

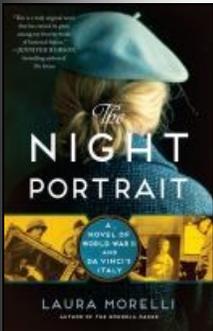


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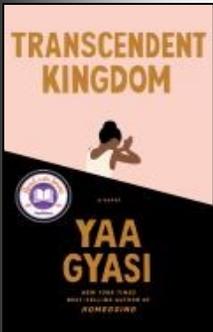
FICTION



***THE NIGHT PORTRAIT* BY LAURA MORELLI**

(PICKED BY SLH & SM)

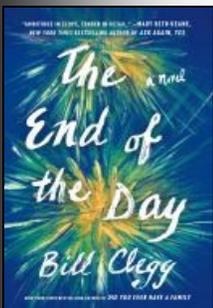
Milan, 1492: When a 16-year old beauty becomes the mistress of the Duke of Milan, she must fight for her place in the palace—and against those who want her out. Soon, she finds herself sitting before Leonardo da Vinci, who wants to ensure his own place in the ducal palace by painting his most ambitious portrait to date. Munich, World War II: After a modest conservator unwittingly places a priceless Italian Renaissance portrait into the hands of a high-ranking Nazi leader, she risks her life to recover it, working with an American soldier, part of the famed Monuments Men team, to get it back. Two women, separated by 500 years, are swept up in the tide of history as one painting stands at the center of their quests for their own destinies. (496 pgs)



***TRANSCENDENT KINGDOM* BY YAA GYASI**

(PICKED BY KT & SLS)

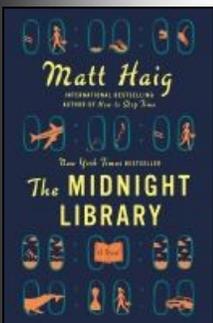
Gifty is a fifth-year candidate in neuroscience at Stanford School of Medicine studying reward-seeking behavior in mice and the neural circuits of depression and addiction. Her brother, Nana, was a gifted high school athlete who died of a heroin overdose after a knee injury left him hooked on OxyContin. Her suicidal mother is living in her bed. Gifty is determined to discover the scientific basis for the suffering she sees all around her. But even as she turns to the hard sciences to unlock the mystery of her family's loss, she finds herself hungering for her childhood faith and grappling with the evangelical church in which she was raised, whose promise of salvation remains as tantalizing as it is elusive. *Transcendent Kingdom* is a deeply moving portrait of a family of Ghanaian immigrants ravaged by depression and addiction and grief—a novel about faith, science, religion, love. (264 pgs)



***THE END OF THE DAY* BY BILL CLEGG**

(PICKED BY SLS)

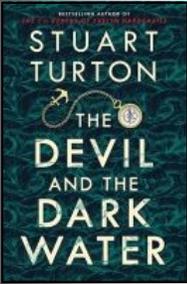
A retired widow in rural Connecticut wakes to an unexpected visit from her childhood best friend whom she hasn't seen in forty-nine years. A man arrives at a Pennsylvania hotel to introduce his estranged father to his newborn daughter and finds him collapsed on the floor of the lobby. A sixty-seven-year-old taxi driver in Kauai receives a phone call from the mainland that jars her back to a traumatic past. These seemingly disconnected lives come together as half-century-old secrets begin to surface. It is in this moment that Bill Clegg reminds us how choices—to connect, to betray, to protect—become our legacy. (320 pgs)



***THE MIDNIGHT LIBRARY* BY MATT HAIG**

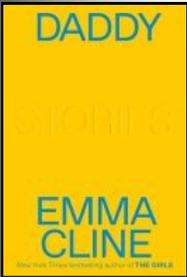
(PICKED BY SM & SLS)

Somewhere out beyond the edge of the universe there is a library that contains an infinite number of books, each one the story of another reality. One tells the story of your life as it is, along with another book for the other life you could have lived if you had made a different choice at any point in your life. While we all wonder how our lives might have been, what if you had the chance to go to the library and see for yourself? Would any of these other lives truly be better? In *The Midnight Library*, Nora Seed finds herself faced with this decision. Faced with the possibility of changing her life for a new one, following a different career, undoing old breakups, realizing her dreams of becoming a glaciologist; she must search within herself as she travels through the Midnight Library to decide what is truly fulfilling in life, and what makes it worth living in the first place. (304 pgs)



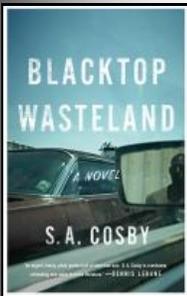
THE DEVIL AND THE DARK WATER BY STUART TURTON (PICKED BY MG & BS)

