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VINTAGE

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PERENNIAL CLASSICS • BELOVED AUTHORS • AWARD WINNERS • AND MORE

ANCHOR 

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IN PAPERBACK AND EBOOK

 ReadingGroupCenter



#1 WORLDWIDE BESTSELLER

Origin

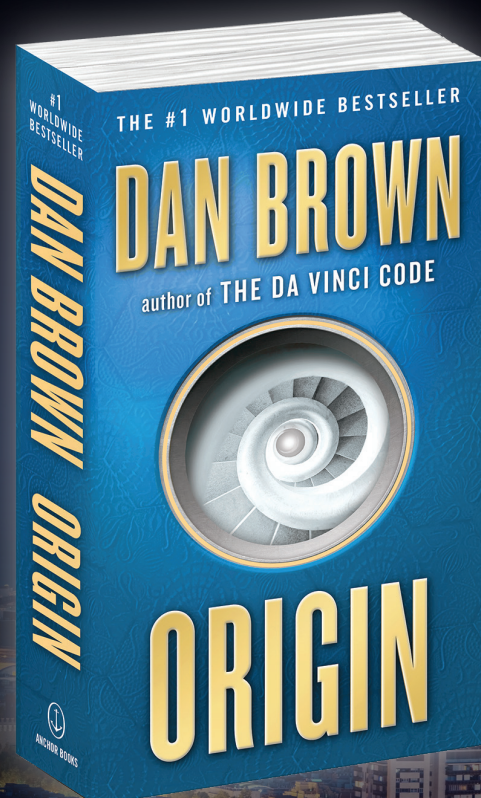
Dan Brown

“Fans of *The Da Vinci Code* rejoice! Professor Robert Langdon is again solving the mysteries of the universe.” —*People*

Robert Langdon, Harvard professor of symbology, arrives at the ultramodern Guggenheim Museum Bilbao to attend the unveiling of a discovery that “will change the face of science forever.” The evening’s host is Edmond Kirsch, a forty-year-old billionaire and futurist, and one of Langdon’s first students.

But the meticulously orchestrated evening suddenly erupts into chaos, and Kirsch’s precious discovery teeters on the brink of being lost forever. Facing an imminent threat, Langdon is forced to flee. With him is Ambra Vidal, the elegant museum director who worked with Kirsch. They travel to Barcelona on a perilous quest to locate a cryptic password that will unlock Kirsch’s secret.

Navigating the dark corridors of hidden history and extreme religion, Langdon and Vidal must evade an enemy whose all-knowing power seems to emanate from Spain’s Royal Palace. They uncover clues that ultimately bring them face-to-face with Kirsch’s shocking discovery... and the breathtaking truth that has long eluded us.



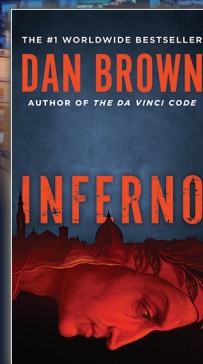
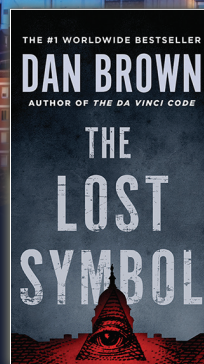
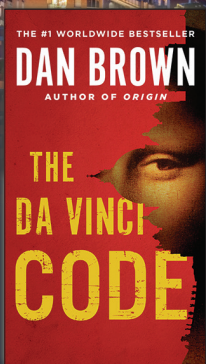
WHOEVER YOU ARE. WHATEVER YOU BELIEVE. EVERYTHING IS ABOUT TO CHANGE.

Dan Brown comments on life’s big questions:

Where are we going, where do we come from, these are issues that are at the core of what is to be human. Every religion on earth tries to answer these questions, and in recent centuries, science has tried very hard to answer these questions. It used to be, we had a huge pantheon of gods and goddesses to describe the natural world, and bit by bit, science began picking away at that ... so the book really asks, what happens when science starts answering the final few questions. Will the gods of today survive?

—From an interview on npr.org

**Dan Brown is
“the master of the
intellectual cliffhanger.”**
—*The Wall Street Journal*



Other acclaimed Robert Langdon novels, now available in new paperback packages.

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

Killers of the Flower Moon

David Grann

National Book Award Finalist

A Best Book of the Year: *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Boston Globe*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *GO*, *Time*, *Newsday*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *NPR*, *Vogue*, and more!

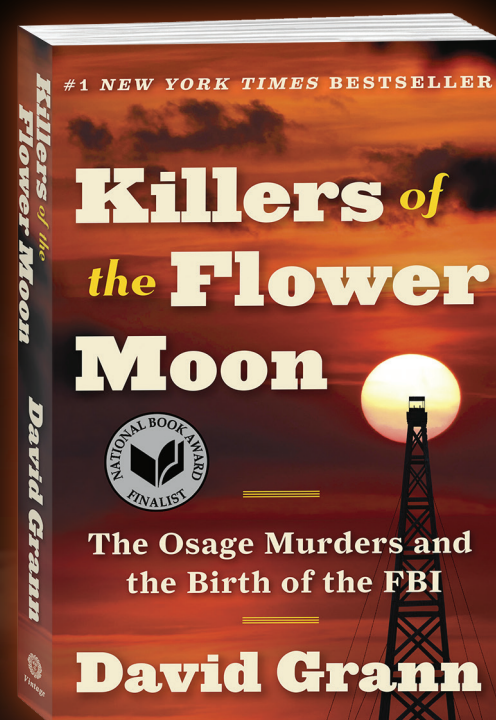
"A shocking whodunit.... A sinister conspiracy."

—*USA Today*

In the 1920s, the richest people per capita in the world were members of the Osage Nation in Oklahoma. After oil was discovered beneath their land, the Osage rode in chauffeured automobiles, built mansions, and sent their children to study in Europe.

Then, one by one, the Osage began to be killed off. The family of an Osage woman, Mollie Burkhart, became a prime target. One of her relatives was shot. Another was poisoned. And it was just the beginning, as more and more Osage were dying under mysterious circumstances, and many of those who dared to investigate the killings were themselves murdered.

