



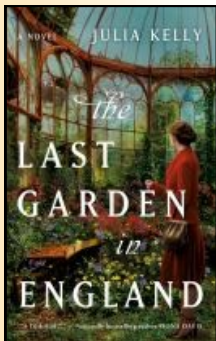
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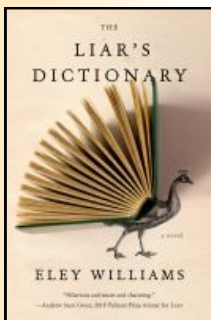
FICTION



THE LAST GARDEN IN ENGLAND BY JULIA KELLY

(PICKED BY SLH & SM)

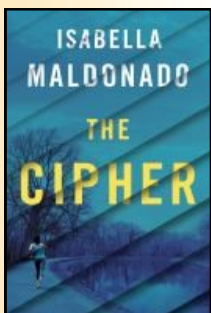
Present day: Emma Lovett has just been given the opportunity to restore the gardens of the famed Highbury House estate, designed in 1907 by her hero Venetia Smith. But as Emma dives deeper into the gardens' past, she begins to uncover secrets that have long lain hidden. *1907:* Venetia Smith has carved out a niche for herself as a garden designer to those looking to show off their wealth with sumptuous country houses. When she is hired to design the gardens of Highbury House, she is determined to make them a triumph, but the gardens—and the people she meets—promise to change her life forever. *1944:* When land girl Beth Pedley arrives at a farm on the outskirts of the village of Highbury, all she wants is to find a place she can call home. Cook Stella Adderton is desperate to leave Highbury House to pursue her own dreams. Widow Diana Symonds, the mistress of the grand house, is trying to cling to her pre-war life now that her home has been requisitioned and transformed into a convalescent hospital for wounded soldiers. But when war threatens Highbury House's treasured gardens, these three very different women are drawn together by a secret that will last for decades. (368pgs)



THE LIAR'S DICTIONARY BY ELEY WILLIAMS

(PICKED BY KT)

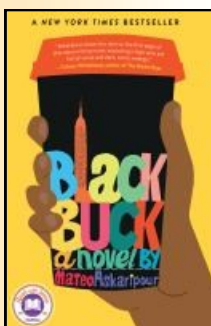
Mountweazel n. *the phenomenon of false entries within dictionaries and works of reference. Often used as a safeguard against copyright infringement.* Peter Winceworth, Victorian lexicographer, is toiling away at the letter S for Swansby's multivolume Encyclopaedic Dictionary. His disaffection compels him to insert unauthorized fictitious entries into the dictionary in an attempt to assert some sense of individual purpose and artistic freedom. In the present day, Mallory, a young intern employed by the publisher, is tasked with uncovering these mountweazels before the work is digitized. As these two narratives combine, both Winceworth and Mallory discover how they might negotiate the complexities of the often nonsensical, relentless and undefinable path we call life. *The Liar's Dictionary* celebrates the rigidity, fragility, absurdity, and joy of language. (288 pgs)



THE CIPHER BY ISABELLA MALDONADO

(PICKED BY SP)

FBI Special Agent Nina Guerrero escaped a serial killer's trap at sixteen. Years later, when she's jumped in a Virginia park, a video of the attack goes viral. Legions of new fans are not the only ones impressed with her fighting skills. The man who abducted her eleven years ago is watching. Determined to reclaim his lost prize, he commits a grisly murder designed to pull her into the investigation...but his games are just beginning. And he's using the internet to invite the public to play along. His coded riddles may have made him a depraved social media superstar—an enigmatic cyber-ghost dubbed “the Cipher”—but to Nina he's a monster who preys on the vulnerable. Partnered with the FBI's preeminent mind hunter, Dr. Jeffrey Wade, who is haunted by his own past, Nina tracks the predator across the country. Clue by clue, victim by victim, Nina races to stop a deadly killer while the world watches. (335 pgs)



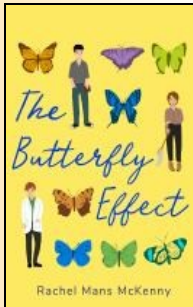
BLACK BUCK BY MATEO ASKARIPOUR

(PICKED BY SLS)

An unambitious twenty-two-year-old, Darren lives in a Bed-Stuy brownstone with his mother, who wants to see him live up to his potential as the valedictorian of Bronx Science. But Darren is content working at Starbucks in a Midtown office building, hanging out with his girlfriend, and eating his mother's home-cooked meals. All that changes when a chance encounter with Rhett Daniels, the CEO of NYC's hottest tech startup, results in an exclusive invitation for Darren to join an elite sales team on the thirty-sixth floor. After a “hell week” of training, Darren, the only Black person in the company, reimagines himself as “Buck,” a ruthless salesman unrecognizable to his friends and family. But when things turn tragic at home and Buck feels he's hit rock bottom, he begins to hatch a plan to help young people of color infiltrate America's sales force, setting off a chain of events that forever changes the game. (400pgs)

