

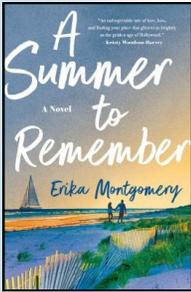


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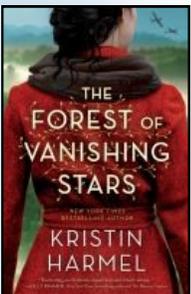
FICTION



A SUMMER TO REMEMBER BY ERIKA MONTGOMERY

(PICKED BY KT)

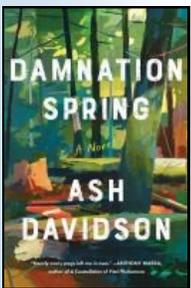
For thirty-year-old Frankie Simon, selling movie memorabilia in the shop she opened with her late mother on Hollywood Boulevard is more than just her livelihood—it's an enduring connection to the only family she has ever known. But when a mysterious package arrives containing a photograph of her mother and famous movie stars Glory Cartwright and her husband at a coastal film festival the year before Frankie's birth, her life begins to unravel in ways unimaginable. What begins is a journey along a path revealing buried family secrets, betrayals between lovers, bonds between friends. And for Frankie, as the past unlocks the present, the chance to learn that memories define who we are, and that they can show us the meaning of home and the magic of true love. (320 pgs)



THE FOREST OF VANISHING STARS BY KRISTIN HARMEL

(PICKED BY SM)

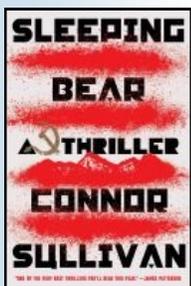
After being stolen from her wealthy German parents and raised in the unforgiving wilderness of eastern Europe, a young woman finds herself alone in 1941 after her kidnapper dies. Her solitary existence is interrupted, however, when she happens upon a group of Jews fleeing the Nazi terror. Stunned to learn what's happening in the outside world, she vows to teach the group all she can about surviving in the forest—and in turn, they teach her some surprising lessons about opening her heart after years of isolation. But when she is betrayed and escapes into a German-occupied village, her past and present come together in a shocking collision that could change everything. (384 pgs)



DAMNATION SPRING BY ASH DAVIDSON

(PICKED BY MG)

For generations, Rich Gundersen's family has chopped a livelihood out of the redwood forest along California's rugged coast. Now Rich and his wife, Colleen, are raising their own young son near Damnation Grove, a swath of ancient redwoods on which Rich's employer, Sanderson Timber Co., plans to make a killing. It's dangerous work and Rich wants better for his son, Chub, so when the opportunity arises to buy 24-7 Ridge—costing them all the savings they've squirreled away for their growing family—he grabs it, unbeknownst to Colleen. Because the reality is their family isn't growing; Colleen has lost several pregnancies. And she isn't alone. As a midwife, Colleen has seen it with her own eyes. For decades, the herbicides the logging company uses were considered harmless. But Colleen is no longer so sure. What if these miscarriages aren't isolated strokes of bad luck? As mudslides take out clear-cut hillsides and salmon vanish from creeks, her search for answers threatens to unravel not just Rich's plans for the 24-7, but their marriage too, dividing a town that lives and dies on timber along the way. (464 pgs)



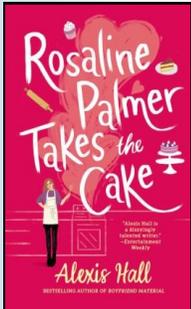
SLEEPING BEAR BY CONNOR SULLIVAN

(PICKED BY SLS)

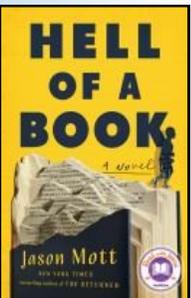
After her young husband's untimely death, Army veteran Cassie Gale decides to take a few days of solitude in the Alaska wilderness before she starts her new job. But when she fails to show up on her first day and her dog is discovered injured at her wrecked campsite, her father knows that this is much more than a camping trip gone awry. Cassie's not the first person to disappear without a trace in Alaska's northern interior. There are many ways to die in here. But not all disappearances can be explained. Cassie's is one of them, along with a number of other outdoor enthusiasts who have vanished in recent years. Regaining consciousness in a Russian prison, Cassie finds herself trapped in a system designed to ensure that no one ever escapes alive. It will require all her grit and skills to survive. Meanwhile, her father rushes to outrun the clock, only to realize she's been taken by a far more nefarious adversary—one with the power of the Eastern Bloc behind it. Ties to his past life, one full of secrets, threaten to surface. He knows there's a price to be paid, but he's determined it won't be his daughter. (400 pgs)