As the death toll rose, the newly created FBI took up the case, and the young director, J. Edgar Hoover, turned to a former Texas Ranger named Tom White to try to unravel the mystery. White put together an undercover team, including a Native American agent who infiltrated the region, and together with the Osage began to expose one of the most chilling conspiracies in American history.



David Grann talks about what inspired him to write this book:

I had never heard of [the story]. And at one point, a historian had mentioned it to me. And I made a trip out to the Osage Nation in Oklahoma. And I visited the museum there. At that point, I had no plans of writing a book or even necessarily a story or anything.

And when I was at the museum, there was this great photograph on the wall that was taken in 1924. And it showed members of the Osage Nation with white settlers. It looked very innocent. But I noticed that a portion of the photograph was missing.

And I asked the then museum director what had happened to it. And she said it had contained a figure so frightening that she decided to remove it. And she then

pointed to the missing panel. And she said, the devil was standing right there.

The book grew out of trying to understand who that figure was. And she went down into the basement. And she brought up an image of the missing panel. And it contained an image of one of the killers of the Osage who had murdered many of them for their oil money.

And I kept thinking, the Osage had removed that picture not to forget what happened, but because they can't forget. And yet so many people, including me, had no knowledge of this event. And so that was the real impetus to fill in my own ignorance.

—From an interview on PBS.org



© Madeline Whitehead

WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE

#1 *New York Times* Bestseller

Winner of the National Book Award

Winner of the Andrew Carnegie Medal
for Excellence in Fiction

Longlisted for the Man Booker Prize

A Best Book of the Year: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*,
NPR, *The Boston Globe*, *The Seattle Times*, *HuffPost*, *Esquire*,
Minneapolis Star Tribune

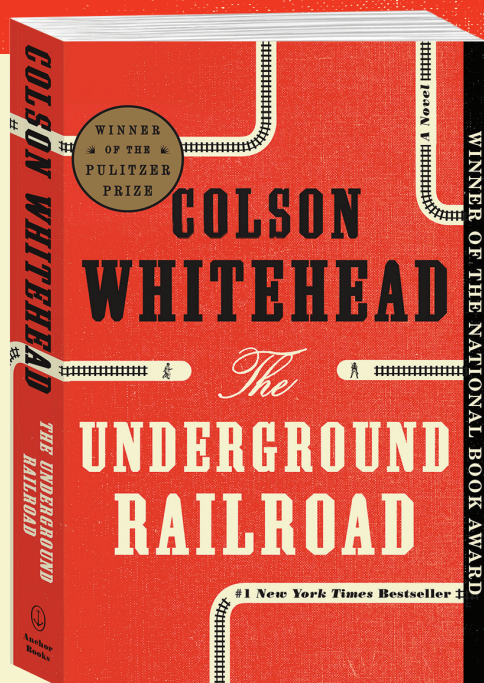
The Underground Railroad

Colson Whitehead

Cora is a young slave on a cotton plantation in Georgia. An outcast even among her fellow Africans, she is on the cusp of womanhood—where greater pain awaits. So, when Caesar, a slave who has recently arrived from Virginia urges her to join him on the Underground Railroad, she seizes the opportunity and escapes with him.

In Colson Whitehead's ingenious conception, the Underground Railroad is no mere metaphor: engineers and conductors operate a secret network of actual tracks and tunnels beneath the Southern soil.

Cora embarks on a harrowing flight from one state to the next, encountering, like Gulliver, strange yet familiar iterations of her own world at each stop. As Whitehead brilliantly re-creates the terrors of the antebellum era, he weaves in the saga of our nation, from the brutal abduction of Africans to the unfulfilled promises of the present day. *The Underground Railroad* is both the gripping tale of one woman's will to escape the horrors of bondage—and a powerful meditation on the history we all share.



“Whitehead’s best work and an important American novel.”

—*The Boston Globe*

“An American masterpiece.”

—NPR

Colson Whitehead reveals his literary influences and discusses writing from the perspective of a female protagonist:

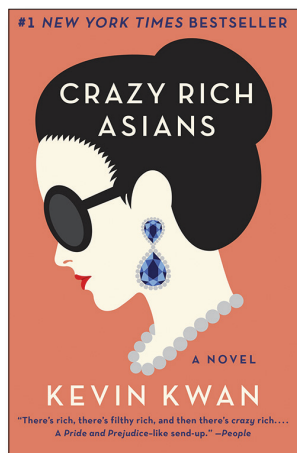
Q: Which authors or specific works influenced your writing?

A: I take inspiration from books, movies, television, music—it all goes in the hopper. Depending on the project, I'm drawing from this or that piece of art that has stayed with me. Toni Morrison, George Romero, Sonic Youth—they are all in there.

Q: Why did you choose to focus on a female heroine's perspective?

A: You make choices early on—regarding story, protagonist, mood, narrator—that determine everything that comes later. I'd had a string of male protagonists, so it was time to mix it up. The plight of the female slave as described in Harriet Jacobs's famous slave narrative, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, was an inspiration.

“There’s rich, there’s filthy rich, and then there’s *crazy* rich.”
—*People*



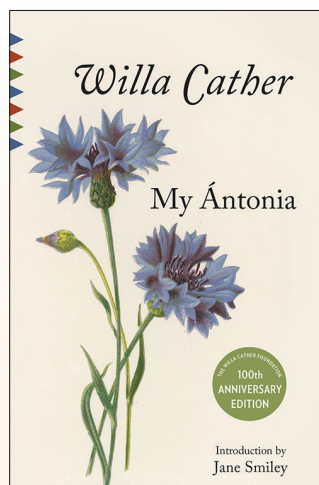
“A dizzily shopaholic comedy...
Wickedly delectable.”
—Janet Maslin, *The New York Times*



Crazy Rich Asians is now
a major motion picture
and also available with
a movie tie-in cover.



