

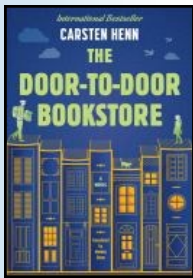


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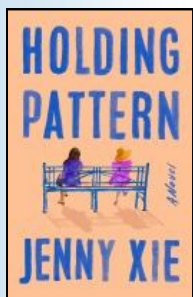
FICTION



THE DOOR-TO-DOOR BOOKSTORE BY CARSTEN HENN

(PICKED BY FC)

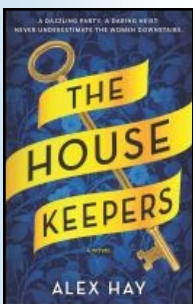
Small-town German bookseller Carl Kollhoff delivers his books to special customers in the evening hours after closing time, walking through the picturesque alleys of the city. These people are almost like friends to him, and he is their most important connection to the world. When Kollhoff unexpectedly loses his job, it takes the power of books and a nine-year-old girl to make them all find the courage to rebuild their bonds with each other. (320 pgs)



HOLDING PATTERN BY JENNY XIE

(PICKED BY SLS)

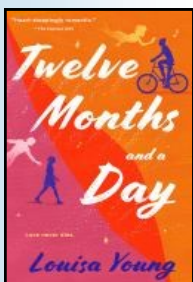
Kathleen Cheng has gone through a humiliating breakup, dropped out of her graduate program, and left everything behind. Now she's back in her childhood home in Oakland, wondering what's next. To her surprise, her mother isn't the same person Kathleen remembers. No longer depressed or desperate to return to China, the new Marissa Cheng is sporty, perky, and has been transformed by love. Kathleen thought she'd be planning her own wedding, but instead finds herself helping her mother plan hers—to a Silicon Valley tech entrepreneur. Grasping for direction, Kathleen takes a job at a start-up that specializes in an unconventional form of therapy based on touch. While she negotiates new ideas about intimacy and connection, an unforeseen attachment to someone at work pushes her to rethink her relationships—especially the one with Marissa. As they peel back the layers of their history they must come to a new understanding of how they can propel each other forward, and what they've done to hold each other back. (288 pgs)



THE HOUSEKEEPERS BY ALEX HAY

(PICKED BY SLS)

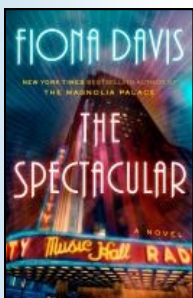
Mrs. King is no ordinary housekeeper. Born into a world of con artists and thieves, she's made herself respectable, running the grandest home in Mayfair. The place is packed with treasures, a glittering symbol of wealth and power, but dark secrets lurk in the shadows. When Mrs. King is suddenly dismissed from her position, she recruits an eclectic group of women to join her in revenge: A black market queen out to settle her scores. An actress desperate for a magnificent part. A seamstress dreaming of a better life. And Mrs. King's predecessor, with her own desire for vengeance. Their plan? On the night of the house's highly anticipated costume ball—set to be the most illustrious of the year—they will rob it of its every possession, right under the noses of the distinguished guests and their elusive heiress host. But there's one thing Mrs. King wants even more than money: the truth. And she'll run any risk to get it. (368 pgs)



TWELVE MONTHS AND A DAY BY LOUISA YOUNG

(PICKED BY KT)

Rasmus and Jay, Róisín and Nico: two couples, strangers to each other. Two beautiful, ordinary love stories, cut short. Both in their thirties and too young to be widowed, Róisín swears she still feels Nico beside her in bed and Rasmus hears Jay as he writes songs at the piano. Jay and Nico don't even believe in ghosts, yet here they still are. Still in love with Rasmus and Róisín. And maddeningly powerless. Until Jay has an idea that Nico wants no part of—bringing Róisín and Rasmus together. It's crazy enough that it just might work, but playing matchmaker to the living is no easy feat and one that will require all four of them to discover the meaning of love after loss, and the importance of fighting for happiness against all odds. (384 pgs)



***THE SPECTACULAR* BY FIONA DAVIS**

(PICKED BY SM)

New York City, 1956: Nineteen-year-old Marion is over the moon to have been selected to be one of the Rockettes, Radio City Music Hall's glamorous precision-dancing troupe. But with four shows a day as well as grueling rehearsals, Marion quickly realizes that the life of a Rockette has both extraordinary highs and devastating lows. Then one night a bomb explodes in the theater. It's only the latest in a string of explosions around the city orchestrated by a person the press has nicknamed the "Big Apple Bomber." They have been terrorizing the citizens of New York for sixteen years by planting bombs in popular, crowded spaces. With the public in an uproar over the lack of any real leads after a years long manhunt, the police, at Marion's urging, turn in desperation to a radical new technique: psychological profiling. As Marion finds herself pulled deeper into the investigation, she realizes that as much as she's been training herself to blend in—performing in perfect unison with all the other identical Rockettes—if she hopes to catch the bomber, she'll need to stand out and take a terrifying risk. (368 pgs)