**LOVE AND FURY BY SAMANTHA SILVA****(PICKED BY SM)**

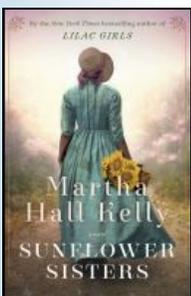
August, 1797. Midwife Parthenia Blenkinsop has delivered countless babies, but nothing prepares her for the experience that unfolds when she arrives at Mary Wollstonecraft's door. Over the eleven harrowing days that follow, as Mrs. Blenkinsop fights for the survival of both mother and newborn, Wollstonecraft recounts the life she dared to live amidst the impossible constraints and prejudices of the late 18th century, rejecting the tyranny of men and marriage, risking everything to demand equality for herself and all women. She weaves her riveting tale to give her fragile daughter a reason to live, even as her own strength wanes. Wollstonecraft's urgent story of loss and triumph forms the heartbreakingly brief intersection between the lives of a mother and daughter (Mary Shelley) who will change the arc of history and thought. (288pgs)

**ROSALINE PALMER TAKES THE CAKE BY ALEXIS HALL****(PICKED KT & MG)**

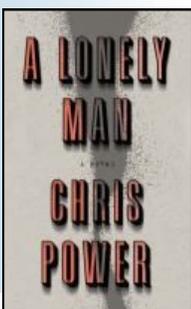
Following the recipe is the key to a successful bake. Rosaline Palmer has always lived by those rules—well, except for when she dropped out of college to raise her daughter, Amelie. Now, with a paycheck as useful as greaseproof paper and a house crumbling faster than biscuits in tea, she's teetering on the edge of financial disaster. But Rosaline has just landed a spot on the nation's most beloved baking show. Winning the prize money would give her daughter the life she deserves—and Rosaline is determined to stick to the instructions. However, more than collapsing trifles stand between Rosaline and victory. Suave, well-educated, and parent-approved Alain Pope knows all the right moves to sweep her off her feet, but it's shy electrician Harry Dobson who makes Rosaline question her long-held beliefs—about herself, her family, and her desires. (449 pgs)

**HELL OF A BOOK BY JASON MOTT****(PICKED BY SLS & BS)**

In Jason Mott's *Hell of a Book*, a Black author sets out on a cross-country publicity tour to promote his bestselling novel. That storyline drives *Hell of a Book* and is the scaffolding of something much larger and urgent: since Mott's novel also tells the story of Soot, a young Black boy living in a rural town in the recent past, and The Kid, a possibly imaginary child who appears to the author on his tour. As these characters' stories build and build and converge, they astonish. For while this heartbreaking and magical book entertains and is at once about family, love of parents and children, art and money, it's also about the nation's reckoning with a tragic police shooting playing over and over again on the news. And with what it can mean to be Black in America. (323 pgs)

**SUNFLOWER SISTERS BY MARTHA HALL KELLY****(PICKED BY SM)**

Georgeanne "Georgy" Woolsey isn't meant for the world of lavish parties and demure attitudes of women of her stature. So when the war ignites the nation, Georgy follows her passion for nursing during a time when doctors considered women a bother on the battlefield. She ventures from New York to Washington, D.C., to Gettysburg and witnesses the unparalleled horrors of slavery as her family become involved in the war effort. In the South, Jemma is enslaved on the Peeler Plantation in Maryland. When Jemma is sold by the cruel plantation mistress Anne-May at the same time the Union army comes through, she sees a chance to finally escape. Anne-May is left behind to run Peeler Planation when her husband joins the Union Army and her cherished brother enlists with the Confederates. In charge of the household, she uses the opportunity to follow her own ambitions and is drawn into a secret Southern network of spies, finally exposing herself to the fate she deserves. Inspired by true accounts, *Sunflower Sisters* provides a vivid, detailed look at the Civil War experience. (528 pgs)

**A LONELY MAN BY CHRIS POWER****(PICKED BY SLS)**

Two British men, both writers, meet by chance in Berlin. Robert is trying and failing to finish his next book while balancing his responsibilities as a husband and father. Patrick, a recent arrival in the city, is secretive about his past, but eventually reveals he has been ghostwriting the autobiography of a Russian oligarch. The oligarch is now dead, and Patrick claims to be a hunted man himself. Although Robert doubts the truth of Patrick's story, it fascinates him, and he thinks it might hold the key to his own foundering novel. Working to gain the other man's trust, Robert draws out the details of Patrick's past while ensnaring himself ever more tightly in what might be a fantasist's creation, or a devastating international plot. *A Lonely Man* depicts an attempt to create art at the cost of empathy. Robert must decide what is his for the taking—and whether some stories are too dangerous to tell. (320 pgs)