Read all of the novels in Kevin Kwan's
bestselling *Crazy Rich Asians* trilogy



CELEBRATING AN AMERICAN CLASSIC

My Ántonia

Willa Cather

With an introduction by Jane Smiley

“No romantic novel ever written in America, by man or woman, is one half so beautiful as *My Ántonia*.” —H. L. Mencken

This 100th Anniversary Edition of Willa Cather’s masterpiece, with a new introduction by Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Jane Smiley.

In this symphonically powerful and magnificently observed novel, Cather created one of the most winning heroines in American fiction, a woman whose calm, undemonstrative strength and robust high spirits make her emblematic of the virtues Cather most admired in her country. Ántonia Shimerda is the daughter of Bohemian immigrant parents struggling with the oceanic loneliness of life on the Nebraska prairie. Through the eyes of Jim Burden, her tutor and disappointed admirer, we follow Ántonia from farm to town as she survives hardships both natural and human, from poverty to a failed romance—and not only survives, but triumphs.

“One of the things critics loved about *My Ántonia* was that it recalled a world of relative human innocence and natural beauty that readers knew, even as the book was being published, was disappearing. . . . Because of Willa Cather’s intensity of observation, *My Ántonia* remains a revelation.”

—Jane Smiley (from the introduction to the Willa Cather Foundation 100th Anniversary Edition)



Stay with Me Ayobami Adebayo

Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction Finalist

A Best Book of the Year: *The New York Times*, NPR, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Economist*, *Southern Living*, BuzzFeed

**“A thoroughly contemporary—and deeply moving—
portrait of a marriage.”** —*The New York Times Book Review*

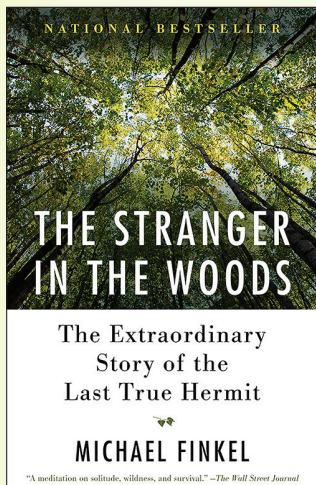
Yejide and Akin have been married since they met and fell in love at university. Though many expected Akin to take several wives, he and Yejide have always agreed: polygamy is not for them. But four years into their marriage—after consulting fertility doctors and healers, trying strange teas and unlikely cures—Yejide is still not pregnant. She assumes she still has time—until her family arrives on her doorstep with a young woman they introduce as Akin's second wife. Furious, shocked, and livid with jealousy, Yejide knows the only way to save her marriage is to get pregnant. Which, finally, she does—but at a cost far greater than she could have dared to imagine. An electrifying novel of enormous emotional power, *Stay With Me* asks how much we can sacrifice for the sake of family.



Ayobami Adebayo on the things we leave unsaid:

I come from a part of Nigeria where a lot of value is placed on implicit communication. The 'well brought up' child is the one who can pick up nonverbal cues from adults and interpret them correctly. I think this primed me to be particularly interested in what is left unsaid, to always be conscious of the layers that lie beneath social interactions. With *Stay with Me*, it was interesting to explore the impact and implications of Yejide and Akin's inability to confront certain issues because they are both afraid, though for very different reasons.

—From an interview on refinery29.com



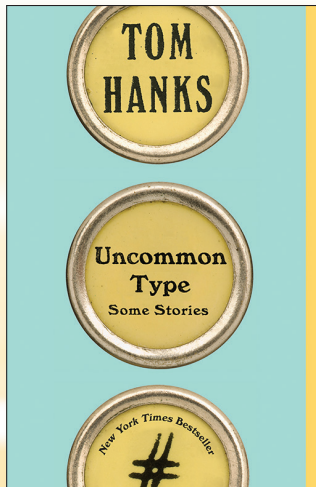
STRANGER IN THE WOODS Michael Finkel

A *National Geographic* Best Book of the Year

“A meditation on solitude, wildness and survival.”
—*The Wall Street Journal*

Many people dream of escaping modern life. Most will never act on it—but in 1986, twenty-year-old Christopher Knight did just that when he left his home in Massachusetts, drove to Maine, and disappeared into the woods for the next twenty-seven years.

Drawing on extensive interviews with Knight himself, journalist Michael Finkel shows how Knight lived in a tent in a secluded encampment, developing ingenious ways to store provisions and stave off frostbite during the winters. Since returning to the world, he has faced unique challenges—and compelled us to reexamine our assumptions about what makes a good life.



Uncommon Type

Tom Hanks

A Best Book of the Year: *USA Today* and NPR

“These stories are a hit. . . . There is life here, and humour, along with evocative moments of reflection on the state of the American dream.” —*Financial Times*

A collection of seventeen wonderful short stories showing that two-time Oscar winner Tom Hanks is as talented a writer as he is an actor.

A gentle Eastern European immigrant arrives in New York City after his family and his life have been torn apart by his country's civil war. An eccentric billionaire and his faithful executive assistant venture into America looking for acquisitions and discover a down and out motel, romance, and a bit of real life. These are just some of the tales Tom Hanks tells in this first collection of his short stories. They are surprising, intelligent, heartwarming, and, for the millions and millions of Tom Hanks fans, an absolute must-have!

Tom Hanks on his love affair with typewriters:

There's something about—I don't know, it's a hex in my brain—there is something I find reassuring, comforting, dazzling in that here is a very specific apparatus that is meant to do one thing, and it does it perfectly. And that one thing is to translate the thoughts in your head down to paper. Now that means everything from a shopping list to James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Short of carving words into stone with a hammer and chisel, not much is more permanent than a paragraph or a sentence or a love letter or a story typed on paper.



