

DECEMBER '19



Wake, Siren: Ovid Resung

By Nina MacLaughlin

"*Wake, Siren: Ovid Resung* has the power of a spell. Giving voice to the myriad women of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where 'what we have been today, we shall not be tomorrow,' Nina MacLaughlin conjures into being a new female consciousness and a world where our innermost truths are sung and our power is real. On nearly every page of this gorgeously written book, I heard echoed for the first time the song of my own authentic voice; I felt myself remade, fortified, held. I am awed by this visionary work and the remarkable insight that made it possible."

—Lisa Gozashti, Brookline Booksmith, Brookline, MA



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Anyone: A Novel

By Charles Soule

"In *Anyone*, Charles Soule takes what was so fun about his novel *The Oracle Year* and perfects it. This takes the high-paced adventure of a spy novel or an action film and pairs it with the thoughtfulness that is found in really good science fiction. Soule puts his characters through unimaginable stressors to make us evaluate our views on race, identity, humanity, and the very existence of the self."

—Faith Parke-Dodge, Page 158 Books, Wake Forest, NC



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Mary Toft; or, The Rabbit Queen: A Novel

By Dexter Palmer

"This is the story of Mary Toft, a woman who gave birth to dead rabbits in 1726. She did this more than 10 times, confounding surgeons and townsfolk alike. Is this a hoax, a curse, a miracle, or something in between? Based on a true story—if you are not familiar with it, don't look it up until you finish the book!—we follow surgeon John Howard and apprentice Zachary as they try to understand what is going on with their stunning patient. Extremely readable while still evoking the language and atmosphere of the time period, the book takes readers from the small village of Godalming, England, to London as John Howard and Zachary recruit the help of the top surgeons of the day. I highly enjoyed this disturbing novel. It is brutal, unexpected, and unputdownable."

—Katrina Bright-Yerges, Books & Company, Oconomowoc, WI



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The German House: A Novel

By Annette Hess, Elisabeth Lauffer (Trans.)

"*The German House* captured my imagination. The author expertly unfolds the story of Eva Bruhns, a translator for the 1963 Frankfurt Auschwitz Trials, with such believability that the reader feels complicit in the denial of the past. As she hears testimonies, Eva discovers that anyone can be guilty of some horrific role in the war, however unaware they were of inhumane acts, or however prey to propaganda. The reader's nausea will build as Eva gets closer to the truth. This historical novel seethes with life and feels authentic at every turn."

—Diane McGuire, Valley Bookseller, Stillwater, MN



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Twenty-one Truths About Love: A Novel

By Matthew Dicks

"Matthew Dicks returns to the page with the most phenomenally entertaining and clever novel of the year. Written entirely in the form of lists, this poignant and hilarious novel follows protagonist Daniel Mayrock as he records his hopes, failures, frustrations, and loves. The lists portray a man hurt by loss and yearning for a success to make him feel worthy of his wife's love. Daniel will make the reader fall in love with him as he exposes his foibles. Grab a Little Debbie snack cake (or four) and curl up with what is sure to be a singular sensation in the literary world."

—Pamela Klinger-Horn, Excelsior Bay Books, Excelsior, MN



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The Second Sleep: A Novel

By Robert Harris

"The year: 1468. The place: a remote English village. Christopher Fairfax, a young cleric, has come to bury a priest whose interest in old, heretical artifacts may have led to his death. Robert Harris, master of the historical novel, has written a corker—I won't say anything to spoil the twist!"

—Susan Taylor, Book House of Stuyvesant Plaza, Albany, NY



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Not the Girl You Marry: A Novel

By Andie J. Christopher

"This is a fun and engaging read. Don't let the concept (a role reversal of *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days*) or cute cover fool you. There is a lot more depth to this plot than meets the eye; it's about being seen and accepting your true self. Jack and Hannah both try to be what they think others want them to be but, because of their deceptions due to job obligations, are actually their natural selves. I can't wait for book two."

