

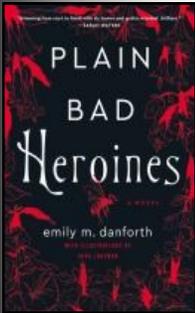


Staff Picks Digital and Print Edition

Go to www.lib.de.us to find out how!



FICTION



PLAIN BAD HEROINES BY EMILY DANFORTH

(PICKED BY BS)

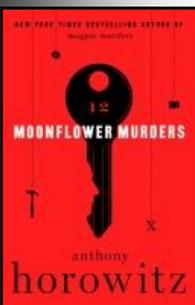
Our story begins in 1902, at The Brookhants School for Girls. Flo and Clara are obsessed with each other and with a daring young writer named Mary MacLane, the author of a scandalous bestselling memoir. To show their devotion to Mary, the girls establish their own private club and call it The Plain Bad Heroine Society. They meet in secret in a nearby apple orchard, the setting of their wildest happiness and, ultimately, of their macabre deaths. Less than five years later, The Brookhants School for Girls closes its doors forever—but not before three more people mysteriously die on the property. Over a century later, the now abandoned and crumbling Brookhants is back in the news when wunderkind writer, Merritt Emmons, publishes a breakout book celebrating the queer, feminist history surrounding the “haunted and cursed” Gilded-Age institution. Her bestselling book inspires a controversial horror film adaptation. But as Brookhants opens its gates once again, and our three modern heroines arrive on set to begin filming, past and present become grimly entangled—or perhaps just grimly exploited—and soon it’s impossible to tell where the curse leaves off and Hollywood begins. (619 pgs)



READY PLAYER TWO BY ERNEST CLINE

(PICKED BY KT)

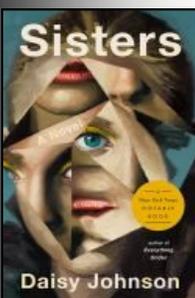
Days after Oasis founder James Halliday's contest, Wade Watts makes a discovery that changes everything. Hidden within Halliday's vault, waiting for his heir to find, lies a technological advancement that will once again change the world and make the Oasis a thousand times more wondrous, and addictive, than even Wade dreamed possible. With it comes a new riddle and a new quest. A last Easter egg from Halliday, hinting at a mysterious prize. And an unexpected, impossibly powerful, and dangerous new rival awaits, one who will kill millions to get what he wants. Wade's life and the future of the Oasis are again at stake, but this time the fate of humanity also hangs in the balance. (370 pgs)



MOONFLOWER MURDERS BY ANTHONY HOROWITZ

(PICKED BY SLH)

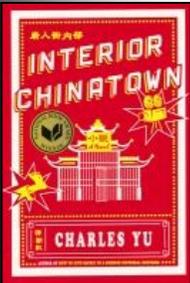
Retired publisher Susan Ryeland is running a small hotel on a Greek island with her boyfriend Andreas. It should be everything she's always wanted. But she's exhausted with the responsibilities of making everything work on an island where nothing ever does, and she's beginning to miss London. Then the Trehearnes come to stay. The story they tell about a murder that took place on the same day and in the same hotel in which their daughter was married—a picturesque inn on the Suffolk coast named Farlingaye Halle—fascinates Susan and piques her editor's instincts. One of her former writers, the late Alan Conway knew the murder victim—an advertising executive named Frank Parris—and once visited Farlingaye Hall. Conway based the third book in his detective series on that very crime. The Trehearne's daughter read Conway's mystery and believed the book proves that the man convicted of Parris's murder is innocent. When the Trehearnes reveal that Cecily is now missing, Susan knows that she must return to England and find out what really happened. (608 pgs)



SISTERS BY DAISY JOHNSON

(PICKED BY TA)

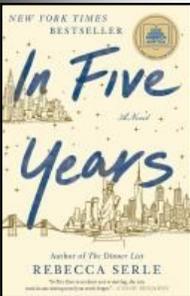
Born just ten months apart, July and September are thick as thieves, never needing anyone but each other. Now, following a case of school bullying, the teens have moved away with their single mother to a long-abandoned family home near the shore. In their new, isolated life, July finds that the deep bond she has always shared with September is shifting in ways she cannot entirely understand. A creeping sense of dread and unease descends inside the house. Meanwhile, outside, the sisters push boundaries of behavior—until a series of shocking encounters tests the limits of their shared experience, and forces shocking revelations about the girls' past and future. (224 pgs)



INTERIOR CHINATOWN BY CHARLES YU

(PICKED BY SLS)

