

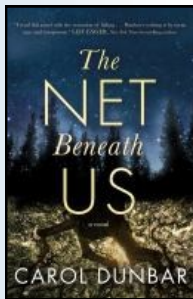


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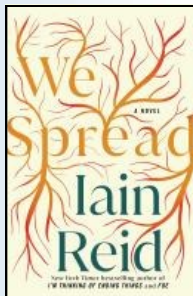
FICTION



***THE NET BENEATH US* BY CAROL DUNBAR**

(PICKED BY SM)

In the aftermath of her husband’s logging accident, Elsa has more questions than answers about how to carry on while caring for their two small children in the unfinished house he was building for them in the woods of rural Wisconsin. To cope with the challenges of winter and the near-daily miscommunications from her in-laws, she forges her own relationship with the land, learning from and taking comfort in the trees her husband had so loved. If she wants to stay in their home, she must discover her own capabilities, and accept help from the people and places she least expects. *The Net Beneath Us* is a lyrical exploration of loss, marriage, parenthood, and self-reliance; a tale of how the natural world offers us healing, if we can learn where to look. (320 pgs)



***WE SPREAD* BY IAIN REID**

(PICKED BY TA)

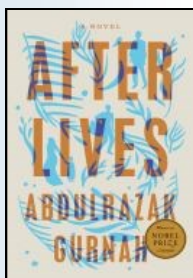
Penny, an artist, has lived in the same apartment for decades, surrounded by the artifacts and keepsakes of her long life. She is resigned to the mundane rituals of old age, until things start to slip. Before her longtime partner passed away years earlier, provisions were made, unbeknownst to her, for a room in a unique long-term care residence, where Penny finds herself after one too many “incidents.” Initially, all is well. She even begins to paint again. But as the days start to blur together, Penny—with a growing sense of unrest and distrust—starts to lose her grip on the passage of time and on her place in the world. Is she succumbing to the subtly destructive effects of aging, or is she an unknowing participant in something more unsettling? (304 pgs)



***THE HOUSE PARTY* BY RITA CAMERON**

(PICKED BY SM)

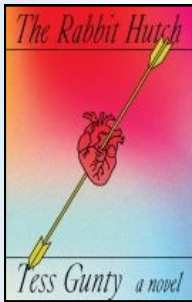
Maja Jensen is the type of woman who considers every detail when building her dream home in the suburbs of Philadelphia. The perfect house that would compensate for her failure to have a child, the house that was going to save her marriage. But when a group of reckless teenagers trash the newly built home just weeks before she moves in, her plans are shattered. Those teenagers are the “good kids”—the ones on track to go to college and move on to the next stage of their privileged lives. They have grown up in a protected bubble and are accustomed to getting by with just a slap on the wrist. Did they think they could just destroy property without facing punishment? Or was there something deeper, darker, at play that night? As the police close in on a list of suspects, the tight-knit community begins to fray as families attempt to protect themselves. What should have been the party of the year will have repercussions that will put Maja's marriage to the ultimate test, jeopardize the futures of those “good kids,” and divide the town over questions of privilege and responsibility. (320 pgs)



***AFTERLIVES* BY ABDULRAZAK GURNAH**

(PICKED BY SLS)

When he was just a boy, Ilyas was stolen from his parents on the coast of east Africa by German colonial troops. After years away, fighting against his own people, he returns home to find his parents gone and his sister, Afiya, abandoned into de facto slavery. Hamza, too, returns home from the war, scarred in body and soul and with nothing but the clothes on his back—until he meets the beautiful, undaunted Afiya. As these young people live and work and fall in love, their fates knotted ever more tightly together, the shadow of a new war on another continent falls over them, threatening once again to carry them away. (288 pgs)

**THE RABBIT HUTCH BY TESS GUNTY****(PICKED BY SLS)**

The automobile industry has abandoned Vacca Vale, Indiana. In a run-down apartment building on the edge of town, commonly known as the Rabbit Hutch, a number of people now reside quietly, looking for ways to live in a dying city. Here live four teenagers who have recently aged out of the state foster-care system: three boys and one girl, Blandine, who *The Rabbit Hutch* centers around. Hauntingly beautiful and unnervingly bright, Blandine is plagued by the structures, people, and places that not only failed her but actively harmed her. Now all Blandine wants is an escape, a true bodily escape like the mystics describe in the books she reads. Set across one week and culminating in a shocking act of violence, *The Rabbit Hutch* chronicles a town on the brink, desperate for rebirth. How far will its residents go to achieve it? Does one person's gain always come at another's expense? (352 pgs)

