

November 24, 2025

booklife®

YOUR GUIDE TO SELF-PUBLISHING

54 New BookLife Titles Listed • 32 New BookLife Titles Reviewed

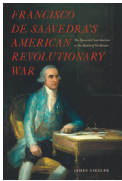
Indie Spotlight

In this edition of our monthly thematic roundup of BookLife titles, we feature books on history and historical fiction.

Want to see your book featured? Check out the Indie Spotlight calendar at booklife.com/indiespotlight.

HISTORY

Francisco de Saavedra's American Revolutionary War

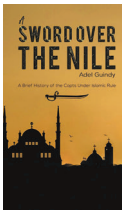


James Giesler

ASIN B0FKCYHXZL

Author statement: "This is the story of how the decisive American victory in the Revolutionary War, at the Battle of Yorktown in October 1781, was the result of French and Spanish cooperation in the Caribbean."

A Sword over the Nile: A Brief History of the Copts Under Islamic Rule



Adel Guindy

ISBN 978-1-64378-761-9

Author statement: "A *Sword over the Nile* was born from my desire to tell a story long silenced—the fate of Egypt's indigenous Christians, the Copts, after the Arab-Islamic conquest."

Unmasking the Humourist



Brent L. Kendrick

ASIN B0FNCCGGTH

Author statement: "Unmasking *The Humourist* is a literary investigation that solves one of Colonial America's greatest mysteries—who wrote 'The Humourist' essays published in *The South Carolina Gazette* in 1753-1754?"

HISTORICAL FICTION

Death of a Cigarette: A Story of Survival, Memory, and Legacy



Timothy Webber & Milo Grey

ASIN B0FR55TBFT

Author statement: "Told through the voice of an unlit WWII cigarette named Chance, *Death of a Cigarette* is a historical novella about survival, memory, and legacy."

The Irish Yankee

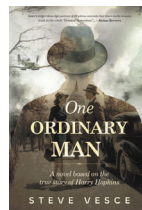


Regan Walker

ASIN B0FPQZ267W

Author statement: "With Americans about to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, it seemed to me timely to give readers a story that tells of America's beginnings."

One Ordinary Man: A Novel Based on the True Story of Harry Hopkins



Steve Vesce

ASIN B0FVMLBFV5

Author statement: "One *Ordinary Man* is a historically accurate novel about the inspiring, surprising, and remarkable true story of Harry L. Hopkins—one ordinary man who grew from obscurity to play a leading and pivotal role in helping America overcome the Great Depression, defeat fascism, and win World War II."

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)



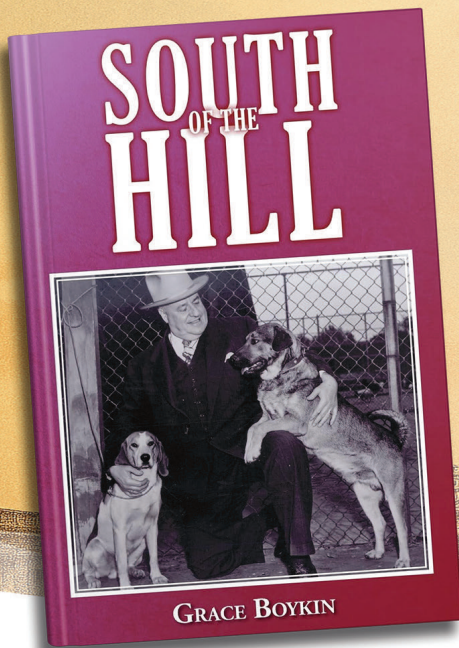
paid reviews of self- or
indie-published titles
[publishersweekly.com/
BookLifeReviews](https://publishersweekly.com/BookLifeReviews)



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All powered by *Publishers Weekly* reviewers.



SOUTH OF THE HILL

BY GRACE BOYKIN

ISBN: 9781684869626

South of the Hill: Grace Boykin Maps the Heart's Backroads

Grace Boykin's *South of the Hill* arrives with the quiet confidence of a writer who knows exactly where she's taking you and why the journey matters. Published by URLink Print & Media, Boykin's work is a luminous exploration of place and belonging, of what we inherit and what we choose, and of the small acts of courage that alter a life's course.

Boykin writes with a cartographer's precision and a poet's ear. The book's landscapes, porches washed in late light, two-lane roads stitched through wide fields, kitchen tables crowded with memory, form a living atlas of characters whose hopes and wounds feel at once singular and deeply familiar. Even in its most intimate moments, *South of the Hill* reaches for a larger American story: how families hold together, how communities account for their pasts, and how a person's sense of home can both anchor and unsettle.

Readers will feel the tug of Boykin's sentences from the opening pages. Her prose is attentive, unhurried, and precise, leaving room for silences that resonate. Rather than chase spectacle, she composes meaning from the ordinary, the smell of rain in dust, the crack in a step that no one bothers to fix, a roadside diner where the coffee is strong and the news travels faster than the clock. In Boykin's hands, such details aren't decoration; they're the story's beating heart.

On its surface, *South of the Hill* tracks the fault lines between past and present. But the book's deeper engine is the reckoning that comes when memory collides with truth. Characters who have learned to live with the half-light of rumor and tradition find themselves confronted by choices that are tender, difficult, and, ultimately, liberating. Boykin refuses tidy answers. Instead, she offers the pleasures of discovery: a widening horizon, a clearer sky.

Boykin's characters are as textured as the land they inhabit, funny, stubborn, generous, and always human. Dialogue lands with the ease of conversation overheard on a summer night. Her scenes turn not on melodrama but on revelation: a gesture misread, a letter found, a road driven twice. The cumulative effect is quietly devastating in the best way, reader and character learning, together, how to see.

In an era that often rewards noise, *South of the Hill* trusts a different register. It speaks to readers who crave depth over speed, and who understand that the most consequential journeys are rarely the loudest. Boykin's novel is a reminder that home is not a fixed point on a map; it's a practice of attention, care, and courage.

About the Author

Grace Boykin is an observer of the everyday sublime. Her work balances lyric sensitivity with narrative drive, inviting readers into worlds that feel both fresh and familiar. With *South of the Hill*, Boykin extends her reputation for crafting fiction that honors the textures of real life while illuminating the emotional geographies beneath it.

Publisher's Note: For review copies, interview requests, or event inquiries related to Grace Boykin and South of the Hill, please contact URLink Print & Media's publicity team.



Available at:

amazon.com

BARNES & NOBLE



*also in other major online bookstores

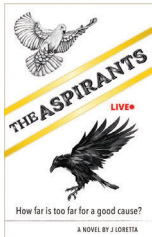


New Titles from Self-Publishers

Booksellers, publishers, librarians, and agents are encouraged to look at the 54 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

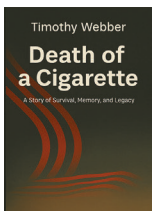
The Aspirants



J. Loretta. J. Loretta. \$12.99 paper (354p), ISBN 978-2-8399-4564-6; \$5.99 e-book, ASIN B0F2MZQTGH Amazon, Apple Books, Barnes & Noble, Everand, Kobo
Hope for the hopeless? While Ned builds a

livestreaming entertainment empire of death, Emma counters his death toll by performing spectacular acts of rescue on her own show.

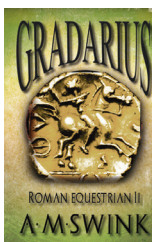
Death of a Cigarette



Timothy Webber. Grey & Webber. \$14.95 (80p), ISBN 979-8-3507-5511-4; \$9.95 paper, ISBN 979-8-3507-5507-7 Amazon, Google Play, IngramSpark

On D-Day, a Lucky Strike named Chance rides in a GI's pack, witnessing landing, loss, and the long echo of silence, proving sometimes the bravest act is not to burn.

Gradarius: Roman Equestrian II



A.M. Swink. Historium Press. \$19.99 paper (366p), ISBN 978-1-964700-56-4; \$3.99 e-book, ISBN 978-1-964700-57-1 Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Bookshop.org, Kobo
A Roman centurion and a

British tribeswoman put their love to the

test. Will they find a way forward together before war tears them apart?

The Life and Times of Sarah Good, Accused Witch



Witch

Sandra Wagner-Wright. Sandra Wagner-Wright. \$14.99 paper (210p), ISBN 979-1-7354132-5-9; \$2.99 e-book, ISBN 978-1-7354135-6-6 Amazon, Apple Books, Barnes &

Noble, Google Play, Kobo

When Ann Putnam suffers fits, she names Sarah Good as a witch. Her father takes the matter to court, thereby igniting the 1692 Salem witch hysteria. Sarah is convicted and executed.

The New-Way Governance: Living in 22nd Century



Viswa. Qcloud. \$14.99 paper (200p), ISBN 979-8-9995493-1-0 Amazon, IngramSpark

The New-Way Governance offers a bold framework for addressing inequities that persisted for far too long. It introduces a new ideology to place human well-being at center.

One Ordinary Man: A Novel Based on the True Story of Harry Hopkins

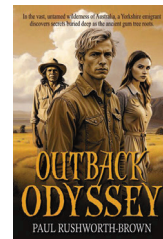


Steve Vesce. Verlibri Media. \$21.99 paper (618p), ISBN 979-8-9996453-1-9; \$9.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-9996453-0-2

Amazon

One Ordinary Man is a novel based on the inspiring and surprising true story of Harry Hopkins, who helped America overcome the Great Depression, defeat fascism, and win WWII.

Outback Odyssey



Paul Rushworth-Brown. Historium Press. \$17.99 paper (310p), ISBN 978-1-964700-14-4; \$6.70 e-book, ISBN 978-1-964700-13-7 Amazon

A gripping 1950s outback adventure and allegory of belonging, courage, and reconciliation, where survival and understanding become one beneath Australia's red earth.

Revived



Barbara Avon. Barbara Avon. \$17.95 paper (140p), ISBN 979-8-4392-5400-2; \$9.99 e-book, ASIN B09WZDDPVM Amazon, Apple Books, Barnes & Noble, Kobo
Steven Gold died for a full 60 seconds. When they

revived him, his sins followed him back. He should have stayed dead. Set in 1994.