—Find more of this interview on npr.org

Michael Finkel on self-discovery and the universal appeal of Knight's story:

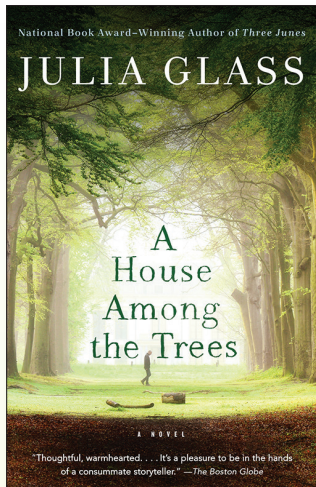
Q: While *The Stranger in the Woods* is primarily an exploration of Christopher Knight's life, it is clear that researching and writing it was a process of self-discovery for you as well. What would you say was the most surprising or significant realization that you had about yourself?

A: My time spent with Chris Knight, along with all of the research that went into the project . . . clearly demonstrated that the idea to seek alone time is extremely healthy for some people. I'm one of those people, and my guess is that there are many of us out there.

Q: What is it about Christopher Knight and his unusual story that you think has resonated with audiences so much?

A: I think many people have this sense that something about modern society—the screens, the noise, the traffic, the constant busyness—has approached a point where living in the world feels somewhat unhealthy. . . . Knight's story, in a sense, is the ultimate escapist fantasy—and that fact that it's true makes it so much more intriguing.

Read more at ReadingGroupCenter.com



A House Among the Trees

Julia Glass

From the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Three Junes*

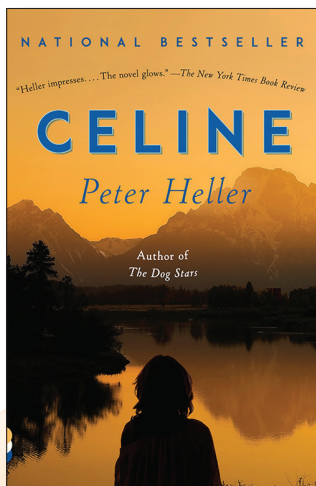
“Thoughtful, warm-hearted. . . It’s a pleasure to be in the hands of a consummate storyteller.” —*The Boston Globe*

Julia Glass’s richly imagined novel begins just after the sudden death of world-renowned children’s book author Mort Lear, who leaves behind a wholly unexpected will, an idyllic country house, and difficult secrets about a childhood far darker than those of the beloved characters he created for young readers of all ages. Left to grapple with the consequences of his final wishes are Tommy Daulair, his longtime live-in assistant; Merry Galarza, a museum curator betrayed by those wishes; and Nick Greene, a beguiling actor preparing to play Lear in a movie.

When Nick pays a visit to Lear’s home, he and Tommy confront what it means to be entrusted with the great writer’s legacy and reputation. Tommy realizes that despite his generous bequest, the man to whom she devoted decades of her life has left her with grave doubts about her past as well as her future. Vivid and gripping, filled with insight and humor, *A House Among the Trees* is an unforgettable story about friendship and love, artistic ambition, the perils of fame, and the sacrifices made by those who serve the demands of a creative genius.

“I will never forget how much joy I experienced introducing [my children] to so many children’s books and discovering children’s books with them.”

—Julia Glass in an interview on *The Reading Life* by Susan Larson, npr.org



Celine

Peter Heller

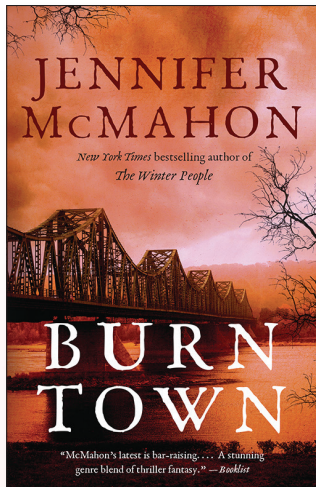
A Best Book of the Year: *Esquire*, Minnesota Public Radio, *The Morning News*

“Ingenious. . . Irresistible suspense. . . Masterful, emotional and action-packed. . . One of this year’s most unforgettable characters.” —*Elle*

Celine is not your typical private eye. With prep school pedigree and a pair of opera glasses for stakeouts, her methods are unconventional but extremely successful, and Celine has made a career out of tracking down missing persons nobody else can find. But when a young woman named Gabriela employs her expertise, what was meant to be Celine’s last case becomes a scavenger hunt through her own memories, the secrets there and the surprising redemptions.

Gabriela’s father was a National Geographic photographer who went missing in Wyoming twenty years ago and while he was assumed to have been mauled by a grizzly his body was never found. Celine and her partner set out to Yellowstone National Park to follow a trail gone cold but soon realize that somebody desperately wants to keep this case closed. Combining ingenious plotting with crystalline prose and sweeping natural panoramas, Peter Heller gives us his finest work to date.

Plan your own Armchair Adventure to Yellowstone with stops at
Sinks Canyon • Jackson Hole • Old Faithful • The Lamar Valley



Burntown

Jennifer McMahon

“A stunning genre blend of thriller and fantasy.” —*Booklist*

On the surface, Ashford, Vermont, seems like a quaint New England college town, but to those who live among the shadowy remains of its abandoned mills and factories and beneath its towering steel bridges, it's known as Burntown.

Eva Sandeski, who goes by the name Necco on the street, has been a part of Burntown's underworld for years, ever since the night her father, Miles, drowned in a flood that left her and her mother, Lily, homeless.

Now, on the run from a man called Snake Eyes, Necco must rely on other Burntown outsiders to survive. As the lives of these misfits intersect, and as the killer from the Sandeski family's past draws ever closer, a story of edge-of-your-seat suspense begins to unfurl with classic Jennifer McMahon twists and turns.

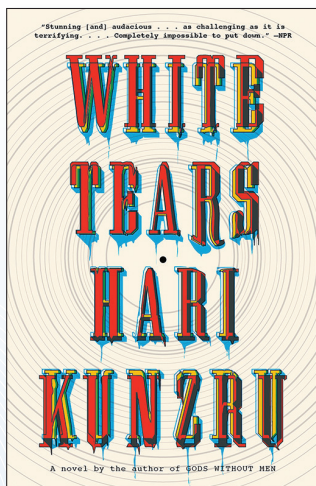
Jennifer McMahon reveals the quirky outsiders of literature that inspired the characters of *Burntown*:

Pippi Longstocking: A girl who has a pet monkey, a horse on her porch, and who lives on her own with little regard for social conventions—what's not to love?

