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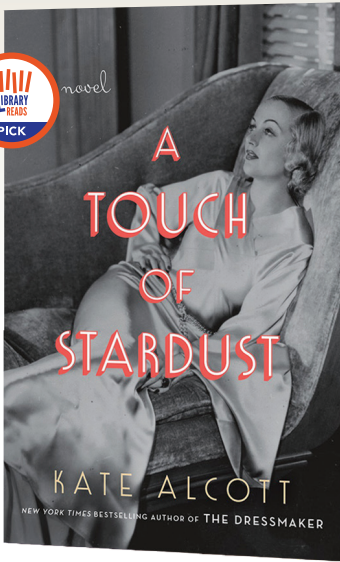
BOOK CLUB

What Will You Read Next?

Volume 9



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



Kate Alcott

A Touch of Stardust:

A Novel

978-0-385-53904-3 | \$25.00/\$29.95C | Doubleday | HC

📖 978-0-385-53905-0

📍 AD: 978-1-101-88945-9 | 📻 CD: 978-1-101-88944-2

READERS' ADVISORY:

For readers of *The Paris Wife*, *The Aviator's Wife*, *Beautiful Ruins*, *Laura Lamont's Life in Pictures*; fans of *Gone with the Wind*.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Dressmaker*, comes a blockbuster novel that takes you behind-the-scenes of the filming of *Gone with the Wind*, while turning the spotlight on the passionate romance between its dashing leading man, Clark Gable, and the blithe, free-spirited actress, Carole Lombard. Vivid, romantic, and filled with Old Hollywood details, *A Touch of Stardust* will entrance, surprise, and delight.

"Alcott should entrance large audiences with her stellar historical novel . . . nuanced and substantive . . . The briskly paced narrative captivates as it lets readers view the creation of silver-screen magic, and it's also a terrific tribute to the industry pioneers." —*Booklist*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Did the relationship between Carole Lombard and Clark Gable make you think of a modern-day Hollywood couple? Or do you consider them singular icons without equal today?
2. Which behind-the-scenes anecdote about the making of *Gone with the Wind* surprised you the most?
3. Did *A Touch of Stardust* inspire you to find out more about Carole Lombard and to watch her films?
4. The next time you watch *Gone with the Wind*, will you see it in a different way? How has the novel changed or enriched your viewing experience?
5. *Gone with the Wind* wrapped just days before Britain declared war on Germany. How does the political atmosphere operate in the novel?

For more discussion questions visit: [KnopfDoubleday.com/reading-group-center/](https://www.knopfdoubleday.com/reading-group-center/)

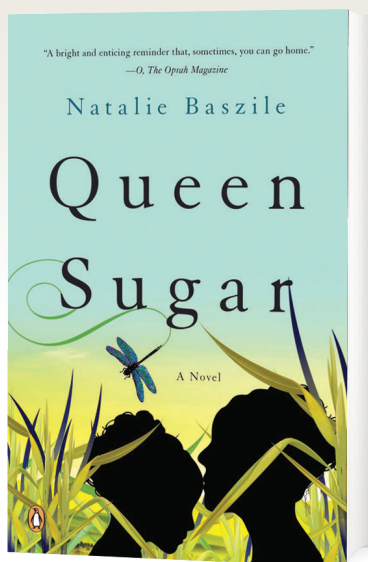
Natalie Baszile
Queen Sugar: A Novel

978-0-143-12623-2 | \$16.00/\$18.00C | Penguin Paperback | TR

📞 978-0-698-15154-3

🔊 AD: 978-0-698-14940-3

READERS' ADVISORY:
Readers of Sue Monk Kidd, Kathryn Stockett,
and Beth Hoffman will love this fresh take on the
Southern novel from an African American
point of view.



ABOUT THE BOOK:

Charley Bordelon is a widowed single mother who is just barely scraping by, teaching art to inner city kids and living in a dilapidated rented bungalow in Los Angeles. But when she discovers that her late father has left her an 800-acre sugar cane plantation in rural Louisiana, she suddenly sees a chance to steer her life back on course. Once in Louisiana, Charley and her eleven-year-old daughter Micah take up residence in the home of Miss Honey, Charley's grandmother. Miss Honey also takes in Charley's troubled half-brother Ralph Angel, who, while in hiding from the law, conspires to claim what he sees as his rightful share of Charley's inheritance. Honest, engrossing, and heartwarming, Baszile's *Queen Sugar* announces the arrival of an exciting and accomplished new voice in contemporary Southern fiction.

"A sensory experience, a tableau vivant that Baszile skillfully paints in a palette simultaneously subtle and bold."

—O, *The Oprah Magazine*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Race plays a major role in *Queen Sugar*, affecting the characters in both overt and subtle ways. How does the challenge of being African American in Southern Louisiana vary from character to character?
2. What is the reason behind Miss Honey's constant support for and forgiveness of Ralph Angel?
3. Both Ralph Angel and Charley have lost a spouse. How does each person face that loss and loneliness? In what ways are their approaches similar, and how are they different?
4. Why was it so important to Charley's father to own those particular acres of sugar cane?

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



Amy Belding Brown

Flight of the Sparrow:

A Novel of Early America

978-0-451-46669-3 | \$15.00/\$17.00C | New American Library | TR

📞 978-0-698-13753-0

📖 AD: 978-1483018072 | 📀 CD: 978-1483018065

📻 LP: 978-1410473110

READERS' ADVISORY:

A novel inspired by the real-life story of Mary Rowlandson, the minister's wife who was captured by Indians during one of the bloodiest conflicts in 17th century Massachusetts.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1676. Even before Mary Rowlandson was captured by Indians on a winter day of violence and terror, she sometimes found herself in conflict with her rigid Puritan community. Now, her home destroyed, her children lost to her, she has been sold into the service of a powerful woman tribal leader, made a pawn in the ongoing bloody struggle between English settlers and native people. Battling cold, hunger, and exhaustion, Mary witnesses harrowing brutality but also unexpected kindness. To her confused surprise, she is drawn to her captors' open and straightforward way of life, a feeling further complicated by her attraction to a generous, protective English-speaking native known as James Printer. All her life, Mary has been taught to fear God, submit to her husband, and abhor Indians. Now, having lived on the other side of the forest, she begins to question the edicts that have guided her, torn between the life she knew and the wisdom the natives have shown her.

Based on the compelling true narrative of Mary Rowlandson, *Flight of the Sparrow* is an evocative tale that transports the reader to a little-known time in early America and explores the real meanings of freedom, faith, and acceptance.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss Mary Rowlandson's relationships with the three men in her life—Joseph, James, and Samuel. What does she give and what does she receive from each relationship?
2. Discuss the various forms that freedom and imprisonment take in the novel. What role does the sparrow play in the author's exploration of those ideas?
3. James Printer tells Mary, "We have both bought our redemption at a terrible price." And Mary realizes that she felt redeemed when she followed the promptings of her heart. Discuss the many meanings of redemption in the novel.

For more discussion questions visit: AmyBeldingBrown.org/reader-s-guide.html

Darcie Chan
**The Mill River
Redemption: A Novel**

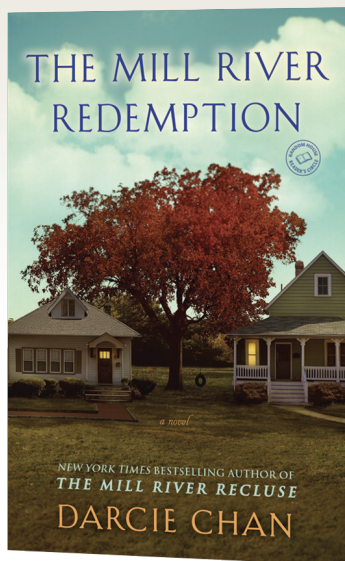
978-0-345-53823-9 | \$15.00/\$18.00C | Ballantine Books | TR

978-0-345-54156-7

AD: 978-0-804-19330-6 | CD: 978-0-804-19329-0

READERS' ADVISORY:

From the bestselling author of *The Mill River Recluse*, comes a second heartwarming and poignant novel, set in the fictional town of Mill River. Perfect for fans of Maeve Binchy, Jan Karon, and Debbie Macomber.



ABOUT THE BOOK:

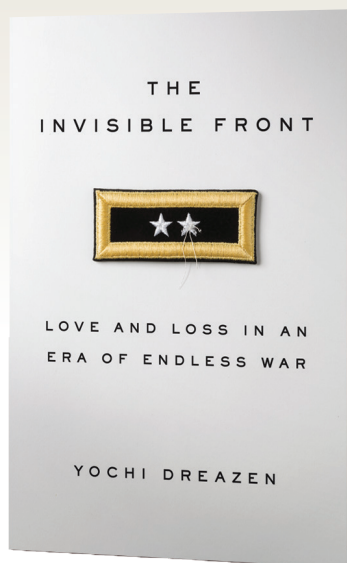
Josie DiSanti is starting over. Recently widowed, she has fled her New York City home with her two young daughters—spirited Rose and shy Emily—and takes refuge in Mill River, Vermont. There, the young mother and her girls build a new life for themselves, until a shocking tragedy tears the sisters apart.

Years later, Josie's still-estranged daughters return to the quiet town for the reading of their mother's will, which stipulates that they must work together to locate a hidden key to a safe-deposit box containing their inheritance. Even from the great beyond, it seems Josie will do anything to bring about her daughters' reconciliation. As Rose and Emily begin the search, they discover that, in the close-knit community known for magic and miracles, an even greater treasure awaits them.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In the beginning of *The Mill River Redemption*, Josie DiSanti is traumatized and frightened. Over the course of the story, however, she becomes strong, self-sufficient, and confident. What do you feel is the single biggest factor in her transformation?
2. As a single parent, Josie tries to be everything to and provide everything for her daughters Rose and Emily. Given her situation, what do you feel were her greatest successes and failures as a parent? What might she have done differently?
3. Josie has to deal with an unpleasant boss in her first job as a single parent. Have you encountered a "Ned Circle"—i.e., someone who intentionally tried to make things difficult for you—in your own life or career? If so, how did you handle the situation?
4. As young adults, Rose and Emily DiSanti experience a terrible tragedy and become estranged, and Josie spends many years trying to help them reconcile. If you were in Emily's position, could you forgive Rose for what she did? If you were in Rose's position, could you ask Emily for forgiveness?

