off to be his jester. While Max and her merry band of misfits bear a noticeable resemblance to Charlie Brown and his buddies (Charles Schulz is one of Peirce's inspirations), these characters have a modern *Wimpy Kid* vibe.

In the second adventure of his *Mac B., Kid Spy* series, Caldecott Medal-winning author Mac Barnett recounts his supposed youthful adventures in 1989 as an espionage agent in **Mac B., Kid Spy: The Impossible Crime** (Orchard, \$12.99, 160 pages, 9781338143683, ages 7 to 10). One moment, young Mac B. is playing mini golf in Castro Valley, California, and the next the queen of England is summoning him via pay phone to help her protect the crown jewels. Three hundred years ago, Colonel Thomas Blood stole them, and the queen believes one of his heirs will try to steal them again on the anniversary of this real-life 17th-century crime. The action never stops in this light-hearted adventure that's fueled by Barnett's jaunty narration, jokes galore and Mike Lowery's entertaining, full-color cartoon illustrations. The plot may be preposterous, but it's hard not to enjoy the ride.

Family dynamics are decidedly tricky for Happy Conklin Jr., a 10-year-old who has to shave three times a day after being experimented on by his inventor father. In 2018's *How to Sell Your Family to Aliens*, Hap battled his authoritarian grandma, and in **How to Properly Dispose of Planet Earth** (Bloomsbury, \$13.99, 192 pages, 9781681196596, ages 8 to 12), he longs to be lab partners with Nevada Everly, the new girl in his science class. Hap manages to befriend her, but he also opens up a black hole that threatens to swallow his school—and the solar system. In this rollicking sci-fi adventure by *New Yorker* cartoonist Paul Noth, Hap and his super-powered sisters endure extraordinary exploits reminiscent of Netflix's "Stranger Things," with appearances by Genghis Khan, magical lizards and a gigantic robot. There's never a dull moment in this outlandish romp. —Alice Cary



Excerpt from *Max & the Midnights*, copyright © 2019 by Lincoln Peirce. Reprinted with permission from Crown Books for Young Readers.

Illustration from *Mac B., Kid Spy: The Impossible Crime* © 2018 by Mike Lowery. Reprinted with permission from Scholastic.

Illustration from *How to Properly Dispose of Planet Earth* © 2019 by Paul Noth. Reprinted with permission from Bloomsbury Children's.

★ Top Pick: My Heart

By Corinna Luyken

Dial, \$17.99, 32 pages, 9780735227934

eBook available

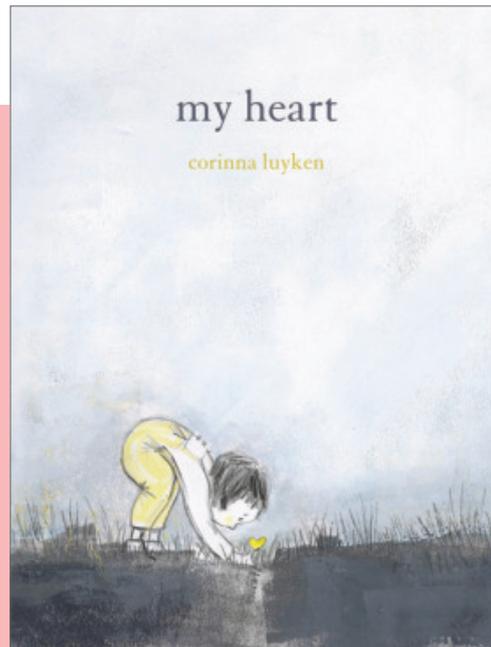
Ages 4 to 8

Picture Book

In author and illustrator Corinna Luyken's atmospheric new picture book, **My Heart**, young readers see a series of diverse children whose innermost feelings are manifested via clever metaphors and softly rendered monotype illustrations. "My heart is a window," one small child says as they stare through a window lit with vivid yellow sunlight. "Some days it is tiny," says another child, wondering at a small and delicate flower in the grass.

In spare and pleasing rhyming text, Luyken explores the fears, joys and emotional vulner-

abilities of children—and the moments when their hearts are closed (like a fence) or open (like the flowers in a dazzling bouquet). Luyken juxtaposes the muted grays of pencil with lemony yellows that seem to shine from the pages in her simple, uncluttered compositions. If you linger over the artwork, you'll see that Luyken includes a sub-



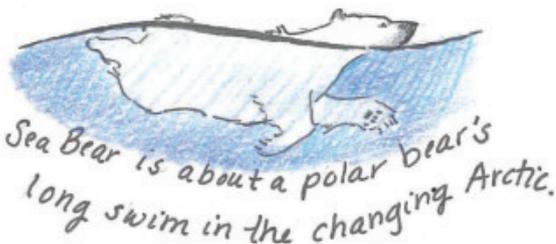
children have autonomy over their own interior lives.

