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VINTAGE

ANCHOR





A VISIT FROM THE GOON SQUAD

Jennifer Egan

PULITZER
PRIZE
WINNER

National Book Critics Circle Award Winner
Nationwide Best Book of the Year
One of the 2011 *TIME* 100

“Pitch-perfect.... Darkly, rippingly funny.... Egan possesses a satirist’s eye and a romance novelist’s heart.” —*The New York Times Book Review*

Bennie is an aging former punk rocker and record executive. Sasha is the passionate, troubled young woman he employs. Here Jennifer Egan brilliantly reveals their pasts, along with the inner lives of a host of other characters whose paths intersect with theirs. With music pulsing on every page, *A Visit from the Goon Squad* is a startling, exhilarating novel of self-destruction and redemption.

\$14.95 (Can. \$16.95) • 978-0-307-47747-7 • eBook: 978-0-307-59362-7

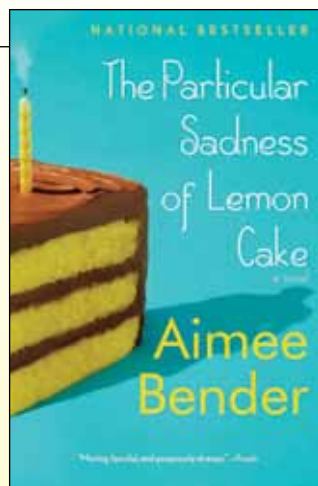
Jennifer Egan on Writing *A Visit from the Goon Squad*

Readers of *A Visit from the Goon Squad* are sometimes startled at first to find that each of its thirteen chapters has both a different main character, and a different mood, tone, and feel from the other chapters. My thinking was: if this novel is made of parts—rather than one central story—why not take full advantage of that structure and make the parts as unlike one another as they can possibly be, while still fusing together? I wanted to provide the greatest possible range of reading experiences: some parts of the book are unabashedly tragic; others are satiric; a few moments are openly farcical. One chapter is written in the form of a celebrity profile; another is in Power Point. I tried writing a chapter in epic poetry, but it turns out that to write epic poetry, you have to be a poet.

For more from Jennifer Egan, or to set up a phone chat with your book club, visit www.ReadingGroupCenter.com/egan



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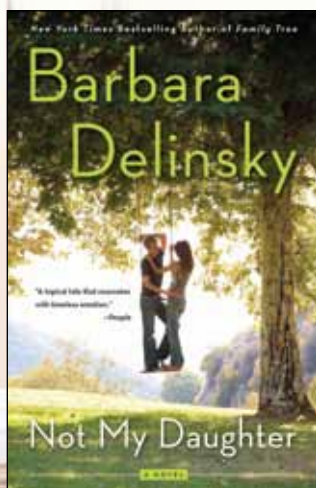
THE PARTICULAR SADNESS OF LEMON CAKE

Aimee Bender

“Moving, fanciful, and gorgeously strange.” —*People*

On the eve of her ninth birthday, unassuming Rose Edelstein bites into her mother’s homemade lemon-chocolate cake and discovers she has a magical gift: she can taste her mother’s emotions in the slice. To her horror, she finds that her cheerful mother tastes of despair. Soon, she’s privy to the secret knowledge that most families keep hidden. But there are some family secrets that even her cursed taste buds can’t discern.

\$15.00 (Can. \$17.00) • 978-0-385-72096-0 • eBook: 978-0-385-53322-5



NOT MY DAUGHTER

Barbara Delinsky

“A topical tale that resonates with timeless emotion.” —People

When Susan Tate's seventeen-year-old daughter, Lily, announces she is pregnant, Susan is stunned. Then comes word of two more pregnancies among other high school juniors who happen to be Lily's best friends. The town turns to talk of a pact. As fingers start pointing, the emotional ties between mothers and daughters are stretched to breaking in an emotionally wrenching story of love and forgiveness.

\$14.95 (Can. \$16.95) • 978-0-7679-2896-0

• eBook: 978-0-385-53263-1

Barbara Delinsky on Why Reading Groups Matter

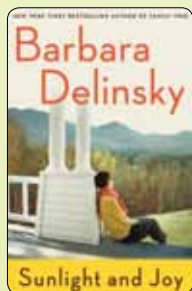
I've been a book group enthusiast for twenty-three years, which is how long I've belonged to one. We meet monthly, take turns hosting and leading the discussion, and pick our books for the year over wine and dinner each June. To this day, our list is eclectic, including many books that I never would have read on my own, but isn't that one of the points of a book group—to nudge us beyond our immediate comfort zone? Some months, I've gone to book group desperate for the other members to help me make sense of a book. Other months, I've felt indifferent about a book until members bring it to life for me. Our best discussions are often the ones to which we bring pieces of our own very diverse lives.

Actually, some of our most memorable discussions have been on books we hated. That always makes me smile. Back in my photography days,

one of my teachers said that a good photograph was one that evoked emotion, be it good or bad. The same is true of a book, which is one of the reasons I love it when reading groups discuss my books. I write in layers; these groups bring those layers alive in ways that no one member on her own can do. The more heated the discussion, the better.

*It's not that I write books with reading groups in mind, rather that reading groups are so ingrained in my psyche that the finished product works for them. **Not My Daughter** makes us think about how we define a good mother. **Escape** makes us think about the evolution of our dreams as we live and grow. Both make us think about responsibility, yes, indeed, sometimes outside our comfort zones. So hate me for that, but if one of my books has made you think, I'm happy.*

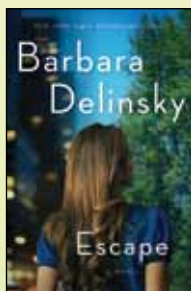
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SUNLIGHT AND JOY

A heartwarming story about a couple compelled to relearn how to appreciate each other. Includes a conversation with the author.

An original short story only available as an eBook: 978-0-307-94757-4



ESCAPE

This luminous novel follows a woman's desire to abandon the endless obligation of work and marriage for passion and romance—and her surprising discovery.

