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# BOOK CLUB

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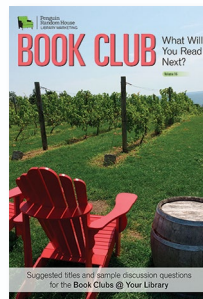
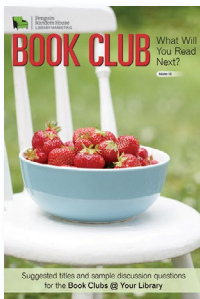
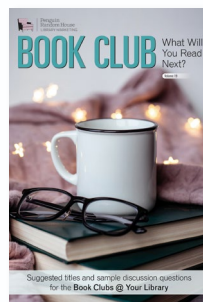
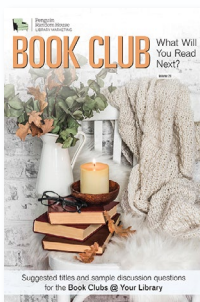
Volume 23



Suggested titles and sample discussion questions  
for the **Book Clubs @ Your Library**

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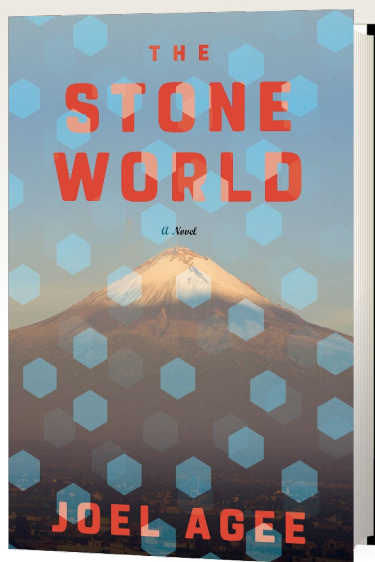
Sign up for our monthly Book Club eNewsletter:  
[TinyUrl.com/BCeNewsletter](https://TinyUrl.com/BCeNewsletter)

Joel Agee  
**The Stone World:**  
A Novel

978-1-61219-954-2 | \$27.99/\$35.99C | Melville House | HC  
📞 978-1-61219-955-9

**READERS' ADVISORY:**

**An unforgettable portrait of a family, for readers of his father, James Agee's, *A Death in the Family*.**



**ABOUT THE BOOK:**

**S**et in the mid-late 1940s, this book tells the story of a six-year-old boy named Peter, who finds himself in a strange new world—a small town in Mexico. His mother, a classical musician, has left his father—also a famous musician—and taken up with a German writer Peter calls his “second father.”

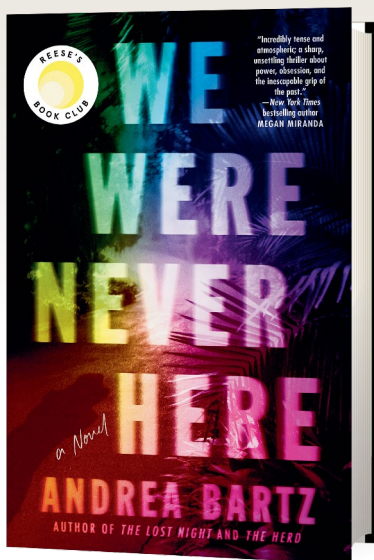
His parents are part of a community that always seems nervous, up to something—he stumbles on meetings where they suddenly hush themselves, there are parties that break up into political arguments. His “second father” yearns for news from Germany, and seems distracted from their project of writing a poem together. There is the sense of tragedy, just off-stage.

But Peter spends his days absorbed with the exotic world around him, falling in love with the place and the people in his life, even as his parents and their friends seem increasingly stressed, and they slowly break the idea to him that things may be about to change soon.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Throughout the novel, we're brought back to the image of Peter resting his head against the grey stone of his back patio. Why is this simple act so important to Peter? How does this help Peter in times of distress?
2. Peter's parents are artists—a musician and poet. Bruno, Peter's stepfather, helps Peter write a poem which becomes a recurring piece of Peter's boyhood. What is the significance of this poem to Peter?
3. Why do you think Peter had a closer relationship with Aron, the poor Mexican boy who lives down the street, versus Chris, the rich American boy who lives in a big house with lots of toys?
4. There is always discussion of parties, but not parties in the way Peter understands them. There are parties and then there are parties. Does the way Peter unpack the two meanings of the word influences your understanding of his world? Why or why not?

For more discussion questions visit: [TinyUrl.com/StoneWorldQuestions](https://www.tinyurl.com/StoneWorldQuestions)



## Andrea Bartz

# We Were Never Here:

### A Novel

978-1-9848-2046-4 | \$27.00/\$36.00C | Ballantine Books | HC  
978-1-9848-2047-1 | AD: 978-0-593-34841-3

#### READERS' ADVISORY:

A new thriller from the bestselling author of *The Lost Night* and *The Herd*—perfect for fans of Lucy Foley's *The Guest List*; Oyinkan Braithwaite's *My Sister, the Serial Killer*; Samantha Downing's *My Lovely Wife*; and Jessica Knoll's *Luckiest Girl Alive*.

A REESE'S BOOK CLUB PICK

#### ABOUT THE BOOK:

Emily is having the time of her life—she's in the mountains of Chile with her best friend, Kristen, on their annual reunion trip, and the women are feeling closer than ever. But on the last night of the trip, Emily enters their hotel suite to find blood and broken glass on the floor. Kristen says the cute backpacker she brought back to their room attacked her, and she had no choice but to kill him in self-defense. Even more shocking: The scene is horrifyingly similar to last year's trip, when another backpacker wound up dead. Emily can't believe it's happened again—can lightning really strike twice?

Back home in Wisconsin, Emily struggles to bury her trauma, diving headfirst into a new relationship and throwing herself into work. But when Kristen shows up for a surprise visit, Emily is forced to confront their violent past. Can Emily outrun the secrets she shares with Kristen, or will they destroy her relationship, her freedom—even her life?

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Emily and Kristen have been best friends since college, ever since Emily's breakup with her high school boyfriend. What did you think of the way this breakup cemented their friendship? Do you think it was the beginning of a pattern that is followed throughout the novel? Do you have a pivotal moment in your life that you saw one way in the moment, but in an entirely new one light years later?
2. Ever since Emily's traumatic experience in Cambodia, she has struggled to move forward in her life, particularly regarding romantic relationships—and, especially after the events in Chile, she discovers that Kristen's help alone is not enough and begins to see a therapist. What does it show about Emily's character when she reaches the decision to finally seek professional help for her recovery? What does Kristen's reaction to this demonstrate about their relationship?

For more discussion questions visit: [TinyUrl.com/WeWereNeverHereBookClubKit](https://TinyUrl.com/WeWereNeverHereBookClubKit)

# Emma Brodie

## Songs in Ursa Major:

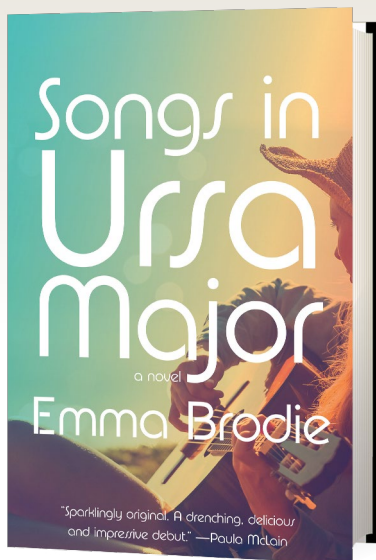
### A Novel

978-0-593-31862-1 | \$26.95/\$35.95C | Knopf | HC  
978-0-593-31863-8 | LP: 978-0-593-41445-3  
AD: 978-0-593-41074-5

#### READERS' ADVISORY:

For fans of Emma Straub, J. Courtney Sullivan,  
Curtis Sittenfeld, and Meg Wolitzer.

**"In the vein of *Daisy Jones & the Six* and *The Final Revival of Opal and Nev*, this is an intoxicating chronicle of the music industry, inspired largely by the love affair between artists Joni Mitchell and James Taylor." —*Elle***



#### ABOUT THE BOOK:

A transporting love story of music, stardom, heartbreak, and a gifted young singer-songwriter who must find her own voice.

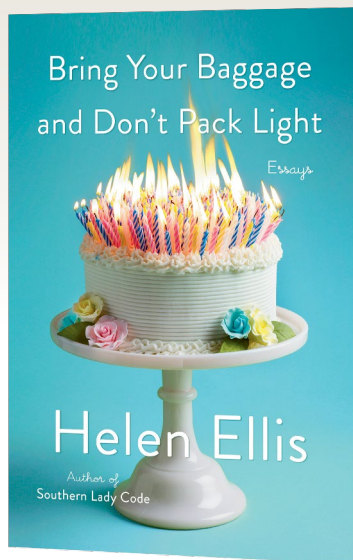
Raised on an island off Massachusetts by a mother who wrote songs for famous musicians, Jane Quinn is singing in her own band. When folk legend Jesse Reid hears about Jane's performance at the island's music festival, a star is born—and so is a passionate love affair. Caught up in the thrill of the road and the profound and lustful connection she has with Jesse, Jane is blind-sided by the discovery she makes about the dark secret beneath his music.

Shot through with the lyrics, the icons, the lore, the adrenaline of the early 70s music scene, *Songs in Ursa Major* pulses with romantic longing and asks the question so many female artists must face: What are we willing to sacrifice for our dreams?

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Explore the family dynamic in the Quinn household. How does the tragedy of her mother's story affect Jane's relationship with Elsie, Grace, and Maggie? Why do you think the Quinn women choose not to marry?
2. Discuss the social fabric of Bayleen Island. How is the world of the locals different from that of the vacationers? In what ways is Jane able to move back and forth between these two spheres?
3. What does Willy see in Jane? How does her talent, in his view, compare to Jesse's? What does his willingness to bet on her suggest about his understanding of the music industry? Is he successful in this gamble? Why or why not?
4. Explore Jane's experience on tour with Jesse, his band, and the Breakers. What does the tour teach her about navigating life as a celebrity? How does the spotlight both deepen and test her relationship with Jesse?

For more discussion questions visit: [TinyUrl.com/SongsInUrsaMajorBookClubKit](https://TinyUrl.com/SongsInUrsaMajorBookClubKit)



## Helen Ellis

# Bring Your Baggage and Don't Pack Light: Essays

978-0-385-54615-7 | \$23.00/\$30.00C | Doubleday | HC

📞 978-0-385-54616-4 | 📺 AD: 978-0-593-40282-5

📖 LP: 978-0-593-41410-1

### READERS' ADVISORY:

For readers of David Sedaris, Sloane Crosley, and Samantha Irby.

**"Ellis, whose uproarious essays call to mind the warm, brassy and amused tone of a latter-day Erma Bombeck, here celebrates middle-aged female friendship." —*The New York Times***

### ABOUT THE BOOK:

**T**he bestselling author of *American Housewife* and *Southern Lady Code* returns with a viciously funny, deeply felt collection of essays on friendship among grown-ass women.

