



**Staff Picks Digital and Print Edition**

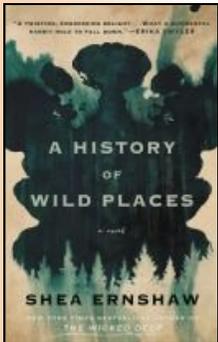
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**FICTION**

**A HISTORY OF WILD PLACES BY SHEA ERNSHAW**

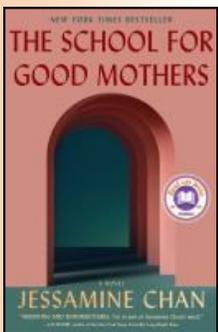
**(PICKED BY MG)**



Travis Wren has an unusual talent for locating missing people. Hired by families as a last resort, he requires only a single object to find the person who has vanished. When he takes on the case of Maggie St. James—a well-known author of dark, macabre children's books—he's led to a place many believed to be only a legend. Called "Pastoral," this reclusive community was founded in the 1970s by like-minded people searching for a simpler way of life. By all accounts, the commune shouldn't exist anymore and soon after Travis stumbles upon it... he disappears. Just like Maggie St. James. Years later, Theo, a lifelong member of Pastoral, discovers Travis's abandoned truck beyond the border of the community. No one is allowed in or out, not when there's a risk of bringing a disease—rot—into Pastoral. Unraveling the mystery of what happened reveals secrets that Theo, his wife, Calla, and her sister, Bee, keep from one another. Secrets that prove their perfect, isolated world isn't as safe as they believed—and that darkness takes many forms. (368 pgs)

**THE SCHOOL FOR GOOD MOTHERS BY JESSAMINE CHAN**

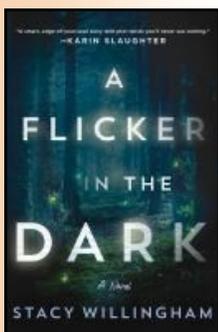
**(PICKED BY TA & SLS)**



Frida Liu is struggling. She doesn't have a career worthy of her Chinese immigrant parents' sacrifices. What's worse is she can't persuade her husband, Gust, to give up his wellness-obsessed younger mistress. Only with their angelic daughter Harriet does Frida finally feel she's attained the perfection expected of her. Harriet may be all she has, but she's just enough. Until Frida has a horrible day. The state has its eyes on mothers like Frida — ones who check their phones while their kids are on the playground; who let their children walk home alone; in other words, mothers who only have one lapse of judgement. Now, a host of government officials will determine if Frida is a candidate for a Big Brother-like institution that measures the success or failure of a mother's devotion. Faced with the possibility of losing Harriet, Frida must prove that she can live up to the standards set for mothers — that she can learn to be good. (336 pgs)

**A FLICKER IN THE DARK BY STACY WILLINGHAM**

**(PICKED BY BS)**



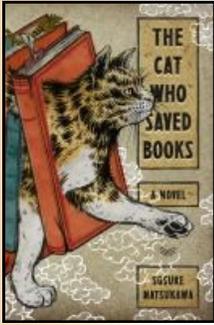
When Chloe Davis was twelve, six teenage girls went missing in her small Louisiana town. By the end of the summer, Chloe's father had been arrested as a serial killer and promptly put in prison. Chloe and the rest of her family were left to grapple with the truth and try to move forward while dealing with the aftermath. Now 20 years later, Chloe is a psychologist in private practice in Baton Rouge and getting ready for her wedding. She finally has a fragile grasp on the happiness she's worked so hard to get. Sometimes, though, she feels as out of control of her own life as the troubled teens who are her patients. Then a local teenage girl goes missing, and then another, and that terrifying summer comes crashing back. Is she paranoid, and seeing parallels that aren't really there, or for the second time in her life, is she about to unmask a killer? (368 pgs)

**HEARD IT IN A LOVE SONG BY TRACEY GARVIS GRAVES**

**(PICKED BY SM)**

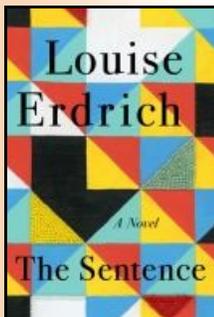


Layla Hilding is thirty-five and recently divorced. Struggling to break free from the past—her glory days as the lead singer in a band and a ten-year marriage to a man who never put her first—Layla's newly found independence feels a lot like loneliness. Then there's Josh, the single dad whose daughter attends the elementary school where Layla teaches music. Recently separated, he's still processing the end of his twenty-year marriage to his high school sweetheart. He chats with Layla every morning at school and finds himself thinking about her more and more. Equally cautious and confused about dating in a world that favors apps over meeting organically, Layla and Josh decide to be friends with the potential for something more. Sounds sensible and way too simple—but when two people are on the rebound, is it heartbreak or happiness that's a love song away? (304 pgs)