**DEAR MISS KOPP BY AMY STEWART****(PICKED BY KT)**

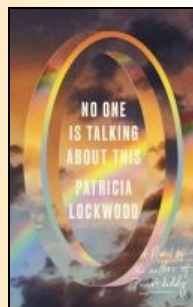
The U.S. has finally entered World War I and Constance is chasing down suspected German saboteurs and spies for the Bureau of Investigation while Fleurette is traveling across the country entertaining troops with song and dance. Meanwhile, at an undisclosed location in France, Norma is overseeing her thwarted pigeon project for the Army Signal Corps. When Aggie, a nurse at the American field hospital, is accused of stealing essential medical supplies, the intrepid Norma is on the case to find the true culprit. The far-flung sisters—separated for the first time in their lives—correspond with news of their days. The world has irrevocably changed—will the sisters be content to return to the New Jersey farm when the war is over? (310 pgs)

**THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT BY RACHEL MANS MCKENNY****(PICKED BY SM)**

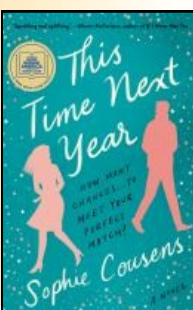
Is there such a thing as an *anti-social* butterfly? If there were, Greta Oto would totally relate. An entomologist, Greta far prefers the company of bugs to humans. That's okay, because people don't seem to like her that much anyway, with the exception of her twin brother, Danny, though they've recently had a falling out. So when she lands a research gig in the rainforest, she leaves it all behind. But when Greta learns that Danny has suffered an aneurysm and is now hospitalized, she abandons her research and hurries home to be there for her brother. Coming home means confronting all that she left behind, including her lousy soon-to-be sister-in-law, her estranged mother, and her ex-boyfriend Brandon who has conveniently found a new non-lab-exclusive partner with shiny hair. Being that Brandon runs the only butterfly conservatory in town, and her dissertation is now in jeopardy, taking that job, being back home, it's all creating chaos of her perfectly compartmentalized world. Greta will have to ask herself if she has the courage to open up for the people she loves, and for those who want to love her. (328 pgs)

**FINLAY DONOVAN IS KILLING IT BY ELLE COSIMANO****(PICKED BY BS)**

Finlay Donovan is killing it . . . except, she's really not. As a stressed-out single-mom of two and struggling novelist, Finlay's life is in chaos: the new book she promised her literary agent isn't written, her ex-husband fired the nanny without telling her, and this morning she had to send her four-year-old to school with hair duct-taped to her head after an incident with scissors. When Finlay is overheard discussing the plot of her new suspense novel with her agent over lunch, she's mistaken for a contract killer, and inadvertently accepts an offer to dispose of a problem husband in order to make ends meet . . . Soon, Finlay discovers that crime in real life is a lot more difficult than its fictional counterpart, as she becomes tangled in a real-life murder investigation. (368 pgs)

**NO ONE IS TALKING ABOUT THIS BY PATRICIA LOCKWOOD****(PICKED BY TA)**

A woman who has recently been elevated to prominence for her social media posts travels around the world to meet her adoring fans. She is overwhelmed by navigating the new language and etiquette of what she terms "the portal". When existential threats—from climate change to the rise of an unnamed dictator and an epidemic of loneliness—begin to loom, she posts her way deeper into the portal's void. An avalanche of images, details, and references accumulate to form a landscape that is post-sense, post-irony, post-everything. "Are we in hell?" the people of the portal ask themselves. "Are we all just going to keep doing this until we die?" Suddenly, two texts from her mother pierce the fray: "Something has gone wrong," and "How soon can you get here?" As real life collides with the increasingly absurd antics of the portal, the woman confronts a world that seems to contain both an abundance of proof that there is goodness, empathy, and justice in the universe, and a deluge of evidence to the contrary. (224 pgs)

**THIS TIME NEXT YEAR BY SOPHIE COUSENS****(PICKED BY MG)**

Down-to-earth baker Minnie Cooper knows two things with certainty: that her New Year's birthday has always been unlucky, and that it's all because of Quinn Hamilton, a man she's never met. Minnie and Quinn were born at the same hospital just after midnight on New Year's Day thirty years before, and not only did he edge her out by minutes to win the cash prize for being the first baby born in London in 1990, but he stole the name she was meant to have, as well. When Minnie unexpectedly runs into Quinn at a New Year's party on their mutual thirtieth birthday, she sees only more evidence that fortune has continued to favor him. The handsome, charming business owner truly seems to have it all—including the perfect girlfriend. But if Quinn and Minnie are from different worlds, why do they keep bumping into each other? And why is it that each frustrating interaction somehow seems to leave them both hoping for more? (344 pgs)