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



Yochi Dreazen

The Invisible Front:

Love and Loss in an Era of Endless War

978-0-385-34783-9 | \$26.00/\$31.00C | Crown | HC
978-0385-34785 3 | \$15.00/\$17.00C | Broadway Books | TR | October 2015
📞 978-0-385-34784-6

READERS' ADVISORY:
For fans of David Finkel and Karl Marlantes.
An Amazon Best Book of the Year.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

The galvanizing story of an army family that lost two sons—one to suicide and one in combat—and devoted their lives to fighting the military's suicide epidemic. With great sympathy and deep understanding, *The Invisible Front* examines America's problematic treatment of its soldiers and offers the Graham family's work as a new way of understanding how to minimize the risk of suicide, substance abuse, and PTSD in the military.

"Harrowing, a courageous effort . . . This vital book is a stirring call for action to better aid American soldiers who struggle alone with depression—and civilians who suffer from our most stigmatized disease as well."
—*The New York Times Book Review*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Yochi illustrates the military's stigmatized treatment of mental health problems in part by citing the roadblocks the Grahams encountered when they tried to address those issues head-on. Were you surprised to learn that there is such an entrenched attitude of denial and shame regarding mental illness in military culture? Why or why not?
2. In 2012, more soldiers killed themselves than died in combat, and that number only rose in 2013 and then again in 2014. What do you think are the most important first steps in changing this disturbing trend?
3. Depression and anxiety don't just affect soldiers stationed in combat zones. Have you or anyone you know ever experienced depression or anxiety? What sort of support was most meaningful to that person?
4. Suicide is a national problem, not just a military one. More people kill themselves today than die in car crashes, and the rate continues to skyrocket. Do you think enough is being done to combat this and provide resources for people who are struggling? What do you think is the most important thing we can do to reduce the number of suicides?

For more discussion questions visit: RandomHouse.com

Jan Ellison

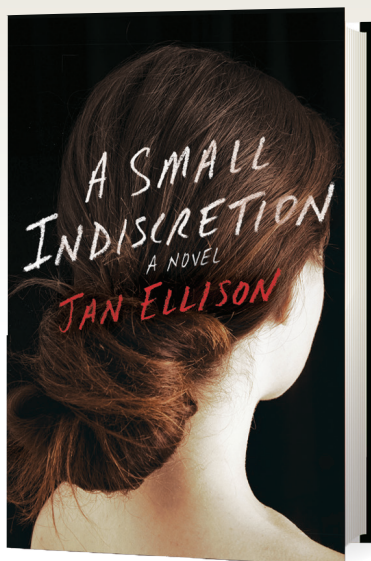
A Small Indiscretion:

A Novel

978-0-8129-9544-2 | \$27.00/\$32.00C | Random House | HC
978-0-8129-8542-9 | \$16.00/\$19.00C | Random House | TR | September 2015
📞 978-0-8129-9545-9
📍 AD: 978-0-553-39979-0

READERS' ADVISORY:

For readers of Amy Bloom, Meg Wolitzer, and Lorrie Moore comes a gripping and ultimately redemptive novel of love and its dangers, marriage and its secrets, youth and its treacherous mistakes.



ABOUT THE BOOK:

At nineteen, Annie Black trades a bleak future in her washed-out hometown for a London winter of drinking to oblivion and yearning for deliverance. Some two decades later, she is married to a good man and settled in San Francisco, with a son and two daughters and a successful career designing artistic interior lights. One June morning, a photograph arrives in her mailbox, igniting an old longing and setting off a chain of events that rock the foundations of her marriage and threaten to overturn her family's hard-won happiness.

A Small Indiscretion is a riveting debut novel about a woman's search for understanding and forgiveness, a taut exploration of a modern marriage, and of love—the kind that destroys, and the kind that redeems.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In the beginning of the novel, Annie writes: "Between those bookends was a family whose happiness might still be intact if only I'd been able to see the threats to it more clearly." Is Annie responsible for Robbie's accident, and for her family's unraveling? Is it in her power to protect them?
2. There is more than one indiscretion in the novel. Which do you think the title refers to, or might it refer to more than one?
3. Annie writes that it is "easier to blame the impulsiveness of youth than the wanton self-indulgence of a grown woman." How can this statement be assessed in the context of Annie's story? Why does Annie confess to Jonathan upon her return from London?
4. After Jonathan moves out, Clara and Polly are passed between their parents "like a restaurant dessert." Is Jonathan's decision to move out defensible? How are the girls' childhoods altered by the events of the summer? How might they look back on this period in their lives?

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



Michel Faber

The Book of Strange New Things: A Novel

978-0-553-41884-2 | \$28.00 | Hogarth | HC
978-0553-41886-6 | \$17.00 | Hogarth | TR | June 2015
📞 978-0-553-41885-9
📍 AD: 978-0-553-54624-8 | 📀 CD: 978-0-553-54623-1

READERS' ADVISORY:

Fans of Donna Tartt, Kate Atkinson, David Mitchell, Kazuo Ishiguro, Michael Chabon, Audrey Niffenegger, and Dave Eggers; Viewers of *Avatar*, *District 9*, and *Gravity*.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

The long-awaited new novel from the internationally bestselling author of *The Crimson Petal and the White*. Peter—devoted pastor, dedicated missionary, and loving husband to his wife, Bea—has just accepted a demanding and perilous new job. He's to travel to a new planet, Oasis, to work for a mysterious corporation called USIC. He's tasked with reaching out to the indigenous race, to make sure they are as peaceful as they seem. A separation measured in galaxies, and defined both by one newly discovered world and another in a state of collapse, is threatened by an ever-widening gulf that is much less quantifiable. Peter's and Bea's trials lay bare a profound meditation on faith, love tested beyond endurance, and the responsibility we have to others.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

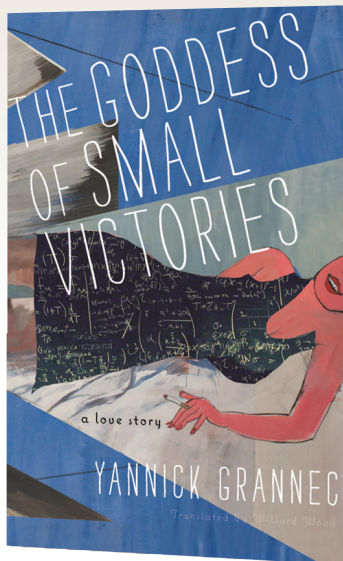
1. *The Book of Strange New Things* is a literary novel with elements of science fiction. Do you consider it more one genre than the other? Does it fall into any other categories?
2. Peter and Bea's marriage is at the heart of *The Book of Strange New Things*. How does the evolution of their relationship help drive the action of the book? Do you think their letters reveal the full breadth of their experiences apart?
3. While Peter is away ministering to the Oasans, Bea's world is torn by calamity. As Peter struggles to remain connected to her, he is challenged by both their physical and emotional distance. Do you think he overcomes this?
4. *The Book of Strange New Things* raises significant questions about our ability to feel compassion towards others, from strangers to those we love most deeply. How does Peter's ability to show empathy change throughout the novel?
5. *The Book of Strange New Things* explores a variety of wide-ranging themes: love, fidelity, faith, and compassion. Of these, which do you think this book is ultimately about?

For more discussion questions visit: MichelFaber.com

Yannick Grannec
**The Goddess of
Small Victories**

978-1-59051-636-2 | \$26.95/\$32.00C | Other Press | HC
📍 978-1-59051-637-9

READERS' ADVISORY:
For readers of *Loving Frank* and *The Paris Wife*, as well as fans of *A Beautiful Mind* and *Amadeus*.



ABOUT THE BOOK:

A young and un-ambitious librarian named Anna Roth is assigned the task of retrieving the records of Kurt Gödel—the most fascinating and hermetic mathematician of the 20th century. Her mission consists of befriending and ultimately taming the great man’s widow, Adele, a notoriously bitter woman set on taking belated revenge against the establishment by refusing to hand over these documents of immeasurable historical value.

But as Anna soon finds out, Adele has a story of her own to tell. Through descriptions of Princeton and Vienna after the war, the occupation of Austria by the Nazis, the pressures of McCarthyism, the end of the positivist ideal, and the advent of nuclear weapons, Anna discovers firsthand the epic story of a genius who could never quite find his place in the world, and the private torment of the woman who loved him.

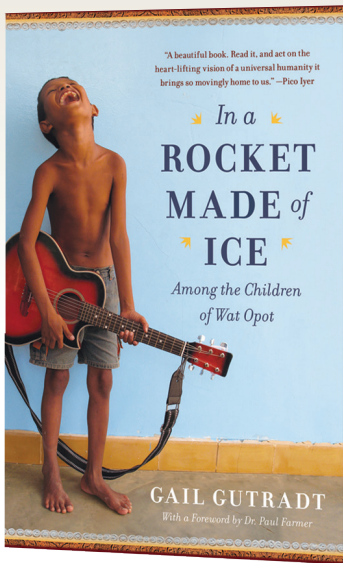
“[A] fascinating portrait of a marriage...tracing the Gödels’ tumultuous past and the sad decline of a brilliant mind.”

—*The New York Times*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think Yannick Grannec chose to write about Kurt Gödel’s life from the perspective of his wife? How does this choice change what we see of Gödel? How is it different from what we might have read had this been a biography of the mathematician?
2. Anna often reflects on the sense of purposelessness she feels in her life. (See “The sum of little bits of wasted time and the lateness of others added up to a lost life,”; “What worries me is that I’m not doing anything with my life.” How does this relate to her professional ambition and her relationships with Adele, her parents, and Leo? How does it compare to Kurt Gödel’s passion for his work?
3. How is Adele’s devotion to Kurt and Kurt’s devotion to his work similar?

