



SEPTEMBER '17

My Absolute Darling: A Novel

By Gabriel Tallent

"I believe in great American novels, but not *the* Great American Novel. This is a Great American Novel: exquisitely lush language of the natural world; startlingly vivid characters; a global understanding of social context, in a particular place; and, in this case, steel-wire narrative tension stringing through the beautiful prose like piano wire. It is the book this year that I feel every American should read, because of its greatness and also because of its deep wrestling with issues of class, complacency, climate change, culture, and especially gender."

—John Evans, DIESEL, A Bookstore, Oakland, CA



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SEPTEMBER '17

Little Fires Everywhere: A Novel

By Celeste Ng

"*Little Fires Everywhere* is a breathtaking novel about art, motherhood, and truth. Mia and her daughter, Pearl, move to the perfectly planned community of Shaker Heights as the last stop on their nomadic adventure, bringing some much-needed permanence to teenager Pearl's life. They both find friendship, but the connections they create with their landlord's family will soon change all of their lives. Impossible to put down or stop thinking about. A great read."

—Stef Schmidt, Water Street Bookstore, Exeter, NH



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The Child Finder: A Novel

By Rene Denfeld

"In Rene Denfeld's new novel, a woman who searches for abducted or lost children must confront her own memories of being abducted as a young girl. While searching for a girl recently kidnapped in her hometown, she is haunted by her past and the lies that she used to weave her present, lies that often took the form of stories. Meanwhile, the abducted girl must survive years of terror and heartbreak, all while constructing a magical mythology to shield herself from the atrocities of her captor. These characters, especially the women, are strong and imaginative. Readers who enjoyed *Room* will devour this literary thriller, which promises to open up Denfeld's readership to a much wider level."

—William Carl, Wellesley Books, Wellesley, MA



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Young Jane Young: A Novel

By Gabrielle Zevin

"I've been waiting for a quirky, funny, thoughtful novel to follow in the footsteps of *Where'd You Go, Bernadette*, and behold: I have found it. I loved the vibrant female characters at the heart of this book. Told in four different voices, *Young Jane Young* is the story of Aviva Grossman, a young Congressional intern in South Florida who does the unthinkable: she sleeps with her boss. The book details the repercussions of that decision and examines the abuse of power that occurs in politics and in the day-to-day interactions between members of the opposite sex. Gabrielle Zevin has written something really smart and heartwarming, yet also incredibly timely."

—Annie Jones, The Bookshelf, Thomasville, GA



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Sing, Unburied, Sing: A Novel

By Jesmyn Ward

"*Sing, Unburied, Sing* is a dark and gorgeous song of love and heartbreak, haunting and tragic and disorienting in its timelessness. The Deepwater Horizon oil spill anchors Ward's tale to Mississippi today, which is almost indistinguishable from its notorious yesterday, a present and past (ironically) made more alive in the novel by ghosts and where everyone suffers from the cancers of buried sins. On Jojo's 13th birthday, while Mam is dying and Pop struggles to keep everyone safe, Leonie plans a road trip to the prison to pick up Michael, Jojo and baby Kayla's father. It's *The Odyssey* meets the Delta blues meets William Faulkner and Toni Morrison and some ineffable something that is Jesmyn Ward's own magic."

—Sara Hinckley, Hudson Booksellers, Marietta, GA



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The Burning Girl: A Novel

By Claire Messud

"Claire Messud is one of our most talented storytellers. Her latest, *The Burning Girl*, is a crystalline evocation of the deep friendships that develop between teenage girls, a bond unlike any other. Messud traverses the fraught alliances and raw emotions of high school, reminding us that these ordinary rites of passage can have extraordinary consequences. Messud's writing is deft and immersive, her character development sharp and perceptive. The novel recreates the pain of first realizing that it is impossible to fully know another, that our self-narratives reflect how we want to be seen but not who we actually are."