***LOVE HONOR BETRAY* BY MARY MONROE**

(PICKED BY SP)

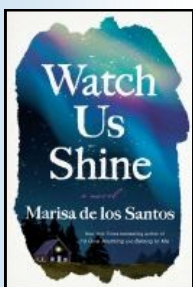
With mysterious serial murders putting peaceful Lexington, Alabama, on edge, Jessie and Hubert Wiggins' steadfast calm and devotion to each other reassures everyone that faith will see them through. But Jessie and Hubert have paid a terrible hidden cost to maintain their devout facade and respectable standing. Hubert thought he and his secret lover, Leroy, could continue seeing each other on the down-low in peace. But when Leroy's ex-wife moves back in with him, a heartbroken Hubert is driven to distraction trying to keep Jessie in the dark—and quell his mounting jealousy. Jessie believes the struggles between her and Hubert will all be worth it if she can connive him to finally consummate their marriage. But his erratic behavior and her frustration soon has her trying yet another new lover, who is as charming as he is unreliable—and unexpectedly dangerous. Now with their secrets out of control—and the police perilously near—Jessie and Hubert discover who might be behind the deaths plaguing their town. But can they risk a pursuit that could expose their own web of lies? (320 pgs)



***THE SUN WALKS DOWN* BY FIONA MCFARLANE**

(PICKED BY LW)

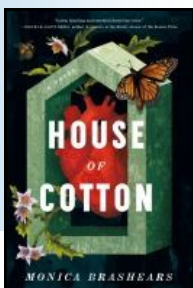
In September 1883, the South Australian town of Fairly huddles under strange, vivid sunsets. Six-year-old Denny Wallace has gone missing during a dust storm, and the whole town is intent on finding him. As they search the desert and mountains for the lost child, the residents of Fairly - landowners, artists, Indigenous trackers, schoolteachers, widows, maids, policemen - explore their own relationships with the complex landscape unsettling history of the Flinders Ranges. Colonial Australia is unfamiliar, multicultural, and noisy with opinions, arguments, longings and terrors. It's haunted by many gods - the sun among them, rising and falling on each day that Denny could be found, or lost forever. (352 pgs)



***WATCH US SHINE* BY MARISA DE LOS SANTOS**

(PICKED BY KT)

Cornelia Brown is reeling from a terrifying act of violence when she gets word that her mother has been badly injured in an accident. Cornelia returns to Virginia, to the house she grew up in, and in the weeks that follow, she watches her mother Ellie struggle to recover, fluctuating between her usual crisp, can-do clarity and periods of delirium during which she seems haunted by a devastating loss from her past. In grief-stricken tones, Ellie begs Cornelia to bring her the Northern Lights, and despite her confusion at this mysterious plea, Cornelia vows to do so. With the help of her prickly sister, Ollie, Cornelia embarks on a mission to piece together the lost years of their mother's life - spanning Ellie's late teens through her mid-twenties. Cornelia and Ollie's quest takes them to unexpected places and into the worlds of strangers whose lives Ellie touched and irrevocably changed. As the sisters uncover truths about their mother's life, Cornelia herself begins to heal, to forgive herself, and to find her way back home. (320 pgs)



***HOUSE OF COTTON* BY MONICA BRASHEARS**

(PICKED BY BS)

Nineteen years old, broke, and effectively an orphan, Magnolia doesn't have much to look forward to. She feels stuck and haunted: by her overdrawn bank account, by her predatory landlord, by the ghost of her late grandmother Mama Brown. One night while working at her dead-end gas station job, a mysterious, slick stranger named Cotton walks in and offers to turn Magnolia's luck around. He offers her a lucrative "modeling" job at his family's funeral home. Magnolia accepts. But despite things looking up, Magnolia's problems fatten along with her wallet. When Cotton's requests become increasingly weird, Magnolia discovers there's a lot more at stake than just her rent. (304 pgs)