When Helen Ellis and her lifelong friends arrive for a reunion on the Redneck Riviera, they unpack more than their suitcases: stories of husbands and kids; lost parents and lost jobs; powdered onion dip and photographs you have to hold by the edges; dirty jokes and sunscreen with SPF higher than they hair-sprayed their bangs senior year; and a bad mammogram.

Alive with the sensational humor and ferocious love for her friends that won Helen Ellis legions of fans, this book has a raw vulnerability and an emotional generosity that takes this acclaimed author to a whole new level of accomplishment.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. As you met Helen Ellis's childhood friends, what did you observe about the traits that have kept the group together throughout the decades, even though their personalities and experiences are so varied? Did they remind you of anyone in your world who has sustained you with a lifetime of adolescent humor?
2. When Helen and her friends rallied around Vicki during her treatment for breast cancer, what did they demonstrate about the best way to confront fear, including the fear of mortality?
3. Helen regales the reader with an appreciation for "characters." In other parts of the book she shares a more strict view on manners. How do these two philosophies coexist in the book?
4. What would you have said to the receptionist who had never heard of Gloria Steinem in "She's Young"? Describe a time when you had to explain a person, place, or thing to someone from a different generation.

For more discussion questions visit: [TinyUrl.com/BringYourBaggageRGG](https://www.tinyurl.com/BringYourBaggageRGG)

Lauren Groff  
**Matrix:**  
A Novel

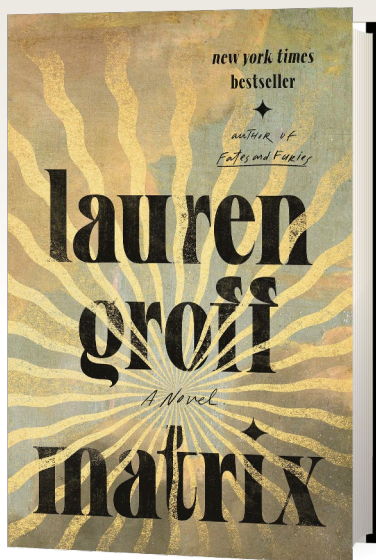
978-1-59463-449-9 | \$28.00/\$37.00C | Riverhead Books | HC

📖 978-0-698-40513-4 | 📖 AD: 978-0-593-45375-9

📍 CD: 978-0-593-45373-5 | 📖 LP: 978-0-593-45965-2

**READERS' ADVISORY:**

Set in 12th Century Europe, Lauren Groff's new novel—her first since *Fates and Furies*—is a defiant and timely exploration of the raw power of female creativity in a corrupted world.



**ABOUT THE BOOK:**

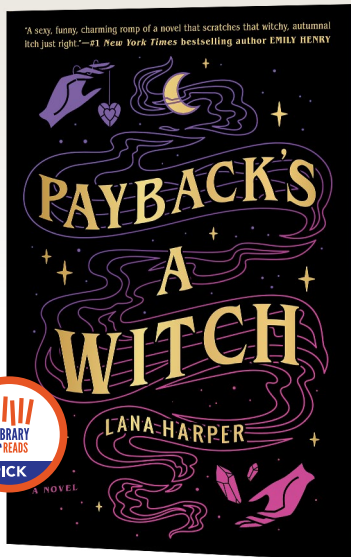
**C**ast out of the royal court by Eleanor of Aquitaine, deemed too coarse and rough-hewn for marriage or courtly life, seventeen-year-old Marie de France is sent to England to be the new prioress of an impoverished abbey, its nuns on the brink of starvation and beset by disease.

At first taken aback by the severity of her new life, Marie finds focus and love in collective life with her singular and mercurial sisters. In this crucible, Marie steadily supplants her desire for family, for her homeland, for the passions of her youth with something new to her: devotion to her sisters, and a conviction in her own divine visions. Marie, born the last in a long line of women warriors and crusaders, is determined to chart a bold new course for the women she now leads and protects. But in a world that is shifting and corroding in frightening ways, one that can never reconcile itself with her existence, will the sheer force of Marie's vision be bulwark enough?

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. *Matrix* takes place in a twelfth-century abbey and explores the life of a powerful and singular figure, Marie of France, set against a rapidly changing world order. What themes in the book resonated with you as you think about the modern-day challenges we face as a society?
2. Marie has a complex, nearly lifelong relationship with Queen Eleanor. When she meets the queen for the first time as a child, what are her impressions? How does her relationship with the queen change over the course of the book?
3. Marie becomes the most powerful figure at the abbey—yet she was ordered there by the queen. She is at once the most powerful and essentially powerless. How does Marie's understanding of power shift during her time at the abbey?
4. Marie tells Nest that there can be no special relationships between nuns. Why does Marie believe that intimacy between individuals would threaten the abbey's goals?

For more discussion questions visit: [PenguinRandomHouse.com](https://www.PenguinRandomHouse.com)



## Lana Harper **Payback's a Witch**

978-0-593-33606-9 | \$16.00/\$22.00C | Berkley Jove | TR

📞 978-0-593-33607-6 | 📻 AD: 978-0-593-45671-2

### **READERS' ADVISORY:**

*Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* meets *The L Word* in this fresh, sizzling rom-com by Lana Harper.

### **ABOUT THE BOOK:**

**E**mma Harlow is a witch but not a very powerful one—in part because she hasn't been home to the magical town of Thistle Grove in years. Her self-imposed exile has a lot to do with a complicated family history and a desire to forge her own way in the world, and only the very tiniest bit to do with Gareth Blackmoor, heir to the most powerful magical family in town and casual breaker of hearts and destroyer of dreams.

But when a spellcasting tournament that her family serves as arbiters for approaches, it turns out the pull of tradition is strong enough to bring Emmy back.

On her first night home, Emmy runs into Talia Avramov—an all-around badass adept in the arts of divination—who is fresh off a bad breakup . . . with Gareth Blackmoor. Talia had let herself be charmed, only to discover that Gareth was also seeing Linden Thorn—unbeknownst to either of them. And now she and Violet want revenge. Only one question stands: Is Emmy in?

But most concerning of all: Why can't she stop thinking about the terrifyingly competent, devastatingly gorgeous, wickedly charming Talia Avramov?

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. At the very beginning of the book, when Emmy returns to Thistle Grove, she dismissively refers to the town's magical beauty as "so damn extra"—and her own magicless life in Chicago as real. Do you believe Emmy's value judgments about either place? Do you think she believes them herself?
2. Do you think Emmy truly comes home only because of the pull of tradition and the impressive parental guilt trip—or is the truth more complicated?
3. What do you think of Emmy's experience with being the Arbiter, and the magic of the mantle? Do you think you would enjoy being immersed in such intoxicating power, or does the idea make you uneasy?

For more discussion questions visit: [TinyUrl.com/PaybacksAWitchBookClubKit](https://TinyUrl.com/PaybacksAWitchBookClubKit)

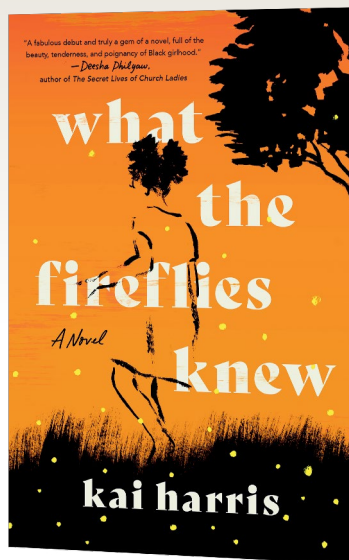


Kai Harris  
**What the  
Fireflies Knew:**  
A Novel

978-0-593-18534-6 | \$26.00/\$35.00C  
Tiny Reparations Books | HC | February 2022  
📞 978-0-593-18535-3 | 📻 AD: 978-0-593-51098-8  
📖 LP: 978-0-593-55658-0

**READERS' ADVISORY:**

For fans of Jacqueline Woodson, Jesmyn Ward,  
Asha Lemmie, Abi Daré, Celeste Ng, and Harper Lee.



**ABOUT THE BOOK:**

**A**fter almost-eleven-year-old Kenyatta Bernice's (KB) father dies of an overdose and the debts incurred from his addiction cause the loss of the family home in Detroit, she and her teenage sister, Nia, are sent by their overwhelmed mother to live with their estranged grandfather.

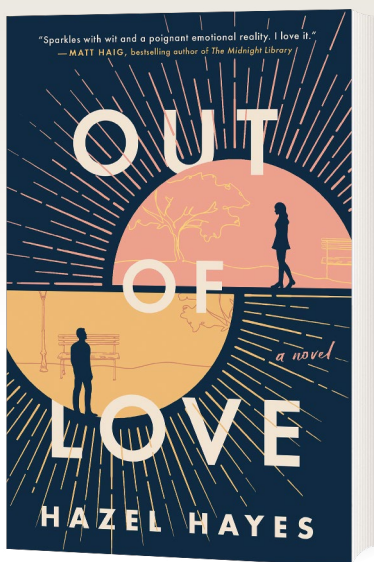
KB attempts to get her bearings in a world that has turned upside down—a father who is labeled a fiend; a mother whose smile no longer reaches her eyes; a sister who has crossed the threshold of adolescence and suddenly wants nothing to do with her; a grandfather who is grumpy and silent; the white kids across the street who are friendly, but only sometimes.

Pinballing between resentment, abandonment, and loneliness, KB is forced to carve out a different identity for herself and find her own voice.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. *What the Fireflies Knew* poignantly reveals the heartbreaking realization that loved ones can be flawed and that the perfect family we all dream of looks different up close. How does KB navigate this reality throughout the book?
2. For any child, moving and uprooting their lives can be traumatic. For KB, this happens after her father's death, and after her mother's disappearance. How can this trauma be seen manifesting in other areas of KB's life?
3. Why does KB find solace and resonance in *Anne of Green Gables*? Is there a book that you feel similarly about in your personal reading journey?
5. When KB's grandpa confronts Bobby and Charlotte's mom, he says, "Our children don't have to make the same mistakes we did. . . Let 'em decide who to be for themselves." What does he mean by this? How is this theme represented elsewhere in the book?
6. As KB muses about her family, she thinks that "what finally brings the three of us together are the fireflies." What significance do fireflies have to the book? What do you think KB's fireflies are, and why?

For more discussion questions visit: [PenguinRandomHouse.com](https://www.PenguinRandomHouse.com)



## Hazel Hayes

# Out of Love:

### A Novel

978-0-593-18452-3 | \$17.00/\$23.00C | Dutton | TR  
📞 978-0-593-18453-0 | 📄 AD: 978-0-593-45810-5

#### **READERS' ADVISORY:**

**This gorgeously written debut is a love story told in reverse, starting with the heart-rending breakup, and weaving back together an already unraveled tapestry, from tragic break-up to magical first kiss. Perfect for fans of Sally Rooney's *Normal People* and David Nicholls's *One Day*.**

#### **ABOUT THE BOOK:**

**O***ut of Love* begins at the end. “Angel” and Theo call it quits after nearly five years, and all the standard breakup questions arise. What did she ever see in him? How could they have spent so long together? When did they fall out of love? Were there good times before the bad? These are the questions to obsess over when a relationship ends, even when obsessing can do no good. But instead of moving forward through the emotional fallout of a breakup, Hazel Hayes takes us back in time, mining their history for days and details to try to understand love, and why it sometimes falls apart.