It's 1634 and Samuel Pippis, the world's greatest detective, is being transported to Amsterdam to be executed for a crime he may, or may not, have committed. Travelling with him is his loyal bodyguard, Arent Hayes, who is determined to prove his friend innocent. But no sooner are they out to sea than devilry begins to blight the voyage. A twice-dead leper stalks the decks. Strange symbols appear on the sails. Livestock is slaughtered. And then three passengers are marked for death, including Samuel. Could a demon be responsible for their misfortunes? With Pippis imprisoned, only Arent can solve a mystery that connects every passenger onboard. A mystery that stretches back into their past and now threatens to sink the ship, killing everybody on board. (448 pgs)



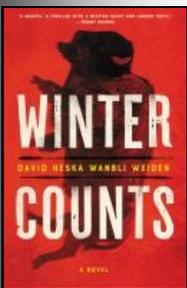
DADDY: STORIES BY EMMA CLINE (PICKED BY TA)

An absentee father collects his son from boarding school after a shocking act of violence. A nanny to a celebrity family hides out in Laurel Canyon in the aftermath of a tabloid scandal. A young woman sells her underwear to strangers. A notorious guest arrives at a placid, not-quite rehab in the Southwest. In ten stories, Emma Cline portrays moments when the ordinary is disturbed, when daily life buckles, revealing the perversity and violence pulsing under the surface. She explores characters navigating the edge, the limits of themselves and those around them: power dynamics in families, in relationships, the distance between their true and false selves. They want connection, but what they provoke is often closer to self-sabotage. What are the costs of one's choices? Of the moments when we act, or fail to act? (256 pgs)



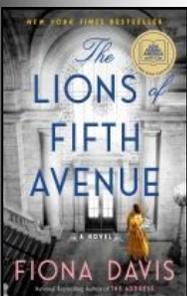
BLACKTOP WASTELAND BY S.A. COSBY (PICKED BY SP)

Beauregard "Bug" Montage: husband, father, honest car mechanic. But he was once known - from North Carolina to the beaches of Florida - as the best getaway driver on the East Coast. Just like his father, who disappeared many years ago. After a series of financial calamities (worsened by the racial prejudices of the small town he lives in) Bug reluctantly takes part in a daring diamond heist to solve his money troubles - and to go straight once and for all. However, when it goes horrifically wrong, he's sucked into a grimy underworld which threatens everything, and everyone, he holds dear . . . (285 pgs)



WINTER COUNTS BY DAVID WEIDEN (PICKED BY SLS)

Virgil Wounded Horse is the local enforcer on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota. When justice is denied by the American legal system or the tribal council, Virgil is hired to deliver his own punishment, the kind that's hard to forget. But when heroin makes its way into the reservation and finds Virgil's nephew, his vigilantism suddenly becomes personal. He enlists the help of his ex-girlfriend and sets out to learn where the drugs are coming from, and how to make them stop. They follow a lead to Denver and find that drug cartels are rapidly expanding and forming new and terrifying alliances. And back on the reservation, a new tribal council initiative raises uncomfortable questions about money and power. As Virgil starts to link the pieces together, he must face his own demons and reclaim his Native identity. He realizes that being a Native American in the twenty-first century comes at an incredible cost. (336 pgs)



THE LIONS OF FIFTH AVENUE BY FIONA DAVIS (PICKED BY SM)

It's 1913, and on the surface, Laura Lyons couldn't ask for more out of life—her husband is the superintendent of the New York Public Library, allowing their family to live in an apartment in the grand building, and they are blessed with two children. But Laura wants more, and when she applies to the Columbia Journalism School, her world is cracked wide open. She finds herself drawn to Greenwich Village's new bohemia, where she discovers the Heterodoxy Club—a radical, all-female group in which women are encouraged to loudly share their opinions on suffrage, birth control, and women's rights. But when valuable books are stolen back at the library, threatening the home and institution she loves, she's forced to confront her shifting priorities head on. Eighty years later, in 1993, Sadie Donovan struggles with the legacy of her grandmother, the famous essayist Laura Lyons, especially after she's wrangled her dream job as a curator at the New York Public Library. But the job quickly becomes a nightmare when rare manuscripts for the exhibit Sadie's running begin disappearing from the library's famous Berg Collection. Determined to save both the exhibit and her career, the typically risk-averse Sadie teams up with a private security expert to uncover the culprit. However, things unexpectedly become personal when the investigation leads Sadie to some unwelcome truths about her own family heritage—truths that shed new light on the biggest tragedy in the library's history. (354 pg)

