



FEBRUARY '15

The Nightingale

A Novel, by Kristin Hannah

"Filled with sacrifice, betrayal, suspense, courage, and ultimately, forgiveness, *The Nightingale* offers a haunting glimpse of what it was like for women to survive during WWII. Set in a small town in France, *The Nightingale* tells the alternating stories of two sisters, their father, and the friends and enemies that occupy their lives during this tragic period of history. Based on a true story, *The Nightingale* weaves a riveting tale around the heroism of Isabelle, a young woman who serves as a key player in the underground Resistance, and her sister, Viann, who is back home under German occupation, near starvation and struggling to save Jewish children. In the end, however, perhaps this novel is more about the sisterly bonds of love that, although stretched to the limit, still endure. You will not forget the song of *The Nightingale*."

—Marnie Mamminga, Redbery Books, Cable, WI



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FEBRUARY '15

Etta and Otto and Russell and James

A Novel, by Emma Hooper

"Eighty-three-year-old Etta Vogel quietly sets out one day to walk 3,200 kilometers to the coast of Canada for her first view of the ocean. As Etta travels, author Hooper gently and poignantly reveals a lifetime of morally charged events that shaped Etta as well as her husband, Otto, and her lifelong friend, Russell. This is a beautiful and sometimes hauntingly stark portrait of three WWII-generation lives, sprinkled with the wise counsel of a loyal coyote named James. I loved it!"

—Susan Tyler, The Book Bin, Onley, VA



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FEBRUARY '15

A Spool of Blue Thread

A Novel, by Anne Tyler

"Tyler's story of three generations of the Whitshank family has all the hallmarks for which she is so well known. There is drama, dysfunction, and sorrow aplenty here, but Tyler has an amazing way of exposing family life in both its ugly and beautiful glory. These characters love each other, except when they don't, and every interaction is crackling with Tyler's quirky and unassuming wit. *A Spool of Blue Thread* shows how lives intersect—very rarely neatly—and how that messiness gives meaning to every human connection. Tyler is a master of her craft—this being her 20th novel—and she is a treasure to read."

—Dinah Hughley, Powell's Books, Portland, OR



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FEBRUARY '15

Of Things Gone Astray

A Novel, by Janina Matthewson

"In London, a group of people have lost that which they hold most dear. A girl stands in the airport waiting for her lover while her feet turn to roots and her skin to bark. A recluse loses the front wall of her home, while a workaholic cannot find his office building. Piano keys, a sense of direction, and a boy's relationship with his father all have gone astray. Slowly, each victim adapts, unwittingly helping one another during the briefest encounters. Each loss is heartbreaking and each character's struggle to survive is inspiring. With stunning prose and insight, Matthewson uses magic to illuminate truth in this hauntingly beautiful debut novel."

—Amelia Stymacks, Northshire Bookstore, Saratoga Springs, NY



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FEBRUARY '15

Get in Trouble

Stories, by Kelly Link

"I'm not sure what just happened to me, but Link is obviously a genius and possibly an evil one at that. My brain feels infected by these stories, unable to let go of their twists and turns and unwilling to let their memory fade. The grace of the subtle shifts that Link uses to move her worlds from familiar to fantastic is matched only by the deftness with which she brings it back around to the human condition. One minute you're reading about the spectral projections of haunted, life-size, animated boyfriend dolls, and the next you're thinking, 'OMG, that was me in high school.' Plan on reading these slowly, as you will need time to recuperate!"

—Nichole McCown, Bookshop Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, CA



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FEBRUARY '15

Sweetland

A Novel, by Michael Crummey

"Crummey takes readers into the heart of the insular fishing community of Chance Cove, Sweetland Island, Newfoundland. Sixty-eight-year-old Moses Sweetland's family founded the town, and he is the only holdout when the government offers the residents a generous cash settlement to relocate to the mainland, that is effective only if everyone signs on. Told in sparse, beautiful prose with generous helpings of the local dialect, *Sweetland* is a requiem for the intimate knowledge of place that a transient society can just barely remember."