—Julie Danielson

 Subscribe to our children's and YA newsletter for more reviews, interviews and features: bookpage.com/generationread

meet LINDSAY MOORE

How would you describe the book?



Sea Bear is about a polar bear's long swim in the changing Arctic.

Who has been the biggest influence on your work?



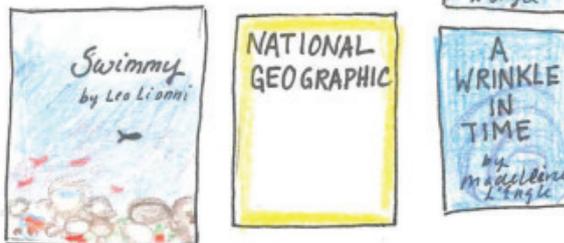
My mom, she was so good at reading and always made sure I had time and art supplies and space to work.

Who was your childhood hero?



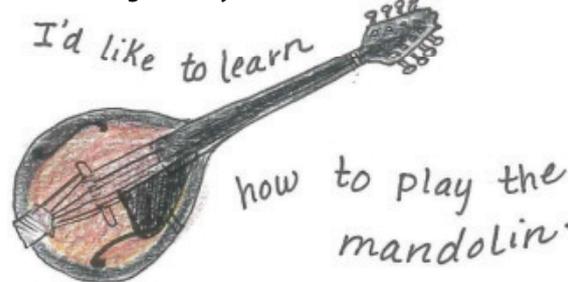
Sylvia Earle, Madeleine L'Engle, Jane Goodall

What books did you enjoy as a child?



Swimmy by Leo Lionni, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC, A RING OF ENDLESS LIGHT by Madeleine L'Engle, A WRINKLE IN TIME by Madeleine L'Engle

What one thing would you like to learn to do?



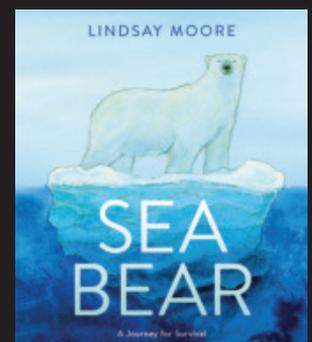
I'd like to learn how to play the mandolin.

What message would you like to send to young readers?

READ about what makes you CURIOUS. Always be CURIOUS about something.



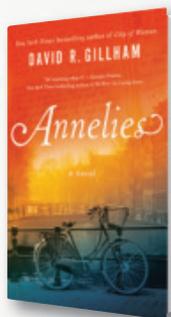
In author and illustrator Lindsay Moore's debut picture book, **Sea Bear** (Greenwillow, \$17.99, 48 pages, 9780062791283, ages 4 to 8), a mother polar bear navigates a warming arctic landscape as she hunts and raises her young cubs. Moore's background in marine biology and scientific illustration make this story equally beautiful and informative. She lives in Bowling Green, Ohio, with her family.



NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

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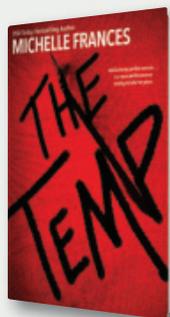


FOR READERS OF *LILAC GIRLS, WE WERE THE LUCKY ONES, AND BEFORE WE WERE YOURS*

David R. Gillham
ANNELIES: A NOVEL

A powerful, deeply humane new novel that asks: What if Anne Frank survived the Holocaust?

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Michelle Frances
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bright, creative, with killer instincts. Trust and fear trade places in a love triangle that defies readers' expectations at every turn.

Kensington | Available in Hardcover and eBook Editions.



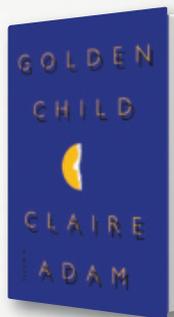
FOR READERS OF *BEL CANTO, ACCORDION CRIMES, AND THE STARS ARE FIRE*

Chris Cander
THE WEIGHT OF A PIANO: A NOVEL

A tour-de-force about two women and the piano that inexorably ties their lives together

through time and across continents, for better and for worse.

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FOR READERS OF *KHALED HOSSEINI AND CRISTINA HENRIQUEZ*

Claire Adam
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Stephanie Barron
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FOR READERS OF *CELESTE NG AND CHLOE BENJAMIN*

Anissa Gray
THE CARE AND FEEDING OF RAVENOUSLY HUNGRY GIRLS

The Mothers meets *American Marriage* in this dazzling debut novel

about mothers and daughters, identity and family, and how the relationships that sustain you can also be the ones that consume you.

Berkley | Available in Hardcover, eBook, and Audio Editions.

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