



Staff Picks Digital and Print Edition

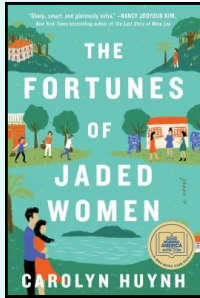
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FICTION

THE FORTUNES OF JADED WOMEN BY CAROLYN HUYNH

(PICKED BY KT)



It started with their ancestor Oanh who dared to leave her marriage for true love—so a fearsome Vietnamese witch cursed Oanh and her descendants so that they would never find love or happiness, and the Duong women would give birth to daughters, never sons. Oanh's current descendant Mai Nguyen knows this curse well. She's divorced, and after an explosive disagreement a decade ago, she's estranged from her younger sisters, Minh Pham (the middle and the mediator) and Khuyen Lam (the youngest who swears she just runs humble coffee shops and nail salons, not Little Saigon's underground). Though Mai's three adult daughters, Priscilla, Thuy, and Thao, are successful in their careers, the same can't be said for their love life. Desperate for guidance, Mai consults Auntie Hua, her trusted psychic in Hawaii, who delivers an unexpected prediction: this year, her family will witness a marriage, a funeral, and the birth of a son. This prophecy will reunite estranged mothers, daughters, aunts, and cousins—for better or for worse. (272 pgs)

THE NIGHT SHIP BY JESS KIDD

(PICKED BY LW)



1629: A newly orphaned young girl named Mayken is bound for the Dutch East Indies on the Batavia, one of the greatest ships of the Dutch Golden Age. Curious and mischievous, Mayken spends the long journey going on misadventures above and below the deck, searching for a mythical monster. But the true monsters might be closer than she thinks. 1989: A lonely boy named Gil is sent to live off the coast of Western Australia among the seasonal fishing community where his late mother once resided. There, on the tiny reef-shrouded island, he discovers the story of an infamous shipwreck... (400 pgs)

THE BOY AND THE DOG BY SEISHU HASE

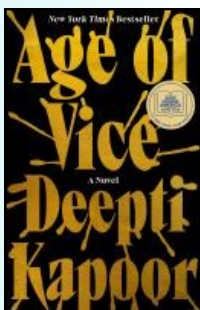
(PICKED BY KT)



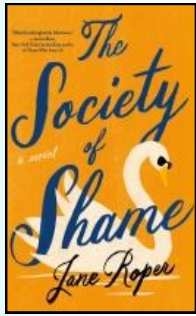
Following a devastating earthquake and tsunami, a young man in Japan finds a stray dog outside a convenience store. The dog's tag says "Tamon," a name evocative of the guardian deity of the north. The man decides to keep Tamon, becoming the first in a series of owners on the dog's five-year journey to find his beloved first owner, Hikaru, a boy who has not spoken since the tsunami. An agent of fate, Tamon is a gift to everyone who welcomes him into their life. (320 pgs)

AGE OF VICE BY DEEPTI KAPOOR

(PICKED BY SLS)



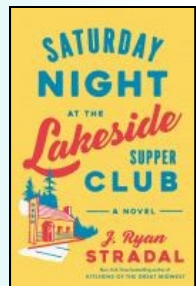
New Delhi, 3 a.m. A speeding Mercedes jumps the curb and in the blink of an eye, five people are dead. It's a rich man's car, but when the dust settles there is no rich man at all, just a shell-shocked servant who cannot explain the strange series of events that led to this crime. Nor can he foresee the dark drama that is about to unfold. Deftly shifting through time and perspective in contemporary India, *Age of Vice* is an epic, action-packed story propelled by the seductive wealth, startling corruption, and bloodthirsty violence of the Wadia family — loved by some, loathed by others, feared by all. In the shadow of lavish estates, extravagant parties, predatory business deals and calculated political influence, three lives become dangerously intertwined: Ajay is the watchful servant, born into poverty, who rises through the family's ranks. Sunny is the playboy heir who dreams of outshining his father, whatever the cost. And Neda is the curious journalist caught between morality and desire. Against a sweeping plot fueled by loss, pleasure, greed, yearning, violence and revenge, will these characters' connections become a path to escape, or a trigger of further destruction? (544 pgs)


THE SOCIETY OF SHAME BY JANE ROPER
(PICKED BY FC)