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. This novel begins at the end; a bittersweet romance told in reverse. What did you think about that during your reading experience?
2. It's unique that the female protagonist is never named—although she is the lead character. Did you notice that? What do you think the reasoning for that might be?
3. Each chapter jumps farther into the past, mining their history for the days and details that might help us understand love—how it happens and why it sometimes falls apart. Does looking back seem to help the protagonist; or lead her further away from finding happiness again? Or, can they be mutually exclusive?
4. What have been some of the best/most cathartic things you have done for yourself after a breakup?
5. As the story goes on and the novel ends, our main character finds hope, something we all are constantly striving for. How do you find hope and your inner strength when tough things come your way?
6. Even though you know from the first page that “Angel” and Theo’s relationship is ultimately doomed, do you think *Out of Love* has a happy ending?

For more discussion questions visit: [TinyUrl.com/OutOfLoveBookClubKit](https://TinyUrl.com/OutOfLoveBookClubKit)

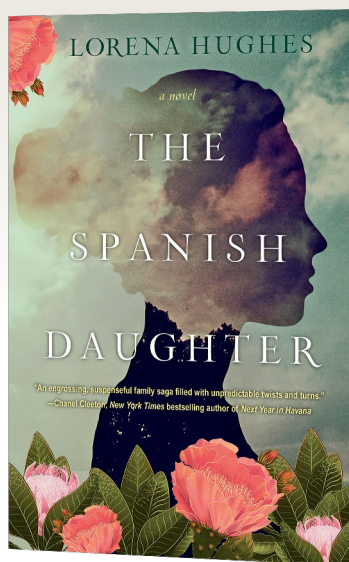
# Lorena Hughes The Spanish Daughter

978-1-4967-3624-6 | \$15.95/ \$21.95C | Kensington | TR

**READERS' ADVISORY:**  
For readers of *The Sisters of Alameda Street* and  
*A Long Petal of the Sea*.

**"An engrossing, suspenseful family saga filled with  
unpredictable twists and turns."**

**—Chanel Cleeton, *New York Times* bestselling  
author of *Next Year in Havana***



## ABOUT THE BOOK:

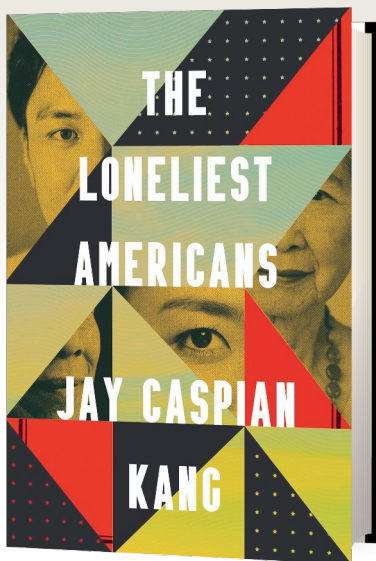
**A**s a child in Spain, Puri always knew her passion for chocolate was inherited from her father. But it's not until his death that she learns of something else she's inherited—a cocoa plantation in Vinces, Ecuador, a town nicknamed "Paris Chiquito." Eager to claim her birthright and filled with hope for a new life after the devastation of WWI, she and her husband Cristóbal set out across the Atlantic Ocean. But it soon becomes clear, someone is angered by Puri's claim to the plantation...

When a mercenary sent to murder her aboard the ship accidentally kills Cristóbal instead, Puri dons her husband's clothes and assumes his identity, hoping to stay safe while she searches for the truth of her father's legacy in Ecuador. Though freed from the rules that women are expected to follow, Puri confronts other challenges at the plantation—newfound siblings, hidden affairs, and her father's dark secrets. Then there are the dangers awakened by her attraction to an enigmatic man as she tries to learn the identity of an enemy who is still at large, threatening the future she is determined to claim.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. It's not until after the death of her father that Puri learns he had three children in Ecuador—her half-brother and sisters. Are there any stories about discovering unknown family members in your own family history? If so, did that discovery change your relationships or your feelings toward certain family members?
2. Do you think Puri was justified in deceiving her family? Why or why not?
3. Have you heard true stories of women in real life who had to disguise themselves as men as a means of self-protection or to gain access to rights not available to women? What about other examples of people "passing" as an identity group other than their own, such as a different race, ethnicity, social class, or status? What are some reasons why a person would want or need to pass as a different race, gender, or other status?

For more discussion questions visit: [TinyUrl.com/TheSpanishDaughterQuestions](https://www.tinyurl.com/TheSpanishDaughterQuestions)



## Jay Caspian Kang **The Loneliest Americans**

978-0-525-57622-8 | \$27.00/\$36.00C | Crown | HC  
📍 978-0-525-57624-2 | 📻 AD: 978-0-593-50634-9

### **READERS' ADVISORY:**

**For readers of literary nonfiction on race and identity in America like *Minor Feelings*, *The Undocumented Americans*, *Yellow*, and *The Making of Asian America*.**

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### **ABOUT THE BOOK:**

**A**riveting blend of family history and original reportage that explores—and reimagines—Asian American identity in a Black and white world.

In 1965, a new immigration law lifted a century of restrictions against Asian immigrants to the United States. Nobody, including the lawmakers who passed the bill, expected it to transform the country's demographics. But over the next four decades, millions arrived, including Jay Caspian Kang's parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles. They came with almost no understanding of their new home, much less the history of "Asian America" that was supposed to define them.

*The Loneliest Americans* is the unforgettable story of Kang and his family as they move from a housing project in Cambridge to an idyllic college town in the South and eventually to the West Coast. Their story unfolds against the backdrop of a rapidly expanding Asian America, as millions more immigrants, many of them working-class or undocumented, stream into the country. At the same time, upwardly mobile urban professionals have struggled to reconcile their parents' assimilationist goals with membership in a multicultural elite—all while trying to carve out a new kind of belonging for their own children, who are neither white nor truly "people of color." Kang recognizes this existential loneliness in himself and in other Asian Americans who try to locate themselves in the country's racial binary.

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### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What was your biggest takeaway from the book? Has it changed your perspective on your own background?
2. This country has a complicated—and sometimes downright horrifying—history with its citizens of Asian descent. What are some incidents or events you were already aware of? What surprised you?
3. Did any scenes from the book challenge your belief or understanding of what it means to be Asian American today? That affirmed your belief or understanding?

For more discussion questions visit: [TinyUrl.com/LoneliestAmericansBookClubKit](https://TinyUrl.com/LoneliestAmericansBookClubKit)

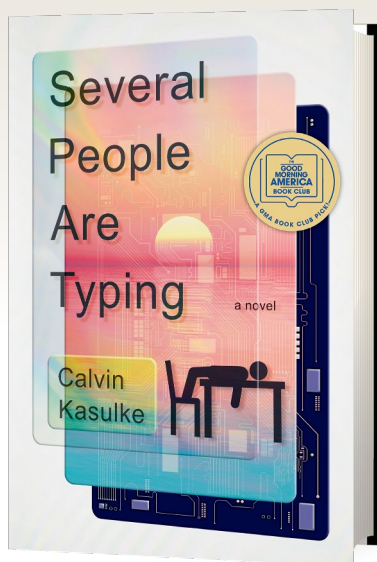
Calvin Kasulke  
**Several People  
Are Typing:**  
A Novel

978-0-385-54722-2 | \$24.00/\$32.00C | Doubleday | HC  
📞 978-0-385-54725-3 | 📍 AD: 978-0-593-45561-6

**READERS' ADVISORY:**

For readers of *Dear Committee Members* by Julie Schumacher and *Severance* by Ling Ma; for fans of office comedies like *IT Crowd* and *The Office*.

**A Good Morning America Book Club Pick**



**ABOUT THE BOOK:**

**T**old entirely through clever and captivating Slack messages, this irresistible, relatable satire of both virtual work and contemporary life is *The Office* for a new world.

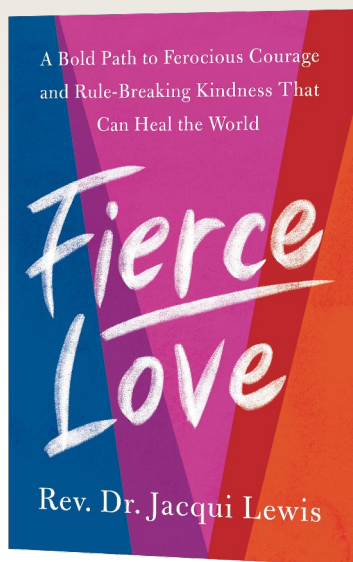
Gerald, a mid-level employee of a New York–based public relations firm has been uploaded into the company’s internal Slack channels—at least his consciousness has. His colleagues assume it’s an elaborate gag to exploit the new work-from-home policy, but now that Gerald’s productivity is through the roof, his bosses are only too happy to let him work from . . . wherever he says he is.

A work-from-home comedy where WFH meets WTF.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Discuss the pros and cons of having a body. Can you relate to the times when Gerald enjoys having a separate consciousness? Have you ever felt disconnected from your own body?
2. The novel is written entirely in Slack messages. How did this unique format affect your reading experience? Have you read other untraditional works (epistolary novels, novels written in text messages or emails, etc.)? If so, how did this experience compare?
3. Throughout the novel, the characters are reminded that none of their Slack messages are actually private. Do you expect your messages and internet use will be monitored at work? How does working remotely impact those expectations/boundaries? How would you feel if someone else read all your DMs?
4. Discuss your own experiences working from home. Do you prefer working remotely or being in the office? Why?
5. Emojis and gifs play a big part in the characters’ conversations. Discuss the meanings of the various emojis and how they shift as the book goes on. What does our preference to speak through images instead of words say about society and our ability to communicate?

For more discussion questions visit: [TinyUrl.com/SeveralPeopleAreTypingRGG](https://TinyUrl.com/SeveralPeopleAreTypingRGG)



Dr. Jacqui Lewis

## Fierce Love:

A Bold Path to Ferocious Courage  
and Rule-Breaking Kindness  
That Can Heal the World

978-0-593-23386-3 | \$27.00/\$36.00C | Harmony | HC

📖 978-0-593-23387-0 | 📖 AD: 978-0-593-45344-5

📖 LP: 978-0-593-50851-0

### READERS' ADVISORY:

For readers of books about personal and global healing, including *Radical Forgiveness*, *Radical Compassion*, *Love is the Way*, and *The Four Agreements*.

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### ABOUT THE BOOK:

**A** healing antidote to our divisive culture, full of evocative storytelling, spiritual wisdom, and nine essential daily practices—by the first female, Black senior minister at the historic Collegiate Churches of New York.

We are living in a world divided. Race and ethnicity, caste and color, gender and sexuality, class and education, religion and political party have all become demographic labels that reduce our differences to simplistic categories in which “we” are vehemently against “them.” But Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis’s own experience—of being the first female and first Black minister in her church’s history, of being in an interracial marriage, and of making peace with childhood abuse—illustrates that our human capacity for empathy and forgiveness is the key to reversing these ugly trends.

