

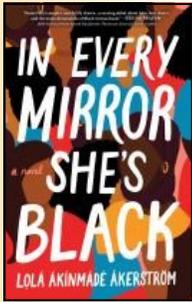


## Staff Picks Digital and Print Edition

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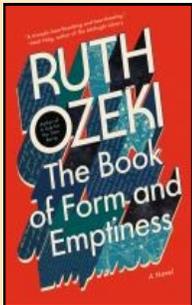


### FICTION



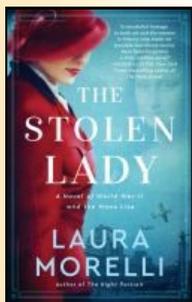
#### ***IN EVERY MIRROR SHE'S BLACK* BY LOLA AKINMADE AKERSTROM (PICKED BY SM)**

Three Black women are linked in unexpected ways to the same influential white man in Stockholm as they build their new lives in the most open society run by the most private people. Successful marketing executive Kemi Adeyemi is lured from the U.S. to Sweden by Jonny von Lundin, CEO of the nation's largest marketing firm, to help fix a PR fiasco involving a racially tone-deaf campaign. A chance meeting with Jonny in business class en route to the U.S. propels former model-turned-flight-attendant Brittany-Rae Johnson into a life of wealth, luxury, and privilege—a life she's not sure she wants—as the object of his unhealthy obsession. Refugee Muna Saheed, who lost her entire family, finds a job cleaning the toilets at Jonny's office as she works to establish her residency in Sweden and, more importantly, seeks connection and a place she can call home. (416 pg.)



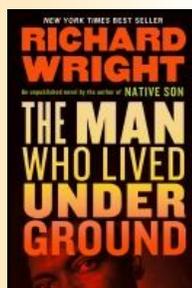
#### ***THE BOOK OF FORM AND EMPTINESS* BY RUTH OZEKI (PICKED BY MG)**

After the tragic death of his beloved musician father, 14-year-old Benny Oh begins to hear voices. They belong to the things in his house—a sneaker, a broken Christmas ornament, a piece of wilted lettuce. Although Benny doesn't understand what these things are saying, he can sense their emotional tone; some are pleasant, but others are angry and full of pain. When his mother develops a hoarding problem, the voices grow more clamorous. At first, Benny tries to ignore them, but soon the voices follow him outside the house, driving him at last to seek refuge in the silence of a public library, where objects are well-behaved and know to speak in whispers. There, Benny discovers a strange new world, where "things happen." He falls in love with a street artist with a smug pet ferret, who uses the library as her performance space. He meets a homeless philosopher-poet, who encourages him to ask important questions and find his own voice amongst the many. And he meets his very own Book—a talking thing—who narrates Benny's life and teaches him to listen to the things that truly matter. (560pgs)



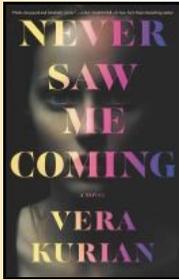
#### ***THE STOLEN LADY* BY LAURA MORELLI (PICKED BY SLH)**

**France, 1939:** At the dawn of World War II, Anne Guichard, a young archivist employed at the Louvre, arrives home to find her brother missing. Refugees begin flooding into Paris, and German artillery fire rattles the city. Anne is sent to the Castle of Chambord, where the Louvre's most precious artworks—including the *Mona Lisa*—are being transferred to ensure their safety. Anne frantically moves the *Mona Lisa* and other treasures again and again in an elaborate game of hide and seek. **Florence, 1479** Servant Bellina Sardi's future seems fixed when she accompanies her newly married mistress, Lisa Gherardini, to her home across the Arno. Lisa's husband, a prosperous silk merchant, is aligned with the powerful Medici. But soon, Bellina finds herself bewitched by a charismatic monk who has urged Florentines to rise up against the Medici, and to empty their homes of the riches and jewels her new employer prizes. When Master Leonardo da Vinci is commissioned to paint a portrait of Lisa, Bellina finds herself tasked with hiding an impossible secret. (384 pgs)