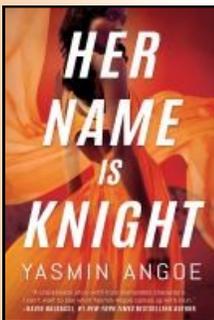
***THE CAT WHO SAVED BOOKS* BY SŌSUKE NATSUMURA (PICKED BY KT & SLS)**

Bookish high school student Rintaro Natsuki is about to close the secondhand bookstore he inherited from his beloved bookworm grandfather. Then, a talking cat named Tiger appears with an unusual request. The feline asks for—or rather, demands—the teenager’s help in saving books with him. The world is full of lonely books left unread and unloved, and Tiger and Rintaro must liberate them from their neglectful owners. Their mission sends this odd couple on an amazing journey, where they enter different mazes to set books free. Through their travels, Tiger and Rintaro meet a man who leaves his books to perish on a bookshelf, an unwitting book torturer who cuts the pages of books into snippets to help people speed read, and a publishing drone who only wants to create bestsellers. Their adventures culminate in one final, unforgettable challenge. (208 pgs)



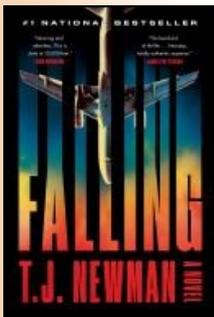
***THE SENTENCE* BY LOUISE ERDRICH (PICKED KT)**

*The Sentence*, asks what we owe to the living, the dead, to the reader and to the book. A small independent bookstore in Minneapolis is haunted from November 2019 to November 2020 by the store's most annoying customer. Flora dies on All Souls' Day, but she simply won't leave the store. Toookie, who has landed a job selling books after years of incarceration that she survived by reading with murderous attention, must solve the mystery of this haunting while at the same time trying to understand all that occurs in Minneapolis during a year of grief, astonishment, isolation, and furious reckoning. (387 pgs)



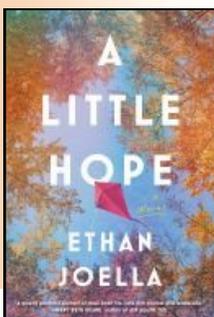
***HER NAME IS KNIGHT* BY YASMIN ANGOE (PICKED BY SP)**

Stolen from her Ghanaian village as a child, Nena Knight has plenty of motives to kill. Now an elite assassin for a powerful business syndicate called the Tribe, she gets plenty of chances. But while on assignment in Miami, Nena ends up saving a life, not taking one. She emerges from the experience a changed woman, finally hopeful for a life beyond rage and revenge. Tasked with killing a man she’s come to respect, Nena struggles to reconcile her loyalty to the Tribe with her new purpose. Meanwhile, she learns a new Tribe council member is the same man who razed her village, murdered her family, and sold her into captivity. Nena can’t resist the temptation of vengeance—and she doesn’t want to. Before she can reclaim her life, she must leverage everything she was and everything she is to take him down and end the cycle of bloodshed for good. (431 pgs)



***FALLING* BY T J NEWMAN (PICKED BY SM)**

You just boarded a flight to New York. There are one hundred and forty-three other passengers onboard. What you don’t know is that thirty minutes before the flight your pilot’s family was kidnapped. For his family to live, everyone on your plane must die. The only way the family will survive is if the pilot follows his orders and crashes the plane. Enjoy the flight. (304 pgs)



***A LITTLE HOPE* BY ETHAN JOELLA (PICKED BY SM)**

*A Little Hope* explores the intertwining lives of a dozen neighbors as they confront everyday desires and fears: a lost love, a stalled career, an illness, and a betrayal. Freddie and Greg Tyler seem to have it all: a comfortable home, a beautiful young daughter, a bond that feels unbreakable. But when Greg is diagnosed with a rare and aggressive form of cancer, the sense of certainty they once knew evaporates. Throughout their town, friends and neighbors face the most difficult of life’s challenges and are figuring out how to survive. *A Little Hope* is a deeply resonant debut that immerses the reader in a community and celebrates the importance of small moments of connection. (288 pgs)

