

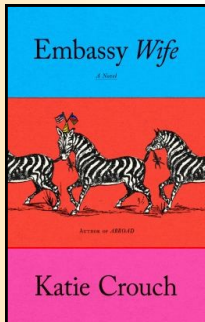


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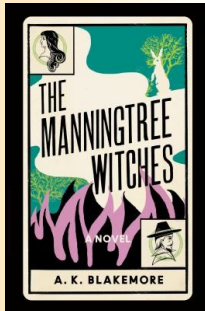
FICTION



EMBASSY WIFE BY KATIE CROUCH

(PICKED BY SLS)

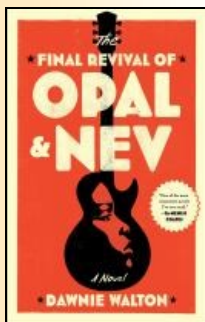
Meet Persephone Wilder, a displaced genius posing as the wife of an American diplomat in Namibia. She also suspects her husband is not actually the ambassador's legal counsel but a secret agent in the CIA. Persephone takes the newest trailing spouse, Amanda Evans, under her wing. Amanda arrives in Namibia mere weeks after giving up her Silicon Valley job so her husband, Mark, can have his family close by as he works on his Fulbright project. But once they're settled, Amanda sees clearly that Mark, who lived in Namibia two decades earlier, has other reasons for returning. The situation grows even more fraught when their daughter becomes involved in an international conflict and their own government won't stand up for her. How far will Amanda go to keep her family intact? How much corruption can Persephone ignore? What does it mean to be an American abroad when you're not sure you understand your country anymore? (368 pgs)



THE MANNINGTREE WITCHES BY A.K. BLAKEMORE

(PICKED BY MG)

England, 1643. Puritanical fervor has gripped the nation. In Manningtree, a town depleted of men since the wars began, the hot terror of damnation burns in the hearts of women left to their own devices. Rebecca West, fatherless and husbandless, chafes against the drudgery of her days, livened only occasionally by her infatuation with the handsome young clerk John Edes. But then a newcomer, Matthew Hopkins, arrives. A mysterious, pious figure dressed from head to toe in black, he takes over the Thorn Inn and begins to ask questions about what the women on the margins of this diminished community are up to. Dangerous rumors of covens, pacts, and bodily wants have begun to hang over women like Rebecca—and the future is as frightening as it is thrilling. (320 pgs)



THE FINAL REVIVAL OF OPAL & NEV BY DAWNIE WALTON

(PICKED BY KT)

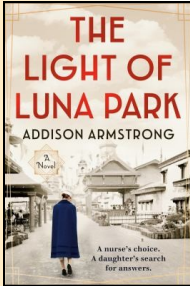
Opal is a fiercely independent young woman pushing against the grain in her style and attitude, Afro-punk before that term existed. When the aspiring British singer/songwriter Neville Charles discovers her at a bar's amateur night, she takes him up on his offer to make rock music together for the fledgling Rivington Records. In early 70's New York City, a rival band signed to her label brandishes a Confederate flag at a promotional concert. Opal's bold protest and the violence that ensues set off a chain of events that will not only change the lives of those she loves, but also be a deadly reminder that repercussions are always harsher for women, especially black women, who dare to speak their truth. Decades later, as Opal considers a 2016 reunion with Nev, music journalist S. Sunny Shelton seizes the chance to curate an oral history about her idols. But as her interviews dig deeper, a nasty new allegation from an unexpected source threatens to blow up everything. (368 pgs)



THE GODMOTHERS BY CAMILLE AUBRAY

(PICKED BY SM)

Four women become godmothers to one another's children, finding hope and shelter in this prosperous family and their sumptuous Greenwich Village home, and enjoying New York life. But the women's secret pasts lead to unforeseen consequences and betrayals that threaten to unravel all their carefully laid plans. When their husbands are forced to leave them during World War II, the Godmothers must unexpectedly contend with notorious gangsters like Frank Costello and Lucky Luciano who run the streets of New York City. Refusing to merely imitate the world of men, the four Godmothers learn to put aside their differences and grudges so that they can work together to protect their loved ones, and to find their own unique paths to the futures they've always dreamed of. (416 pgs)


THE LIGHT OF LUNA PARK BY ADDISON ARMSTRONG
(PICKED BY SM)