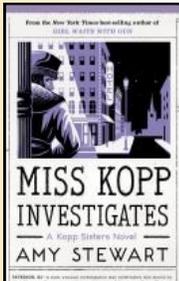


#### ***THE MAN WHO LIVED UNDERGROUND* BY RICHARD WRIGHT (PICKED BY KT)**

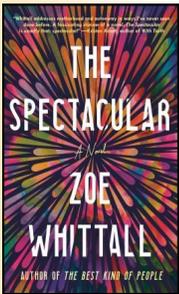
Fred Daniels, a Black man, is picked up randomly by the police after a brutal murder in a Chicago neighborhood and taken to the local precinct where he is tortured until he confesses to a crime he didn't commit. After signing a confession, he escapes—or is permitted to escape—from the precinct and takes up residence in the sewers below the streets of Chicago. This is the simple, horrible premise of Richard Wright's scorching novel, written in the same period as his landmark books *Native Son* (1940) and *Black Boy* (1945) that he was unable to publish in his lifetime. Only small parts of it have appeared in print, and in a significantly redacted form it would eventually be included in the short story collection *Eight Men* (1961). Now this novel about race and violence in America is published in full. (240 pgs)

**NEVER SAW ME COMING BY VERA KURIAN****(PICKED BY MG)**

Meet Chloe Sevre. She's a freshman honor student, hot girl next door, who also happens to be a psychopath. Her hobbies include yogalates, frat parties, and plotting to kill Will Bachman, a childhood friend who grievously wronged her. Chloe is one of seven students at her DC-based college who are part of an unusual clinical study for psychopaths—students like herself who lack empathy and can't comprehend emotions like fear or guilt. The study, led by a renowned psychologist, requires them to wear smart watches that track their moods and movements. When one of the students in the study is found murdered in the psychology building, a dangerous game of cat and mouse begins, and Chloe goes from hunter to prey. As she races to identify the killer and put her own plan into action, she'll be forced to decide if she can trust any of her fellow psychopaths—and everybody knows you should never trust a psychopath. (400 pgs)

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

Winter 1919: Norma is summoned home from France, Constance is called back from Washington, and Fleurette puts her own plans on hold as the sisters rally around their recently widowed sister-in-law and her children. How are four women going to support themselves? A chance encounter offers Fleurette a solution: clandestine legal work for a former colleague of Constance's. She becomes a "professional co-respondent," posing as the "other woman" in divorce cases so that photographs can be entered as evidence to procure a divorce. While her late-night assignments are both exciting and lucrative, they put her on a collision course with her own family, who would never approve of such disreputable work. One client's suspicious behavior leads Fleurette to uncover a much larger crime, putting her in the unlikely position of amateur detective. (304 pgs)

**THE SPECTACULAR BY ZOE WHITTALL****(PICKED BY SM)**

It's 1997 and Missy is a cellist in an indie rock band on a tour across America. At 22 years old, Missy gets on stage every night and plays the song about her absent mother that made the band famous. As the only girl in the band, she's determined to party just as hard as everyone else, loving and leaving a guy in every town. But then she meets a tomboy drummer who is hard to forget, and a forgotten flap of cocaine strands her at the border. Fortysomething Carola is just surfacing from a sex scandal at the yoga center where she has been living when she sees her daughter, Missy, for the first time in ten years—on the cover of a music magazine. Ruth is eighty-three and planning her return to the Turkish seaside village where she spent her childhood. But when her granddaughter, Missy, winds up crashing at her house, she decides it's time that the strong and stubborn women in her family find a way to understand one another again. (384 pgs)