**THE READING LIST BY SARA NISHA ADAMS****(PICKED BY KT)**

Widower Mukesh lives a quiet life in the London Borough of Ealing after losing his beloved wife. He worries about his granddaughter, Priya, who hides in her room reading while he spends his evenings watching nature documentaries. Aleisha is a bright but anxious teenager working at the local library for the summer when she discovers a crumpled-up piece of paper in the back of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. It's a list of novels that she's never heard of before. Intrigued, and a little bored with her slow job at the checkout desk, she decides to read every book on the list. As each story gives up its magic, the books transport Aleisha from the painful realities she's facing at home. When Mukesh arrives at the library, desperate to forge a connection with his bookworm granddaughter, Aleisha passes along the reading list... hoping that it will be a lifeline for him too. Slowly, the shared books create a connection between two lonely souls, as fiction helps them escape their grief and everyday troubles and find joy again. (373 pgs)

**LIBERATION DAY BY GEORGE SAUNDERS****(PICKED BY SM)**

The "best short story writer in English" (Time) is back with a masterful collection that explores ideas of power, ethics, and justice. "Love Letter" is a tender missive from grandfather to grandson, in the midst of a dystopian political situation in the not-too-distant future, that reminds us of our obligations to our ideals, ourselves, and each other. In "Mother's Day," two women who loved the same man come to an existential reckoning in the middle of a hailstorm. And in "Elliott Spencer," our eighty-nine-year-old protagonist finds himself brainwashed—his memory "scraped"—a victim of a scheme in which poor, vulnerable people are reprogrammed and deployed as political protesters. Together, these nine stories coalesce into a case for viewing the world with the same generosity and clear-eyed attention as Saunders does, even in the most absurd of circumstances. (256 pgs)

**ALIAS EMMA BY AVA GLASS****(PICKED BY SLS)**

Emma Makepeace is about to spend the longest night of her life. She's on her first operation with a shadowy organization known only as 'The Agency', assigned to track down and save an innocent man wanted by the Russian government. All Emma has to do is bring him in to MI6 before sunrise, and before an assassination team gets to him first. But the Russians have hacked the city's CCTV cameras. There are spies all over London searching for the two of them. And her target, Michael Primalov, doesn't want to be rescued. As London sleeps, a battle is taking place on its streets as Emma fights to keep Michael alive. But what sort of reception await them if and when they get to MI6? (288 pgs)

**DAISY DARKER BY ALICE FEENEY****(PICKED BY SP)**

After years of avoiding each other, Daisy Darker's entire family is assembling for Nana's 80th birthday party in Nana's crumbling gothic house on a tiny tidal island. Finally back together one last time, when the tide comes in, they will be cut off from the rest of the world for eight hours. The family arrives, each of them harboring secrets. Then at the stroke of midnight, as a storm rages, Nana is found dead. And an hour later, the next family member follows... Trapped on an island where someone is killing them one by one, the Darkers must reckon with their present mystery as well as their past secrets, before the tide comes in and all is revealed. (352 pgs)

STAFF PICKS

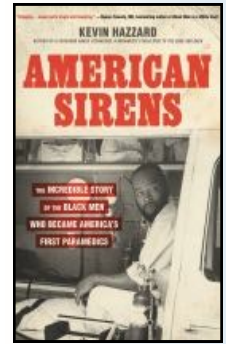
NOVEMBER 2022



NON-FICTION

AMERICAN SIRENS BY KEVIN HAZZARD (PICKED BY SM)

