

## Gaming Dispatch

It's the middle of summer and the heat is rising, so these days, mid-day, you can find my family and me hiding inside—reading, sure, but also playing video games. Lots and lots of video games.

Rather than complain about the heat (my nemesis), I'll spare you and give you a fervent defense of the video games. For all that video games are sometimes negatively compared to reading, they embellish my family's life AND our bookshelves.

It was *Legend of Zelda* that compelled us to buy our first manga, and my kids devoured them from a young age, never mind that the books read back to front/right to left. Now they read multiple graphic novels in a day with a visual literacy and fluid approach to language that inspires me. AND it was *Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild* which

prompted my children to deep dive into their favorite cookbook, *The Complete Cookbook for Young Chefs* by America's Test Kitchen, to replicate some of the virtual cooking they did in that game.

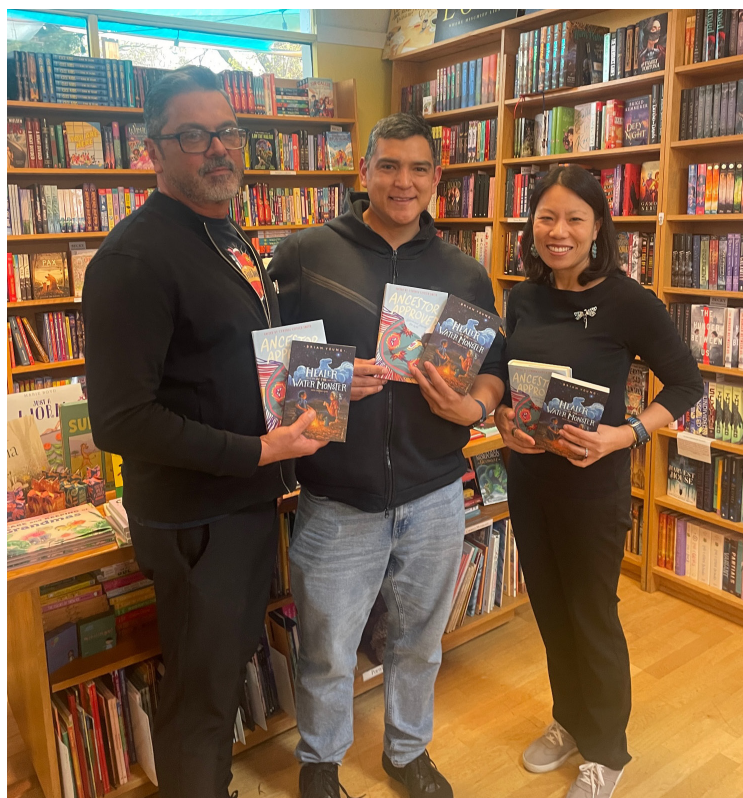
It was *God of War Ragnarök* that motivated us to pick up Neil Gaiman's *Norse Mythology* and Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson* series.

It was *Horizon: Forbidden West* that recently sparked a months-long conversation in our home about the allures and pitfalls of exceptionalism and dovetailed nicely with books they were reading in school like *The Giver*.

So, for the middle of summer, I'll take all the video games and more please, and won't be surprised if we end up with lots to talk about and heavier bookshelves all around. —Michaela Riding

## Brain Food Books

Brain Food Books continues to get new books into the hands of readers without regular access to them.



Calvin Crosby, Author Brian Young and State Librarian Karen Lui

## Pinxtos+Libros

Have you been to one of our joint events with our neighbor Casot? These cozy Book Talks pair our author events with Casot's excellent food and wine. Space is limited so sign up fast when you see one! (age 21+)



Author Taylor Brorby discussing his new memoir, *Boys and Oil*, at Casot



## Recent Events At The



*Author Abraham Verghese at his sold-out event for  
The Covenant of Water*



*Calvin Crosby and Tina Ferguson from Face in a Book in El Dorado Hills joined to give away books at Native American Day at Rose Park*



*Author Jason June, Tara Lipsyncki and the crews from Under the Umbrella, Legendarium, Calvin Crosby representing TKE and BFB*

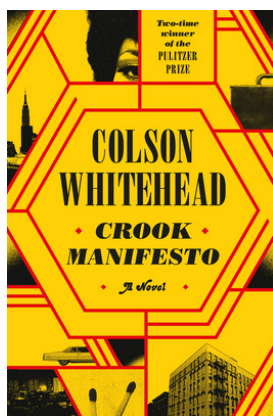


*Anne Holman and Calvin Crosby meeting with our  
Penguin Random House Reps*



*Author Brooke Smart and Queenie*





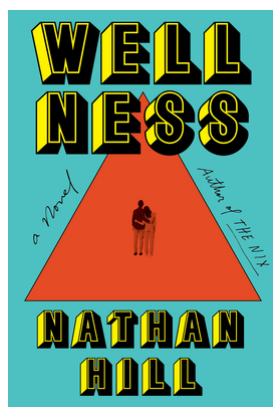
**Crook Manifesto**, Colson Whitehead

In this follow-up to *Harlem Shuffle*, Ray Carney is attempting (and doing OK-ish) to stay on the straight and narrow. But when your whole life has been spent committing crimes both medium and small, there are just too many temptations and too many people who know you. And when his daughter decides she can't live without Jackson Five tickets, well, Carney does what he does best. Unfortunately, one thing leads to another in this funny but dark journey through the early 1970s

with our favorite fencer. —Anne Holman, Doubleday, \$30

**Wellness**, Nathan Hill

Readers who loved *The Nix* will be blown away by Hill's new novel. Jack and Elizabeth are two self-made individuals. Both are orphans from dysfunctional families who find themselves in the gritty Chicago of the nineties and fall in love at first sight, setting off a love story that encompasses romance, marriage, the nature of art, parenting, dreams realized and hopes dashed, and all the things that hold two people together. An insightful book for these times told with humor, heart, and gobs of detail as it explores our obsessions with technology, psychology, health, and wellness. You'll delight in falling down each rabbit hole. A book not to be rushed but savored—each section a course in a menu of delights. —Anne Stewart Mark, Knopf, \$30



**The Fraud**, Zadie Smith

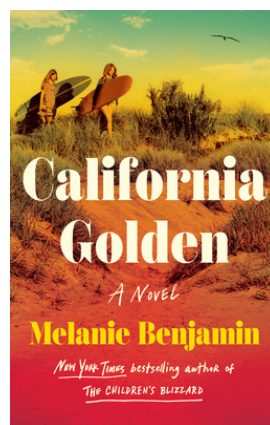
Part historical novel, part political statement, part dysfunctional family drama and completely absorbing. Don't plan on a quick read because this picture of the world in the late 1800s is complex. At the core of the novel is Mrs. Eliza Touchet, a Scottish housekeeper who lives in the home of William Ainsworth, an actual novelist of the time who outsold Dickens at one point but is no longer in vogue. Traveling through the era with Mrs. Touchet, the reader gets to meet the



working class of Lancashire and London and the slaves and sugar and molasses workers of Jamaica. The major fraud of the book lies in the historical "Tichborne Trial" of an Australian butcher who was purported to be the heir of an English estate. The factual trial occupied the news of the time, attracting a sizeable number of followers to the butcher's cause. Mrs. Touchet introduces readers to the case and to Mr. Bogle, a Jamaican star witness, who represents the oppressed slaves and the oppressed poor of England. The butcher is probably a fraud, but he is not the only fraud Smith explores in the novel. His trial is only part of this rich panorama of class, gender, and hypocrisy, and the fraudulent stories which humans have told each other throughout the ages in the search for a comfortable truth within a chaotic world. —Wendy Foster Leigh, Penguin Press, \$29

