

FEBRUARY 24, 2025

booklife®

YOUR GUIDE TO SELF-PUBLISHING

59 New BookLife Titles Listed • 18 New BookLife Titles Reviewed

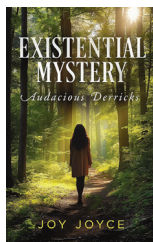
Indie Spotlight

In this edition of our monthly thematic roundup of BookLife titles, we welcome romance and relationship books.

Want to see your book featured? Go to booklife.com/indiespotlight.

MULTIGENERATIONAL STORIES

Existential Mystery: Audacious Derricks



Joy Joyce

ASIN B0DJC2SY7P

Author statement: “An agelong dispute plagued generation after generation. Families were torn apart by violence and death. Can a hidden romance end the long feud? This fantasy story celebrates the power of love, persistence, and the impact one determined individual can have on the

lives of many. Coming from a country in Africa with a diversity of languages and traditional cultural differences, my writing is mostly preoccupied with the themes of culture, tradition, and social and economic inequality, highlighting some of the problems women face in Africa for just being women.”

Flooding the River



Kehinde Winful

ISBN 978-1-63489-744-0

Author statement: “*Flooding the River* is a third-person narrative about a Nigerian American woman named Lolah. This book captures how relationships frequently unfold in ways we cannot imagine and shows us that the means are just as important as the end. Through Lolah, her mother,

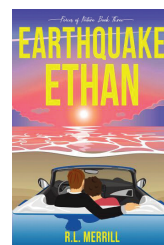
and her Auntie Kay, we see three stories that show the reader there is no one way to be an African woman in love. These characters

show how love is learned and unlearned and passed down generation after generation—and that, even through hardship, love is really meant to be sweet, hopeful, and even triumphant.”

ROMANTIC COMEDIES & LIGHT ADVENTURE

Earthquake Ethan

R.L. Merrill



ISBN 978-1-953433-14-5

Author statement: “The Earth shakes the morning actor Ethan Bradley arrives in Los Angeles looking for a second chance. He hopes his former producers, Reese Matheson and Toby Griffiths, meant it when they said to look them up if he were ever in L.A. because he has no other options. The pictures the paparazzi took at the

wrap party for their London show made sure of that. What he isn't counting on is the reception he gets from their manager, Arthur Frye. Ethan wishes he would notice him, and for more than his pretty face and talent. Too bad Arthur only sees Ethan as a complication. Ethan Bradley shakes things up wherever he goes, and Arthur Frye is afraid he'll be left in the wreckage if he gets too close.”

The Gentlewoman Farmer

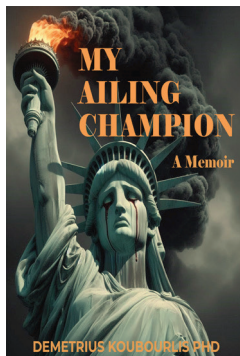
Emily Opal

ASIN B09DMWBW7C

Author statement: “When Sophia agrees to marry her neighbor to save her struggling farm, she believes her problems are solved.

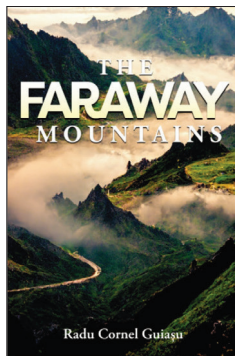


Must-Read Titles



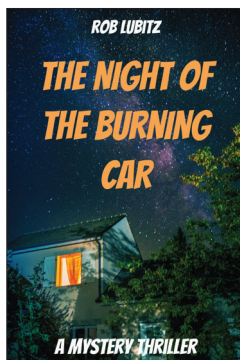
My Ailing Champion: A Memoir
by Demetrius Koubourlis, Ph.D.
ISBN: 979-8218389420

“Pointed, pained, touching account of coming to America for learning and freedom.”



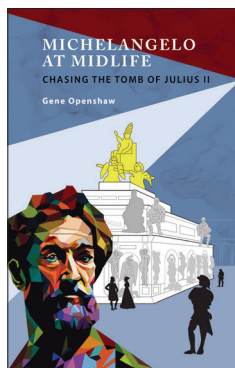
The Faraway Mountains
by Radu Guiașu
ISBN: 978-1592113170

An often hilarious and sometimes heartbreaking exploration of the absurdities of life under an increasingly erratic dictatorship.



The Night of the Burning Car
by Rob Lubitz
ISBN: 979-8372097766

“A page-turning thriller about crime, corruption, and justice in the midcentury South.”



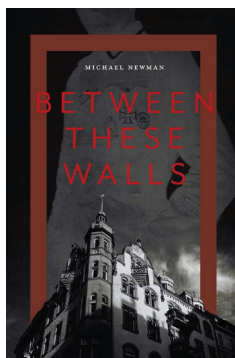
Michelangelo at Midlife
by Gene Openshaw
ISBN: 979-8218553975

“Surprising novel of art, history, and mid-life crises, including Michelangelo’s.”



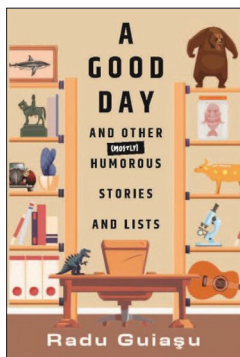
Hair Trigger Smile
by Daniel James
EDITOR'S PICK
ISBN: 978-1738495627

“Superior paranormal thriller, rich with mad invention and moral urgency.”



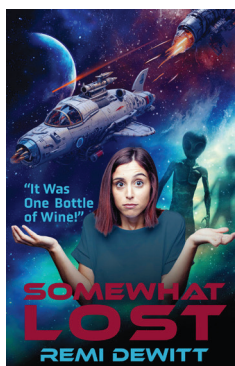
Between These Walls
by Michael Newman
EDITOR'S PICK
ISBN: 978-1525548840

“Fans of WWII fiction will not want to miss this gripping story, which brims with authenticity and suspense.”



A Good Day and Other (Mostly) Humorous Stories and Lists
by Radu Guiașu
ISBN: 978-1039194946

“Eclectic, entertaining collection that probes life’s lighter moments.”

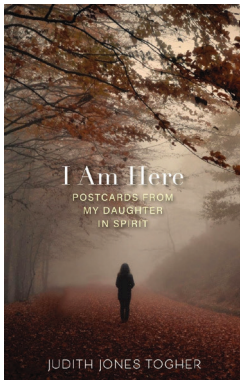


Somewhat Lost: It Was One Bottle of Wine
by Remi DeWitt
ISBN: 978-1922329608

“Fast, fun story of bold women on the run throughout the galaxy.”



Must-Read Titles



I Am Here: Postcards from My Daughter in Spirit

by Judith Togher
ISBN: 978-1642280630

“ Readers facing loss will find comfort and beauty in Togher’s enlightening approach to grief.



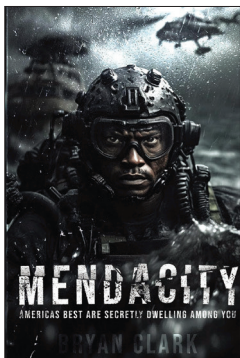
The Adventures of Princess Ramele and Prince Peter, Vol. 2

by Mona Leung

EDITOR'S PICK

ISBN: 979-8328451383

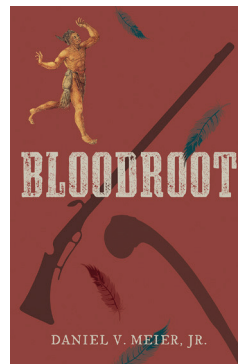
“ Fun, fantastical adventure filled with mermaids, fairies, and sea dragons.



Mendacity: Americas Best Are Secretly Dwelling Among You

by Bryan Clark
ISBN: 979-8990705906

“ Brisk military fiction with deeper themes of betrayal and corruption.



Bloodroot

by Daniel V. Meier, Jr.

ISBN: 978-1952782046

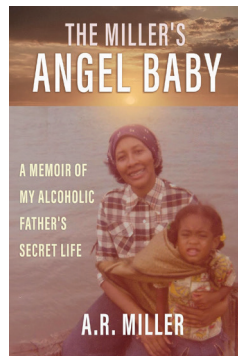
“ This well-researched novel of early Jamestown will grab readers seeking a fresh look at history.



Bisentient

by Patrick O'Connor
ISBN: 978-1739113612

“ Creepy, ambitious thriller of conspiracies, other realities, and major surprises.

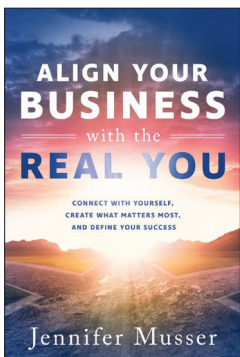


The Miller's Angel Baby

by A.R. Miller

ISBN: 979-8891094062

“ Emotional memoir of family secrets, grief, and, ultimately, forgiveness.



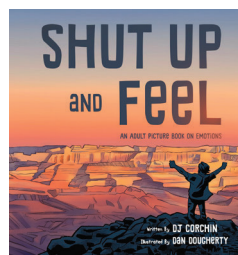
Align Your Business with the Real You

by Jennifer Musser

EDITOR'S PICK

ISBN: 979-8991544214

“ Optimistic, well-ordered guide to building business success.

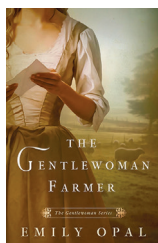


Shut Up and Feel

by DJ Corchin

ISBN: 978-1732864627

“ Aggressively profane adult picture book urging readers to let themselves feel.



However, her childhood sweetheart, Philip, appears on her doorstep after disappearing two years prior. She must decide whether she is willing to put her farm, her livelihood, and all those who depend on her at risk to be with the man she truly loves. While drafting a novel, I always realize I'm exploring my own problems. In this story, Sophia struggles alone despite being surrounded by those able to help. I hope her journey resonates with readers as much as it does with me."

The Italian Holiday



Nicole Sharp

ISBN 978-1-4087-3088-1

Author statement: "Keats McCall is Italy bound for Valentine's Day, but not for romantic reasons. What she doesn't expect is Lorenzo, who smells of espresso, Italian history, and self-assurance, to propel her on an unimaginable journey. A few years ago, I relayed the story of my first visit to see my sister in

Florence when she was studying abroad there. After I finished telling my friend this story, she asked me one question: Why didn't you stay in Italy? The question gestated and, wouldn't you know it, a few days later Olivia Keats McCall woke me up in the middle of the night and

told me how she went to Italy, got off the plane in Rome, and had the adventure of a lifetime."

It Happened One Morning



L.A. Hider Jones

ASIN BODGFKJ32Z

Author statement: "The high heel is on the other foot when cocky Boz Studebaker, America's favorite dating and relationship coach, suddenly turns into a woman. Now he is forced not only to live a woman's life, but also to take his own dating advice. When a horrific event leads her to the love of her life, for the first time

she doesn't want to return to being Boz. Problem is, the universe has other plans. The origins of this book began in 2022, after the breakup of a relationship. I wondered what I did wrong, so I dove into relationship advice from experts and psychologists. During that time, it occurred to me that almost all of these advisers are men who have never dated the men we women date. I turned that observation into a rom-com."

Liddy-Jean Marketing Queen and the Matchmaking Scheme

Mari SanGiovanni

ISBN 978-1-61294-285-8

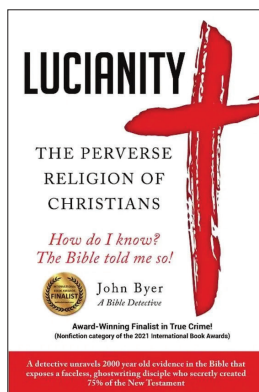
Author statement: "Liddy-Jean Carpenter has learning disabilities.



booklife

Must-Read Titles

SPONSORED



Lucianity

by John Byer

ISBN: 978-1642379297

Lucianity reports that Lucius, one of Jesus Christ's 70 disciples, and 'Keeper of Records' for the early church, forged and/or corrupted about 75% of the New Testament.



