



APRIL '17

The Women in the Castle: A Novel

By Jessica Shattuck

"Three war widows and their children help each other survive at the end of World War II in this engaging novel filled with rich period details. Their husbands died as members of the resistance, but aside from that common thread, Marianne, Benita, and Ania bring very different backgrounds to their makeshift home in the castle's kitchen. They also face repercussions from past choices and current secrets. Jessica Shattuck brings us into their world and shows us that the rules for love and loyalty are different in wartime."

—Dawn Rennert, The Concord Bookshop, Concord, MA



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APRIL '17

The Twelve Lives of Samuel Hawley: A Novel

By Hannah Tinti

"Hannah Tinti has accomplished something rare in *The Twelve Lives of Samuel Hawley*: she has written a book too exciting to put down, but too well written to race through or, heaven forbid, skim. Her novel, however, is more than just a treat for those of us who love literary thrillers; it is also a provocative exploration of violence and the extremes to which men and women will go to defend those they love. Because Tinti is so good at what she does, it is virtually impossible for us, her readers, not to become complicit in the mayhem and to be left wondering, in the end, what we would do in her characters' places."

—Ezra Goldstein, Community Bookstore, Brooklyn, NY



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Spoils: A Novel

By Brian Van Reet

"Borne of his experience fighting in Iraq, Brian Van Reet's *Spoils* is a clear-eyed, gritty, and tension-filled story of young soldiers caught up in impossible circumstances. At the heart of the story is Cassandra, a 19-year-old machine gunner who is captured by the enemy. Her ordeal as a captive along with two fellow soldiers is harrowing, but also provides insight into the character of soldiers and their captors. Recent and current conflicts have inspired some excellent fiction and *Spoils* ranks with the best of it."

—Mark Laframboise, Politics and Prose Bookstore, Washington, DC



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The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane: A Novel

By Lisa See

"This captivating story is set in a remote Yunnan village where, for many years, the Akha people have followed the rituals and cycles of harvesting tea leaves. Slowly, the changes going on in the rest of China begin to reach the area. Li-yan, one of the few educated girls in the village, acts as translator for a stranger seeking a rare tea from Yunnan. When Li-yan gives birth to a baby out of wedlock, she wraps her baby in a blanket along with a package of the rare tea and leaves her in a city where she will be taken to an orphanage. Over the years, mother and daughter dream of finding one another again. Brew yourself a cup of tea and settle down to read this tale of family and the search for answers in different places and cultures."

—Elizabeth Merritt, Titcomb's Bookshop, East Sandwich, MA



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APRIL '17

American War: A Novel

By Omar El Akkad

"Omar El Akkad has delivered a stunning debut. He imagines a world in a not-too-distant future where Americans are at war with each other once again. The characters in this story are fully developed and individual, yet their histories—their stories—extend into the histories of all those displaced and affected by the forces of war. The title, *American War*, is a shape-shifter. At once, it means that America is again at war, but at times reflects the ways in which the true, actual wars that America has perpetrated on Earth have affected the lives of millions of people. This will be one of the most discussed books of the year, and I cannot wait to put it in the hands of all readers looking to be changed."

—Matt Keliher, SubText Books, St. Paul, MN



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APRIL '17

The River of Kings: A Novel

By Taylor Brown

"In his second novel, Taylor Brown takes us on a fascinating trip down the Altamaha River. Also called Georgia's 'Little Amazon,' the river is one of the most remote and wild places in the U.S. This is where the Loggins brothers, Hunter and Lawton, grew up with their abusive father. After he dies under mysterious conditions, they decide to kayak down the river to disperse his ashes and try to discover what really happened. Brown combines the story of the brothers' journey and descriptions of their father's rough life with a narrative of the 1564 French expedition and settlement at the river's mouth. Three stories in which nature takes center stage intertwine to give this superb novel an almost mythical dimension."

