



## Staff Picks Digital and Print Edition

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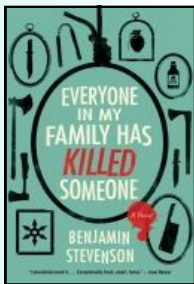
### FICTION



#### ***THE RESEMBLANCE BY LAUREN NOSSETT***

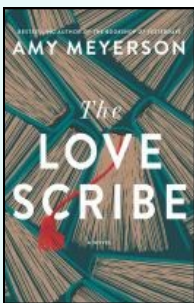
**(PICKED BY BS)**

On a November morning at the University of Georgia, a fraternity brother steps off a busy crosswalk and is struck dead by an oncoming car. More than a dozen witnesses all agree on two things: The driver looked identical to the victim, and he was smiling. Detective Marlitt Kaplan is first on the scene. An Athens native and the daughter of a UGA professor, she knows all its shameful histories. But in the course of investigating this hit-and-run, she will uncover more chilling secrets as she explores the sprawling, interconnected Greek system. The lines between Marlitt's policework and her own past increasingly blur as Marlitt seeks to bring to justice an institution that took something precious from her many years ago. When threats against her escalate, and some long-buried secrets threaten to come to the surface, she can't help but question whether the corruption in Athens has run off campus and into the force and how far these brotherhoods will go to protect their own. (320 pgs)



#### ***EVERYONE IN MY FAMILY HAS KILLED SOMEONE BY BENJAMIN STEVENSON*** (PICKED BY SLS)

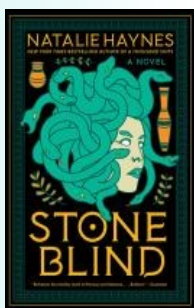
Everyone in my family has killed someone. Some of us, the high achievers, have killed more than once. I'm not trying to be dramatic, but it is the truth. Some of us are good, others are bad, and some just unfortunate. I'm Ernest Cunningham. Call me Ern or Ernie. I wish I'd killed whoever decided our family reunion should be at a ski resort, but it's a little more complicated than that. Have I killed someone? Yes. I have. Who was it? Let's get started... (384 pgs)



#### ***THE LOVE SCRIBE BY AMY MEYERSON***

**(PICKED BY SM)**

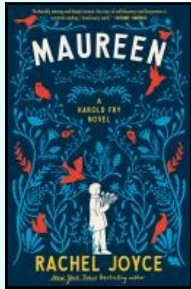
When Alice's best friend, Gabby, is reeling from a breakup, Alice writes her a heartfelt story to cheer her up. While reading it in a café, Gabby, as if by magic, meets the man of her dreams. Thinking the story might have some special power to it, Gabby shares it with her sister and other friends, who all find instant love. Word of mouth spreads, and Alice stumbles upon a new calling—to be a love scribe. But not all the love stories she writes unfold as expected. And while Alice tries to harness her extraordinary gift, she is summoned to a mansion in the woods where she encounters the reclusive Madeline Alger and her mysterious library. As Alice struggles to write a story for Madeline, her most challenging assignment yet, she's forced to confront her own guarded heart. Because maybe—just maybe—there's a love story waiting to be written for her, too. *The Love Scribe* explores love, fate and the power of stories when we choose to believe in them. (352 pgs)



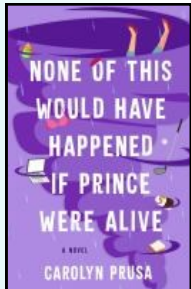
#### ***STONE BLIND BY NATALIE HAYNES***

**(PICKED BY LW & SLS)**

The only mortal in a family of gods, Medusa is the youngest of the Gorgon sisters. Unlike her siblings, Medusa grows older, feels weakness. Her mortal lifespan gives her an urgency that her family will never know. When the sea god Poseidon assaults Medusa in Athene's temple, the goddess is enraged. Furious by the violation of her sacred space, Athene takes revenge—on the young woman. Punished for Poseidon's actions, Medusa is forever transformed. Writhing snakes replace her hair and her gaze will turn any living creature to stone. Cursed with the power to destroy all she loves with one look, Medusa condemns herself to a life of solitude. Until Perseus embarks upon a fateful quest to fetch the head of a Gorgon... In *Stone Blind*, classicist and comedian Natalie Haynes turns our understanding of this legendary myth on its head, bringing empathy and nuance to one of the earliest stories in which a woman—injured by a powerful man—is blamed, punished, and monstered for the assault. (373 pgs)