Vigilante Priest

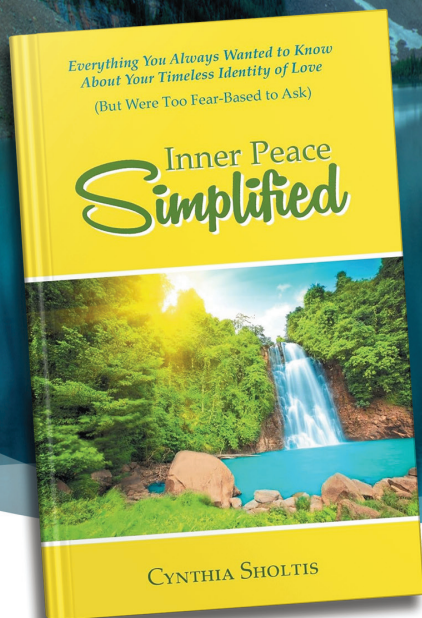
by Dan Bowden

ISBN: 978-1737847243

“Epic procedural of a Bronx cop, missing priests, and organized vengeance.”

“ Quotes from BookLife Reviews

If you are interested in participating in our next group ad please reach out to dali@publishersweekly.com.



INNER PEACE SIMPLIFIED



ISBN: 978-1684867516

In a world where chaos often overshadows calm, Cynthia Sholtis' book, *Inner Peace Simplified: Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Your Timeless Identity of Love (But Were Too Fear-Based to Ask)*, offers a roadmap to emotional and spiritual freedom. This compelling spiritual self-help guide masterfully reveals how to break free from fear-based behaviors and embrace a life rooted in self-love and inner peace.

Sholtis begins by addressing a profound truth: the greatest obstacle to personal well-being isn't external but internal—what she calls “false self-hate.” Through vivid storytelling and compassionate insights, she illustrates how childhood experiences can unconsciously shape adult behaviors. Readers are introduced to Paula, a woman whose upbringing with a submissive mother and a verbally abusive father influenced her relationships. In her first marriage, Paula became the victim; in her second, she mirrored her father's aggressiveness. Sholtis' analysis of Paula's journey underscores a central theme of the book—unhealthy patterns must be unlearned to experience true emotional freedom.

Sholtis' own family history adds a poignant layer to her guidance. Her late ex-husband, Bob, struggled with drug addiction fueled by a deep fear of inheriting his schizophrenic mother's mental illness. This candid account serves as a powerful reminder of how self-doubt and fear can sabotage personal growth. Sholtis invites readers to confront these fears and replace them with a mindset of love and trust.

One of the book's most striking elements is its spiritual foundation. Sholtis weaves the story of Adam and Eve into her teachings, illustrating how a victim mentality—one rooted in shame and blame—can perpetuate feelings of hopelessness. Instead, she encourages readers to shift their focus to the present moment, where healing and transformation can begin.

Sholtis' advice is far from preachy; her tone is empathetic and empowering. She delivers practical strategies to combat fear-based thinking and emphasizes the importance of self-respect. As she writes, “The real winner in any disagreement is the person who says the least.” This principle reflects her belief in the power of mindfulness and restraint in cultivating inner peace.

Ultimately, *Inner Peace Simplified* is a beacon of hope for anyone seeking to break free from the shadows of their past. Sholtis reminds readers that the journey to inner peace begins with self-love and trust in a higher power. The lessons in this book are transformative, offering readers a chance to reclaim their timeless identity of love.

Available at:

[amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

[BARNES & NOBLE](https://www.barnesandnoble.com)



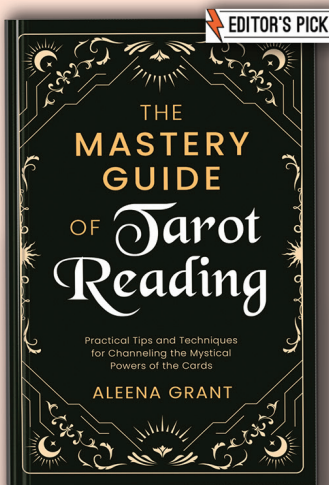
*also in other major online bookstores





ISBN 979-8-9912282-2-0

“Refreshing guidance on how to find meaning in leisure time activities.” — **booklife**

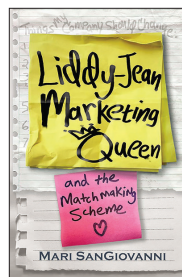


ISBN 979-8-9907910-3-9

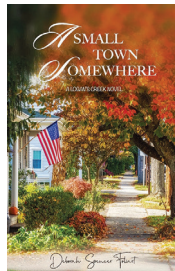
“—a smart, demystifying guide worth referring to often.” — **booklife**



ISBN 979-8-9907910-9-1



A Small Town Somewhere: A Logan's Creek Novel

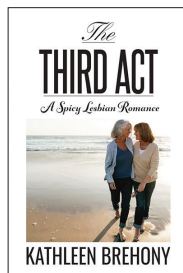


Deborah Spencer Foliart

ASIN B0DJNS85P9

Author statement: “The day hotheaded Abby Carter blows up her carefully curated life in Chicago, she takes a pair of scissors to her too-small Spanx. When she returns to Logan’s Creek, she runs into her first love, Josh. He’s too handsome for his own good, and he knows it. But in the decade since Abby left town, he’s not been able to forget her. In the meantime, Abby’s ex Ian decides Abby means more to him than he realized. How do you choose between the homecoming king and the man who can make you forget your own name with just the touch of his fingertips?”

The Third Act



Kathleen Brehony

ASIN B0DHQSWDTK

Author statement: “Shannon O’Connell is broken. She is 65 years old and looks 20 years younger. Her partner of 30 years left her for a mutual friend. Her mother is disappearing before her eyes with dementia. And now, the death of her best friend from metastatic breast cancer brings her to her knees. In this dark night of the soul—filled with endings—she could not have predicted that this moment could be a beginning. It’s an old flame, the beautiful and sexy Elizabeth Matthews, who awakens something in her that was forgotten long ago. Can they overcome the emotional roadblocks they put in their own way?”

That's Lovely



Toni McBride

ASIN B0DQYBQN2K

Author statement: “This romance started with a simple idea: What if two people, totally different from each other, somehow found a way to really see and understand one another? I wanted to write about the messy, unexpected journey of love—how it’s not always about perfect timing or instant chemistry but about vulnerability, growth, and connection. I let the characters take over and see where they led me. This is a story that will make you laugh and maybe allow you to believe in the power of second chances. My hope is that readers will feel that same mix of excitement and uncertainty that love brings.”

ROMANTASY & PARANORMAL

The Amulet's Power

Kendra Powers

ASIN B0DMLW7HD2

Author statement: “Meet Alistair, a billionaire vampire with secrets as deep as the Seine. His world is turned upside down when Iris, a fiercely independent time-traveling witch, arrives on a mission, wearing a mysterious red amulet. This relic, tied to her enigmatic past, guards



the fate of their supernatural world. Bound by fate, opposed by history, they are enemies turned lovers under the glimmering city lights. Their bond ignites with a revelation—triple heirs, pulsating with wizardry and vampiric power. As ancient foes rise from the ashes and mystical hunters threaten their haven, the red amulet becomes their beacon of hope.”

Every Bite You Take (Unusualities #2)



Kel Bruem
ASIN B0CJ4HJ4FT

Author statement: “Evelyn Sharp fell in love by accident. She was only pretending to date the terrifyingly handsome and funny mershark Will Burleigh, but fate had other plans. After covering a haute couture fashion show in New York City and seeing Will’s steady improvements to himself, Evelyn

thinks she’s found her happy ending—until a mysterious sea witch from Will’s past appears and ruins everything. With her deadlines slipping and a contested trip to Paris looming, Evelyn must decide if cleaning up after Will is worth all the collateral damage in her life—or if she’ll take a more luxurious path forward.”

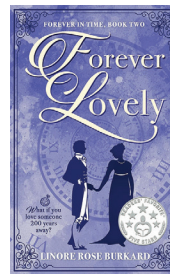
The Fire Apprentice: A Fairy Tale with Benefits



Jane Buehler
ASIN B0DQVCGF9D

Author statement: “After a fairy seduced her, Jane swore she’d never trust one again. But when a dragon snatches her child, Jane is desperate for help. Rowan, the apprentice blacksmith, offers to rescue Elle. And how does he know all about dragons and their magic? Because he’s a fairy. I write lighthearted romantasy stories with fun magic. With this book, I was interested in creating a heroine who struggles with pelvic floor issues but overcomes her self-doubts and finds a romantic partner and a happy ending.”

Forever Lovely: A Regency Time Travel Romance



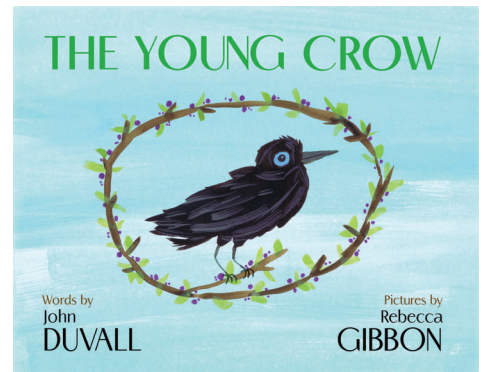
Linore Rose Burkard
ISBN 978-1-955511-23-0

Author statement: “Miss Margaret Andrews, a bluestocking from Regency England, gets stranded in present-day New York City when the tallit, the time-traveling shawl, goes awry. She meets handsome Stewart Russell and falls in love. But he’s a targeted man due to a mixup. Can she get them both back to the past—before it’s too late?”

Q&A SPONSORED

BookLife Talks with John Duvall and Rebecca Gibbon

After working together on another picture book called *The Great Spruce*, Duvall and Gibbon teamed up to bring to life a story about two friends who foster a young crow they find.



What’s the story behind *The Young Crow*?

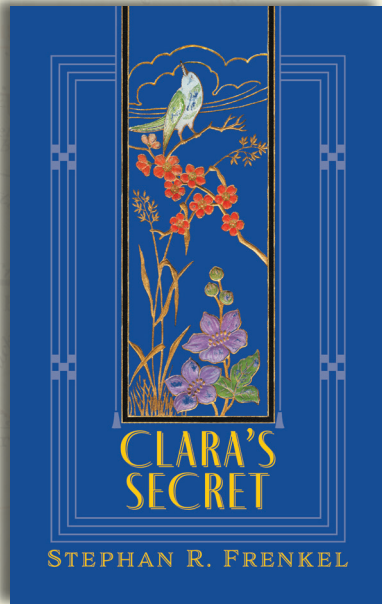
Duvall: While driving home one evening, I saw a little crow in the middle of the street. I pulled over and inspected it. As I approached, the bird opened its mouth for food. I took it to the neighborhood deli and bought some corn, grapes, and seeds. I took the bird home and it grew quickly. Soon it could fly on its own. One night, it flew away and I never saw it again.

How did you become involved in *The Young Crow*?

Gibbon: Back in 2015, I illustrated John’s book *The Great Spruce*, published by Penguin, and we’ve been

friends ever since. John set up a blog that was an offshoot of *The Great Spruce*, called *Alec & Rosa*, and asked me to illustrate scenes of the two friends playing outside, finding insects, climbing trees, feeding birds, and so on. John is always writing little stories and often emails them over to me. When I first read *The Young Crow*, I could envisage it as a children’s book. I love the simplicity of the story and the tender friendship between Rosa, Alec, and the crow.

For more, visit booklife.com/youngcrow



“Rich personal and cultural history of a young woman in Berlin’s Belle Epoque.”

—Publishers Weekly/BookLife Reviews



“A tender, personality-centered biography of golden age Berlin.”

—Kirkus Reviews

“A wonderfully composed portrayal that could be considered narrative Art Nouveau.”

—BookTrib

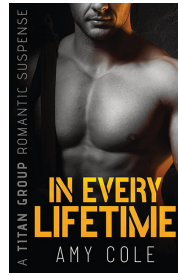
Interactive Content



Paperback ISBN:
978-1-7343635-3-1
Kindle eBook ISBN:
978-1-7343635-4-8

www.laevnotes.com

In Every Lifetime

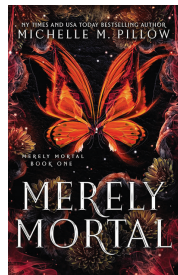


Amy Cole

ASIN B0DJG1WP6Q

Author statement: “The story of Max and Violet is one of romantic suspense with healthy doses of spice, love, and brotherhood. This story came to me while tromping around the Saratoga Springs Battlefield Park site. I imagined the countless stories those hills and valleys could tell. Although the story is a true romance at its core (with the steamier scenes as well), I’ve also tried to weave in historical tidbits and cultural references and pay homage to incredible people and places along the way.”