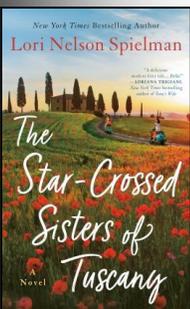
Willis Wu doesn't perceive himself as a protagonist even in his own life: he's merely Generic Asian Man. Every day, he leaves his tiny room in a Chinatown SRO and enters the Golden Palace restaurant, where *Black and White*, a procedural cop show, is in perpetual production. He's a bit player here too. . . but he dreams of being Kung Fu Guy—the highest aspiration he can imagine for a Chinatown denizen. Or is it? After stumbling into the spotlight, Willis finds himself launched into a wider world than he's ever known, discovering not only the secret history of Chinatown, but the buried legacy of his own family, and what that means for him, in today's America. (273 pgs)



IN FIVE YEARS BY REBECCA SERLE

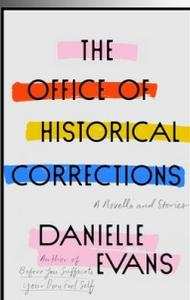
(PICKED BY SM)

When Type-A Manhattan lawyer Dannie Kohan is asked this question at the most important interview of her career, she has a meticulously crafted answer at the ready. Later, after nailing her interview and accepting her boyfriend's marriage proposal, Dannie goes to sleep knowing she is right on track to achieve her five-year plan. But when she wakes up, she's suddenly in a different apartment, with a different ring on her finger, and beside a very different man. The television news is on in the background, and she can just make out the scrolling date. It's the same night—December 15—but 2025, five years in the future. After a very intense, shocking hour, Dannie wakes again, at the brink of midnight, back in 2020. It certainly felt much more than merely a dream, but she isn't the kind of person who believes in visions. That nonsense is only charming coming from free-spirited types, like her lifelong best friend, Bella. Determined to ignore the odd experience, she files it away in the back of her mind. That is, until four-and-a-half years later, when by chance Dannie meets the very same man from her long-ago vision. (255 pgs)



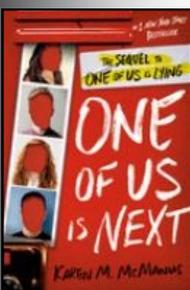
THE STAR-CROSSED SISTERS OF TUSCANY BY LORI N. SPIELMAN (PICKED BY MG&SM)

Since the day Filomena Fontana cast a curse upon her sister more than two hundred years ago, not one second-born Fontana daughter has found lasting love. Some, like second-born Emilia, the happily-single baker at her grandfather's Brooklyn deli, claim it's an odd coincidence. Others, like her sexy, desperate-for-love cousin Lucy, insist it's a true hex. But both are bewildered when their great-aunt calls with an astounding proposition: If they accompany her to her homeland of Italy, Aunt Poppy vows she'll meet the love of her life on the steps of the Ravello Cathedral on her eightieth birthday, and break the Fontana Second-Daughter Curse once and for all. Against the backdrop of wandering Venetian canals, rolling Tuscan fields, and enchanting Amalfi Coast villages, romance blooms, destinies are found, and family secrets are unearthed. (400 pgs)



THE OFFICE OF HISTORICAL CORRECTIONS BY DANIELLE EVANS (PICKED BY MG)

Danielle Evans is widely acclaimed for her blisteringly smart voice and x-ray insights into complex human relationships. With *The Office of Historical Corrections*, Evans zooms in on particular moments and relationships in her characters' lives in a way that allows them to speak to larger issues of race, culture, and history. She introduces us to Black and multiracial characters who are experiencing the universal confusions of lust and love, and getting walloped by grief—all while exploring how history haunts us, personally and collectively. Ultimately, she provokes us to think about the truths of American history—about who gets to tell them, and the cost of setting the record straight. (288 pgs)



ONE OF US IS NEXT BY KAREN MCMANUS [TEEN]

(PICKED BY SP)

The highly anticipated sequel to *One of Us Is Lying!* There's a new mystery to solve at Bayview High, and there's a whole new set of rules. A ton of copycat gossip apps have popped up since Simon died, but in the year since the Bayview four were cleared of his shocking death, no one's been able to fill the gossip void quite like he could. The problem is no one has the facts. Until now. This time it's not an app, though—it's a game. *Truth or Dare*. Phoebe's the first target. If you choose not to play, it's a truth. And hers is dark. Then comes Maeve and she should know better—always choose the dare. But by the time Knox is about to be tagged, things have gotten dangerous. The dares have become deadly, and if Maeve learned anything from Bronwyn last year, it's that they can't count on the police for help. Or protection. Simon's gone, but someone's determined to keep his legacy at Bayview High alive. And this time, there's a whole new set of rules. (377 pgs)