# STAFF PICKS

FEBRUARY 2022

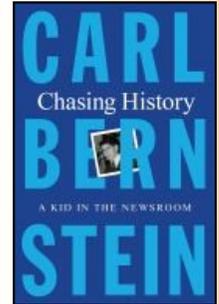


## NON-FICTION

### **CHASING HISTORY BY CARL BERNSTEIN**

**(PICKED BY SLS)**

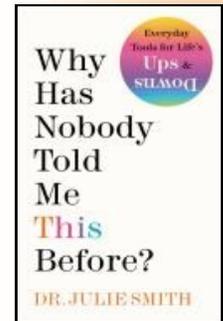
In 1960, Bernstein was just a sixteen-year-old at considerable risk of failing to graduate high school. Inquisitive, self-taught—and, yes, truant—Bernstein landed a job as a copyboy at the Evening Star, the afternoon paper in Washington. By nineteen, he was a reporter there. In *Chasing History*, Bernstein recalls the origins of his storied journalistic career as he chronicles the Kennedy era, the swelling civil rights movement, and a slew of grisly crimes. He spins a buoyant, frenetic account of educating himself in what Bob Woodward describes as “the genius of perpetual engagement.” *Chasing History* is an extraordinary memoir of life on the cusp of adulthood for a determined young man with a dogged commitment to the truth. (384 pgs)



### **WHY HAS NOBODY TOLD ME THIS BEFORE? BY JULIE SMITH**

**(PICKED BY SLS)**

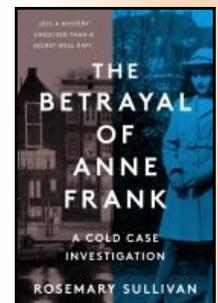
Filled with secrets from a therapist's toolkit, *Why Has Nobody Told Me This Before* teaches you how to fortify and maintain your mental health, even in the most trying of times. Dr. Julie Smith's expert advice and powerful coping techniques will help you stay resilient, whether you want to manage anxiety, deal with criticism, cope with depression, build self-confidence, find motivation, or learn to forgive yourself. *Why Has Nobody Told Me This Before* tackles everyday issues and offers practical solutions in bite-sized, easy-to-digest entries that make it easy to quickly find specific information and guidance. Your mental well-being is just as important as your physical well-being. Packed with proven strategies, Dr. Julie's empathetic guide offers a deeper understanding of how your mind works and gives you the insights and help you need to nurture your mental health every day. (368 pgs)



### **THE BETRAYAL OF ANNE FRANK BY ROSEMARY SULLIVAN**

**(PICKED BY SM)**

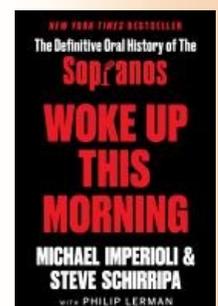
Over thirty million people have read *The Diary of a Young Girl*, the journal teen-aged Anne Frank kept while living in an attic with her family in Amsterdam during World War II, until the Nazis arrested them and sent Anne to her death in a concentration camp. But despite the many works devoted to Anne's story, none has ever conclusively explained how the Franks and four other people managed to live in hiding undetected for over two years—and who or what finally brought the Nazis to their door. Former FBI agent Vincent Pankoke and a team of indefatigable investigators pored over tens of thousands of pages of documents and interviewed scores of descendants of people involved, both Nazi sympathizers and resisters, familiar with the Franks. Utilizing methods developed by the FBI, the Cold Case Team painstakingly pieced together the months leading to the Franks' arrest—and came to a shocking conclusion. Rosemary Sullivan introduces us to the investigators, explains the behavior of both the captives and their captors and profiles a group of suspects. All the while, she vividly brings to life wartime Amsterdam: a place where no matter how wealthy, educated, or careful you were, you never knew whom you could trust. (400pgs)

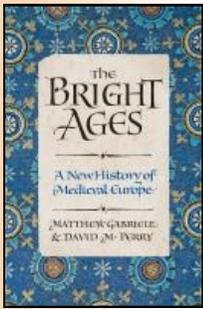


### **WOKE UP THIS MORNING BY MICHAEL IMPERIOLI**

**(PICKED BY SLS)**

Who made the phone call that got HBO to launch *The Sopranos*? What's the significance of all those eggs? What ever happened to the Russian? Michael Imperioli, Steve Schirripa, and the entire cast and crew of *The Sopranos* have all the answers—and they're revealing where all the bodies are buried. Inspired by the incredibly successful *Talking Sopranos* podcast, *The Sopranos* stars will finally reveal all the Soprano family secrets. *Woke Up This Morning* will be the definitive behind-the-scenes history of the groundbreaking HBO series that became a worldwide cultural phenomenon, ushered in a new Golden Age of Television, and to this day continues to be one of the most binged shows of all time. (509 pgs)