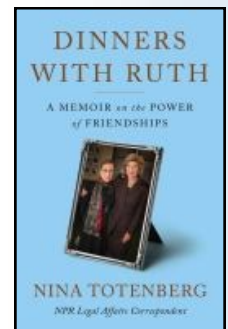
Until the 1970s, if you suffered a medical crisis, your chances of survival were minimal. A 9-1-1 call might bring police or even the local funeral home. But that all changed with Freedom House EMS in Pittsburgh, a group of Black men who became America's first paramedics and set the gold standard for emergency medicine around the world, only to have their story and their legacy erased—until now. In *American Sirens*, journalist and paramedic Kevin Hazzard tells the dramatic story of how a group of young, undereducated Black men forged a new frontier of healthcare. He follows a rich cast of characters that includes John Moon, an orphan who found his calling as a paramedic; Peter Safar, the Nobel Prize-nominated physician who invented CPR and realized his vision for a trained ambulance service; and Nancy Caroline, the idealistic young doctor who turned a scrappy team into an international leader. At every turn, Freedom House battled racism—from the community, the police, and the government. Their job was grueling, yet despite the long odds and fierce opposition, they succeeded spectacularly. (336 pgs)



DINNERS WITH RUTH BY NINA TOTENBERG

(PICKED BY KT)

Four years before Nina Totenberg was hired at NPR and nearly twenty-two years before Ruth Bader Ginsburg was appointed to the Supreme Court, Nina called Ruth. A reporter for *The National Observer*, Nina was curious about Ruth's legal brief, asking the Supreme Court to declare a law that discriminated "on the basis of sex" to be unconstitutional. In a time when women were fired for becoming pregnant, often could not apply for credit cards or get a mortgage in their own names, Ruth patiently explained her argument. That call launched a remarkable, nearly fifty-year friendship. *Dinners with Ruth* is an extraordinary account of two women who paved the way for future generations by tearing down professional and legal barriers. It is also an intimate memoir of the power of friendships as women began to pry open career doors and transform the workplace. *Dinners with Ruth* also weaves together compelling, personal portraits of other fascinating women and men from Nina's life, including her cherished NPR colleagues and multiple Supreme Court Justices. (320 pgs)



FABRIC BY VICTORIA FINLAY

(PICKED BY SLS)

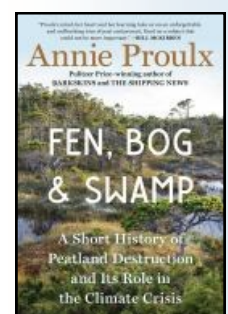
Fabric is a necessary part of our everyday lives, but it's also an opportunity for creativity, symbolism, culture and connection. Traveling across the world and bringing history to life, Victoria Finlay investigates how and why people have made and used cloth. A century ago in Wales, women would sew their own funeral clothes over tea with friends. In Papua New Guinea, bark is stripped from trees and beaten into cloth. Harris Tweed has a particular smell, while Guatemalan weavers use dazzling colors. Uncovering the stories of the fabrics people wear and use from sacking to silk, *Fabric* combines science, history, tradition and art in a captivating exploration of how we live, work, craft and care. (384 pgs)

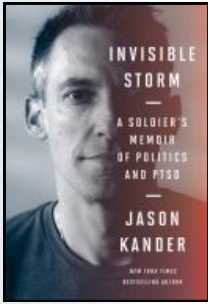


FEN, BOG & SWAMP BY ANNIE PROULX

(PICKED BY SLS)

A lifelong acolyte of the natural world, Annie Proulx brings her witness and research to the subject of wetlands and the vitally important role they play in preserving the environment—by storing the carbon emissions that accelerate climate change. Fens, bogs, swamps, and marine estuaries are crucial to the earth's survival, and in four illuminating parts, Proulx documents their systemic destruction in pursuit of profit. In a vivid and revelatory journey through history, Proulx describes the fens of 16th-century England, Canada's Hudson Bay lowlands, Russia's Great Vasyugan Mire, and America's Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. She introduces the early explorers who launched the destruction of the Amazon rainforest, and writes of the diseases spawned in the wetlands—the Ague, malaria, Marsh Fever. (208 pgs)

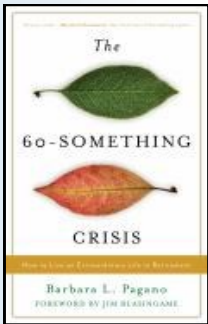




INVISIBLE STORM BY JASON KANDER

(PICKED BY SM)