Just published in hardcover and as an eBook and coming in paperback in 2012

• Hardcover: 978-0-385-53272-3

• eBook: 978-0-385-53273-0

• Paperback (2012): 978-0-307-47597-8

RECIPE BY THE BOOK—Satisfy your book club's hunger with this recipe for Lemon Cake (Cake au citron) from Joël Robuchon's *The Complete Robuchon*. Serves 6-8

INGREDIENTS:

½ cup milk, warmed in a small saucepan
The grated zest of 1 organic lemon
10 tbsp butter, plus a little extra for greasing the pan
2½ cups flour, plus a little extra for flouring the greased pan
2 cups confectioners' sugar, plus 1 heaping tbsp if you decide to make syrup
3 large eggs
1 tsp baking powder
1 tbsp lemon juice (optional)
Special equipment: round cake pan, about 10 inches

Preparation: 15 minutes • Cooking: 50 minutes

Dice the butter and melt it in the microwave at low power.

Use a pastry brush to grease the bottom and sides of the cake pan with butter. Sprinkle the pan with flour, turn it all around to spread the flour evenly, and tap out any excess.

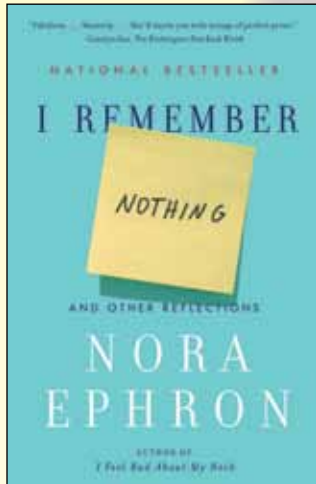
Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Sift the sugar into a bowl. Add the lemon zest. Mix the sugar and zest well with your fingers, then whisk in the eggs. When the eggs and sugar are thoroughly combined, whisk in the melted butter and warm milk. Add the flour and baking powder, whisking constantly throughout.

Pour the batter into the prepared cake pan and bake for 8 minutes. Lower the heat to 300°F and cook about 40 minutes more. The cake is finished when the blade of a knife inserted in its center comes out dry.

Remove the finished cake from the oven, unmold it onto a cooling rack, and let cool.

Just after cooking you can, if you like, use a pastry brush to coat the cake with syrup. Just boil 4 tablespoons water with 1 heaping tablespoon confectioners' sugar for a couple of minutes. Allow it to cool, then stir in 1 tablespoon lemon juice. Brush the syrup on the still-warm cake.



© Ilona Lieberman

I REMEMBER NOTHING Nora Ephron

One of *People Magazine's* Top 10 Books

“Fabulous.... Masterly.... She’ll dazzle you with strings of perfect prose.”

—*The Washington Post Book World*

Nora Ephron returns with her first book since the astounding success of *I Feel Bad About My Neck*, taking a cool, hard, hilarious look at the past, the present, and the future, bemoaning the vicissitudes of modern life, and recalling with her signature clarity and wisdom everything she hasn’t (yet) forgotten.

Filled with insights and observations that instantly ring true—and could have come only from Nora Ephron—*I Remember Nothing* is pure joy.

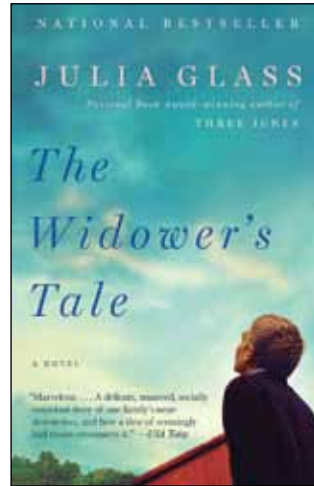
\$14.00 (Can. \$16.00) • 978-0-307-74280-3 • eBook: 978-0-307-59562-1

Thirteen of the Twenty-Five Things People Have a Shocking Capacity to Be Surprised by Over and Over Again

1. Journalists sometimes make things up.
2. Journalists sometimes get things wrong.
3. Almost all books that are published as memoirs were initially written as novels, and then the agent/editor said, This might work better as a memoir.
4. Beautiful young women sometimes marry ugly, old rich men.
5. In business there is no such thing as synergy in the good sense of the term.
6. Freedom of the press belongs to the man who owns one.
7. Nothing written in today’s sports pages makes sense to anyone who didn’t read yesterday’s sports pages.
8. There is no explaining the stock market but people try.
9. The Democrats are deeply disappointing.
10. Movies have no political effect whatsoever.
11. Men cheat.
12. A lot of people take the Bible literally.
13. Pornography is the opiate of the masses.

Read more from Nora Ephron and download a reading group guide at www.ReadingGroupCenter.com/ephron

THE WIDOWER’S TALE Julia Glass



“Marvelous....

A delicate, nuanced, socially conscious story of one family’s near-destruction, and how a slew of seemingly bad moves reconnects it.”

—*USA Today*

Seventy-year-old Percy Darling is settling happily into retirement: reading novels, watching old movies, and swimming naked in his pond. But his routines are disrupted when he is persuaded to let a locally beloved preschool take

over his barn. With equal parts affection and humor, Julia Glass spins a captivating tale about a man who can no longer remain aloof from his community, his two grown daughters, or—to his great shock—the precarious joy of falling in love.

\$15.00 (Can. \$17.00) • 978-0-307-45610-6

• eBook: 978-0-307-37943-6

LITERARY WIDOWERS

Paul Dombey — *Dombey and Son* by Charles Dickens — An ambitious and heartless merchant whose wife dies in childbirth, leaving him to raise their fragile son, and an off-neglected older daughter.

Thomas Stone — *Cutting for Stone* by Abraham Verghese — While they’re not technically married, the love of his life dies in childbirth, leaving Thomas Stone utterly bereft and causing him to flee the Ethiopian hospital they called home and abandon their twin sons.

Major Ernest Pettigrew — *Major Pettigrew’s Last Stand* by Helen Simonson — A true English gentleman falls in love with a Pakistani shopkeeper over literature and the loss of their respective spouses.

Max Morden — *The Sea* by John Banville — After the recent loss of his wife, Max returns to the seaside town where he spent summers in his youth and where he met the Graces, a family that introduced him to both love and death.

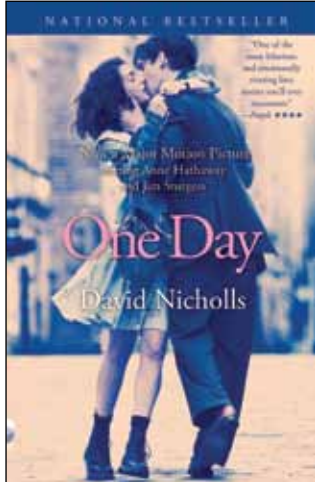
Garret Blake — *Message in a Bottle* by Nicholas Sparks — The author of the titular message, who throws a love letter to his lost wife into the sea, only to meet and fall for its unintentional recipient.