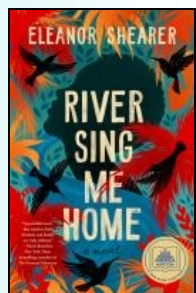
Kathleen Held's life is turned upside down when she arrives home to find her house on fire and her husband on the front lawn in his underwear. But the scandal that emerges is not that Bill, who's running for Senate, is having a painfully clichéd affair with one of his young staffers: it's that the eyewitness photographing the scene accidentally captures a period stain on the back of Kathleen's pants. Overnight, Kathleen finds herself the unwitting figurehead for a social media-centered women's right movement, #YesWeBleed. Humiliated, Kathleen desperately seeks a way to hide from the spotlight. But when she stumbles upon the Society of Shame, Kathleen finds herself part of a group of women all working to change their lives after their own scandals. But as she ascends to celebrity status, Kathleen's growing obsession with maintaining her popularity online threatens her most important relationship IRL: that with her budding activist daughter, Aggie. (352 pgs)


WHEN THE MOON TURNS BLUE BY PAMELA TERRY
(PICKED BY SM)

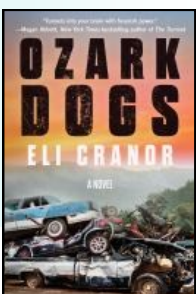
On the morning after Harry Cline's funeral, a rare ice storm hits the town of Wesleyan, Georgia. The community wakes up to find its controversial statue of Confederate general Henry Benning destroyed—and not by the weather. Half the town had wanted to remove the statue; the other half wanted to celebrate it. Now that the matter has been taken out of their hands, the town's long-simmering tensions are laid bare. This conflict is especially personal to Harry's widow, Marietta, who's never been a fan of the statue. Her brother, Macon, the top defense attorney in the Southeast, is representing Old Man Griffin, the owner of the park where the statue stood. Despite Marietta's pleas to let the matter rest, Macon is determined to find those responsible for the damage and protect the Griffin legacy—and he's far from the only person Marietta stands to lose over a statue. Without Harry beside her, Marietta longs to salvage those connections, but the world is changing, and the divide can no longer be ignored. (304 pgs)


SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE LAKESIDE SUPPER CLUB BY J. RYAN STRADAL
(PICKED BY SM)

Mariel Prager needs a break. Her husband Ned is having an identity crisis, her beloved restaurant is bleeding money by the day. The Lakeside Supper Club has been in her family for decades, and while Mariel's grandmother embraced the business, Mariel's mother, Florence, never took to it. When Mariel inherited the restaurant, skipping Florence, it created a rift between mother and daughter that never quite healed. Ned is also an heir—to a chain of home-style diners—and while he doesn't have a head for business, he knows his family's chain could provide a better future than his wife's fading restaurant. In the aftermath of a tragedy, Ned and Mariel lose almost everything they hold dear, and the hard-won victories of each family hang in the balance. With their dreams dashed, can one fractured family find a way to rebuild despite their losses, and will the Lakeside Supper Club be their salvation? (384 pgs)


RIVER SING ME HOME BY ELEANOR SHEARER
(PICKED BY SLS)

The master of the Providence plantation in Barbados gathers his slaves and announces the king has decreed an end to slavery. As of the following day, the Emancipation Act of 1834 will come into effect. The cries of joy fall silent when he announces that they are no longer his slaves; they are now his apprentices. They must work for him for another six years. Freedom is just another name for the life they have always lived. So Rachel runs. Away from Providence, she begins a desperate search to find her children—the five who survived birth and were sold. The journey takes her from Barbados to British Guiana and finally to Trinidad. She is driven on by the certainty that a mother cannot be truly free without knowing what has become of her children. These are their stories. But above all, this is the story of Rachel and the extraordinary lengths to which a mother will go to find her children...and her freedom. (322 pgs)


OZARK DOGS BY ELI CRANOR
(PICKED BY BS)

After his son is convicted of capital murder, Vietnam War veteran Jeremiah Fitzjurls takes over the care of his granddaughter, Joanna, raising her with as much warmth as can be found in an Ozark junkyard outfitted to be an armory. He teaches her how to shoot and fight, but there is not enough training in the world to protect her when the dreaded Ledfords, notorious meth dealers and fanatical white supremacists, come to collect on Joanna as payment for a long-overdue blood debt. The Ledfords have never forgotten what the Fitzjurls family did to them, and they will not be satisfied until they have taken an eye for an eye. As they seek revenge, and as Jeremiah desperately searches for his granddaughter, their narratives collide in this story about family and how far some will go to honor, defend—or in some cases, destroy it. (312 pgs)