**MAUREEN BY RACHEL JOYCE****(PICKED BY FC & SM)**

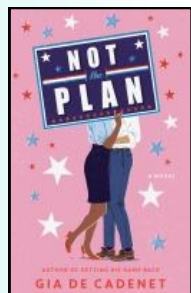
Maureen Fry has settled into the quiet life she shares with her husband after his iconic walk across England ten years ago. When an unexpected message from the North disturbs her equilibrium again, it is now her turn to make a journey. But Maureen is not like Harold. By turns outspoken, then vulnerable, she struggles to form bonds with the people she meets, and the landscape she crosses has radically changed. And Maureen has no sense of what she will find at the end of the road. All she knows is that she has to get there. While it stands alone, it is also the extraordinarily moving finale to a trilogy that began with the phenomenal bestseller *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* and continued in *The Love Song of Miss Queenie Hennessy*. (192 pgs)

**NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF PRINCE WERE ALIVE BY CAROLYN PRUSA (PICKED BY KT)**

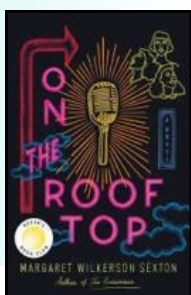
Ramona's got a bratty boss, a toddler teetering through toilet training, a critical mom who doesn't mind sharing, and oops—a cheating husband. That's how a Category Four hurricane bearing down on her life in Savannah becomes just another item on her to-do list. In the next forty-eight hours she'll add a neighborhood child and the class guinea pig named Clarence Thomas to her entourage as she struggles to evacuate town. Ignoring the persistent glow of her minivan's check engine light, Ramona navigates police check points, bathroom emergencies, demands from her boss, and torrential downpours while fielding calls and apology texts from her cheating husband and longing for the days when her life was like a Prince song, full of sexy creativity and joy. (336 pgs)

**BLAZE ME A SUN BY CHRISTOFFER CARLSSON****(PICKED BY SLS)**

In February 1986, the Halland police receive a call from a man who claims to have attacked his first victim. *I'm going to do it again*, he says before the line cuts off. By the time policeman Sven Jörgensson reaches the crime scene, the woman is taking her last breath. On the same night, Sweden plunges into a state of shock after the murder of the prime minister. Could there possibly be a connection? As Sven becomes obsessed with the case, two more fall victim. For years Sven remains haunted by the murders he cannot solve. Eventually Sven retires from the police in defeat. Having failed to catch the killer, he passes his obsession to his son, who has joined the force to be closer to his father. Decades later, the case unexpectedly resurfaces when a novelist returns home to Halland after a failed marriage and sputtering career. The writer befriends a retired police officer, a former colleague of Sven's, who helps the novelist—our narrator—unspool the many strands of this engrossing tale about a community confronting its shames. (439 pgs)

**NOT THE PLAN BY GIA DE CADENET****(PICKED BY KT)**

After nearly a decade of experience in state politics, Isadora Maris is damn good at her job. Aggressive lobbyists and stonewalling senators are no match for her diplomacy and her unflappable commitment to her principles. If all goes according to her plan, she'll soon be managing her boss's successful campaign for U.S. representative. But Isadora's cool professionalism is knocked off-kilter when she meets Karim Sarda. Karim is gorgeous and brilliant and seems to share many of her ideals. So why is he working for the California senate's most detestable scumbag? When Karim and Isadora succumb to their undeniable chemistry, their initial desire blossoms into something more—something real. But if Karim's boss takes control of the California senate, everything Isadora worked for could be destroyed. Will workplace politics shatter their chance at love? (320 pgs)

**ON THE ROOFTOP BY MARGARET SEXTON****(PICKED BY BS)**

At home they are just sisters, but on stage, they are The Salvations. Ruth, Esther, and Chloe have been singing and dancing in harmony since they could speak. Thanks to the rigorous direction of their mother, Vivian, they've become a bona fide girl group whose shows are the talk of the Jazz-era Fillmore. Now Vivian has scored a once-in-a-lifetime offer from a talent manager, who promises to catapult The Salvations into the national spotlight. Vivian knows this is the big break she's been praying for. But sometime between the hours of rehearsal on their rooftop and the weekly gigs at the Champagne Supper Club, the girls have become women, with dreams that their mother cannot imagine. The neighborhood is changing, too: all around the Fillmore, white men in suits are approaching Black property owners with offers. And Vivian, who has always maintained control, will have to confront the parts of her life that threaten to splinter: the community, The Salvations, and even her family. (304 pgs)