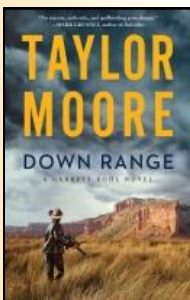
New York City, 1926. Nurse Althea Anderson's heart is near breaking when she witnesses another premature baby die at Bellevue Hospital. So when she reads an article detailing the amazing survival rates of babies treated in incubators in an exhibit at Luna Park, Coney Island, it feels like the miracle she has been searching for. But the doctors at Bellevue dismiss Althea and this unconventional medicine, forcing her to make a choice between a baby's life and the doctors' wishes that will change everything. Twenty-five years later, Stella Wright is falling apart. Her mother has just passed, she quit a job she loves, and her marriage is struggling. Then she discovers a letter that brings into question everything she knew about her mother, and everything she knows about herself. (336 pgs)


LEAVE SOCIETY BY TAO LIN
(PICKED TA)

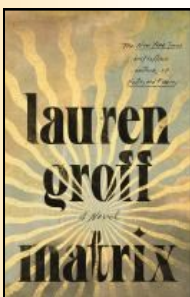
In 2014, a novelist named Li leaves Manhattan to visit his parents in Taipei for ten weeks. His life will begin to deepen and complexify on this trip. As he flies between these two worlds—year by year, over four years—he will flit in and out of optimism, despair, loneliness, sanity, bouts of chronic pain, and drafts of a new book. He will incite and temper arguments, uncover secrets about nature and history, and try to understand how to live a meaningful life as an artist and a son. But how to fit these pieces of his life together? Where to begin? Or should he leave society altogether? (368 pgs)


MOTHER MAY I BY JOSHILYN JACKSON
(PICKED BY SP)

Growing up poor in rural Georgia, Bree Cabbat was warned by her single mother that the world was a dark and scary place. Bree rejected her mother's fearful outlook, and life has proved her right. Bree now has all a woman could ever dream of. Until the day she awakens and sees a witch peering into her bedroom window—an old gray-haired woman dressed all in black who vanishes as quickly as she appears. Later that day though, she spies the old woman again, in the parking lot of her daughters' private school . . . just minutes before Bree's infant son, asleep in his car seat only a few feet away, vanishes. There is a note left in his place, warning her that she is being watched; if she wants her baby back, she must not call the police or deviate in any way from the instructions that will follow. To get her baby back, Bree must complete one small—but critical—task. It seems harmless enough, but her action comes with a devastating price, making her complicit in a tangled web of tragedy and shocking secrets that could destroy everything she loves. (324 pgs)


DOWN RANGE BY TAYLOR MOORE
(PICKED BY BS)

As a decorated undercover DEA special agent, Garrett Kohl has traveled the world—and fought in most of it—but it's the High Plains of northwest Texas he calls home and dreams of returning to one day. Kohl is in the middle of an assignment in Afghanistan when his commander orders him back to Texas on a short mission expected to take a week at most. The once-peaceful ranching community he loves is under attack by a band of criminals who have infiltrated law enforcement, corrupted local businesses, and is now terrorizing Kohl's own family. Hoping to prevent bloodshed, Kohl tries to resolve matters peacefully. But when the group strikes first, he has no choice but to go on the attack. Although outnumbered and outgunned, Kohl knows this region of Texas better than anyone. Like so many trespassers before them, these murderers will find out the hard way that the only thing tougher than this land is the people who call it home. (352 pgs)


MATRIX BY LAUREN GROFF
(PICKED BY SLH)

Cast out of the royal court by Eleanor of Aquitaine, deemed too coarse and rough-hewn for marriage or courtly life, seventeen-year-old Marie de France is sent to England to be the new prioress of an impoverished abbey, its nuns on the brink of starvation and beset by disease. At first taken aback by the severity of her new life, Marie finds focus and love in collective life with her singular and mercurial sisters. In this crucible, Marie steadily supplants her desire for family, for her homeland, for the passions of her youth with something new to her: devotion to her sisters, and a conviction in her own divine visions. Marie, born the last in a long line of women warriors and crusaders, is determined to chart a bold new course for the women she now leads and protects. But in a world that is shifting and corroding in frightening ways, one that can never reconcile itself with her existence, will the sheer force of Marie's vision be bulwark enough? (272 pgs)

STAFF PICKS

OCTOBER 2021

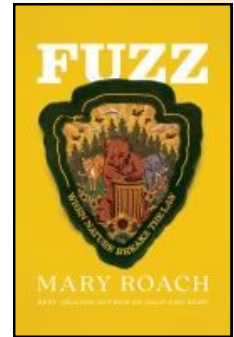


NON-FICTION

FUZZ BY MARY ROACH

(PICKED BY MG)