STAFF PICKS

MAY 2023

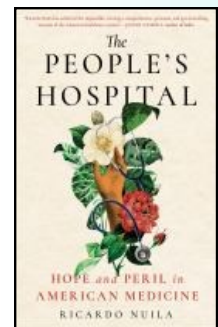


NON-FICTION

THE PEOPLE'S HOSPITAL BY RICARDO NUILA

(PICKED BY SM)

Where does one go without health insurance, when turned away by hospitals, clinics, and doctors? In *The People's Hospital*, we follow the lives of five uninsured Houstonians as their struggle for survival leads them to a hospital where insurance comes second to genuine care. Whether due to immigration status, income, or the vagaries of state Medicaid law, all five are denied access to care. For all five, this exclusion could prove life-threatening. Each patient eventually lands at Ben Taub, the county hospital where Dr. Nuila has worked for over a decade. Nuila delves with empathy into the experiences of his patients, braiding their dramas into a singular narrative that contradicts the established idea that the only way to receive good healthcare is with good insurance. As readers follow the movingly rendered twists and turns in each patient's story, it's impossible to deny that our system is broken—and that Ben Taub's innovative model, which emphasizes people over payments, could help light the path forward. (384 pgs)



THE DIRTY TRICKS DEPARTMENT BY JOHN LISLE

(PICKED BY SM)

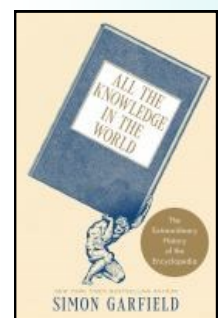
In the summer of 1942, Stanley Lovell, a renowned industrial chemist, received a mysterious order to report to an unfamiliar building in Washington, D.C. When he arrived, he was led to a barren room where he waited to meet the man who had summoned him - William "Wild Bill" Donovan, the head of the OSS. Lovell became the head of a secret group of scientists who developed dirty tricks for the OSS, the precursor to the CIA. Their inventions included bat bombs, suicide pills and camouflaged explosives. They forged documents for undercover agents, plotted the assassination of foreign leaders, and performed truth drug experiments on unsuspecting subjects. Based on extensive archival research and personal interviews, *The Dirty Tricks Department* tells the story of these scheming scientists, explores the moral dilemmas that they faced, and reveals their dark legacy of directly inspiring the most infamous program in CIA history: MKULTRA. (352 pgs)



ALL THE KNOWLEDGE IN THE WORLD BY SIMON GARFIELD

(PICKED BY SLS)

Created by thousands of scholars and the most obsessive of editors, a good set conveyed a sense of absolute wisdom on its reader. Contributions from Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, and Marie Curie helped millions of children with their homework. But now these huge books gather dust, and sell for almost nothing on eBay, and we derive our information from our phones and computers. What have we lost in this transition? *All the Knowledge in the World* is a history and celebration of those who created the most remarkable publishing phenomenon of any age. It tracks the story from Ancient Greece to Wikipedia. It looks at how Encyclopaedia Britannica came to dominate the industry, how it spawned hundreds of competitors, and how an army of ingenious door-to-door salesmen sold their wares to guilt-ridden parents. It exposes how these ultimate bastions of trust were often riddled with errors and prejudice. (390 pgs)

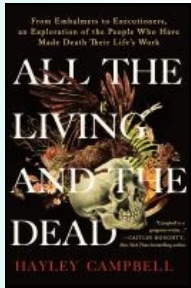


SAVING TIME BY JENNY ODELL

(PICKED BY SLS)

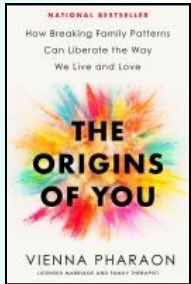
Odell took a deep dive into the fundamental structure of our society and found that the clock we live by was built for profit, not people. This is why our lives, even in leisure, have come to seem like a series of moments to be bought, sold, and processed ever more efficiently. This deeply hopeful book offers us different ways to experience time—inspired by pre-industrial cultures and ecological cues that can bring within reach a more humane, responsive way of living. As planet-bound animals, we live inside shortening and lengthening days alongside gardens growing, birds migrating, and cliffs eroding; the stretchy quality of waiting and desire. *Saving Time* tugs at the seams of reality as we know it—the way we experience time itself—and rearranges it, imagining a world not centered on work, the office clock, or the profit motive. (400 pgs)





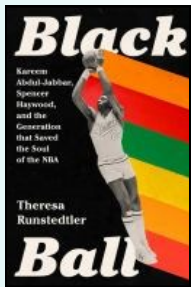
ALL THE LIVING AND THE DEAD BY HAYLEY CAMPBELL (PICKED BY LW)