Skinless

Maggie Moor. Pearl of Peace Publishing. \$21.99 paper (388p), ISBN 979-8-9931212-2-2; \$7.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-9931212-4-6 Amazon, Bookshop.org, IngramSpark



PALMETTO
PUBLISHING

From Concept to Completion

With unparalleled expertise, Palmetto supports writers at every stage of the publishing journey

At Palmetto, publishing isn't just a job; it is in the company's DNA. Founded in 2018 by Richard Joseph and Jack Joseph, the South

Carolina-based independent publishing house is built upon this father-son duo's deep, global roots in the industry. Jack is the third in his family to work in books, his grandparents having founded South Africa's largest bookstore chain. Eight years ago, Jack and Richard recognized that the future of publishing lay in empowering authors directly, and that's when Palmetto was born.

"We founded Palmetto Publishing to create the best possible self-publishing experience," Jack says. "Because we understand what great books look and feel like — and because we know authors' needs firsthand—we've combined our industry expertise with innovative technology to deliver an exceptional, affordable publishing experience at scale."

An important part of Palmetto's framework is supporting authors at every stage—even before they have finished writing. To help authors flesh out their ideas, Palmetto offers a one-on-one coaching program that Jack says is "designed to guide authors from initial concept to completed manuscript." And once the manuscript has been written and

polished, Palmetto continues to guide authors through the next steps.

"We manage the entire publishing process, from editing and design to distribution and launch," Jack says.

"We guide authors through every step, ensuring their book meets the highest standards of quality and has the best possible chance for success in the marketplace."

— Jack Joseph

"Everything we offer has been developed, tested, and continuously monitored to ensure it delivers genuine value to our authors. We focus solely on proven solutions and stay away from gimmicks like 'book-to-screen' promises. Our goal is simple: to make the publishing process seamless, transparent, and rewarding."

Through its full suite of professional publishing services, Palmetto guides authors through what can be a confusing and overwhelming process, with services

that can be tailored to each author's specific goals. No author is confined to a preset model.

"We guide authors through every step, ensuring their book meets the highest standards of quality and has the best possible chance for success in the marketplace," Jack says.

In addition to allowing authors to move at their own pace and select the services they need, self-publishing with Palmetto also allows authors to keep complete creative and financial control over their work, retaining 100% of their intellectual property and profits. This has allowed many clients to make an impact in more ways than one.

"It's incredible to see the real-world impact our authors achieve," Jack says. "We've seen professionals grow their businesses and attract new clients, authors raise significant funds for causes they care about, and one author even filled the

Jacksonville Jaguars stadium for a book event. Whether the goal is to inspire, educate, or generate income, self-publishing offers authors the flexibility to use their book strategically to reach their unique goals."

Palmetto's success stories include Jule Menanno, an author who used the relationship advice space to build a strong online following. After self-publishing her work, she achieved such great success that she attracted a literary agent and snagged a major traditional publishing deal. For Jack, seeing writers achieve their dreams makes continuing his family's legacy in the publishing industry more than worthwhile.

"The most fulfilling part of our work is hearing from authors after their books are published and learning how their work has changed their lives or helped them achieve long-held goals," Jack says. "Many of our authors have spent years developing their stories, so it's deeply meaningful to know they trusted Palmetto with something so personal. Seeing their excitement and success reminds us why we do what we do—helping authors bring their ideas to life and share them with the world."



N.Y.C., 1999: After teen homelessness and abuse, street-smart singer Charmay creates “Cindy,” a glittering alter-ego—until chaos ricochets and she must choose: the mask or her voice.

Tortue du Soleil



S.E. Filomeo. BookBaby. \$36.99 (300p), ISBN 979-8-9927507-0-6; \$8.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-9927507-1-3
Amazon
Tortue du Soleil tells the story of three women

from different cultural backgrounds who experience life-changing adventures against the beautiful backdrop of French Polynesia.

Poetry

Resting Warrior: Marching through the Fire



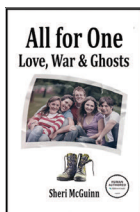
Ruthie Chamichian-Smith. Three Tomatoes Publishing. \$24.99 (140p), ISBN 979-8-9995761-3-2; \$14.99 paper (136p), ISBN 979-8-9995761-2-5
Amazon, Barnes & Noble,

Bookshop.org, IngramSpark

Through poetry and prose, one woman chronicles her passage through trauma, grief, and illness toward self-reclamation, hope, and the strength to be whole again.

Mystery/Thriller

All for One: Love, War, & Ghosts



Sheri McGuinn. Durare Publishing. \$17.95 paper (218p), ISBN 978-1-942069-10-2; \$7.99 e-book, ISBN 978-1-942069-11-9
Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Books-A-Million,

Bookshop.org, IngramSpark

A tale of friendship, love, and youthful decisions that drive friends apart for decades. When the ghosts of Vietnam shove their way into the present, fear, uncertainty, and death follow.

Burnt

Gene Upchurch. Firebrand. \$24.99 (156p), ISBN 978-1-941907-56-6



Amazon, Barnes & Noble, The Country Bookshop
A retired small-time arsonist is haunted by the deadly consequences of his actions and tries to escape his former life.

Mirage



Tony Burnett. Kallisto Gaia Press. \$29.99 (330p), ISBN 978-1-952224-45-4; \$21.99 paper (330p), ISBN 978-1-952224-44-7
Amazon, Apple Books, Barnes & Noble, Books-A-Million,

Bookshop.org, Google Books

By weaving together Carrie’s struggle as survivor-turned-deputy, Kevin’s infiltration of cartel hierarchy, and a tangled web of family secrets, *Mirage* feels urgent and unforgettable.

True Target



Austin S. Camacho. Audecyn Books. \$18.99 paper (294p), ISBN 979-8-9885333-5-1; \$6.99 e-book, ISBN 978-1-940758-93-0
Amazon, Barnes & Noble

Assassin Skye Maddox is hired by a grieving father to hunt down the chain of men responsible for his son’s death and finds a huge criminal conspiracy.

Wild Cards



Stuart Stromin. Close to the Bone Publishing. \$10.99 paper (202p), ISBN 978-1-7132-9264-7
Amazon, Barnes & Noble
Two street hustlers seek payback from a vicious mobster one explosive night in Las Vegas.

SF/Fantasy/Horror

Addie's Eyes: A Historical Fantasy



Tim Landry, illus. by Nataliia Kretsu and Tim Landry. Sir Reel Press. \$31.99 (220p), ISBN 979-8-89778-598-8; \$2.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-89778-597-1
Amazon, IngramSpark
A blind girl forms an unlikely bond with a sideshow performer,

unaware of his unusual appearance. When they are separated, a magical adventure ensues.

AI Monsters: Good!? Bad!? Evil!?



The Kite, illus. by BeFunky. The Kite. \$13.82 paper (266p), ISBN 979-8-2882-4625-8; \$2.96 e-book, ISBN 979-8-2882-4625-8
Amazon

It is a political saga littered with romance and family drama, following the lives of humans and aliens living under an oppressive AI regime.

All the Dark Souls



A.M. Dunnewin. Dark Hour Press. \$14.99 paper (240p), ISBN 978-1-952577-17-8; \$4.99 e-book, ISBN 978-1-952577-02-4
Amazon, Apple Books, Barnes & Noble, Kobo

A female executioner gets caught up in a deadly scheme when a mysterious prisoner comes into town claiming to be the lost prince.

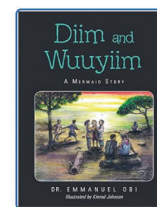
Linked: Scars



J.E. Lenoir. Page Publishing. \$21.95 paper (304p), ISBN 978-1-6624-7939-7
Amazon

Two cousins in the Vietnam War share a psychic bond that resurfaces amid chaos, forcing them to confront inner demons, family secrets, and the haunting power of their connection.

Diim and Wuuyiim: A Mermaid Story



Emmanuel Obi, illus. by Kinrod Johnson. Authorhouse. \$20.99 e-book, ISBN 978-1-7283-1290-3
Amazon

When Tuka looks at her seemingly perfect husband, she occasionally feels an uncanny familiarity about him that hints at a mysterious past neither of them have acknowledged.

BookLife Talks with John Chirillo

Chirillo's YA debut *Reborn*, the first in a new series, follows Jonah, a teen juggling his dual faith background as he discovers latent abilities within him.

You've written both fiction and nonfiction works. What inspired you to start writing in the first place?

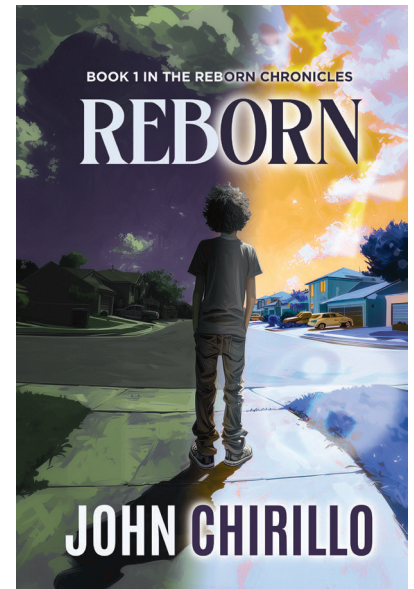
I started writing because I wanted to make sense of complexity—whether in technology or in people. My nonfiction career began in cybersecurity, where I wrote to simplify difficult systems and help others see the patterns behind the chaos. Over time, I realized that same desire extended to storytelling. Fiction lets me explore what data can't quantify, such as faith, emotion, and the gray areas between logic and belief. *Reborn* became a way to blend both sides of my mind—the technical and the spiritual—and write about transformation in a more human, emotional way.

The main character in *Reborn* is part of a multi-religion family. Do you come from a similar background?

Yes, my family's faith background mirrors Jonah's in some ways. Growing up with various influences, I saw how belief could divide or connect people depending on how they approached it. That shaped me and deeply influenced Jonah's journey. In *Reborn*, his struggle isn't as much about choosing one faith over another as it is about realizing that truth and connection often live in the overlap. I wanted readers from any background to recognize themselves in that search for belonging and meaning.

Your adult thrillers seem to pull much from your background as a cybersecurity specialist. Was that true for *Reborn* as well?

Well, only in a more symbolic way. My cybersecurity work is about understanding hidden systems, such as how information moves and how connections create both powerful outcomes and vulnerabilities. The same idea drives *Reborn*. The "system" here isn't digital but spiritual. The network is humanity itself and how faith, emotion, and energy link us together. I used that mindset to give the story a sense of



realism and structure. Even the supernatural elements in *Reborn* follow rules, like code; they have logic and consequence.

How do you imagine readers at this moment will connect to *Reborn*?