**QUESTLAND BY CARRIE VAUGHN****(PICKED BY BS)**

Literature professor Dr. Addie Cox is living a happy life in her ivory tower when Harris Lang, the eccentric billionaire tech genius, offers her an unusual job. He wants her to guide a mercenary strike team sent to infiltrate his island retreat off the northwest coast of the United States. Addie is puzzled by her role on the mission until she understands what Lang has built: Insula Mirabilis, an isolated resort where tourists will one day pay big bucks for a convincing, high-tech-powered fantasy-world experience. Unfortunately, one of the island's employees has gone rogue and activated an invisible force shield that has cut off all outside communication. Suspicion rests on Dominic Brand, the project's head designer— and Addie Cox's ex-boyfriend. Lang has tasked Addie and the mercenary team with taking back control of the island at any cost. But Addie is wrestling demons of her own—and not the fantastical kind. Now, she must navigate the deadly traps of Insula Mirabilis as well as her own past trauma. (304 pgs)

**JUST ONE LOOK BY LINDSAY CAMERON****(PICKED BY SP)**

After suffering an epic tumble down the corporate ladder, Cassie Woodson finds the only way she can pay her bills is to take a thankless temp job reviewing correspondence for a large-scale fraud suit. The daily drudgery amplifies all that her life is lacking and leaves her with too much time on her hands. While sorting through a relentless deluge of emails, something catches her eye: the tender (and totally private) exchanges between a partner at the firm, Forest Watts, and his enchanting wife, Annabelle. Every day, Cassie dissects their emails from her dingy workstation. Her admiration quickly escalates into all-out mimicry, because she wants this life more than anything. But when Cassie orchestrates a "chance" meeting with Forest in the real world and sees something that throws the state of his marriage into question, the fantasy she's been carefully cultivating shatters. Suddenly, she doesn't simply admire Annabelle—she wants to take her place. And she's armed with the tools to make that happen. (304 pgs)

# STAFF PICKS

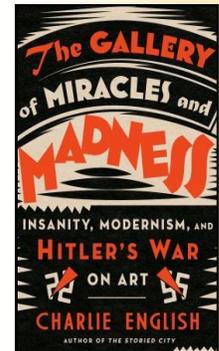
NOVEMBER 2021



## NON-FICTION

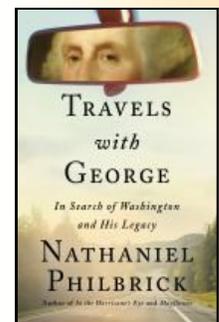
### ***THE GALLERY OF MIRACLES AND MADNESS BY CHARLIE ENGLISH (PICKED BY SLH)***

As a veteran of World War I, and an expert in art history and medicine, Hans Prinzhorn was uniquely placed to explore the connection between art and madness. The work he collected contained a raw, emotional power, and the book he published about the material inspired a new generation of modern artists. By the mid-1930s, Prinzhorn's collection had begun to attract the attention of a far more sinister group. Modernism was in full swing when Adolf Hitler arrived in Vienna in 1907, hoping to forge a career as a painter. Rejected from art school, he became convinced that modern art was degrading the Aryan soul, and once he had risen to power he ordered that modern works be seized and publicly shamed in "degenerate art" exhibitions, which became wildly popular. Hitler's next campaign was against allegedly "degenerate" humans, and Prinzhorn's artist-patients were caught up in both. By 1941, the Nazis had murdered 70,000 psychiatric patients in killing centers that would serve as prototypes for the death camps of the Final Solution. Dozens of Prinzhorn artists were among the victims. (336 pgs)