Merely Mortal (Merely Mortal #1)



Michelle M. Pillow

ISBN 978-1-62501-341-5

Author statement: “This is the first in a brand-new series that I have poured my heart and soul into, and I can’t wait for you to dive into Tamara’s world. The Merely Mortal Series is a bit of a departure from my usual writing style. This time, I’ve embraced a more personal, first-person perspective to bring you closer to the heart and mind of our heroine, Tamara. Navigating a perilous supernatural society as a mortal, Tamara’s journey is filled with forbidden love, dark family secrets, and the quest for identity amidst magic and danger.”

Storm on the Horizon



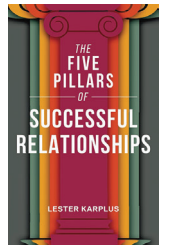
Meredith Bond

ISBN 978-1-4923-5581-6

Author statement: “Tatiana Ashurst can’t help being drawn to the dashing Kit Vallentyn, who extends a spell of desire over her more powerful than any she can conjure. But she is preordained to give birth to the most powerful priestess in seven generations—she does not get to choose who she marries. Kit would rather not marry, but at his father’s insistence he agrees to do so. The only way to survive the storm looming on the horizon will be to have the courage to shed their secrets and discover their true destinies together.”

NONFICTION

The Five Pillars of Successful Relationships

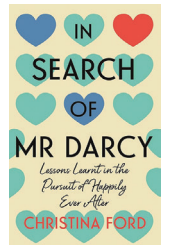


Lester Karplus

ASIN B0DM9SPGYN

Author statement: “*The Five Pillars of Successful Relationships* offers readers a practical guide to creating strong, lasting connections with those who matter most. Although this book provides a roadmap for finding success in dating and love relationships, its pillars can strengthen any relationship, whether personal or professional. Start building more robust, more fulfilling relationships today!

In Search of Mr. Darcy: Lessons Learnt in the Pursuit of Happily Ever After



Christina Ford

ISBN 978-1-73830-442-4

Author statement: “*In Search of Mr. Darcy: Lessons Learnt in the Pursuit of Happily Ever* is a romance memoir that spans four decades. It explores love, divorce, affairs, friendships, and dating as a single parent in your 40s. If you ever wondered if there is life after divorce, sex after 40, or if your broken heart will ever beat again, the answer is damn straight—to all of it.”

Booksellers & Librarians:



How are you handling self-published books?

Every week, *Publishers Weekly* reviewers highlight self-published books that deserve your attention.

PLUS



Reviews

look for "self-published"
at the end of a review
[publishersweekly.com/
self-pub](https://publishersweekly.com/self-pub)



paid reviews of self- or
indie-published titles
[publishersweekly.com/
BookLifeReviews](https://publishersweekly.com/BookLifeReviews)



PW reviewers critique
thousands of self-published
titles every year:
[publishersweekly.com/
BookLifePrize](https://publishersweekly.com/BookLifePrize)

Let us help you find the best in self-published books!

All powered by *Publishers Weekly* reviewers.

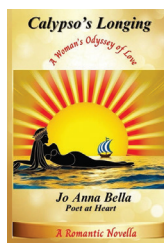


New Titles from Self-Publishers

Booksellers, publishers, librarians, and agents are encouraged to look at the 59 self-published titles below. Each appears with a list of retailers that are selling the book and a description provided by its author. Some of these writers are waiting to be discovered; others have track records and followings and are doing it on their own. If you are a self-published author interested in listing titles in this section, please visit publishersweekly.com/pw-select for more information.

Fiction

Calypso's Longing: A Woman's Odyssey of Love



Jo Anna Bella. Luxor Scribe. \$5.99 e-book, ASIN BODSK39HP8 Amazon

Riveting reimagining! Finally, hear the goddess Calypso's side of the story. Indulge in the

depth of emotions of both Odysseus and Calypso from the vast chronicles of Greek mythology!

The Maker's Name



Seamus McKenna. Audacity Publications. \$17.75 paper (320p), ISBN 978-1-7385410-1-0; 99¢ e-book, ASIN BOD4KXVV7C Amazon, Apple Books, Barnes & Noble, Blackwell's, Google Books, Kobo,

Waterstones

A thrilling ride through life, celebrity, and dodgy business practices, not to mention a possible parricide, by two warring brothers, one of whom has a wife who regrets her early choice.



Mnara 610

Burak Kaya. Burak Kaya. \$4.99 e-book, ASIN BODRW8FB5C Amazon, Kobo

Mnara 610 is a gripping historical novel

that tells the heroic story of 610 Lycian youths who valiantly resist Alexander the Great, sacrificing everything for freedom and honor.

Old Dogs and Other Stories

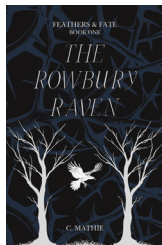


Butch Freedman. Avi Press. \$16.99 paper (242p), ISBN 979-8-218-48967-0; \$6.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-218-48968-7

Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Ingram

A collection of 16 short stories that delve into the subjects of loneliness, the human condition, families, dogs, surfing, and staying alive while still having a laugh.

The Rowbury Raven (Feathers and Fate #1)



C. Mathie. C. Mathie. \$15.99 paper (300p), ISBN 979-8-3420-4610-7; \$7.99 e-book, ASIN BODJL6RJCQ

Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Books-A-Million

Mansyn Rowbury embarks on a painful journey of self-discovery. Through a fast-paced swirl of events, she uncovers cryptic truths about her family and herself in a world of magic.

Silver Echoes: A Gold Digger Novel

Rebecca Rosenberg. Lion Heart Publishing. \$12.99 paper (360p), ISBN 978-1-7329699-6-4; \$4.99 e-book, ISBN 978-1-7329699-7-1 Amazon, Ingram



Spellbinding saga of secrets and redemption: a 1920s starlet takes a dark turn when an attack reawakens a secret part of herself, plunging her into a dangerous underworld.

The Silver Squad: Rebels with Wrinkles



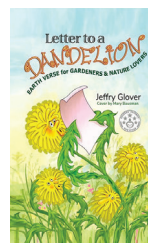
Marty Essen. Encante Press. \$18.95 paper (278p), ISBN 978-1-7344303-9-4; \$9.99 e-book, ISBN 978-1-7344303-8-7

Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Books-A-Million, Powell's

Proving you're never too old to make a difference, septuagenarian vigilantes Barry and Beth embark on a hilarious cross-country road trip, becoming accidental celebrities along the way.

Poetry

Letter to a Dandelion: Earth Verse for Gardeners & Nature Lovers



Jeffrey Glover. Poems for Pleasure Press. \$22.99 (200p), ISBN 978-1-948854-07-8; \$4.99 e-book, ISBN 978-1-948854-09-2

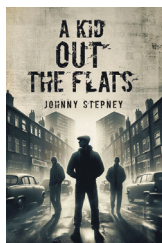
Amazon, Apple Books, Barnes & Noble, Bookshop.org

This charming, lighthearted tour around an imaginary garden through the seasons explores the joy of gardening and the

delight of reading poetry aloud. Over 150 rhyming poems! For ages 12 to adult.

Mystery/Thriller

A Kid out the Flats



John Stepney. Austin Macauley Publishers. \$15.95 paper (216p), ISBN 978-1-0358-3998-8; \$4.50 e-book, ISBN 978-1-0358-3999-5
Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Waterstones, WH Smith

A story of survival in the run-down docklands area of East London, where murderous drug gangs are looking to take control of London.

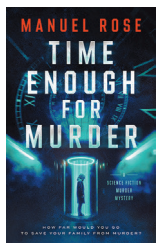
The Old Fox: A Tom Miller Spy Thriller



Robert Perkins. Robert Perkins. \$29.99 (470p), ISBN 979-8-3034-6408-7; \$19.99 paper, ISBN 979-8-3034-6237-3
Amazon

In this political and espionage thriller, the British security and intelligence services battle Russia's and Iran's foreign and military intelligence services, which are jointly seeking to undermine British democracy.

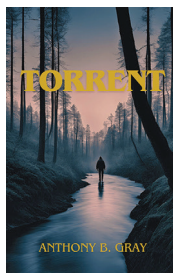
Time Enough for Murder



Manuel Rose. Manuel Rose. \$30.99 (428p), ISBN 979-8-218-54232-0; \$17.99 paper, ISBN 979-8-218-54246-7
Amazon

Haunted by grief, driven by the brutal murders of his wife and daughter, scientist-inventor Nathan Harris seeks revenge. He tests his new time machine to travel back to stop the killer.

Torrent



Anthony B. Gray. Anthony B. Gray. \$7.99 paper (148p), ISBN 979-8-218-57478-9; \$2.99 e-book, ASIN BODRJ8LSHC
Amazon, Ingram
Samuel Ross reluctantly joins a hiking expedition to Canyon

Park. What begins as journey of healing quickly descends into a nightmare of human trafficking.

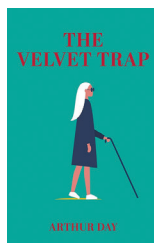
Under the Radar



Peter Cumyn. Peter Cumyn. \$16.99 paper (258p), ISBN 978-1-7780009-4-2; \$5.99 e-book, BODF81KBHW
Amazon, Chapters, Indigo
A murder in Montreal takes police detective Carmel Roch north to

Labrador, where she helps the RCMP arrest a Russian spy at a high-security radar site and catches the murderer.

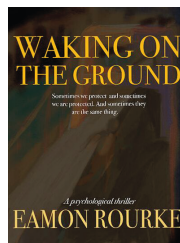
The Velvet Trap



Arthur Day. Authors' Tranquility Press. \$13.99 paper (454p), ISBN 978-1-956480-90-0
Amazon

Trans woman Dianne Vargas and partner M.J. McCaal race to stop a killer targeting a blind woman while investigating a young girl's disappearance in a white slavery ring.

Waking on the Ground

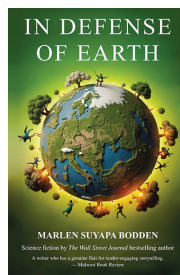


Eamon Rourke. Rory O'Sullivan. \$2.99 e-book, ASIN BODTJGZ9VJ
Kobo

Edgar is a homeless veteran who witnesses an abduction that may be more than it appears to be.

SF/Fantasy/Horror

In Defense of Earth



Marlen Suyapa Bodden. Roatan Hall Press. \$12.99 paper (148p), ISBN 979-8-9920309-0-7; \$9.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-9920309-1-4
Ingram

Axy starts its mission. Earth's cores wobble. The humans fire on Axy. Axy starts its kill switch so its replacement will complete its mission to end all life on Earth.

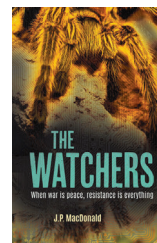
A Tarot Prophecy and Other Stories



Stephen Tallevi. Stephen Tallevi. \$12.99 paper (232p), ISBN 978-1-0690862-0-4; \$2.99 e-book, ASIN BODJDZ117L
Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Kobo

Dark, atmospheric stories for lovers of haunting tales. Séances, horrifying manifestations, and malevolent forces are sure to keep readers awake well into the night.

The Watchers



J.P. MacDonald. Glossy Black Books. \$18.99 paper (228p), ISBN 978-1-7637640-1-9; \$5.99 e-book, ISBN 978-1-7637640-0-2
Amazon, Bookshop.org, Ingram

In a future where freedom is a memory, Kangaroo Island stands as the last hope. A young biorobotics engineer discovers that the fight for freedom begins with the courage to resist.