We're living in an age of uncertainty, where people question what's real and what they can trust in technology, institutions, and even themselves. *Reborn* speaks to that anxiety but also to the hope beneath it. It's about rediscovering faith, and not just religious faith but faith in purpose, love, and connection. Jonah's emergence mirrors what many of us feel right now, the sense that something bigger is moving through our lives, even when we can't explain it. I think readers, especially younger ones, will connect to that hunger for meaning in a world that feels increasingly mechanical.

When can readers expect the second book in the *Reborn* chronicles?

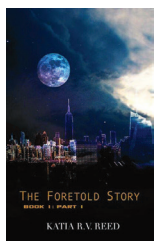
Book two, titled *Awakened*, is already in development and expands on the mythology introduced in *Reborn*. It follows a new character and her own place in the world. It continues the emotional, spiritual, and cinematic arc in *Reborn*. Where *Reborn* explored belief and identity, *Awakened* dives deeper into legacy and the ripple effects of power. Readers can expect it in mid-2026, with early excerpts and cover art releasing prior.

For more, visit booklife.com/chirillo

A Fairy Story: Saving the Green

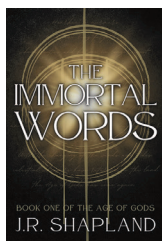
Levanah Shell Bdolak, illus. by Ched C. Readers Magnet. \$19.99 paper (314p), ISBN 979-8-90000-034-3; \$5.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-90000-035-0
Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Readers Magnet

Meet the invisible race of the Fae and the humans who champion their cause. Join with Merrilee as she spans the globe to save a Fairy Kingdom and our planet.

The Foretold Story Book 1: Part 1

Katia R.V. Reed. E-Booktime. \$31.95 (420p), ISBN 978-1-60862-780-6; \$23.95 paper, ISBN 978-1-60862-779-0
Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Books-A-Million

A young man with a golden touch follows his dream to work for the Skyscraper Empire in N.Y.C. and stumbles unknowingly into the world of the elites unlocking society's twisted secrets.

The Immortal Words

J.R. Shapland. J.R. Shapland. \$14.95 paper (540p), ISBN 979-8-9924795-1-5; \$2.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-9924795-0-8
Amazon, Barnes & Noble
Fen and Aleesa, escaping conscription from a

vengeful war, race against time, the Shadow, and the Gods themselves to uncover the truth of the forgotten Ages. The words must not be spoken.

Lost Requiem: The Witch's First Movement

Isabel Moran. Isabel Moran Publication. \$12.99 paper (206p), ISBN 978-0-578-23615-5
Amazon, Barnes & Noble
A half-spirit must lead oppressed races to overthrow oppressive

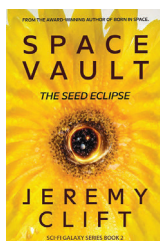
forces and restore peace, but the true enemy remains hidden in plain sight.

The Poet (The Forest of Fontainebleau #1)

Nickie Krewson. iUniverse. \$21.95 paper (394p),



ISBN 978-1-4759-6055-6
Amazon, Barnes & Noble
After a faerie makes a wish that turns a wandering bat into a human, both she and the transformed creature must navigate love, loss, and the tangled morality of the mortal world.

Space Vault: The Seed Eclipse

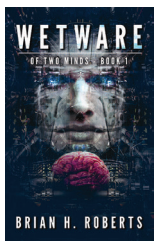
Jeremy Clift. ElleWon Press. \$17.99 paper (374p), ISBN 979-8-9900107-5-8; \$2.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-9900107-6-5
Amazon, IngramSpark

On the Moon, a mother risks everything to protect her engineered daughter and the Seed Vault that holds the last blueprint of life.

The Spring Dragon

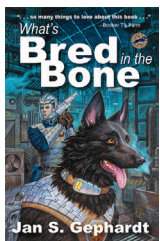
Natalie Wright. Menaris Books. \$33.99 (464p), ISBN 979-8-9874912-8-7; \$19.99 paper, ISBN 979-8-9874912-9-4
NatalieWrightAuthor.com, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Bookshop.org

Aldewin races against time to discover the legendary Heart of Magic before the Dynasty can, for whoever holds the Heart unlocks the key not only to magic, but to life itself.

Wetware (Of Two Minds #1)

Brian H. Roberts. Brian H. Roberts. \$16.99 paper (294p), ISBN 979-8-9921612-3-6; \$2.99 e-book, ASIN B0FWDCYD8K
Amazon

Al lacks consciousness, until it borrows self-awareness from a human host.

What's Bred in the Bone (XK9 "Bones" Trilogy #1)

Jan S. Gephardt, illus. by Jody A. Lee. Weird Sisters Publishing. \$19.99 paper (492p), ISBN 978-1-950748-03-7; \$4.99 e-book, ISBN 978-1-950748-01-3

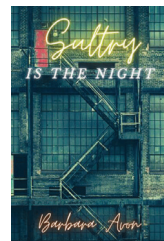
IngramSpark

Bioengineered as a precision forensic tool, XK9 Rex is far more than his buyers bargained for. And that's an international scandal.

Romance/Erotica**On the Way Down**

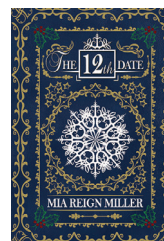
Jennifer Farwell. Starry Girl Publishing. \$19.99 (334p), ISBN 979-8-9994018-1-6; \$2.99 e-book, ISBN 978-0-9986143-6-6
Amazon

When disgraced actor Phoenix Alden resurfaces in Delaney Sharpe's life, she can't ignore the spark or the sense he's hiding something about their six years apart.

Sultry, Is the Night

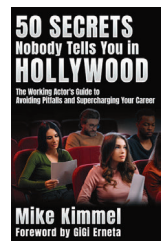
Barbara Avon. Barbara Avon. \$21.99 paper (174p), ISBN 979-8-5333-5704-3; \$9.99 e-book, ASIN B09M7Q4YQ3
Amazon, Apple Books, Barnes & Noble, Kobo

Mario is from the wrong side of the tracks. Tess is the beautiful, rich stranger who is hiding a dark secret. Some borders aren't meant to be crossed. Set in 1982.

The 12th Date

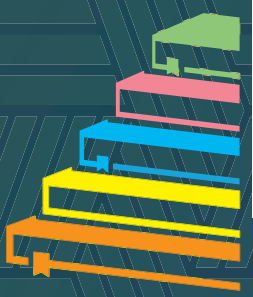
Mia Reign Miller, illus. by JessHavok. Evergrove Media. \$9.99 paper (148p), ISBN 979-8-9909236-2-1; \$4.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-9909236-3-8
Amazon

A heartwarming holiday novella where Christmas magic and love intertwine, reminding Jane and all of us that it's never too late to believe again.

Nonfiction**50 Secrets Nobody Tells You in Hollywood:**

The Working Actor's Guide to Avoiding Pitfalls and Supercharging Your Career
Mike Kimmel. Ben Rose Creative Arts. \$19.99 paper (246p), ISBN 978-1-953057-18-1; \$0.99 e-book, ISBN 978-1-953057-16-7

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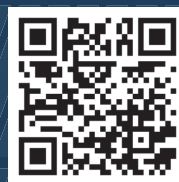
The New Author Opportunity

Keynote ★ Presentations ★ Networking

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- ★ Technology & Tools for Your Publishing Business
- ★ Editing & Design Essentials
- ★ Vetting Your Book
- ★ Market Strategies by Channel
- ★ Driving Demand through Branding & Community Building



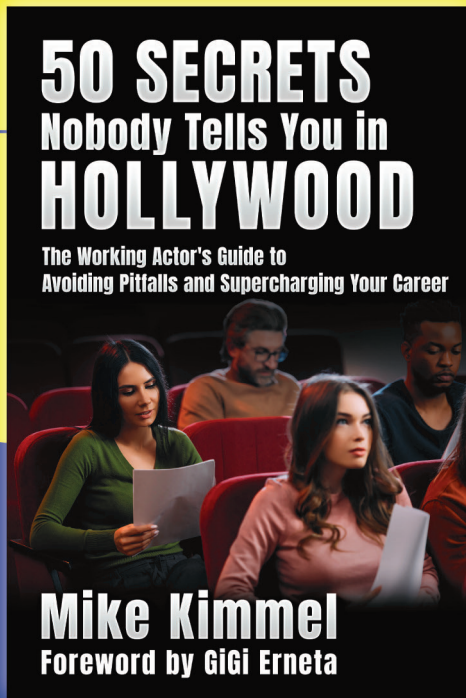
Opening Keynote:
Jane Friedman and
Russell Nohelty will discuss
The New Author Opportunity



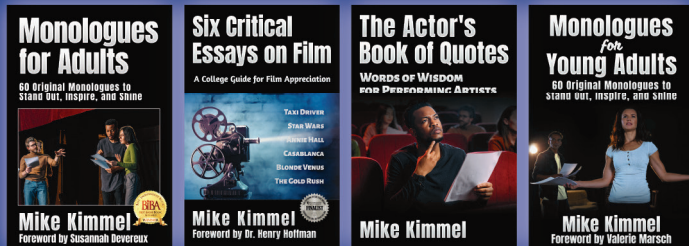
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“With humorous and welcome candor, Kimmel provides a wealth of behind-the-scenes information and advice about auditions, interacting with agents, and prioritizing self-care, with actionable game plans for actors ranging in age from their 20s to their 50s.”

—*BookLife by Publishers Weekly Review*

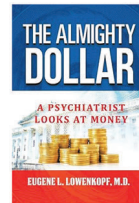
“... the author guides would-be actors through lessons on dealing with managers, agents, and other performers, as well as the labyrinthine workings of the entertainment industry in general.”

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Amazon, Barnes & Noble, The Drama Book Shop, IngramSpark
 Veteran actor's clear-eyed demystification of the acting business and how to navigate the industry's unseen pitfalls, with action steps to build your credits and ensure long-term success.

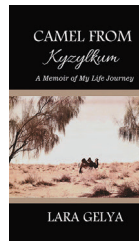
The Almighty Dollar: A Psychiatrist Looks at Money



Eugene L. Lowenkopf. Brilliant Books Literary. \$13.99 paper (312p), ISBN 979-8-88945-310-9
 Amazon, Barnes & Noble

There are chapters dealing with important stages in the life cycle such as childhood, adolescence, marriage, maturity, retirement, old age, and death.

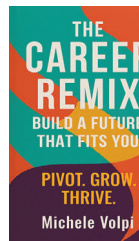
Camel from Kyzylkum: A Memoir of My Life Journey



Lara Gelya. Life Journeys Books. \$14.99 paper (202p), ISBN 978-1-7377878-0-8; \$4.99 e-book, ASIN B09Y7GTZQS

Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Target, Walmart
 A moving true story of escape from the Soviet Union, survival as a stateless refugee, and rebuilding life with hope in America.

