

JUNE '11



Silver Sparrow

A Novel, by Tayari Jones

"The unconventional, morally troubling relationships at the core of Jones' *Silver Sparrow* illustrate the universality of the human quest for acknowledgment, legitimacy, love, and loyalty. As Chaurisse and her secret half-sister, Dana, move toward adulthood, they must shed idealistic notions of romantic and familial love to face difficult truths. A complex family drama, a richly crafted coming-of-age story, and a meditation on the nature of love and forgiveness, this is a gripping story with characters you will not soon forget."

—Libby Cowles, Maria's Bookshop, Durango, CO



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State of Wonder

A Novel, by Ann Patchett

"When Marina Singh receives a note that her office mate, Anders Eckman, has died in the Amazon while investigating scientific work on female fertility, she is persuaded to follow him into the jungle in search of the doctor with whom he worked—who has also exerted a crucial influence on Marina's life—and to retrieve Anders' personal effects. This spellbinding, richly atmospheric novel raises ethical questions about scientific research and discovery, loyalty, honesty, and love. Not to be missed!"

—Tova Beiser, Brown University Bookstore, Providence, RI



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Joy for Beginners

A Novel, by Erica Bauermeister

"Kate has conquered cancer, and now she has the goal to ride the white-water rapids in the Grand Canyon. During a celebration dinner, she gives each of her six friends an equally personal challenge. Bauermeister masterfully weaves the stories of the seven women together, allowing the reader to empathize with and root for each one as she jumps her own personal hurdle. A great selection for book clubs!"

—Sam Droke-Dickinson, Aaron's Books, Litzitz, PA



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To Be Sung Underwater

A Novel, by Tom McNeal

"As a young girl, Judith believed in the kind of love that 'picks you up in Akron and sets you down in Rio.' When she gives up her first love, Willy, she assumes that love like that is not to be had. Instead, she marries the kind of man whose love 'picks her up on Main Street and sets her down at the edge of town.' Now 20 years later, Judith is restless. Her marriage is stagnant, her husband is wandering, and she finds herself staring at a piece of paper with a phone number scribbled on it, a number that might very well take her back to that early dream. You will *not* want to put this book down!"

—Nancy Simpson, The Book Vault, Oskaloosa, IA



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The Borrower

A Novel, by Rebecca Makkai

"A 26-year-old children's librarian, Lucy Hull, allows herself to be 'kidnapped' by one of her precocious 10-year-old patrons, a boy intent on running away from home. The pair end up on a hilarious road trip that ping-pongs them across the Midwest and out to the East Coast. Makkai's writing is sharp and funny, and book lovers will enjoy the many references to well-known titles, from echoes of the road trip in *Lolita* to a chapter that is structured like a Choose Your Own Adventure story. What a wonderful, assured, and original debut!"

—Shuchi Saraswat, Titcomb's Bookshop, East Sandwich, MA



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Best Staged Plans

A Novel, by Claire Cook

"*Best Staged Plans* is a classic Cook romp featuring Sandy, a home stager who could only wish that her talent for making other people's lives appear organized and appealing could extend to her own life, which is rife with chaos on every level. The novel is full of trademark Cook wit and wry observations on everyday situations that would be really comical if only they were happening to someone else. You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll tell all your girlfriends that this is the beach read of the summer!"

—Jill Miner, Saturn Booksellers, Gaylord, MI



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Tiny Sunbirds, Far Away

by Christie Watson

"'Haunting' and 'eye-opening' only begin to describe *Tiny Sunbirds, Far Away*. Blessing may only be 12 years old, but she speaks to us through her wise, yet innocent eyes about the upheaval of her family and her world in Nigeria. Forced from a comfortable urban setting in Lagos to the poverty-stricken, rural world of her mother's family, Blessing is without anchor except for the brother she would give her life for. This story of survival and the fight for dignity will linger long after you have finished reading."

—Lynn Riggs, Books & Company, Oconomowoc, WI



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South of Superior

A Novel, by Ellen Airgood

"This story is like immersion therapy for anyone who has fantasized about a simpler life in a small town. The town is McAllister, Michigan, on the southern shore of Lake Superior, as seen through the eyes of a young woman from Chicago who has come to make her home and, hopefully, a livelihood there. The learning curve is steep as she contends with a challenging climate, difficult economic times, and the complications of being part of a small, tight community. You will fall in love with McAllister, where every character is, of necessity, strong and where the currency is not measured in dollars, but rather in resourcefulness."

—Jeanne Regentin, Between the Covers, Harbor Springs, MI



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The Beekeeper's Lament

How One Man and Half a Billion Honey Bees Help Feed America, by Hannah Nordhaus

"Agriculture, as we know it today, relies heavily on bees—and the bees of America are in peril. In this informative and wildly entertaining book, Nordhaus explores the vital and sometimes contentious relationships between bees, beekeepers, and farmers. She goes inside the world of the long-distance 'bee guys,' a gloriously eccentric cast of characters without whom commercial farming would be largely impossible. *The Beekeeper's Lament* offers a timely and fascinating look at a little-known and incredibly important industry."

—Sam Kaas, Village Books, Bellingham, WA



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The Upright Piano Player

A Novel, by David Abbott

"As he faces retirement, Henry Cage finds his life spiraling out of control. He must deal with an ailing ex-wife, an estranged son, and a malicious stalker who is prone to violence. This first novel is both a page-turner and a disconcerting portrayal of the randomness of life and the choices we make. Strangely uplifting, *The Upright Piano Player* is guaranteed to keep you riveted."