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



Gail Gutradt

In a Rocket Made of Ice: Among the Children of Wat Opot

978-0-385-35347-2 | \$25.95/\$30.00C | Knopf | HC
978-0-8041-7268-4 | \$16.95/\$19.95C | Vintage | TR | June 2015
📞 978-0-385-35348-9
📍 AD: 978-0-553-54644-6 | 📍 CD: 978-0-553-54643-9

READERS' ADVISORY:

For readers of *Half the Sky*, *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, and *I Am Malala*.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

Gail Gutradt was at a crossroads in her life when she learned of the Wat Opot Children's Community. Begun with just fifty dollars in the pocket of Wayne Dale Matthyse, a former Marine Corps medic in Vietnam, Wat Opot, a temple complex nestled among Cambodia's verdant rice paddies, was once a haunted scrubland that became a place of healing and respite where children with or orphaned by HIV/AIDS could live outside of fear or judgment, and find a new family—a place that Gutradt calls "a workshop for souls."

Disarming, funny, deeply moving, *In a Rocket Made of Ice* gathers the stories of children saved and changed by this very special place, and of one woman's transformation in trying to help them.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. One of the first things you see as you open *In A Rocket Made of Ice* is a full-page photograph of children running toward you on a road. Does the art and photography woven throughout the book affect how you imagine what it might be like to live in Wat Opot? If so, how?
2. There are numerous moments in the book where limited resources were of particular issue for Wayne Dale Matthyse, the cofounder of Wat Opot, and all the volunteers. What role does money play in this book, including Gutradt's own decisions about fund-raising among people she knows? How do the volunteers provide other kinds of healing and care above and beyond these scarce resources?
3. Discuss the meaning of the book's title. Why do you think the author only revealed it near the very end?
4. Gutradt's attempt to capture life at Wat Opot includes the words of the kids themselves. How did hearing the voices of the children directly affect your involvement in the story?

For more discussion questions visit: KnopfDoubleday.com/reading-group-center/

Mette Ivie Harrison

The Bishop's Wife:

A Novel

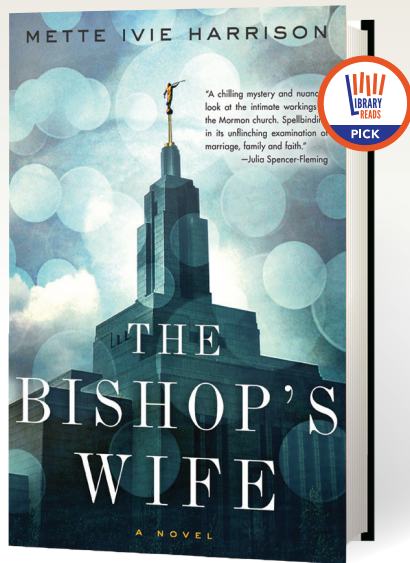
978-1-61695-476-5 | \$26.95/\$26.95C | Soho Press | HC
978-1-61695-618-9 | \$15.95/\$15.95C | TR | November 2015
📞 978-1-61695-478-9

READERS' ADVISORY:

For fans of *Big Love* and readers of *The 19th Wife*.

"The mystery surrounding Carrie drives the plot, but Linda herself is the most compelling thing about young adult author Harrison's debut adult mystery about a world she knows well."

—Booklist (starred review)



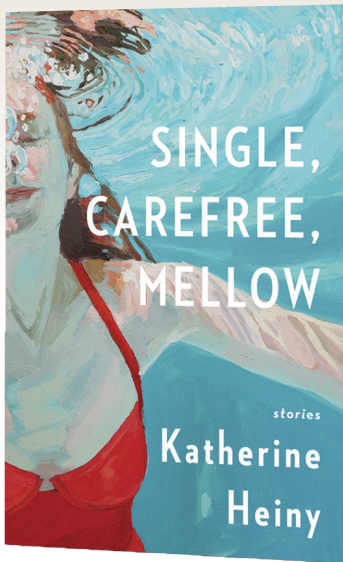
ABOUT THE BOOK:

Inspired by a chilling true crime and written by a practicing Mormon, *The Bishop's Wife* is about Linda Wallheim a devout Mormon, the mother of five boys and the wife of a bishop. Linda is increasingly troubled by her church's structure and secrecy, especially as a disturbing situation takes shape in her ward. One cold winter night, a young wife and mother named Carrie Helm disappears, leaving behind everything she owns. Carrie's husband, Jared, claims his wife has always been unstable and that she has abandoned the family, but Linda doesn't trust him. As Linda snoops in the Helm family's circumstances, she becomes convinced that Jared has murdered his wife and painted himself as a wronged husband.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Linda tells us that Kurt believes "any marriage can be saved with enough work and help from God." Linda, meanwhile, believes that not every marriage should last forever. We see many different kinds of marriages in this book: Linda and Kurt's; Carrie and Jared Helm's; Anna and Tobias Torstensen's; the somewhat controversial new marriage of Perdita, who was not allowed to marry in the temple. Which of the marriages shown in the book seem like strong ones, which seem flawed, and which seem unsalvageable? How does the Mormon concept of marriage for eternity—as opposed to "till death do us part"—affect the characters in the story?
2. Kurt asks Linda not to get involved in the Helms' private affairs, but she refuses to stop snooping and asking questions. Do you believe she overstepped? Do you believe, in the end, she helped or hurt the Helms? What about her snooping into the Torstensen's past? Did Linda's involvement change the course of any events? To be a responsible bishop's wife, is it a de facto part of her job to go to these kinds of measures to try to protect her ward?
3. Although Linda is a pillar of her religious community, behind closed doors she has a complicated relationship with her faith. What do you think about that relationship?

For more discussion questions visit: SohoPress.com



Katherine Heiny **Single, Carefree, Mellow:** Stories

978-0-385-35363-2 | \$23.95 | Knopf | HC

📞 978-0-385-35364-9

📍 AD: 978-0-553-41002-0

READERS' ADVISORY:

For fans of Maria Semple's *Where'd You Go Bernadette*, Lorrie Moore's *Anagrams*, and Melissa Bank's *The Girls' Guide to Hunting and Fishing*.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

Maya is in love with both her boyfriend and her boss. Sadie's lover calls her as he drives to meet his wife at marriage counseling. Gwen pines for her roommate, a man who will hold her hand but then tells her that her palm is sweaty. And Sasha agrees to have a drink with her married lover's wife and then immediately regrets it. These are the women of *Single, Carefree, Mellow*, and in these eleven sublime stories they are grappling with unwelcome houseguests, disastrous birthday parties, needy but loyal friends, and all manner of love, secrets, and betrayal.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

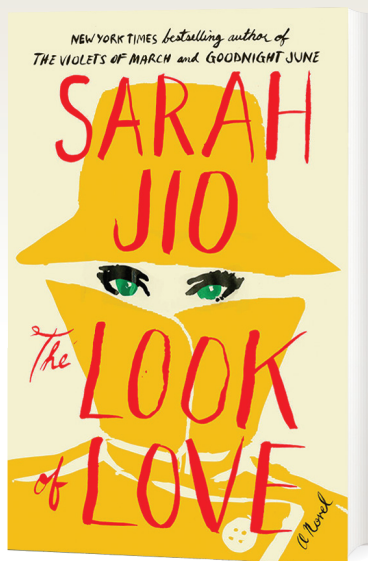
1. Infidelity is an overarching theme of the collection. Are there any commonalities among the affairs described in the book? How do different characters wrestle with the idea of being "the other woman"? Does anyone fight this label? Embrace it?
2. Discuss Sasha's relationship with Monique as described throughout "The Dive Bar." How would you describe their friendship? How does Sasha depend on Monique for moral support? When Sasha is viewing the apartment with Carson, why does she immediately think of Monique?
3. In "How to Give the Wrong Impression," Gwen wrestles with issues of insecurity in her relationship with Boris. How does this manifest throughout the story?
4. In "Blue Heron Bridge," Nina mentions that she "got the sense she sometimes got when she said something funny, that she had suddenly become visible." Explore this concept of "visibility" in connection with Nina's identity. How does she define herself? How does she determine her self-worth? Why do you think she embarks on her affair with David?
5. How is motherhood described throughout *Single, Carefree, Mellow*? Contrast the experiences of the protagonist in "That Dance You Do" with Nina in "Blue Heron Bridge."

For more discussion questions visit: [KnopfDoubleday.com/reading-group-center/](https://www.knopfdoubleday.com/reading-group-center/)

Sarah Jio
The Look of Love:
A Novel

978-0-142-18053-2 | \$16.00 | Plume | TR
978-0-142-18053-2 | \$18.00C | Penguin Random House Canada | TR
978-1-101-62888-1

READERS' ADVISORY:
For readers of Kate Morton,
Kristin Hannah, and Jane Green.