—Sarah Goddin, Quail Ridge Books & Music, Raleigh, NC



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FEBRUARY '15

Leaving Before the Rains Come

by Alexandra Fuller

"Fans of Fuller's African adventures will be thrilled to find she is back with another engaging memoir, and new readers will want to read her previous works. In *Leaving Before the Rains Come*, Fuller tells of her unraveling marriage and her realization that she is a person truly between countries, living in the U.S. with her husband and children while her heart and soul remain in Africa. Her experiences in the States change her, and when she returns to Africa she discovers that she no longer fits in as she previously had. Fuller must face some tough questions about who she is and where she belongs, and she does so with her usual intelligence and wit."

—Liz Heywood, The Babbling Book, Haines, AK



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FEBRUARY '15

Black River

A Novel, by S.M. Hulse

"This debut set in the American West follows Wes Carver, a former corrections officer whose passion in life was playing the fiddle until his hands were ruined during a prison riot. Years later, following the loss of his wife to cancer, Wes returns to the small prison town in Montana to scatter his wife's ashes and speak at the parole hearing of the inmate who ruined his life. He struggles to accept the possibility that the inmate has found God, especially as his own faith is hanging on by a thread. Hulse's writing is like the river at the center of her novel, a quiet surface covering raging emotions underneath, and her descriptions of music are breathtakingly beautiful. Discover a wonderful new talent!"

—Nancy Solberg, Odyssey Bookshop, South Hadley, MA



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FEBRUARY '15

The Jaguar's Children

A Novel, by John Vaillant

"Vaillant has established his reputation as an accomplished writer of nonfiction, and he now brings his considerable talent to this debut novel. There are no easy moments in this story told by Hector, a young man engaged in an illegal border crossing inside a sealed tanker truck. Vaillant uses Hector's narration to bring the frequent brutality of the illegal immigration experience to light in visceral detail, engaging both the reader's sympathy and revulsion, which linger long after the last page is turned."

—Fran Keilty, The Hickory Stick Bookshop, Washington Depot, CT



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FEBRUARY '15

First Frost

A Novel, by Sarah Addison Allen

"Ten years after they first met the Waverley sisters in Allen's *Garden Spells*, readers catch up with Claire and Sydney, who have grown closer together and shared both life's highs and lows. They are both in love with their husbands and each is raising a spirited daughter. Old stories circle back around and information is disclosed that shakes Claire's world. Allen offers a heartwarming, funny, and welcome trip back to a family readers have come to love."

—Valerie Koehler, Blue Willow Bookshop, Houston, TX



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FEBRUARY '15

Wolf Winter

A Novel, by Cecilia Ekbäck

"Maija, her husband Paavo, and their daughters, Frederika and Dorotea, leave Finland to settle in Lapland in the beautiful area near Blackäsen Mountain. One day, Frederika discovers the body of one of the villagers. Was he killed by wolves or was he murdered? What powers does the mountain have? The harsh 'wolf winter' brings the settlers together to survive, but what tragedies, secrets, customs, and vengeance are they hiding? When Maija and her family arrived at the mountain, readers were told, 'This was the kind of land that didn't know how to let go.' Ekbäck's intriguing tale of Swedish Lapland in 1717 gives insight into the land and people of the far north and is also hard to let go."

—Barbara Theroux, Fact & Fiction, Missoula, MT



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FEBRUARY '15

The Swimmer

A Novel, by Joakim Zander

"This Swedish thriller with its roots in the Middle East features a burnt-out CIA agent, a couple of incredible young women, and a rogue company of villains that contracted with the CIA to do 'enhanced' interrogation in Iraq and Afghanistan. With untrustworthy colleagues, a greedy, self-interested lobbyist, and shifting alliances, Klara Waldeen, a lawyer working in an EU office in Brussels, finds herself enmeshed in a cover-up with deadly elements. Her tribulations, after a terrifying chase around Europe, culminate on Christmas Eve on an island off the coast of Sweden in the arms of her grandparents. Thrilling post-holiday reading!"

—Darwin Ellis, Books on the Common, Ridgefield, CT



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FEBRUARY '15

Mort(e)

A Novel, by Robert Repino

"Ants conquer the world and pets overthrow their masters in this smart, gripping novel. House cat Sebastian becomes Mort(e), a fearsome warrior for the animal cause. Battling across a dystopian landscape, flushing out the few human survivors, Mort(e) can never quite forget his domesticated past and lost friend, the dog Sheba. A crisis of conscience ensues. What is good? Who is evil? Are the dictatorial ants truly better than the humans with their germ warfare? Laced with humor, this action-packed thriller is thought provoking."

