

# MARCH '12



## Carry the One

**A Novel, by Carol Anshaw**

"Carmen and Matt's wedding was festive, full of dancing, drinking, and celebrating the joining of two lives. But for Carmen and Matt their wedding night would not be remembered solely with joy, but rather as the night a car full of their relatives and close friends headed out into the dark and accidentally killed a young girl on a lonely stretch of road. The occupants of that car and the wedding couple would be shackled by the guilt of that night for years to come. *Carry the One* examines the subtle shades of change this tragic accident causes in their lives. It is a compelling story of friendship, loss, betrayal, and life at its most real."

—Deon Stonehouse, Sunriver Books & Music, Sunriver, OR



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## The Song of Achilles

**A Novel, by Madeline Miller**

"It's a daunting effort to recast an ancient tale, but classics scholar Miller proves that she is worthy of the task with this finely wrought debut grafted from the historical root of the Trojan War. By focusing on Achilles' near-fatherly love for Patroclus, we see an intimate side of the great Achilles, long overshadowed by Homer's portrayal of his exploits in war and his 'great rage' against the Trojans. Miller's homage to *The Iliad* is sharp and strengthened by her knowledge and exquisite prose."

—Robert A. Geake, Brown University Bookstore, Providence, RI



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## Birds of a Lesser Paradise

**Stories, by Megan Mayhew Bergman**

"*Birds of a Lesser Paradise* is a poignant collection of stories, each filled with vivid imagery, surprising wit, and elegant prose. My copy is filled with dog-eared pages of Bergman's brilliantly written observations on who we are and who we hope to be. She masterfully captures the fragility of human life by placing it within and against the natural world. Read these stories. You will be so thankful you did, and then you will read them again!"

—Anderson McKean, Page & Palette, Fairhope, AL



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## Pure

**by Julianna Baggot**

"I can say, without a doubt, that this is one of the best books I've read in the past year, and I read a lot of books! A gritty, dystopian tale of the world after a nuclear holocaust, this first part of a trilogy has something for everyone: mystery and intrigue, violence, romance, and rumblings of a sinister conspiracy. This unsettling but beautiful book is sure to be a huge crossover hit, sophisticated enough to appeal to adults, and perfect for YA readers. I'm counting down the days until the next installment is released!"

—Lauren Peugh, Mrs. Nelson's Toy and Book Shop, La Verne, CA



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## The Starboard Sea

**A Novel, by Amber Dermont**

"In a world of privilege, Jaguars, Renoirs, and competitive sailing, Jason Prosper has already lost what money can't buy: a best friend and lover. At Bellingham Academy, a last-shot boarding school for those on their third strike, Jason must learn to rebuild his life and navigate the stormy seas of friendship and love. Dermont recreates both the pain and promise of youth with beautiful clarity. She peoples her work with young adults doing their best to assume the very adult roles their world demands, complete with their flaws, fears, and insecurities masked by false bravado. An outstanding debut."

—Christopher Green, The Bookworm of Edwards, Edwards, CO



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## Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?

**by Jeanette Winterson**

"Readers familiar with Winterson's *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* will have an inkling of the earnestness and pathos as well as the source of this most perfectly chosen title quote, but no one should stop there: this memoir delivers far more than the expected exploration of that story's roots. This is a captivating book, quotable, and brightly flecked with humor, a personal and, at times, painfully raw story about an adoptee's lifelong search for love. It also makes the strongest case I've ever read for how a life can be saved by literature."

—Jennifer Indeliclae, Ebenezer Books, Johnson, VT



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## The Healing

**A Novel, by Jonathan Odell**

"During the years before the Civil War, Master Ben purchases Polly Shine, a slave woman known to possess healing powers, to help 'doctor' his slaves suffering from a mysterious plague. Polly also needs to pass on her healing knowledge to the next generation and focuses on Granada, a young slave girl. Granada is not so willing to accept her gift and is not interested in learning anything from Polly. Despite Granada's impatience and resistance, Polly teaches her that the gift of healing is much more than just learning to heal."