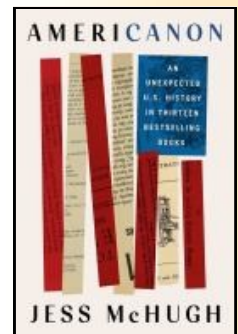
What's to be done about a jaywalking moose? A bear caught breaking and entering? Three hundred years ago, animals that broke the law would be assigned legal representation and put on trial. The answers are found not in jurisprudence but in science: the curious science of human-wildlife conflict, a discipline at the crossroads of human behavior and wildlife biology. Roach tags along with animal-attack forensics investigators, human-elephant conflict specialists and bear managers. She travels from leopard-terrorized hamlets in the Indian Himalaya to St. Peter's Square in the hours before the pope arrives for Easter Mass, when vandal gulls swoop in to destroy the elaborate floral display. She taste-tests rat bait, learns how to install a vulture effigy, and gets mugged by a macaque. Roach reveals as much about humanity as about nature's lawbreakers. When it comes to "problem" wildlife, she finds, humans are more often the problem—and the solution. (308 pgs)



AMERICANON BY JESS MCHUGH

(PICKED BY SLS)

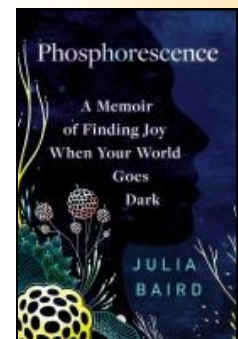
The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, The Old Farmer's Almanac, How to Win Friends and Influence People, Webster's American Dictionary of the English Language, Betty Crocker's Picture Cook Book: These are a few examples of American "bibles." They are reference books for daily life that ostensibly taught readers one subject, all while instructing them about their role in society and their responsibilities to family and to country. These are dictionaries, school primers, cookbooks, and how-to guides, spanning the full range of our 245-year history, which sold tens of millions of copies and set out specific archetypes for the ideal American, from the self-made entrepreneur to the devoted homemaker to the humble farmer. *Americanon* looks at how these ubiquitous texts have molded common language, culture, and customs—attempting to impose a single definition of American on a diverse nation. (336 pgs)



PHOSPHORESCENCE BY JULIA BAIRD

(PICKED BY KT)

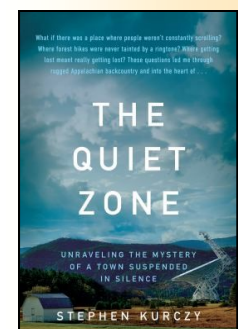
After surviving a difficult heartbreak and battle with cancer, Julia Baird began thinking deeply about how we persevere through the most challenging circumstances. She started to wonder, when we are overwhelmed by illness, loss or pain, or a tragedy outside our control: how can we keep putting one foot in front of the other? Baird went in search of the magic that fuels the light within—our own phosphorescence. She reflects on the things that lit her way through the darkness, especially the surprising strength found in connecting with nature and not just experiencing awe and wonder about the world around her, but deliberately hunting it, daily. Baird also writes about nurturing friendships and a quiet faith, pursuing silence, fighting for what she believes in, the importance of feeling small, learning from her mother's example of stoic grace. She also explores how others nurture their inner light, interviewing the founder of the modern forest therapy movement in Tokyo, a jellyfish scientist in Tasmania, and a tattooed priest from Colorado, among others. (320 pgs)

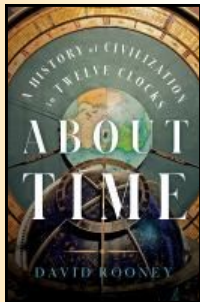


THE QUIET ZONE BY STEPHEN KURCZY

(PICKED BY SLH & BS)

Deep in the Appalachian Mountains lies the last truly quiet town in America. Green Bank, West Virginia, is a place at once futuristic and old-fashioned: It's home to the Green Bank Observatory, where astronomers search the depths of the universe using the latest technology, while schoolchildren go without WiFi or iPads. With a ban on all devices emanating radio frequencies that might interfere with the observatory's telescopes, Quiet Zone residents live a life free from constant digital connectivity. But a community that on the surface seems idyllic is a place of contradictions, where the provincial meets the seemingly supernatural and quiet can serve as a cover for something darker. In *The Quiet Zone*, he introduces us to an unforgettable cast of characters amongst the ordinary citizens seeking a simpler way of living. Kurczy asks: Is a less connected life desirable? Is it even possible? (336 pgs)

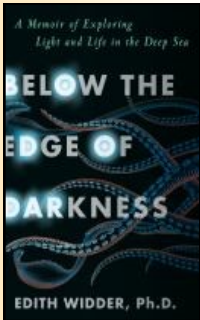




ABOUT TIME BY DAVID ROONEY

(PICKED BY SLH)