—Mariga Temple-West, Big Blue Marble Bookstore, Philadelphia, PA



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FEBRUARY '15

Migratory Animals

A Novel, by Mary Helen Specht

"Specht's novel weaves together stories of science and art, friends faraway and family returned. *Migratory Animals* is a coming-of-age tale for grownups, a reminder that growing pains don't stop as we age and change and become who we're supposed to be—or who we hope to be. Flannery and her friends will grab hold of you and not let go until the last page has been turned."

—Annie B. Jones, The Bookshelf, Thomasville, GA



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FEBRUARY '15

The Country of Ice Cream Star

A Novel, by Sandra Newman

"Newman drops the reader into a small tribe of scavengers, hunting and thieving out a meager survival in the woods of Massachusetts, approximately 80 years after an unnamed plague has wiped out most of the U.S. population. The world Newman creates is original, richly detailed, and compellingly realized, including the patois in which the story is told. At turns violent, romantic, funny, and touching, *The Country of Ice Cream Star* wraps an exploration of power, American institutions, race, and human nature into a ripping, twisting, and turning post-apocalyptic tale that is epic in scope and achievement."

—Matt Nixon, The Booksellers at Laurelwood, Memphis, TN



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FEBRUARY '15

Unbecoming

A Novel, by Rebecca Scherm

"Julie rents a room in a dilapidated house outside of Paris. She repairs antiques, mostly things no one else wants, and is a loner with no friends or social life. In her room at night, she reads the news from Garland, Tennessee, her hometown, where two men are about to be let out on parole for a crime for which she was the mastermind. Julie is terrified of being found and is just trying to survive. This is an exhilarating page-turner with multi-layered characters and several good twists. Once you hit the halfway point, it's a race to the finish to find out what's going to happen."

—Amanda Skelton, Union Avenue Books, Knoxville, TN



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FEBRUARY '15

My Sunshine Away

A Novel, by M.O. Walsh

"This debut author offers a wonderfully written story about a boy coming of age in the late '80s in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. It is narrated by a 14-year-old boy who, along with all of the other young males in the neighborhood, is infatuated by 15-year-old Lindy Simpson. Everything changes that summer, when Lindy is brutally raped and no one is ever charged with the crime. Told with a sense of humor, some sadness, and, at times, a wisdom beyond the narrator's 14 years, the story focuses on all of the suspects and shows how suspicion and violence can change lives forever."

—Nancy McFarlane, Fiction Addiction, Greenville, SC



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FEBRUARY '15

We Are Pirates

A Novel, by Daniel Handler

"From the mind behind Lemony Snicket comes this weird and wonderous novel, featuring a troubled teenage girl, her befuddled parents, an Alzheimer's-addled old man, and, of course, pirates. Handler plays it straight, until he doesn't, and demonstrates why he is one of the most playful, macabre, and beloved writers working today."

—Cody Morrison, Square Books, Oxford, MS



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FEBRUARY '15

The Upstairs Wife

An Intimate History of Pakistan, by Rafia Zakaria

"This is a masterfully executed, gripping, and intimate account of both the situation of Pakistani women and the troubling politics of the Pakistani state. Zakaria chronicles the humiliation of her aunt, a barren wife, as she is relegated to second-class status and moved upstairs to make room for her uncle's second wife. Into this remembrance, the author skillfully weaves the story of Benazir Bhutto, the charismatic and powerful Pakistani leader plagued by the dark history and politics of her country which eventually led to her assassination. A dark tale, *The Upstairs Wife* offers the reader much insight into the history and culture of Pakistan."

—Cathy Langer, Tattered Cover Bookstore, Denver, CO



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FEBRUARY '15

Single, Carefree, Mellow

Stories, by Katherine Heiny

"*Single, Carefree, Mellow* is a very special debut collection from an author with a voice that is both interesting and unique. Heiny often takes the perspective of women that, in real life, one would be cheering against and yet for whom readers will end up having much sympathy. Her characters are like nice mean girls with wicked senses of humor, lost, in many ways, like the rest of us."

—Pam Cady, University Book Store, Seattle, WA



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