We are surrounded by death. Yet from a young age, we are told that death is something to be feared. How are we supposed to know what we're so afraid of, when we are never given the chance to look? Fueled by a childhood fascination with death, journalist Hayley Campbell searches for answers in the people who make a living by working with the dead. She encounters mass fatality investigators, embalmers, and a former executioner who is responsible for ending sixty-two lives. She meets gravediggers who have already dug their own graves, visits a cryonics facility in Michigan, and questions a man whose job it is to make crime scenes disappear. Through Campbell's interviews with these people who see death every day, she wonders why would someone choose this kind of life? Does it change you as a person? And are we missing something vital by letting death remain hidden? (288 pgs)



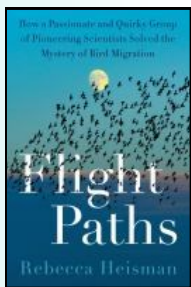
THE ORIGINS OF YOU BY VIENNA PHARAON (PICKED BY SM)

None of us had a perfect childhood; we are all carrying around behaviors that don't serve us—and may in fact be hurting us. Our past might create our patterns, but we can change those patterns for the better...with the right tools. In *The Origins of You*, Vienna Pharaon has unlocked a healing process to help us understand our Family of Origin—the family and framework we grew up within—and examine what worked (and didn't) in that system. Unhealed pain (or “wounds”) in that Family of Origin will manifest in our adult behaviors in surprising ways, from work challenges to interpersonal struggles. Armed with the knowledge about our past, we can actually rewire our programming to meaningfully improve our relationships and our lives, right now and in the future. Complete with guided introspection, personal experiences, frameworks for having difficult conversations, *The Origins of You* will teach you how to break family patterns and help you liberate the way you live and love. (304 pgs)



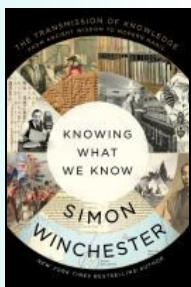
BLACK BALL BY THERESA RUNSTEDTLER (PICKED BY SM)

Against a backdrop of ongoing resistance to racial desegregation and strident calls for Black Power, the NBA in the 1970s embodied the nation's imagined descent into disorder. A new generation of Black players entered the league then, among them Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Spencer Haywood, and the press and public were quick to blame this cohort for the supposed decline of pro basketball, citing drugs, violence, and greed. Enter *Black Ball*, a gripping history and corrective in which scholar Theresa Runstedtler expertly rewrites basketball's “Dark Ages.” Runstedtler argues that this much-maligned period was pivotal to the rise of the modern-day NBA. Black players introduced an improvisational style derived from the playground courts of their neighborhoods. They also challenged the team owners' autocratic power, garnering higher salaries and increased agency. Their skills, style, and savvy laid the foundation for the global popularity and profitability of the league we know today. (368 pgs)



FLIGHT PATHS BY REBECCA HEISMAN (PICKED BY SLS)

How and why birds navigate the skies, traveling from continent to continent—flying thousands of miles across the earth each fall and spring—has continually fascinated the human imagination, but only recently have we been able to fully understand these amazing journeys. Bird enthusiast and science writer Rebecca Heisman traces the development of each technique used for tracking migratory birds, from the first attempts to mark individual birds to the cutting-edge technology that lets ornithologists trace where a bird has been, based on unique DNA markers. Along the way, she touches on the biggest technological breakthroughs of modern science and reveals the almost-forgotten stories of the scientists who harnessed these inventions in service of furthering our understanding of nature. (288 pgs)



KNOWING WHAT WE KNOW BY SIMON WINCHESTER (PICKED BY BS)

With the advent of the internet, any topic we want to know about is instantly available with the touch of a smartphone button. With so much knowledge at our fingertips, what is there left for our brains to do? At a time when we seem to be stripping all value from the idea of knowing things—no need for math, no need for map-reading, no need for memorization—are we risking our ability to think? As we empty our minds, will we one day be incapable of thoughtfulness? Simon Winchester explores how humans have attained, stored, and disseminated knowledge. Examining such disciplines as education, journalism, encyclopedia creation, and broadcasting, he looks at a whole range of knowledge diffusion. Winchester forces us to ponder what rational humans are becoming. What good is all this knowledge if it leads to lack of thought? What is information without wisdom? And what will the world be like if no one in it is wise? (432 pgs)