STAFF PICKS

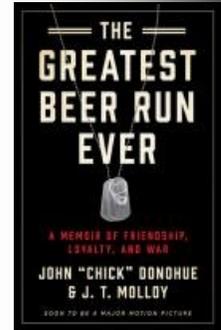
JANUARY 2021



NON-FICTION

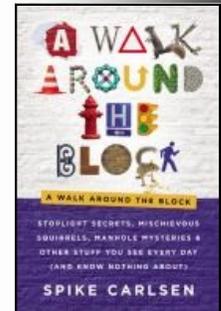
***THE GREATEST BEER RUN EVER* BY JOHN DONOHUE (PICKED BY SMC)**

One night in 1967, 26 year-old John Donohue—known as Chick—was out with friends, drinking in a New York City bar. The friends gathered there had lost loved ones in Vietnam. Now, they watched as anti-war protesters turned on the troops themselves. One neighborhood patriot came up with an inspired—some would call it insane—idea. Someone should sneak into Vietnam, track down their buddies there, give them messages of support from back home, and share a few laughs over a can of beer. It would be the Greatest Beer Run Ever. One man was up for the challenge—a U. S. Marine Corps veteran turned merchant mariner who wasn't about to desert his buddies on the front lines when they needed him. Chick volunteered. A day later, he was on a cargo ship headed to Vietnam, armed with Irish luck and a backpack full of alcohol. Landing in Qui Nho'n, Chick set off on an adventure that would change his life forever—an odyssey that took him through a series of hilarious escapades and harrowing close calls, including the Tet Offensive. But none of that mattered if he could bring some cheer to his pals and show them how much the folks back home appreciated them. (272 pgs)



***A WALK AROUND THE BLOCK* BY SPIKE CARLSEN (PICKED BY SMC)**

A simple walk around the block set journalist Spike Carlsen off to investigate everything he could about everything we take for granted in our normal life—from manhole covers and recycling bins to bike lanes and stoplights. In this celebration of the seemingly mundane, Carlsen opens our eyes to the engineering marvels, human stories, and natural wonders right outside our front door. He guides us through the surprising allure of sewers, the intricacies of power plants, the extraordinary path of an everyday letter, and the genius of recycling centers—all the while revealing that this awesome world isn't just a spectator sport. (336 pgs)



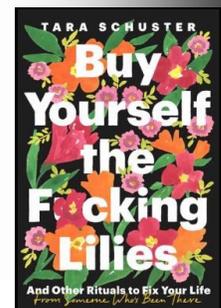
***FORGIVING WHAT YOU CAN'T FORGET* BY LYSA TERKEURST (PICKED BY BS)**

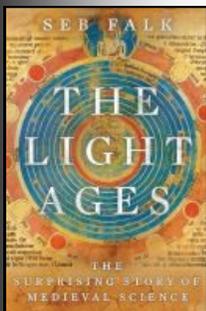
Have you ever felt stuck in a cycle of unresolved pain, playing offense over and over in your mind? Lysa TerKeurst has wrestled through this journey. But in surprising ways, she's discovered how to let go of bound-up resentment and overcome the resistance to forgiving people who aren't willing to make things right. With deep empathy, therapeutic insight, and rich Bible teaching coming out of more than 1,000 hours of theological study, Lysa will help you: learn how to move on when the other person refuses to change and never says they're sorry. Walk through a step-by-step process to free yourself from the hurt of your past and feel less offended today. Identify what's stealing trust and vulnerability from your relationships so you can believe there is still good ahead. Disempower the triggers hijacking your emotions by embracing the two necessary parts of forgiveness. (288 pgs)



***BUY YOURSELF THE F*CKING LILIES* BY TARA SCHUSTER (PICKED BY KT)**

By the time she was in her late twenties, Tara Schuster was a sought-after TV executive who had worked with Jon Stewart and launched *Key & Peele* to viral superstardom. By all appearances, she had mastered being a grown-up. But beneath that veneer of success, she was a chronically anxious, self-medicating mess. No one knew that her road to adulthood had been paved with depression, anxiety, and shame, owing in large part to her minimally parented upbringing. She realized she'd hit rock bottom when she drunk-dialed her therapist pleading for help. *Buy Yourself the F*cking Lilies* is the story of Tara's path to re-parenting herself and becoming a "ninja of self-love." This is the book Tara wished someone had given her and it is the book many of us desperately need: a candid, funny, practical guide to growing up and learning to love yourself in a not -so-cheesy way. (318 pgs)

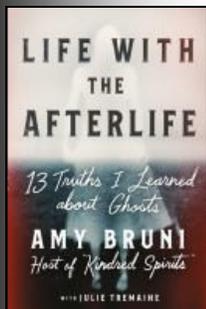




THE LIGHT AGES BY SEB FALK

(PICKED BY MG)