The Zygan Emprise: Renegades, Redemption, Rebirth



Y.S. Pascal. Amphitrite Publishing. \$24.99 paper (510p), ISBN 979-8-3390-1913-8; \$4.99 e-book, ASIN BODGRY5NW6
Amazon

Shiloh Rush plays Ensign Tara Guard in the sci-fi TV series *Bulwark*, but nobody knows Shiloh is a secret agent for the Zygan Federation, an intergalactic empire hidden from Earth.

Romance/Erotica

Lost Genes: A Small-Town Deputy Suspenseful Romance (Romancing Our

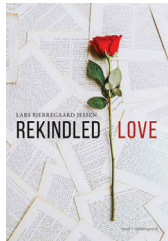


Roots #2)
Claudia J. Severin. Pella Road Publishing. \$17.99 paper (300p), ISBN 979-8-9873408-3-7; \$2.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-9873408-4-4
Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Kobo, Ingram

All seems lost when a sniper's bullet hits

its mark. Can Jace protect Leslie from his brother's criminal associates? Once she uncovers his secret, can Leslie outsmart their nemesis?

Rekindled Love



Lars Bjerregaard Jessen. mellelmgard. \$33.99 paper (270p), ISBN 978-87-7608-061-7; \$21.91 e-book, ASIN B0C3H27Q9L Forlagetmellelmgard.com, Amazon

Rekindled Love is a novel about great infatuation, love, and how love acts as a driving force in life. It is also a travelogue and a story about unrequited love.

Stewart: The McKeegans: A New Generation

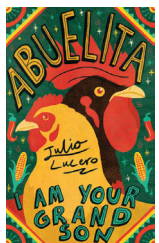


Kathleen Ball. Kathleen Ball. \$9.99 paper (160p), ISBN 979-8-3046-4653-6; \$3.99 e-book, ASIN B0DP1HXTT8 Amazon

What if your whole life was a lie? Aurora, reeling from her stepfather's crimes, and Stewart McKeegan, scammed by him, must overcome mistrust and danger to find everlasting love.

Nonfiction

Abuelita, I Am Your Grandson



Julio Lucero. Julio Lucero. \$15.95 paper (192p), ISBN 979-8-9906022-0-5; \$9.99 e-book, ASIN B0D8LMK785 Amazon

A lighthearted collection of autobiographical essays from a family business, a Mexican eatery. Topics range from Mexican gastronomy, to business, to lessons in language and culture.

The After-Life of Brian



Julian Doyle, illus. by Nathan Box. Chippenham Books. \$44.50 (318p), ISBN 978-1-0687465-4-3; \$15.66 paper, ISBN 978-1-0687465-0-5 Amazon, Ingram

The editor of *Monty Python's Life of Brian* explores the questions

raised by the heretical scenes in the film. Although it is a dense historical document, it nonetheless has many funny anecdotes and plenty of Pythonesque humor.

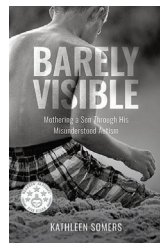
Alive... for a Reason: What You Don't Know Could Kill You and It's Not the Pandemic:



Julia's Story
Jaiden Jackson Smith. \$18.98 paper (316p), ISBN 979-8-9866310-0-4 Amazon, Apple Books,

Barnes & Noble, Google Play
Thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura is a rare, sudden, and often deadly autoimmune blood disorder that can happen to anyone anywhere in the world. The story begins when three companions rescue Julia from what could have been certain death. Then God whispered to Julia's spirit, "Tell all."

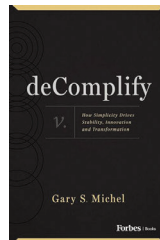
Barely Visible: Mothering a Son Through His Misunderstood Autism



Kathleen Somers. She Writes Press. \$17.99 paper (312p), ISBN 978-1-64742-882-2; \$12.99 e-book, ISBN 978-1-64742-883-9

Barnes & Noble, Bookshop.org
For any parent who has ever struggled with a child's difficult behavior, this candid and compelling memoir about raising a child on the spectrum is reassurance that you are not alone.

Decomplify: How Simplicity Drives Stability, Innovation and Transformation



Gary Michel. Forbesbooks. \$27.99 (176p), ISBN 979-8-88750-341-7; \$9.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-88750-342-4

Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Books-A-Million
Align people and processes to simplify and focus on the right things, and you will build a great organization that delivers for your customers, associates, and investors.

Everything Is Not Peachey: One Woman's Pursuit of Happiness in the Face of Chronic Illness

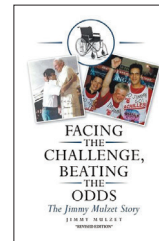
Lisa Peachey. 5D Garden. \$16.99 paper (186p),



ISBN 978-1-962190-07-7; \$8.99 e-book, ISBN 978-1-962190-08-4

Amazon, Ingram
Once happy and healthy, Lisa Peachey's world was turned upside down as chronic illness crept in, shifting her focus from carefree living to the constant management of her body's needs.

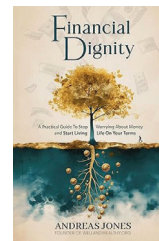
Facing the Challenge, Beating the Odds: The Jimmy Mulzet Story, revised ed.



Jimmy Mulzet. Readersmagnet. \$24.99 (106p), ISBN 979-8-89091-695-2; \$10.49 paper, ISBN 978-1-6657-0858-6

Amazon
Jimmy Mulzet nearly died before his first birthday. Diagnosed with cerebral palsy at six months of age, it initially appeared that Jimmy's journey in life would be full of challenges.

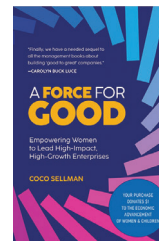
Financial Dignity: Stop Worrying about Money and Start Living Life on Your Terms



Andreas Jones. Amazon Elite Publishers. \$21.99 (236p), ISBN 978-1-966587-13-2; \$4.99 e-book, ASIN B0DSXX9LXD

Amazon
The book is about how to overcome financial shame and guilt. It's about how to start experiencing financial dignity and stop worrying about money and spending without guilt.

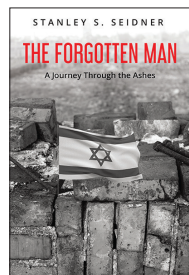
A Force for Good: Empowering Visionary Women to Lead High-Impact, High-Growth Enterprises



Coco Sellman. Wisdom of Women Media. \$23.99 paper (338p), ISBN 979-8-9907225-0-7; \$14.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-9907225-1-4

Amazon, Barnes & Noble
Empowering women founders, *A Force for Good* offers a roadmap to amplify impact, scale, and profit while inspiring societal change through women-led businesses.

The Forgotten Man: A Journey through the Ashes

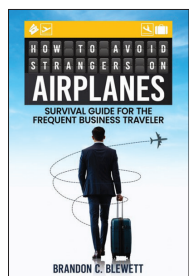


Stanley S. Seidner. Gatekeeper Press. \$69.99 paper (818p), ISBN 978-1-6629-4137-5; \$59.99 e-book, ISBN 978-1-6629-4138-2

Amazon, Apple Books, Barnes & Noble, Google Play

The Forgotten Man chronicles David Wdowinski's life as a psychiatrist, Holocaust survivor, and Warsaw ghetto rebellion leader, revealing his struggles, heroism, and impact.

How to Avoid Strangers on Airplanes: Survival Guide for the Frequent Business Traveler

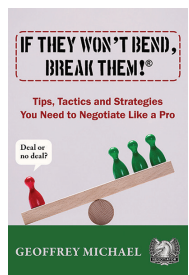


Brandon C. Blewett, illus. by Leader's Press. Brandon C. Blewett. \$14.95 paper (138p), ISBN 979-8-3396-2632-9; 99¢ e-book, ASIN BODP7RW8WV

Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Kobo, Ingram

A witty guide for frequent flyers, blending hilarious travel tales with practical insights on career growth, leadership, and turning travel woes into professional lessons.

If They Won't Bend, Break Them! Tips, Tactics and Strategies You Need to Negotiate Like a Pro

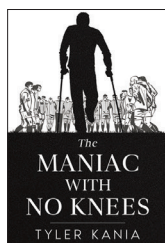


Geoffrey Michael. Cannon Communications. \$24.95 (240p), ISBN 979-8-9910320-1-8; \$14.95 paper, ISBN 979-8-9910320-0-1

Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Ingram
This book is based on my four decades of negotiating in the trenches. I focus on time-tested, fundamental principles and the tactics and strategies I use to achieve successful results.

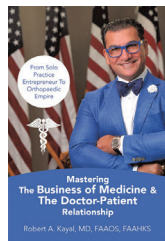
The Maniac with No Knees

Tyler Kania. Tyler Kania. \$15.99 (224p), ISBN 979-8-89316-378-0; \$11.99 paper, ISBN 979-8-89316-377-3



Amazon.
From rugby stardom to crypto startups. From the mafia to mania. Suicide attempts land Tyler in a facility for the insane, where he finally begins to heal.

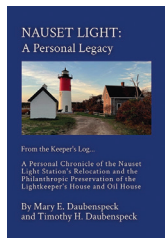
Mastering the Business of Medicine and the Doctor-Patient Relationship: From Solo Practice Entrepreneur to Orthopaedic Empire



Robert A. Kayal. WestBowPress. \$16.99 paper (114p), ISBN 979-8-3850-2389-9; \$9.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-3850-2573-2

Amazon
Robert A. Kayal, a seasoned expert in the field, provides a comprehensive guide to the business of medicine, covering topics such as startup, branding, scaling, and mergers and acquisitions.

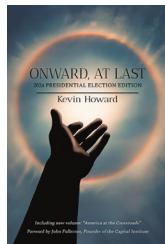
Nauset Light: A Personal Legacy



Mary E. Daubenspeck and Timothy H. Daubenspeck. Keeper's House Press. \$29.95 paper (240p), ISBN 979-8-218-41643-0; \$9.99 e-book, ASIN BOD7XWMR5T

Nausetlightkeepershouse.com, Amazon, Ingram
Nauset Light landmark partial owner's memoir of Atlantic erosion crisis and freight relocation challenges, resulting in the donation of her keeper's house and oil house in the 1990s.

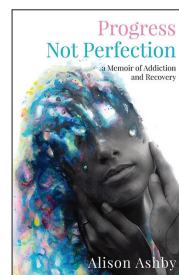
Onward, at Last: 2024 Presidential Election Edition



Kevin Howard. Atmosphere Press. \$16.99 paper (264p), ISBN 978-1-63988-608-1; \$12.99 audio, ASIN B0BQ4ZW7YS

Apple Books
The book of social commentary provides a deep exploration into the virtues that define our lives, posing the question: What if our own virtues are the cause of all that afflicts our society and ourselves?

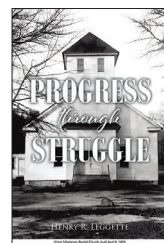
Progress Not Perfection: A Memoir of Addiction and Recovery



Alison Ashby. Gatekeeper Press. \$13.99 paper (312p), ISBN 978-1-6629-5011-7; \$3.99 e-book, ISBN 978-1-6629-5010-0

Amazon, Apple Books, Barnes & Noble, Google Play
Author Alison shares her struggles with addiction and relapse in *Progress Not Perfection*, offering hope to those seeking lasting recovery from the challenges of alcoholism.

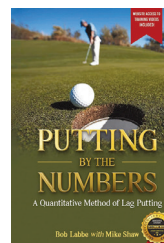
Progress Through Struggle



Henry R. Leggette. Christian Faith Publishing. \$21.95 paper (288p), ISBN 979-8-88943-861-8

Amazon
The main part of the story is to demonstrate how the young man did not allow cotton farming, cutting pulp wood and logs, and other things with low-paying jobs stop him.

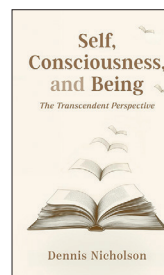
Putting by the Numbers: A Quantitative Method of Lag Putting



Bob Labbe. Bob Labbe Books. \$12.99 (80p), ISBN 979-8-9920800-4-9; \$9.99 paper, ISBN 979-8-9920800-2-5

Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Chapters, Indigo, Waterstones
Offers golfers a scientific yet accessible approach to improving their lag putting skills. Designed for players of all levels, from recreational to professional.