The Career Remix: Build a Future That Fits You: Pivot. Grow. Thrive.



Michele Volpi. Volpi Publishing. \$12.99 paper (322p), ISBN 979-8-9999740-0-6; \$6.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-9999740-1-3

Amazon, Apple Books, Kobo, IngramSpark
The Career Remix breaks the mold of traditional career advice, offering professionals a transformative, strategic, and deeply personalized approach to designing a fulfilling career.

The Daughter of the Innocent Man



Noel Daniels. Noel Daniels. \$24.99 (166p), ISBN 979-8-8801-7991-6; \$19.99 paper (182p), ISBN 979-8-8801-6475-2

Amazon, Barnes & Noble, IngramSpark
 Noel's father, the Innocent Man, spent nearly 12 years on death row for a crime he didn't commit and was exonerated just five days before execution. His story inspired a book and Netflix doc.

The Enigma of Grief and the Sublime

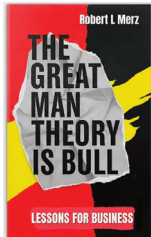


Robert Arnold Johnson. Robert Arnold Johnson/ Fearless Literary. \$19.99 paper (140p), ISBN 979-8-218-67826-5; \$9.95 e-book, ASIN B0FRMW6R49

Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Bookshop.org, IngramSpark
 Grief is sublimely sad, an emotional parallel to the enigma of loss and the self that must

bear it. Each word in the sentence just stated counts; this book shows why.

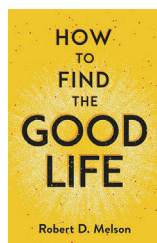
The Great Man Theory Is Bull: Lessons for



Business

Robert L. Merz. Values of America Publishing. \$12.95 paper (236p), ISBN 979-8-2965-3442-2; \$5.95 e-book, ASIN B0FLWZ2SF3 Amazon

Effective leadership relies not on the extraordinary abilities of one person, but on the collaborative efforts and supporting systems that enable teams and organizations to thrive.



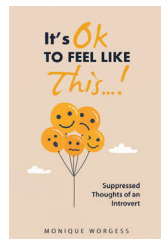
How to Find the Good Life

Robert D. Melson. BookBaby. \$24.99 paper (84p), ISBN 979-8-3178-0869-3; \$9.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-3178-0870-9 Amazon, BookBaby, Walmart

Imagine a book that can

guide you through hard times, teach you to earn more money, and lead you to better health. Within this you will discover the secret to creating a great life.

It's OK to Feel Like This...!: Suppressed Thoughts of an Introvert



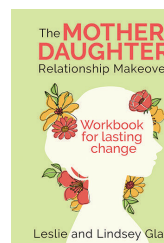
Monique Worgess.

BalboaPressUK. \$20.17 paper (122p), ISBN 978-1-9822-8730-6; \$4.99 e-book, ISBN 978-1-9822-8731-3

Amazon
Using Monique Worgess's personal story as a backdrop, this self-improvement book discusses recognizing the bittersweet feeling of slowing down and acknowledging oneself to stop avoiding the pain from the past.

The Mother Daughter Relationship Makeover Workbook for Lasting Change

Leslie Glass and Lindsey Glass, illus. by Haley La Ferney. Reach Out Recovery. \$39.99 paper

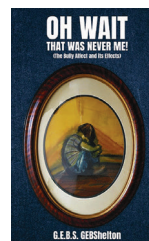


(132p), ISBN 978-1-7324158-8-1

Reachoutrecovery.com, Amazon

Workbook for repairing mother-daughter relationships with guided exercises, conflict-resolution tools, and practical scripts for healthier family patterns.

Oh Wait: That Was Never Me: The Bully Affect and Its Effects



Gary (G.E.B.) Shelton. Gary (G.E.B.) Shelton. \$19.99

(184p), ISBN 979-8-3485-4714-1; \$12.99 paper, ISBN 979-8-3493-9586-4

Amazon
Through a lifetime of being bullied, inner strength propelled me into a successful career as a nurse, artist, and author. I have never been able to forget how mean people were to me.

GENERATIONS OF FAITH, FAMILY, AND FARMING
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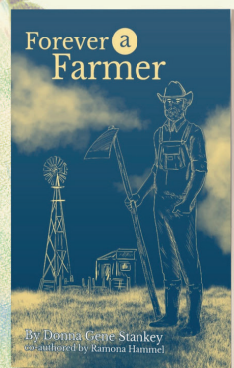
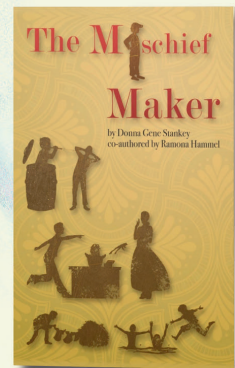
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Inspired by their own upbringings on fourth-generation farms, they write with authenticity and heart, capturing the humor, hardship, and humanity of small-town life. Each story invites readers to slow down, breathe in the scent of fresh earth, and rediscover the simple joys that built generations.

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THE TALE OF MR. CROCODILE TAKES TEA

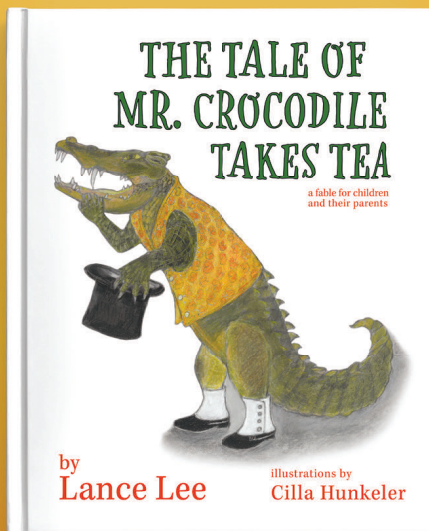
by Lance Lee

A heartwarming story that encourages readers to consider themes of acceptance and the importance of looking beyond external differences...an excellent read for children...a modern fable that entertains and educates, making it an excellent addition to a child's library.

—Carol Thompson, 5* Readers' Favorite review

Lee's second installment in his charming "Crouch End" series follows...an adventurous story of a crocodile learning to become a person...and offers a beautiful moral that all life has dignity and deserves respect.... *The Tale of Mr. Crocodile Takes Tea* offers a perspective that may positively inspire young readers....

—Booklife Reviews



Paperback: 979-8-21830-614-4 • \$17.95

Hardback: 979-8-21830-612-0 • \$31.50

Whimsical and delightfully thought-provoking

—Diane Donovan, *Midwest Book Review*

Delightful...Charming...Fantastical Whimsy!

—Aimee Jodoin, 4* Foreword review

A delightful little story of differences and respect

—Asher Syed, 5* Readers' Favorite review

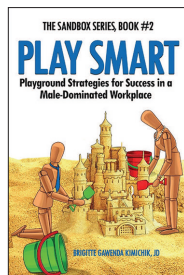
A tale of unity told through a Crocodile's search for whether we're all persons

—Love Reading: Love Reading for Kids, and: An Indie Book We Love

Available at

amazon BARNES & NOBLE

Play Smart: Playground Strategies for Success in a Male-Dominated Workplace

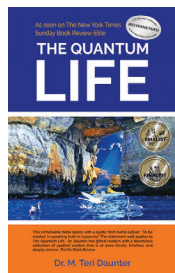


Brigitte Gawenda
Kimichik. Sandbox
Series. \$22.95 paper
(236p), ISBN 979-8-
9909126-1-8; \$9.95
e-book, ISBN 979-8-
9909126-2-5
Amazon, Barnes & Noble,
Books-A-Million,

IndieBound

A practical guide for women to excel in male-dominated workplaces, offering clear strategies to navigate bias, build influence, and rise with confidence.

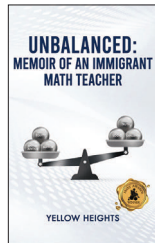
The Quantum Life: There Is a Better Way to Live



M. Teri Daunter. Publish.
\$16.99 paper (264p),
ISBN 978-1-64704-921-
8; \$5.99 e-book, ISBN
978-1-64704-922-5
Amazon, Barnes & Noble
What if everything
you've been told is

wrong? After a life-altering experience shattered my carefully constructed world, I discovered we have been living a life of fiction.

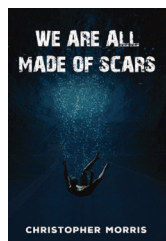
Unbalanced: Memoir of an Immigrant Math Teacher



Yellow Heights. Mindstir
Media. \$15.95 paper
(254p), ISBN 978-1-
966074-47-2; \$5.99
e-book, ASIN B0FG7TKX13
Amazon

This is the journey of a first-generation immigrant becoming a math teacher in the United States.

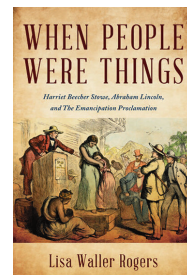
We Are All Made of Scars



Christopher Morris.
Christopher Morris. \$13.99
paper (378p), ISBN 979-8-
3647-6239-9; \$3.89
e-book, ASIN
B0BQZCQ462
Amazon

A raw, mid-'90s coming-of-age memoir of addiction, chaos, and survival. Chris struggles to find normal in a world shattered by alcoholism.

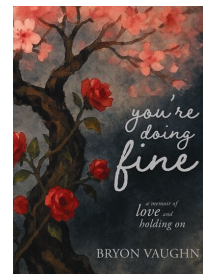
When People Were Things: Harriet Beecher Stowe, Abraham Lincoln, and the



Emancipation
Proclamation
Lisa Waller Rogers. Barrel
Cactus Press. \$36.99
(682p), ISBN 979-8-
9994096-2-1
IngramSpark
A history of the
American abolition

of slavery movement.

You're Doing Fine: A Memoir of Love and Holding On

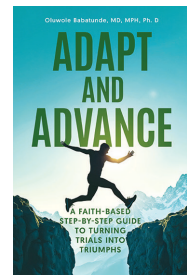


Bryon Vaughn. Bryon
Vaughn. \$16.99 paper
(228p), ISBN 979-8-
2708-2416-7; \$9.99
e-book, ASIN
B0FX3BWLQD
Amazon
A grieving husband
searches for meaning

in the quiet aftermath of loss, finding his late wife's voice woven through memory, love, and the small mercies of living on.