—Julia Barth, Blue Willow Bookshop, Houston, TX



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## The Book of Lost Fragrances

**A Novel of Suspense, by M.J. Rose**

"*The Book of Lost Fragrances* takes the reader on a aromatic carpet ride from Egypt to New York City to China to Paris and back again through the ages, involving a secret people would kill for. Cleopatra believed a fragrance could enable one to remember past lives. Today, China has forbidden Tibetans from exploring their belief in reincarnation to the extent that the boy chosen by the Dalai Lama has disappeared. At the same time Jac L'Etoile, daughter of the famous Paris perfume manufacturer has visions of past lives and lovers. Their stories are connected by a two thousand year-old fragrance. A sensuous thriller combined with a heartbreaking love story and a modern dilemma for a country under siege."

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



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## The Inquisitor

**A Novel, by Mark Allen Smith**

"This story will keep you up and give you nightmares, but you will be hooked from page one. Smith has added a surprising new element to the thriller genre with the introduction of his protagonist, a professional torturer, who is himself a tortured individual. Geiger has three rules, one of which is, he doesn't interrogate children. So when he ends up with a 12-year-old boy he is supposed to extract information from, Geiger changes all of the rules. Geiger is an extremely fascinating character whom you want to hate, but can't. A compelling and unique thriller."

—Nancy McFarlane, Fiction Addiction, Greenville, SC



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## Flatscreen

**A Novel, by Adam Wilson**

"Reading *Flatscreen* in public without cracking up was a challenge, one that I did not meet, and I frequently looked like a crazy person reading the book. Wilson balances heartbreak with humor in a way that is affecting and real. In the book, we meet Eli Schwartz, college dropout, failed Hebrew, and culinary master. Eli's struggle to assert himself in a digitized world as a fleshed-out man is as frighteningly real as it is funny. Eli longs for what all twenty-somethings long for—a sense of belonging, to be loved, and, perhaps, to be worshiped. *Flatscreen* is a treasure. Bravo, Mr. Wilson!"

—Zach Sampinos, Weller Book Works, Salt Lake City, UT



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## Forgotten Country

**A Novel, by Catherine Chung**

"On the day of her sister's birth, Janie is told by her Korean grandmother that one girl child in each generation dies. This statement sets the stage for Janie's 'disappearance' and 'reemergence.' Laced with Korean folklore and culture, the story moves seamlessly from Korea to Middle America and reflects the travails of an immigrant family both culturally and emotionally. The writing in this debut is poetic, spare, and exquisite. It would be a great pick for a book group."

—Biddy Kehoe, Hockessin Book Shelf, Hockessin, DE



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## Until the Next Time

**A Novel, by Kevin Fox**

"Sean Corrigan has lived an ordinary life until his twenty-first birthday when his father gives him a journal written by his Uncle Michael, a relative previously unknown to Sean. The journal sets Sean on a course he never could have imagined. From the United States to Ireland, this is a story of family, murder, ancient myth, and a love that goes on through time. I was captured from the first page by this unique blend of mystery, suspense, and romance."

—Sue Richardson, Maine Coast Book Shop, Damariscotta, ME



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## The Expats

A Novel, by Chris Pavone

"Kate Moore is a former CIA agent who gradually comes to find that her husband is operating in just as big a shadow world as the one she formally inhabited. As the story of fraud, theft, and chicanery plays out across Europe, the reader is immersed in a style of thriller reminiscent of Eric Ambler, Graham Greene, and John le Carré. There is a level of intelligence here rarely found in genre fiction, and it marks a major debut."