**Happiness Falls**, Angie Kim

A stunning beginning: "We didn't call the police right away." This sentence engenders suspense when 14-year-old Eugene (autistic, nonverbal) has returned home from a hike bloody and without Dad. Older sister Mia breathlessly narrates her tight-knit Korean American family's drama in a hyper-analytical voice, often adding side-tracking detours. As the story unfolds, Dad's missing water-logged backpack is found 1/2 mile downstream in the park. It contains a journal recording his personal and professional notes regarding experiments he's conducted, "trying to prepare the family for dramatic experiences in store." The missing person investigation is seriously hampered by Eugene's inability to speak, as well as by his physical outbursts which lead the police to suspect then charge him of harming his father. Eugene's lawyer makes a case for not guilty due to disability. But is he guilty, disability or not? Or did Dad deliberately fake his disappearance? Other elements—a phone message, a bird-watcher's video, screams, hits on Dad's debit card, even Covid—tangle and heighten the action. A surprising resolution wraps up this original, so-much-more-than-a-story-about-a missing-person novel! —Carol Krane, Hogarth, \$28



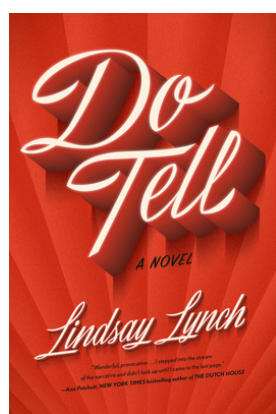
**California Golden**, Melanie Benjamin

Novelist Benjamin has given readers another wonderful journey, this time through California in the 50s and 60s, with an intoxicating backdrop of sun, sand, and surf. After the relatively calm post-war years of the 50s, as women relearned their roles in society, the upheaval of the 60s was particularly difficult for female athletes in that sexist and racist time. *California Golden* follows the Donnelly women—mother Carol and daughters Mindy and Ginger—through the world of competitive surfing. The mother-daughter-sister dynamic is explored through the viewpoints of each woman as they struggle with relationships, fame, celebrity, drugs, and the Vietnam War. A perfect beach read with new information about the relatively niche sport of surfing and the role women played in its formation and popularity. —Anne Stewart Mark, Delacorte Press, \$28



**Lucky Red**, Claudia Gravens

When Bridget washes up half-dead in Dodge City, it's Lila who takes her in and introduces her to "the sporting life". After some rest, hearty food and a bath, Bridget (or Red as they like to call her) takes easily to being a whore. It's the easiest her life's ever been, sadly. And the folks at the Buffalo Queen do become like family to her...but it is Dodge City and so of course nothing good can last. Red falls head over heels for not one but two women who pass through the doors of the Queen and neither one of them has her best interests in mind. But Bridget is nothing if not a survivor and this story of love and revenge in the old West is very satisfying. —Anne Holman, *The Dial Press*, \$27



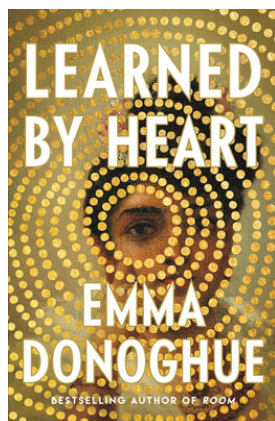
**Do Tell**, Lindsay Lynch

Hollywood in the 30s seemed glamorous to Edie O'Dare when she was bused there for the prize of a high school contest and ended up scoring a 7-year contract at a major studio. Her acting career began well, but, as she lost her ingenue glow and it became obvious that her contract would not be renewed, she began supplementing her income and her prospects by supplying telling tidbits to the reigning gossip queen. Now, she embarks on her second career, dishing the dirt herself rather than

merely passing it on, with a skill born of need, a way with words, and the likeable nature which makes her a natural (if untrustworthy) confidante. As the tale wends its way through two decades, we come to admire our former ingenue, even as she exposes the secrets of the present herd of starlets and the actors and studio bosses they use and are used by, while the glitter and gloss continue to cover up the tarnished lives, often irretrievably damaged, whether by misogyny, greed, or jealousy. Lynch's eye for irony is as keen as her protagonist's and her humor is matched by the moral complexity of her characters. Brava! —Betsy Burton, *Doubleday*, \$28

**Learned by Heart**, Emma Donoghue

Gorgeous, top to bottom. Reminiscent of Sarah Waters, but maintaining Emma Donoghue's signature tender hand, the young life of Anne Lister, the first modern lesbian, is vividly rendered in immaculate prose. Donoghue is a master of queer, feminist historical fiction. I'll read anything she writes, but this one is particularly special. —Mackenzie Van Engelenhoven, *Little Brown & Company*, \$28



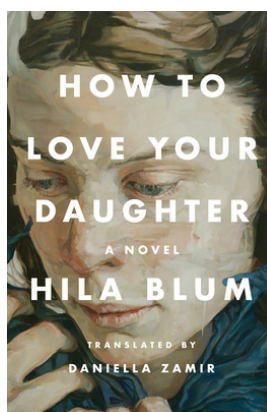
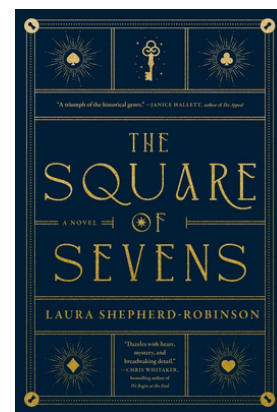
**Speech Team**, Tim Murphy

Microaggressions sometimes aren't as micro as society makes them seem. In the midst of multiple social awareness movements, author Tim Murphy tells the story of four schoolmates reuniting later in their lives to confront a teacher who led them to greatness advising their Speech Team. But he also impacted their lives negatively with small things that were said and done targeting each of their "other-isms". What may have seemed like mere words became a reason for a fellow

classmate's suicide, motivating these four friends to stand up for themselves and their fallen classmate. Their conversations are difficult and necessary. All sides of the conversation are represented. This true-to-life depiction of the impact of words is a book that I cannot recommend enough. —Brady Parkin, *Viking*, \$28

**The Square of Sevens**, Laura Shepherd-Robinson

Set in the Georgian era in a variety of British venues, an orphaned young woman searches for clues about her parents' identities and their past. As a child, she was trained by her father in the art of card reading. The title refers to a cartomancy (card fortune telling) technique. The untimely death of her father results in her adoption and takes her from the anonymous life of a traveling "Gypsy" to a privileged life of English society. A beautifully written and evocative description of the times with a plot that keeps pivoting; altogether a pleasure to read. —Christina Richards, *Atria Books*, \$29.99