—Lori Feathers, Interabang Books, Dallas, TX



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The Resurrection of Joan Ashby: A Novel

By Cherise Wolas

"I've always admired people who knew what they wanted to do from an early age, whether that was to be a doctor, a marine biologist, or a writer. Enter Joan Ashby, a young girl determined never to marry and certainly never to have children; then she does both, and that is when her tale truly begins. Not only are we privy to her life's story, we get to read some of her short stories and parts of her developing novels—the stories within the story, if you will. The only thing any of us know for sure, except for death and taxes, is that the hoped-for path is never straight and never predictable. I flat-out loved this book!"

—Anne Holman, The King's English, Salt Lake City, UT



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The Heart's Invisible Furies: A Novel

By John Boyne

"This is the novel John Boyne was born to write: A brilliant book of identity and redemption, both heartbreaking and humorous, intimate and expansive. Cyril Avery has been constantly reminded he doesn't belong, first by his adopted parents, then by the church and his country. As we follow him on his journey to acceptance, we are shown the cruelty of fate and the surprising kindness of ordinary people. Boyne perfectly constructs every story told, unveiling the humor and hypocrisy of humanity in each character and illuminating how the arc of Cyril's story is also the arc of modern times. An amazing feat from the first page to the last."

—Luisa Smith, Book Passage, Corte Madera, CA



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Fever: A Novel

By Deon Meyer, K.L. Seegers (Trans.)

"*Fever*, which grabbed me from the beginning, takes place in South Africa several years after a devastating illness wipes out most of the planet. It starts as a thrilling survival tale between a brilliant father and his 13-year-old son and quickly evolves into a fascinating study of human nature and the perils of building a new civilization from scratch. The survivalist details throughout the novel are especially fascinating, as are the conflicts within the society as it grows. A dense, captivating read that drew me in and kept me hooked."

—Elissa Englund, Bank Square Books, Mystic, CT



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SEPTEMBER '17

Miss Kopp's Midnight Confessions: A Kopp Sisters Novel

By Amy Stewart

"Constance Kopp is back, solving mysteries and making headlines! Deputy Kopp is a heroine of her day and continues to inspire today. Whether assisting young girls in finding their footing on a law-abiding path, using her voice to stand up for the voiceless, or fighting crime alongside her all-male counterparts, Constance Kopp is breaking with traditional female roles and navigating sometimes-stormy waters with grace, dignity, and a bit of humor. What does a feminist look like? This is what a feminist looks like!"

—Donna McFadden, Wellington Square Bookshop, Exton, PA



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The World of Tomorrow: A Novel

By Brendan Mathews

"*The World of Tomorrow* is so wise and so ambitious in scope, with characters so complex, sympathetic, and real, that you will be hard-pressed to set it aside at a reasonable hour. Mathews' success in rendering the physicality of New York City just before WWII, the complexities of the Irish-American experience, and the first awful rumblings of the Holocaust, along with all the details of class, race, family, tragedy, comedy, heroics, and jazz, make this a truly immersive reading experience. With beautiful prose, a plot that manages strand after strand of narrative without ever becoming knotted or coming undone, and a cast of characters as alive as any on the page, this novel is a masterpiece."

—Robert McDonald, The Book Stall at Chestnut Court, Winnetka, IL



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The Hidden Light of Northern Fires: A Novel

By Daren Wang

"In *The Hidden Light of Northern Fires*, a town on the Underground Railroad secedes from the Union after it becomes fractured by the politics of the American Civil War. As a huge geek on the subject, I'm often skeptical of historical fiction relating to it. While Wang's tale benefits from being based on truth, that is a moot point. His well-developed, very real characters and masterful writing are all that's needed for an incredible debut. Though a novel of the home front, it is nonetheless a war novel focusing on how conflict brings out the best and worst in people. It is one of the best works of historical fiction on the Civil War that I've ever read, and perhaps even that exists."

—Carl Kranz, The Fountain Bookstore, Richmond, VA



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Don't Call Us Dead: Poems

By Danez Smith

"Danez Smith has a remarkable talent for distilling disparate experiences and emotions into powerful and provocative images. His poems tackle the complexities of being young, black, and HIV-positive. He is a keen observer of the human condition, and his words express with urgency the need to understand one another. I loved this collection, and I'm so glad that this born-and-bred St. Paul poet is getting the recognition his talents so richly deserve."