Self, Consciousness, and Being: The Transcendent Perspective



Dennis Nicholson. Wordzworth. \$36.99 (506p), ISBN 978-1-78324-342-6; \$12.99 e-book, ISBN 978-1-78324-343-3

Alibris, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Books-A-Million
Describes and defends

a self-view that transcends ideas, subordinating them to a resting focus and core of empty consciousness, the underlying essence of consciousness itself.

Solving Global Warming Will Kill the Fossil



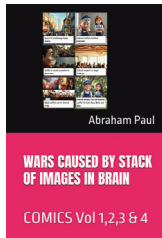
Fuel Industry

Thomas Mizejeski.
Brookside Books. \$19.95
paper (240p), ISBN 979-8-
3006-9680-1

Amazon

Examines the global impact of the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy, which requires the cooperation of all stakeholders, including fossil fuel industry management.

Wars Caused by Stack of Images in Brain



Abraham Paul. Changing
Destiny. \$24.99 paper
(86p), ASIN B0DTP892H4;
\$9.99 e-book, ASIN
B0DTJ13ZQV

Amazon

Children started to label emotions with bedtime stories, storing in brains a stack of images that became the reference with which they see themselves and others, leading to conflict.

Religion/Spirituality

Walk by Faith: With God as Your Compass



Debra Lee Fader. Xulon
Press. \$36.40 (180p), ISBN
978-1-6628-9512-8;
\$21.14 paper, ISBN 978-1-
6628-4682-3

Amazon

Follow Debra Lee Fader as she strives to follow God's plans for her despite adversities in life.

Children's/YA

An Instrument for Florenda, second ed.



Tomeko Brown, illus. by
YoungJu Kim. Moving
Notes Books/Tomeko
Brown. \$9.99 paper (96p),
ISBN 979-8-218-51345-
0; \$7.99 e-book, ISBN
979-8-218-52125-7

Amazon, Barnes & Noble,
Ingram

Surrounded by the sounds of music in her

small Louisiana town, Florenda is thrilled when her school announces a new band class starting after summer break.

Bad Intentions



Nannette Sandy. Bookbaby.
\$13.99 paper (248p), ISBN
979-8-3509-7711-0;
\$2.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-
3509-7712-7

Amazon, Apple Books,
Barnes & Noble, Target

When teen Kayla gets kicked out of her house and cut off from the family money, she soon realizes that her life is full of lies and that murders and friends go hand in hand.

Colony



Ron Wolff. Ron Wolff. \$12.99
paper (388p), ISBN 978-1-
941035-16-0; \$4.99
e-book, ISBN 978-1-
941035-17-7

Amazon, Apple Books, Barnes
& Noble

When an alien swarm decimates his colony, 17-year-old Adam Flynn must lead a group of teenagers in a fight for survival.

The Enchanted House Chronicles: Sisters, Secrets and Sorcery



Elizabeth Parr. Austin
Macauley Publishers.
\$8.95 paper (92p), ISBN
978-1-0358-5647-3;
\$4.50 e-book, ISBN 978-
1-0358-5650-3

Amazon, Barnes & Noble,
Waterstones, WH Smith
Hastings 1943. Three

girls have an identical dream of crystals and discover they are witches. They use a portal to help win D-Day, and find two of the crystals.

High Hopes Big Dreams



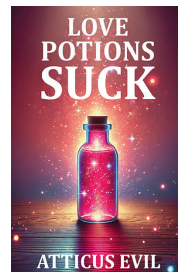
Yolanda S. Pascal,
illus. by Zainab Asif
Rahi. Amphitrite
Publishing. \$10.50
paper (38p), ISBN
979-8-3343-4165-
4; \$1.99 e-book, ASIN

B0DBPNCTC

Amazon

George builds his dream house with his new blocks. But it keeps getting knocked over. Does George give up? No, he rebuilds his beautiful castle in his sweet dreams.

Love Potions Suck



Atticus Evil. Amazon.
\$9.99 paper (336p),
ASIN B0DT1LBXM1;
\$3.99 e-book,
ASIN B0DSV68KP6

Amazon

Rayne's love potion plan to win Phoenix backfires hilariously, pulling her into high school drama, gossip, and mishaps. Along the way, she learns love can't be brewed.

Ora: I Have a Dream

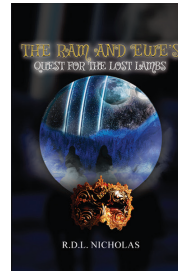


Evren Ersan. Balboa
Press UK. \$13.18
paper (36p), ISBN
978-1-9822-8882-2;
\$4.99 e-book, ISBN
978-1-9822-8881-5

Abebooks, Amazon,
Barnes & Noble, Google Play, Kobo

Ora, a passionate starfish unhappy in the deep sea, dreams of becoming the brightest star, like Sirius. One day, she bravely sets off on a journey to pursue her shining aspiration.

The Ram and Ewe's Quest for the Lost Lambs



R.D.L. Nicholas. Genesis
Publishing House. \$24.99
(260p), ISBN 979-8-
9908442-6-1; \$3.99
e-book, ISBN 979-8-
9908442-4-7

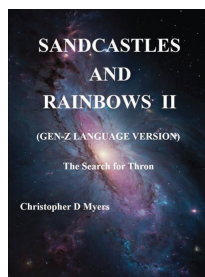
Amazon, Barnes & Noble

A fairy tale adventure of luile, who is in dire need in saving her father with the aid of her friend, Ellis. After ignoring all warnings, they journey into a nightmare like no other.

Sandcastles and Rainbows II (Gen-Z Language Version): The Search for Thron

Christopher D. Myers. MyWin Publishing. \$20.99
paper (270p), ISBN 979-8-227-35194-4;
\$7.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-230-36657-7

Amazon, Apple, Baker & Taylor, Barnes & Noble,



BorrowBox, Everand, Hoopla, Kobo, Overdrive, Vivlio
Gen-Z language version of story about main hero who comes to planet with a society similar to Gen Z and grows up in its environment while still looking and freeing his fellow Mental Beings.

So You Want to Be a Youth Leader: Tips on Manifesting an Environment Where Ideas



Thrive
Merrill Keating. Merrill Keating. \$24.95 (134p), ISBN 979-8-3451-5202-7; \$14.95 paper, ISBN 979-8-3740-2141-7
Amazon
Empowering young changemakers with skills to lead confidently, foster inclusivity,

set actionable visions, and create lasting community impact through leadership.

Sylphie Is Resilient: Sylph Series

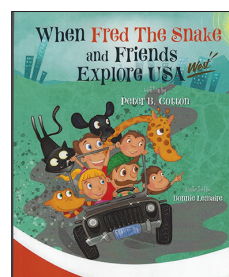


La Kayshal, illus. by Shehan Konthawardhana. La Kayshal. \$17.99 (56p), ISBN 978-0-6452360-1-9; \$12.50 paper, ISBN 978-0-

6452360-2-6
Amazon, Booktopia, Ingram At 7, Sylphie Williams discovers she is a sylph with wings, but she cannot fly. Will she ever soar like the other sylphs? This book is 2,500 words long and is suitable for grades 3-4.

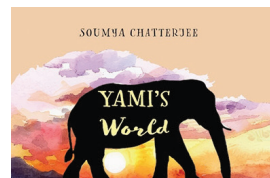
When Fred the Snake and Friends Explore USA-West: California to Hawaii

Peter Cotton, illus. by Bonnie Lemaire. Publish. \$19.95 (60p), ISBN 978-1-64704-766-5;



\$14.95 paper, ISBN 978-1-64704-766-5
Petercottontales.com, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Ingram
Fred and friends explore the West Coast from California to Hawaii.

Yami's World



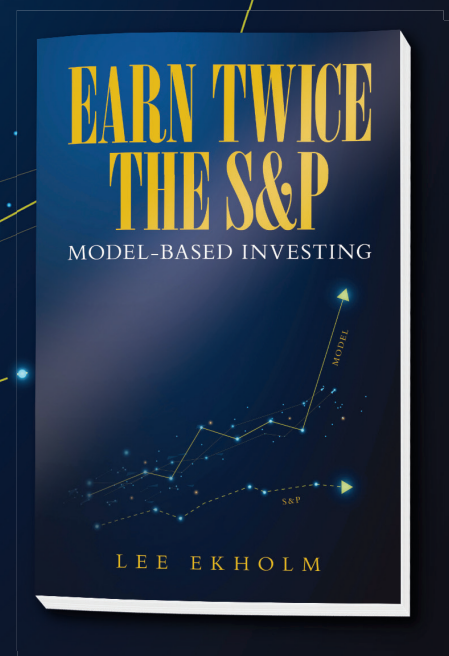
Soumya Chatterjee, illus. by Manushi Raj. Opus. \$12.99 paper (26p),

ISBN 978-1-62429-532-4
Politics-prose.com

In *Yami's World*, step into the heart of the African savanna with Yami, a curious baby elephant with wide eyes and an even wider imagination!

UNVEILING THE HIGH YIELD, LOW MAINTENANCE INVESTMENT SECRET

Earn Twice the S&P provides a revolutionary, rule-based investing strategy that yields eight times the S&P 500. Backed by 26 years of success, this approach offers greater returns with less maintenance. The book presents practical strategies for immediate implementation, encouraging long-term returns. It debunks traditional investing methods, emphasizing patience, discipline, and consistency. Proven effective despite market volatility, this resource could significantly uplift your financial trajectory. A must-have for financial growth and independence seekers.



Hardcover ISBN: 9798822967885
Paperback ISBN: 9798822967892
eBook ISBN: 9798822967908

leeekholm.com



PALMETTO PUBLISHING
Charleston, SC
www.PalmettoPublishing.com



BookLife Reviews are paid reviews of independently published books. A lightning bolt (⚡) indicates an Editor's Pick, a book of outstanding quality.

FICTION

⚡ EDITOR'S PICK

I, No Other: Narrations & Exaltations

Yarrow Paisley | WhiskeyTit

214p, trade paper, \$18, ISBN 978-0-996-76464-3

The title of this collection of short, sharp fictions from Paisley (*Divine in Essence*) comes from a famous remark, given in an epigraph, of Rimbaud, and much of Paisley's work shares a spirit of aggressive transgression with that Symbolist firebrand. Paisley's stories pointedly share but a slight acquaintance with the real world, instead unfolding in an existence that's much stranger than ours—even as its deeper anxieties prove wrenchingly familiar. The narrator of the opening salvo, "Flâneurysm," can seemingly remove or suffer the loss of body parts with no ill effects. Another narrator builds an increasingly elaborate nest of pipes to deal with noisy neighbors, the smelly ghost of his sister, and even the surveillance of forces beyond us: "when the Devil attempts to spy, he hears only God's choirs transformed to gibbering rants."

Such striking thoughts and phrases keep these cryptic, at times comic stories



Bold, bizarre, even confounding fictions with precise, pyrotechnic power.

Great for fans of Donald Barthelme, Kathy Acker.

lively. Bizarre conceits abound, though Paisley offers occasional gestures toward explanation. The eerie repetitions, rebirths, and transformations of the narrator of "Reinformation Theory" are part of—we eventually discover—a computer simulation, while the semi-omniscient grandiloquent being who narrates the first part of "Spirit and Corpus" turns out to be the disembodied consciousness of a man in a persistent vegetative coma. That piece's second half, from the POV of the stricken man's former girlfriend, proves that Paisley doesn't need to get weird to tell a good story.

Paisley's pyrotechnic, precise style unites his elaborately strange plots, with a careful attention to rhythm and sound grounding even his most far-flung or baffling excursions. His work can be wildly abstract, obscene, and absurd, but it always retains an internal coherence and lexical lustiness that should delight adventurous readers, particularly fans of bold post-modern greats.