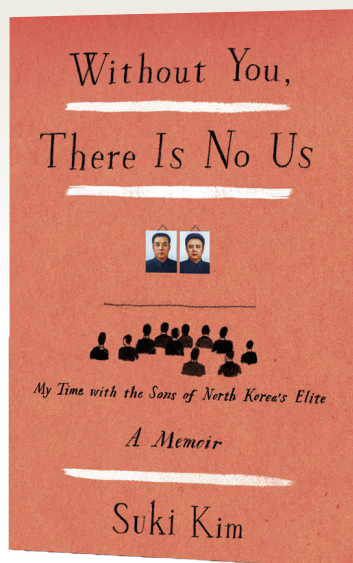
ABOUT THE BOOK:

Born during a Christmas Day blizzard, Jane receives a rare and timeless gift: the ability to detect true love. The deep bond between her grandparents is marked by the sparks she observes circling their heads—the halo effect in her personal night sky. Jane becomes a hopeless romantic, unable to resist scanning any crowd to see which couples are in love and which are merely pretending. On Jane’s twenty-fifth birthday comes the gift of knowledge. The midwife who delivered her as a baby warns Jane by letter that she must find her own true love before the full moon following her thirtieth birthday, or face grave consequences. Jane meets Camden Bernstein and reveals the secret of her gift. A skeptic, Cam doesn’t believe in love, and doubts that Jane can see what doesn’t exist. Still, sparks fly, until Cam endangers Jane to further his career. Forlorn and vulnerable, Jane’s health begins to fail, and she realizes she must rid herself of the gift to save her own life. Yet the look of love is one the heart can’t disguise. As a full moon rises, is Jane’s fate sealed?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Does Jane’s discovery of her gift change her? How so?
2. The story Colette tells Jane and the request she makes of her is a highly unusual one. Why does Jane believe her? Is there anything about Jane’s character that makes her especially suited for this gift?
3. How would you describe Jane’s relationships with her girlfriends, Lo, Mary, Katie, and Elaine? How does her ability to see love affect her friendships? Does she become more confident in her power to guide her friends as time goes on?
4. Why does it take Dr. Heller so long to acknowledge that Jane’s gift may actually be real? What ultimately changes her mind?

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



Suki Kim

Without You, There Is No Us: My Time with the Sons of North Korea's Elite

978-0-307-72065-8 | \$24.00/\$28.00C | Crown | HC

978-0-307-72066-5 | \$15.00/\$18.00C | Broadway Books | TR | October 2015

📞 978-0-307-72067-2

📍 AD: 978-1-101-91276-8

READERS' ADVISORY:

For readers of *The Orphan Master's Son*, *Nothing to Envy*, *Escape from Camp 14*, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, *Behind the Beautiful Forevers*, and *House of Stone*.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

Award-winning novelist Suki Kim's haunting memoir of teaching English to the sons of North Korea's elite during the last six months of Kim Jong Il's reign—a moving and incalculably rare glimpse of life in the world's most unknowable country. While most of our knowledge of North Korea comes from impoverished defectors, or from journalists allowed only on short tours, Kim spent months teaching, eating meals, and living alongside the sons of Pyongyang's ruling class.

"A rare and nuanced look at North Korean culture, and an uncommon addition to the 'inspirational-teacher' genre."

—*Booklist* (starred review)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Before reading Suki Kim's memoir, what were your impressions about life in North Korea? By the end of the book, had your understanding changed? How does Suki's account differ from others you may have read?
2. In Chapter 1, Suki writes that the "unrequited heartbreak" of her family's separation during the Korean War prompted her to undertake repeated trips to North Korea. How does this background inform the narrative? Have you ever returned to your family's country (or countries) of origin? How connected do you feel to the cultures of your ancestors?
3. In the prologue, Suki refers to PUST as a "prison disguised as a campus." How does PUST's isolation affect its culture? How do Suki and the other teachers deal with the monotony of life at PUST?
4. Suki carefully plans her lessons in order to expose her students to tidbits of information about life outside North Korea, especially technology and the Internet, without running afoul of the "counterparts." If you were in Suki's situation, what subjects or ideas would you want to teach?

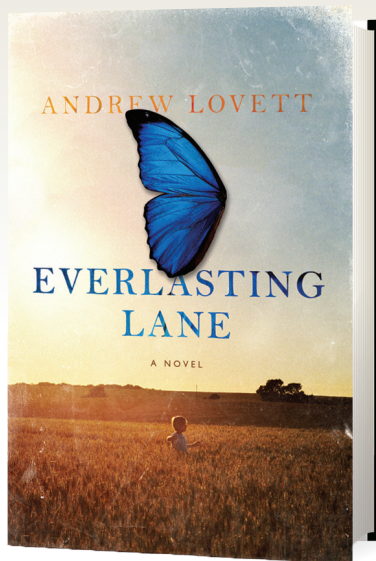
For more discussion questions visit: [RandomHouse.com](https://www.randomhouse.com)

Andrew Lovett
Everlasting Lane:
A Novel

978-1-61219-380-9 | \$25.95/\$25.95C | Melville House | HC
📞 978-1-61219-381-6

READERS' ADVISORY:

“Beautifully written, and as charming as it is dark, the novel unwraps the endless secrets that elude a child.” —*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)



ABOUT THE BOOK:

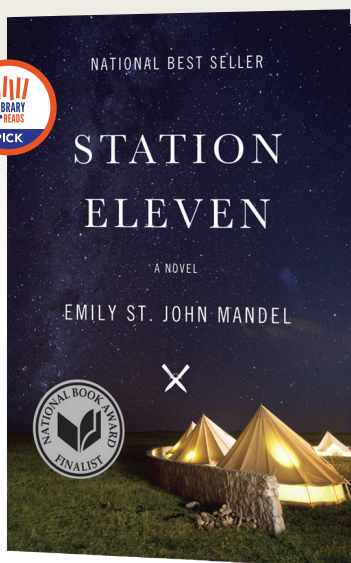
In a timeless coming-of-age tale as charming and haunting as the movie *Stand By Me*, Andrew Lovett's *Everlasting Lane* tells the story of what happens when nine-year-old Peter's father dies and his mother moves them from the city to a house in the countryside, for what seem to Peter to be mysterious reasons.

He's soon distracted, though, by the difficulties of being the new, shy kid at school, and he befriends the other two kids who seem to be outcasts: overweight Tommie and too-smart-for-her-own-good Anna-Marie. Together they try to weather the storm of bullying teachers and fellow students, by escaping into explorations of the seemingly bucolic countryside. There, though, they find other outcasts from society such as cranky Mr. Merridew, who won't leave his cottage in the woods, and Scarecrow Man, who stands in the fields searching the skies. And meanwhile, Peter is disturbed by the growing awareness that his own mother may be some sort of outcast, too.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In the beginning of the novel, Doctor Todd gives Peter a watch as a present, to help Peter organize himself. After receiving the watch, Peter destroys it. What might Peter's destroying the watch signify? Is this action a reflection of his feelings towards Doctor Todd? Is it something more complicated?
2. Peter's mother suggests she and Peter play a game in which Peter pretends she is not actually his mother, but his Aunt Kat. She insists he call her "Kat" for the rest of the novel. What might her reasoning be behind this? Do you think it's directly related to Alice? Why, or why not?
3. How do you feel that Peter calling his mother "Kat" instead of "Mummy," or "Mother," changes their relationship? Is it for the better or for the worse?

For more discussion questions visit: RandomHouse.com



Emily St. John Mandel **Station Eleven:** A Novel

978-0-385-35330-4 | \$24.95 | Knopf | HC
978-0-8041-7244-8 | \$15.95 | Vintage | TR | June 2015
📞 978-0-385-35331-1
📻 AD: 978-0-553-39798-7 | 📻 CD: 978-0-553-54558-6

READERS' ADVISORY:
For fans of *The Age of Miracles* and *The Dog Stars*.
A National Book Award Finalist.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

One snowy night a famous Hollywood actor slumps over and dies onstage during a production of *King Lear*. Hours later, the world as we know it begins to dissolve. Moving back and forth in time—from the actor's early days as a film star to fifteen years in the future, when a theater troupe known as the Traveling Symphony roams the wasteland of what remains—this suspenseful, elegiac, spellbinding novel charts the strange twists of fate that connect five people: the actor, the man who tried to save him, the actor's first wife, his oldest friend, and a young actress with the Traveling Symphony, caught in the crosshairs of a dangerous self-proclaimed prophet. Sometimes terrifying, sometimes tender, *Station Eleven* tells a story about the relationships that sustain us, the ephemeral nature of fame, and the beauty of the world as we know it.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

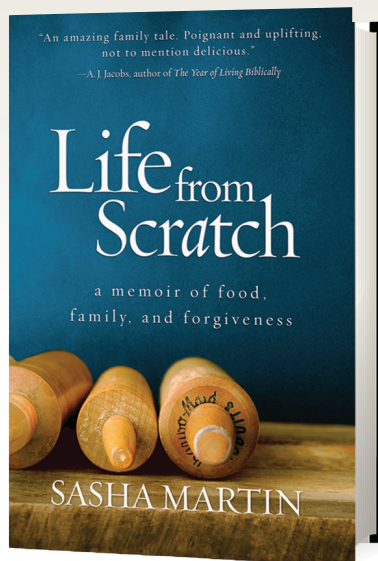
1. Now that you've read the entire novel, go back and reread the passage by Czeslaw Milosz that serves as an epigraph. What does it mean? Why did Mandel choose it to introduce *Station Eleven*?
2. Does the novel have a main character? Who would you consider it to be?
3. Arthur's death happens to coincide with the arrival of the Georgia Flu. If Jeevan had been able to save him, it wouldn't have prevented the apocalypse. But how might the trajectory of the novel been different?
4. What is the metaphor of the *Station Eleven* comic books? How does the Undersea connect to the events of the novel?
5. "Survival is insufficient," a line from *Star Trek: Voyager*, is the Traveling Symphony's motto. What does it mean to them?

For more discussion questions visit: [KnopfDoubleday.com/reading-group-center/](https://www.knopfdoubleday.com/reading-group-center/)

Sasha Martin
Life From Scratch:
A Memoir of Food,
Family, and Forgiveness

978-1-4262-1374-8 | \$25.00/\$25.00C | National Geographic | HC | March 2015
978-1-4262-1375-5

READERS' ADVISORY:
For readers of *Tender at the Bone*
and *Julie and Julia*.