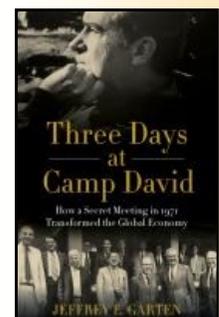
### ***TRAVELS WITH GEORGE BY NATHANIEL PHILBRICK (PICKED BY SM)***

When George Washington became president in 1789, the United States of America was still a loose and quarrelsome confederation and a tentative political experiment. Washington undertook a tour of the ex-colonies to talk to ordinary citizens about his new government, and to imbue in them the idea of being one thing—Americans. In the fall of 2018, Nathaniel Philbrick embarked on his own journey to see for himself what America had become in the 229 years since. Writing in a thoughtful first person about his own adventures with his wife Melissa and their dog Dora, Philbrick follows Washington's presidential excursions: from Mount Vernon to the new capital in New York; a tour of New England; a venture onto Long Island and eventually across Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina. The narrative moves smoothly between the eighteenth and twenty-first centuries as we see the country through both Washington's and Philbrick's eyes. (400 pgs)



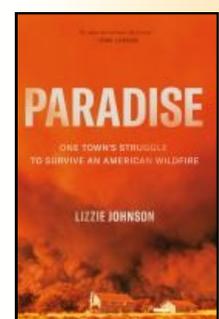
### ***THREE DAYS AT CAMP DAVID BY JEFFREY GARTEN (PICKED BY SM)***

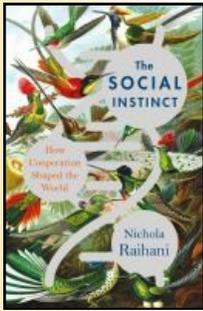
Over the course of three days in August, 1971—at a secret meeting at Camp David, President Richard Nixon and his brain trust changed the course of history. Before that weekend, all national currencies were valued to the U.S. dollar, which was convertible to gold at a fixed rate. That system was the foundation of the international monetary system that helped fuel the greatest expansion of middle-class prosperity the world has ever seen. Garten argues that many of the roots of America's dramatic retrenchment in world affairs began with the admission that America could no longer afford to uphold the global monetary system. It opened the way for massive market instability and speculation that has plagued the world economy ever since, but at the same time it made possible the gigantic expansion of trade and investment across borders which created our modern era of once unimaginable progress. Garten chronicles this critical turning point, analyzes its impact on the American economy and world markets, and explores its ramifications now and for the future. (320 pgs)



### ***PARADISE BY LIZZIE JOHNSON (PICKED BY SLH)***

San Francisco Chronicle reporter Lizzie Johnson was there as the town of Paradise burned. She provides a minute-by-minute account of the Camp Fire—the nation's deadliest wildfire in a century—following residents and first responders as they fight to save themselves and their town. Johnson documents the unfolding tragedy with empathy and nuance. But she also investigates the root causes, from runaway climate change to a deeply flawed alert system to Pacific Gas and Electric's decades-long neglect of critical infrastructure. A cautionary tale for a new era of megafires, *Paradise* is the gripping story of a town wiped off the map and the determination of its people to rise again. (432 pgs)

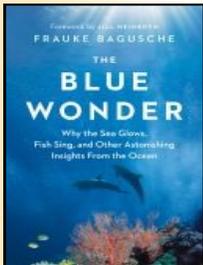




**THE SOCIAL INSTINCT BY NICHOLA RAIHANI**

**(PICKED BY MG)**

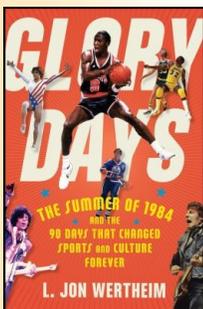
Cooperation is the means by which life arose in the first place. It's how we progressed from free-floating strands of genetic material, to nation states. But given what we know about the mechanisms of evolution, cooperation is also something of a puzzle. How does cooperation begin, when on a Darwinian level, all that the genes in your body care about is being passed on to the next generation? Raihani looks at where and how collaborative behavior emerges throughout the animal kingdom, and what problems it solves. She reveals that the species that exhibit cooperative behavior most similar to our own tend not to be other apes; they are birds, insects, and fish, occupying far more distant branches of the evolutionary tree. By understanding the problems they face, and how they cooperate to solve them, we can glimpse how human cooperation first evolved. And we can also understand what it is about the way we cooperate that has made humans so distinctive—and so successful. (304 pgs)