Cover: **A** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: — Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

FICTION

⚡ EDITOR'S PICK

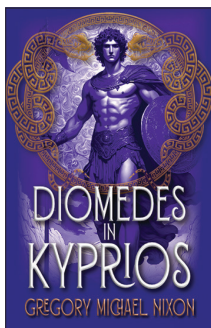
Diomedes in Kyrios

Gregory Michael Nixon | Historium Press

242p, e-book, \$5, ASIN B0DM2QWNL6

Nixon's vigorous novel seamlessly blends myth, history, and lively fiction against the smoldering wreck of the Late Bronze Age, in the aftermath of the fall of Troy. Following up *The Diomedea*, Nixon dramatizes Diomedes's emergence from near death after being swept through a river, stripped of memory but driven by instinct to journey to Kyrios. There, a "great gathering" of the "rebellious, palace-hating" migrants known as the Peoples of the Sea prepare, after having crushed the Hittites, for a bold advance: an invasion of what we now call Egypt. For Diomedes, though, the quest is personal, as he yearns to reunite with Lieia-Hepa, the deposed Queen of the Hittites. The novel juxtaposes Diomedes's journey with the trials of Lieia, imprisoned by the manipulative priestess Lilitu in the sacred city of Lawazantiya.

Journeys and schemes, human and divine, power this panoramic survey that,



Richly told story of gods, warriors, and the end of the Bronze Age.

Great for fans of Madeline Miller; Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad*.

like Ovid, embraces a spirit of transformation. As Diomedes traverses a fractured world, he rebuilds his purpose and allies himself with figures like Sarpedon, the charismatic Sea People leader. Nixon highlights tensions between mortal ambition and divine will while digging deeply into the textures of life, mysteries of history, and the "storm of chaos as the era of bronze metal slowly came apart." Vivid incidents abound as Diomedes's journey leads to the birthplace of Aphrodite ("the bright wanderer, the sea-borne goddess").

Aphrodite, of course, will test his devotion and loyalty to Lieia, even as she faces her own entanglements with passionate Adonis. This odyssey offers rich, timeless storytelling of depth and complexity, plus magic, adventure, lyrical prose, richly drawn characters, rituals "beyond knowing," "sacrilegious lusts," gorgeous courtly speech, convincing sociocultural and historical insights, and Homeric attention to shields and swords. A robust achievement.

Cover: **B+** | Design & typography: **A-** | Illustrations: — Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **B+**

FICTION

A Little Something to Hide

Craig Brown

362p, trade paper, \$11.99, ISBN 978-1-068-55130-7

Brown's debut follows the lives of disparate, often desperate individuals, each harboring a secret, on a bus trip from San Francisco to Albuquerque. The journey opens with a lone woman boarding the bus, leaving behind a man's lifeless body in the basement of her home. Noting that "she's not the only killer travelling to Albuquerque," Brown immediately draws readers into a hard world where ordinary appearances mask extraordinary truths. As further stops bring new passengers, the narrative expands to explore their stories of ambition, regret, resilience, and murder. Brown's sharp, observant prose captures both vivid moments—the shuffle of passengers, the hesitations when choosing seats, Rosa Fernandez wondering as her knitting needles clack whether she's looking at a murderer—but also the inner dramas, delusions, and backstories of these transients.

Brown excels at creating multidimensional, flawed individuals whose struggles and secrets stir empathy. Bobbie, a drag performer, seeks identity and familial



Grittily humane novel of passengers with dark secrets on a cross-country bus.

Great for fans of Larry Brown's *Dirty Work*, Gint Aras's *The Fugue*.

acceptance. Rosa, burdened by sacrifice, strives to heal fractured bonds. Toby Ames battles his mother's unfulfilled dreams to carve his own path in Hollywood, while Father Simon, once a beacon of faith, struggles with eroding belief and his inability to provide comfort. Amidst these passengers who have chosen "the cheapest option available," the bus owner embodies a crumbling legacy, mirroring his worn-out, poorly maintained buses.

The thriller elements suggested by the prologue and cover remain atmospheric rather than central as Brown, like Nelson Algren, surveys hardscrabble lives. What the novel lacks in traditional plot, it compensates for with richly drawn characters. Powering the narrative is a feeling of movement, literal and metaphorical—Brown creates a sense of momentum in both the physical and emotional journeys. The bus becomes a space where fleeting connections leave lasting impacts. *A Little Something to Hide* proves less about what happens and more who it happens to, a meditation on the stories we carry and the connections we make along the way.

Cover: **A-** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: — Editing: **A-** | Marketing copy: **B**

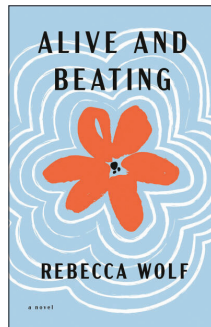
FICTION

Alive and Beating

Rebecca Wolf | Arbitrary Press
235p, hardcover, \$29.95, ISBN 978-1-958-76213-4

Inspired by a true story, Wolf's humane slice-of-life follows the lives of six people in different parts of Israel, bound together by a thread that emphasizes our shared humanity: their pursuit of organ transplants. All six, coming from diverse religious and socio-economic backgrounds, are suffering deteriorating health conditions as they wait for their turn on the transplant lists. There's Leah, a young Hasidic Jewish woman; Yael, a daughter of Holocaust survivors; Hoda, a Palestinian hairdresser; David, an Iraqi restaurant owner; Severin, a Catholic priest; and Youssef and Yosef, two teenage boys in the same ward. Their individual, agonized waits finally come to an end when all-too-familiar tragedy strikes: a bomber destroys a bus, and a single woman becomes the salvation for these six disparate families.

Wolf opens with details of the bomb blast from the perspective of the young woman whose choice to be an organ donor becomes the link connecting everything



Moving novel of a bombing, organ donation, and lives across Israel.

Great for fans of Ayelet Tsabari; Germaine Shames's *Between Two Deserts*.

its rippling effect through lives. She surveys the intricate politics of religion in her milieu, exploring with empathy the precarity of Arab families, the pain of Holocaust survivors' families, and the orthodoxy of Hasidic Jews.

A few chapters build to cliffhangers, and readers expecting full closure on the fates of all six people may be frustrated. Instead, the novel centers this charitable act and the hope it inspires, painting a vivid portrait of six lives and, in the process, of Israeli society as a whole. Lovers of stories of everyday people from diverse walks of life in a contested land and time will find much here that resonates.

Cover: **A-** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: – Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

MYSTERY/THRILLER

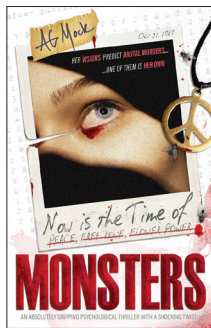
EDITOR'S PICK

Now Is the Time of Monsters

A.G. Mock | Epoch Thrillers
382p, hardcover, \$29.99, ISBN 978-1-736-29199-3

Mock (author of *Shadow Watchers*) once again transports readers into a twisty, chilling dimension, this time to 1969 San Francisco, where a vicious killer is on the loose. The story follows Cassie Kennedy, a newly single mother and a reluctant psychic, as she endures horrifying visions of murders by a sadistic serial killer known as The Gemini. In search of income and control over her powers, Cassie starts to offer psychic readings at her best friend Patty Brewster's café, until she becomes entangled in the killer's dark web and foresees her own death at his hands.

The novel's shifting perspectives—from Cassie's psychic visions to the detectives' pursuit and The Gemini's twisted mind games—hold readers in a vice of suspense. When Cassie vanishes without a trace, Mock shifts the focus to detectives Doug Ressler and Sid Younger as they race to decode The Gemini's cryptic puzzles, while forensic psychiatrist Siobhan Jacobs offers a terrifying glimpse into the twisted psyche of a predator. The portrayal of The Gemini is gruesome—his



Chilling ride into the tormented psyche of a grisly serial killer.

Great for fans of Graham Masterton's *The House of a Hundred Whispers*, Stacy Willingham's *A Flicker in the Dark*.

meticulous planning, cryptic puzzles, and psychological manipulation of his victims make him a true monster. Mock seamlessly integrates Cassie's backstory into the narrative, forging a harrowing connection between her past and the horrors she faces in the present. Held captive alongside another victim, Rosalie Sherwood, Cassie is subjected to unspeakable torment in the killer's lair, and her fight for survival becomes a battle of sheer will, drawing on a strength shaped by her traumatic childhood of abuse and loss. The raw, unflinching portrayal of violence and psychological torment creates unforgettable tension, as Mock explores the literal and metaphorical monsters that stalk a world in turmoil. A haunting, thought-provoking thriller, this is as much an exploration of human darkness as it is a terrifying ride into the unknown.

Cover: **B+** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: – Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A-**

MYSTERY/THRILLER

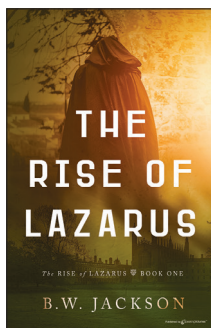
EDITOR'S PICK

The Rise of Lazarus

B.W. Jackson | Speaking Volumes, LLC
185p, trade paper, \$15.95, ISBN 979-8-89022-220-6

Jackson's debut, the first in a series, follows college student Aaron, who stumbles onto a centuries-old mystery with close ties to home. When Professor Freeman—known for his preoccupation with offbeat discussions and conspiracy theories—mentions his connections to a Holocaust survivor in class one day, Aaron is intrigued; his own Grandpa Moshe survived life in the Nazi death camps. As Aaron is drawn deeper into Freeman's web, a cryptic figure emerges: a man who claims to have lived—and experienced the world's most horrific events—for the last two thousand years. Shockingly, Aaron's grandfather knows this man as well—his name, according to Moshe, is Lazarus, the one “whom Jesus raised from the dead.”

Aaron's discovery is just the start of a tangled web, and Jackson capably threads the mystery of Lazarus into Aaron's past—and present. Moshe has secrets of his own, tales of his youth that speak of lost love and lives destroyed by the Nazis' murders of his people, and his experience with Lazarus is intimately personal. Jackson delicately teases the central mystery's components with stories of Lazarus



Impressive series starter brimming with twisty, centuries-old mysteries.

Great for fans of Steve Berry's *The Omega Factor*, Glenn Cooper's *The Lost Pope*.

that have been passed down for generations, legends murmured between millions of people that hint at impossible feats escaping death and torture. The puzzle of who Lazarus really is parallels what Aaron learns about his grandfather—and Professor Freeman, who holds his own perplexing connections with Aaron's family.

The Rise of Lazarus is beautifully written and compelling, unfolding in a thrilling series of stories whispered between characters that paint an electrifying portrait of faith, power, and redemption. Aaron's discoveries lead him on a deeply personal journey, one that holds purpose not just for his own life, but for the future of all humanity. Jackson closes with a stunning cliffhanger that foretells more mysteries to come, leaving readers eager for the next in the series.

Cover: **A** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: – Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A-**

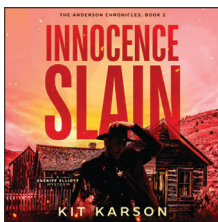
MYSTERY/THRILLER

Innocence Slain: A Sheriff Elliott Mystery

Kit Karson | Granite Mountain Press
331p, e-book, \$4.99, ISBN 979-8-9873287-6-7

Karson returns readers to the tourist-clogged Montana ranch-and-mining town of Anderson, where Sheriff Peter Elliott, in his second mystery (after *Land Grab*), faces a kidnapper, a series of young women gone missing, and, as the case grinds on, an agitated public howling for his resignation. But Elliott is determined to catch the culprit, and he's got the aid of rookie deputy Birdie Bradshaw and Mary, a runaway who has thrived in her years since sweeping at the Rustler's Roost dive bar. As Elliott trains Birdie in working a case, both her and Mary's interest proves deeply personal: both know girls who disappeared and were never found. Karson's empathy for victims and survivors humanizes *Innocence Slain*—the missing girls, here, are never just a plot device. In urgent perspective chapters, one of the kidnappees, Stacey, proves as willful and driven as the sheriff: "If her life as a spoiled princess taught her one thing," Karson writes, "it was determination."

Karson imbues the telling with small-town realism, a real feeling for Western living and landscapes, and a convincing sense of the fickleness of public opinion



Sharply drawn small-town mystery with touching empathy for its missing girls.

Great for fans of Declan James's *Murder in the Hollows*, Megan Miranda's *All the Missing Girls*.

ones and illustrates Stacey's horrific dilemma with tense clarity and attention to physical detail.