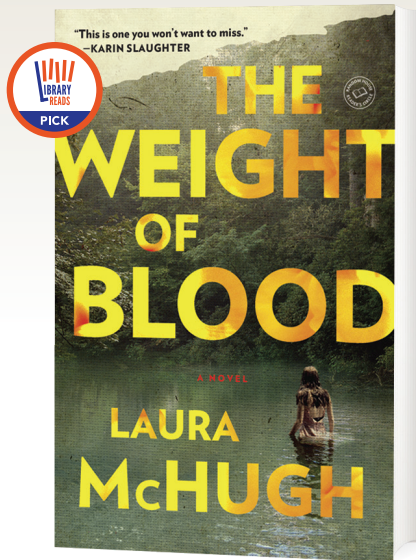
ABOUT THE BOOK:

It was a culinary journey like no other: Over the course of 195 weeks, food writer and blogger Sasha Martin set out to cook—and eat—a meal from every country in the world. As cooking unlocked the memories of her rough-and-tumble childhood and the loss and heartbreak that came with it, Martin became more determined than ever to find peace and elevate her life through the prism of food and world cultures. From the tiny, makeshift kitchen of her eccentric, creative mother to a string of foster homes to the house from which she launches her own cooking adventure, Martin's heartfelt, brutally honest memoir reveals the power of cooking to bond, to empower, and to heal—and celebrates the simple truth that happiness is created from within.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. About the challenges of her childhood, Sasha writes, "there's a difference between poverty of resources and poverty of spirit." What does she mean by this?
2. Do you think Sasha's longing to reconnect with her mom influences her memory of her childhood?
3. How would you describe Sasha's relationship with Patricia Dumont? In what ways do you identify with Sasha? In what ways do you identify with Patricia?
4. When Sasha realizes that her college boyfriend John is about to propose and offer her the sense of love and belonging she yearned to find, why do you think she breaks up with him?
5. After Sasha's boyfriend Greg breaks up with her, he says "I understand that your life has been a struggle . . . but you have to work through that on your own." Do you agree or disagree with this advice? How do you think this influenced Sasha in the long run?

For more discussion questions visit: SashaMartin.com/book



Laura McHugh

The Weight of Blood: A Novel

978-0-8129-8533-7 | \$16.00/\$19.00C | Spiegel & Grau | TR

📞 978-0-8129-9521-3

📍 AD: 978-0-804-19152-4 | 📻 CD: 978-0-553-54603-3

READERS' ADVISORY:

For fans of Gillian Flynn, Scott Smith, and Daniel Woodrell comes a gripping, suspenseful novel about two mysterious disappearances a generation apart.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

The town of Henbane sits deep in the Ozark Mountains. Folks there still whisper about Lucy Dane's mother, a bewitching stranger who appeared long enough to marry Carl Dane and then vanished when Lucy was just a child. Now on the brink of adulthood, Lucy experiences another loss when her friend Cheri disappears and is then found murdered. Haunted by the two lost girls—the mother she never knew and the friend she couldn't save—Lucy sets out with the help of a local boy, Daniel, to uncover the mystery behind Cheri's death.

What Lucy discovers is a secret that pervades the secluded Missouri hills, and beyond that horrific revelation is a more personal one concerning what happened to her mother more than a decade earlier.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. *The Weight of Blood* alternates narrators, giving us many of the characters' perspectives, but mostly going back and forth between Lila and Lucy. What did you think of this dual narrative? Did it confuse you? Could the story have been told in one voice?
2. How do you interpret the relationship between Crete and Carl? Carl consistently turns a blind eye toward Crete's questionable behavior. Do you think this is a weakness of Carl's character, or do you believe that Carl is rightly loyal to his brother? If you were Carl, how would you handle your relationship with Crete? Would you have covered up Cheri's murder?
3. *The Weight of Blood* ends with Lucy and Daniel together on a blanket, lost in their own world. Lucy tells us, "I let myself get lost in the moment, looking neither forward nor back, seeking nothing absent but embracing what was right in front of me." How does this ending resonate with the rest of the story and the struggles Lucy has had to face?

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

Rebecca Mead My Life in Middlemarch

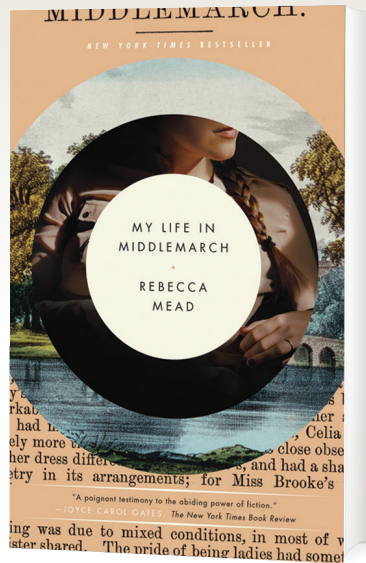
978-0-307-98477-7 | \$15.00 | Broadway Books | TR
978-0-385-67688-5 | \$18.95C | Anchor Canada | TR
📞 978-0-307-98478-4

READERS' ADVISORY:

For readers of *Reading Lolita in Tehran*,
A Jane Austen Education, and
How Proust Can Change Your Life.

The New York Times Book Review Editors' Choice.

A Library Journal Best Book of the Year.



ABOUT THE BOOK:

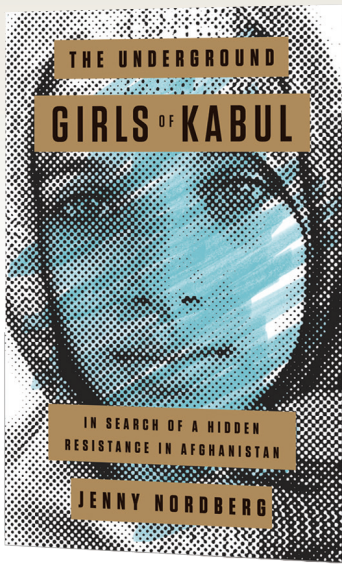
A book for every passionate reader who wonders about the power of literature to shape our lives. A *New Yorker* writer revisits *Middlemarch*, the seminal book of her youth and now middle age, Mead takes Eliot's ideas about parenthood, wisdom, and morality and brings them into the present day.

Offering both a fascinating reading of Eliot's biography and an exploration of the way aspects of Mead's life uncannily echo that of Eliot herself, *My Life in Middlemarch* is for every ardent lover of literature who cares about why we read books, and how they read us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss your own experience with *Middlemarch*, whether you've been a lifelong devotee or have only glimpsed it through Mead's lens. Which storylines and relationships resonate the most with you? Which characters are the most intriguing to you?
2. What motivates Mead to retrace Eliot's life? How does her research reshape her view of Eliot's imaginary communities?
3. Browse the memoir's chapter titles (which mirror the titles of the eight books in *Middlemarch*) as well as the epigraphs. What makes these lines equally appropriate for Mead's modern world? Which epigraph could make an apt motto for your life?
4. Mead describes her pilgrimages to the archives that hold Eliot's journals, manuscripts, and other documents, including Yale's Beinecke Library, the New York Public Library, and the British Library. In addition to fact-gathering, what does Mead gain by spending time with pages that were touched by Eliot's own hand? Does the digital age spell the end of that experience?

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



Jenny Nordberg

The Underground Girls of Kabul:

In Search of a Hidden Resistance in Afghanistan

978-0-307-95249-3 | \$25.00/\$29.95C | Crown | HC
978-0-307-95250-9 | \$15.00/\$17.00C | Broadway Books | TR | July 2015
📞 978-0-307-95251-6 | 📄 AD: 978-0-804-16632-4

READERS' ADVISORY:

For readers of narrative nonfiction, human interest stories, accounts of foreign cultures and fans of *The Bookseller of Kabul* and *Kabul Beauty School*.

A Publishers Weekly Best Book of 2014.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

An investigative journalist uncovers a hidden Afghan custom that will change your understanding of what it means to grow up as a girl. Expanding on her widely read *New York Times* article "Afghan Boys Are Prized, So Girls Live the Part," in which she uncovered the phenomenon of *bacha posh*, the practice of disguising and raising young girls as boys.

"A stunning book . . . Nordberg has done some staggering work in this unique, important, and compelling chronicle. Book clubs will be riveted, and will talk for hours."

—*Booklist* (starred review)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. The *Underground Girls of Kabul* features several women who find ways to resist and subvert power—including Azita, whose status is elevated by disguising her daughter as a son; Mehran, who is able to confidently roughhouse with boys her own age; and Zahra, who fights her parents to maintain her male identity after puberty. Which woman's story did you find most interesting? Why?
2. Although Afghanistan and its conflicts have been well-covered, the book offers a different entry point into the lives of people there. Before reading this book what (if anything) did you know about Afghanistan? What did you find surprising about the country and its history in reading this book?
3. Do you think the practice of *bacha posh* is subversive, with the potential to change the strict gender culture of Afghanistan? Or do you see it as women capitulating to and reinforcing a system of segregation?
4. Some of the girls who are raised as *bacha posh* do not want to go back to living as women. How do you think you would react if you were in their position?

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

Stewart O’Nan

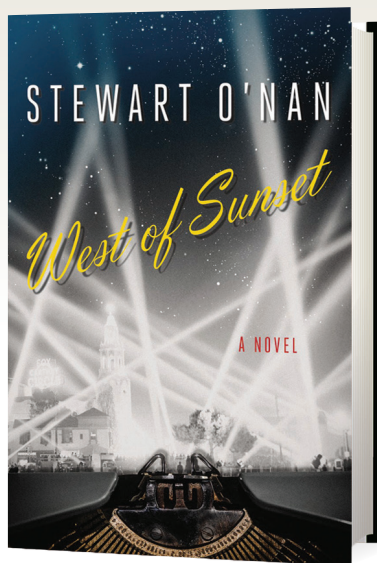
West of Sunset:

A Novel

978-0-670-78595-7 | \$27.95/\$32.95C | Viking | HC
978-1-101-60839-5

READERS’ ADVISORY:

For fans of *Z* by Therese Ann Fowler,
The Paris Wife by Paula McLain, and
Rules of Civility by Amor Towles.