With the goal of mending our inextricable human connection, *Fierce Love* is a manifesto for all generations: a bighearted, healing antidote to our rancorous culture.

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### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Do you think it is different to learn self-love in today’s world, as opposed to times past? Why or why not?
2. Can you identify with Jacqui’s story of love, marriage, divorce, and rebuilding herself?
3. Have you ever had to confront “troubling places” with someone you loved? If not, why not? What might “confronting with love” look like for you?
4. What would happen if you laid down your previous belief system and let a new one emerge?
5. Have you ever misjudged someone only to realize they were your people? How do you carry that lesson going forward?

For more discussion questions visit: [TinyUrl.com/FierceLoveBookClubKit](https://TinyUrl.com/FierceLoveBookClubKit)

Josie Lloyd  
**The Bright Side  
Running Club:**

A novel of breast cancer, best friends, and jogging for your life

978-1-64385-949-1 | \$16.99/\$22.99C | Alcove Press | TR | February 2022

📞 978-1-64385-950-7

**READERS' ADVISORY:**

In the vein of Mary Ellen Taylor's *Honeysuckle Season* this "amazing, breathtaking, and inspiring" (Jenny Colgan) novel is full of hope and heart.



**ABOUT THE BOOK:**

When Keira first receives her breast cancer diagnosis, she never expects to end up joining a running group with three women she's only just met. Totally blind-sided, all she can think about is how she doesn't want to tell her family or step back from work. Nor does she want to be part of a group of fellow cancer patients. Cancer is not her club.

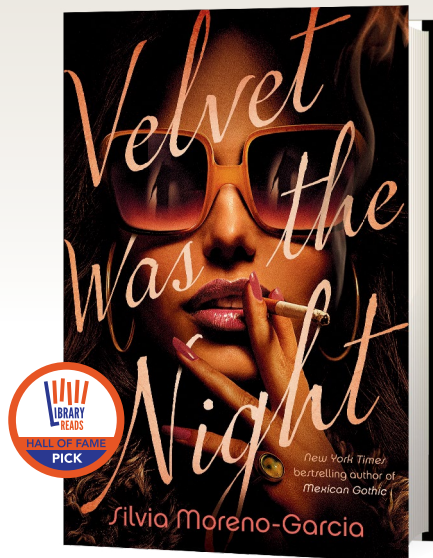
And yet it's running—hot, sweaty, lycra-clad running in the company of brilliant, funny women all going through treatment—that unexpectedly gives Keira the hope she so urgently needs. Because Keira will not be defined by the C-word. And now, with the Cancer Ladies' Running Club cheering her on, she is going to reclaim everything: her family, her identity, and her life.

One step at a time.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. When Keira receives her cancer diagnosis, she doesn't want to tell her family about her diagnosis. Do you think you would feel the same way? Is there an appropriate response to hard news or grief? Why or why not?
2. When Keira joins a running club, she meets a group of women who are all so different yet going through the same struggles. Which character in this book did you relate to and why?
3. Much of the *Bright Side Running Club* is about "finding your tribe." What are some communities or hobbies that have gotten you through tough times?
4. *The Bright Side Running Club* is different from most books featuring cancer because of its hopeful and inspiring ending. What other books have you read about a cancer diagnosis, and how did this compare?

For more discussion questions visit: [TinyUrl.com/BrightSideRunningClub](https://TinyUrl.com/BrightSideRunningClub)



## Silvia Moreno-Garcia

# Velvet Was the Night

978-0-593-35682-1 | \$28.00/\$37.00C | Del Rey | HC

📖 978-0-593-35683-8 | 📻 AD: 978-0-593-45607-1

📱 LP: 978-0-593-50850-3

### READERS' ADVISORY:

From the bestselling author of *Mexican Gothic* comes a riveting noir for readers of Riley Sager's *Final Girls*, Tana French's *The Likeness*, and Ruth Ware's *The Turn of the Key*, and fans of *Perry Mason* and *Fargo*.

### ABOUT THE BOOK:

**I**n the 1970s, Mexico City. Maite is a secretary who lives for one thing: the latest issue of *Secret Romance*. While student protests and political unrest consume the city, Maite escapes into stories of passion and danger.

Her next-door neighbor, Leonora, a beautiful art student, seems to live a life of intrigue and romance that Maite envies. When Leonora disappears under suspicious circumstances, Maite finds herself searching for the missing woman—and journeying deeper into Leonora's secret life of student radicals and dissidents.

Meanwhile, someone else is also looking for Leonora at the behest of his boss, a shadowy figure who commands goon squads dedicated to squashing political activists. But as Elvis searches for the missing woman, he watches Maite from a distance—and comes to regard her as a kindred spirit who shares his love of music and the unspoken loneliness of his heart.

Now as Maite and Elvis come closer to discovering the truth behind Leonora's disappearance, they can no longer escape the danger that threatens to consume their lives.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think Maite likes to steal things?
2. Maite is obsessed with romance magazines and comic books. How does she view fantasy versus reality? What do you think that says about her world?
3. While at first, Leonora's disappearance irks her, Maite eventually becomes intrigued by it. Why do you think that is?
4. Are you a fan of literary noir? In what ways does *Velvet Was the Night* stay true to the genre? Are there ways the genre is taken to new, different levels?
5. In what ways are Maite and Elvis transformed over the course of the book? What do you think their lives might look like going forward?

For more discussion questions visit: [TinyUrl.com/VelvetWasTheNightBookClubKit](https://www.tinyurl.com/VelvetWasTheNightBookClubKit)



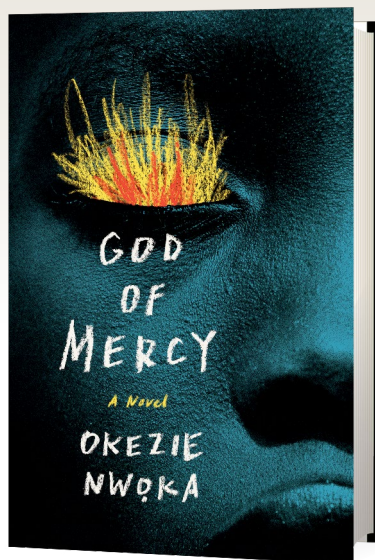
# Okezie Nwoka

## God of Mercy:

### A Novel

978-1-66260-083-8 | \$27.00/\$36.00C | Astra House | HC  
978-1-66260-084-5

**READERS' ADVISORY:**  
*Homegoing* meets *Black Leopard, Red Wolf*.  
Okezie Nwoka's debut novel is a powerful  
reimagining of a history erased.



#### ABOUT THE BOOK:

In the Igbo village of Ichulu, the people's worship of their gods is absolute, and their adherence to tradition has allowed them to evade colonization. But the village is reckoning with changes, including a war between gods signaled by Ijeoma, a girl who can fly.

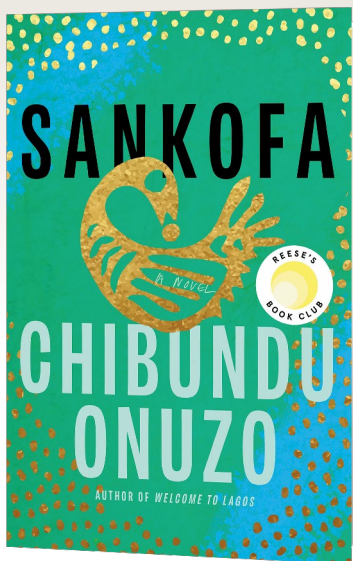
As tensions grow between Ichulu and its neighboring colonized villages, Ijeoma is forced into exile. Reckoning with her powers and suffering through isolation, she comes to understand the truth of merciful love.

A sprawling cast of characters presented in lyrical prose, *God of Mercy* reimagines the nature of tradition and cultural heritage.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When Ijeoma comes to the defense of Jekwu, despite the long-standing tradition that would see Jekwu, with his mouthful of teeth, excommunicated from the village as a baby, she does so in open defiance of her community. How do you explain her decision as the protagonist of the book?
2. Discuss the differences between traditional Igbo spiritual practices and those of Christianity. Is there a tension between these traditions as they appear in the book? How do the characters in the book come into conflict with these traditions? And what, if any, resolution does the novel present in response to this conflict?
3. Ofodile exhibits a hubris throughout the novel, his tragic flaw. How does his insistence upon being respected by the people of Ichulu impact the outcome of the novel?
4. In the novel, Ijeoma is endowed with the ability to fly and there are other elements that might be considered magical, like the presence of gods in the village of Ichulu. How much of what appears to be magic is actually proven to be true? Does this suggest anything about the nature of faith and superstition?

For more discussion questions visit: [TinyUrl.com/GodOfMercyQuestions](https://www.tinyurl.com/GodOfMercyQuestions)



## Chibundu Onuzo

# Sankofa:

### A Novel

978-1-64622-083-0 | \$26.00/\$34.00C | Catapult | HC  
978-1-64622-084-7

#### READERS' ADVISORY:

"[A] beautiful book about a woman brave enough to discover her true identity." —Reese Witherspoon

A REESE'S BOOK CLUB PICK

#### ABOUT THE BOOK:

Anna is at a stage of her life when she's beginning to wonder who she really is. In her 40s, she has separated from her husband, her daughter is all grown up, and her mother—the only parent who raised her—is dead.

Searching through her mother's belongings one day, Anna finds clues about the African father she never knew. His student diaries chronicle his involvement in radical politics in 1970s London. Anna discovers that he eventually became the president—some would say dictator—of a small nation in West Africa. And he is still alive . . .

When Anna decides to track her father down, a journey begins that is disarmingly moving, funny, and fascinating. Like the metaphorical bird that gives the novel its name, *Sankofa* expresses the importance of reaching back to knowledge gained in the past and bringing it into the present to address universal questions of race and belonging, the overseas experience for the African diaspora, and the search for a family's hidden roots.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How does being mixed race impact Anna's experience growing up in the UK? Do you think Bronwyn and Caryl treat Anna differently because of it?
2. What do you think of the diary format in the early chapters? Do you keep diaries? Have you ever read someone else's? Compared to a standard narrative, what does it reveal about the diary's writer and what does it conceal?
3. In Chapter 8, Anna recalls an incident when she smacked Rose in public and a woman asks, "Does her mother know you hit her?" Anna responds, "Yes, she does." Why do you think the woman asks this? Why do you think Anna responds the way she does?
4. Why does Anna meet with a divorce lawyer and what does she learn from the meeting?