Religion/Spirituality

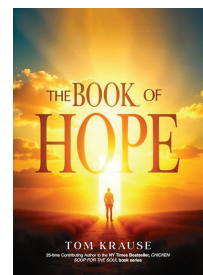
Adapt and Advance: A Faith-Based Step-by-Step Guide to Turning Trials into



Triumphs
Oluwle Babatunde.
Oluwle Babatunde.
\$9.99 e-book, ISBN 979-
8-89694-285-6
Amazon, IngramSpark
Adapt and Advance is a
faith-based guide that
empowers readers to

turn life's trials into triumphs using the MAPLAMP framework finding meaning, taking action, and overcoming adversity.

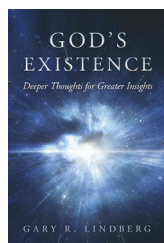
The Book of Hope



Thomas R. Krause. Wiz
Publishing. \$29.95
(138p), ISBN 978-1-
966414-21-6; \$14.95
paper, ISBN 978-1-
966414-20-9
Amazon, IngramSpark
Daily inspiration from
a collection of poems

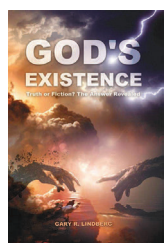
and related quotes intended to encourage and bring hope.

God's Existence: Deeper Thoughts for Greater Insights



Gary R. Lindberg. BookBaby. \$11.99 paper (152p), ISBN 979-8-3509-5258-2
Amazon
From Creation and Genesis to Moses and the Exodus, seeking to uncover deeper truths and reconcile faith with historical and scientific understanding.

God's Existence: Truth or Fiction? The Answer Revealed



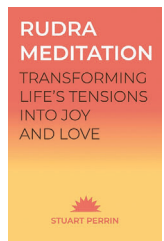
Gary R. Lindberg. Dorrance Publishing. \$11.99 paper (110p), ISBN 978-1-64804-273-7
Amazon
Lindberg's unique approach suggests that both science and the Bible were created by God and as a result the two say the same thing.

In the Wake of God and Man



Darby O'Gill. Penguin Book Publishing. \$29.99 paper (654p), ISBN 979-8-8692-1469-0
Amazon, Barnes & Noble
This novel offers a rare window into the turbulent inner world of a woman navigating the wake of trauma, love, loss, and divine calling.

Rudra Meditation: Transforming Tension into Joy and Love



Stuart Perrin. Stuart Prerin. \$22.95 paper (190p), ISBN 979-8-218-78366-2
Stuartperrin.com, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, IngramSpark
Both a memoir and an instructional text on

the development of an inner life strong enough to transmute emotional, mental, and sexual tension into an open heart and a balanced life.

Children's/YA

Aloe Vera's Special Gift

Jeanette Gil, illus. by Tania Ortiz. Zun Zun Press.



\$13.99 paper (38p), ISBN 979-8-9988132-0-7; \$3.99 e-book, ASIN B0FST3JH3F
Jeanettegil.com, Amazon, IngramSpark
Aloe Vera's Special Gift is a heartwarming tale for ages 4-8 about resilience, kindness, and discovering the healing gifts we each carry inside.

Dog Gone Brave



Peter Bremer. Peter Bremer. \$26.50 (40p), ISBN 979-8-218-72032-2
Amazon, Barnes & Noble, IngramSpark
Benjamin has big feelings. That's why he has a special

dog named Chumley. When a storm comes, Chumley gets scared and runs away. Can Benjamin find his best friend before it's too late?

God's Gonna Cut You Down



Brandon Gillespie. Revenant Creative Studio. \$19.99 paper (420p), ISBN 978-0-9987499-7-6; \$9.99 e-book, ISBN 978-0-9987499-6-9
Amazon, Barnes & Noble
Exiled to the monster-

infested lower decks of a dying space station, Diego hides his despised, void-tainted powers as rival boys turn survival into a brutal test of trust and identity.

Holly and the Magic Bunny



Kateryna Dronova, illus. by Dara Karei. Kateryna Dronova. \$12.99 paper (44p), ISBN 979-8-2657-9875-6; \$4.99 e-book, ASIN B0FRNT27XS
Amazon

When Holly is whisked away to a magical winter forest by a talking bunny, she faces more than snow and enchantment—she discovers what truly matters.

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by Lance Lee

In the vein of classic fables and morality tales Lee's latest is [a] charmingly illustrated... Inspiring tale of hope and love.

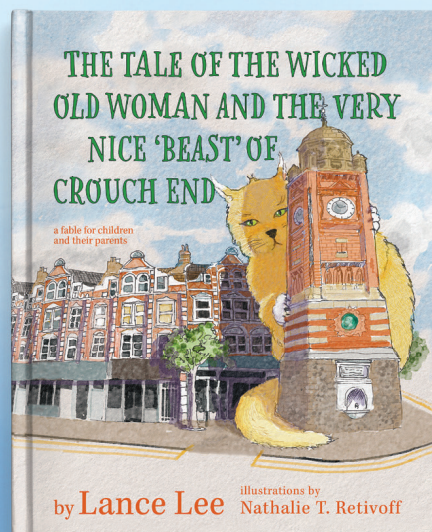
—Booklife Reviews (Publishers Weekly)

Lee presents a modern retelling of a classic tale of misunderstood magic and small acts of redemption. A gorgeously unusual, emotionally redeeming parable with plenty of heart and...magic.

—Kirkus Reviews

A truly sweet story told through elegant writing and enchanting imagery.

—Asher Syed, 5* Readers' Favorite Review



Paperback: 979-8-21846-529-2 • \$17.99
Hardback: 979-8-21846-524-7 • \$31.99

Both playful and poetic [Lee's] story nudges us to consider how...joy can thaw even the iciest spell... A story to be shared across generations.

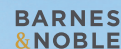
—Priya Mathew, 5* Readers' Favorite Review

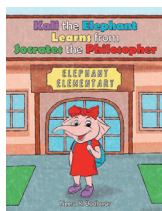


A quick light-hearted read that would be great for your readers.

—LoveReading4Kids

Available at



Kali the Elephant Learns from Socrates the**Philosopher**

Neera K. Badhwar, illus. by Sebastian Ady Branzei. Archway Publishing. \$12.99 paper (36p), ISBN 978-1-6657-7366-9; \$3.99 e-book, ASIN B0F8Q52LS5

Amazon, Archway Publishing, Barnes & Noble
Kali is hurt when her friends tease her about her ears, trunk, and eyes. But, inspired by Socrates, she comes up with a reply that leaves her friends wishing that they looked like her!

The Mist and the Flame

Coral-Li St. Helen. Cantraip Press. \$13.99 paper (202p), ISBN 978-1-942737-37-7; \$2.99 e-book, ASIN B0FNJ8TN33

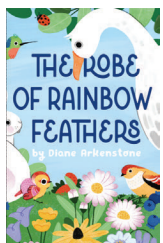
Amazon, Apple Books, Barnes & Noble, Kobo

Everyone knows the tale of Romeo and Juliet, but there's a lot more to it—including magic.

Reborn (The Reborn Chronicles #1)

John Chirillo. John Chirillo. \$9.99 paper (366p), ISBN 979-8-2696-5969-5; \$0.99 e-book, ASIN B0FWYBM8WR
Amazon

A teen torn between faith and science discovers powers that could save the world or destroy it in this gripping supernatural coming-of-age thriller.

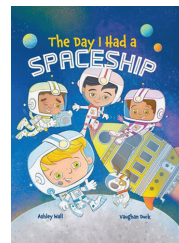
The Robe of Rainbow Feathers

Diane Arkenstone, illus. by Anja Slibar. Mulamu Publishing. \$10.99 paper (52p), ISBN 979-8-9905734-3-7; \$4.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-9905734-2-0
Amazon, Barnes & Noble,

IngramSpark

The Robe of Rainbow Feathers is a colorful and poignant story of a young girl's journey to adulthood that captures a

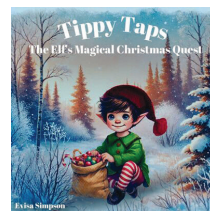
sense of wonder and innocence that reflects back on her childhood.

The Day I Had a Spaceship

Ashley Wall. Mamabear Books. \$17.95 (32p), ISBN 978-1-960616-28-9

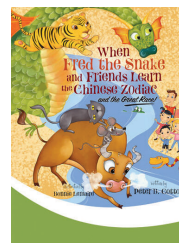
Mamabearbooks.com, Amazon, Target
In the fourth Day I Had

book, toys come to life to send four friends on a cosmic journey filled with challenges, surprises, and opportunities to help one another.

Tippy Taps the Elf's Magical Christmas**Quest**

Evisa Simpson. Evisa Simpson. \$11.99 paper (28p), ISBN 978-1-0682460-4-3
Amazon, IngramSpark

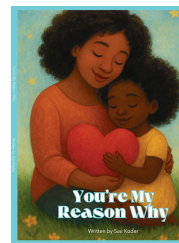
A cheeky elf's wish to help Santa sparks a magical adventure of kindness and Christmas joy, reminding readers that giving is the greatest gift of all.

When Fred the Snake and Friends Learn the Chinese Zodiac and the Great Race

Peter Cotton, illus. by Bonnie Lemaire. Publish. \$19.99 (44p), ISBN 979-8-89989-063-5; \$15.99 paper, ISBN 979-8-89989-062-8
Amazon, Apple Books, Barnes & Noble, Google

Play, IngramSpark, Kobo

Fred the lovable snake returns to school, meets new Chinese friends, and learns all about the Zodiac animals and the thrilling Great Race. It's the year of the snake!

You're My Reason Why

Susi Kader. Your Reason Why Publishing. \$14.99 paper (44p), ISBN 979-8-3495-9531-8; \$4.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-3495-9532-5
Amazon

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A MEMOIR

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COMICS/GRAPHIC NOVELS

⚡ EDITOR'S PICK

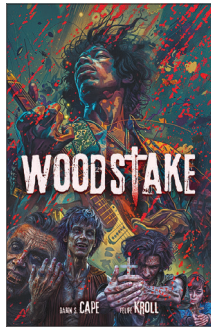
Woodstake: Three Days of Peace, Music and Blood

Darin S. Cape and Felipe Kroll

192p, trade paper, \$18.99, ISBN 979-8-992-74991-5

The Dracula legend comes to America during the 1969 Woodstock music festival in Cape and Kroll's bloody, biting graphic novel of horror and hippies. In 1927, an unnamed shapeshifting vampire awakens from a long sleep in upstate New York, then possesses Lucy, the wife of farmer Jack Heyward. In 1969 San Francisco, fanzine writer Jon Harper, his girlfriend, Nina Murray, and their friend Artie drive across the country to the soon-to-be-epochal concert, where Jon hopes to interview the legendary Jimi Hendrix. Meanwhile, the vampire reemerges from hibernation and hypnotizes local sheriff Jim Wood to do his bidding, as Alexandru Van Helsing—a coroner continuing his family's legacy—investigates suspicious deaths at Jack's old farm.