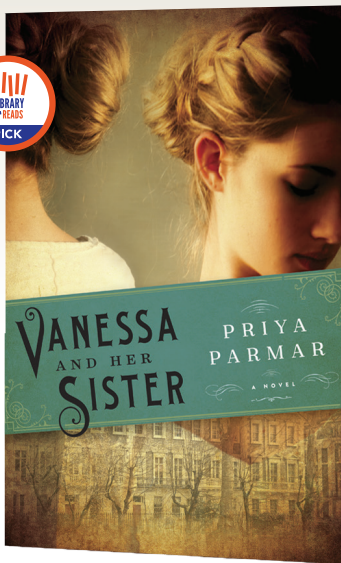
ABOUT THE BOOK:

In 1937, F. Scott Fitzgerald was a troubled, uncertain man whose literary success was long over. In poor health, with his wife consigned to a mental asylum and his finances in ruins, he struggled to make a new start as a screenwriter in Hollywood. By December 1940, he would be dead of a heart attack. Those last three years of Fitzgerald’s life are the focus of Stewart O’Nan’s gorgeously and gracefully written novel. Fitzgerald’s orbit of literary fame and the Golden Age of Hollywood is brought vividly to life through the novel’s romantic cast of characters, from Dorothy Parker and Ernest Hemingway to Humphrey Bogart. A sympathetic and deeply personal portrait of a flawed man who never gave up in the end, even as his every wish and hope seemed thwarted, *West of Sunset* confirms O’Nan as “possibly our best working novelist” (*Salon*).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Stewart O’Nan chooses to begin *West of Sunset*, not with Scott’s arrival in Hollywood, but with a meeting between Scott and Zelda. What does his story gain from this subtle and interesting choice?
2. The real Fitzgerald once wrote, “The two basic stories of all times are ‘Cinderella’ and ‘Jack the Giant Killer’—the charm of women and the courage of men.” Was he correct? Does O’Nan’s novel undermine or confirm Fitzgerald’s statement?
3. Some have seen *West of Sunset* as, above all, a love story. If this is correct, who or what is the true object of Scott’s love: Zelda? Sheilah? Himself? Someone or something else? Discuss your answer.
4. Based on what you have read in *West of Sunset*, do you consider F. Scott Fitzgerald a brave man, a coward, or a bit of both? Explain your reaction.

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



Priya Parmar

Vanessa and Her Sister: A Novel

978-0-804-17637-8 | \$26.00 | Ballantine Books | HC
978-0-385-68133-9 | \$29.95C | Bond Street Books | HC
📞 978-0-804-17638-5
📍 AD: 978-0-553-39846-5 | 📍 CD: 978-0-553-54562-3
📻 LP: 978-0-804-19480-8

READERS' ADVISORY:

For fans of *The Paris Wife* and *Loving Frank* comes a captivating novel that offers an intimate glimpse into the lives of Vanessa Bell, her sister Virginia Woolf, and the circle of intellectuals known as the Bloomsbury Group.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

London, 1905: The city is alight with change, and the Stephen siblings are at the forefront. Vanessa, Virginia, Thoby, and Adrian leave behind their childhood home and take a house in the heart of avant-garde Bloomsbury. There they bring together a glittering circle of bright, outrageous artistic friends who will grow into legend and come to be known as the Bloomsbury Group. Together, this sparkling coterie of artists and intellectuals throw away convention and embrace the wild freedom of being young, single bohemians in London.

But when Vanessa unexpectedly falls in love, her sister feels dangerously abandoned. Eerily possessive, charismatic, manipulative, and brilliant, Virginia has always lived in the shelter of Vanessa's constant attention and encouragement. Without it, she careens toward self-destruction and madness. As tragedy and betrayal threaten to destroy the family, Vanessa must decide if it is finally time to protect her own happiness above all else.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When the novel opens, their father has died and the Stephen siblings have moved from their childhood home in Kensington to bohemian Bloomsbury. Why do you think Vanessa chose to uproot her siblings and move to such a radically different part of town? What sort of change is she trying to bring about for her family?
2. Vanessa tells us that her family value words and books over painting and visual arts. How do you think growing up in such a family affected Vanessa's view of herself as an artist? Would you rather be a writer or a painter?
3. Vanessa has always protected and supported Virginia, and has excused much of her difficult and unsocial behavior. Do you think Vanessa's tolerance gives Virginia permission to behave in the way that she does?

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

Christian Rudder

Dataclysm: Who We Are (When We Think No One's Looking)

978-0-385-34737-2 | \$28.00 | Crown | HC
978-0-345-81258-2 | \$29.95C | RH Canada | HC
978-0-385-34739-6 | \$16.00 | Broadway Books | TR | September 2015
978-0-385-34738-9
AD: 978-0-553-39752-9 | CD: 978-0-553-39751-2

READERS' ADVISORY:
For readers of *Big Data* and *Freakonomics*.



ABOUT THE BOOK:

An irreverent and provocative look at what our online lives reveal about who we really are—and how this deluge of data will transform the science of human behavior. Rudder's writing is smart, funny, and irreverent—Chuck Klosterman meets Nate Silver—and he has invented a new form of statistical storytelling, where numbers become narrative. Printed in two-color and full of amazing charts, graphs, photos, word clouds and other visuals, the book won't look like anything else on the shelf. Visually arresting and full of wit and insight, *Dataclysm* is a new way of seeing ourselves—a brilliant alchemy, in which math is made human and numbers become the narrative of our time.

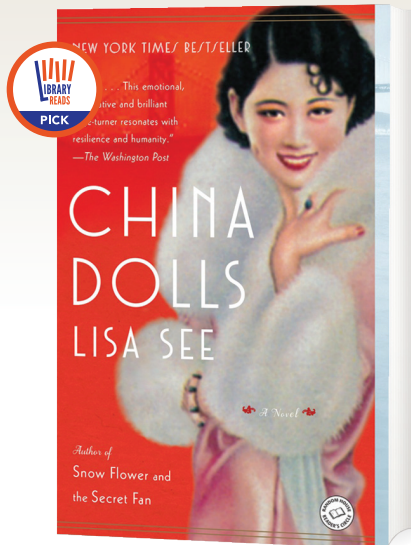
"Fascinating, funny, and occasionally howl-inducing . . . [Rudder] is a quant with soul, and we're lucky to have him." —Elle

"*Dataclysm* is a book full of juicy secrets—secrets about who we love, what we crave, why we like, and how we change each other's minds and lives, often without even knowing it." —Jane McGonigal, author of *Reality Is Broken*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What did you know about Big Data before reading this book? In what ways, if any, has your understanding of it changed?
2. Christian Rudder has said that he doesn't put anything online that he's not comfortable being public and available to anyone. Do you share the same mentality? Why or why not? Is your attitude different when it comes to your children's online activities?
3. If you're a social media user, how much do you think about self-branding? Do you only consider it in the context of potential employers and what they might glean about you online? Do you think consciously about presenting a certain image of yourself to friends? Or even strangers?

For more discussion questions visit: RandomHouse.com



Lisa See

China Dolls: A Novel

978-0-8129-8282-4 | \$16.00/\$19.00C | Random House | TR | March 2015

ISBN 978-0-679-64416-3

ISBN AD: 978-0-385-39418-5 | ISBN CD: 978-0-385-39417-8

ISBN LP: 978-0-804-19438-9

READERS' ADVISORY:

From the beloved bestselling author of *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan* and *Shanghai Girls* comes a novel set in the “Chop Suey Circuit” of San Francisco right before World War II. Perfect for readers of Amy Tan and Jamie Ford.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

It's 1938 in San Francisco: a world's fair is preparing to open, a war is brewing overseas, and the city is alive with possibilities. Grace, Helen, and Ruby meet by chance at the exclusive and glamorous Forbidden City nightclub. Grace Lee, an American-born Chinese girl, has fled the Midwest with nothing but a pair of dancing shoes. Helen Fong lives with her family in Chinatown, where her traditional parents insist that she guard her reputation like a piece of jade. The stunning Ruby Tom challenges the boundaries of convention at every turn with her defiant attitude and no-holds-barred ambition.

The girls become fast friends, relying on one another through unexpected challenges and shifting fortunes. But after the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor, paranoia and suspicion threaten to destroy their lives, and a shocking act of betrayal changes everything.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. The novel opens with a quotation. What does this quotation mean in the context of *China Dolls*? See's novel is filled with secrets—some hidden and not revealed until late in the novel. What were the most important ones? Why were they hidden? Did you agree with how and when they were revealed?
2. “In just these few minutes I'd learned two things about myself: I would never lower myself by faking an accent like my dad did (or Charlie Chan did in the movies), nor would I work naked as a hoochie-coochie dancer. All right, so I had pride. But what price would I have to pay for it?” This is something Grace realized about herself when she just started out as a performer. How did her outlook evolve throughout the novel?
3. Grace's father brutally abused her when she was a young girl. Although See never excused his behavior, how did she gradually reveal to the reader some of the factors that made him the man he was? Did you ever accept him for who he was? In what ways did the abuse Grace suffered at the hands of her father shape her subsequent relationships with men?

For more discussion questions visit: RandomHouse.com

Jane Smiley

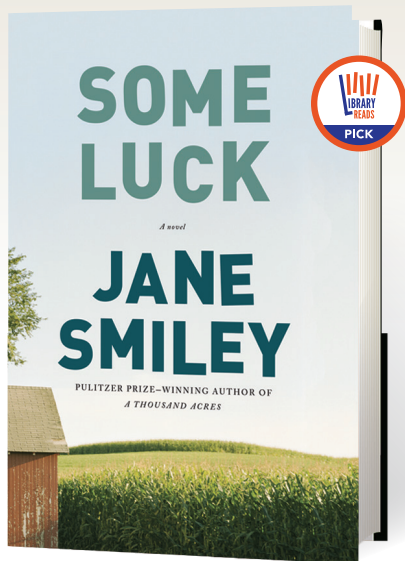
Some Luck: A Novel

978-0-307-70031-5 | \$26.95/\$32.00C | Knopf | HC

📞 978-0-385-35039-6

📍 AD: 978-0-8041-9413-6

READERS' ADVISORY:
For readers of Phillip Meyer,
Louise Erdrich, and Penny Vincenzi.



ABOUT THE BOOK:

From the winner of the Pulitzer Prize: a powerful, engrossing new novel—the life and times of a remarkable family over three transformative decades in America.