Scout Finch: Scout's another outsider girl that I really connect with—a tomboy who gets in fistfights, wears overalls, and refuses to conform to requests to be more like a young lady, and yet has a maturity and wisdom beyond her years.

Carrie White: If you were ever an outsider in any way, ever teased by the popular girls in school, you understand what there is to love about Carrie, as pitiful as she is at the beginning of the novel.

Read more at ReadingGroupCenter.com



White Tears

Hari Kunzru

A PEN/Jean Stein Book Award Finalist

A Best Book of the Year: *The Washington Post*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, NPR, *GQ*, *Time*, *The Economist*, *Slate*, *HuffPost*, *BookRiot*

“A book that everyone should be reading right now. . . .

Part ghost story, part travelogue. . . [a] treatise on race, class and poverty of the soul.” —*TIME*

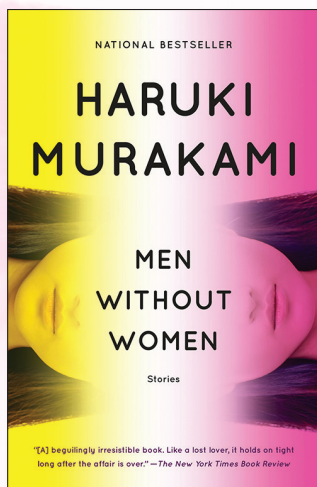
Seth is a shy, awkward twentysomething. Carter is more glamorous, the heir to a great American fortune. But they share an obsession with music—especially the blues. One day, Seth discovers that he's accidentally recorded an unknown blues singer in a park. Carter puts the file online, claiming it's a 1920s recording by a made-up musician named Charlie Shaw. But when a music collector tells them that their recording is genuine—that there really was a singer named Charlie Shaw—the two white boys, along with Carter's sister, find themselves in over their heads, delving deeper and deeper into America's dark, vengeful heart. *White Tears* is a literary thriller and a meditation on art—who owns it, who can consume it, and who profits from it.

Immerse yourself in the music of *White Tears*:

Music is at the very center of this gripping ghost story, pushing the young protagonists to obsession. Check out a playlist curated by the author himself specifically for *White Tears* including:

*Whea Yo Ghost At, Whea Yo Dead Man by DJ Elmoe *Future Blues by Willie Brown

* Wire Recorder Piece by Halim El-Dabh



Men Without Women

Haruki Murakami

A Best Book of the Year: *The Washington Post*, NPR, and *Esquire*

“[A] beguilingly irresistible book. Like a lost lover, it holds on tight long after the affair is over.”

—*The New York Times Book Review*

Across seven tales, Haruki Murakami brings his powers of observation to bear on the lives of men who, in their own ways, find themselves alone. Here are lovesick doctors, students, ex-boyfriends, actors, bartenders, and even Kafka’s Gregor Samsa, brought together to tell stories that speak to us all. In *Men Without Women* Murakami has crafted another contemporary classic, marked by the same wry humor and pathos that have defined his entire body of work.

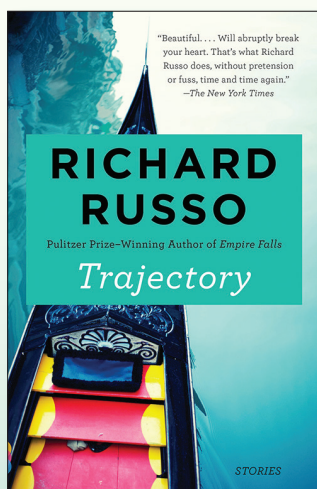
Check out these other acclaimed short story collections:

Moral Disorder and Other Stories by Margaret Atwood

House of the Sleeping Beauties by Yasunari Kawabata

Dear Life by Alice Munro

Vampires in the Lemon Grove by Karen Russell



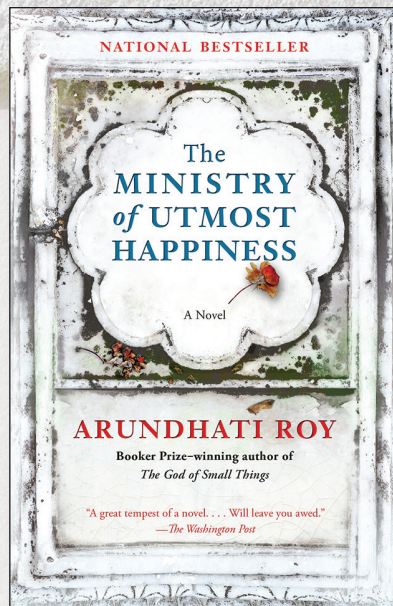
Trajectory

Richard Russo

“Has the engaging quality of tales told by a friend, over drinks, about a person we know in common.”

—*The New York Times Book Review*

The characters in these four expansive stories are a departure from the blue-collar denizens that populate so many of Richard Russo’s novels, and all are bound together by parallel moments of reckoning with their pasts. In “Horseman,” a young professor confronts an undergraduate plagiarist—as well as her own regrets. In “Intervention,” a realtor facing a serious medical prognosis finds himself in his late father’s shadow. “Voice” gives us a semiretired academic who is conned by his estranged brother into joining a group tour of the Venice Biennale. And “Milton and Marcus” takes us into a lapsed novelist’s attempt to rekindle his screenwriting career—a career that depends wholly, at a crucial moment, on two Hollywood icons (one living, one dead). Shot through with Russo’s inimitable humor, wisdom, and surprise, *Trajectory* is the work of a masterful writer continuing to discover new heights.



The Ministry of Utmost Happiness

Arundhati Roy

Longlisted for the Man Booker Prize

National Book Critics Circle Award Finalist

A Best Book of the Year: *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe*, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, *NPR*, *Newsday*, *The Guardian*, *Financial Times*, *The Christian Science Monitor*

“A great tempest of a novel. . . Will leave you awed.”