—Audrey Huang, Belmont Books, Belmont, PA



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The Clergyman's Wife: A Pride & Prejudice Novel

By Molly Greeley

"In *Pride and Prejudice*, Charlotte Lucas chooses with her eyes wide open to marry Mr. Collins, the unctuous clergyman who has nothing to recommend him but the ability to provide her with a household of her own. In *The Clergyman's Wife*, Molly Greeley pauses to consider the backstory and consequences of this choice. This is a gentle story, notable for the author's clear, lyrical writing and consideration of the real financial challenges facing women in Jane Austen's day, as well as her empathy for the characters—especially, and perhaps surprisingly, Mr. Collins—without letting them off the hook for their moral choices. With a light touch, wisdom, and care, Greeley explores questions that provide a richer understanding of history and of our own lives."

—Rebecca Mattis, Phoenix Books, Rutland, VT



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Winter Grave: A Novel

By Helene Tursten, Marlaine Delargy (Trans.)

"Helene Tursten has crafted a fast-paced Swedish police drama that is no-nonsense and utterly delightful. Two children turn up missing in a small town, and when the main suspect, a teenage boy, won't defend himself, the town turns on him. A spree of seemingly unconnected murders flusters the police, while young detective Embla sorts through the mess with panache and grace. The sharp, well-thought-out, complex plotting will keep you up at night. Very enjoyable."

—Becky Reed, Skylark Bookshop, Columbia, MO



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Labyrinth of Ice: The Triumphant and Tragic Greeley Polar Expedition

By Buddy Levy

"There are very few narratives of the tribulations and deprivations of polar expedition. Ernest Shackleton's is the most well-known; the Franklin Expedition's is the most horrific, but we have no survivors to recount it for us. The Greeley Expedition of 1881, however, remains largely unknown. Here, Buddy Levy has resurrected the forgotten story of the U.S. Army Signal Corps' participation in the First International Polar Year explorations using the recollections and diaries of the participants. That anyone survived is almost incredible; that we have their stories and photographs even more so. Gripping."

—Jeff L. Battis, Sausalito Books by the Bay, Sausalito, CA



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Trace of Evil: A Novel

By Alice Blanchard

"Author Alice Blanchard begins her first thriller series with a novel about rookie detective Natalie Lockhart. She's young, she has a past—and who doesn't in the sleepy little town of Burning Lake, New York?—but she also has a good heart and the need to find out what happened to nine missing transients. What she finds, however, may be worse than murder, and soon involves more than the original missing people. There's something distinctly evil lurking in the hearts and minds of certain residents of Burning Lake; the question is, can Natalie keep her head above water long enough to learn the truth and bring justice to light? Crime writer Ann Cleeves calls Blanchard's writing powerful, and I could not agree more!"

—Linda Bond, Auntie's Bookstore, Spokane, WA



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The Innocents: A Novel

By Michael Crummey

"Michael Crummey is a master chronicler of isolation, and *The Innocents* is a perfect example. Following an orphaned brother and sister trying to survive on the coast of Newfoundland, this is a spare and elemental novel about the power of family and the act of survival, even in the harshest circumstances."

—Tyler Goodson, Avid Bookshop, Athens, GA



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NVK: A Novel

By Temple Drake

"A weirdly wonderful tale of love, tragedy, lust, and, yes, a new breed of vampire: the auto-created immortal creature. Set in modern-day Shanghai, *NVK* tells the story of a young businessman who meets and falls hard for an aloof foreign beauty. Their torrid affair transforms into one of mystery as well as unasked and unanswered questions as Drake seductively draws the reader into a world of secrets and death. Here is a different telling of the lone vampire story that will appeal to readers who believe, perhaps, that the undead do walk amongst us, seeking love and connection, and not necessarily looking for their next meal."