That delicious setup pays off when the sheriff releases his master into the



Vampire infiltrates Woodstock in suspenseful, darkly funny reimagining.

Great for fans of *American Vampire*; *Dracula*, *Motherf**ker!*.

close in on the vampire. Cape imbues the eerie escapade with rich period ambience: war protesters, free-love hippies, historical nods, and musical cues.

The horror lands with both tension and sinister humor, conveyed through panels of fanged stalking and cross-sizzling-on-flesh action. Kroll's sumptuous, photorealistic artwork and lavish color palette capture the dark atmospheric dread of the story alongside the kaleidoscopic psychedelia of the festival, while the script's jab at conservative bloodsuckers' hatred of hippie freaks is both sharp and hilarious. The ending will leave readers hungry for the next installment, set at an event already tinged with horror: the ill-fated Woodstock '99.

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

COMICS/GRAPHIC NOVELS

Zicky: Wrath of the Rat King

Darin S. Cape, Zeno Decrux, and Hiorsh Gabotto

160p, trade paper \$18.99, ISBN 979-8-992-74993-9

Cape's graphic novel for young readers deftly employs two different artists to reflect how the narrative slips between fantasy and reality—until eventually that line, for hero Zicky, is obliterated. Daring adventurer Zicky is the alter ego of Zackary, a five-year-old boy from our world who becomes the hero Zicky in his dreams, striving to infiltrate the lair of the Rat King, with his magic ring carrying him back to the waking world every morning. Cape riffs on Winsor McCay's classic *Little Nemo in Slumberland* strip as well as Masashi Kishimoto's *Naruto*, influences clearly reflected in the art. The shonen manga-style dream world, illustrated by Zeno DeCruz, bursts with dutch angles, bright colors, and propulsive storytelling, while Hiorsh Gabotto's more naturalistic rendering of Zackary's waking life employs restrained poses and traditional layouts.

Zackary's older brother and sister have little patience for his imagination, especially



Smart, energetic graphic novel blending mad-science fun with touching emotion.

Great for fans of Chad Sell's *The Cardboard Kingdom*, Stan Yan's *The Many Misfortunes of Eugenia Wang*.

exploration of how young children process emotional distress.

Much mad-science weirdness ensues, including alliances with rats, an adult version of Zooky, the intervention of a literal *deus ex machina*, and hints that this isn't the first time something this strange has happened. Cape and his artists take these ideas as far as they can go—and then some—smashing expectations, springing surprises, and keeping the pages pleasurable turning, all while grounding the chaotic story in the growing pains of children and anxieties of the adults.

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

FICTION

⚡ EDITOR'S PICK

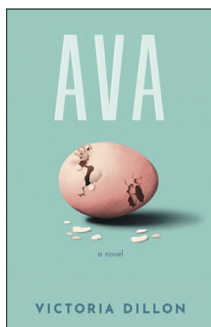
Ava

Victoria Dillon | She Writes Press

256p, trade paper, \$25, ISBN 979-8-896-36086-5

Dillon's eye-opening science-fiction debut, centered on women in a near-future America caught in a frightening political atmosphere, boldly imagines an effort to secure women's bodily autonomy by changing the very nature of childbirth. Following the death of his mother, Dr. James Davis Jr. makes it his life's mission to decrease pregnancy complications. In a turbulent Tennessee where abortion of any kind has been outlawed, Davis's new research assistant, Larkin, is told at her first ultrasound that her baby girl suffers from anencephaly and won't survive after birth. Still, Larkin is forced to carry to term, and her daughter lives only a few hours. To help others avoid similar tragedies, Larkin agrees to assist with Davis's exceptionally unusual side project: making it possible for human women to lay eggs.

This speculative look at a post-*Roe v. Wade* world raises philosophical and ethical questions that readers of smart, humane science fiction will be eager to



Resonant near-future novel of audacious effort to secure women's bodily autonomy.

Great for fans of Naomi Alderman's *The Power*, Agustina Bazterrica's *Tender Is the Flesh*.

explore. Dillon succeeds at getting readers to suspend disbelief in this audacious plan, making women laying eggs seem not only possible but urgently necessary. Larkin's day-to-day life during her doomed pregnancy is excruciating, dramatized with empathy and intelligence, ensuring readers understand how her deep pain could drive her to become

the first person to have her eggs augmented for the birth of her next child, Ava.

Lending veracity to the story, Dillon draws on her own professional experience. A former research scientist, she uses her extensive knowledge of avian biology to give readers a clear explanation of chicken reproductive systems. Now a practicing pediatrician, Dillon gives a credible, compassionate voice to Aubrey, Larkin's best friend and OB-GYN, drawing on her daily interactions with mothers and babies. Through crisp, authoritative prose, Dillon's expertise and empathy shine, making this seemingly impossible genetic innovation feel eerily plausible in the novel's not-so-farfetched political and legislative landscape.

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

FICTION

EDITOR'S PICK

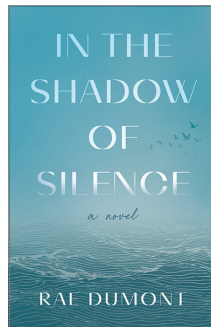
In the Shadow of Silence: A Novel

Rae Dumont

264p, trade paper, \$17.99, ISBN 979-8-896-36072-8

Dumont explores the corrosive effects of mental illness on families in this moving debut. Eva, who emigrated from Belgium to the United States, has recently finished her psychiatry degree and wants nothing more than success at her new job—and to fall in love. When she first moves to Vermont to work as a child psychiatrist, she looks for love in the wrong places—until she meets the charismatic, moody ecologist Lyman Willis at a school lecture. His off-and-on communication initially leaves Eva wondering if the attraction is one-sided, though they eventually marry and have three children: Ezra, Gabe, and Olivia. But things with Lyman feel off, and Eva suspects more. When he's eventually diagnosed with depression, a trial on Prozac seems to help—until several years later when Lyman stops taking it, rapidly spiraling and pulling his family down with him.

With spare but lyrical prose, Dumont sensitively demonstrates the life-changing



Sensitive portrayal of how mental illness affects a family's dynamics.

Great for fans of Boo Trundle's *The Daughter Ship*, Sarah Rose Etter's *Ripe*.

power of mental illness and how it can affect families, informing readers that she "wrote this book for those who struggle with depression" before launching into the story. She navigates fraught topics with grace and empathy, illuminating the highs and lows Eva and Lyman experience together in a way that feels authentic and genuine. Lyman's unraveling is painful to watch, causing Eva to feel unbalanced and that "Everything [is] precarious. Quiet moments are no longer innocent. Tired and irritable moments are harbingers of doom."

Taut plotting draws readers into the story immediately, as do Dumont's all-too-relatable points that depression can cause those affected to make impulsive, unhealthy decisions. But most importantly, Eva and Lyman's trajectory shows that depression can be treated successfully, giving hope to those who may be mired in its pain. The couple is not gifted a tidy ending, but Dumont taps into the struggles, joys, and emotions that make them real, showing us that life is messy, wonderful, and worth it.

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

FICTION

EDITOR'S PICK

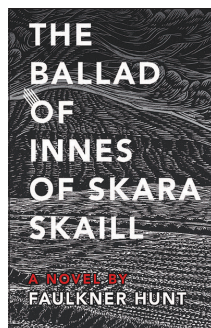
The Ballad of Innes of Skara Skail

Faulkner Hunt

320p, hardcover, \$30, ISBN 979-8-888-45804-4

Hunt's immersive debut chronicles a group of broken people and a buried treasure in a land brimming with danger, secrets, and harsh beauty. When construction worker Innes Mackie returns to the Northern Isles of Skara Skail, he's injured during the passage back, helped by two teen brothers, Rory and Tito, who are living a meager existence on their own. The trio is soon joined by Hamish Little, who urges them to seek medical attention with the new village doctor, Aggie Allen, for Innes's injuries. Meanwhile, the wealthy Lord Marwick and his head bruiser, The Badger, are safeguarding their dig site in the ruins of Skarahollow Chapel, searching for the fabled treasure of King Harald. As their paths converge, Hunt paints an evocative mystery, punctuated by ballads that tell of priceless relics from the ancient past.

The story's wild landscape comes to life in Hunt's hands, drenching readers in the dreary setting: creeping moors; valleys and bogs; unrelenting wind, rain, and cold; the primeval power of the sea. The presence of animals in the background—both



Atmospheric tale of timeless secrets, buried treasure, and haunting landscape.

Great for fans of Ian McGuire's *The North Water*, Declan Shalvey and Gavin Fullerton's *Bog Bodies*.

wild and domesticated—and their uncanny behavior adds color, immersing readers in a land that takes much more than it gives, with characters precisely cut for that jarring terrain. From the "bantam-sharp" Badger with undisputed authority and cruelty to Innes, a man scrambling to keep one step ahead of his troubled past, Hunt populates this captivating tale with a compelling—and often entertaining—cast.

There's never a dull moment in *The Ballad of Innes of Skara Skail*, and Hunt builds the mystery with a quiet assurance and slinking tension, dropping new clues at regular intervals while clarifying old ones. The gentle humor in scenes featuring Ashenrose Museum associates Alastair Clements and Jameson Hewitt—alerted to the potential discovery of an eighth century Byzantium coin—adds a humane touch to the riotous proceedings. This is a tale that will linger long after the last page.

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

FICTION

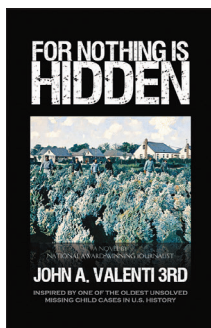
For Nothing Is Hidden

John A. Valenti 3rd | Bushwickborn Productions, Inc.