STAFF PICKS

NOVEMBER 2020

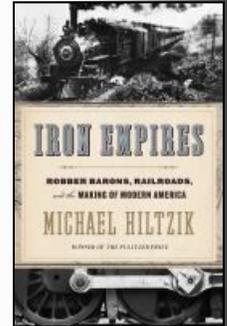


NON-FICTION

IRON EMPIRES BY MICHAEL HILTZIK

(PICKED BY SMC)

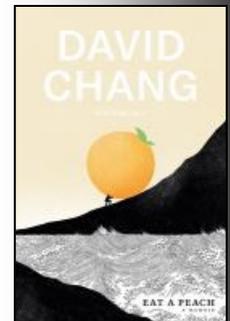
In 1869, when the final spike was driven into the Transcontinental Railroad, few were prepared for its seismic aftershocks. Once a hodgepodge of short, squabbling lines, America's railways soon exploded into a titanic industry helmed by a pageant of speculators, crooks, and visionaries. The vicious competition between empire builders such as Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jay Gould, J. P. Morgan, and E. H. Harriman sparked stock market frenzies, panics, and crashes; provoked strikes that upended the relationship between management and labor; transformed the nation's geography; and culminated in a ferocious two-man battle that shook the nation's financial markets to their foundations and produced dramatic, lasting changes in the interplay of business and government. (448 pgs)



EAT A PEACH BY DAVID CHANG

(PICKED BY SLS)

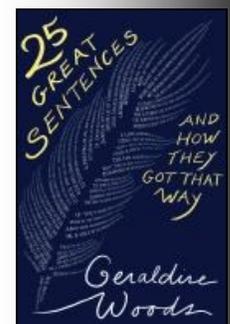
In 2004, David Chang opened a noodle restaurant named Momofuku in Manhattan's East Village, not expecting the business to survive its first year. In 2018, he was the owner and chef of his own restaurant empire, with 15 locations from New York to Australia, the star of his own hit Netflix show and podcast, was named one of the most influential people of the 21st century and had a following of over 1.2 million. In this heartfelt memoir, Chang shares the extraordinary story of his culinary coming-of-age. Growing up in Virginia, the son of Korean immigrant parents, Chang struggled with feelings of abandonment, isolation and loneliness throughout his childhood. After failing to find a job after graduating, he convinced his father to loan him money to open a restaurant. Momofuku's unpretentious air and great-tasting simple staples - ramen bowls and pork buns - earned it rave reviews, culinary awards and before long, Chang had a cult following. Chang's love of food and cooking remained a constant in his life, despite the adversities he had to overcome. In *Eat a Peach*, Chang opens up about his feelings of paranoia, self-confidence and pulls back the curtain on his struggles, failures and learned lessons. (288p)



25 GREAT SENTENCES AND HOW THEY GOT THAT WAY BY GERALDINE WOODS

(PICKED BY SMC)

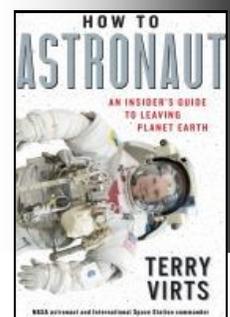
Virginia Woolf, Toni Morrison, Neil Armstrong, Jack Kerouac, Yoda: these are just a handful of the writers and speakers whose words are parsed in this diverting romp through sentences culled from poems, essays, speeches, songs, fiction and film. In chapters titled for distinctive features, such as "U-turn" and "impossibility," master teacher Geraldine Woods deftly reveals the underlying craft that goes into the creation of a memorable sentence. Literature lovers will be delighted to discover new authors and revisit favorite passages from a fresh perspective. Writers who want to stretch their skills by following the prompts in each chapter may well find themselves feeling as Henry James did when he wrote, "I have many irons on the fire, and am bursting with writableness." This is a must-read book for any resister of grammar-bound, sentence-diagramming analysis who wants to understand the art that lifts a sentence from good to great. (256 pgs)

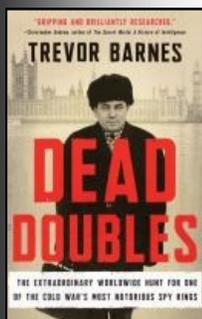


HOW TO ASTRONAUT BY TERRY VIRTS

(PICKED BY SLH)

Former NASA astronaut Terry Virts offers an insider's guide to astronauting—a behind-the-scenes look at the training, the basic rules, lessons, and procedures of space travel, including how to deal with a dead body in space, what it's like to film an IMAX movie in orbit, what exactly to do when nature calls, the art of putting on a spacesuit, time travel and much more. (304 pgs)

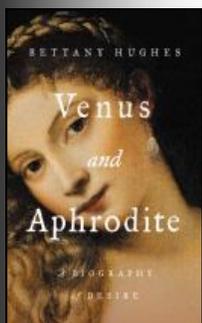




DEAD DOUBLES BY TREVOR BARNES

(PICKED BY SMC)