# STAFF PICKS

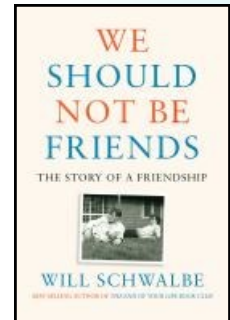
APRIL 2023



## NON-FICTION

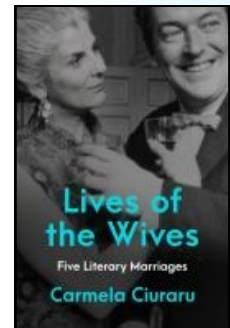
### ***WE SHOULD NOT BE FRIENDS* BY WILL SCHWALBE (PICKED BY FC)**

By the time Will Schwalbe was a junior at college, he had already met everyone he cared to know: the theater people, writers, visual artists and comp lit majors, and the handful of students who shared his own major, Latin and Greek. He also knew exactly who he wanted to avoid: the jocks. The jocks wore baseball caps and moved in packs, filling boisterous tables in the dining hall, and on the whole seemed to be another species entirely, one Will might encounter only at his own peril. All this changed dramatically when Will collided with Chris Maxey, known to just about everyone as Maxey. Maxey was physically imposing, loud, and a star wrestler who was determined to become a Navy SEAL (where he would later serve for six years). Thanks to the strangely liberating circumstances of a little-known secret society at Yale, the two forged a bond that would become a mainstay of each other's lives as they repeatedly lost and found each other and themselves in the years after graduation. (336 pgs)



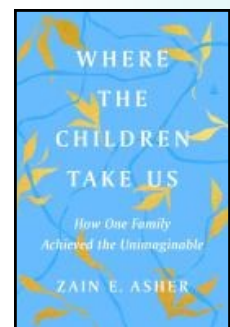
### ***LIVES OF THE WIVES* BY CARMELA CIURARU (PICKED BY SLS)**

*Lives of the Wives* is a witty, provocative look inside the tumultuous marriages of five writers, illuminating the creative process as well as the role of money, power, and fame in these complex and fascinating relationships. The history of wives is largely one of silence, resilience, and forbearance. Toss in celebrity, ruthless ambition, narcissism, misogyny, infidelity, alcoholism, and a mood disorder or two, and it's easy to understand why the marriages of so many famous writers have been stormy, short-lived, and mutually destructive. The legendary British theatre critic Kenneth Tynan encouraged his American wife, Elaine Dundy, to write, then watched in a jealous rage as she became a bestselling author and critical success. In the early years of their marriage, Roald Dahl enjoyed basking in the glow of his glamorous movie star wife, Patricia Neal, until he detested her for being the breadwinner, and being more famous than he was. Each marriage is a unique story, filled with struggles and triumphs and the negotiation of power. (336 pgs)



### ***WHERE THE CHILDREN TAKE US* BY ZAIN ASHER (PICKED BY SP)**

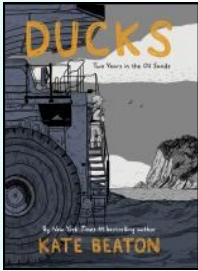
In *Where the Children Take Us*, Obiajulu's daughter, Zain E. Asher, tells the story of her mother's harrowing fight to raise four children as a widowed immigrant in South London. Drawing on tough-love parenting strategies, Obiajulu teaches her sons and daughters to overcome the daily pressures of poverty, crime and prejudice—and much more. As her children veer down the wrong path, she instills a family book club with Western literary classics, testing their resolve and challenging their deeper understanding. Desperate for inspiration, she plasters newspaper clippings of Black success stories on the walls and hunts for overachieving neighbors to serve as role models, all while running Shakespeare theatre lines with her son and finishing homework into the early morning with Zain. When distractions persist, she literally cuts the TV cord and installs a residential pay phone. With her relentless support, the children exceed all expectations—becoming a CNN anchor, an Oscar-nominated actor—Asher's older brother Chiwetel Ejiofor (*12 Years a Slave*), a medical doctor, and a thriving entrepreneur. (224 pgs)



### ***SALMON WARS* BY DOUGLAS FRANTZ (PICKED BY SM)**

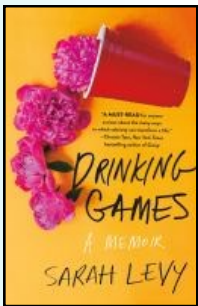
In *Salmon Wars*, investigative journalists Douglas Frantz and Catherine Collins bring readers to massive ocean feedlots where millions of salmon are crammed into parasite-plagued cages and fed a chemical-laced diet. The authors reveal the conditions inside hatcheries, where young salmon are treated like garbage, and at the farms that threaten our fragile coasts. They draw colorful portraits of characters, such as the big salmon farmer who poisoned his own backyard, the fly-fishing activist who risked everything to ban salmon farms in Puget Sound, and the American researcher driven out of Norway for raising the alarm about dangerous contaminants in the fish. Frantz and Collins document how the industrialization of Atlantic salmon threatens this keystone species, endangers our health and environment. (368 pgs)