On their farm in Denby, Iowa, Rosanna and Walter Langdon abide by time-honored values that they pass on to their five wildly different yet equally remarkable children. Moving from post-World War I America through the early 1950s, *Some Luck* gives us an intimate look at this family's triumphs and tragedies, zooming in on the realities of farm life, while casting—as the children grow up and scatter to New York, California, and everywhere in between—a panoramic eye on the monumental changes that marked the first half of the twentieth century.

“Highly recommended; a lush and grounded reading experience.”

—*Library Journal* (starred review)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think the title means? Whose luck does it refer to? Is it only good or bad luck, or does the word “luck” shift in connotation as the novel goes forward?
2. Each chapter in the novel takes place over the course of one year. How does Smiley use this structure to propel her story?
3. Rosanna assigns personality traits to each of her children in infancy. When those traits prove true, do you think it's because of nurture—her and Walter's influence—or nature—personalities fully formed at birth?
4. How does Smiley use the children's points of view at all ages—including when they are very small—to show their development and coming-of-age in real time? What are some of the memorable traits that carry from infancy to young adulthood for each of the five children?

For more discussion questions visit: [KnopfDoubleday.com/reading-group-center/](https://www.knopfdoubleday.com/reading-group-center/)



Anne Tyler

A Spool of Blue Thread: A Novel

978-1-101-87427-1 | \$25.95 | Knopf | HC
978-0-385-68342-5 | \$29.95C | Bond Street Books | HC
📞 978-1-101-87428-8
📍 AD: 978-0-553-55106-8 | 📍 CD: 978-0-553-55105-1
📻 LP: 978-0-8041-9472-3

READERS' ADVISORY:

For readers of Anna Quindlen, Elizabeth Berg, Jennifer Weiner, Sue Monk Kidd, Nick Hornby, Alice McDermott, and Anita Shreve.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

From the beloved Pulitzer Prize-winning author—now in the fiftieth year of her remarkable career—a brilliantly observed, joyful and wrenching, funny and true new novel that reveals, as only she can, the very nature of a family's life.

"It was a beautiful, breezy, yellow-and-green afternoon." This is the way Abby Whitshank always begins the story of how she fell in love with Red that day in July 1959. The whole family—their two daughters and two sons, their grandchildren, even their faithful old dog—is on the porch, listening contentedly as Abby tells the tale they have heard so many times before. Brimming with luminous insight, humor, and compassion, this capacious novel takes us across three generations of the Whitshanks, their shared stories and long-held secrets, all the unguarded and richly lived moments that combine to define who and what they are as a family.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What are the main themes of the novel? Which did you find most thought-provoking?
2. The novel opens and closes with Denny. Do you think he's the main character? If not, who is?
3. We don't learn the full significance of the title until nearly the end. How did this delay make the metaphor more powerful? What is the metaphor?
4. Chapter 2 begins with the Whitshank family stories: "These stories were viewed as quintessential—as *defining*, in some way—and every family member, including Stem's three-year-old, had heard them told and retold and embroidered and conjectured upon any number of times." Why are these two stories so important? Why is the story of Red's sister important to Red's family?
5. How does Abby's story about the day she fell in love with Red fit into the Whitshank family history? Why isn't it one of the family's two defining stories?

For more discussion questions visit: [KnopfDoubleday.com/reading-group-center/](https://www.knopfdoubleday.com/reading-group-center/)

Lisa Van Allen
The Night Garden:
A Novel

978-0-345-53783-6 | \$15.00/\$18.00C | Ballantine Books | TR
978-0-345-53757-7

READERS' ADVISORY:
For fans of Sarah Addison Allen, Aimee Bender,
and Alice Hoffman, comes a luminous novel
of love, forgiveness, and the possibilities that
arise when you open your heart.



ABOUT THE BOOK:

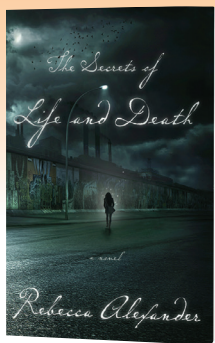
Nestled in the bucolic town of Green Valley in upstate New York, the Pennywort farm appears ordinary, yet at its center lies something remarkable: a wild maze of colorful gardens that reaches beyond the imagination. Local legend says that a visitor can gain answers to life's most difficult problems simply by walking through its lush corridors.

Yet the labyrinth has never helped Olivia Pennywort, the garden's beautiful and enigmatic caretaker. She has spent her entire life on her family's land, harboring a secret that forces her to keep everyone at arm's length. But when her childhood best friend, Sam Van Winkle, returns to the valley, Olivia faces a difficult question: Is the garden maze that she has nurtured all of her life a safe haven or a prison?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Olivia Pennywort has a unique condition that causes anyone she touches to develop a rash. What would you do if you had Olivia's condition? How would you cope if you knew there was no way to get rid of it?
2. Olivia keeps her condition a secret at the risk of being perceived as a monster and driving everyone she knows away. What do you think would happen if Olivia was more open about her condition? Is she right to fear the public's reaction?
3. Because of her condition, Olivia believes she "would be wrong to expect more of her life than what she had." Even though she has everything she needs to survive, do you think this is an acceptable attitude? In what ways can expectations shape how you live your life?
4. At the start, Sam's condition has stripped him of the ability to feel. If you had this condition, which sensations do you think would be the most jarring to lose?
5. When she was younger, Olivia chose not to be with Sam because she was hurting him, even though she still loved him. Did she make the right decision to break up with him? Should she have told him the truth? What would you have done?

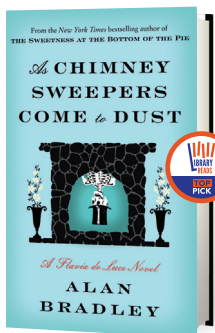
For more discussion questions visit: RandomHouse.com



Rebecca Alexander
The Secrets of Life and Death: A Novel

978-0-804-14068-3 | \$15.00/\$18.00C | Broadway Books | TR
 978-0-804-14069-0

A gripping debut fantasy that seamlessly blends a modern-day tale of magicians who cheat death with a historical story of alchemists and witches grappling with demonic possession. Alexander extensively researched an actual historical meeting between the Elizabethan alchemist John Dee and the infamous serial killer Elisabeth Bathory and seamlessly incorporates real people and events into the narrative. For fans of Deborah Harkness's *A Discovery of Witches*, Magnus Flyte's *City of Dark Magic*, and Paula Brackston's *The Witch's Daughter*.



Alan Bradley
As Chimney Sweepers Come to Dust:
 A Flavia de Luce Novel

978-0-345-53993-9 | \$25.00 | Delacorte Press | HC
 978-0-385-67838-4 | \$29.95C | Doubleday Canada | HC
 978-0-345-53995-3 | ♣ AD: 978-0-449-80764-4 | ♣ CD: 978-0-449-80763-7

Flavia de Luce now takes her remarkable sleuthing prowess to the unexpectedly unsavory world of Canadian boarding schools. The sun has not yet risen on Flavia's first day at Miss Bodycote's Female Academy when a mummified body tumbles out of a bedroom chimney. Now, while attending classes, making friends (and enemies), and assessing the school's stern headmistress and faculty (one of whom is an acquitted murderess), Flavia is on the hunt for the victim's identity and time of death, as well as suspects, motives, and means.

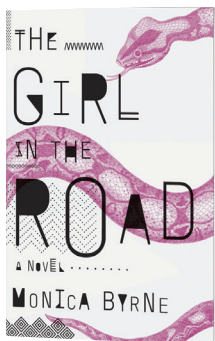


Pierce Brown
Golden Son: Book II of the Red Rising Trilogy

978-0-345-53981-6 | \$25.00/\$28.00C | Del Rey | HC
 978-0-345-53982-3

With shades of *The Hunger Games*, *Ender's Game*, and *Game of Thrones*, debut author Pierce Brown's genre-defying epic *Red Rising* hit the ground running and wasted no time becoming a sensation. *Golden Son* continues the stunning saga of Darrow, a rebel forged by tragedy, battling to lead his oppressed people to freedom.

"The stakes are even higher . . . and the twists and turns of the story are every bit as exciting. The jaw-dropper of an ending will leave readers hungry for the conclusion to Brown's wholly original, completely thrilling saga."
 —*Booklist* (starred review)



Monica Byrne
The Girl in the Road: A Novel

978-0-804-13886-4 | \$15.00/\$18.00C | Broadway Books | TR
 978-0-804-13885-7
 ♣ AD: 978-0-804-16623-2

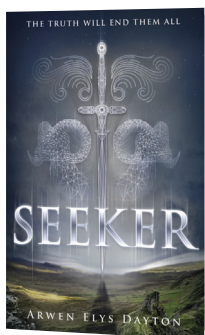
Stunningly original and wildly inventive, Byrne melds the influences of Margaret Atwood, Neil Gaiman, and Erin Morgenstern for a dazzling debut. Meena, a young woman living in a futuristic Mumbai, must flee India and return to Ethiopia, the place of her birth. Having long heard about The Trail—an energy-harvesting bridge that spans the Arabian Sea—she embarks on foot on this forbidden bridge, with its own subculture and rules.



Michael Christie
If I Fall, If I Die: A Novel

978-0-804-14080-5 | \$25.00 | Hogarth | HC
 978-0-771-02365-1 | \$29.95C | McClelland & Stewart | HC
 978-0-804-14081-2

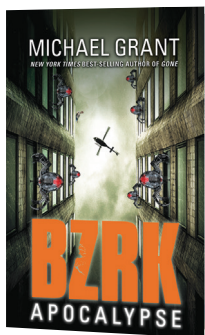
Will has never been to the outside, or gotten to know anyone other than his agoraphobic mother. When Will ventures outside, he meets and befriends Jonah, a quiet boy who introduces Will to skateboarding. For fans of *Tell the Wolves I'm Home*, *The Family Fang*, and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*.