**How to Love Your Daughter**, Hila Blum

Stories about mothers and daughters can hurt in unexpected ways. Especially if you're Yoella Linden, looking back after raising her daughter Leah, and checking the boxes of fifty ways to love your daughter...check, check, check. Obsessively seeking the one box she missed, the inexplicable misstep she took that drove Leah away to create a secret life with children of her own. Yoella watches her granddaughters grow up on Facebook and is not meant to meet them. **How to**

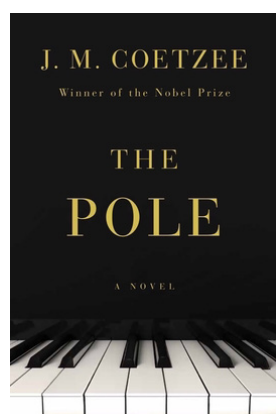
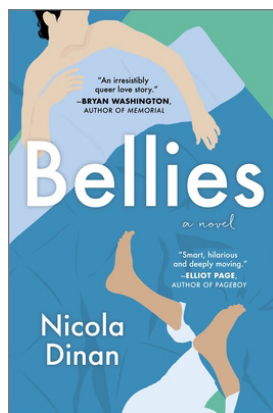
**Love Your Daughter** reads like a detective story, a photo journal, a deep glimpse into a mother's heart who is still compelled after all these years to love and protect her daughter, to keep her happy. As parents, we're lucky if we get to know the other side of the story, if our children explain to us what we did or didn't do to make them want to come home again. How much love is too much? When does watching become stalking? After reading **How to Love Your Daughter**, I couldn't help but wonder how reliable mothers are as narrators? —Val Kittel, *Riverhead*, \$27





**Bellies**, Nicola Dinan

For lovers of *Detransition, Baby* and author Sally Rooney, this book tackles the ups and downs of a relationship that is forced to evolve as one main character, Ming, comes to awareness of her own identity as a transgender woman. Relationships are far deeper and more nuanced than the romance and sexuality within. This book explores those nuances both within the relationship and separately for each individual. The story here is full of heart and emotion. Tough conversations and wrong choices bring each character to a necessary awareness of humanity in all its depth. —Brady Parkin, Hanover Square Press, \$30

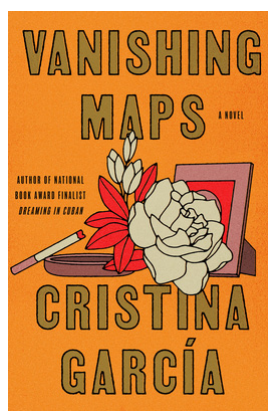
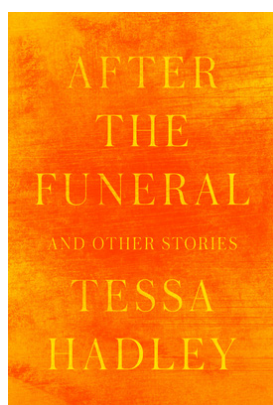
**The Pole**, J.M. Coetzee

“Between a man and a woman, between two poles, electricity crackles or does not crackle. So it has been since the beginning of time.” In this instance, the man is 70-year-old Polish pianist Wihold, interpreter of Chopin, with “a striking mane of silver hair.” The woman is almost 50, wealthy, civic-minded Spanish Beatriz, who walks “gliding across the floor, erect even stately.” He is impractical, unentertaining, single. She is diligent, competent, satisfactorily married. Between

them exists a far more complex and unpredictable relationship than electric crackles. She is initially unimpressed. He is infatuated, then obsessed, sending her gifts, letters, invitations to travel with him. At first, she refuses. Then she drives to a nearby town where he is giving a Piano Master Class; invites him to visit her and her husband at their summer home in Mallorca (he refuses); invites him to visit her as she stays alone an extra week; he does! At their week’s end, he invites her once again to visit Brazil with him. She refuses and assures him that they will never see one another again. At parting Wihold announces, “Be-a-triz, I will die with your name on my lips.” Prophetic? Overly dramatic? Coetzee renders the last third of his spare, well-crafted novel brilliantly, exploring the deep, profound, sentient ties that bind a man and a woman. —Carol Kranes, Liveright, \$26

**After The Funeral and Other Stories**, Tessa Hadley

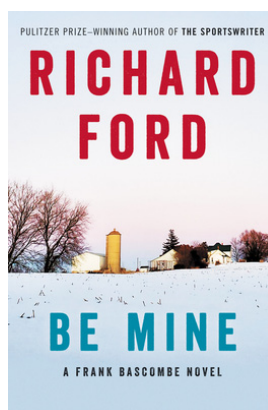
Twelve new stories by the award-winning Hadley, rich in detail and astute in observation, firmly place her as one of the very finest in the art of the short story. Immediately creating a sense of place and mood, each story is deeply affecting and beautiful in the telling. Touching on both relationships and the complexity of the human condition, these stories will allow the reader into a new emotive sensory experience. I read each one like a fresh new tasting menu. —Anne Stewart Mark, Knopf, \$28

**Vanishing Maps**, Cristina Garcia

When family drama meets cultural reckonings, you will almost always find a story filled with beauty and life. This book is no different as we track four generations in a Cuban family that has found itself spread across all geographic and ideological zones. Add in a significant dusting of magic realism and this book becomes unforgettable in story, character, and climax. For those who enjoyed *Pachinko*, this is a can’t miss tale. —Brady Parkin, Knopf, \$28

**The First Ladies**, Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray

These two wonderful authors who gave us *The Personal Librarian* have illuminated the largely unknown and very close relationship between First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and Mary McLeod Bethune, known as the “First Lady of the Struggle.” Mrs. Roosevelt, whom we all know, and Mrs. McLeod, whom we all should know, both felt called to help underserved Americans. Eleanor had many important causes in her lifetime but she later acknowledged that due to her privileged, starchy White background, she knew very little of the struggles of the Black community before and after World War II. We meet Mary as young Eleanor does, at a ladies’ luncheon where the racist tendencies entrenched in our society come immediately into the foreground. These two women became great friends as they undertook many uncomfortable conversations in their efforts to overcome the barriers between White and Black communities, forging the beginnings of the civil rights movement. The gift the authors give readers is the opportunity to have real discussions about our own entrenched biases and prejudices. A great read for book groups and friends and any who are willing to talk, listen and grow. —Anne Stewart Mark, Berkley, \$28

**Be Mine**, Richard Ford

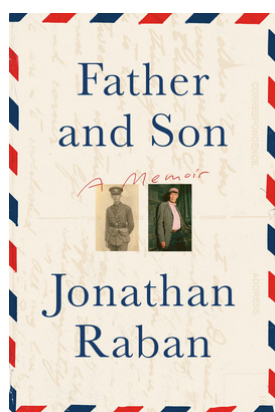
The fifth and final book in the series that began with *The Sportswriter*, the ongoing saga of “everyman” Frank Bascombe finds him, still a realtor, driving through the freezing snow in Rochester, Minnesota, where his 47-year-old son Paul is being treated at the Mayo Clinic. Paul has late-stage ALS. Although there is no hope for remission, he is participating in a study meant to provide data for those who come after, a contribution he feels will make up for his lack of previous accomplishment in his life. Following their sojourn in Minnesota (don’t miss the world’s drollest description of a giant mall there), the pair travels West into everyman’s America, proceeding in their Dodge toward Mount Rushmore along with hordes of Teslas and tractor-trailers, Chevies and Hyundais, past Hiltons and Holiday Inns, fast-food

## FICTION

drive-thrus and Denny's, casinos and carwashes. Their pilgrimage simultaneously follows the rough metaphorical road of their disconnected pasts toward a place where they might find one another in the present. Ford's descriptions are funny, detailed, and deadly; his voice wryly humorous and dryly philosophical; his prose precise and cinematic in this perfect end of an unforgettable literary quintet.