374p, hardcover, \$27.95, ISBN 979-8-9889193-3-9

Valenti's debut novel—inspired by the 1955 real-life, unsolved missing persons case of Steven Damman—follows Colleen Goodson, an overwhelmed mother of two, stretched thin between the boundless energy of a toddler, the relentless cries of a colicky baby, and the emotional absence of her withdrawn husband. During a routine grocery run, Colleen makes a seemingly innocuous decision: she leaves her children unattended outside the supermarket. In the span of 10 minutes, her three-year-old son, Bobby, vanishes without a trace. What begins as a familiar domestic scare—a small boy having wandered off—quickly spirals into a harrowing investigation. Soon, Colleen and her husband, Driscoll, find themselves under suspicion, their private lives picked and prodded, and their already strained marriage bearing the brunt of the intrusive scrutiny.

Valenti skillfully probes the heartbreaking tragedy of missing child cases: the slow, unraveling grief of not knowing, the persistent hope that tomorrow may bring news, and the quiet terror of imagining the worst, all colliding against the exhausting machinery of police procedure, by necessity methodical and impersonal. Here,



Gripping rendering of the emotional fallout of a missing child.

Great for fans of Emma Donoghue's *Room*, Lisa Jewell's *Then She Was Gone*.

Valenti's background in journalism shines through: there's a clean precision in how the investigation unfolds and a restraint in tone that sidesteps melodrama. Using multiple perspectives—cops and journalists, family and neighbors—and anchoring the story in true historical events, Valenti builds a grounded narrative that feels at once immediate and universal. And while

this broad scope sometimes veers into detours, the novel is ultimately richer for it.

What doesn't quite land is the ending itself. In trying to fictionalize a resolution when real life offers none, the conclusion feels more like a forced—if somewhat necessary—exit than an earned one. Still, the novel's strength lies in the care with which Valenti carries its emotional terrain—the result being a no-frills, unflinching look at grief and uncertainty that lingers long after the final page

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

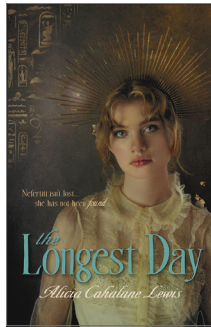
FICTION

The Longest Day

Alicia Cahalane Lewis | Tattered Script Publishing
215p, trade paper, \$17, ISBN 979-8-9995833-0-7

"There's nothing wrong, as there's nothing right, about being a girl. It's not something I wanted to be, and it's not something I don't want to be. It's who I am," muses 15-year-old Ellen in the opening lines of Lewis's introspective novel, as she delves into her fear, frustration, and fury at a flawed, oppressive system that treats girls as immaterial and weak. At Ellen's experimental, privately-funded school, The Craftsman, the teachers are all female—except for one, Mr. Wallace. When he keeps Ellen after class one day, accuses her of cheating on a biology test, and rapes her, she struggles to voice what has happened. Her resulting journey to reclaim herself unfurls through an unsure but earnest voice, woven together with themes of feminism and friendship.

Lewis (*The Archivist*) offers a story that centers on Ellen's struggle to navigate Wallace's sexual assault and her life at The Craftsman after it happens. Authority figures don't take her seriously, her unreliable friend Sylvia is caught up in her



Heart-wrenching story of traumatized girl's fight to reclaim herself.

Great for fans of Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak*, Fiona Snycckers's *Lacuna*.

spiritual security Nefertiti represents.

Ellen's lens of a child negotiating very recent trauma propels this harrowing story, resulting in an introspective coming-of-age with a heart-wrenching conclusion. The story takes place in a handful of rooms over the course of just a few hours. That limited timeframe means the emotional conclusions are largely solved off page, but as Ellen learns more about Nefertiti's gripping legacy, she also touches on revelations of her own strength, echoed in Justin's observations that the famed Egyptian queen is "not lost. She's just not been found."

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

FICTION

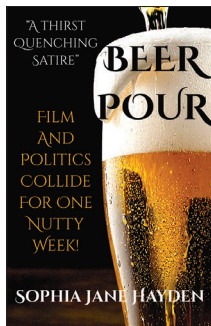
Beer Pour

Sophia Jane Hayden

115p, e-book, \$4.44, ISBN 979-8-231-10988-3

In this humorous novel, Hollywood rivals, a throwback to commercial advertising, and cutthroat politics take center stage. Vice President Jacqueline Farmington is brokering a diplomatic agreement with the Emperor of Japan as two Japanese beer brands expand stateside, while rival directors Cory Osaka—the first grandchild of the Emperor—and ultra-competitive Laird Killebrew duke it out in a week-long competition to see who will land the commercial rights. As Jacqueline navigates diplomatic relations with the Emperor and oversees the advertising project, she draws close to the handsome and charming Paul Wexler, Laird's producer. Despite Jacqueline being married, romance soon blossoms between the two, as they navigate a riotous thrill ride of international political agendas, contentious rivalries, and lively drama.

Hayden (*Flicka's LOVERS*) nails behind-the-scenes Hollywood antics and underhanded business dealings, highlighting the lengths people will go to come out on top. Often referenced as an "idiot psychopath," Laird regularly throws tan-



Witty take on political diplomacy and cutthroat brand marketing.

Great for fans of Ava Wilder's *How to Fake It in Hollywood*, Robby Benson's *Who Stole the Funny?*.

readers an inside glimpse of what really goes into this billion-dollar industry.

In keeping with the novel's rollicking flavor, some over-the-top characters function more as comic relief than pivotal actors, landing themselves in situations—like Paul's sister, DeDee, smoking a joint with Jacqueline while the "VEEP" extols her brother's manly assets—that may induce an occasional eye roll in readers. Hayden's excessive use of exclamation points softens the emotional impact of the narrative, but the strong female protagonist and real-world politics infused with witty developments will keep readers entertained.

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

FICTION

The Fateful Voyage of the Empress of Ireland: A Tale of Betrayal, Redemption, and a Curse's Wrath!

Cheryl Roberts Gale | FriesenPress
273p, e-book, \$9.99, ISBN 978-1038323163

Gale's historical fiction debut begins in 1965 when kindly nurse Ellie takes time to visit with 91-year-old Henry Kendall, a former sea captain and occupant of the hospice center where she works. Kendall starts telling Ellie a story of his upbringing in 19th-century England, but he quickly veers into the life of Hawley Crippen—a doctor who enters into a disastrous second marriage and is accused of murdering his wife, in what came to be dubbed the London Cellar Murder. In Kendall's story, he finds Crippen on the run and turns him in, resulting in Crippen's death, but a chance encounter with a woman much later—aboard the ill-fated *Empress of Ireland*, no less—makes Kendall realize that he may have made a mistake all those years back.

Readers glean Kendall's story through flashbacks, as he shares his past with Ellie and she conducts her own research on the side, though his revelations center more on Crippen than himself. The most striking part of his tale ends up being Crippen's relationship with his second wife, Cora, who later changes her name to



History and coincidence intertwine in this rousing mystery.

Great for fans of Kate Morton's *The Lake House*, Taylor Jenkins Reid's *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*.

The lines between fact and fiction blur at times, but Gale delivers a riveting story that is well-researched and grounded in historical context. Mystery fans will be pleased with the surprising twist at the end, and, though its accidental circumstances sometimes feel extraordinary, Kendall's story cleverly depicts life's penchant for irony. The revelations come too late for Hawley Crippen, but the unveiling is still gripping.

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

own troubles, and school outlier Justin's clumsy attempts to connect annoy more than they comfort—though he does offer Ellen distraction when he asks her to help investigate what he believes is the location of Queen Nefertiti's missing tomb. Reluctant at first—Wallace is involved with Justin's work—Ellen eventually identifies with the female power and

trumps and berates his staff, though his behavior is glossed over in favor of his "unique talents as a commercial director." In contrast, Cory spends his time carefully analyzing the Japanese beers in question, aware that his status as the Emperor's grandson will afford no special favors. The amusing villainy that ensues entertains, and Hayden regularly fleshes out the mechanics behind commercials, giving

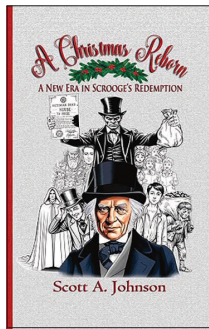
FICTION

A Christmas Reborn: A New Era in Scrooge's Redemption

Scott A. Johnson | Scott A Johnson Professional Writing Services, LLC
212p, e-book, \$6.99, ASIN B0FL7XDNWQ

In Johnson's moving follow-up to Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, Scrooge's redemption creates ripples far beyond himself and the Cratchits. Now a reformed philanthropist, Scrooge dedicates his wealth to easing the suffering of the poor and helping families avoid the dreaded workhouse. To the struggling classes, he becomes "Scrooge the Saint." But to London's elite, he is something far more dangerous—an enabler of rebellion who threatens the social order. When his beloved nephew Fred dies unexpectedly of scarlet fever, Scrooge's faith in joy is shaken to its core. Grieving alongside Fred's widow Lily and her children, he must confront an aching question: can he continue his mission of goodness when one of the few people who gave his life meaning is gone?

Johnson deftly transports readers into Dickens's London, capturing both its grit and its hope. His Scrooge is no mere caricature of generosity, but a complex man



Heartfelt imagining of Scrooge's life after his redemption.

Great for fans of John C. Derr's *Another Christmas Carol*, R.K. Bouknight's *Cratchit*.

learning to live with compassion in a world resistant to change. Amid his turmoil, Scrooge encounters The Wanderer—"a spirit of the future, a keeper of possibilities... in which past, present, and future converge." With a booming voice, The Wanderer reveals that every act of kindness sends forth light, hope, and connection, while indifference to suffering breeds darkness. From this revelation, Scrooge emerges believing that "the whole burden—the responsibility for relieving the agony of the poor—rested solely on him."

Johnson creates a heartwarming and imaginative continuation of a beloved classic. Familiar faces—Bob Cratchit, Tiny Tim, even Jacob Marley—grace its pages, but the story belongs to a Scrooge who grows deeper, wiser, and more human. Determined to make a lasting impact, Scrooge mentors a bright but impoverished boy whose promise draws the ire of the city's powerful industrialists. That new bond—and Scrooge's ongoing awakening—both broadens and completes the Scrooge legacy, reminding us that one person's kindness can indeed change the world.

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

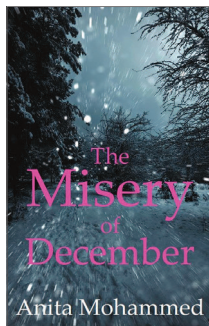
MYSTERY/THRILLER

The Misery of December

Anita Mohammed | Gatekeeper Press
275p, e-book, \$7.99, ISBN 978-1-662-96493-0

Burlington, Vermont is in upheaval in Mohammed's Anara Ali series opener. Its decades-long peace pact between the town's three major crime syndicates is rapidly expiring, shootings are on the rise, the streets aren't safe, and detective Anara and her partner Jared Ublonski are desperately trying to figure out why their city is in an all-out gang war. Meanwhile, Mexican cartel leader Oscar Solando rises through the ranks with brutality and intimidation, sparing no one who gets in his way—including his own brother. When Oscar and his righthand man—his cousin, Martel—set their sights on Burlington for their next takeover, there's nothing they won't do to get what they want.