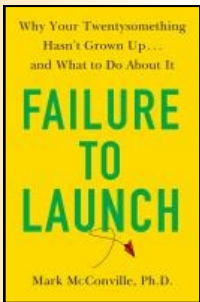
For thousands of years, people of all cultures have made and used clocks, from the city sundials of ancient Rome to the Stock Exchange clock of Amsterdam in 1611, Enlightenment observatories in India, and the high-precision clocks circling the Earth on a fleet of GPS satellites that have been launched since 1978. Clocks have helped us navigate the world and build empires, and have even taken us to the brink of destruction. Through the stories of twelve clocks, *About Time* brings pivotal moments from the past vividly to life. Rooney shows, through these artifacts, how time has been imagined, politicized, and weaponized over the centuries—and how it might bring peace. (288 pgs)



BELOW THE EDGE OF DARKNESS BY EDITH WIDDER

(PICKED BY SLS)

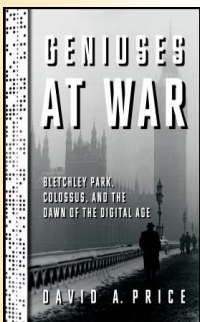
Edith Widder's childhood dream of becoming a marine biologist was almost derailed in college, when complications from a surgery gone wrong caused temporary blindness. A new reality of shifting shadows drew her fascination to the power of light. As her vision cleared, Widder found the intersection of her two passions in oceanic bioluminescence. She leaped at the first opportunity to train as a submersible pilot. Widder's first journey into the deep ocean, in a diving suit that resembled a suit of armor, took her to a depth of eight hundred feet. She turned off the lights and witnessed breathtaking underwater fireworks: explosions of bioluminescent activity. *Below the Edge of Darkness* takes readers deep into our planet's oceans as Widder pursues her questions about one of the most important and widely used forms of communication in nature. We experience life-and-death equipment malfunctions and witness breakthroughs in technology and understanding, all set against a growing awareness of the deteriorating health of our largest and least understood ecosystem. (352 pgs)



FAILURE TO LAUNCH BY MARK MCCONVILLE

(PICKED BY BS)

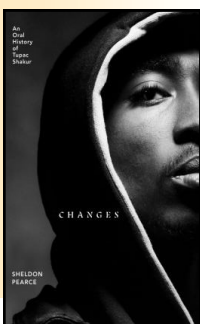
In Dr. Mark McConville's experience as a family clinical psychologist, perhaps no problem has been more fraught than that of young adults who fail to successfully transition from adolescence into adulthood. Studies show that 1 in 4 Americans aged 25 to 34 neither work nor attend school, and it's a problem that spans all socioeconomic and geographic boundaries. Why are modern kids failing to launch in ever-increasing numbers? The key, McConville has found, is that they are struggling with three critical skills that are necessary to make the transition from childhood to adulthood—finding a sense of purpose, developing administrative responsibility, and cultivating interdependence. In *Failure to Launch*, McConville breaks these down into achievable, accessible goals and offers a practical guide for the whole family, to help parents instill those skills in their young adults—and to get their kids into the real world, ready to start their lives. (320 pgs)



GENIUSES AT WAR BY DAVID PRICE

(PICKED BY SM)

Decoding the communication of the Nazi high command was imperative for the success of the Allied invasion of Normandy. The Nazi missives were encrypted by the Tunny cipher, a code that was orders of magnitude more difficult to crack than the infamous Enigma code. But Tommy Flowers, a maverick English working-class engineer, devised the ingenious, daring, and controversial plan to build a machine that could think at breathtaking speed and break the code in nearly real time. Together with the pioneering mathematician Max Newman and Enigma code-breaker Alan Turing, Flowers and his team produced—against the odds, the clock, and a resistant leadership—Colossus, the world's first digital electronic computer, the machine that would help bring the war to an end. *Geniuses at War* tells the mesmerizing story of the great minds behind Colossus, and chronicles their remarkable feats of engineering genius that ushered in the dawn of the digital age. (256 pgs)



CHANGES: AN ORAL HISTORY OF TUPAC SHAKUR BY SHELDON PEARCE (PICKED BY TA)

In the summer of 2020, Tupac Shakur's single "Changes" became an anthem for the worldwide protests against the murder of George Floyd. In *Changes*, published to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of Tupac's birth and twenty-fifth anniversary of his death, Sheldon Pearce offers one of the most thoughtful and comprehensive accounts yet of the artist's life and legacy. The book focuses on the individuals who are lesser known and offer fresh stories and rare insight. Meticulously woven together by Pearce, their voices combine to portray Tupac in all his complexity and contradiction. (288 pgs)