—Christopher Rose, Andover Bookstore, Andover, MA



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Vaclav & Lena

A Novel, by Haley Tanner

"Vaclav and Lena are both children of Russian immigrant families that have settled in contemporary Brooklyn. Seldom have the variables in immigrant experiences been written about so beautifully, resulting in a book that is both a charming love story and a dramatic page-turner. You will fall in love with both Vaclav and Lena—five years old when we first meet them and 17 when Tanner's narrative ends. A wonderful debut!"

—Marian Nielsen, Orinda Books, Orinda, CA



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Eleven

A Novel, by Mark Watson

"The problem with many complexly plotted postmodern novels is that the authors are so involved with their own cleverness that they forget to tell a story you want to read. *Eleven* is just the opposite: a hilarious, heartwarming story of intersecting lives, so entertaining, with characters so engaging, it's only after you've finished tearing through its pages that you realize how clever the plot was. Late-night radio host Xavier fled to England and isolated himself from human contact after a tragedy back home in Australia. But after he hires a cleaning lady he meets at a speed-dating event, everything starts to change. Fresh and delightful!"

—Carol Schneck, Schuler Books & Music, Okemos, MI



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The Summer of the Bear

A Novel, by Bella Pollen

"Why do some people's lives work out while others do not? Leticia Fleming asks this question on the eve of her husband's fatal fall from the roof of his embassy office in Bonn, Germany. Accident or suicide? Political or personal? Now, she and her three children are on their way to a small island in Scotland's Outer Hebrides to try to recover. It takes more than quiet island life, however, for Letty to let go of the past and return her attention to her children. It takes a little magic and a young boy's unflagging belief in his father's word. A heartfelt story of love and redemption."

—Karen Briggs, Great Northern Books & Hobbies, Oscoda, MI



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Faith

A Novel, by Jennifer Haigh

"This is the story of a family that shows the world a little and hides a lot more—even from each other. It's a story of compassion and abuse, lies and secrets, of people who once could finish each other's sentences and now don't know who they themselves are, let alone who other family members have become. It's about narrow minds and big dreams, and about how sometimes grace and sin can be the exact same thing, and how that can tear apart hearts and lives. This is a difficult tale, exquisitely told."

—Jackie Blem, Tattered Cover Bookstore, Denver, CO



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Sister

A Novel, by Rosamund Lupton

"In this debut novel, Beatrice is informed of her sister's disappearance and she returns home to London to fulfill what she assumes will be her usual big-sister-role over the free-spirited Tess. Instead, when Tess is found dead by apparent suicide, Beatrice delves into her life and becomes obsessed with solving what she believes to be a case of murder. Beatrice's recounting of her sister's death becomes a letter of tribute to Tess and touches the reader with the depth of a sister's bond. Written with a clever twist, *Sister* is both poignant and captivating."

—Julia MacDonald, The Yankee Bookshop, Woodstock, VT



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The Little Women Letters

A Novel, by Gabrielle Donnelly

"Donnelly has written a vibrant, humorous, and heart-warming novel about three sisters who are the imagined descendants of those famous March sisters known to the rest of us as Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*. There's Emma, who's about to be married; Lulu, who's undecided about a career; and Sophie, who is utterly theatrical, both on and off stage. You will fall in love with them—along with their friends and relatives—and wish that they lived next door!"

—Ellen Klein, Hooray for Books!, Alexandria, VA



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Emotional Currency

A Woman's Guide to Building a Healthy Relationship With Money, by Kate Levinson

"It is interesting—and very telling—to note one's constantly fluctuating emotions surrounding money. Levinson's book is an excellent aid to not only clear the confusion, but also to wisely and gently walk one through all of the options to discover the best possible personal choices. This is a terrific and useful book!"

—Sheryl Coteleur, Book Passage, Corte Madera, CA



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A Conflict of Interest

A Novel, by Adam Mitzner

"Alex Miller is a young criminal defense attorney and recent partner in a powerful NYC law firm. At his father's funeral, Michael Ohlig introduces himself as a longtime family friend and asks Alex to represent him in a criminal investigation involving a brokerage scam that left his investors penniless. While investigating evidence being presented by the prosecution, Alex discovers facts that lead to old family secrets and lies. Desperation may lead to the truth, but deception can come at a high price. Twists in the final pages of this thriller will keep readers on the edge."

—Carol Hicks, Bookshelf at Hooligan Rocks, Truckee, CA



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Tolstoy and the Purple Chair

My Year of Magical Reading, by Nina Sankovitch

"This graceful memoir describes a true love affair with books. After losing her 46-year-old sister to cancer, Sankovitch embarks on a year of reading: one book every day for a full year. Her project, complete with daily book reviews, becomes an ongoing conversation with her sister and provides insight into her own past and contact with bibliophiles across the world. This is the best description of the power of books that I have ever encountered!"

—Caitlin Daggart, Where the Sidewalk Ends, Chatham, MA



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Oil on Water

A Novel, by Helon Habila

"In this beautiful, truth-seeking novel, journalists Rufus and Zaq make their way through the fetid, oil-choked waters of the Nigerian Delta in search of the kidnapped wife of an oil executive. Rufus, young and eager to prove himself, is thrilled at the prospect of a big story and to be working with his hero, Zaq. But their journey into the dense wilderness takes on a much different form than either expected, and they are thrust into events beyond their control. *Oil on Water* is a suspenseful story about globalization, ambition, and the unwieldy nature of truth."

—Amanda Hurley, Inkwood Books, Tampa, FL



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