—*The Washington Post*

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness takes us on an intimate journey across the Indian subcontinent—from the cramped neighborhoods of Old Delhi and the roads of the new city to the mountains and valleys of Kashmir and beyond, where war is peace and peace is war. Braiding together the lives of a diverse cast of characters who have been broken by the world they live in and then rescued, patched together by acts of love—and by hope, here Arundhati Roy reinvents what a novel can do and can be.

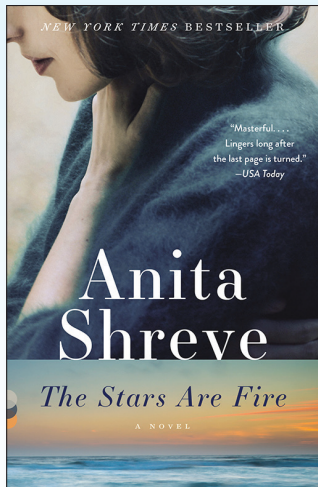
An excerpt from *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*:

She was the fourth of five children, born on a cold January night, by lamplight (power cut), in Shahjahanabad, the walled city of Delhi. Ahlam Baji, the midwife who delivered her and put her in her mother's arms wrapped in two shawls, said, “It's a boy.” Given the circumstances, her error was understandable.

A month into her first pregnancy Jahanara Begum and her husband decided that if their baby was a boy they would name him Aftab. Their first three children were girls. They had been waiting for their Aftab for six years. The night he was born was the happiest of Jahanara Begum's life.

The next morning, when the sun was up and the room nice and warm, she unswaddled little Aftab. She explored his tiny body—eyes nose head neck armpits fingers toes—with sated, unhurried delight. That was when she discovered, nestling underneath his boy-parts, a small, unformed, but undoubtedly girl-part.





The Stars Are Fire

Anita Shreve

One of the *The Washington Post's* 50 Notable Works of Fiction

“Masterful... lingers long after the last page is turned.” —*USA Today*

From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Weight of Water* and *The Pilot's Wife* (an Oprah's Book Club selection): an exquisitely suspenseful new novel about an extraordinary young woman tested by a catastrophic event—based on the true story of the largest fire in Maine's history.

In October 1947, Grace Holland is experiencing two simultaneous droughts. An unseasonably hot, dry summer has turned the state of Maine into a tinderbox, and Grace and her husband, Gene, have fallen out of love and barely speak. Five months pregnant and caring for two toddlers, Grace has resigned herself to a life of loneliness and domestic chores. One night she awakes to find that wildfires are racing down the coast, closer and closer to her house. Forced to pull her children into the ocean to escape the flames, Grace watches helplessly as everything she knows burns to the ground. By morning, her life is forever changed: she is homeless, penniless, awaiting news of her husband's fate, and left to face an uncertain future in a town that no longer exists. With courage and stoicism, Grace overcomes devastating loss and, through the smoke, is able to glimpse the opportunity to rewrite her own story.

Q: What inspired you to use the Maine fires of 1947 as the backdrop for your story? As a native New Englander, do you have a personal connection to this event or its aftermath?

A: As it happens, I live in a town on the Maine coast that was hard hit by the Fires of '47. During that week-long catastrophe, 151 of 156 houses along the beach in town were burned to the ground. Over the years, I'd heard talk about the Great Fire and had, once or twice in the past, read about it.

A couple of years ago, I developed an intense interest and began to go to the archives to research the disaster. The detail that captured my imagination was that of the women who had to go into the sea to save themselves and their children. I began to envision a young housewife who had to do just that, and the novel was born.

Read more at PenguinRandomHouse.com



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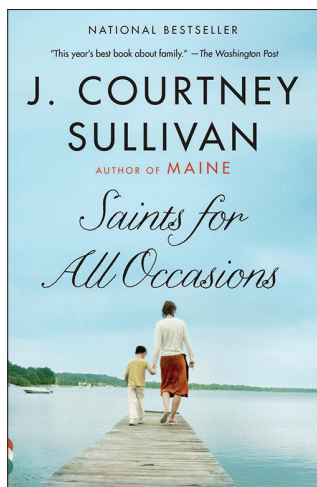


Visiting Maine:

Whether or not you actually plan a vacation to Maine, we hope our imaginary journey through the state that inspired *The Stars Are Fire* helps you and your reading group appreciate the story all the more.

- **National & State Parks:** Maine is an outdoorsman's paradise just waiting to be discovered. With over half a million acres of national and state forests, the hiking, camping, and fishing possibilities are endless.
- **Maine Art Museum Trail:** For the art enthusiasts out there, we recommend planning your trip around the Maine Art Museum Trail, which consists of nine museums and around 73,000 works of art.
- **Historic Lighthouses:** Maine is home to over sixty historic lighthouses along the coast.
- **Scenic Byways:** If you're more the type to hit the road and make stops along the way, check out Maine's four National Scenic Byways to make the drive even more enjoyable.
- **Maine Beer Trail:** For those of you who prefer to immerse yourselves in the local flavor of a place, check out Maine's Beer Trail to discover this state's wealth of microbreweries.

For more, visit the Armchair Adventurer at ReadingGroupCenter.com



Saints for All Occasions

J. Courtney Sullivan

A Best Book of the Year: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Harper's Bazaar*

"This year's best book about family." —*The Washington Post*

Nora and Theresa Flynn are twenty-one and seventeen when they leave their small village in Ireland and journey to America. Nora is the responsible sister; she's shy and serious and engaged to a man she isn't sure that she loves. Theresa is gregarious; she is thrilled by their new life in Boston and besotted with the fashionable dresses and dance halls on Dudley Street. But when Theresa ends up pregnant, Nora is forced to come up with a plan—a decision with repercussions they are both far too young to understand. Fifty years later, Nora is the matriarch of a big Catholic family with four grown children. Estranged from her sister, Theresa is a cloistered nun, living in an abbey in rural Vermont. Until, after decades of silence, a sudden death forces Nora and Theresa to confront the choices they made so long ago.