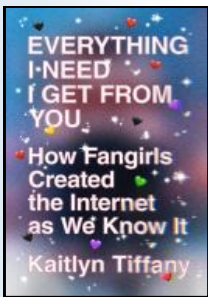
In 2017, President Obama was asked who gave him hope for the future of the country, and Jason Kander was the first name he mentioned. Suddenly, Jason was a national figure. As observers assumed he was preparing a run for the presidency, Jason announced a bid for mayor of Kansas City instead and was headed for a landslide victory. But after eleven years battling PTSD from his service in Afghanistan, Jason was seized by depression and suicidal thoughts. He dropped out of the mayor's race and out of public life. And finally, he sought help. In this brutally honest second memoir, Kander has written the book he himself needed in the most painful moments of his PTSD. In candid, in-the-moment detail, we see him struggle with undiagnosed illness during a presidential bid; witness his family buoy him through challenging treatment; and, giving hope to so many of us, see him heal. (256 pgs)



THE 60-SOMETHING CRISIS BY BARBARA PAGANO

(PICKED BY SM)

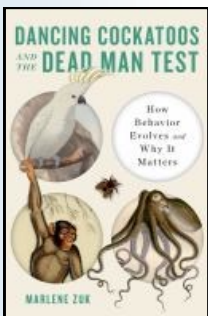
The 60-Something Crisis: How to Live an Extraordinary Life in Retirement is the first book to circumvent the tired and conventional approaches of finding purpose, passion, or happiness, or using reinvention to discover a path of fulfillment after 60. It presents a clear, practical framework through four portals—geography of place, yield, kinship, and freedom—to navigate and support future well-being and happiness. Pagano provides the foundation for taking on or taking back late-stage growth and shifts the conversation from “What’s next?” to “What do I need to know, what do I need to do now, and how soon can I get started?” Pre-retirees on the brink of a major life transition or retirees who want more from life will find themselves pulled toward a higher target of well-being that endures. (240 pgs)



EVERYTHING I NEED I GET FROM YOU BY KAITLYN TIFFANY

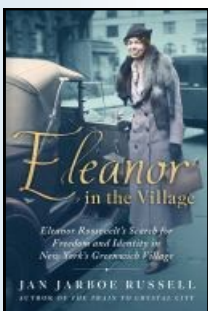
(PICKED BY TA)

In *Everything I Need I Get from You*, Kaitlyn Tiffany, a staff writer at *The Atlantic* and a superfan herself, guides us through the online world of fans, stans, and boybands. Along the way we meet girls who damage their lungs from screaming too loud, fans rallying together to manipulate chart numbers using complex digital subversion, and an underworld of inside jokes and shared memories surrounding band members' allergies, internet typos, and hairstyles. In the process, Tiffany makes a convincing argument that fangirls, in their ingenuity and collaboration, created the social internet we know today. “Before most people were using the internet for anything,” Tiffany writes, “fans were using it for everything.” (320pgs)



DANCING COCKATOOS AND THE DEAD MAN TEST BY MARLENE ZUK (PICKED BY SLS)

For centuries, people have been returning to the same tired nature-versus-nurture debate, trying to determine what we learn and what we inherit. In *Dancing Cockatoos and the Dead Man Test*, biologist Marlene Zuk goes beyond the binary and instead focuses on interaction, or the way that genes and environment work together. Driving her investigation is a simple but essential question: How does behavior evolve? Zuk answers this question by turning to a wide range of animals and animal behavior. There are stories of cockatoos that dance to rock music, ants that heal their injured companions, dogs that exhibit signs of obsessive-compulsive disorder, and so much more. Zuk helps us see both other animals and ourselves more clearly, demonstrating that animal behavior can be remarkably similar to human behavior, and wonderfully complicated in its own right. (352 pgs)



ELEANOR IN THE VILLAGE BY JAN RUSSELL (PICKED BY SL)

Not much is known about why in 1920, Eleanor suddenly abandoned her duties as a mother of five and moved to Greenwich Village, then the symbol of all forms of transgressive freedom—communism, homosexuality, interracial relationships, and subversive political activity. Jan Russell pulls back the curtain on Eleanor's life to reveal the motivations and desires that drew her to the Village and how her time there changed her political outlook. Eleanor joined the cohort of what then was called “The New Women” in Greenwich Village. They had a serious agenda, organizing for social change—unions for workers, equal pay, protection for child workers—and they insisted on their own sexual freedom. Even after moving into the White House, Eleanor retained connections to the Village, ultimately purchasing an apartment in Washington Square where she lived during World War II and in the aftermath of Roosevelt's death in 1945. (240 pgs)