STAFF PICKS

SEPTEMBER 2021



NON-FICTION

THE BURNING BLUE BY KEVIN COOK

(PICKED BY SM)

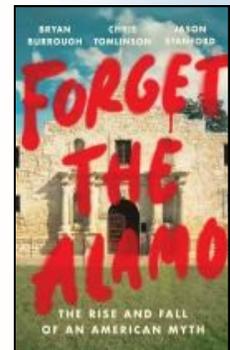
On the morning of January 28, 1986, NASA's space shuttle Challenger exploded shortly after blasting off from Cape Canaveral. Christa McAuliffe, America's "Teacher in Space," was instantly killed, along with the other six members of the mission. Right? Wrong. Thirty-five years after NASA's revitalization program literally went up in smoke, Kevin Cook uncovers the untold story of the disastrous order to launch on an ice-cold Florida day. For the first time, he takes readers inside the shuttle for those agonizing two minutes and forty-five seconds after the fire, which, yes, some of the astronauts survived. Centering on McAuliffe, *The Burning Blue* animates the mission's colorful cast of characters. Drawing intimate portraits of the people wearing the spacesuits and detailing how they earned the right to suit up, Cook makes readers temporarily forget the tragedy toward which the tale is hurtling. (288 pgs)



FORGET THE ALAMO BY BRYAN BURROUGH

(PICKED BY SP)

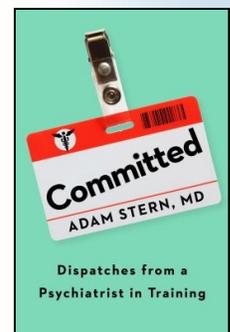
Every nation needs its creation myth, and since Texas was a nation before it was a state, it's no surprise that its myths bite deep. There's no piece of history more important to Texans than the Battle of the Alamo, when Davy Crockett and a band of rebels went down in a blaze of glory fighting for independence from Mexico, losing the battle but setting Texas up to win the war. However, that version of events, as *Forget the Alamo* definitively shows, owes more to fantasy than reality. The Alamo's story was forgotten and twisted over time, with the contributions of Tejanos, Texans of Mexican origin who fought alongside the Anglo rebels, scrubbed from the record, and the origin of the conflict over Mexico's push to abolish slavery papered over. *Forget the Alamo* explains the true story of the battle against the backdrop of Texas's struggle for independence. (432 pgs)



COMMITTED BY ADAM STERN

(PICKED BY MG)

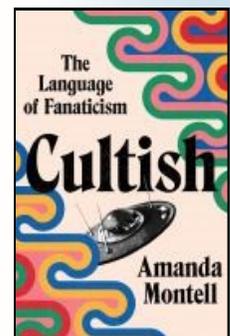
Adam Stern was a student at a state medical school before being selected to train as a psychiatry resident at one of the most prestigious programs in the country. His new and initially intimidating classmates were high achievers from the Ivy League and other elite universities around the nation. Stern pulls back the curtain on the intense and emotionally challenging lessons he and his fellow doctors learned while studying the human condition, and ultimately, the value of connection. The narrative focuses on these residents, their growth as doctors, and the life choices they make as they try to survive their grueling four-year residency. Most importantly, as they study how to help distressed patients in search of a better life, they discover the meaning of failure and the preciousness of success. (320 pgs)

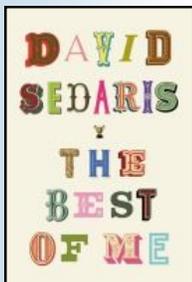


CULTISH BY AMANDA MONTELL

(PICKED BY SLH)

What makes "cults" so intriguing and frightening? What makes them powerful? The reason why so many of us fall down rabbit holes researching suburban moms gone QAnon is because we're looking for a satisfying explanation for what causes people to join and more importantly, stay in—extreme groups. In *Cultish*, Montell argues that the key to manufacturing intense ideology, community, and us/them attitudes all comes down to language. In both positive ways and shadowy ones, cultish language is something we hear—and are influenced by—every single day. Montell exposes the verbal elements that make a wide spectrum of communities "cultish," revealing how they affect followers of groups as notorious as Heaven's Gate, but also how they pervade our modern start-ups, Peloton leaderboards, and Instagram feeds. Incisive and darkly funny, this enrapturing take on the curious social science of power and belief will make you hear the fanatical language of "cultish" everywhere. (320 pgs)

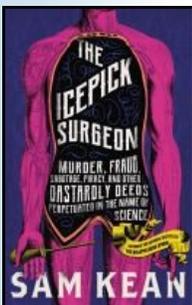




THE BEST OF ME BY DAVID SEDARIS

(PICKED BY KT)