—Betsy Burton, Ecco, \$30

## BIO



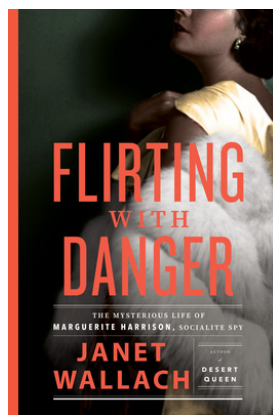
***Father and Son: A Memoir***, Jonathan Raban

Poignantly, Jonathan Raban died just after finishing this memoir. In alternating chapters, he describes the stroke he had at age 69 and his father Peter's service in WWII. An irascible human being, Raban, Jr. was a keen observer of life. The stroke forced him to rely on others for almost everything; not an easy position when your first reaction isn't always kindness. He recovered and went on to live and write for many more years. His chapters

about his father begin with the senior Raban's commission as a major in the Royal Artillery in Great Britain. Through letters back and forth between Peter and Monica (Jonathan's mother) and other people's histories we learn of Dunkirk, Tunis, and Anzio all while years pass and peace finally arrives. The two lives are so different and their place in history so different and yet in each setting it feels like you are there. A very interesting read. —Anne Holman, Knopf, \$28

***Flirting with Danger: The Mysterious Life of Marguerite Harrison, Socialite Spy***, Janet Wallach

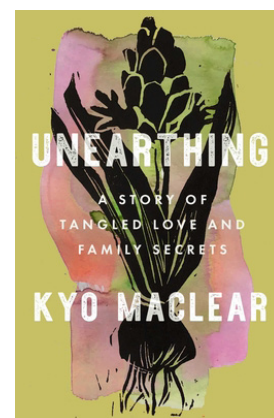
Born into the privilege of Gilded Age America, Marguerite Harrison lived a life far removed from that of the pampered heiress she might have led. After America's entrance into WWI, Marguerite began to work for Military Intelligence. Once the Armistice was announced she was sent to Berlin where her expansive society contacts brought her into contact with the movers and shakers of post-war Germany. Her reporting on the growing power of the German right led to a posting in Russia which was still in turmoil from the Revolution. Her facility with language and her sympathetic manner encouraged the people she interacted with to reveal the undercurrents existing in Europe between the World Wars. Her remarkable life included imprisonment in Russia, exploration of Turkey during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and extensive travel through the Middle East and then on to Japan and China. This woman lived a life rarely seen in early 20th century America where not only were women forbidden to vote, but where most lived lives narrowed by expectations of what was acceptable behavior. Marguerite Harrison burst through all the barriers she faced. —Barbara Hoagland, Doubleday, \$30



## BIO

***Unearthing: A Story of Tangled Love and Family Secrets***, Kyo Maclear

What happens when the one story we know to be true of ourselves is uprooted, unearthed? In early spring 2019, Kyo Maclear learned through DNA testing that she was unrelated to the British man she'd always loved as her father. Her Japanese mother liked to tell her she found her as a baby floating on a river; a story that conveyed (as Maclear would understand later), "a family could occur by happenstance and strange handiwork." *Unearthing* is an intimate memoir that traces Maclear's new-found heritage and the complicated stories that go with it. Along the way, she grows her relationship with her mother whose memories are sometimes crafty constructions, and other times heartbreaking confessions. The memoir is arranged in the tradition of Japanese Sekki, or "small seasons", offered as "a different way of thinking about the ever-changing ground of our stories." —Val Kittel, Scribner, \$24



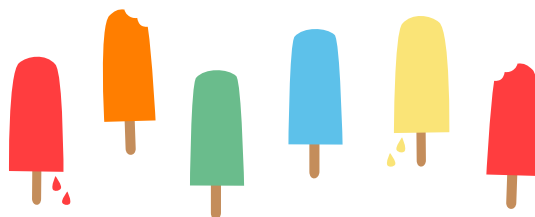
## HISTORY

***The Six: The Untold Story of America's First Women Astronauts***, Loren Grush



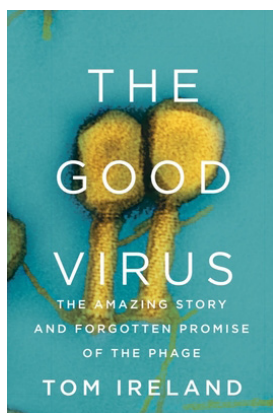
In 1973, NASA was in a PR scandal, having recently fired their Equal Employment Opportunity Officer for pointing out their discriminatory hiring practices. They had the lowest diversity of any federal agency, and most of the women they employed held the lowest paying available jobs. Combined with the fact that their previous cadre of astronauts were aging out of the stringent physical requirements, they looked to hire a new

cohort. This time, for the first time, planning to include minorities and women. By 1978, NASA had hired its new class of astronauts to launch the Space Shuttle era—thirty-five in all, including the first three African American men, the first Asian American man, and the first six women. Those six ambitious women became headliners all around the U.S. as they grappled with the misogyny and biases that had kept them out of space since NASA's inception. This is their story, full of incredible detail, as they navigated newfound celebrity status, grueling physical trials, and tragedy, while also fulfilling their dreams and bringing with them much-needed changes, ushering in the NASA of today. A perfect read for any NASA buff, scientist, feminist, or future astronaut. —Michaela Riding, Scribner, \$32.50





## NATURE/SCIENCE



***The Good Virus: The Amazing Story and Forgotten Promise of the Phage***, Tom Ireland

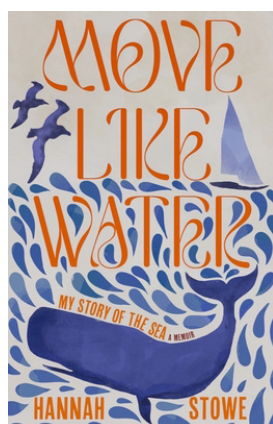
The virus, especially after Covid, is pretty universally maligned. But could there also be good viruses? We are literally surrounded by trillions of microscopic bacteriophages that are constantly invading and destroying bacteria but leaving other cells, including our own, unharmed.