—Bill Cusumano, Nicola's Books, Ann Arbor, MI



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## The Dog Who Danced

A Novel, by Susan Wilson

"If you liked Garth Stein's *The Art of Racing in the Rain* this should be next on your reading list. This story of love, loss, and redemption moves between venues and characters with the grace and fluidity of a dancer. The voices of Justine, who lost Mack; Ed, who found him; and Mack, himself, move this intricate but smoothly written novel quickly from Seattle to New Bedford. I couldn't wait to get to the next chapter and find out how these flawed, but likeable humans were affected by losing or finding Mack, and where Mack would eventually wind up. Wonderful!"

—Trish Cutsail, A Likely Story, Sykesville, MD



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## By the Iowa Sea

A Memoir of Disaster and Love, by Joe Blair

"This is a perfectly written book about a very complicated family under extraordinary circumstances. A troubled couple, Joe and his wife, along with their four kids, live in Coralville, Iowa, at nightmarish flood tide. Blair knows how families work and knows the sorrow of families working poorly. He also learns the way tragedy can pull things together. His struggles with his wife and learning-disabled son are particularly moving. No one can teach someone to write with Blair's level of honesty and love."

—Paul Ingram, Prairie Lights Books, Iowa City, IA



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## Anatomy of Murder

A Novel, by Imogen Robertson

"London swirls with pomp and intrigue, the Admiralty is dealing with the American Revolution and French spies, and a headstrong woman and her reclusive fellow detective are called upon to discover the story behind a drowning that may be more than it seems. Meandering between the lowest of slums and the glitter of the opera house, *Anatomy of Murder* is a charming page-turner."

—Becky Milner, Vintage Books, Vancouver, WA



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## Murder at the Lanterne Rouge

**An Aimee Leduc Investigation, by Cara Black**

"This is a whirlwind mystery featuring Aimee Leduc of the Leduc Detective Agency. The agency specializes in computer security, but Aimee always stumbles onto murders, and in this case she must find the murderer because her partner Rene's girlfriend is the main suspect. Black expertly weaves the social issues of Chinese sweatshops and illegal immigrants with current science and computer technology, 14th century Templars and guilds, and the local police and French secret service. The murder is only one of the mysteries in this investigation that will delightfully transport you to Paris."

—Patricia Moody, Hickory Stick Bookshop, Washington Depot, CT



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## The Dressmaker

**A Novel, by Kate Alcott**

"A young housemaid quits her job and is chosen at the last minute to accompany a great fashion designer on the ill-fated voyage of the Titanic. They both survive the sinking, but the designer and her husband make questionable choices in their lifeboat, which are not well received in the public eye. The reader can't help but think, 'What would I have done in that situation?'"

—Beth Carpenter, The Country Bookshop, Southern Pines, NC



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## Gypsy Boy

**My Life in the Secret World of the Romany Gypsies, by Mikey Walsh**

"Growing up, I envied and romanticized the culture of freedom and adventure amid a free spirited gypsy life. *Gypsy Boy* both dispels and confirms some of the myths that surround this world. We are given a rare view into the hostile, secretive, and protective bonds that have allowed the gypsies to continue their way of life, one of persecution and lawlessness, in the modern world. While Walsh endures a harsh life filled with abuse, at the same time he experiences enduring love and protection from his mother and sister, even after his decision to leave the tribe. Difficult to read, but even more difficult to put down, Mikey's transformation and ultimate happiness with his life will have you cheering."

—Susan Schlesinger, Books on the Square, Providence, RI



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## Arcadia

**A Novel, by Lauren Groff**

"I am left almost speechless by the beauty and raw reality of this book. The story is centered around a boy named Bit—nicknamed for his small size. Groff splits the narrative into two parts: in the first, we watch Bit grow up in a utopian wooded commune in the early '70s; in the next part, Bit is an adult, a father raising his own child in New York City. Groff's wonderful use of language brings us into Bit's world—the intimacy, wonder, confusion, worry, and unwavering hope he holds as a child and the struggle, shattering grief, and quiet determined bravery he develops as a man. Stunning!"

—Susan McCloskey, Bookshop Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, CA



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