**THE BLUE WONDER BY FRAUKE BAGUSCHE**

**(PICKED BY SLS)**

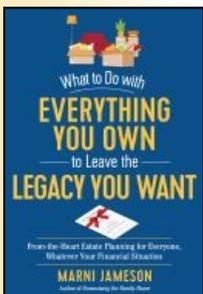
Marine biologist and diver Frauke Bagusche brings readers on a fascinating and beautiful deep-sea dive into the ocean. Drawing on scientific discoveries and her own research, she uses photographs and playful prose to reveal: deep-sea reefs that glitter like glass, fish that converse with each other by singing—loudly, an octopus that imitates more than fifteen other animals, the secret behind why the sea glows at night and more. There is so much to be discovered, under the sea. With the heart of a poet and the mind of a scientist, Frauke Bagusche re-awakens our love for the sea and ignites a desire to protect this vital habitat. (304 pgs)



**GLORY DAYS BY L. JON WERTHEIM**

**(PICKED BY SM)**

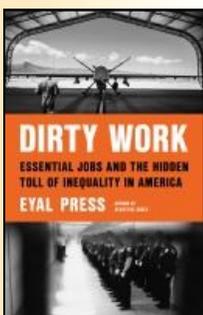
The summer of 1984 was a watershed moment in the birth of modern sports when the nation watched Michael Jordan grow from college basketball player to professional athlete and star. That summer also saw ESPN's rise to media dominance as the country's premier sports network and the first modern, commercialized, profitable Olympics. Magic Johnson and Larry Bird's rivalry raged, Martina Navratilova and John McEnroe reigned in tennis, and Hulk Hogan and Vince McMahon made pro wrestling a business. It was an awakening in the sports world, a moment when sports began to morph into the market-savvy, moneyed, controversial, and wildly popular arena we know today. L. Jon Wertheim captures these 90 seminal days against the backdrop of the nostalgia-soaked 1980s, to show that this was the year we collectively traded in our ratty Converse for a pair of sleek, heavily branded, ingeniously marketed Nikes. (336 pgs)



**WHAT TO DO WITH EVERYTHING YOU OWN BY MARNI JAMESON**

**(PICKED BY BS)**

In helping readers leave behind a blessing rather than a burden, Marni Jameson focuses on what's important: taking care of loved ones and causes dear to you—and making a thoughtful plan instead of a mess. Whether you are in the prime of life or your later years; are single or married; have kids or not; are well-off or just getting by, *What to Do with Everything* can help you: identify what kind of legacy you want to leave, understand wills, trusts, and other agreements, head off potential family conflict and decide which possessions to donate, sell, or auction. As Jameson helps you shape your legacy, you'll enjoy peace of mind, comfort, and even a few laughs. And you'll rest assured: It's not so much *what* you leave but *how* you leave it that matters. (272 pgs)



**DIRTY WORK BY EYAL PRESS**

**(PICKED BY SLS)**

Drone pilots who carry out targeted assassinations. Undocumented immigrants who man the "kill floors" of industrial slaughterhouses. Guards who patrol the wards of America's most violent prisons. In *Dirty Work*, Eyal Press offers a view of the moral landscape of contemporary America through the stories of people who perform society's most ethically troubling jobs. As Press shows, we are increasingly distanced from an array of questionable activities that other, less privileged people perform in our name. The COVID-19 pandemic has drawn unprecedented attention to the issue of "essential workers," and to the health and safety risks to which workers are exposed. But *Dirty Work* examines less familiar occupational hazards: psychological and emotional hardships such as stigma, shame and PTSD. These burdens fall disproportionately on low-income workers, undocumented immigrants, women, and people of color. Illuminating the stories of the people doing society's dirty work, and incisively examining the structures of power and complicity that shape their lives, Press reveals fundamental truths about the moral dimensions of work, and the hidden costs of inequality in America. (303 pgs)