STAFF PICKS

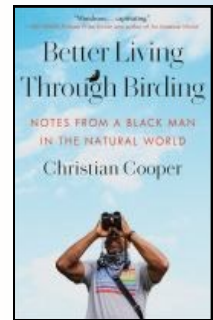
AUGUST 2023



NON-FICTION

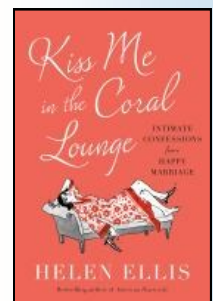
BETTER LIVING THROUGH BIRDING BY CHRISTIAN COOPER (PICKED BY BS&SLS)

Christian Cooper is a self-described “Blerd” (Black nerd), an avid comics fan and expert birder who devotes every spring to gazing upon the migratory birds that stop to rest in Central Park. While in the park one morning in May 2020, Cooper was engaged in the birdwatching ritual that had been a part of his life since he was ten years old when what might have been a routine encounter with a dog walker exploded age-old racial tensions. Cooper’s viral video of the incident would send shock waves through the nation. Cooper tells the story of his extraordinary life leading up to the now-infamous incident in Central Park and shows how a life spent looking up at the birds prepared him to be a gay, Black man in America today. This is Cooper’s story of learning to claim and defend space for himself and others like him, from his days at Marvel Comics introducing the first gay storylines to vivid and life-changing birding expeditions through Africa, Australia, the Americas, and the Himalayas. (304 pgs)



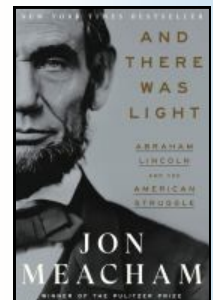
KISS ME IN THE CORAL LOUNGE BY HELEN ELLIS (PICKED BY SM)

Welcome to the Coral Lounge, a room in Helen Ellis’s New York City apartment painted such an exuberant shade that a Peeping Tom left a sticky note asking for the color. It is in the Coral Lounge where all the parties happen: A game called “What’s in the box?” makes its uproarious debut, the Puzzle Posse pounces on a 500-piece jigsaw of a beheaded priest, and guests don blindfolds for a raucous bridal shower. When the pandemic shuts down the city, the Coral Lounge becomes a place of refuge, where Helen and her husband binge-watch Joan Collins’s Dynasty, dote on two spoiled cats, and where Helen discovers that even twenty years into marriage, her husband still makes her heart pitter patter. (224 pgs)



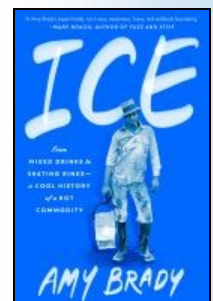
AND THERE WAS LIGHT BY JON MEACHAM (PICKED BY SM)

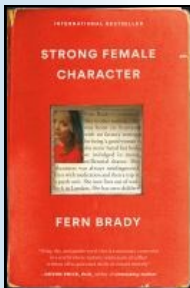
A president who governed a divided country has much to teach us in a twenty-first-century moment of polarization and political crisis. This new portrait gives us a very human Lincoln—an imperfect man whose moral antislavery commitment was essential to the story of justice in America. Here is the Lincoln who, as a boy, was steeped in the sermons of emancipation by Baptist preachers; who insisted that slavery was a moral evil; and who sought, as he put it, to do right as God gave him light to see the right. Lincoln’s story illuminates the ways and means of politics, the marshaling of power in a belligerent democracy, the durability of white supremacy in America, and the capacity of conscience to shape the maelstrom of events. Lincoln was not all he might have been—few human beings ever are—but he was more than many men have ever been. We could have done worse. And we have. And, as Lincoln himself would readily acknowledge, we can always do better. (676 pgs)



ICE BY AMY BRADY (PICKED BY SLS)

Nearly half of all refrigerators owned by Americans feature automatic ice machines. Ice-on-demand has so revolutionized modern life that it's easy to forget that it wasn't always this way...and to overlook what aspects of society might just melt away as the planet warms. In *Ice*, journalist and historian Amy Brady shares the storied two-hundred-year-old history of ice in America: from the introduction of mixed-drinks "on the rocks," to P. T. Barnum's first-ever indoor ice rink, to how delicacies like iced custard and iced tea revolutionized our palettes, to the ubiquitous ice machine in every motel across the U.S. Brady also explores the surprising, present-day uses of ice in sports, medicine, and sustainable energy—including cutting-edge cryotherapy breast-cancer treatments and the promise of a substance called "flammable ice" that may prove to be a cleaner fuel source—underscoring how precious this commodity is, especially in an age of climate change. (336 pgs)

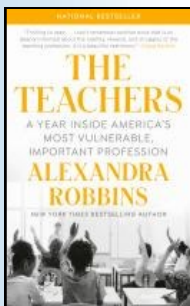




STRONG FEMALE CHARACTER BY FERN BRADY

(PICKED BY FC)