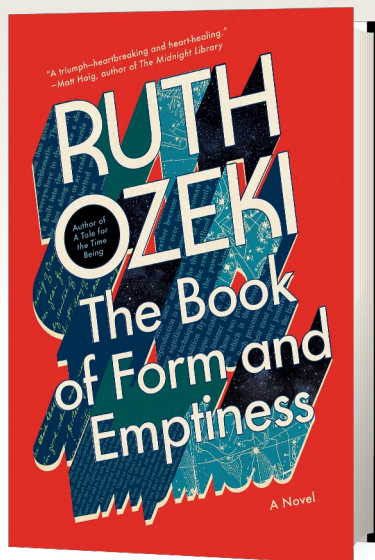
For more discussion questions visit: [TinyUrl.com/SankofaQuestions](https://TinyUrl.com/SankofaQuestions)

Ruth Ozeki  
**The Book of Form  
and Emptiness:**  
A Novel

978-0-399-56364-5 | \$30.00 | Viking Adult | HC  
978-0-399-56365-2 | AD: 978-0-593-41792-8  
CD: 978-0-593-45373-5 | LP: 978-0-593-45965-2

**READERS' ADVISORY:**

A brilliantly inventive new novel from the Booker Prize-finalist Ruth Ozeki, author of *My Year of Meats* and *A Tale for the Time Being*. For readers of sweeping, imaginative novels by Haruki Murakami, Mohsin Hamid, and Helen Oyeyemi.



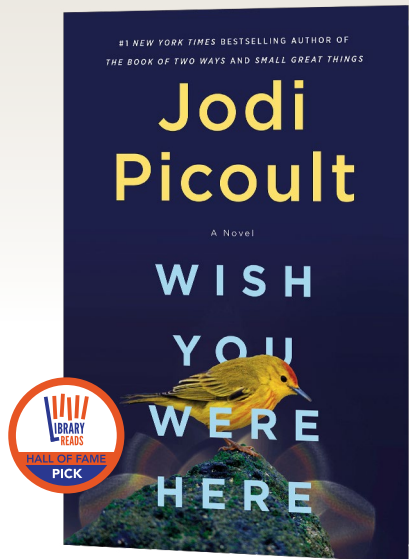
**ABOUT THE BOOK:**

One year after the death of his beloved musician father, thirteen-year-old Benny Oh begins to hear voices. The voices belong to the things in his house—a sneaker, a broken Christmas ornament, a piece of wilted lettuce. Although Benny doesn't understand what these things are saying, he can sense their emotional tone; some are pleasant, a gentle hum or coo, but others are snide, angry and full of pain. When his mother, Annabelle, develops a hoarding problem, the voices grow more clamorous. At first, Benny tries to ignore them, but soon the voices follow him outside the house, onto the street and at school, driving him at last to seek refuge in the silence of a large public library, where objects are well-behaved and know to speak in whispers. There, Benny discovers a strange new world. He falls in love with a mesmerizing street artist with a smug pet ferret, who uses the library as her performance space. He meets a homeless philosopher-poet, who encourages him to ask important questions and find his own voice amongst the many.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. *The Book of Form and Emptiness* is, in many ways, the coming-of-age story of a boy grappling with his own mind. Do you think the Book is creating Benny, or is Benny creating the Book?
2. Has reading about Benny's voice-hearing experiences changed the way you view the mind? The imagination? Madness? Creativity?
3. The Library is a very important place for Benny and for the wider community, a place where people go to both find and lose themselves, and where objects both behave themselves and come to life. What are the components that make an ideal library?
4. In the prologue to *Tidy Magic*, Aikon writes, "before you know it, your belongings have gotten the upper hand again, and your possessions have you in their thrall . . . I used to have this same relationship with my things. I didn't possess them, they possessed me." What kind of relationship do you have with your possessions?

For more discussion questions visit: [PenguinRandomHouse.com](https://www.PenguinRandomHouse.com)



## Jodi Picoult

# Wish You Were Here:

### A Novel

978-1-9848-1841-6 | \$28.99 | Ballantine Books | HC  
978-0-735-27696-3 | \$36.00C | Random House Canada | HC  
📞 978-1-9848-1842-3 | 📻 AD: 978-0-593-50865-7  
📻 CD: 978-0-593-50863-3

#### **READERS' ADVISORY:**

For readers of popular and thought-provoking authors such as Celeste Ng, Liane Moriarty, and Kristin Hannah.

#### **ABOUT THE BOOK:**

**D**iana O'Toole is perfectly on track. She will be married by thirty, done having kids by thirty-five, and move out to the New York City suburbs, all while climbing the professional ladder in the cutthroat art auction world. She's an associate specialist at Sotheby's now, but her boss has hinted at a promotion if she can close a deal with a high-profile client. She's not engaged just yet, but she knows her boyfriend, Finn, a surgical resident, is about to propose on their romantic getaway to the Galápagos—days before her thirtieth birthday. Right on time.

But then a virus that felt worlds away has appeared in the city, and on the eve of their departure, Finn breaks the news: It's all hands on deck at the hospital. He has to stay behind. *You should still go*, he assures her, since it would be a shame for all of their nonrefundable trip to go to waste. And so, reluctantly, she goes. But soon, the whole island is under quarantine, and she is stranded until the borders reopen. Diana then finds herself examining her relationships, her choices, and herself—and wondering if when she goes home, she too will have evolved into someone completely different.

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What was it like to revisit March 2020 right at the moment the world changed as we entered the pandemic? Did the author capture what it felt like when everything started? Was it strange to think back to that time? What emotions and thoughts came up as you started to read?
2. Diana was trapped in the Galápagos, unable to return to New York City due to travel restrictions. But she managed to make friends and explore the island every day. Do you think she would have been more or less isolated if she had stayed in the city?
3. Think about how Diana and Gabriel's relationship evolves over the course of the book. How does their understanding of one another compare to the way Diana and Finn relate?

For more discussion questions visit: [TinyUrl.com/WishYouWereHereBookClubKit](https://www.tinyurl.com/WishYouWereHereBookClubKit)

# Nita Prose

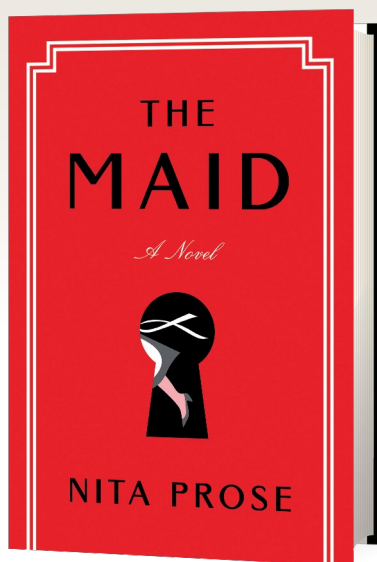
## The Maid:

### A Novel

978-0-593-35615-9 | \$27.00 | Ballantine Books | HC | January 2022  
978-0-735-24133-6 | \$24.95 | Viking Canada | TR  
📍 978-0-593-35616-6 | 🗺️ AD: 9780-593-45269-1  
📖 LP: 978-0-593-51084-1

#### READERS' ADVISORY:

For fans of quirky heroines like Eleanor in *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine*, and for readers of novels like *The Thursday Murder Club*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, and *Magpie Murders*.



#### ABOUT THE BOOK:

Molly Gray is not like everyone else. She struggles with social skills and misreads the intentions of others. Her gran used to interpret the world for her, codifying it into simple rules that Molly could live by. Since Gran died a few months ago, twenty-five-year-old Molly has been navigating life's complexities all by herself. No matter—she throws herself with gusto into her work as a hotel maid. She delights in donning her crisp uniform each morning, stocking her cart with miniature soaps and bottles, and returning guest rooms at the Regency Grand Hotel to a state of perfection.

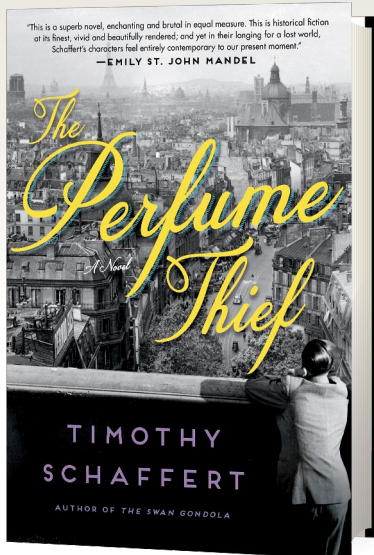
But Molly's orderly life is upended the day she enters the suite of the infamous and wealthy Charles Black, only to find it in a state of disarray and Mr. Black himself dead in his bed. Before she knows what's happening, Molly's unusual demeanor has the police targeting her as their lead suspect.

A *Clue*-like, locked-room mystery and a heartwarming journey of the spirit, *The Maid* explores what it means to be the same as everyone else and yet entirely different—and reveals that all mysteries can be solved through connection to the human heart.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Gran has a number of iconic sayings that Molly relies on to get her through both very happy and very difficult situations. What were some of your favorites?
2. Gran and Molly believe in the three E's—Etiquette, Elocution and Erudition. Is there a moment in the novel where Molly's application of these three values stood out to you? If you had to pick just one of these, which would you say is the most important?
3. What were some of your takeaways from the book? What message do you think the author was trying to convey?

For more discussion questions visit: [PenguinRandomHouse.com](https://www.PenguinRandomHouse.com)



## Timothy Schaffert

# The Perfume Thief:

## A Novel

978-0-385-54574-7 | \$27.00/\$36.00C | Doubleday | HC

📞 978-0-385-54575-4 | 📻 AD: 978-0-593-40816-2

### READERS' ADVISORY:

For readers of *The Alice Network* by Kate Quinn, *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* by Taylor Jenkins Reid, and *A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles.

### ABOUT THE BOOK:

**A** *Gentleman in Moscow* meets “Moulin Rouge” in this stylish, sexy page-turner set in Paris on the eve of World War II, where Clementine, a queer American ex-pat and notorious thief, is drawn out of retirement and into one last scam when the Nazis invade.

Complete with romance, espionage, champagne towers, and haute couture, this full-tilt sensory experience is a dazzling portrait of the underground resistance of twentieth-century Paris and a passionate love letter to the power of beauty and community in the face of insidious hate.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of our favorite scent memories? What are those scents that make you the most nostalgic, or those that have been lost to time, or those that carry you away to another place or to a particular moment in the past?
2. While we might not often see women in their 70s leading the action in crime novels and movie thrillers, many aspects of Clementine’s age and experience give her the upper hand throughout the novel. What are the aspects that Clem works to her advantage?
3. Describe Clem’s insights into what makes her such a good thief, and what are her perspectives on her life of crime? Let’s say you have all the best skills and no scruples: What one thing would you most like to steal?
4. The novel is set among singers and actors in wartime. How do art and literature, fashion and perfume, and music and entertainment have the power to influence politics, social conflicts, and the balance of power?
5. Black performers from America—Josephine Baker, Ada “Brickhouse” Smith, Alberta Hunter, among many others—flocked to Paris in the 1920s, where there were more opportunities for success for singers like Day. How did treatment of these Black Americans differ in Paris? How was Day’s situation under Nazi Occupation different from that of Blue and Clem’s?