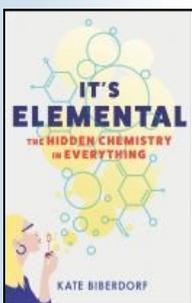
For more than twenty-five years, David Sedaris has been carving out a unique literary space, virtually creating his own genre. A Sedaris story may seem confessional, but is also highly attuned to the world outside. It opens our eyes to what is at absurd and moving about our daily existence. And it is almost impossible to read without laughing. Now, for the first time collected in one volume, the author brings us his funniest and most memorable work. Taken together, the stories in *The Best of Me* reveal the wonder and delight Sedaris takes in the surprises life brings him. No experience, he sees, is quite as he expected—it's often harder, more fraught, and certainly weirder—but sometimes it is also much richer and more wonderful. (387 pgs)



THE ICEPICK SURGEON BY SAM KEAN

(PICKED BY SLS & SLH)

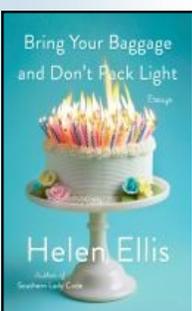
Science is a force for good in the world—at least usually. Sam Kean tells the true story of what happens when unfettered ambition pushes otherwise rational men and women to cross the line in the name of science. *The Icepick Surgeon* masterfully guides the reader across two thousand years of history, beginning with Cleopatra's dark deeds in ancient Egypt. The book reveals the origins of much of modern science in the transatlantic slave trade of the 1700s, as well as Thomas Edison's mercenary support of the electric chair and the warped logic of the spies who infiltrated the Manhattan Project. Many of the sins of science still affect us today. We can draw direct lines from the medical abuses of Tuskegee and Nazi Germany to current vaccine hesitancy, and connect icepick lobotomies from the 1950s to the contemporary failings of mental-health care. Kean even takes us into the future, when advanced computers and genetic engineering could unleash whole new ways to do one another wrong. (368 pgs)



IT'S ELEMENTAL BY KATE BIBERDORF

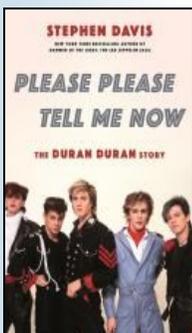
(PICKED BY SLH)

Have you ever wondered what makes dough rise? Or how your morning coffee gives you that energy boost? The answer is chemistry. From the moment we wake up until the time we go to sleep (and even while we sleep), chemistry is at work. Dr. Biberdorf has appeared on TV programs from the Today show to The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, lighting the world on fire and changing the face of chemistry as we know it. In *It's Elemental*, she demystifies the fundamental principles of the science that may have eluded you in high school and shows how chemistry comes alive in everything we do. With wry wit and infectious enthusiasm, this entertaining guide will ignite your passion for science and change the way you experience the world. (304 pgs)



BRING YOUR BAGGAGE AND DON'T PACK LIGHT BY HELEN ELLIS (PICKED BY BS)

When Helen Ellis and her lifelong friends arrive for a reunion on the Redneck Riviera they unpack more than their suitcases: stories of husbands and kids, lost parents and lost jobs, powdered onion dip and photographs you have to hold by the edges; dirty jokes and sunscreen with SPF higher than they hair-sprayed their bangs senior year, and a bad mammogram. It's a diagnosis that scares them, but could never break their bond. Because women pushing fifty won't be pushed around. In these twelve gloriously comic and moving essays, Helen Ellis dishes on married middle-age sex, sobs with a theater full of women as a psychic exorcises their sorrows, gets twenty shots of stomach bile to the neck to get rid of her double chin, and gathers up the courage to ask, Are you there, Menopause? *It's Me, Helen*. (192 pgs)



PLEASE PLEASE TELL ME NOW BY STEPHEN DAVIS

(PICKED BY BS)

In *Please Please Tell Me Now*, bestselling rock biographer Stephen Davis tells the story of Duran Duran, the quintessential band of the 1980s. Their pretty boy looks made them the stars of fledgling MTV, but it was their brilliant musicianship that led to a string of number one hits. By the end of the decade, they had sold 60 million albums; today, they've sold over 100 million albums—and counting. Davis traces their roots to the austere 1970s British malaise that spawned both the Sex Pistols and Duran Duran—two seemingly opposite music extremes. Handsome, British, and young, it was Duran Duran that headlined Live Aid, not Bob Dylan or Led Zeppelin. With timeless hits like "Hungry Like the Wolf," "Girls on Film," "Rio," "Save a Prayer," and the bestselling James Bond theme in the series' history, "A View to Kill," Duran Duran has cemented its legacy in the pop pantheon—and with a new album and a worldwide tour on the way, they show no signs of slowing down anytime soon. (353 pg)