Characters are sharply drawn, such as the beleaguered sheriff, victim-turned-badass Stacey, newbie Birdie, and Mary, who spends her time paying forward the decency she has been shown in Anderson. Less admirable but a pleasure to jeer at is the distinctly unlikable mayor, ripe for a #MeToo lawsuit. Karson combines these elements into a suspenseful ride that culminates in a satisfying ending that leaves the door open for future entries.

Cover: **A** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: – Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **B**

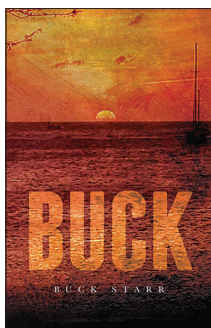
MYSTERY/THRILLER

Buck

Buck Starr | Palmetto Publishing Group
232p, e-book, \$13.99, ISBN 978-1-649-90111-8

Buck Starr, the protagonist of this series-starter thriller that also bears Buck Starr's name as author, is an "old-fashioned" assassin who prefers the term "contract operative"—he does more than just kill, and he's picky about who he'll target. "I hope not to be sniping people when I'm 80 years old," he admits after a night of bad sleep. So, he pounces on a protection/sting assignment in which he must shield a princess, Jules, and her country, Musjistan, from attempts on her life and a hostile government takeover. Both author and hero get right down to business in the crisp yet hard-hitting first pages, as a head explodes in the second sentence, setting the bar high for the high-stakes, high-intensity adventure that follows. As the king of "Muji" ails, Buck serves as watchdog on Jules's lavish Greek vacation and must try to read the movements and schemes of a larger group of assassins making moves against her, all while laying low, pleasing Jules, admiring her "impeccable taste in bikinis," but also keeping her in the dark.

Author Starr reveals Buck's character through both action ("He didn't budge,



Crisp thriller of a pained assassin and the princess he must protect.

Great for fans of Jay Bonansinga's *The Killer's Game*, Vince Flynn's *Kill Shot*.

to stay true to his mission.

Less assured is the romance between Buck and Jules, which develops offhandedly, more quickly than the suspense. As the hero faces conspiracies and preps for an opera house showdown, Starr is convincing about Buck possessing the set of skills that serving as a contract operative demands, but *Buck* breezes through a much trickier operation: Buck's seduction of a princess (or vice versa) while he poses as a real-estate broker. This central relationship deserves more detailed treatment, especially in light of some late-in-the-novel surprises.

Cover: **B** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: – Editing: **B+** | Marketing copy: **B**

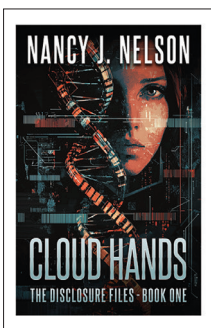
SF/FANTASY/HORROR

Cloud Hands: The Disclosure Files, Book 1

Nancy J. Nelson | Brown Leaf Press
325p, e-book, \$5.99, ISBN 979-8-9919647-1-5

Nelson's head-spinning debut science fiction of future tech, alien diplomacy, and human potential opens with a relatable mystery. When asked by an ex-professor friend to watch over his kids while he's away, particularly his emotionally fragile daughter, Jessica, one-time State Department worker Victoria "Vicki" Heywood quickly finds much to wonder about: why does she need top secret clearance? Why do the people in the orbit of the Partnership for Advanced Technologies Transformation enjoy access to promising new medical treatments? And when she meets a biologic construct—"I am Lawrence Cooper," he announces, "but not a cell of my body is a human cell"—is he exaggerating when he jokes that this tech has been reverse-engineered from "a flying saucer"?

Tantalizing as these mysteries are, this series-starter is long on setup, as Nelson explicates in brisk, conversational detail the answers. The exposition can be heavy and the plotting busy, but Nelson writes with winning clarity. Vicki soon discovers that she has been targeted for membership in the Four, a small group of people who have learned to obtain a higher level of consciousness, and as a result, unlock their



Debut of elevated consciousness, tense diplomacy, and saving humanity.

Great for fans of Annalee Newitz, Marge Piercy.

own minds to see and think things they never thought possible. As Vicki discovers what the Four must learn, how to learn it, and how they access another plane of existence, Nelson springs surprises, like the ways that Vicki's skills as a diplomat become crucial, or that the Earth faces a "vibrational shift," which Vicki must prep

humanity for while delicately negotiating with many different types of aliens and facing a daunting foe: that Partnership, which hoards alien technology with the worst intentions.

Nelson draws on her own experiences as a diplomat with the U.S. Department of State, lending power and confidence to Vicki's character, and her work as a diplomat is well fleshed out. While parts get bogged down with explanation, and the blend of consciousness-raising and diplomatic drama will not be to all SF readers' tastes, this thoughtful, humane premise has promise that future volumes could meet.

Cover: **A** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: – Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

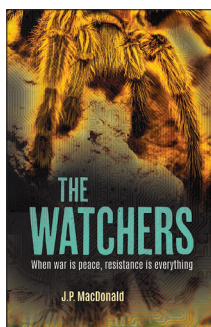
SF/FANTASY/HORROR

The Watchers

J.P. MacDonald | Glossy Black Books
275p, e-book, \$5.99, ISBN 978-1-763-76400-2

MacDonald's intense dystopian thriller takes place in a near-future Australia, now controlled by the authoritarian People's Global Republic (PGR). The novel follows Harry M., a retired spy, and a team of brilliant scientists, including bio-robotics engineer Ame Goto-Loch and Christian, a geneticist. Trapped on Kangaroo Island, the team must work against time to counteract the PGR's weaponized mind-control technology with a groundbreaking neural block. Against the stunning yet unforgiving backdrop of the Australian outback, this band of unlikely heroes fights for freedom while grappling with questions of sacrifice, loyalty, and technological ethics.

MacDonald skillfully blends relentless action with a profound exploration of scientific and moral dilemmas. The inclusion of inventive bio-robotic creations, such as Louie, a spider-like QAIN, and Batty, a high-tech surveillance drone, add imaginative twists while illustrating the dual nature of technology as both a tool



A team of brilliant scientists work to stop government mind control.

Great for fans of Rob Hart's *The Warehouse*, Marc Elsberg's *Code Zero*.

of oppression and resistance. Each character is vividly drawn, with Ame's personal journey—marked by loss, resilience, and ingenuity—standing out as a particularly compelling narrative thread. Harry's leadership and the team's determination add depth and emotional resonance. The richly described landscapes of Kangaroo Island and the broader Australian wilderness enhance the story's tension, grounding its futuristic themes in a tangible setting. MacDonald's ability to make advanced scientific concepts both understandable and integral to the plot ensures that readers remain deeply engaged, and the novel's reflections on the dangers of unchecked technology and authoritarian power are eerily timely, offering readers much to contemplate about our own world. *The Watchers* is an absorbing and thought-provoking novel that combines the urgency of a techno-thriller with the depth of dystopian fiction, a promising debut from MacDonald that is sure to appeal to fans of both action-packed narratives and stories that challenge the boundaries of morality and innovation.

Cover: **B-** | Design & typography: **B+** | Illustrations: — | Editing: **A-** | Marketing copy: **A**

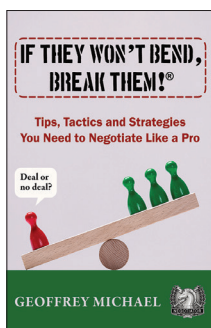
BUSINESS & PERSONAL FINANCE

EDITOR'S PICK

If They Won't Bend, Break Them!: Tips, Tactics and Strategies You Need to Negotiate Like a Pro

Geoffrey Michael | Cannon Communications
240p, hardcover, \$24.95, ISBN 979-8-991-03201-8

"Look for leverage in every negotiation," Michael writes in this clear-eyed, hard-nosed guide to getting "the best deal possible under very trying circumstances." What if you don't have leverage? "Create it. If you can't create it, make the other party believe you have it." Advice like that powers *If They Won't Bend, Break Them!*, a handbook for negotiators but also anyone wishing to improve the negotiating skills that, as Michael argues, everyone can use—buying a car, setting bedtimes, or even choosing what movie to watch. Michael makes a persuasive case that since each of us, knowingly or not, negotiates each day, we owe it to ourselves to get a handle on our haggling ability. While the book casts a wide negotiating net, Michael's centerpiece, a list of Twelve Fundamental Principles of Negotiation, is worth the price of admission on its own, warning against the "warranty trap" and reminding us all, in high-stakes business or everyday life, "Only negotiate with



Persuasive, practical guide to negotiation tactics in business and life.

Great for fans of Victoria Medvec's *Negotiate Without Fear*, Joshua N. Weiss's *The Book of Real-World Negotiations*.

someone empowered to commit." Michael's guidance is detailed, practical, and convincing, drawn from hard-won experience in defense systems sales. From that work he offers some myth-busting claims: "lawyers are less effective negotiators than people I've worked with in other disciplines," he argues. Other lessons demonstrate the importance of setting the bar beyond what you believe is attainable and acquiring thorough subject knowledge before starting any negotiation. Similarly, when one is the buyer in any negotiation, Michael urges starting "well below" where you'd like to finish, creating a wide "upside margin."

With anecdotes and examples, Michael shows how ordinary human personality traits can torpedo a seemingly promising negotiation and how "fairness" is "a highly subjective term open to interpretation." Occasionally the storytelling is self-regarding in a salesman's way, but the guidance is clearly built on years of hands-on, person-to-person experience. Whether you're preparing to buy a home, request a raise, or pick a restaurant, Michael can help.

Cover: **B-** | Design & typography: **A-** | Illustrations: **A-** | Editing: **A-** | Marketing copy: **B+**

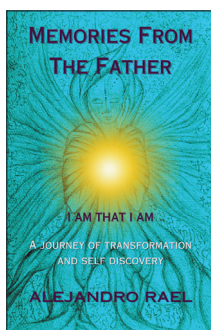
SELF-HELP

Memories from the Father

Alejandro Rael | Crystal Light House Publishing
375p, mass market, \$29.95, ISBN 978-1-763-66662-7

Rael sweeps readers into a flowing quest for personal growth, healing, and self-development, diffused through the spiritual perspective of I AM. "I speak to you from the Godhead, in you, that I AM," that perspective declares early on, as Rael explores his familial bonds, relationships with women, and liberation from "ancestral trauma." Describing how he opens himself up completely to a spiritual awakening, Rael demonstrates a process of tapping into a higher consciousness, immersing himself in the inner work of self-acceptance, expression, and healing, while addressing the wounds of his past as a barrier to closeness with "the creator, the father and the holy spirit that I AM in You."

Soaked in metaphor and tender exploration, Rael's debut is emotive yet raw, revealing his personal journey to connect to a higher self and emerge as a completely unmasked, healed being. The narrative unfolds through a reciprocal conversation between the Godhead and Rael's present self, as they examine his life's path and its influence on the man he ultimately becomes. That format encourages readers to reflect on their own personal development as well: "Everything that you see in



Spiritual exploration unfolds through a conversation with the inner Godhead.

Great for fans of Sara Landon's *You Are a Channel*, Kathy Izard's *Trust the Whisper*.

your life is a reflection of what is inside of you, and it only wants to be seen and recognised to exist and evolve," Rael asserts. In recognizing how his own childhood traumas blocked his flow of love well into adulthood, Rael acknowledges those painful memories while releasing their hold on his psyche. *Memories from the Father* speaks through a voice of positivity and compassion, tapping into spiritual sources to obtain guidance and love from the metaphysical realm. As Rael processes past abuse, "facing *inherited wounds* as a man," he also records "transcending the limitations through the feminine as your teacher," prompting readers to weigh the pain of their pasts against hope for the future. Light and dark, troubled and soothing, this is truly, as Rael writes, a touching "story of processing the human experience."