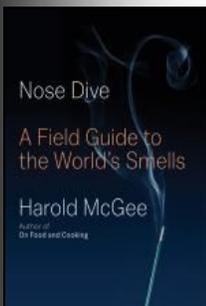
Soaring Gothic cathedrals, violent crusades, the Black Death: these are the dramatic forces that shaped the medieval era. But the so-called Dark Ages also gave us the first universities, eyeglasses, and mechanical clocks, proving that the Middle Ages were home to a vibrant scientific culture. In *The Light Ages*, Cambridge science historian Seb Falk takes us on an immersive tour of medieval science through the story of one fourteenth-century monk, John of Westwyk. From multiplying Roman numerals to navigating by the stars, curing disease, and telling time with an ancient astrolabe, we learn emerging science alongside Westwyk, while following the gripping story of the struggles and successes of an ordinary man in a precarious world. (416 pgs)



LIFE WITH THE AFTERLIFE BY AMY BRUNI

(PICKED BY TA)

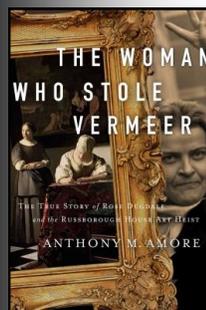
Amy Bruni, co-star of *Kindred Spirits* and one of the world's leading paranormal investigators, has learned a lot about ghosts over her years of research and first-hand experience. Now, in *Life with the Afterlife*, she shares the insight she has gleaned and how it has shaped her unique approach to interacting with the spirits of the dead and those who encounter them. From her earliest supernatural encounters as a child, through her years appearing on *Ghost Hunters* and the creation of her company Strange Escapes, which offers paranormal excursions to some of America's most notoriously haunted destinations, and into her current work on The Travel Channel's *Kindred Spirits*, this book is full of astonishing and deeply moving stories of Amy's efforts to better understand the dead but not yet departed. (272 pgs)



NOSE DIVE BY HAROLD MCGEE

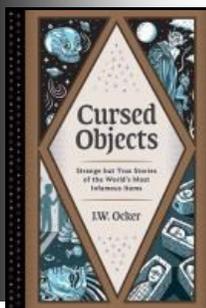
(PICKED BY SLS & SLH)

From Harold McGee, James Beard Award-winning author and leading expert on the science of food and cooking, comes an extensive exploration of the awe-inspiring world of smell. In *Nose Dive*, McGee takes us on a sensory-filled adventure, from the sulfurous nascent earth more than four billion years ago to the keyboard of your laptop, where trace notes of formaldehyde escape between the keys. We'll sniff the ordinary (wet pavement and cut grass) and extraordinary (fresh bread and chocolate), the delightful (roses and vanilla) and the unpleasant (spoiled meat and rotten eggs). Through it all, McGee familiarizes us with the actual bits of matter that we breathe in – the molecules that trigger our perceptions. Like everything in the physical world, molecules have histories. *Nose Dive* distills the science behind the smells and translates it into an accessible and entertaining guide. (688 pgs)



THE WOMAN WHO STOLE VERMEER BY ANTHONY AMORE (PICKED BY SLH&SMC)

In the world of crime, there exists an unusual commonality between those who steal art and those who repeatedly kill: they are almost exclusively male. But, as with all things, there is always an outlier. In the history of major art heists, that outlier is Rose Dugdale. Born into extreme wealth, she abandoned her life as an Oxford-trained PhD and heiress to join the cause of Irish Republicanism. Dugdale ran head-first towards the action, spearheading the first aerial terrorist attack in British history and pulling off the biggest art theft of her time. In 1974, she led a gang into the opulent Russborough House in Ireland and made off with millions in prized paintings, including works by Goya, Gainsborough, Rubens, as well as Johannes Vermeer. Dugdale thus became the only woman to pull off a major art heist. (272 pgs)



CURSED OBJECTS BY J.W. OCKER

(PICKED BY SLH)

An illustrated compendium that reveals the true stories behind the most infamous, creepy, and bizarre real-life cursed objects throughout history. Spanning decades and continents, subjects range from the opulent Hope Diamond to the humble Busy Stoop chair. They're lurking in museums, graveyards, and private homes around the world. Their stories have inspired countless horror movies, reality TV shows, campfire tales, books, and even chain emails. They're cursed objects, and in order to unleash a wave of misfortune, all they need...is you. As a culture, we can't seem to get enough of cursed objects. But never before have the true stories of these infamous real-life items been compiled into a fascinating and chilling volume. (288 pgs)