Mike Noonan — *Bag of Bones* by Stephen King — Suffering from grief-induced writer’s block, even four years after his wife’s sudden death, Mike returns to his summerhouse, the setting of increasingly frequent and vivid nightmares, to find that the town is now in the clutches of a powerful millionaire.

For more from Julia Glass, and to download a guide or to set up a phone chat with your book club, visit www.ReadingGroupCenter.com/glass

Read the Book, See the Movie, and Have a Great Discussion

A Major Motion Picture Starring Anne Hathaway and Jim Sturgess



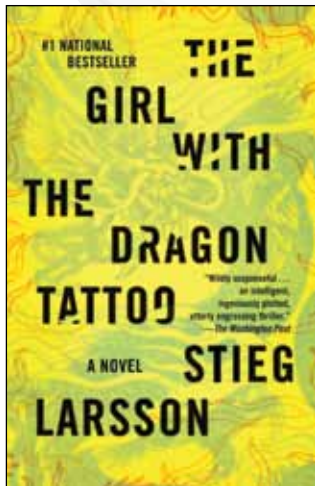
"One of the most hilarious and emotionally riveting love stories you'll ever encounter." —*People*

It's 1988 and Dexter Mayhew and Emma Morley have only just met. But after only one day together, they cannot stop thinking about one another. Over twenty years, snapshots of that relationship are revealed on the same day—July 15th—of each year. Dex and Em face squabbles and fights, hopes and missed opportunities, laughter and tears. And as the true meaning of this one crucial day is revealed, they must come to grips with the nature of love and life itself.

In theaters now

\$14.95 (Can. \$16.95) • 978-0-307-94671-3 • eBook: 978-0-307-73930-8

A Holiday 2011 Major Motion Picture



"Wildly suspenseful... an intelligent, ingeniously plotted, utterly engrossing thriller."

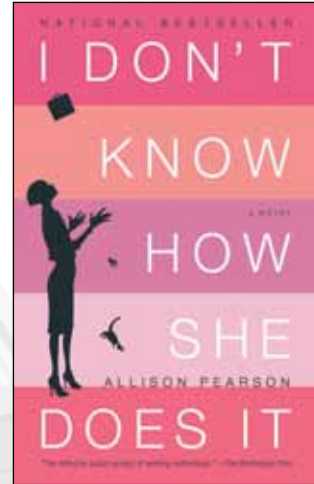
—*The Washington Post*

An international publishing sensation, Stieg Larsson's *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* combines murder mystery, family saga, love story, and financial intrigue into one satisfyingly complex and entertainingly atmospheric novel.

In theaters December 21, 2011

\$14.95 • 978-0-307-45454-6 • eBook: 978-0-307-27211-9

Soon to Be a Major Motion Picture Starring Sarah Jessica Parker, Greg Kinnear, Pierce Brosnan, Olivia Munn, and Christina Hendricks



"Fast...funny... heartbreaking.... You'll root for Kate the whole length of her roller coaster ride."

—*The New York Times Book Review*

Delightfully smart and heartbreakingly poignant, Allison Pearson's smash debut novel exploded onto bestseller lists as "The national anthem for working mothers" (*O, The Oprah Magazine*). With panache, wisdom, and uproarious wit, *I Don't Know How She Does It* brilliantly dramatizes the dilemma of every working mom.

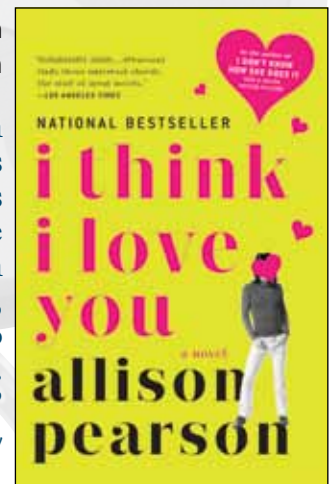
In theaters September 16, 2011

\$14.95 (Can. \$16.95) • 978-0-307-94856-4
• eBook: 978-1-4000-4012-4

Also from
Allison Pearson

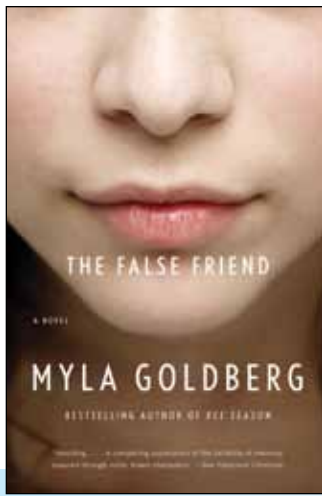
"Allison Pearson grabs 1970s nostalgia by its weepy, pop-culture heartstrings in *I Think I Love You*, an homage to teen crushes.... Sweetly told."

—*USA Today*



Allison Pearson's funny and moving new novel takes us on an unforgettable journey into first love, and reminds us of how the ardor of our youth can ignite our adult lives.

Available in Paperback September 2011 • \$15.00 (Can. \$17.00)
• 978-1-4000-7691-8 • eBook: 978-0-307-59540-9



THE FALSE FRIEND **Myla Goldberg**

“Suspenseful and smart...a timely take on the fraught emotional terrain of American schoolgirls.” —People

From the bestselling author of *Bee Season* comes an astonishingly complex psychological drama. Leaders of a mercurial clique of girls, Celia and Djuna reigned mercilessly over their three followers. One afternoon, they decided to walk home along a forbidden road. Djuna disappeared, and for twenty years Celia blocked out how it happened. Everyone assumed Djuna had been abducted, though neither she nor her abductor were ever found. Celia's desperate search to understand what happened to Djuna has powerful consequences. A deeply resonant and emotionally charged story, *The False Friend* explores the adults that children become—leading us to question the truths that we accept or reject, as well as the lies to which we succumb.

\$14.95 (Can. \$16.95) • 978-0-307-39070-7 • eBook: 978-0-385-53363-8

FAMOUS LITERARY FRENEMIES

***The Little Girls* by Elizabeth Bowen —**

Dinah, Clare, and Sheila—Former childhood best friends reunite in old age to uncover a long lost chest only to discover they are no longer the friends they used to be.

***The House of Mirth* by Edith Wharton —** Lily Bart and Bertha Dorset—Lily accepts an invitation from Bertha to join her and her husband on a cruise. All starts well but ends badly when Bertha accuses Lily of sleeping with her husband to cover up her own infidelity. As a result Lily is disinherited and, ultimately, ruined.

***Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro —** Kathy and Ruth—The two both fall for their fellow classmate, Tommy. Ruth, the stronger personality of the two dates

Tommy for years, despite knowing that he and Kathy are truly in love. Her reason for keeping them apart? She didn't want to be left out.

***Cat's Eye* by Margaret Atwood —** Elaine and Cordelia — Elaine reflects on her childhood, during which she was both tortured and beloved by Cordelia. Their strange friend-enemy relationship has profound effects on her future relationships.

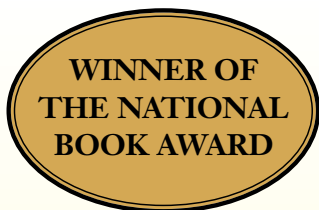
***Something Borrowed* by Emily Giffin —** Rachel and Darcy—Friends since they were four, Rachel and Darcy had been one-upping each other their whole lives. But when Rachel sleeps with Darcy's fiancé, the competition is taken to a whole new level.



Also available from Myla Goldberg, the national bestseller, perennial book club favorite, and basis for a major motion picture: *Bee Season*.

\$13.95 (Can. \$18.95) • 978-0-385-49880-7
• eBook: 978-1-4000-3276-1

For more on Myla Goldberg and to download a reading group guide or schedule a chat with the author visit:
www.ReadingGroupCenter.com/goldberg



LORD OF MISRULE **Jaimy Gordon**

PEN/Faulkner Award Finalist
A *Washington Post* and *Time* Magazine
Best Book of the Year

“Assured, exotic and uncategorizable...an incontrovertible winner, a bona fide bolt from the blue.” —The New York Times

A brilliant novel that captures the dusty, dark, and beautiful world of small-time horse racing, where trainers, jockeys, grooms, and grifters vie for what little luck is offered at a run-down West Virginia track.

\$15.00 (Can. \$17.00) • 978-0-307-94673-7 • eBook: 978-0-307-94674-4

Jaimy Gordon on People Who Inspired *Lord of Misrule*

More than I was allowed to know when I was a girl, I am the product of two usually warring ways of looking at the world—and so, I think, is my novel, *Lord of Misrule*.

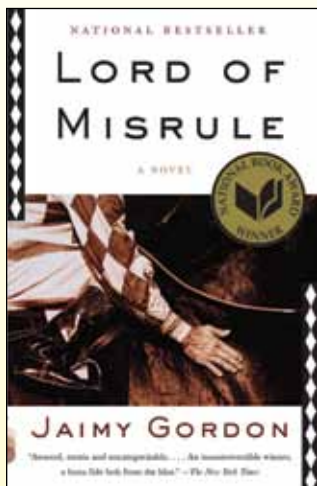
Both my parents were Jewish, the children of immigrants who arrived in America shortly before the turn of the century, but my father was prep school, military school and Ivy educated. His mother, having made a fortune from two elegant hat shops by the time she was thirty, went to lectures and concerts and museums and so at least mimicked the life of the cultured upper class in New York City, where she lived for the rest of her life.

My mother's mother was a garment worker who, like my father's mother, made hats, but on the factory end, not management. My mother was raised by her grandparents on Patterson Park Avenue in East Baltimore, among seven aunts and uncles, none of whom, as far as I know, ever read a book, in a horseplaying household where shabbos ended in a poker game

and a number of shady enterprises were tolerated, so that two uncles went to jail and one was eventually murdered.

I had an excellent education, and never wanted to be anything but a writer. All the same, I was drawn to a wild-eyed horse trainer and the racetrack where he ran his horses, in Charles Town, West Virginia, in my twenties. *Lord of Misrule* is a novel about the seediest possible racetrack, created by a writer (me) who has the highest possible literary aspirations, and my language surely shows it. The characters in *Lord of Misrule* (especially the loan shark Two Tie) talk like my Baltimore uncles, except for the ancient groom Medicine Ed, who, being from South Carolina like most poor black folk I knew in Baltimore when I was growing up, talks like my great grandparents' neighbors on Patterson Park Avenue in the fifties, after most white families had departed.

And that's the consummately hybrid world of *Lord of Misrule*.



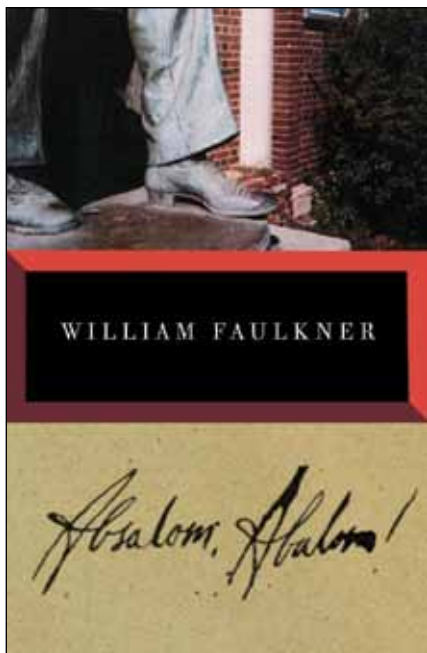
To hear more from Jaimy Gordon, download a reading group guide or schedule a chat with the author visit: **www.ReadingGroupCenter.com/Gordon**

Rediscover the Great American Fiction of WILLIAM FAULKNER

Featuring Stunning New Covers and, For the First Time, Available as eBooks

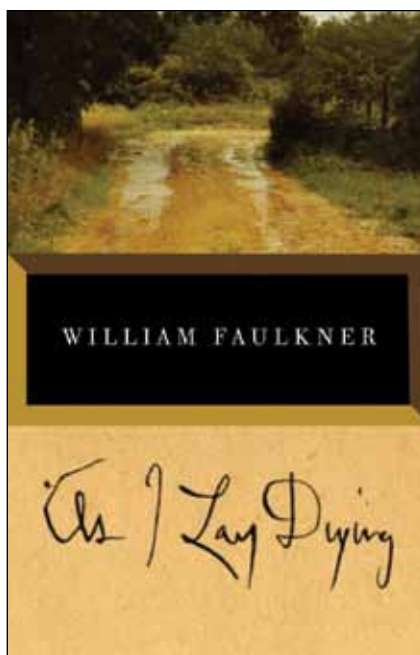
“No man has ever put more of his heart and soul into the written word than did William Faulkner. If you want to know all you can about that heart and soul, the fiction where he put it is still right there.”