Cover: **C+** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: — | Editing: **B** | Marketing copy: **B**

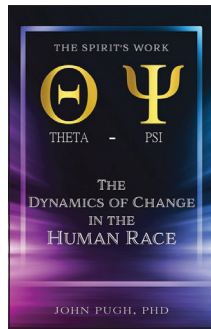
SPIRITUALITY/INSPIRATIONAL

The Dynamics of Change in the Human Race: The Spirit's Work

John Pugh | New Life Creatives Media, LLC
344p, hardcover, \$26.99, ISBN 979-8-894-19168-3

In this analytical guide, Christian counselor Pugh (author of *Christian Formation Counseling*) testifies to the power of faith, melded with therapy, to produce lasting change. "Christian formation concepts"—the work of the Holy Spirit to transform humans from the inside out—" [create] a whole new foundation for the life-change process" according to Pugh, and they should be applied to contemporary counseling theories to produce relational healing and personal growth for Christians. In studying how wounds and traumas can become chronic problems if they are not addressed with the Holy Spirit in mind, Pugh asserts that Christian formation counseling can provide transformative support, rooted in spiritual insights.

Pugh's premise is simple and direct: "our learning must be from God," he writes, and, though therapy plays an integral role in treating mental and emotional disorders, counselors should "recognize that medical treatment [alone] does not solve



Christian counseling approach combining theory with biblical constructs.

Great for fans of Larry Crabb's *Effective Biblical Counseling*, Bob Kellemen's *Equipping Biblical Counselors*.

people's life issues and problems." Sharing case studies from his own clients, Pugh identifies difficulties they experienced as well as their paths to success, always circling back to "matters of spiritual formation" as deciding factors in treatment modalities. In doing so, he tackles issues like anxiety, depression, and personality disorders, all through the lens of biblical context, pointing out how counseling theories can be supported—and, at times, contraindicated—by scripture.

For Christian readers and counselors seeking mental health treatment that integrates with spiritual beliefs, Pugh's approach is thoughtful and supportive. He delves deeply into a wide range of theories, from cognitive behavioral therapy to family systems, carefully explaining strengths, weaknesses, and how they can be molded into a spiritual framework for more effective results. The writing veers toward the clinical, but Pugh presents a convincing argument for why Christians must "[integrate] spiritual issues and values into counseling practice."

Cover: **C+** | Design & typography: **A-** | Illustrations: – | Editing: **B+** | Marketing copy: **A-**

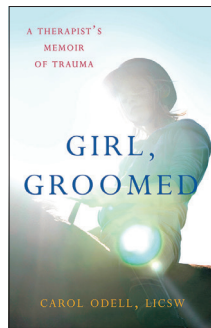
MEMOIR

Girl, Groomed: A Therapist's Memoir of Trauma

Carol Odell | She Writes Press
229p, trade paper, \$17.99, ISBN 978-1-647-42872-3

Psychotherapist Odell breaks open her own past trauma in an effort to show readers the power of rewriting "adopted stories" in this gripping debut. When her family moved from the Midwest to rural Virginia, Odell—then only 10 years old—was swept into her passion for horses, a fascination that played out at the Ivy Creek Stables, run by the domineering and abusive Clarentine. Decades later, as a wife and mother, Odell confronts the hidden effects of her childhood trauma at Clarentine's hands, uncovering the lingering damage that threatens to derail her mental, emotional, and family stability. That intense grappling unfolds in Odell's raw, emotive chronicling of a childhood gone wrong—and the transformative healing she undergoes to shed past pain.

Odell's writing is intricate and descriptive, a measured cadence of sorrow and courage for not just herself, but the countless other girls who also endured Clarentine's abuse. In examining her own longstanding trauma ties, she also unpacks



Stirring memoir of healing from childhood trauma.

Great for fans of Laurie Matthew's *Groomed*, Gemma Carey's *No Matter Our Wreckage*.

victims and to inspire a "platform for open discussion and disagreement about the handling of reported abuses."

Readers will draw inspiration from Odell's vulnerability and transparency, as she highlights the hard work involved in truly peeling back trauma layers and learning to forgive, grow, and mend the wounds of the past. The message she leaves readers with is stirring: "When we enter into a process of unfolding these accumulated wads of old hurts and fears and limiting narratives, the relief is palpable. Then we can courageously start to unfurl and wave in the wind."

Cover: **A** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: – | Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

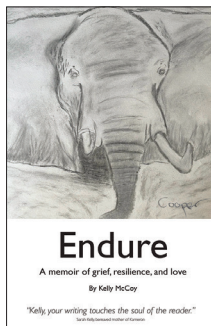
MEMOIR

Endure: A Memoir of Grief, Resilience, and Love

Kelly McCoy | ei² collective
274p, trade paper, \$17.99, ISBN 979-8-218-53470-7

McCoy transforms shattering grief into an expressive tribute to his son, Cooper James, who took his own life at the age of 23. When he received word from law enforcement that his son had died by suicide, McCoy quickly reverted to writing—a gift from a young age—to process his devastation and sorrow. Those initial blogs and letters frame this debut, serving as the catalyst for an intricate journey of loss, grief, and hope as McCoy fights for the balance between moving forward and allowing pain its time and place.

"Something deep inside drove me to put my pain into words, to try to capture the bone-crushing grief of child loss," McCoy reflects, and that unguarded, raw honesty propels his writing. Readers will witness his confusion at not fitting into the "stages" of grief amid his desperate search for answers, as he mourns the opportunities Cooper will never have while striving to protect his other children. He gently confronts the changes Cooper's death rendered on his relationship with his wife as well, exploring their early tendencies of "talking in circles" and acknowl-



Grief memoir offering hope after unimaginable loss.

Great for fans of Paul Kalanithi's *When Breath Becomes Air*, Jayson Greene's *Once More We Saw Stars*.

Though this memoir plunges into the catastrophic pain of losing a child, McCoy manages to infuse the writing with encouraging glimmers, as when he writes "we are doing okay. We really are... Our grief is stabilized, we are functioning reasonably well, and we are reasonably happy inside and out." That message—and McCoy's inclusion of sweet ways to honor Cooper at the book's close—offer hope that even in the face of unimaginable loss, life is still worth living.

Cover: **C** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **A** | Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A-**

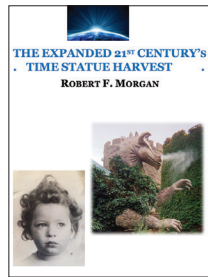
MEMOIR

What's Next?: The Expanded 21st Century's Time Statue Harvest

Robert F. Morgan | Morgan Foundation Publications
319p, trade paper, \$24, ISBN 978-1-885-67938-3

Psychologist Morgan continues his singular-inform memories-of-a-lifetime Time Statues series, with this pointedly unpredictable consideration of the passage of time, humanity's future, and touching moments from recent decades of contemplative living. His emphasis here is on what lies ahead, rooted in the errors and rejoicings of the past, as he challenges readers to revisit "remote events in this century" while considering how our treatment of the Earth—and each other—may preclude our very survival. His perspective is hard won, springing from a life spent thinking, observing, and reading widely, plus medical disasters, paranormal encounters, and more. He urges readers to consider how "great or terrible, good or bad, happy or not, what we create in our life each day lasts."

Morgan again is writing in a word-spinning freestyle mode as he offers a surprising compendium of stories, some brushed by the supernatural. Throughout, he allows space for reflection on the small moments composing a lifetime. A spectral



Surprising reflections on life's material and metaphysical constructs.

Great for fans of Dennis Waters's *Behavior and Culture in One Dimension*, Daniel Klein's *Every Time I Find the Meaning of Life...*

night watchman in Singapore awakens Morgan's spiritual senses, while a young neighbor stirs his love for kinship and communion; elsewhere, the economy takes center stage, as Morgan explores how to balance inflation with the need for a living wage.

Steering into more lighthearted waters, Morgan dabbles in the emoji phenomenon ("a pictorial pandemic," in

his words) and quips about growing older—though even those wanderings hint at deeper truths, as when he notes that "for most, understanding their own mortality is in fact a moral crossroads. What will they leave for those still here when they are gone?" Some meandering passages, punctuated by uncredited images, will likely stir reader puzzlement, but those who revel in playful explorations of memory and meaning in life's tapestry will be entertained and given much to reflect on regarding on time's incessant march—and the urgent need to make changes "for our human family to survive, thrive, and to keep our planet able to support life at all."

Cover: **C** | Design & typography: **C** | Illustrations: **C** Editing: **B** | Marketing copy: **B**

PICTURE BOOKS

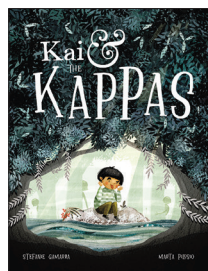
EDITOR'S PICK

Kai & the Kappas

Stefanie Gamarra
32p, e-book, \$4.99, ASIN B0DPXT6QYH

In this enchanting picture book for young children, a boy named Kai discovers the excitement and power of storytelling. Fascinated by all things spooky and mysterious, Kai is delighted when his grandmother gives him a book "filled with the most spine-tingling creatures imaginable," and he can't wait to share the magic with his friends. He gathers a group of children and tells them about the kappa, a mythical creature that has a bowl of water on its head that "gives them strength and power to move rivers just by thinking about it." The catch, of course, is that kappas also like to snatch kids, and when Kai shares this detail, most of his audience runs away in tears.

Gamarra (author of *How to Grow a Marshmallow Tree*), fortunately, handles tones and feelings in storytelling more deftly than Kai does. Readers will enjoy how, despite this disappointing reception, Kai continues to delight in his world of make-believe, getting a kick out of running into town shouting, "A kappa is here to take me away!" After a while, everyone stops listening—and that's when Kai gets a thrilling



Lively modern fairy tale of the excitement and power of storytelling.

Great for fans of Amanda Noll's *I Need My Monster*, Marc Tyler Nobleman's *The Chupacabra Ate the Candelabra*.

surprise that will test his cleverness and blur the line between fantasy and reality. Cleverly, Gamarra doesn't belabor whether Kai's riverside encounter with a kappa was actually "real," which will encourage kids to ask questions and come to their own conclusions.

Marta Pilosio's distinctive illustrations offer a thrilling glimpse into Kai's old-time world, with the children wearing

simple, practical clothing and the adults shown holding farming implements and loaves of bread. The pictures utilize mostly muted tones of gray, blue, and brown, giving the ethereal sense that Willow Creek is similar to—yet distinct from—contemporary life. The children's faces are curious and expressive, while the adults are often shown scowling while going about their work. Ultimately, this captivating tale encourages kids and grownups to put aside their chores and revel in their imaginations.

Cover: **A** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **A** Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

YOUNG ADULT

EDITOR'S PICK

Kat's Greek Summer

Mima Tipper | SparkPress
256p, trade paper, \$13.99, ISBN 978-1-684-63306-7

Tipper's sparkling debut, a coming-of-age story that explores themes of identity, family, and self-discovery with grace and insight, centers on Kat, a 15-year-old girl of mixed Greek and American heritage. On the cusp of high school and dreaming of joining the cross-country team, Kat has a simple but demanding summer goal: train rigorously with the team to prepare for the upcoming season, to "be the fastest runner" in New Canaan, and maybe, just maybe, catch the eye of senior Mike Doherty. However, her plans unravel when her mother announces a surprise trip to Greece for the summer. Still reeling from her parents' divorce and life in a new apartment, Kat is less than thrilled about months in a country where she doesn't know the language

Tipper makes both Kat's drive and disappointment touchingly relatable, even for readers who would relish a Mediterranean summer. Greece, with its sweltering heat and afternoon siestas, seems like the worst possible place to pursue her running dream, so she secretly starts running at night, telling herself that hill



Touching story of a disappointed teen runner's Grecian awakening.

Great for fans of Jenna Evans Welch's *Love & Gelato*, Barbara Dee's *Maybe He Just Likes You*.

training means she still has the chance to "turn herself into the running goddess of life." But the quiet nights hold their own perils—roaring motorcycles, unfamiliar trails, and the weight of cultural differences threaten to derail her every step.

Through her nocturnal runs, Kat encounters Theofilus, a mysterious and alluring boy she's moved to track down

later—and who opens her eyes to the beauty and complexity of the world around her. While *Kat's Greek Summer* abounds in lyric beauty, time with Theofilus inspires Tipper's most sensuous prose: it feels like "hot, hot skin plunging into cool, silky water." As they grow closer, Kat begins to question whether the life she envisioned is truly the one she wants. Kat's journey, set against peaks, patios, and people of Greece, reminds readers that sometimes the detours we dread the most can lead us to places—and people—that transform our lives.

Cover: **A** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: — Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**