Arwen Elys Dayton
Seeker

978-0-385-74407-2 | \$18.99/\$21.99C | Delacorte BYFR | HC
 978-0-375-99148-6 | \$21.99/\$25.99C | GLB
 978-0-385-37857-4 | ♻️ AD: 978-0-8041-6761-1 | ♻️ CD: 978-0-8041-6760-4

For readers of *A Game of Thrones* and *The Hunger Games* comes an epic new series. The night Quin Kincaid takes her Oath, she will become what she has trained to be her entire life. She will become a Seeker. This is her legacy, and it is an honor. As a Seeker, Quin will fight beside her two closest companions, Shinobu and John, to protect the weak and the wronged. Together they will stand for light in a shadowy world. And she'll be with the boy she loves—who's also her best friend. But the night Quin takes her Oath, everything changes. Being a Seeker is not what she thought. Her family is not what she thought. Even the boy she loves is not who she thought. And now it's too late to walk away.

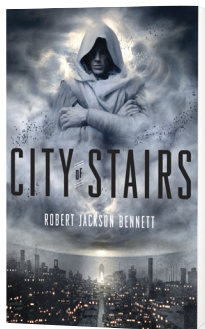


Michael Grant
BZRK Apocalypse

978-1-60684-408-3 | \$18.99/\$21.00C | Egmont USA | HC
 978-1-60684-409-0

The *Matrix* meets *Inner Space* in this third book in the BZRK trilogy from *New York Times* bestselling author Michael Grant.

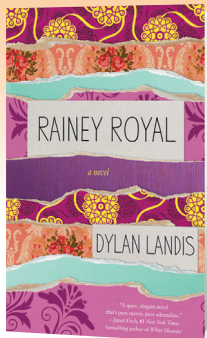
The staggering conclusion to the BZRK trilogy, from the author of *Gone*. The members of BZRK are preparing for their final stand. Noah and Sadie have seen death, and it holds no fear for them. Madness does, though. And losing each other. But they will not sit back, the only witnesses to an invisible apocalypse. The world is being destroyed from the inside out. It's time for them to fight to the last, in the streets and in the nano. This is a story with both thrills and heart, packed with the author's trademark jaw-dropping set pieces and pace.



Robert Jackson Bennett
City of Stairs

978-0-804-13717-1 | \$15.00/\$18.00C | Broadway Books | TR
 978-804-13718-8

Alan Furst meets Gene Wolfe: This is a densely plotted, carefully written, and marvelously atmospheric spy novel, set in a stunningly imaginative world infused with a palpable weight of history. Bulikov, a colonial outpost of the world's new geopolitical power with a divine history is home to Shara Divani. Officially, the quiet mousy woman is just another lowly diplomat sent by Bulikov's oppressors. Unofficially, Shara is one of her country's most accomplished spymasters—dispatched to investigate the brutal murder of a seemingly harmless historian. For fans of Stephen King, Neil Gaiman, and Ray Bradbury.

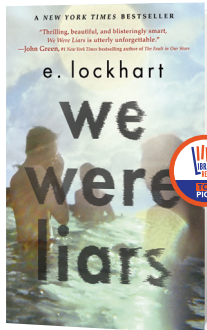


Dylan Landis **Rainey Royal: A Novel**

978-1-61695-452-9 | \$25.00/\$25.00C | Soho Press | HC
 978-1-61695-453-6

For fans of *Olive Kitteridge* and *A Visit from the Goon Squad*. Greenwich Village, 1970s: Rainey Royal, fourteen years old, talented, and troubled, lives in a once-decadent, now decaying brownstone with her father, a jazz musician with a cultish personality. Her mother has abandoned the family, and Rainey fends off advances from her father's best friend while trying desperately to nurture her own creative drives and create a substitute family. She's a rebel, even a criminal, but she's also deeply vulnerable, fighting to figure out how to put back the boundaries her life has knocked down, and more than that, struggling to learn how to be an artist and a person in a broken world.

For discussion questions visit: DylanLandis.com



E. Lockhart **We Were Liars**

978-0-385-74126-2 | \$17.99/\$19.99C | Delacorte Press | HC
 978-0-375-98994-0 | \$20.99/\$24.00C | GLB
 978-0-375-98440-2
 AD: 978-0-8041-6842-7 | CD: 978-0-8041-6841-0

A beautiful and distinguished family. A private island. A brilliant, damaged girl; a passionate, political boy. A group of four friends—the Liars—whose friendship turns destructive. A revolution. An accident. A secret. Lies upon lies. True love. The truth.

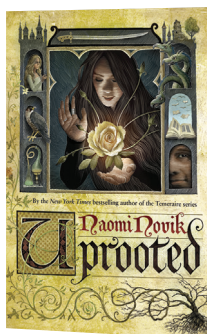
We Were Liars is a modern, sophisticated suspense novel from *New York Times* bestselling author, National Book Award finalist, and Printz Award honoree E. Lockhart. Read it. And if anyone asks you how it ends, just LIE.



Jennifer Niven **All the Bright Places: A Novel**

978-0-385-75588-7 | \$17.99/\$20.99C | Knopf Books for Young Reads | HC
 978-0-385-75589-4 | \$20.99/\$24.99C | GLB
 978-0-385-75590-0 | AD: 978-0-553-55222-5 | CD: 978-0-553-55221-8

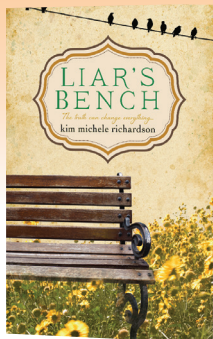
The Fault in Our Stars meets *Eleanor and Park* in this exhilarating and heart-wrenching love story about a girl who learns to live from a boy who intends to die. When Finch and Violet meet on the ledge of the bell tower at school, it's unclear who saves whom. And when they pair up on a project to discover the "natural wonders" of their state, both Finch and Violet make more important discoveries: It's only with Violet that Finch can be himself—a weird, funny, live-out-loud guy who's not such a freak after all. And it's only with Finch that Violet can forget to count away the days and start living them. But as Violet's world grows, Finch's begins to shrink.



Naomi Novik **Uprooted**

978-0-804-17903-4 | \$25.00/\$29.95C | Del Rey | HC | June 2015
 978-0-804-17904-1
 AD: 978-0-553-41009-9

The author of the bestselling and critically acclaimed Temeraire novels introduces a bold new world rooted in folk stories and legends, as elemental as a Grimm fairy tale. Agnieszka loves her quiet village. But the corrupted Wood stands on the border, full of malevolent power. Her people rely on a wizard known only as the Dragon to keep its powers at bay. But he demands a terrible price for his help: one young woman handed over to serve him for ten years, a fate almost as terrible as falling to the Wood.



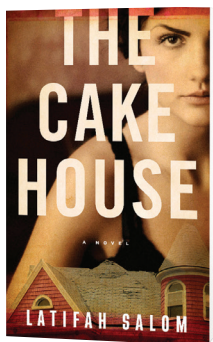
Kim Michele Richardson
Liar's Bench

978-1-61773-733-6 | \$15.00/\$16.95C | Kensington | TR | April 2015
 ☎ 978-1-61773-734-3

In 1972, on Mudas Summers' seventeenth birthday, her beloved Mama, Ella, is found hanging from the rafters of their home. Most people in Peckinpaw, Kentucky, assume that Ella's no-good husband did the deed. Others think Ella grew tired of his abuse and did it herself. Muddy is determined to find out for sure either way, especially once she finds strange papers hidden amongst her mama's possessions.

For fans of *The Secret Life of Bees*.

For more information visit: www.KimMicheleRichardson.com



Latifah Salom
The Cake House: A Novel

978-0-345-80651-2 | \$15.00/\$18.00C | Vintage | TR | March 2015
 ☎ 978-0-345-80652-9

Rosaura Douglas's father committed suicide—or at least that's what they are telling her. Now she is forced to live in a house she calls "the Cake House"—a garish pink edifice in the wealthy part of town. It's the house where her father died, and owned by her mysterious new stepfather, Claude. But when her father's ghost appears and warns Rosie not to trust Claude, Rosie begins to notice cracks in her new family's carefully constructed facade. As her father's ghost becomes increasingly violent—and the secrets haunting the halls of The Cake House thicken—Rosie wonders who, if anyone, is worth trusting.

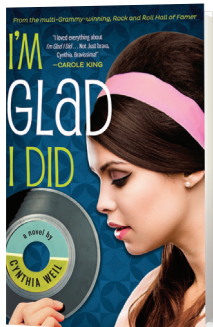


Neil Smith
Boo: A Novel

978-0-8041-7136-6 | \$15.00 | Vintage | TR | May 2015
 978-0-345-80814-1 | \$21.00C | Knopf Canada | TR | ☎ 978-0-8041-7137-3

One minute, Oliver "Boo" Dalrymple is next to his locker at school; the next he finds himself in "Town," an afterlife exclusively for thirteen year-olds. As Boo works to acclimate himself to his new home, another boy from his hometown—Johnny—appears, seemingly a victim of the same school shooter. A social outcast back in America, Boo quickly finds the friendship and joy that he never knew in life, but as he and Johnny search for the identity of their mysterious murderer, possibly now a fellow resident of Town, they uncover a truth that will have profound repercussions for them both.

For readers of Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* and William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*.



Cynthia Weil
I'm Glad I Did: A Novel

978-1-61695-356-0 | \$17.99/\$17.99C | Soho Teen | HC
 ☎ 978-1-61695-357-7

JJ Greene, a gifted 16-year-old songwriter, defies her lawyer parents by secretly applying for a job in the famed Brill Building—the epicenter of songwriting for a new genre called rock-n-roll. But their warnings about the evils of the music industry prove far darker than she imagined when she finds herself at the heart of a cover-up that involves hidden identity, theft, and possibly murder.

The author has been inducted into both the Songwriters Hall of Fame and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. She is the lyricist of classic songs like "On Broadway," "Here You Come Again," "We Gotta Get Out Of This Place," and "You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling," (The most performed song of the 20th century).

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