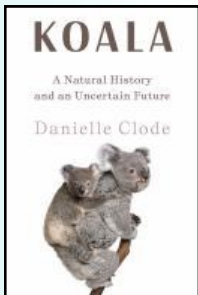
**DUCKS: TWO YEARS IN THE OIL SANDS BY KATE BEATON (GN) (PICKED BY LW)**

After university, Beaton heads out west to take advantage of Alberta’s oil rush, part of the long tradition of East Coasters who seek gainful employment elsewhere when they can’t find it in the homeland they love so much. With the singular goal of paying off her student loans, what the journey will actually cost Beaton will be far more than she anticipates. Arriving in Fort McMurray, Beaton finds work in the lucrative camps owned and operated by the world’s largest oil companies. Being one of the few women among thousands of men, the culture shock is palpable. She encounters the harsh reality of life in the oil sands where trauma is an everyday occurrence yet never discussed. Beaton’s natural cartooning prowess is on full display as she draws colossal machinery and mammoth vehicles set against a sublime Albertan backdrop of wildlife, Northern Lights, and Rocky Mountains. (448 pgs)



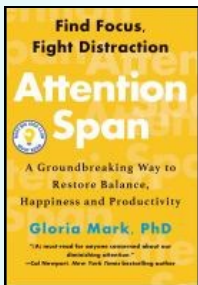
**DRINKING GAMES BY SARAH LEVY (PICKED BY BS)**

*Drinking Games* explores the role alcohol has in our formative adult lives, and what it means to opt out of a culture completely enmeshed in drinking. Sarah explores what our short-term choices about alcohol do to our long-term selves and how it challenges our ability to be vulnerable enough to discover what we really want in life. While many millennial women will see themselves in Sarah’s words and story, *Drinking Games* is dedicated to anyone who feels like their private struggles are terminally unique. Candid, dynamic, *Drinking Games* speaks to the millennial experience of working hard, playing harder, and wanting everything to look perfect on social media. Dedicated to those who might be questioning their relationship with alcohol but scared that quitting drinking is an ending, *Drinking Games* illustrates how, for one woman, sobriety was just the beginning of the story. (288 pgs)



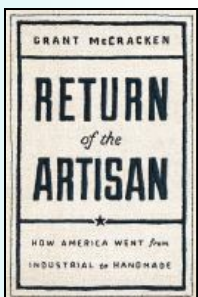
**KOALA BY DANIELLE CLODE (PICKED BY SLS)**

Koalas regularly appeared in Australian biologist Danielle Clode’s backyard, but it was only when a bushfire threatened that she truly paid them attention. Clode embarks on a journey through evolutionary biology, natural history, and ecology to understand where these enigmatic animals came from and what their future may hold. She begins her search with the fossils of ancient giant koalas, delving into why the modern koala has become the lone survivor of a once-diverse family of uniquely Australian marsupials. Born the size of tiny “jellybeans,” joeys face an uphill battle, from crawling into their mother’s pouch to being weaned onto a toxic diet of gum-tree leaves, the koalas’ single source of food. Clode explores the complex relationship and unexpected connections between this species and humans. She explains how koalas are simultaneously threatened with extinction in some areas due to disease, climate change, and increasing wildfires, while overpopulating forests in other parts of the country. (336 pgs)



**ATTENTION SPAN BY GLORIA MARK (PICKED BY BS)**

We spend an average of just 47 seconds on any screen before shifting our attention. It takes 25 minutes to bring our attention back to a task after an interruption. And we interrupt ourselves more than we’re interrupted by others. In *Attention Span*, psychologist Gloria Mark reveals these and more surprising results from her decades of research into how technology affects our attention. She shows how much of what we think we know is wrong, including insights such as: while the concept of “flow” has previously been considered the ideal state of focus, Dr. Mark offers a new framework to help explain how our brains function in the digital world: kinetic attention. This book reveals how we can take control, not only to find more success in our careers, but also to find health and wellness in our everyday lives. (368 pgs)



**RETURN OF THE ARTISAN BY GRANT MCCRACKEN (PICKED BY SM)**

In the 1950s, America was a world of brightly packaged consumer goods, relentless big brand advertising, and diets so rich in salt, sugar, fat, and preservatives you nearly have a heart attack just thinking of them. Then, towards the end of the 20th century, Alice Waters and other pioneers figured out how to market natural, handmade, small-batch products to the American consumer again—and the rest is history. Now, we are in the third wave of a revolution. Thanks to COVID-19, millions of Americans went from being consumers of artisanal goods to being producers. *Return of the Artisan* is a collection of stories and interviews with artisanal businesses across America. This book explores their business models, their motivations, and explores how you can join them by turning your own hobby or passion into your work. (224 pgs)