—EUDORA WELTY



Absalom, Absalom! is Faulkner's epic tale of Thomas Sutpen, an enigmatic stranger who comes to Jefferson, Mississippi, in the early 1830s to wrest his mansion out of the muddy bottoms of the north Mississippi wilderness. He was a man, Faulkner said, “who wanted sons and the sons destroyed him.”

\$15.00 (Can. \$17.00) • 978-0-679-73218-1 • eBook: 978-0-679-64143-8

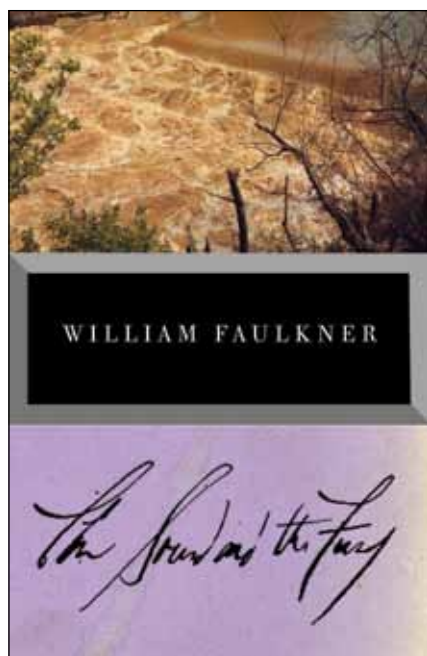


“I set out deliberately to write a tour-de-force. Before I ever put pen to paper and set down the first word I knew that the last word would be almost where the last period would fall.”

—WILLIAM FAULKNER,
on *As I Lay Dying*

As I Lay Dying is Faulkner's harrowing account of the Bundren family's odyssey across the Mississippi countryside to bury Addie, their wife and mother. Narrated in turn by each of the family members—including Addie herself—as well as others the novel ranges in mood, from dark comedy to the deepest pathos.

\$14.00 (Can. \$16.00)
• 978-0-679-73225-9
• eBook: 978-0-307-79216-7



The Sound and the Fury is the tragedy of the Compson family, featuring some of the most memorable characters in literature: beautiful, rebellious Caddy; the manchild Benjy; haunted, neurotic Quentin; Jason, the brutal cynic; and Dilsey, their black servant. Their lives fragmented and harrowed by history and legacy, the character's voices and actions mesh to create what is arguably Faulkner's masterpiece and one of the greatest novels of the twentieth century.

\$14.00 (Can. \$16.00) • 978-0-679-73224-2
• eBook: 978-0-307-79215-0

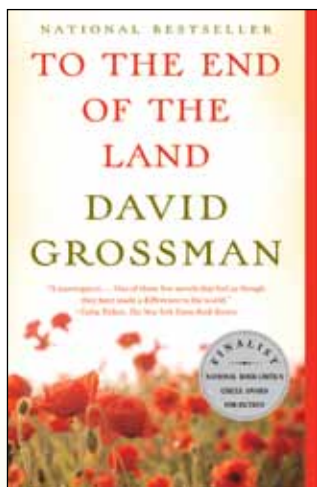
Complement your meeting with a Southern feast of fried chicken, barbecue, slaw, key lime bars, cocktails, and other delicious food from Faulkner's south. Find delectable Southern recipes in *Down Home with the Neelys: A Southern Family Cookbook* by Patrick and Geena Neely and Paula Disbrowe 978-0-307-26994-2.

Visit www.vintagebooks.com for a complete list of works by William Faulkner and to print reading group guides.

TO THE END OF THE LAND

David Grossman

A *New York Times* Notable Book
A *New Yorker*, *Christian Science Monitor*,
Washington Post, *Economist*, *New Republic*
and *New Yorker* Best Book of the Year



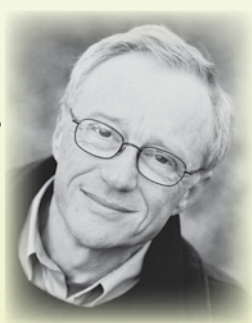
“A panorama of breathtaking emotional force.... A masterpiece.... One of the few novels that feel as though they have made a difference to the world.” —*The New York Times Book Review*

An extraordinary novel of family life—the greatest human drama—and the cost of war, from one of Israel’s most acclaimed writers. Ora, a middle-aged Israeli mother, is on the verge of celebrating her son

Ofer’s release from army service when he returns to the front for a major offensive. In a fit of preemptive grief and magical thinking, she sets out for a hike in the Galilee. Recently estranged from her husband, Ilan, she drags along an unlikely companion: their former best friend and her former lover Avram, a brilliant artistic spirit turned hermit. As Ora and Avram sleep out in the hills, avoiding all news from the front, she gives him the gift of Ofer, word by word. Grossman’s rich imagining of a family in love and crisis makes for one of the great antiwar novels of our time.

\$15.00 • 978-0-307-47640-1 • eBook: 978-0-307-47640-1

© Peter-Andreas Hassiepen



**David Grossman on
the Significance of Writing
To the End of the Land**

I began writing this book in May 2003, six months before the end of my oldest son Yonatan’s military service, and a year and a half before his younger brother, Uri, enlisted.... At the time, I had the feeling—or rather, a wish—that the book I was writing would protect him. On Aug. 12, 2006, in the final hours of the Second Lebanon War, Uri was killed in Southern Lebanon.... He was two weeks short of his twenty-first birthday and three months from the end of his Army service. He had planned on traveling around the world, then studying to be an actor.... By that time, most of this book was already written. What changed, above all, was the echo of the reality in which the final draft was written.



THE LAKE SHORE LIMITED

Sue Miller

A *Washington Post*
Best Book of the Year

**“Exquisite....
Gorgeously drawn
and told with stark
honesty.”**

—*The Washington Post*

The mesmerizing new novel from the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Senator’s Wife*—the story of four indelible characters whose lives intersect through an on stage drama. Wilhelmina (Billy) Gertz is a well-known playwright whose newest drama imagines the story of a man waiting to hear if his estranged wife has survived a terrorist bombing aboard a train. As her life intersects with three other unforgettable characters, Billy’s play—the emotion behind its genesis and its powerful performance—forms the thread that binds them all together. *The Lake Shore Limited* explores the potency of sex; the failure of men and women to understand each other; the hunger for a different life. It is a moving love story and a tale of connection and loss.

\$15.00 (Can. \$17.00) • 978-0-307-27670-4 • eBook: 978-0-307-59355-9

Q: Was there one event in particular that sparked the idea for *The Lake Shore Limited*?