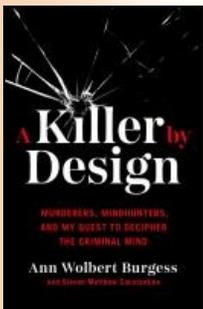




**THE BRIGHT AGES BY MATTHEW GABRIELE**

**(PICKED BY SLS)**

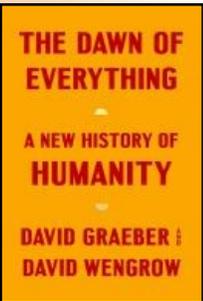
The word “medieval” conjures images of the “Dark Ages”—centuries of ignorance, superstition, and poor hygiene. But the myth of darkness obscures the truth; this was a remarkable period in human history. *The Bright Ages* recasts the European Middle Ages for what it was, capturing this 1,000-year era in all its complexity and fundamental humanity, bringing to light both its beauty and its horrors. *The Bright Ages* takes us through ten centuries and crisscrosses Europe and the Mediterranean, Asia and Africa, revisiting familiar people and events with new light cast upon them. We look with fresh eyes on the Fall of Rome, Charlemagne, the Vikings, the Crusades, and the Black Death, but also to the multi-religious experience of Iberia, the rise of Byzantium, and the genius of Hildegard and the power of queens. (307 pgs)



**A KILLER BY DESIGN BY ANN WOLBERT BURGESS**

**(PICKED BY MG)**

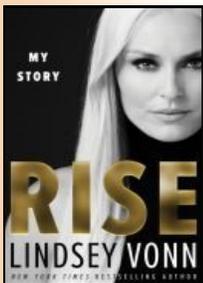
Lurking beneath the progressive activism and sex positivity in the 1970-80s, a dark undercurrent of violence rippled across the American landscape. With reported cases of sexual assault and homicide on the rise, the FBI created a specialized team—the “Mindhunters” better known as the Behavioral Science Unit—to track down the country’s most dangerous criminals. Yet narrowing down a seemingly infinite list of potential suspects seemed daunting at best and impossible at worst—until Dr. Ann Wolbert Burgess stepped on the scene. In *A Killer By Design*, Burgess reveals how her pioneering research on sexual assault and trauma caught the attention of the FBI, and steered her right into the middle of a chilling serial murder investigation. Over the course of the next two decades, she helped the budding unit identify, interview, and track down dozens of notoriously violent offenders. This book pulls us directly into the investigations as she experienced them. Along the way, Burgess also paints a revealing portrait of a formidable institution on the brink of a seismic scientific and cultural reckoning—and the men forced to reconsider everything they thought they knew about crime. (320 pgs)



**THE DAWN OF EVERYTHING BY DAVID GRAEBER**

**(PICKED BY MG)**

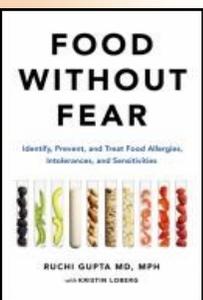
For generations, our remote ancestors have been cast as primitive and childlike—either free and equal innocents, or thuggish and warlike. Civilization, we are told, could be achieved only by sacrificing those original freedoms or, alternatively, by taming our baser instincts. The authors show how such theories first emerged in the eighteenth century as a conservative reaction to critiques of European society posed by Indigenous observers and intellectuals. Revisiting this encounter has startling implications for how we make sense of human history today. *The Dawn of Everything* fundamentally transforms our understanding of the human past and offers a path toward imagining new forms of freedom, new ways of organizing society. (704 pgs)



**RISE BY LINDSEY VONN**

**(PICKED BY BS)**

At the age of 34, world champion alpine skier and Olympic gold medalist Lindsey Vonn announced to the world that she would retire. Vonn, who became the first American woman to win a downhill race at the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games, has led an incredible career on the slopes earning 82 World Cup wins, 20 World Cup titles, 3 Olympic medals, and 7 World Championship medals. In her new memoir, Vonn will share that her epic journey to success has been anything but downhill. From moving away from her small Minnesota town to pursue her career, to challenging the skiing norm and raising the profile of women in the sport, to the high-speed crashes she endured and the remarkable recoveries she made, Vonn has faced her fair share of obstacles and has persevered through them all. (336 pgs)



**FOOD WITHOUT FEAR BY RUCHI GUPTA**

**(PICKED BY SM)**

One in five people in the U.S. has a health condition related to food—from disruptive sensitivities and intolerances to serious allergic reactions that can send them to the ER. The spectrum of these ailments is wide and deep, with many tricky “masqueraders” in the mix to create a lot of confusion, potential misdiagnoses, and faulty or poor treatment—and immeasurable suffering for millions of people. In *Food Without Fear*, Dr. Gupta illuminates this misunderstood spectrum and offers a new approach to managing adverse reactions to food. From debunking common myths to identifying masqueraders, to understanding triggers (including environmental factors), as well as the microbiome’s role in adverse food reactions, these pages hold the answers. Using a framework of Identify and Empower, Treat, Manage and Prevent, and Thrive, *Food Without Fear* offers hope, help—and food freedom—to the millions of people who need it. (352 pgs)