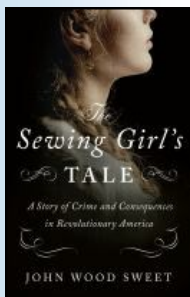
Scottish comedian Fern Brady was told she couldn't be autistic because she'd had loads of boyfriends and is good at eye contact. In this frank and surreal memoir, she delivers a sharp and often hilarious portrait of neurodivergence and living unmasked. After reading about autism in her teens, Fern Brady knew instinctively that she had it but it took until she was thirty-four for her to get diagnosed. *Strong Female Character* is about the years in between, and the unique combination of sexism and ableism that so often prevents autistic women from getting diagnosed until adulthood. Coming from a working-class Scottish Catholic family, Fern wasn't exactly poised to receive an open-minded acceptance of her neurodivergence. With the piercing clarity and wit that has put her at the top of the British comedy scene, she now reflects on the ways her undiagnosed autism influenced her youth. (288 pgs)



THE TEACHERS BY ALEXANDRA ROBBINS

(PICKED BY SM)

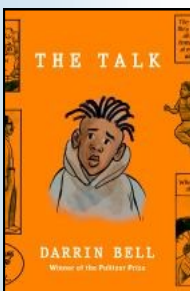
Alexandra Robbins goes behind the scenes to tell the stories of three teachers as they navigate a year in the classroom. She follows Penny, a southern middle school math teacher who grappled with a toxic staff clique at the big school in a small town; Miguel, a special ed teacher in the western United States who fought for his students both as an educator and as an activist; and Rebecca, an East Coast elementary school teacher who struggled to define a life outside of school. Interspersed among the teachers' stories—a seeming scandal and teacher confessions—are hard-hitting essays featuring cutting-edge reporting on the biggest issues facing teachers today, such as school violence; outrageous parent behavior; inadequate support, staffing, and resources coupled with unrealistic mounting demands; the "myth" of teacher burnout; the COVID-19 pandemic; and ways all of us can help the professionals who are central both to the lives of our children and the heart of our communities. (384 pgs)



THE SEWING GIRLS'S TALE BY JOHN WOOD SWEET

(PICKED BY SM)

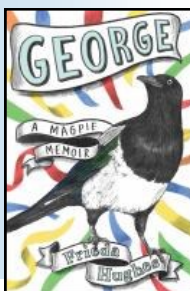
On a night in the summer of 1793, a crime was committed in the back room of a New York brothel—the kind of crime that even victims usually kept secret. Instead, seventeen-year-old seamstress Lanah Sawyer did what virtually no one in US history had done: she charged a gentleman with rape. Her accusation sparked a courtroom drama and a relentless struggle for vindication that threatened both Lanah's and her assailant's lives. The trial exposed a predatory sexual underworld, sparked riots in the streets, and ignited a vigorous debate about class privilege and sexual double standards. The ongoing conflict attracted the nation's top lawyers, including Alexander Hamilton, and shaped the development of American law. The crime and its consequences became a kind of parable about the power of seduction and the limits of justice. Eventually, Lanah Sawyer did succeed in holding her assailant accountable—but at a terrible cost to herself. (384 pgs)



THE TALK BY DARRIN BELL (GRAPHIC NOVEL)

(PICKED BY KT)

Darrin Bell was six years old when his mother told him he couldn't have a realistic water gun. She said she feared for his safety, that police tend to think of little Black boys as older and less innocent than they really are. Through evocative illustrations and sharp humor, Bell examines how The Talk shaped intimate and public moments from childhood to adulthood. While coming of age in Los Angeles—and finding a voice through cartooning—Bell becomes painfully aware of being regarded as dangerous by white teachers, neighbors, and police officers and thus of his mortality. Drawing attention to the brutal murders of African Americans and showcasing revealing insights and cartoons along the way, he brings us up to the moment of reckoning when people took to the streets protesting the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. Now Bell must decide whether he and his own six-year-old son are ready to have The Talk. (352 pgs)



GEORGE: A MAGPIE MEMOIR BY FRIEDA HUGHES

(PICKED BY SLS)

When Frieda Hughes moved to the Welsh countryside, she was expecting to take on a few projects: planting a garden, painting, writing her poetry column for The Times (London), and possibly even breathing new life into her ailing marriage. But instead, she found herself rescuing a baby magpie, the sole survivor of a nest destroyed in a storm—and embarking on an obsession that would change the course of her life. Frieda invites us along on her unlikely journey toward joy and connection in the wake of sadness and loss; a journey that began with saving a tiny wild creature and ended with her being saved in return. (272 pgs)