A: Yes. The spark came from a friend who had a relationship that would have ended sooner than it did had not her lover’s brother died on 9/11. While this situation is not like the one I created for Billy, my fictional playwright, the situation started me thinking about the far reach of such an event; and the variety of responses that play out around it, even at some distance. And the way in which the responses may be based in feelings that might be not the expected ones—i.e., the way in which sometimes we’re called on to enact something we don’t feel, and the discomfort and sense of alienation from ourselves that comes from that.



© Mary Walsh

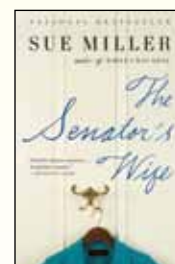
Also Available from
Sue Miller:

The Senator’s Wife

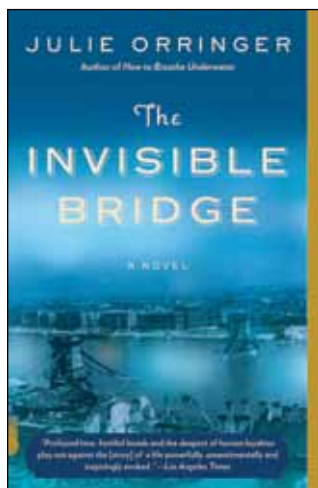
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THE INVISIBLE BRIDGE Julie Orringer

“Profound love, familial bonds and the deepest of human loyalties play out against the backdrop of unimaginable cruelty.... A stunning first novel.” —*Los Angeles Times*

Paris, 1937. Andras Lévi, a Hungarian-Jewish architecture student, arrives from Budapest with a scholarship, a single suitcase, and a mysterious letter he promised to deliver. But when he falls into a complicated relationship with the letter's recipient, he becomes privy to a secret that will alter the course of his—and his family's—history. From the small Hungarian town of Konyár to the grand opera houses of Budapest and Paris, from the despair of Carpathian winter to an unimaginable life in labor camps, *The Invisible Bridge* tells the story of a family shattered and remade in history's darkest hour.

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Armchair Adventurer

Explore the historical landmarks key to the story and the characters.

PARIS

L'École Spéciale d'Architecture—The L'École Spéciale d'Architecture was founded in 1865 as an alternative to the École des Beaux-Arts. Teachers there included Auguste Perret and Pierre Vago, both of whom appear in fictionalized form in *The Invisible Bridge*.

Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt—In 1898, Sarah Bernhardt herself ran the theater, and the name was changed in her honor. During the German occupation, the theater was renamed Théâtre de la Cité; after the war it was renamed again, Théâtre des Nations. Today it is known as Théâtre de la Ville and it hosts world-class theater, dance, and music events.

Bois de Vincennes—Bois de Vincennes is a large public park in eastern Paris that was once a royal hunting ground. The park is home to a

working organic farm, a racetrack, a zoo, a Buddhist temple, a theater and to the Château de Vincennes, the only fortified castle in Paris.

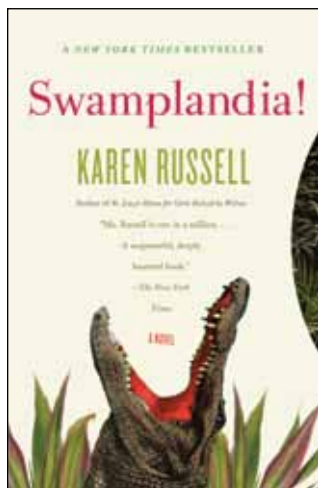
BUDAPEST

Hungarian State Opera House—The opera house was designed by Miklós Ybl and opened to the public in 1884. After shutting down for renovation in the 1980s, the opera house reopened on its centennial in 1984 and currently boasts a busy schedule of opera, ballet, and concerts.

Dohány Street Synagogue—The largest synagogue in Europe (and the second largest in the world), the Dohány Street Synagogue opened in 1859. It is located in Budapest's old Jewish quarter and was the center of the stone-walled Jewish ghetto where Jews were forced to live during World War II.

To schedule an author chat, download a reading group guide, view interactive maps and videos, and find tips on planning a trip to Paris or Budapest, visit www.ReadingGroupCenter.com/Orringer

SWAMPLANDIA! Karen Russell



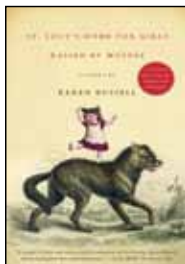
“The bewitching *Swamplandia!* is a tremendous achievement.... Effortless prose and [a] small, beautifully drawn cast of characters...as densely organic as the swamp in which it is set.” —*Entertainment Weekly*, A–

The Bigtree alligator-wrestling dynasty is in decline, and *Swamplandia!*, their island home and gator-wrestling theme park, formerly #1 in the region, is swiftly being encroached upon by a fearsome and sophisticated competitor called the World of Darkness. Ava's mother, the park's indomitable headliner, has just died; her sister, Ossie, has fallen in love with a spooky character known as the Dredgeman, who may or may not

be an actual ghost; and her brilliant big brother, Kiwi, has just defected to the World of Darkness in a last-ditch effort to keep their family business from going under. Ava's father is AWOL; and that leaves Ava, a resourceful but terrified thirteen-year-old, to manage ninety-eight gators and the vast, inscrutable landscape of her own grief.

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Also available: *St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves* which includes the original story in which Ava Bigtree first appeared \$15.00, Can. \$18.95 • 978-0-307-27667-4



Karen Russell on the World of *Swamplandia!*

The world of *Swamplandia!* has been around since I first drafted “Ava Wrestles the Alligator” in graduate school, when I was 22. I can't pinpoint where exactly the idea came from, but it probably owes a great debt to my school's field trips to the Miccosukee Indian Village in the Everglades.... A bunch of ten-year-olds from “the mainland” of Miami

stuff their ears with cotton balls and board an airboat; then, in my experience at least, you eat pinkish hamburgers with mayonnaise and watch a sweaty man in jeans perform a gator-wrestling demonstration. I remember feeling confused about who to root for in this battle—the man was more or less sitting on the alligator. My Ikea sofa puts up more of a fight than the alligator did that day. For reasons I can't perfectly explain, this day has become one of my favorite memories. It didn't start out that way, but it has stealthily crept up in the rankings. Now I think that gator wrestling demonstration, which I sort of snoozed through at the time, must have made a more lasting and dramatic impression than I realized.