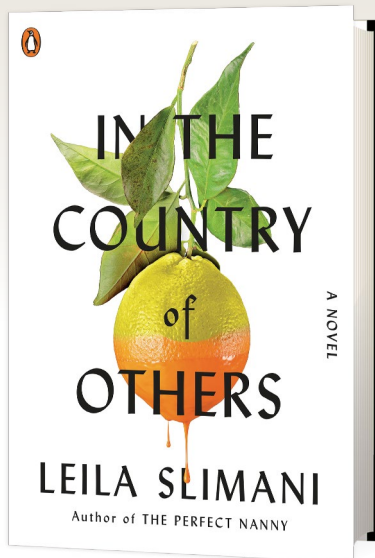
For more discussion questions visit: [TinyUrl.com/PerfumeThiefBookClubKit](https://www.tinyurl.com/PerfumeThiefBookClubKit)

Leila Slimani  
**In the Country  
of Others: A Novel**

978-0-14-313597-5 | \$26.00 | Penguin Books | HC  
978-0-525-50759-8 | AD: 978-0-593-41088-2

**READERS' ADVISORY:**

**The award-winning, #1 internationally bestselling new novel by the author of *The Perfect Nanny*, about a woman in an interracial marriage whose fierce desire for autonomy parallels her adopted country's fight for independence—for readers of *The Death of Vivek Oji*.**



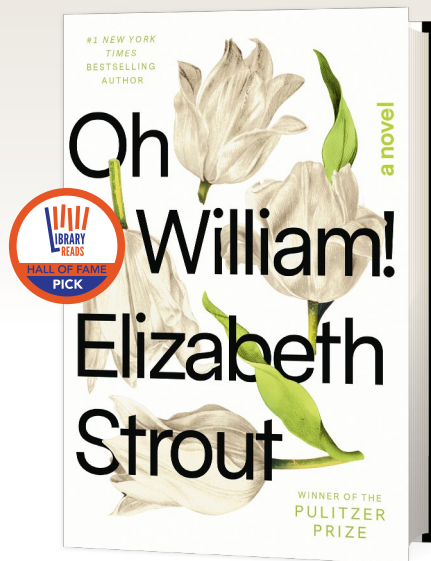
**ABOUT THE BOOK:**

**M**athilde, a spirited young Frenchwoman, falls in love with Amine, a handsome Moroccan soldier in the French army during World War II. After the war, the couple settles in Morocco. While Amine tries to cultivate his family farm's rocky terrain, Mathilde feels her vitality sapped by the isolation, the harsh climate, the lack of money, and the mistrust she inspires as a foreigner. Left increasingly alone to raise her two children in a world whose rules she does not understand, and with her daughter taunted at school by rich French girls for her secondhand clothes and unruly hair, Mathilde goes from being reduced to a farmer's wife to defying the country's chauvinism and repressive social codes by offering medical services to the rural population. As tensions mount between the Moroccans and the French colonists, Amine finds himself caught in the crossfire: in solidarity with his Moroccan workers yet also a landowner, despised by the French yet married to a Frenchwoman, and proud of his wife's resolve but ashamed by her refusal to be subjugated. All of them live in the country of others—especially the women, forced to live in the land of men—and with this novel, Leila Slimani issues the first salvo in their emancipation.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. When Mathilde and Amine move to Morocco, both their personalities seem to change: Amine becomes dour and brooding, and Mathilde fearful and frustrated. Might they have evolved differently if they had stayed in France? How might their marriage have been different?
2. In Morocco, Mathilde is often incensed by what she sees as the lack of women's rights, and is outspoken about her feelings, to the distress of Amine and Mouilala. During their first Ramadan together, for example, Mathilde protests the fact that Mouilala waits for the men to break the fast before breaking her own; Mathilde calls it "slavery." Do you think she is right to protest on Mouilala's behalf? Have you ever traveled to a place where your own morals and beliefs did not line up with those of the place you were visiting? How did you handle it?

For more discussion questions visit: [PenguinRandomHouse.com](https://www.PenguinRandomHouse.com)



## Elizabeth Strout **Oh William!:**

### A Novel

978-0-8129-8943-4 | \$27.00/\$36.00C | Random House | HC

📞 978-0-8129-8945-8 | 📻 AD: 978-0-593-41613-6

📀 CD: 978-0-593-41611-2

#### **READERS' ADVISORY:**

**For the many fans of Elizabeth Strout's *My Name Is Lucy Barton* and *Anything Is Possible*, and for readers of intimate, thoughtful writers like Ann Patchett and Lily King.**

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#### ABOUT THE BOOK:

**L**ucy Barton is a writer, but her ex-husband, William, remains a hard man to read. *William*, she confesses, *has always been a mystery to me*. Another mystery is why the two have remained connected after all these years. They just are.

So Lucy is both surprised and not surprised when William asks her to join him on a trip to investigate a recently uncovered family secret—one of those secrets that rearrange everything we think we know about the people closest to us. What happens next is nothing less than another example of what Hilary Mantel has called Elizabeth Strout's "perfect attunement to the human condition." There are fears and insecurities, simple joys and acts of tenderness, and revelations about affairs and other spouses, parents and their children. On every page of this exquisite novel we learn more about the quiet forces that hold us together—even after we've grown apart.

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#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why have Lucy and William stayed in each other's lives? Did you find yourself wishing they would get back together? How, if at all, did that feeling change over the course of the book?
2. Compare and contrast Lucy's marriages to William and to David. How does she characterize each relationship? How does each man complement her in a different way?
3. Discuss Lucy's relationship with her mother-in-law, Catherine. What does the story about Catherine getting rid of the coat Lucy loved say about their relationship? Did your opinion of Catherine change as you learned more about her past? If so, how? If not, why not?
4. "I have never really understood the whole class business in America, because I came from the very bottom of it, and when that happens it never really leaves you," Lucy says. How do the themes of class and money appear throughout the book?

For more discussion questions visit: [TinyUrl.com/OhWilliamBookClubKit](https://www.tinyurl.com/OhWilliamBookClubKit)



# Lillie Vale

## The Shaadi Set-Up

978-0-593-32871-2 | \$16.00/\$22.00C | Putnam | TR

📞 978-0-593-33114-9 | 📍 AD: 978-0-593-45159-5

### READERS' ADVISORY:

For readers of Jasmine Guillory, Emily Henry, Sally Thorne, Helen Hoang, Sonya Lalli, Sara Desai, Sarah Hogle, and Alisha Rai.



### ABOUT THE BOOK:

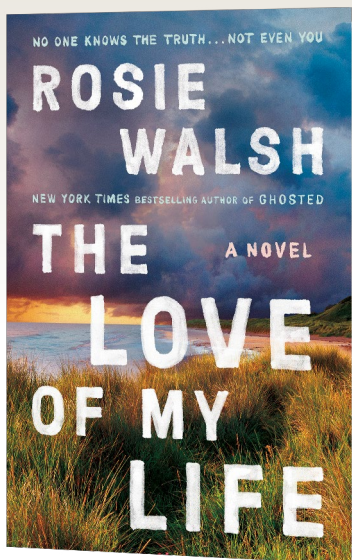
High school sweethearts Rita and Milan were the golden couple, until the day he broke her heart. Now, Rita has turned her passion for furniture restoration into a career and has an almost-perfect boyfriend, Neil. The last thing she needs is for Milan to re-enter her life, but that's exactly what happens when her mother sets them up. Only this time, he actually needs her business expertise, not her heart, to flip a hard-to-sell house for his realty agency.

Rita begrudgingly agrees to help—and to prove she's definitely over him, she signs herself and Neil up on MyShaadi.com, a Desi matchmaking site famous for its success stories. Instead, she's shocked when MyShaadi's perfect match for her isn't Neil . . . it's Milan. And as the two of them dive deeper into work—and their pasts—Rita begins to wonder if maybe her match wasn't so wrong after all.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. *The Shaadi Set-Up* is a second-chance romance. Have you ever reconnected with someone from your past? How did you reconcile the person they once were with who they are now? What about changes in yourself?
2. How does familial expectation influence the main characters' perspective on relationships and careers? Discuss the different ways in which Rita, Milan, and Neil internalize their families' viewpoints.
3. What did you think of Rita's plan to set Neil and herself up on MyShaadi.com? Did you think it would be successful? Why or why not?
4. When Rita and Milan reunite, Rita still holds a grudge against him for how Milan broke up with her. How does her opinion of him change throughout the novel? Why do you think she begins to see him in a different light?
5. Why do you think both Rita and Milan are so drawn to Bluebill Cottage? What does that place mean to each of them?

For more discussion questions visit: [TinyUrl.com/ShaaadiSetUpBookClubKit](https://TinyUrl.com/ShaaadiSetUpBookClubKit)



## Rosie Walsh

# The Love of My Life:

### A Novel

978-0-593-29699-8 | \$28.00 | Pamela Dorman Books | HC | March 2022

📖 978-0-593-29700-1 | 📻 AD: 978-0-593-55440-1

📖 LP: 978-0-593-55640-5

#### **READERS' ADVISORY:**

For fans of Jojo Moyes, Liane Moriarty, Rebecca Searle, Josie Silver, Ann Napolitano's *Dear Edward*, and Miranda Cowley Heller's *The Paper Palace*.

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#### **ABOUT THE BOOK:**

**E**mma loves her husband Leo and their young daughter Ruby: she'd do anything for them. But almost everything she's told them about herself is a lie. And she might just have got away with it, if it weren't for her husband's job. Leo is an obituary writer; Emma a well-known marine biologist. When she suffers a serious illness, Leo copes by doing what he knows best—researching and writing about his wife's life. But as he starts to unravel the truth, he discovers the woman he loves doesn't really exist. Even her name isn't real. When the very darkest moments of Emma's past finally emerge, she must somehow prove to Leo that she really is the woman he always thought she was . . . But first, she must tell him about the other love of her life.

---

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. This novel features betrayal, deceptions, and outright lies. Whose actions—or inactions—do you think were the most harmful, and why?
2. Emma's postpartum psychosis places her in an extremely vulnerable position, which allows Janice to make a decision that changes the course of several lives. What do you think pushed Janice to make such a choice?
3. Leo decides he wants to be with Emma even once he learns the full truth, despite her deceptions. Would you have made the same choice?
4. The moment at which Emma finally meets her adult son is one of the most charged of her life. How do you think mother and son handle this moment? Do you feel hopeful for their emerging relationship at the end of the novel?
5. The title of the book—*The Love of My Life*—implies that Emma has only one true love, but her circumstances throughout the novel indicate something very different. Who do you think is the “real” love of her life, or is there more than one?

For more discussion questions visit: [PenguinRandomHouse.com](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com)

Qian Julie Wang  
**Beautiful Country:**  
A Memoir

978-0-385-54721-5 | \$28.95/\$38.95C | Doubleday | HC

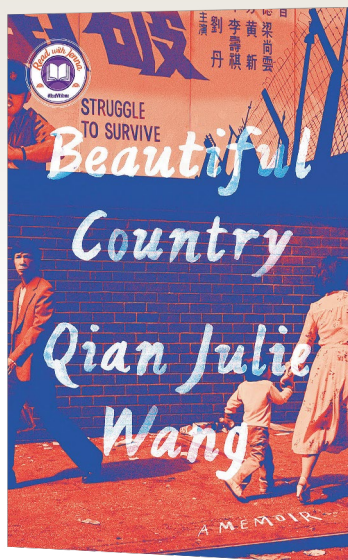
📖 978-0-385-54724-6 | 📱 AD: 978-0-593-45553-1

📖 LP: 978-0-593-46001-6

**READERS' ADVISORY:**

For readers of *Educated* by Tara Westover,  
*The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls, and *The Book of Unknown Americans* by Cristina Henríquez.