***The Good Virus*** examines these phages, exploring their discovery more than a century ago to their resurgence as a great

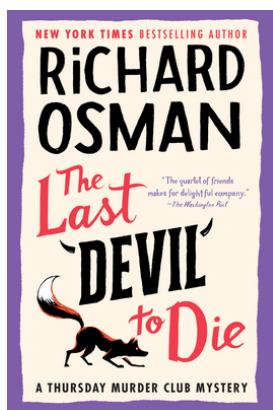
hope in combating antibiotic-resistant infections. This is an engrossing book full of fascinating history, doctors and scientists, and amazing promise for the future. I loved it. —Sally Larkin, Norton, \$30

***Move Like Water: My Story of the Sea***, Hannah Stowe

Hannah Stowe writes of nature with gorgeous prose, following in the traditions of Rachel Carson, Annie Dillard, and Helen MacDonald. Chronicling her love of the ocean and its sea creatures above and below, Stowe's familiarity with the sea is astonishing and vibrant. She writes with all the contradictions of water: lush and languid when describing her favorite animals and locales, while simultaneously urgent and fierce as she notes the ways her favorite seascapes are diminishing. I am perpetually thankful for writers like this. —Michaela Riding, Tin House Books, \$24.95



## MYSTERY/HORROR



***The Last Devil to Die: A Thursday Murder Club Mystery***, Richard Osman

It's Christmas at Cooper's Chase, but murder doesn't take a holiday and this killing affects members of the Thursday Murder Club deeply. Determined to get justice, the club members become involved in antiquing, discovering a missing heroin shipment and romance fraud. Osman provides another cracker of a mystery with laughs and twists aplenty, but his social commentary and the end of a journey are handled with a tenderness

born of experience. Warning, tissues will be required.

—Paula Longhurst, Pamela Dorman Books, \$29

***The Last Ranger***, Peter Heller

Park Ranger Ren Hopper herds tourists and wildlife alike, driving and hiking the length and breadth of Yellowstone National Park, trying to protect one from the other, and finding peace by fishing in his infrequent free time. Ren seems likeable and easy-going, but harbors a rage that can flash white-hot, especially when the Park's animals are

## MYSTERY/HORROR

threatened. Particularly the wolves. His best friend there, Hilly, an internationally known expert on wolf packs, tutors Ren on their behavior and habitat—what they hunt, what hunts them (man of course). When she is caught in one of the traps that have suddenly begun to appear in the Park, Ren's past nightmares and boiling fury ignite in a mystery the beating heart of which is wolves—how they live and die, the poachers who threaten them, the naturalists and tourists who watch them. Heller, whose characters always draw their strength from the land which he observes so closely and portrays with such lyricism, has made wolves a vivid piece of the world about which he writes in a book you won't be able to put down and are unlikely to forget. The wolves will inhabit your dreams and your imagination in new and powerful ways.

—Betsy Burton, Knopf, \$27 *Editor's Note: Heller will join us on the patio on Friday, August 11th at 6 p.m.*



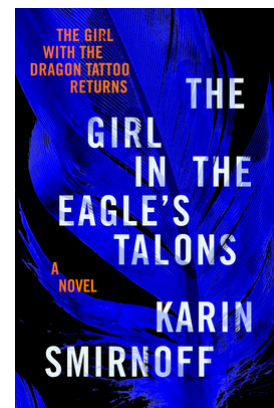
***The Secret Hours***, Mick Herron

Fans of Mick Herron know there are many, many untold stories about how each of the characters in the Slow Horses series came to be. It's a puzzle tracing itself backwards and forwards from Cold War Berlin to now and spies on both sides of the Wall have long memories. Like the other mysteries in this series, *The Secret Hours* begins with a slow burn and keeps you guessing until the very end.

—Anne Holman, Soho Crime, \$27.95

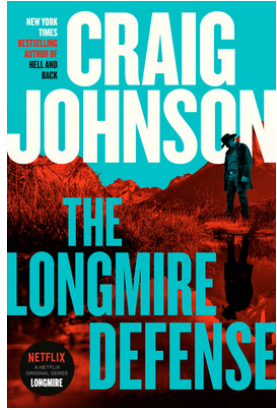
***The Girl in the Eagle's Talon***, Karin Smirnoff, translated by Sarah Death

In a book as violent as any in the series that has followed after those by Stieg Larsson, and as good a read—if the barbarity doesn't make you close the book with a shudder—Lisbeth Salander and Mikael Blomkvist coincidentally appear in Gasskas, a town in the far north of Sweden. Salander has come unwillingly, called there by Social Services to serve as temporary guardian for Salva. Salva, the niece she has never met, whose mother has disappeared and whose grandmother has just died, is on the run from the town's gang—a more deadly group than anyone knows. Mikael is there to attend his daughter's wedding. His prospective son-in-law, a glib man, head of the municipality of Gasskas, is involved in promoting a giant windmill farm. All of this is, in the end, connected through a villain without legs or morality whose appetite for young women is voracious and who will commit any manner of mayhem to acquire control of the proposed energy development, which ironically flies under the label green energy although its creation will destroy the surrounding forests. Turns out corruption abounds in the town,





grist for Blomkvist's mill. Salva, who is unlike Lisbeth physically but might be her younger self psychically, is in far greater danger than either realizes. As the plot thickens it seems as if this new trilogy will continue the Millennium series in the style in which it began—irredeemably violent, but complex and intriguing enough to compel. —Betsy Burton, Knopf, \$29



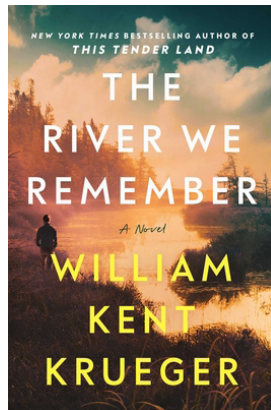
***The Longmire Defense*, Craig Johnson**

When we last encountered Walt Longmire, he had been to *Hell and Back* and taken us with him. It was a terrifying story, not just because of the ghosts, which were plenty, but because of the reminder of what happened to so many Native Americans who were forced into residential schools both in the U.S. and Canada. Now back in Wyoming, the sheriff faces a different ghost...that of his grandfather. —Anne Holman, Viking, \$28  
*Editor's note: Craig will join us on Sunday,*

*September 10, to read from and sign this new mystery.*

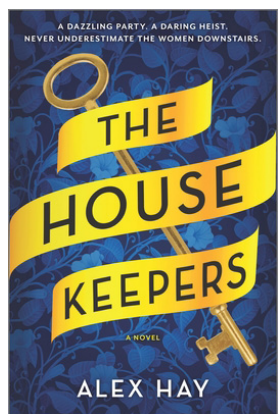
***The River We Remember*, William Kent Krueger**

Krueger's rich descriptions and love for southern Minnesota combined with thoroughly realized characters inhabit this murder mystery set in post-WWII. A wealthy and uniformly despised landowner is brutally murdered. As in all communities, the investigation leads to painful secrets being exposed. The biases present following the world wars figure large in this novel and threaten to destroy this small town. Krueger is at his best in this gem of a story. —Christina Richards, Atria Books, \$28.99  
*Note: Krueger will join us at First Baptist on Friday, September 15th at 6 p.m.*