—Helen Gregory, Maria's Bookshop, Durango, CO



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The Ship of Dreams: The Sinking of the Titanic and the End of the Edwardian Era

By Gareth Russell

"*The Ship of Dreams* recounts the *Titanic* epic largely from the perspective of six of her first-class passengers, including the naval architect who designed the ship; a movie star; a vice president of the Pennsylvania Railroad and his 17-year-old son, Isidor Strauss, who founded Macy's Department Store; and Lucy Noël Martha Leslie, the Countess of Rothes. This incisive and engrossing account of the ship's evolution and tragic loss injects an intelligent light into an event that is as much enshrouded in legend as the *Titanic's* remains are in the deep, dark ocean. This story is both a paean to the genius of the age that gave birth to the *Titanic* and a eulogy for the hubris that doomed her."

—Alden Graves, Northshire Bookstore, Manchester Center, VT



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A Madness of Sunshine: A Novel

By Nalini Singh

"Singh brings us into the wild side of New Zealand, to a tiny village where the new cop knows everybody by name and really cares about protecting them. Maya has returned to find her old school friends greatly changed—and one may be a serial killer. This thriller is compelling; the characters are fresh and exciting but realistic. The tension builds with every page turned, right up to the finale—wow!"

—Karen Bakshoian, Letterpress Books, Portland, ME



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The Sacrament: A Novel

By Olaf Olafsson

"*The Sacrament* is a thoughtful, atmospheric, and quietly intense novel about how our choices have effects that must be felt our whole lives, and how we grapple with those consequences. I loved settling in with this novel."

—Catherine Bock, Parnassus Books, Nashville, TN



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Under Occupation: A Novel

By Alan Furst

"Returning to one of his favorite subjects, Alan Furst examines life in Nazi-occupied Paris through a quasi-doppelgänger: Paul Ricard, an accomplished writer of spy fiction. Facing writer's block, Ricard is presented with an unusual request from a Polish friend to get involved in the Resistance. Together, they manage to make contact with Polish slave laborers (who are actually engineers) in Germany to provide the Resistance—and eventually the English—with technical details and specimens of detonators and torpedoes. In 1942, with Paris gripped by war privations and the terror of the German SS, life was dark, difficult, and exhilarating, and Ricard takes to his assignments as if he had trained for them. Furst is the best writer of espionage fiction today."

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



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Dead Astronauts: A Novel

By Jeff VanderMeer

"Set in the same world as his excellent 2017 novel *Borne*, *Dead Astronauts* finds VanderMeer again at the top of his game exploring a universe destroyed by the nefarious Company. Delightful strangeness abounds: a man disintegrating into hundreds of salamanders, an ancient giant fish called Leviathan, a large blue fox with a message to deliver across time—all these and more make *Dead Astronauts* one of VanderMeer's most engagingly strange and beguiling novels. As he continues to explore deeply environmental themes, his unique lens makes the reader ponder our current climate crisis in a new way. A wonderfully weird, nature-driven science fiction odyssey through time and space."

—Caleb Masters, Bookmarks, Winston-Salem, NC



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The Wicked Redhead: A Novel

By Beatriz Williams

"There has been a rash of then-and-now novels recently, but Williams weaves together two time frames so skillfully that the reader doesn't feel a bit discomfited by the time and narrator-switching in successive chapters. Williams is a skillful storyteller who keeps the reader intrigued by how it will all pan out."

—Susan Thurin, Bookends on Main, Menomonie, WI



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Secondhand: Travels in the New Global Garage Sale

By Adam Minter

"This book has completely consumed my life for the past few days! *Secondhand* takes us on an adventure through the world of recycling and reuse culture. This is an honest look at how the things that clutter our homes don't just disappear when we bring them to a secondhand store or recycling center. This book wants us to be a part of the reuse movement, to take notice of fast fashion, single-use items, and easily replaced electronics and make conscientious decisions as consumers. I hope many people read *Secondhand* and, in the spirit of the book, pass it on to others."

—Alexa Ochocki, Content Bookstore, Northfield, MN



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