J. Courtney Sullivan talks about strong female characters and motherhood:

Q: Who are the women in your life that inspire your writing the most?

A: Writers tend to return to certain obsessions in their work. One of mine has always been the idea that the time when a woman is born will determine so much of who she's allowed to become. I love exploring women's lives in the context of their cultural and historical moment. I'm inspired by women's stories all the time, both women I know personally and those I hear about in one way or another.

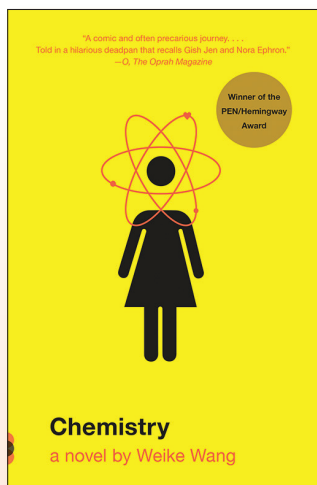
Q: You became a mother shortly after the release of *Saints*, which delves deeply into the themes of motherhood and relationships between mothers and their children. Have your ideas about motherhood changed since the birth of your child?

A: All the big-picture stuff about motherhood in the novel has been true to my experience. It is transformative and life-changing, and yet fundamentally part of you remains just the same as ever.



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Chemistry

Weike Wang

Winner of the PEN/Hemingway Award and a Washington Post Notable Book

"A comic and often precarious journey. . . Told in a hilarious deadpan that recalls Gish Jen and Nora Ephron." —*O, The Oprah Magazine*

At first glance, the quirky, overworked narrator of Weike Wang's debut novel seems to be on the cusp of a perfect life: she is studying for a prestigious PhD in chemistry that will make her Chinese parents proud (or at least satisfied), and her successful, supportive boyfriend has just proposed to her. But instead of feeling hopeful, she is wracked with ambivalence: the long, demanding hours at the lab have created an exquisite pressure cooker, and she doesn't know how to answer the marriage question. When it all becomes too much and her life plan veers off course, she finds herself on a new path of discoveries about everything she thought she knew. Smart, moving, and always funny, this unique coming-of-age story is certain to evoke a winning reaction.

Weike Wang on her favorite books that feature science:

"This list was really hard. I realize there is not much fiction out there featuring science, period, that somehow doesn't go into the realm of dystopia or space or superheroes. Which, I guess, goes to show we as a culture have come to view what science is: either the soon-to-happen catastrophe or our ticket to Mars. Or turning into the Hulk."

Luminous Fish by Lynn Margulis

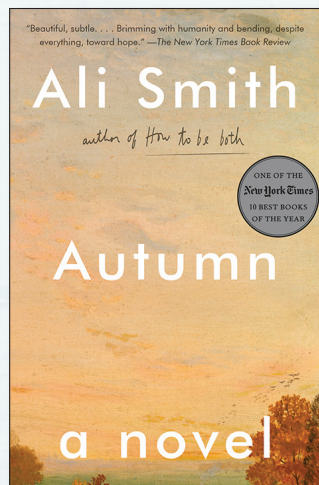
This was the first book I read that featured academic scientists as protagonists. It was given to me by the postdoc I was working under during my years in a microbiology lab.

Goodbye, Vitamin by Rachel Khong

There's not so much science in here, but interesting nutritional facts, and part of my doctorate was nutritional epidemiology.

Read more at ReadingGroupCenter.com

The first two novels in Ali Smith's Seasonal Quartet



Autumn

Man Booker Prize Finalist

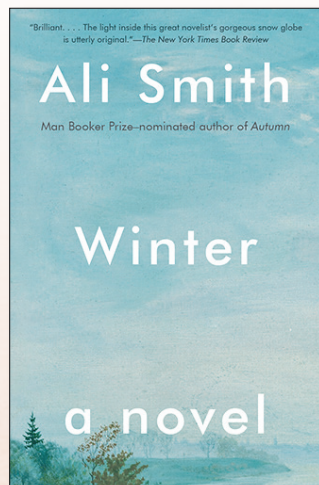
One of the *New York Times* 10 Best Books of the Year

A Best Book of the Year: *The Washington Post*, NPR, Dwight Garner/*The New York Times*, *Slate*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Southern Living*, *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*, *The Morning News*, *Kirkus Reviews*

“Beautiful, subtle. . . . Brimming with humanity and bending, despite everything, toward hope.” —*The New York Times Book Review*

Autumn. Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness. Two old friends—Daniel, a centenarian, and Elisabeth, born in 1984—look to both the future and the past as the United Kingdom stands divided by a historic, once-in-a-generation summer. Love is won, love is lost. Hope is hand-in-hand with hopelessness. The seasons roll round, as ever.

A luminous meditation on the meaning of richness and harvest and worth, *Autumn* is the first installment of Ali Smith's Seasonal quartet, and it casts an eye over our own time: Who are we? What are we made of? Shakespearean jeu d'esprit, Keatsian melancholy, the sheer bright energy of 1960s pop art. Wide-ranging in timescale and light-footed through histories, *Autumn* is an unforgettable story about aging and time and love—and stories themselves.



Winter

“[A] moving mixture of the fantastical and the allegorical . . .

Topical, sweet-natured, something fun to be inside.” —*The New Yorker*

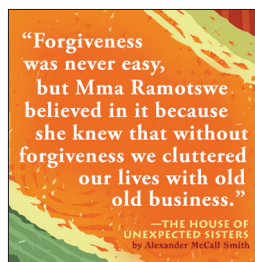
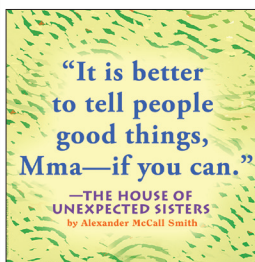
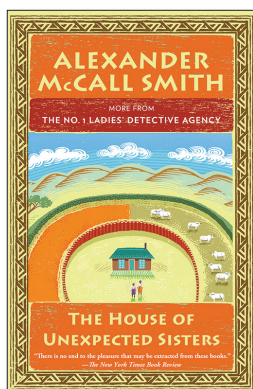
Winter. Bleak. Frosty wind, earth as iron, water as stone, so the old song goes. And now Art's mother is seeing things. Come to think of it, Art's seeing things himself.