—Pierre Camy, Schuler Books, Grand Rapids, MI



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APRIL '17

Marlena: A Novel

By Julie Buntin

"I can't believe this is a debut novel: the writing is so assured; the prose so exquisite. Buntin is a master of word choice, and every sentence felt deliberate and precise. I quickly got sucked into this story about a pair of teenage girls, one doomed, one not. It was a quick read, but one I found myself lingering over. I'd recommend *Marlena* to fans of Megan Abbott's dark, twisty books about girlhood—this is a similarly fierce read!"

—Lauren Peugh, Changing Hands Bookstore, Tempe, AZ



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APRIL '17

The Idiot: A Novel

By Elif Batuman

"Batuman's voice is biting original and her protagonist, Selin, brings vitality to the pages through her odd, serious, and slightly sardonic naïveté. The honesty of Selin's self-exploration during her first year at Harvard struck a chord with me. Her frank sense of observation as she navigates first love, friendship, and freshman year are a breath of fresh air. I have not read anything quite like *The Idiot* and I doubt I will again. I loved it."

—Kisky Holwerda, Astoria Bookshop, Astoria, NY



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Mississippi Blood: A Novel

By Greg Iles

"*Mississippi Blood* is the culmination of the Natchez Trilogy, which follows characters who are trying to get to the bottom of brutal Civil Rights-era crimes. Penn Cage watches as the world around him calls into question everything he thinks he knows, including the moral fortitude of his father. Rippling with parallels to our everyday America, *Mississippi Blood* will, hopefully, push us all to recognize the truths about ourselves and our country."

—Veronica Brooks-Sigler, Octavia Books, New Orleans, LA



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The Shadow Land: A Novel

By Elizabeth Kostova

"This is one of the most engrossing novels that I've read in a while. It is ultimately a road trip through the beautiful haunted land of Bulgaria. An American woman arrives to teach English and inadvertently picks up the wrong bag while getting into a taxi. The bag holds a beautiful wooden box containing human remains. Her helpful, enigmatic taxi driver takes her into Bulgaria's unsettled present in search of the family that surely wants the urn back. It is the fleshing out (pun intended) of the person embodied by the ashes that makes this work intriguing and heart-wrenching. This novel about self-discovery and historical reconciliation is thrilling, introspective, and very well paced."

—Dianne Patrick, Snowbound Books, Marquette, MI



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Our Short History: A Novel

By Lauren Grodstein

"*Our Short History* is a letter from a dying woman to her six-year-old son, and it totally shredded me. Yes, it is a sad story. But it is so much more than that. Readers will love the spirit of Karen Neulander. She is smart and thoughtful and fierce, and Jake is squirmy and tough and tender—just like six-year-old boys can be. Lauren Grodstein takes you to the edge of what you can bear, then shows you that strength comes from fragility and that hope still lives in despair."

—Susan Thomas, CoffeeTree Books, Morehead, KY



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Hourglass: Time, Memory, Marriage

By Dani Shapiro

"As I consider the themes of memory and marriage in my own life, I realize that Dani Shapiro has reached across time to touch me with her insight and candor, and this is how *Hourglass* will touch every reader who is lucky enough to find this special little gem of a book. What a particular and original voice she has shared, reflecting on questions like, how are relationships formed? How does love burn and transform you? How does marriage, that age-old subject, play out between creators in the race against time? Through fragments, touching bits of memory, and poetic flights of fancy, this memoir honors the genre and elevates the form. I couldn't put it down and devoured it in one sitting."

—Cristina Nosti, Books & Books, Coral Gables, FL



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APRIL '17

The Redemption of Galen Pike: Short Stories

By Carys Davies

"This is the most beautiful collection of short stories I have read in a long time. Each story feels perfect. The writing, the topic, and the resolution all left me completely satisfied. Their connecting theme is solitude or isolation and the struggle to move through it. The collection reminds me of some of Kevin Brockmeier's writing: beautiful, sometimes disturbing, and always memorable."

—Lisa Sharp, Nightbird Books, Fayetteville, AR



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APRIL '17

What It Means When a Man Falls From the Sky: Stories

By Lesley Nneka Arimah

"Intense, haunting, and exquisitely rendered, the stories in Lesley Nneka Arimah's debut collection exist in a category of their own. They are individual worlds linked together by familiar themes—self-discovery, yearnings to love and be loved, generational divides, and the meanings of home and place—refashioned in a fresh, new light. Arimah shines in this debut, whose magic will surely live with you beyond the final page. Absolutely stunning."