A Today Show #ReadWithJenna Book Club Pick



**ABOUT THE BOOK:**

An incandescent memoir, *Beautiful Country* puts readers in the shoes of an undocumented child living in poverty in the richest country in the world.

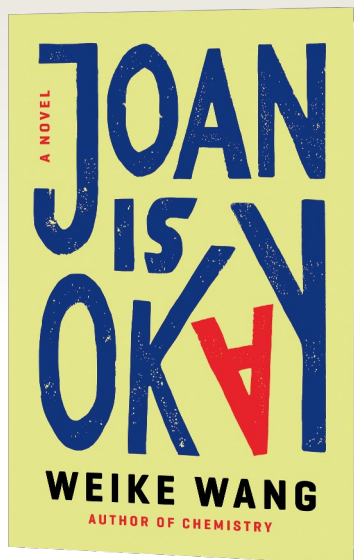
In Chinese, the word for America, Mei Guo, translates directly to “beautiful country.” Yet when seven-year-old Qian arrives in New York City in 1994 full of curiosity, she is overwhelmed by crushing fear and scarcity. In China, Qian’s parents were professors; in America, her family is “illegal” and it will require all the determination and small joys they can muster to survive.

Inhabiting her childhood perspective with exquisite lyric clarity and unforgettable charm and strength, Qian Julie Wang has penned an essential American story about a family fracturing under the weight of invisibility, and a girl coming of age in the shadows, who never stops seeking the light.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Qian had expectations about the US before she arrived. What were they and what surprised her the most? How does that line up with your understanding of the US and your day-to-day view of it?
2. How does Qian’s understanding of her race change when she comes to the US? How does her understanding of other races change?
3. How is Qian treated at school by her teachers? Why is she treated differently, even within her Chinatown school where most students are Chinese immigrants, and how does it affect her view of herself and her opportunities?
4. We are shown a community of immigrants through Qian’s eyes—other people working at the sweatshops, family friends—how do their lives differ from the Wang family’s and how are those differences discussed?
5. Books make a huge impact on Qian. Did you read any of these same books when you were younger, or read them with your kids? How did they affect you?

For more discussion questions visit: [TinyUrl.com/BeautifulCountryRGG](https://www.tinyurl.com/BeautifulCountryRGG)



## Weike Wang

# Joan Is Okay:

### A Novel

978-0-525-65483-4 | \$27.00/\$36.00C  
Random House | HC | January 2022  
📞 978-0-525-65484-1 | 📍 AD: 978-0-593-41229-9

#### **READERS' ADVISORY:**

The award-winning author of *Chemistry* returns with a novel for readers of Jenny Offill's *Dept. of Speculation*, Sally Rooney's *Normal People*, and Susan Choi's *Trust Exercise*, and for fans of Cathy Park Hong, Jenny Zhang, Ocean Vuong, and Celeste Ng.

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#### ABOUT THE BOOK:

**J**oan is a thirtysomething ICU doctor at a busy New York City hospital. The daughter of Chinese parents who came to the United States to secure the American dream for their children, Joan is intensely devoted to her work, happily solitary, successful. She does look up sometimes and wonder where her true roots lie: at the hospital, where her white coat makes her feel needed, or with her family, who try to shape her life by their own cultural and social expectations.

But when Joan's father suddenly dies, a series of events sends Joan spiraling out of her comfort zone just as her hospital, her city, and the world are forced to reckon with a health crisis more devastating than anyone could have imagined.

Deceptively spare yet quietly powerful, laced with sharp humor, *Joan Is Okay* touches on matters that feel deeply resonant: being Chinese-American right now; working in medicine at a high-stakes time; finding one's voice within a dominant culture; being a woman in a male-dominated workplace; and staying independent within a tight-knit family.

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#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Joan is a successful ICU doctor, a first-generation Chinese American, a daughter and sister, a workaholic, and a happily single woman in her thirties. How are these different parts of her identity in harmony with each other? How are they dissonant?
2. *Joan Is Okay* takes place in 2019, in the months leading up to the Covid-19 pandemic. How does this timing influence the events of this novel? How would the book be different if set well before, during, or after Covid-19?
3. Joan thinks a lot about being Chinese-American outside of China. Discuss how Joan grapples with her Chinese heritage and identity. What is important for readers to see within her internalized struggle?

For more discussion questions visit: [PenguinRandomHouse.com](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com)

# Colson Whitehead Harlem Shuffle:

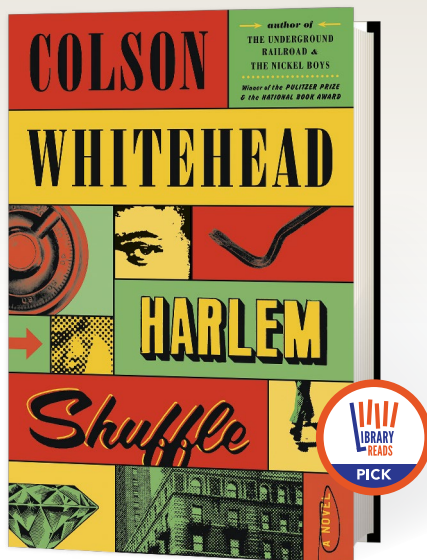
## A Novel

978-0-385-54513-6 | \$28.95 | Doubleday | HC  
978-0-385-69399-8 | \$36.00C | Bond Street Books | HC  
📖 978-0-385-54514-3 | 📻 AD: 978-0-593-45556-2  
📻 CD: 978-0-593-45554-8 | 📻 LP: 978-0-593-46018-4

### READERS' ADVISORY:

For readers of the heist novels of Elmore Leonard and Richard Stark.

From the two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Underground Railroad* and *The Nickel Boys*, a gloriously entertaining novel of heists, shakedowns, and rip-offs.



### ABOUT THE BOOK:

**H**arlem Shuffle's ingenious story plays out in a beautifully recreated New York City of the early 1960s. It's a family saga masquerading as a crime novel, a hilarious morality play, a social novel about race and power, and ultimately a love letter to Harlem.

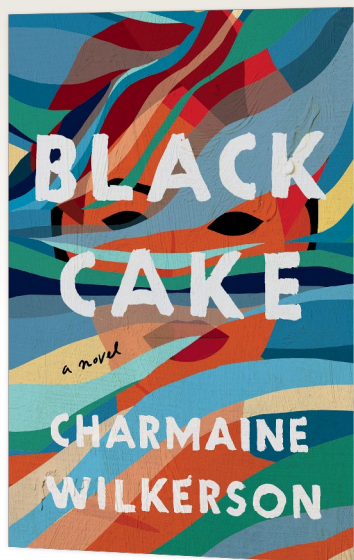
"Ray Carney was only slightly bent when it came to being crooked..." To his customers and neighbors on 125th street, Carney is an upstanding salesman of reasonably priced furniture, making a decent life for himself and his family. He and his wife Elizabeth are expecting their second child, and if her parents on Striver's Row don't approve of him or their cramped apartment across from the subway tracks, it's still home.

Few people know he descends from a line of uptown hoods and crooks, and that his façade of normalcy has more than a few cracks in it. Cracks that are getting bigger all the time.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Carney is described as being "only slightly bent when it came to being crooked, in practice and ambition"—suggesting a more nuanced understanding of seemingly criminal activity. How does his placement on the crooked spectrum change throughout the course of the novel? How does his crookedness compare to others he does business with?
2. Describe Carney's family and role as a husband and a father. How do his personal and professional lives bleed into each other? How do memories of his own father shape his relationship with his wife and children?
3. What are the roles of women in the novel? Consider especially how Elizabeth and Marie are depicted, and Carney's sympathy for Marie in having the "burden of carrying an apartment on your back; you stagger sometimes but you take the weight, what else can you do?"

For more discussion questions visit: [TinyUrl.com/HarlemShuffleRGG](https://TinyUrl.com/HarlemShuffleRGG)



## Charmaine Wilkerson

# Black Cake:

### A Novel

978-0-593-35833-7 | \$28.00/\$37.00C  
Ballantine Books | HC | February 2022  
📞 978-0-593-35834-4 | 📺 AD: 978-0-593-50522-9  
📖 LP: 978-0-593-55913-0

#### READERS' ADVISORY:

For readers of Brit Bennett's *The Vanishing Half*, Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*, Abi Daré's *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, Emma Cline's *The Girls*, and for fans of Edwidge Danticat and Jamaica Kincaid.

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#### ABOUT THE BOOK:

In present-day California, Eleanor Bennett's death leaves behind a puzzling inheritance for her two children, Byron and Benny: a traditional Caribbean black cake, made from a family recipe with a long history, and a voice recording. In her message, Eleanor shares a tumultuous story about a headstrong young swimmer who escapes her island home under suspicion of murder. The heartbreaking tale Eleanor unfolds, the secrets she still holds back, and the mystery of a long-lost child, challenge everything the siblings thought they knew about their lineage, and themselves.

Can Byron and Benny reclaim their once-close relationship, piece together Eleanor's true history, and fulfill her final request to "share the black cake when the time is right"? Will their mother's revelations bring them back together or leave them feeling more lost than ever?

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#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In *Black Cake*, Eleanor Bennett leaves her children behind a voice recording, disclosing the story of her life. What was the most surprising part of her past for you? The saddest? The most interesting?
2. Secrets are a huge part of *Black Cake*. Why do you think Eleanor kept her story from her children for so long and only shared it posthumously? What do you think is more complicated: the secrets you keep or the secrets you share?
3. Eleanor wanted Mr. Mitch, Benny, and Byron to listen to the voice message she left behind, all together. Why do you think she specifically made this request? What would have been different if Benny and Byron had listened to everything separately?
4. What was your favorite part of the story? Your favorite location? Your favorite time period? Who was your favorite character?
5. Black cake was a Bennett family recipe, made for weddings, anniversaries, Christmas, and other special occasions. Do you have a traditional family recipe? What does it mean to you?