***The Housekeepers*, Alex Hay**

Move over all those "guy" heist stories and make way for a group of women who know how to clean a house. Mrs. King lives in the early 1900s, working as a housekeeper in an opulent house on Park Lane, built by a newly rich and newly dead man. When she is rudely dismissed from her position, she sets in motion plans to strip the building bare during the night of a costume ball. Mrs. King comes from a world filled with artists of the underworld who become her soldiers in



the battle for revenge. The colorful recruits include a black marketeer with her own reasons for robbing the house, a seamstress, a previous housekeeper, an East End actress, and a cast of circus characters. The plot is worthy of a three-ring circus and is an antidote to the genteel world of 1900s women waiting for a man to protect them. —Wendy Foster Leigh, Graydon House, \$30

***The Sunset Years of Agnes Sharp*, Leonie Swann**

Sunset Hall is the perfect name for the home of a group of elderly, perhaps you could even say "old", women and men living together as they move into the sunset days of their lives. Into this idyllic setting comes a police officer with news of the murder of an elderly neighbor, but the residents have their own secret and their own body (Lillith) hidden in the shed. The house belongs to Agnes Sharp and the housemates are her friends who all have hidden pasts. If Agnes and the group can find the new murderer, perhaps they can pin Lillith's death on him or her. The action is fast and often humorous and includes a feisty tortoise, Hettie, and a gentle dog, Brexit. This may be the season of the geriatric mystery as this is just one of a series of mysteries which emphasis bright, if eccentric, characters who the reader will either identify with or wish they were related to. —Wendy Foster Leigh, Soho Crime, \$27.95

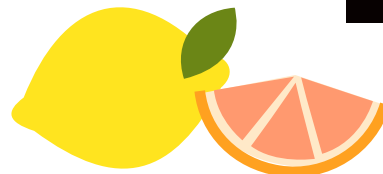


***Blind Fear*, Brandon Webb, John David Mann**

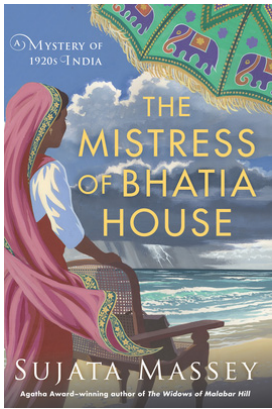
Eight months ago a stranger arrived in Puerto Rico. The locals call him Mimo - we know him as fugitive Navy SEAL, Chief Finn. Fully recovered from his brush with an assassin in Iceland, Finn gets a job with a local (blind) cafe owner and his two grandchildren. At night he continues to hunt for the man who ordered the Mukalla massacre. Until the kids go missing. Finn breaks cover to search for them, knowing that whoever snatched them regards them as witnesses to something and won't keep them alive for long. Whilst hurricane Will picks up speed and barrels towards Puerto Rico, Finn has his own hurricane to deal with; ex-USS Lincoln-helo-pilot-turned-JAG officer Monica Halsey. Halsey has been primed with false intel about Finn and now she's determined to kill him herself. —Paula Longhurst, Bantam, \$28.99

***How Can I Help You*, Laura Sims**

Patricia Delmarco, self-confessed failed writer, gets a job as a reference librarian in a small-town library. The patrons and staff seem normal, until a death in the women's bathroom reveals a different side to one of her colleagues. Patricia begins to dig and the secrets she unearths could either turn into a true crime bestseller or land her in the obituaries column. —Paula Longhurst, G.P. Putnam's Sons, \$27







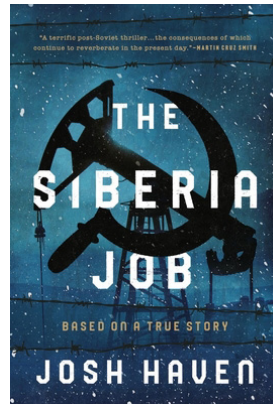
***The Mistress of Bhatia House*, Sujata Massey**

Bombay, 1922, and ordinary women's lives are hard. Childbearing may mean death for the mother and child. Perveen Mistry, the only female lawyer in Bombay takes on the role of defender of women and children. *The Mistress of Bhatia House* is the third in Massey's series in which she writes of problems of birth control, women's health issues, and the problems of India's caste system. While attending a fundraiser for a women's

hospital she witnesses an accident in which the son of a prominent businessman catches fire. A young servant saves the boy's life but is ignored and arrested on vague charges by an unknown man. Mistry will defend the young girl despite her family's problems including her father's questions about defense of the young servant and her brother's problems with his wife and baby. Massey's selection of social issues is an homage to current issues of sexism and social injustice. Her detailed historical research reflects India of that time period, but the message of the book suggests that while women's lives may have improved the journey for justice has not ended. —Wendy Foster Leigh, Soho Crime, \$27.95

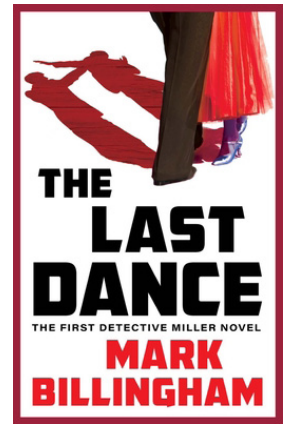
***The Siberia Job*, Josh Haven**

Ever wonder how the oligarchs took such rapid control of Russia? How most of them became oligarchs in the first place? Or, for that matter, how a fair-minded socialist plan for the betterment of the Russian people turned into a capitalist free-for-all? Take a Russian energy company circa 1990, a couple of capitalists (one American, one Czech), add a then-new concept—vouchers, stir, and the result is the most fascinating, complex and wryly entertaining thriller of the year. The two capitalists, John Mills and Petr Kovak, recognize the potential value of the vouchers being issued by the state to insure equal ownership to the masses. The pair realize the collective value of these golden eggs, but also know that they won't be the only people interested in them; that the major Russian energy company itself will do anything to acquire them. Our perhaps greedy but not-quite-crooked pair, with the help of a "cigarette girl" they meet on the train, plan to buy up (on the q.t.) as many vouchers as they can and then formalize their ownership at the clandestine auctions being held across rural Russia. So, they set out on a wild-west-of-a-ride heading east (on trains and planes and dog sleds, even a tank or two) from Moscow to Siberia's farthest reaches in as improbably swashbuckling an adventure (and misadventure) as one can imagine—especially when one considers that it is largely true, particularly in its most zany and exotic incarnations. Wild humor, financial chicanery at levels not even dreamed of by your average hedge funder, bromance, a love story, all leavened with danger make this a thriller to remember. But the heart of this tale is the birth of the dark and dangerous kleptocracy that rules supreme in Russia today. —Betsy Burton, Mysterious Press, \$26.95



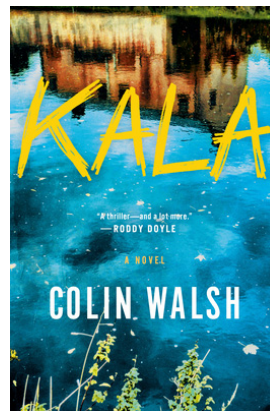
***The Last Dance*, Mark Billingham**

It's been just shy of two months since Declan Miller's wife/fellow detective Alex vanished from the Majestic Ballroom mid-competition only to wind up dead on a Blackpool street hours later. Dec, who was immediately put on medical leave, can't hack sitting around doing nothing so he takes his awful jokes and quirky attitude back to work. Teaming up with Xiu, his new partner, their first case is a murder at the 'how on earth did they give it three stars' Sands Hotel. Was this a northern gangland killing, fratricide, or maybe a jealous spouse with a hitman on speed dial? Dec works the case with Xiu, his dancer friends, a young homeless informant, and Alex, who despite being dead keeps showing up in his kitchen to chat. Billingham has blended a northern police procedural with *Strictly Come Dancing*, added some genuinely surprising plot twists, and come up with a winner. —Paula Longhurst, Atlantic Monthly Press, \$28