—Purvis Cornish, Square Books, Oxford, MS



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APRIL '17

Mercies in Disguise: A Story of Hope, a Family's Genetic Destiny, and the Science That Rescued Them

By Gina Kolata

"This is the tale of a family that has shown remarkable strength in the face of adversity. Kolata does a wonderful job showing us the Baxleys' joy and heartbreak by chronicling their decisions, their doubts, their fears; the decision to be genetically tested for a devastating illness seemed agonizing and the consequences of living with the outcome even more so. The strength shown by Amanda and the Baxley family made this one of the most amazing stories that I have ever had the privilege to read. I thank them for sharing their story with me; it was truly inspirational."

—Austin Wheeling-Goodson, Burry Bookstore, Hartsville, SC



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APRIL '17

A Little More Human: A Novel

By Fiona Maazel

"A Little More Human kept me up way past my bedtime. Fiona Maazel's seamless novel draws you in subtly and irresistibly. I just had to know how Phil Snyder (nursing assistant, professional superhero impersonator, and actual mind-reader) ended up on a horse with splashes of blood on his clothes and no memory of how he got there. Uncovering secrets in snippets along with Phil reminded me of his own mind-reading talent and built the suspense beautifully page by page. Another clever literary masterpiece from Fiona Maazel!"

—Anna Thorn, Upshur Street Books, Washington, DC



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APRIL '17

Girl in Disguise: A Novel

By Greer Macallister

"I'm a resourceful and strong young woman, there is no other option.' That's the concept behind Greer Macallister's telling of the real, honest-to-goodness life of Kate Warne, the first female Pinkerton detective. Kate is a widow with no money and no honest prospects, and she is desperate. Her unconventional upbringing taught her flexibility, and, spotting Pinkerton's ad, she won't take no for an answer. She is hired as an agent and, having proved her value, is soon hiring and training more female agents and serving as a spy as the U.S. prepares to split apart. *Girl in Disguise* is a delight: entertaining and a sure nonstop read."

—Becky Milner, Vintage Books, Vancouver, WA



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APRIL '17

The Day I Died: A Novel

By Lori Rader-Day

"In this story, the devil is, indeed, in the details. You think you're being distracted, only to learn that Rader-Day is actually building layers of evidence for the reader, connecting a framework of apparent incidentals to reach a pinnacle of suspense. Almost anyone can be guilty, but only one is a villain. You unexpectedly feel sympathy for certain characters, partly because they're so genuine. I neglected things because I HAD to finish this book. You will, too."

—Tracy Aleksy, Centuries & Sleuths Bookstore, Forest Park, IL



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APRIL '17

Miss You: A Novel

By Kate Eberlen

"Tess and Gus first cross paths in Florence as 18-year-olds with their futures stretching ahead of them. Back in England, they live their lives oblivious to all the near-misses and chances they have to encounter one another again. The meandering way their lives circle each other is charming rather than frustrating, but the heart of this book lies in the choices Tess and Gus make as their lives unfold in ways neither anticipated. Exceptionally poignant and filled with relatable and deeply human characters, this is a thoughtful story about how you can never quite guess what life has in store for you—and maybe that's for the best."

—Kelly O'Sullivan, R.J. Julia Booksellers, Madison, CT



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APRIL '17

Hallelujah Anyway: Rediscovering Mercy

By Anne Lamott

"*Hallelujah Anyway* completely consumed me. The world has changed so much in the last year and it seems overwhelming at times. Lamott's new book is the answer to that despair, hopelessness, and futility. It's exactly what the title says—mercy through difficult times, kindness when it's not deserved, and singing hallelujah anyway. Lamott writes with such refreshing honesty. This book is now what I like to refer to as 'well-loved'—underlined, dog-eared, and slightly worn. I suspect I'll revisit my favorite passages for years to come."

—Kristin Beverly, Half Price Books, Dallas, TX



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