For more discussion questions visit: [PenguinRandomHouse.com](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com)

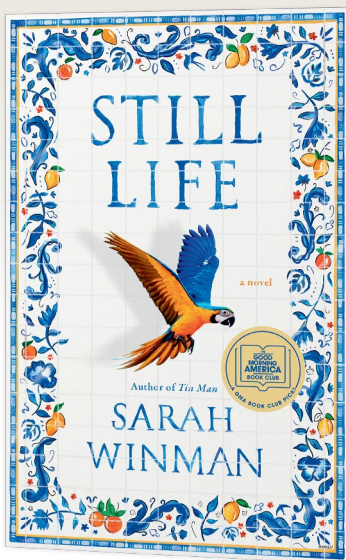
# Sarah Winman Still Life

978-0-593-33075-3 | \$27.00 | Putnam | HC  
978-0-593-33077-7 | AD: 978-0-593-45334-6  
LP: 978-0-593-45967-6

## READERS' ADVISORY:

**A captivating, bighearted, richly tapestried story of people brought together by love, war, art, flood, and the ghost of E. M. Forster, by the celebrated author of *Tin Man*. For readers of John Boyne, Amor Towles, Anthony Doerr, Matt Haig, Colm Tóibín, Julian Barnes, Julie Orringer.**

***A Good Morning America Book Club Pick***



## ABOUT THE BOOK:

Tuscany, 1944: As Allied troops advance and bombs fall around deserted villages, a young English soldier, Ulysses Temper, finds himself in the wine cellar of a deserted villa. There, he has a chance encounter with Evelyn Skinner, a middle-aged art historian who has come to Italy to salvage paintings from the ruins and recall long-forgotten memories of her own youth. In each other, Ulysses and Evelyn find a kindred spirit amidst the rubble of war-torn Italy, and set off on a course of events that will shape Ulysses's life for the next four decades.

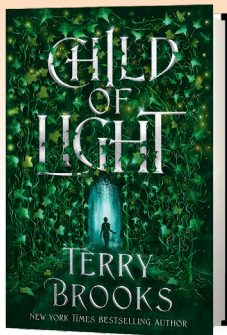
As Ulysses returns home to London, he carries his time in Italy with him. And when an unexpected inheritance brings him back to where it all began, Ulysses knows better than to tempt fate, and returns to the Tuscan hills.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. *Still Life* opens with a fateful meeting between Ulysses and Evelyn. How does this encounter shape the rest of their lives? What did they each take away from that evening?
2. The Stoat and Parot is a major gathering place for many of the characters in this novel. What does the pub mean to each of them?
3. Ulysses is truly surprised by his inheritance of the pensione in Florence, and this fresh start at life includes leaving the only home he's known. Why do you think he made the decision that he did?
4. In what ways does nature impact the characters and the story? Discuss some examples, such as Cress's connection with the trees and the devastation of the flood, and how they shape the larger narrative of *Still Life*.
5. Discuss the ways in which E. M. Forster's presence is felt in *Still Life*. Have you read *A Room with a View*? What did you think of Evelyn's connection to the writer?
6. Do you think Evelyn and Ulysses's meeting, and then their near misses for decades, are due to sheer coincidence? Or do they feel more like matters of fate?

For more discussion questions visit: [TinyUrl.com/StillLifeBookClubKit](https://www.tinyurl.com/StillLifeBookClubKit)

# TITLES FOR TEEN BOOK GROUPS



## Terry Brooks **Child of Light**

978-0-593-35738-5 | \$28.00/\$37.00C | Del Rey | HC

📖 978-0-593-35739-2 | 📻 AD: 978-0-593-45601-9

**T**he electrifying first novel of an all-new fantasy series from the legendary author behind the Shannara saga, about a human girl struggling to find her place in a magical world she's never known.



## Crystal Maldonado **No Filter and Other Lies**

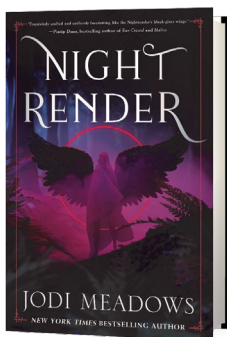
978-0-8234-4718-3 | \$18.99/\$24.99C | Holiday House | HC

📖 978-0-8234-5277-4 | 📻 AD: 978-0-593-39751-0

**T**wenty-one-year-old Max Monroe has it all: beauty, friends, and a glittering life filled with adventure. With tons of followers on Instagram, her picture-perfect existence seems eminently enviable.

Except it's all fake.

When one of her posts goes ultra-viral her entire world—real and fake—comes crashing down around her. She has to figure out a way to get herself out of the huge web of lies she's created until it's too late.

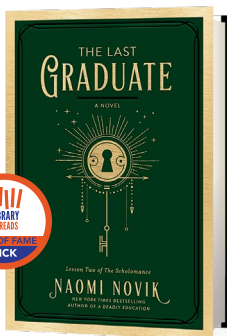


## Jodi Meadows **Nightrender**

978-0-8234-4868-5 | \$19.99/\$25.99C | Holiday House | HC | January 2022

📖 978-0-8234-5273-6

**K**ingdoms will fall, gods will die, and hearts will be broken in this sprawling new fantasy from *New York Times* bestselling author Jodi Meadows. For Young Adult fantasy fanatics, especially devotees of Sarah J. Maas, Claire Legrand, and Sabaa Tahir.



## Naomi Novik **The Last Graduate: A Novel**

978-0-593-12886-2 | \$28.00/\$34.95C | Del Rey | HC

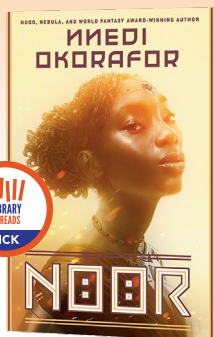
📖 978-0-593-12887-9 | 📻 AD: 978-0-593-28744-6

**T**he specter of graduation looms large as Naomi Novik's groundbreaking, *New York Times* bestselling trilogy continues in the stunning sequel to *A Deadly Education*.

"The climatic graduation-day battle will bring cheers, tears, and gasps as the second of the Scholomance trilogy closes with a breathtaking cliff-hanger."  
—*Booklist*, starred review





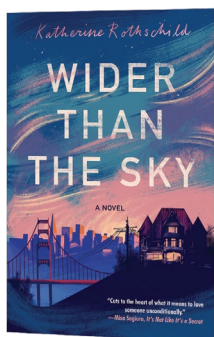


**Nnedi Okorafor**  
**Noor**

978-0-7564-1609-6 | \$27.00/\$36.00C | DAW | HC  
 978-0-698-17517-4

From Africanfuturist luminary Okorafor comes a new science fiction novel of intense action and thoughtful rumination on biotechnology, destiny, and humanity in a near-future Nigeria.

“Haunting and absolutely brilliant. My heart and guts are all turned inside out.”  
 —John Green, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Fault in Our Stars*

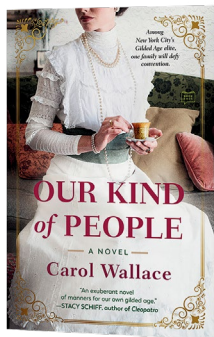


**Katherine Rothchild**  
**Wider Than the Sky**

978-1-64129-268-9 | \$10.99/\$13.99C | Soho Teen | TR  
 978-1-64129-114-9

When twin sisters Blythe and Sabine lose their father, they uncover a secret that rips open their world. Katherine Field Rothchild’s debut novel will break your heart into a million pieces and then put it back together again.

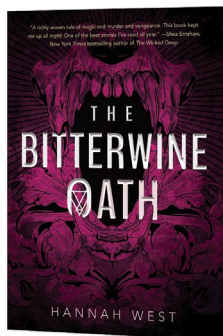
“Lyrical and lovely, *Wider Than the Sky* is one of those rare books that has everything—masterful storytelling, a great love story, important themes, razor-sharp wit, and memorable characters. It’s a gorgeous debut that will capture your heart.”—Corina Vacco, Delacorte Prize-Winning author of *My Chemical Mountain*



**Carol Wallace**  
**Our Kind of People**

978-0-525-54002-1 | \$17.00/\$23.00C | Putnam | TR  
 978-0-525-54168-4 | AD: 978-0-593-45157-1

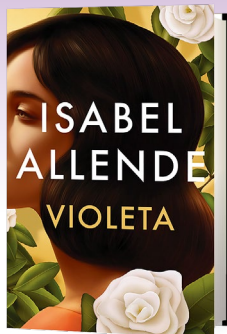
Among New York City’s Gilded Age elite, one family will defy convention. Fans of *Bridgerton* will love this “exuberant novel of manners for our own gilded age” (Stacy Schiff, author of *Cleopatra*) as we follow the Wilcox family’s journey through riches and ruin.



**Hannah West**  
**The Bitterwine Oath**

978-0-8234-4547-9 | 18.99/\$24.99C | Holiday House | HC  
 978-0-8234-4875-3

Every fifty years, a cult claims twelve men to murder in a small Texas town. Can one girl end the cycle of violence—and save the boy who broke her heart?

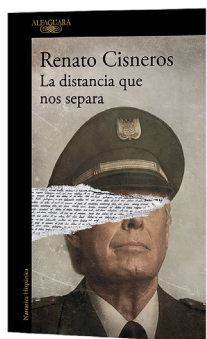


Isabel Allende

## Violeta

978-1-64473-478-0 | \$28.00/\$37.00C | Vintage Español | HC

**T**his sweeping novel from the *New York Times* bestselling author of *A Long Petal of the Sea* tells the epic story of Violeta del Valle, a woman whose life spans one hundred years and bears witness to the greatest upheavals of the twentieth century.



Renato Cisneros

## La distancia que nos separa

978-84-204-5605-8 | \$19.95/\$25.95C | Alfaguara | TR

**T**he emblematic book by one of the most recognized Peruvian authors. A gritty non-fiction novel about the complex relationship between father and son.

“It’s an impressive book and to have written it, in addition to talent, shows great courage.”—Mario Vargas Llosa.



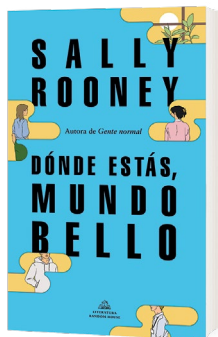
Arturo Pérez-Reverte

## El italiano

978-1-64473-458-2 | \$22.95/\$29.95C | Alfaguara | TR

**A** story about love, sea, and war.

“His elegant narrative style masterfully joins his great command of the Spanish language. Perez-Reverte is a Master.”—La Stampa



Sally Rooney

## Dónde estás, mundo bello

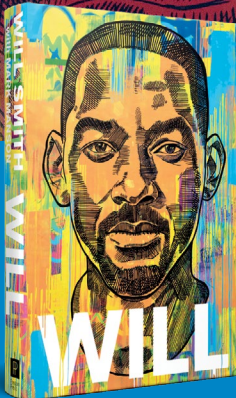
978-84-397-3923-4 | \$19.95/\$25.95C | Literature Random House | TR

**F**rom the acclaimed author of *Normal People*, the story of two friends who seek love and beauty in the face of an uncertain world.

“Literature in capital letters.”—El País



# IT TAKES WILL



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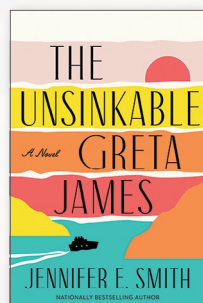
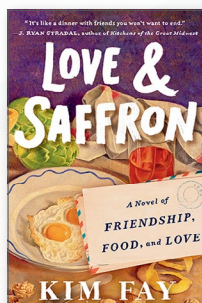
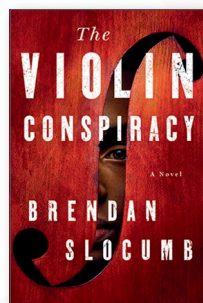
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The next author that everyone will be talking about?

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- For the chance to win free books.



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first look  
 book club