***Kala*, Colin Walsh**

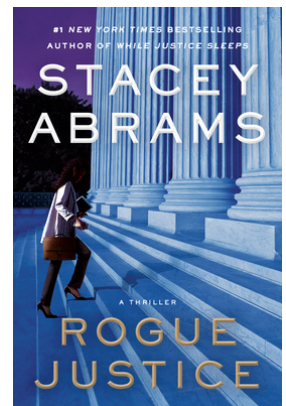
This is a book you will NOT put down. Set in the northern part of the Republic of Ireland, three childhood friends are reunited 15 years after the disappearance of their friend Kala. Mush, Helen, and Joe, in alternating chapters, recall their youthful escapades. And when they are compelled to re-examine the past, it becomes a confrontation of a lot more than Kala's disappearance. Characters that are complicated and authentic are surrounded by a dark and dismal history.



Their narratives add up to a compelling, disturbing, riveting, mystery that will not let you go. I can't get the story out of my head! —Margaret Brennan Neville, Doubleday, \$28

***Rogue Justice*, Stacey Abrams**

This novel combines the terrifying specter of cyberwarfare on our nation's energy grid with the political machinations of Washington, DC. Anyone who's read Ted Koppel's *Lights Out* will recognize the very real vulnerabilities faced by America's power network. Four-time author and two-time Georgia gubernatorial candidate (as well as voting rights activist; how does she have the time?) Stacy Abrams weaves a tale of intrigue, vengeance, and corruption. She combines elements of cyberwarfare with relatable characters and very real governmental issues. The result is a thoroughly researched and wonderfully accessible thriller. —Christina Richards, Doubleday, \$29





## SPECULATIVE FICTION



**Prophet**, Helen MacDonald, Sin Blaché

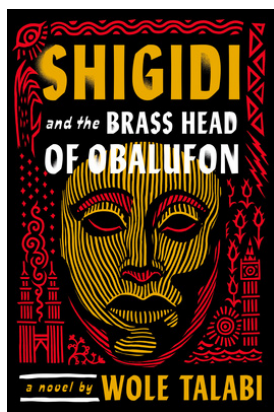
It seems you can weaponize anything these days, including nostalgia. A fiery, fatal accident on an overseas U.S. base and the appearance of an American diner in a foggy English field reunites a very odd couple: Rao, brought from his prison cell and intelligence officer Adam Rubinstein summoned from somewhere 'classified'. Rao's unique ability leads the pair into a life-changing/life-ending investigation where your happiest memory will turn deadly. **Prophet** is an inventive mashup of sci-noir, romance and Stepford-esque

corporate meddling, mixed with a dash of *The Thing*.

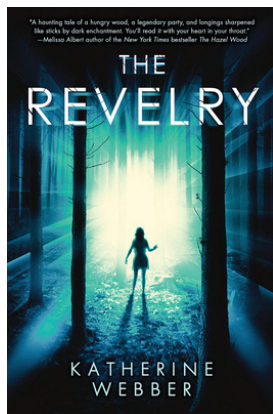
—Paula Longhurst, Grove Press, \$29

**Shigidi And the Brass Head Of Obalufon**, Wole Talabi

Nigeria's old gods have a problem; hardly anyone believes in them anymore. Shigidi, a minor nightmare god, is barely scraping by at the Orisha spirit company until he meets Nneoma, one of the ancient 'fallen'. Shigidi's decision to join her and go freelance remakes him, almost destroys him and draws the partners/lovers into a daring and dangerous heist across spirit barriers at the British Museum. Success will bring about a renaissance at the Orisha spirit company. The consequences of failure don't bear thinking about. —Paula Longhurst, DAW, \$27



## EDGY



**The Revelry**, Katherine Webber

As everyone in Ember Grove knows, the Revelry will be the best night of your life. But that is all anyone knows until it is their time to join. And you do not go to any Revelry that isn't your own. When Bitsy and Amy decide to sneak into the Revelry a year early, despite the superstitions, they awaken the following morning with no recollections of the night before. When terrible things start to happen to Bitsy, while Amy's wishes all come true, it is up to Bitsy to figure out what happened

and break the curse that only she can see. A chilling and thrilling tale of friendship and rivalry, love, and family. Oh so good! —Antonia Squire, Scholastic, \$18.99 (Ages 14 and up)

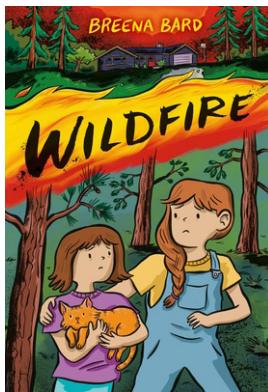
## YOUNG ADULT

**The Princess and the Grilled Cheese Sandwich**, Deya Muniz

Picture the scene: our heroine Cam (Lady Camembert if you must), has just been wooed by another boring aristocrat who wants to tell her what to do. Unable to inherit due to being (inconveniently) born a girl, she does what any self-sufficient young woman in the patriarchy would do—she pretends to be a boy. Thus, Cam presents herself as Count Camembert in the capital city of Fromage. Vowing to stay under the radar, things get a little out of hand when she bumps into the beautiful, passionate, fashionista and activist Princess Brie. As the two draw closer together Brie begins to fall in love with the dashing and sensitive Count, but what will happen when Cam's secret comes out? Silly, hilarious, and profound—this is a tale of activism and cheese puns! —Antonia Squire, Little Brown Ink, \$17.99 (Ages 12 and up)



## CHILDREN'S GRAPHIC NOVELS



**Wildfire**, Breena Bard

Living on a farm with chickens and goats in rural Oregon is the perfect life for Julianna and her family until a fire burns down the home and their town. Her family leaves the surviving animals with her cousins and moves to the city with no possessions. When Julianna discovers a boy from her hometown has moved to the same school and he may have had something to do with setting off the fire, she is furious until she discovers the conservation club where she turns her anger into power in this graphic novel.