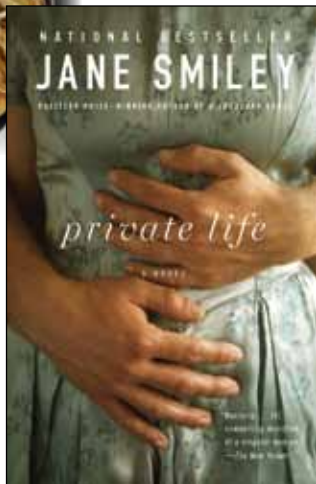
I don't think it's a coincidence that so many authors are drawn to South Florida (Carl Hiaasen, Peter Matthiessen, Joy Williams). There is something absolutely haunting about the swamp. If you go to the Everglades, it does feel as if you're standing in a mythic and a real space at once. I wanted to explore the extreme, alien beauty of the Everglades—and also its extreme devastation, which we've managed to accomplish in just a few generations of Floridian settlement, from the plume-hunting of the nineteenth century to the more recent dyking and drainage and Big Sugar's phosphorus pollution.

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PRIVATE LIFE Jane Smiley

An *Atlantic Monthly*,
New Yorker, and
Washington Post
Best Book of the Year



“It’s not often that a work as exceptional as this comes along in contemporary American letters.” —*The Washington Post*

Margaret Mayfield is nearly an old maid in post–Civil War Missouri when, at the age of twenty-seven, she marries Captain Andrew Jackson Jefferson Early, a naval officer and astronomer. Throughout the course of their marriage in California, Margaret stands by Andrew during tragedies both historical and personal—from the death of their newborn son to the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906. Yet as World War II approaches and the secrets of Andrew’s scientific and academic past begin to surface, the man Margaret thought she knew betrays her in heartbreaking ways, forcing her to reconsider the life she had so carefully constructed. A beautiful and affecting portrait of the mysteries and tragedies of intimacy, *Private Life* is an absorbing and powerful novel by one of our finest storytellers.

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Jane Smiley on Marriage at the Turn of the 20th Century

The novel opens with the following quote from Rose Wilder Lane, “In those days all stories ended with the wedding.” Why this quote?

The essential question of the book, I think, is “what does marriage mean?” In those days, the choices were pretty stark, and so there are several different marriages in the novel. Margaret’s sisters are desirable—Beatrice because she has a claim to a large property and Elizabeth because she is young and charming and has good connections. Dora and Margaret are less desirable, and so the one has a subtly arranged marriage, and the other takes advantage of Progressivism to not get married at all.... So the real theme of the novel is marriage—who do you marry, how is the marriage to be lived through, what does it feel like to, more or less, place a bet and then live with the consequences? ... I don’t think these issues have disappeared, either. Marriage is more of a choice now, but the issue of how do you coexist for a long time with someone who may be very idiosyncratic is still a big one.

To read more, schedule an author chat, or download a reading group guide, visit www.ReadingGroupCenter.com/Smiley

RED HOOK ROAD Ayelet Waldman

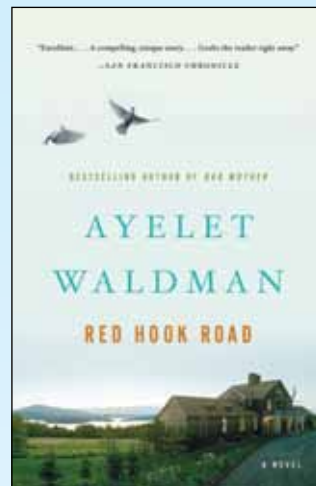
“Excellent.... A compelling, unique story.... Grabs the reader right away.”

—*San Francisco Chronicle*

In the aftermath of a devastating wedding day, two families find their lives unraveled by unthinkable loss. As Waldman explores the unique and personal ways in which each character responds to the tragedy—from the budding romance between the two surviving children to the struggling marriage between Iris, a high-strung professor in New York, and her husband Daniel—she creates a powerful family portrait and a beautiful reminder of the joys of life.

A rich and rewarding story of love, loss, and the power of family from the bestselling author of *Bad Mother* and *Love and Other Impossible Pursuits*.

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Ayelet Waldman on Writing What You Don’t Know



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There’s an old bit of literary wisdom that writing students learn by heart as soon as they first put pen to paper (or turn on their laptops): write what you know. Even my second grader received this instruction for his weekly writing assignments. But whether it’s because he shares his father’s elaborate imagination or my own inherent perversity, my son refuses on principal to follow this rule.

Irate notes from the teacher notwithstanding, I have to admit I understand where my son is coming from. When writers only write what they know, we end up with lots of short stories and novels about young people falling in love for the first time.... All well and good,

but at some point even the most beautifully crafted sentences begin to grow tiresome if they describe people we’ve read about a hundred times before.

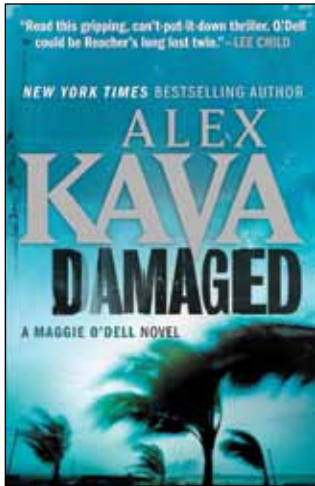
All this is by way of explaining why *Red Hook Road* is full of things like classical music, boxing, wooden boat building, and inter-racial adoption.... I started a crash course that began with the *Idiot’s Guide to Classical Music* and worked its way up to *Classical Music for Dummies* (and a little beyond). I’d never even watched a boxing match, but by the time I finished the novel, I was able to provide color commentary for the *De La Hoya v. Manny Pacquiao* bout.

It’s for this reason, I think, that my favorite characters in *Red Hook Road* aren’t those who are arguably more like me.... My two favorite characters are Samantha, a young violin prodigy, adopted as a toddler from Cambodia, and her mentor, Mr. Emil Kimmelbrod...himself a prodigy on the violin.... I love the relationship between these two people, who have nothing in common besides a love of music and a remarkable gift.

To be allowed to inhabit the mind and heart of someone else, to find a way to express their thoughts with some modicum of authenticity, this is both the challenge and delight of writing fiction.

To read the full article, schedule an author chat, or download a reading group guide, visit www.ReadingGroupCenter.com/Waldman

DAMAGED Alex Kava



“Rip-roaring action that only builds in intensity with every page.... A true thriller!”