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



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Ranger Games: A Story of Soldiers, Family and an Inexplicable Crime

By Ben Blum

"*Ranger Games* is a fascinating examination of family, duty, psychology, and crime. Ben Blum's cousin Alex wanted one thing in life, to be a U.S. Army Ranger, but after completing the program and right before his first deployment, he seemingly inexplicably wound up driving the getaway car for an armed bank robbery with three other Rangers. Blum digs deep into his cousin's story and the culture of the Rangers to find out why and how, and the result is a riveting, thought-provoking book."

—Cody Morrison, Square Books, Oxford, MS



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The Red-Haired Woman: A Novel

By Orhan Pamuk

"'Beguiling' is the perfect word to describe *The Red-Haired Woman*, which feels like an entrancing fairy tale, set in a far away, exotic land peopled with fascinating men and women. The story plays out over the life span of one man whose actions and choices over one summer, however fleeting, will turn out to be the formative events that shape his entire life. I particularly enjoyed the summer nights in the quiet town, as the boy stole around the back alleys, hoping for a glimpse of the red-haired woman. This book is unlike any other I've read."

—Jenny Lyons, The Vermont Book Shop, Middlebury, VT



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The Other Alcott: A Novel

By Elise Hooper

"*The Other Alcott* is an imaginative look at May—the youngest sister of Louisa May Alcott—and the relationship between the two siblings. While Louisa's art was created with words, May was a visual artist who hadn't yet hit her stride with painting when Louisa gained fame as the author of *Little Women*. Readers will be captivated by May's adventures from Concord to Boston and beyond, to Europe, as she grows her talent and is recognized for the artist and the woman—independent of her sister—that she is."

—Dawn Rennert, The Concord Bookshop, Concord, MA



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The History of Bees: A Novel

By Maja Lunde

"Both heartbreaking and hopeful, *The History of Bees* by Maja Lunde looks from present day to the history and future of bees, pollination, and the effects of humankind on these vital insects. Told through the stories of three families of beekeepers and pollinators, Lunde beautifully weaves together separate stories into one epic novel that will hold the reader captive until the very last sentence."

—Mary O'Malley, Anderson's Bookshop, Naperville, IL



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Swallowing Mercury: A Novel

By Wioletta Greg, Eliza Marciniak (Trans.)

"In *Swallowing Mercury*, nuanced gestures, drop-dead metaphors, and indelible observations coalesce in a series of short, adolescent episodes from 1980s Poland. English-speaking readers possessing no knowledge of the political climate and history of the time, fear not, for Greg's primary concern is one of universality, as many scenes take on that unmistakable relatability of childhood. Stories of high jinks, first love, familial absurdity, and (inevitably) death are the basis of these vignettes, while an excellent note from translator Eliza Marciniak contextualizes the book within the wider world."

—John Gibbs, Green Apple Books on the Park, San Francisco, CA



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SEPTEMBER '17



George and Lizzie: A Novel

By Nancy Pearl

"I don't know Nancy Pearl, but I imagine the beloved librarian turned national book commentator would be too modest to recommend her debut for your reading list, so I'll do it for her. Pearl has written an intelligent, character-driven page-turner that asks important questions about honesty and forgiveness and examines how conscious choices and behaviors strengthen us and our relationships. Raised by brilliant but emotionally detached psychologist parents, Lizzie faces ongoing and often humorous internal battles that ultimately lead to a crossroads in her marriage to George. You may examine your own relationships as you read this witty, kindhearted story. Pearl clearly seems to love the characters she has created. You'll fall for them, too."

—Mary Vermillion, Village Books, Bellingham, WA



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Unraveling Oliver: A Novel

By Liz Nugent

"*Oliver*, the titular center of Liz Nugent's chilling debut thriller, will attract and repel the reader as his deep wounds and legacy of destruction are revealed by his own confessions and by the recollections of those whose lives intersect with his. The novel opens with Oliver, a successful writer living in apparent domestic contentment, beating his wife into a coma. Why? As Oliver's crimes come into focus, Nugent's brilliance is in balancing the evil he does with the evil that is done to him. Is he to be reviled or pitied? Or both?"

—Anmiryam Budner, Main Point Books, Wayne, PA



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