When four people, strangers and family, converge on a fifteen-bedroom house in Cornwall for Christmas, will there be enough room for everyone?

Winter. It makes things visible. Ali Smith's shapeshifting *Winter* casts a warm, wise, merry and uncompromising eye over a post-truth era in a story rooted in history and memory and with a taproot deep in the evergreens, art and love.

ALEXANDER McCALL SMITH

The House of Unexpected Sisters A No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency Novel



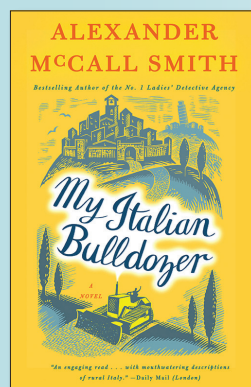
© Michael Lionstar

“There is no end to the pleasure that may be extracted from these books.”

—*The New York Times Book Review*

In this installment of the beloved series, Precious Ramotswe learns valuable lessons about first impressions and forgiveness.

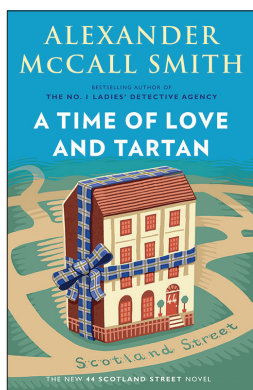
Personal photos from Alexander McCall Smith's trip to Italy:



My Italian Bulldozer

“A delightful mixture of humor, humanity, and observation. Just as at home in Italy as in Botswana, [McCall Smith] depicts the people of Tuscany in this novel with verve.” —*Country Life*

When Paul Stuart, a renowned food writer, finds himself at loose ends after his longtime girlfriend leaves him for her personal trainer, he takes a tour of the Italian countryside in the only vehicle available for rent: a bulldozer.



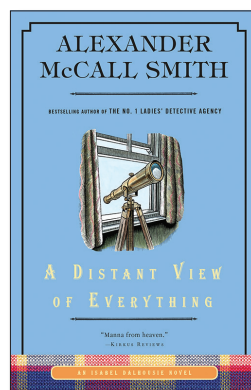
A Time of Love and Tartan

A 44 Scotland Street Novel

“Another charmer.... Especially exciting.... Wow.”

—*Booklist* (starred review)

Whether caused by small things such as a cup of coffee and a book, or major events such as Stuart's application for promotion and his wife Irene's decision to pursue a PhD in Aberdeen, change is coming to Scotland Street.



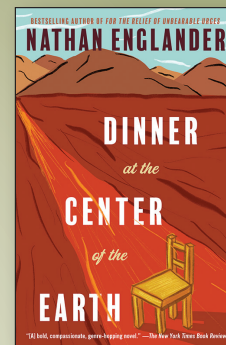
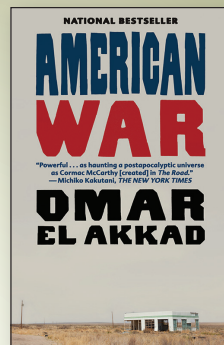
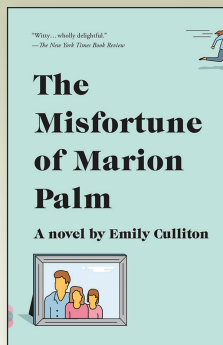
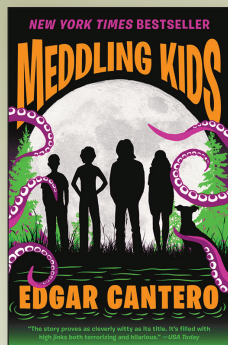
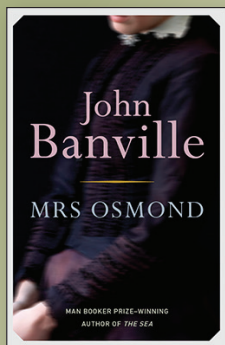
A Distant View of Everything

An Isabel Dalhousie Novel

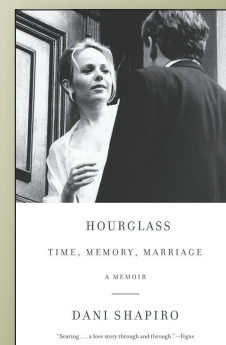
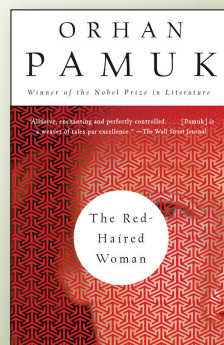
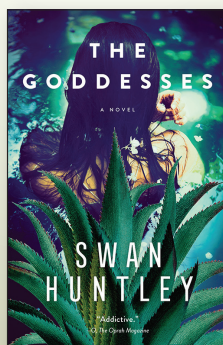
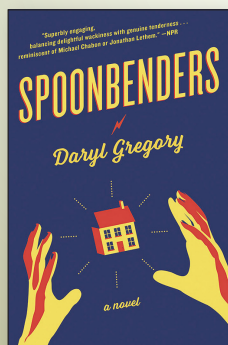
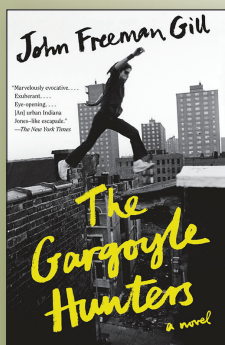
“[Isabel] is such good company, it's hard to believe she's fictional.”

—*Newsweek*

Bea Shandon, something of a matchmaker, has introduced a wealthy female friend to a cosmetic surgeon, but is doubting his motives. Isabel agrees to help find the truth. As Isabel's enquiries take an unexpected turn, she starts to wonder whom exactly she should be investigating.



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