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While the Coast Guard is preparing Pensacola Beach for a severe hurricane, they find an oversized fishing cooler filled with body parts tightly wrapped in plastic floating offshore. Special Agent Maggie O'Dell is sent to investigate, despite the fact that she is putting herself in the projected path of the

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FRAGILE Lisa Unger



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—People

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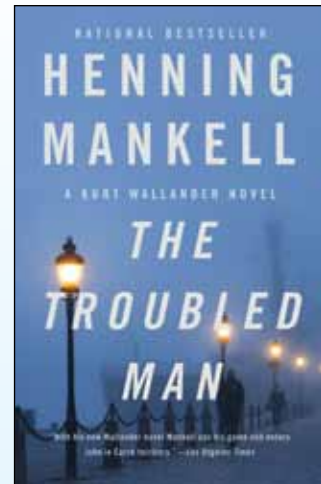
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THE TROUBLED MAN Henning Mankell

“With this new Wallander novel Mankell ups his game and enters John le Carré territory.”

—Los Angeles Times



A retired high-ranking naval officer vanishes during his daily walk in a forest near Stockholm. The investigation into his disappearance has nothing to do with Wallander—officially. But the officer is his daughter's future father-in-law. And so, with his inimitable disregard for normal procedure, Wallander is soon interfering in matters that are not his responsibility and is getting results.

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• Available in Paperback April 2012

Henning Mankell on Creating Kurt Wallander

I wanted to write about how difficult it is to be a good police officer. Police officers often tell me they know things are changing quicker than they can deal with, that society's outracing them. But Wallander's never cynical. He never says, “I don't care about that.” Naturally that damages him, but he takes responsibility, and that's what I love. He feels tired because the work is too much. But if he didn't do the work, he'd feel worse, he would leave a big black hole in himself ... I think a lot of people are struggling to manage now—feeling they are running for a bus they'll never catch. In that sense, he's a very common man. In Sweden, people write to him as if he's alive, and can help them. (*The Guardian*, January 12, 2002)

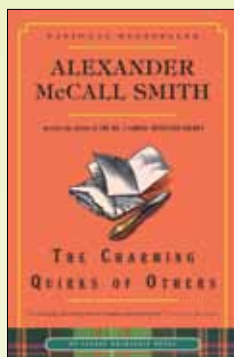
For more from Henning Mankell visit him on Facebook at [Facebook.com/HenningMankell](https://www.facebook.com/HenningMankell)



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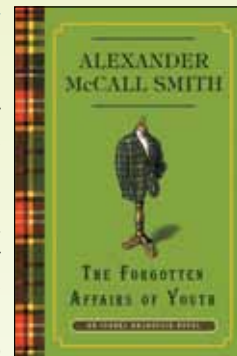
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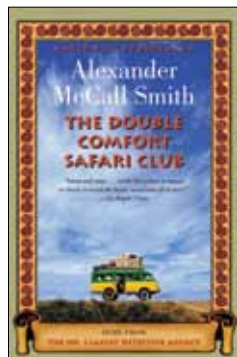
“‘Chocolate involves major philosophical problems,’ she said. ‘It shows us a lot about temptation and self-control.’ She thought for a moment. There was a lot that one might say about chocolate, if one thought about it, ‘Yes,’ she concluded, ‘chocolate is a great test, isn’t it?’”

“She wanted to cry, from sheer happiness, but he would really wake up if he heard her crying those tears of joy and think that something was wrong. Men, on the whole, did

not understand crying for happiness, as women did. There were so many different sorts of tears.”

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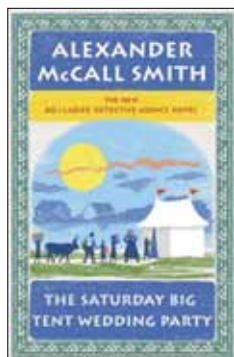
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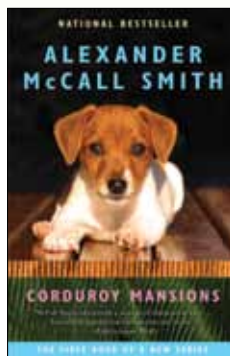
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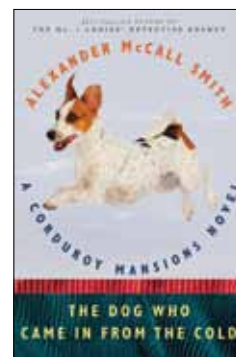
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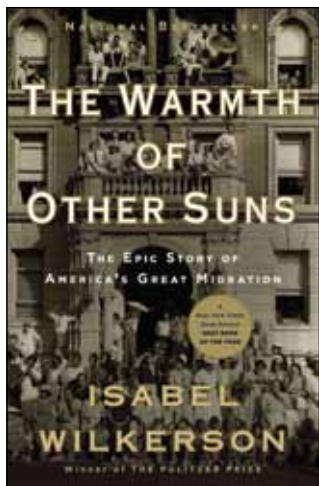
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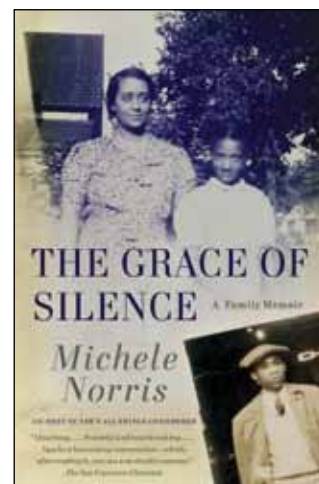
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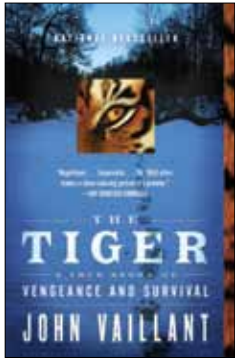
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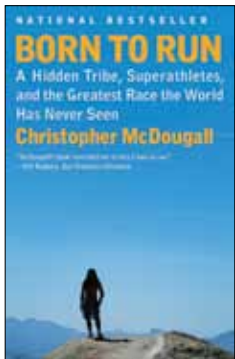
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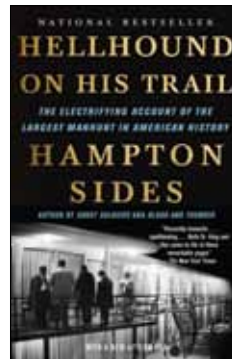
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