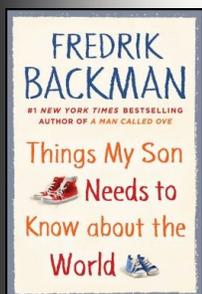
The dramatic arrest in London on January 7, 1961 of five Soviet spies made headlines worldwide and had repercussions around the globe. Alerted by the CIA, Britain's security service, MI5, had discovered two British spies stealing invaluable secrets from the highly sensitive submarine research center at Portland, UK. Their controller, Gordon Lonsdale, was a Canadian who frequently visited a middle-aged couple, the Krogers, in their sleepy London suburb. But the seemingly unassuming Krogers were revealed to be deep cover American KGB spies—infamous undercover agents the FBI had been hunting for years—and they were just one part of an extensive network of Soviet operatives in the UK. Based on revelatory, newly-released archival material and inside sources from around the world, *Dead Doubles* follows the hunt for the highly damaging Portland Spy Ring. As gripping as a le Carré novel, this incredible narrative, layered with false identities, deceptions, and betrayal, crisscrosses from the UK to the USSR to the US, Canada, Europe and New Zealand, and brings to life one of the most extraordinary spy stories of the Cold War. (352 pgs)



VENUS AND APHRODITE BY BETTANY HUGHES

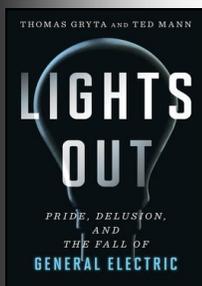
(PICKED BY MG)

Aphrodite was said to have been born from the sea, rising out of a froth of white foam. But long before the Ancient Greeks conceived of this voluptuous blonde, she existed as an early spirit of fertility on the shores of Cyprus – and thousands of years before that, as a ferocious warrior-goddess in the Middle East. Proving that this fabled figure is so much more than an avatar of commercialized romance, historian Bettany Hughes reveals the remarkable life story of one of antiquity's most potent myths. *Venus and Aphrodite* brings together ancient art, mythology, and archaeological revelations to tell the story of human desire. From Mesopotamia to modern-day London, from Botticelli to Beyoncé, Hughes explains why this immortal goddess continues to entrance us today – and how we trivialize her power at our peril. (208 pgs)



THINGS MY SON NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT THE WORLD BY FREDRIK BACKMAN (PICKED BY KT)

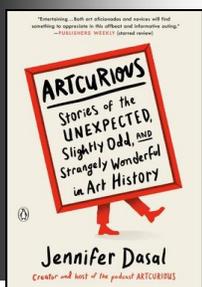
As he conveys his profound awe at experiencing all the "firsts" that fill him with wonder, Fredrik Backman doesn't shy away from revealing his own false steps and fatherly flaws, tackling issues both great and small, from masculinity and mid-life crises to practical jokes and poop. In between the sleep-deprived lows and wonderful highs, Backman takes a step back to share the true story of falling in love with a woman who is his complete opposite, and learning to live a life that revolves around the people you care about unconditionally. Alternating between humorous side notes and longer essays offering his son advice as he grows up and ventures out into the world, Backman relays the big and small lessons in life, including: how to find the team you belong to, why airports explain everything about religion and war, and why, sometimes, a dad might hold onto his son's hand just a little too tight. (208 pgs)



LIGHTS OUT BY THOMAS GRYTA

(PICKED BY SLS)

This is the definitive history of General Electric's epic decline, as told by the two Wall Street Journal reporters who covered its fall. Since its founding in 1892, GE has been more than just a corporation. For generations, it was job security, a solidly safe investment, and an elite business education for top managers. GE electrified America, powering everything from lightbulbs to turbines. After two decades of leadership under legendary CEO Jack Welch, GE entered the twenty-first century as America's most valuable corporation. Yet, fewer than two decades later, the GE of old was gone. *Lights Out* details how one of America's all-time great companies has been reduced to a cautionary tale for our times. (368 pgs)



ARTCURIOUS BY JENNIFER DASAL

(PICKED BY SLH)

We're all familiar with the works of Claude Monet, thanks in no small part to the reproductions of his water lilies on umbrellas, scarves, and dorm-room posters. But did you also know that Monet and his cohort were trailblazing rebels whose works were originally deemed ugly and vulgar? And while you probably know the tale of Vincent van Gogh's suicide, you may not be aware that there's pretty compelling evidence that the artist didn't die by his own hand. Or how about the fact that one of Andy Warhol's most enduring legacies involves Caroline Kennedy's moldy birthday cake and a collection of toenail clippings? *ArtCurious* is a colorful look at the world of art history, revealing some of the strangest and most fascinating stories behind the world's great artists and masterpieces. (288 pgs)