STAFF PICKS

MARCH 2021

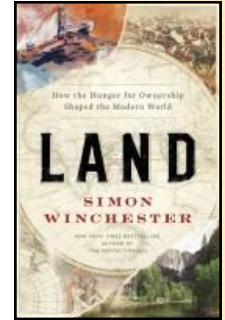


NON-FICTION

LAND BY SIMON WINCHESTER

(PICKED BY SLH)

Land—whether meadow or mountainside, desert or peat bog, parkland or pasture, suburb or city—is central to our existence. It quite literally underlies and underpins everything. Employing the keen intellect, insatiable curiosity, and narrative verve that are the foundations of his previous bestselling works, Simon Winchester examines what we human beings are doing—and have done—with the billions of acres that together make up the solid surface of our planet. *Land: The Ownership of Everywhere* examines in depth how we acquire land, how we steward it, how and why we fight over it, and finally, how we can, and on occasion do, come to share it. Ultimately, Winchester confronts the essential question: who actually owns the world's land—and why does it matter? (416 pgs)



WINTERING BY KATHERINE MAY

(PICKED BY SLS)

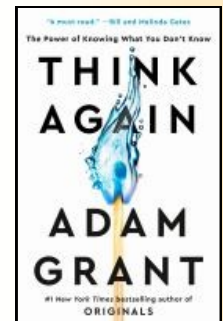
Sometimes you slip through the cracks: unforeseen circumstances like an abrupt illness, the death of a loved one, a break up, or a job loss can derail a life. These periods of dislocation can be lonely and unexpected. For May, her husband fell ill, her son stopped attending school, and her own medical issues led her to leave a demanding job. *Wintering* explores how she not only endured this painful time, but embraced the singular opportunities it offered. A moving personal narrative shot through with lessons from literature, mythology, and the natural world, May's story offers instruction on the transformative power of rest and retreat. Illumination emerges from many sources. *Wintering* invites us to change how we relate to our own fallow times. May models an active acceptance of sadness and finds nourishment in deep retreat, joy in the hushed beauty of winter, and encouragement in understanding life as cyclical, not linear. (256 pgs)



THINK AGAIN BY ADAM GRANT

(PICKED BY BS)

For too many of us, our ways of thinking become habits that we don't bother to question, and mental laziness leads us to prefer the ease of old routines to the difficulty of new ones. We fail to update the beliefs we formed in the past for the challenges we face in the present. But in a rapidly changing world, we need to spend as much time rethinking as we do thinking. *Think Again* is a book about the benefit of doubt, and about how we can get better at embracing the unknown and the joy of being wrong. Evidence has shown that creative geniuses are not attached to one identity, but constantly willing to rethink their stances and that leaders who admit they don't know something and seek critical feedback lead more productive and innovative teams. New evidence shows us that as a mindset and a skillset, rethinking can be taught and Grant explains how to develop the necessary qualities to do it. (307 pgs)

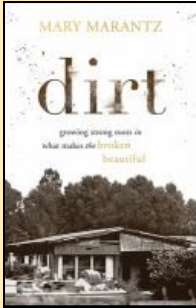


GOLEM GIRL BY RIVA LEHRER (BIO)

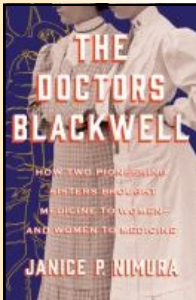
(PICKED BY SLS)

In 1958, among the children born with spina bifida is Riva Lehrer. At the time, most such children are not expected to survive. Her parents and doctors are determined to "fix" her, sending the message over and over again that she is broken. That she will never have a job, a romantic relationship, or an independent life. Enduring countless medical interventions, Riva tries her best to be a good girl and a good patient in the quest to be cured. Everything changes when, as an adult, Riva is invited to join a group of artists, writers, and performers who are building Disability Culture. Their work is daring, edgy, funny, and dark—it rejects tropes that define disabled people as pathetic, frightening, or worthless. They insist that disability is an opportunity for creativity and resistance. Emboldened, Riva asks if she can paint their portraits—inventing an intimate and collaborative process that will transform the way she sees herself, others, and the world. Each portrait story begins to transform the myths she's been told her whole life about her body, her sexuality, and other measures of normal. (448 pgs)