—Becky Hall, Little Brown & Company, \$12.99 (Ages 8-14)

**Dear Brother**, Alison McGhee

In this graphic novel Sister writes letters to her older brother complaining he always gets what he wants. Sister is tired of being overlooked. When their parents offer them a pet, Brother wants a bearded dragon and she wants a puppy. Guess what they get? A bearded dragon! He wants to go to music camp. He gets to go even though Sister also plays a mean bongo. In their summer adventures both siblings learn a lot about each other and themselves. —Becky Hall, Atheneum Books for Young Readers, \$13.99 (Ages 10 and up)





## CHILDREN'S GRAPHIC NOVELS



### *Mexikid*, Pedro Martín

Pedro is one of nine kids in his family. His older brothers and sisters were born in Mexico, and he is the first in his family born in the US. One summer his parents inform the kids that their Abuelito will be coming to live with them in LA, and so the entire family sets off on an epic road trip back to their ancestral village. Heartfelt and hilarious this 'based on a true story' account of a family road trip back to Mexico, Pedro has a lot to learn about being a real Mexican kid like his

older brothers and sisters. Things such as 'don't drink unpasteurized milk if you've never had it before - or if you do, make sure there's a bathroom nearby!' Family dynamics, relationships, and responsibilities, and how to behave when your super-awesome, Mexican civil war hero, Abuelito looks at his American grandson like he has just landed from Mars! —Antonia Squire, Dial Books, \$14.99 (Ages 10 and up)

## MIDDLE READER

### *Tessa Miyata is NO Hero*, Julie Abe

Tessa is in Tokyo for the summer, staying at her grandparents' house with her older sisters. She is ready to enjoy the sights and forget her disastrous social life at home, but when she and Jin, a neighbor, unwittingly release an ancient god who is determined to destroy Tokyo, the two kids must find a way to stop him in this adrenaline powered story. —Becky Hall, Little Brown Books for Young Readers, \$16.99 (Ages 8-12)



### *Vivian Van Tassel and the Secret of Midnight Lake*, Michael Witwer

Twelve-year-old Vivian has lost her temper again and been banished from fencing. Since her mother's death, Vivian's anger has been uncontrollable. When she and her father move to her mother's abandoned family home in tiny Midnight Lake, she swears she'll never let anyone get close to her again. But she meets a group of kids who play the role-playing game invented in their town, Beasts &

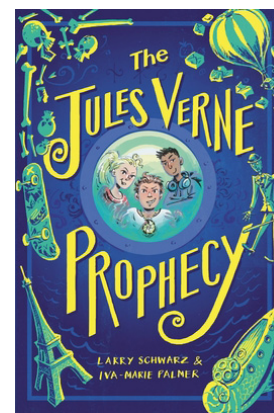
Battlements, which leads to her unraveling mysterious and unsettling truths about the game, its inventor, and her new town. The author is a D&D designer. —Becky Hall, Aladdin, \$18.99 (Ages 8-12)



## MIDDLE READER

### *The Jules Verne Prophecy*, Larry Schwarz & Iva-Marie Palmer

Jules Verne opened our minds with his creativity and *The Jules Verne Prophecy* blows them wide open. Creative, exciting, funny, and fast-paced. You will LOVE this wild romp of a preteen Parisian adventure story based on Jules Verne's books. On a scale of one to ten, it's a twelve! —Becky Hall, Christy Ottaviano Books, \$16.99 (Ages 10-14)

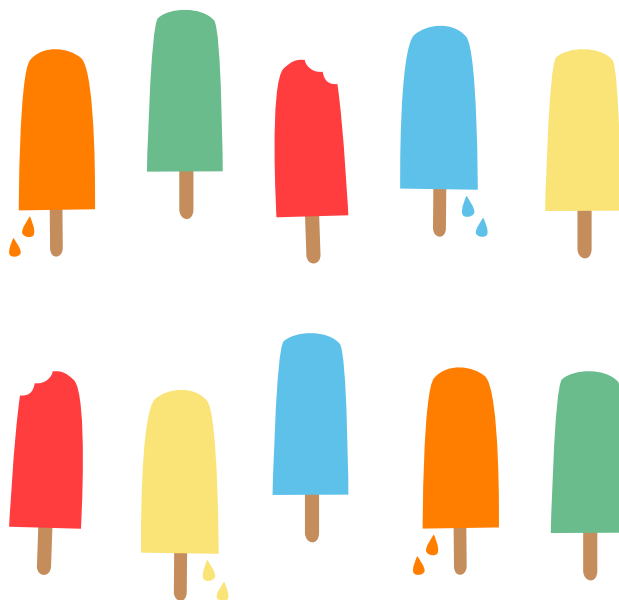


### *Ghostlight*, Kenneth Oppel



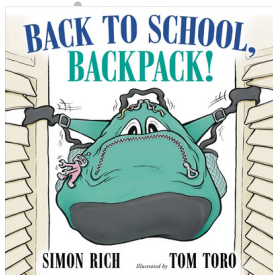
When Gabe takes a summer job guiding tourists around the island lighthouse, he happily invents ghost stories to intrigue the visitors. All in fun of course, Gabe doesn't believe in ghosts. Right up until Rebecca Strand makes herself known to him on his latest visit to the lighthouse. A hundred years earlier Rebecca and her father, the lighthouse keeper, died in mysterious circumstances, their bodies found

on the rocks below with no explanation of how they both fell to their deaths. Rebecca needs Gabe's help to find the Ghostlight to finally destroy a malevolent spirit that grows ever stronger and threatens to turn all living things into lost souls. With help from both the living and the dead, Gabe and Rebecca set off on a terrifying adventure to save humanity. Fun and creepy, this is a heart-poundingly good adventure, I loved every moment of it —Antonia Squire, Yearling, \$9.99 (Ages 10 and up)





## CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOKS



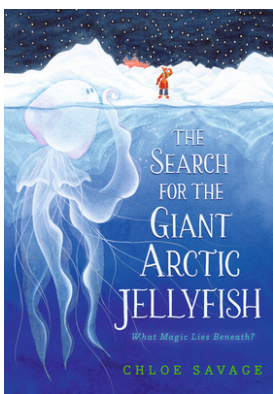
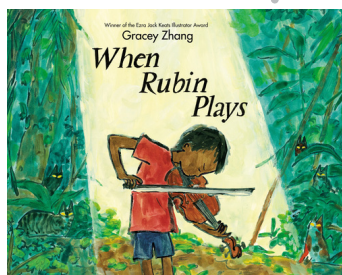
***Back to School, Backpack!***,  
Simon Rich

As tough as it might be for kids to go back to school, it's a million times harder for an anxiety ridden Backpack! So safe and comfortable in the closet during the summer, the anxiety sets in when the

kid shoves books and binders down its throat, drags it up the school steps by its head, and shoves it into a strange new locker. Back to school is terrible, and lonely, and scary—until kid and backpack meet new friends—then things might just get a little better!  
—Antonia Squire, Little Brown Books for Young Readers, \$18.99 (Ages 4-8)

***When Rubin Plays***,  
Gracey Zhang

Zhang captures the joy of music, sound, inspiration, and effort in her new book! Rubin is fascinated by the orchestra and is so excited to be a musician. His first efforts are not quite like the concert, yikes! But when he goes into the wild to practice, something wonderful happens. Zhang does a lovely job showing all the emotions that music can inspire in this ode to not giving up.  
—Margaret Brennan Neville, Orchard Books, \$18.99 (Ages 4-8)



***The Search for the Giant Arctic Jellyfish***, Chloe Savage

Cool off this summer with an imagined trip to the Arctic Ocean, accompanying a red-parka-clad crew of scientists in search of an elusive creature by plumbing the depths of 'the big blue'. Vibrantly whimsical, this book is for adventurous souls of any age—a reminder that we have yet to discover anywhere close to everything

in this world. —Michaela Riding, Candlewick, \$18.99 (Ages 4 and up)

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