**DIRT BY MARY MARANTZ (BIO)****(PICKED BY SMC)**

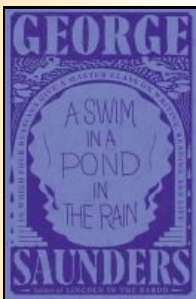
Dirt is a story about the places where we start. From a single-wide trailer in the mountains of rural West Virginia to the halls of Yale Law School, Mary Marantz's story is one of remembering our roots while turning our faces to the sky. From growing up in that trailer, where it rained just as hard inside as out, Mary has known what it is to feel broken and disqualified because of the muddy scars leaving smudged fingerprints across our lives. Generations of her family lived and logged in those woods, risking life and limb just to barely scrape by. *Dirt* is a story of healing. With gut-wrenching honesty and hard-won wisdom, Mary shares her story for anyone who has ever walked into the world and felt like their scars were still on display, showing that you are braver, better, and more empathetic for what you have survived. (272 pgs)

**THE DOCTORS BLACKWELL BY JANICE NIMURA (BIO)****(PICKED BY MG)**

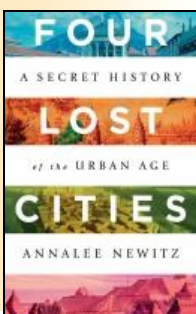
Though the world at first recoiled at the notion of a woman studying medicine, Elizabeth Blackwell's intelligence and intensity ultimately won her the acceptance of the male medical establishment. In 1849, she became the first woman in America to receive an M.D. She was soon joined in her iconic achievement by her younger sister, Emily, who was actually the more brilliant physician. Exploring the sisters' allies, enemies, and enduring partnership, Janice P. Nimura presents a story of trial and triumph. Together, the Blackwells founded the New York Infirmary for Indigent Women and Children, the first hospital staffed entirely by women. Both sisters were tenacious and visionary, but their convictions did not always align with the emergence of women's rights—or with each other. This richly researched biography celebrates two complicated pioneers who exploded the limits of possibility for women in medicine. (336 pgs)

**GONE AT MIDNIGHT BY JAKE ANDERSON****(PICKED BY TA)**

Twenty-one-year-old Vancouver student Elisa Lam was last heard from on January 31, 2013, after she checked into downtown L.A.'s Cecil Hotel—a building with a nine-decade history of scandal and tragedy. More than a week later, complaints by guests of foul-smelling tap water led to a grim discovery: Elisa's nude body floating in a rooftop water tank, in an area extremely difficult to access without setting off alarms. The only apparent clue was a disturbing surveillance video of Elisa, uploaded to YouTube in hopes of public assistance. As the video went viral, so did the questions of its tens of millions of viewers. Was Elisa's death caused by murder, suicide, or paranormal activity? Journalist Jake Anderson set out to uncover the facts behind a death that had become a magnet for conspiracy theorists. He presents shocking new evidence that may re-open one of the most chilling and obsessively followed true crime cases of the century. (368 pgs)

**A SWIM IN A POND IN THE RAIN BY GEORGE SAUNDERS****(PICKED BY SMC)**

For the last twenty years, George Saunders has been teaching a class on the Russian short story to his MFA students at Syracuse University. In *A Swim in a Pond in the Rain*, he shares a version of that class with us. Paired with iconic short stories by Chekhov, Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Gogol, the seven essays in this book are intended for anyone interested in how fiction works and why it's more relevant than ever in these turbulent times. He approaches the stories technically yet accessibly, and through them explains how narrative functions; why we stay immersed in a story and why we resist it; and the bedrock virtues a writer must foster. The process of writing, Saunders reminds us, is a technical craft, but also a way of training oneself to see the world with new openness and curiosity. (432 pgs)

**FOUR LOST CITIES BY ANNALEE NEWITZ****(PICKED BY SLH)**

Newitz explores the rise and fall of four ancient cities, each the center of a sophisticated civilization: the Neolithic site of Çatalhöyük in Central Turkey, the Roman vacation town of Pompeii, the medieval megacity of Angkor in Cambodia, and the indigenous metropolis Cahokia, which stood beside the Mississippi River where East St. Louis is today. Newitz travels to all four sites and investigates the cutting-edge research in archaeology, revealing the mix of environmental changes and political turmoil that doomed these ancient settlements. Tracing the early development of urban planning, Newitz also introduces us to the often anonymous workers who built these cities and created monuments that lasted millennia. *Four Lost Cities* is a journey into the forgotten past, but, foreseeing a future in which the majority of people on Earth will be living in cities, it may also reveal something of our own fate. (320 pgs)