The powers that be quickly form a crack team to diffuse the threat. Anara and Jared, joined by a group of Boston detectives, are collectively known as The Misery of December—so named because the team members all have sequential December birthdates. Together, they work to uncover the puppet masters pitting Burlington's Russian, Chinese, and Afghan gangs against each other, facing evil, personal threats,



Brutal thriller pits crack detective team against a vengeful gang leader.

Great for fans of Louise Penny's *The Black Wolf*, John McMahon's *Head Cases*.

heroes firmly planted on the side of law and order.

The bones of the story are solid, though the narrative stumbles over empty dialogue and flat suspense. In the midst of a gunfight at a gas station, Anara muses to herself "Who the hell are these people? Can it be... The men wreaking havoc in my beloved city!" Lines like that leave little to the imagination, though Mohammed does offer a late-in-the-game twist that reveals there's more to Oscar's bid for control than readers may think.

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

ROMANCE

AcClaim

Jean Thesquare | Sultryverse
416p, e-book, \$14.99, ISBN 979-8-999-95662-0

Beatrix is a talented writer of elevated erotica, living in a world of opulence, art, and sensuality. Her literary success has allowed her to build a life independent of her affluent family, facing the world with her daring, risqué best friend Manon. Though she writes, plays, and attends glittering parties to find muses for her next work, Beatrix hasn't met anyone who truly unsettles her—until Dorian arrives, a man spoken of only in whispers, known for his power and control. When she is drawn into his orbit of danger and dominance, Beatrix resolves to hold her ground within his intoxicating game.

Thesquare's debut plunges readers into the intimate world of the elite, rich in sensual texture and detail. Beatrix and Manon embody confidence and rebellion, women who celebrate pleasure, style, and self-possession, with a flirtatious, boundary-blurring friendship that is enjoyable to watch. What begins as an affair of mutual control between Beatrix and Dorian shifts when he crosses the line, the thrill and domination darkening into manipulation as Beatrix allows him control—from what she eats to what she wears—and discovers she isn't quite ready for his game.



Bold, sensual examination of desire, power, and self-reclamation.

Great for fans of Penelope Douglas's *Corrupt*, Megan Nolan's *Acts of Desperation*.

When Dorian tips the scales and abuses his power, it culminates in a very public humiliation: he violates both her and Manon, while stripping Beatrix of her career, the world she has built for herself, and her self-confidence.

AcClaim is enthralling and immersive, opening amid action and offering unflinching intimacy, though the characters

sometimes lack deeper emotional development and certain ideas become repetitive, softening their impact. What Thesquare does best is unfurl a dangerous game of desire that transforms into a brutal reckoning of power. When Beatrix is at her lowest, with the fierce and unyielding Manon at her side, that game becomes about revenge and a ravenous reclaiming of self. This is a daring, provocative exploration of women's sexuality, agency, and resilience.

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

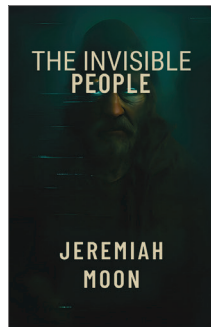
SF/FANTASY/HORROR

The Invisible People

Jeremiah Moon | BusinessEd4Kids, LLC
301p, hardcover, \$29.99, ISBN 979-8-992-44482-7

Moon's alarmed and humane science-fiction debut tackles pressing issues of memory, trauma, and truth in an age when even reality itself can be manipulated. Ava Chen, a brilliant investigative journalist, lives with her brother Caleb, a recovering addict now obsessed with his physics-defying theories about portals and a changing world. Ava indulges him half-seriously—until he vanishes, only to reappear as a seemingly “cleaner” version of himself. Moon keeps readers guessing, but it's clear that nothing is as it seems: people vanish and reappear, reality is edited by an organization called the Equinox Initiative, memories become unreliable, and mirrors reveal more than reflections. With the help of unusual allies, Ava fights to locate her missing brother—and, in the process, herself.

At its core, *The Invisible People* poses a profound question: what would it mean to relinquish our painful memories and traumas for the promise of a newer, purportedly better self? As Equinox sets about “curating society one edit at a time,” Moon



Fragmented, humane vision of a future where memory editing becomes control.

Great for fans of Fred Lunzer's *Sike*, Yoko Ogawa's *The Memory Police*.

and Moon's brisk, terse storytelling emphasizes both the role of the individual in society and, in form, the mechanics of program loops and machine learning.

The prose is frenetic, revealing a jagged world a touch more paranoid and shifting than our own. The clipped, fragmentary sentences and tendency toward repetitive declarative inversions sometimes suggest the influence of chatbots. That inhuman vibe might be intentional, as the project boasts a striking vision, but the relentless pace, somewhat abstract scenecraft, and stylistic fixation on programmer workflows can overwhelm, making emotional connection difficult.

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

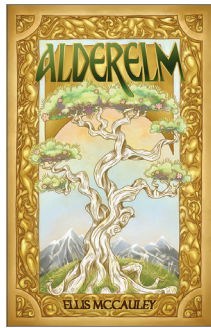
SF/FANTASY/HORROR

Alderelm

Ellis McCauley | Thistlethumb Publishing
368p, e-book, \$4.99, ISBN 979-8-9926228-2-9

McCauley's heady debut may be classic high fantasy, but her worldbuilding is so rooted in the natural world that it feels unearthed rather than invented. In her mythopoeic realm, trees function as sentient repositories of history, and McCauley's description of resin-scented forests—where the mournful voices of ancient boughs echo through luminous tarns—has folkloric gravitas. Faeries guard ancient secrets and elves wrestle with destiny in Alderelm, none more than young LittleLeaf, a Treetan fairy who's been entrusted with the Sakatu, the World Tree Seed that contains all of Earth's knowledge.

The bond between Treetans and their Trees is like two beings sharing the same spirit, and LittleLeaf understands that she carries immense responsibility. Geul, the Spirit Keeper of Pythium, has been attacking the ancient forests, and after the fall of Surgyle, the siege of Lemnoss, and the theft of the Singing Tree Stone, Treetans fear that he will unleash the ghouls of fire and smoke on Alderelm. As the threat looms, a conflict unfolds within the Treetan council. The elders cling to tradition, but



Lyrical, lovely fantasy honoring stewards of Earth's enduring memory.

Great for fans of Patricia McKillip's *The Forgotten Beasts of Eld*, Katherine Arden's *The Bear and the Nightingale*.

only LittleLeaf can awaken the Sakatu, and she begins a quest to the White Mountains accompanied by outsiders who serve as her companions and guardians.

As the narrative moves between sweeping battles and intimate scenes of survival and inheritance, dialogue among elders, seers, and warriors reveals *Alderelm's* central tension: the pull between preservation and transformation. McCauley launches her Annals of Emerus series with a message of stewardship—that even in grief and loss, the memory of the land and the bonds between living things endure. Her prose is lyrical and deliberately archaic, reminiscent of Tolkien yet imbued with its own lush mythologies (there's a sizable appendix). Exploring themes of collective memory, metamorphosis, and the struggle to redefine one's identity in the face of change, *Alderelm* celebrates the interconnectedness of all beings.

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

SF/FANTASY/HORROR

Brain Pickle

Daniel Eric Finkel
271p, e-book, \$4.99, ISBN 979-8-9868178-7-3

This trippy science fiction novel unites psychics and scientists in a satirical experiment sponsored by the mysterious Dr. David Kowalski and his Fellowship of Higher Consciousness. Lance Roberts—a psychic who can detect lies with 100 percent accuracy—is hiding out from his latest casino misadventures when Kowalski tracks him down, offering him a sizable chunk of cash to join his cause. All Lance has to do, for 32 days, is “wea[r] a unitard, bubble fur moon boots, and a brain helmet,” while partaking of Kowalski's unusually tasty smoothies. Lance is quickly joined by five unconventional peers—Jake McGuire, Byron Elling, Uma Khatri, Twink Walker, and Deborah Zigler—who soon discover that all is not what it seems in Kowalski's “Playground of Higher Consciousness.”

Finkel (*Mr. Taffle's Pants of Insanity*) creates a bizarre world of supernatural abilities and fuses it with scientific curiosity and progression, blurring the lines between dreams and reality while keeping the end goal cheerfully vague: “these frequencies will help power a new evolution into the unlimited boundness of bliss,” Kowalski retorts when Uma asks what he plans to do with their brain capacities. The narrative tackles mental illness, the paranormal, and even extraterrestrial life,



Surreal, laugh-out-loud pursuit of knowledge, chaos, and absurdity.

Great for fans of Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett's *Good Omens*, Dennis Taylor's *We Are Legion (We Are Bob)*.

launching readers onto a fast-paced, comical ride that pulses with witty commentary and inside jokes—many of which live inside Lance's head. As the characters start to weary of each other and Kowalski's experiment, the novel becomes increasingly unpredictable and outlandish, spawning mind clones, spa staff dressed as psychedelic frogs, and Kowalski himself (after ingesting the group's

brain frequency) rapping “a playful, Groucho Marx-inspired Humpty Hump” song. Though chaotic, *Brain Pickle* offers readers a frenzied examination of the mind's concealed power. The novel culminates in an unlikely battle to save Earth that gives Lance the opportunity for redemption—and will leave fans wondering what was real, what was imagined, and if being able to tell the difference even matters.

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

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY

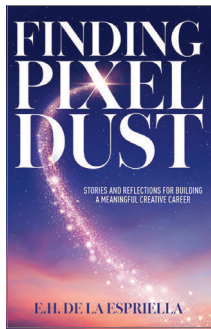
Finding Pixel Dust: Stories and Reflections for Building a Meaningful Creative Career

E.H. de la Esperiella

170p, hardcover, \$21.99, ISBN 979-8-986-86927-8

This rousing memoir and career guide charts de la Esperiella's journey to success as a Disney artist and graphic designer, from dreaming while young to taking practical steps, daring to announce his dream out loud, and then facing this "life-altering" question: "If that's what you want, what's holding you back?" With *Finding Pixel Dust*, he offers readers a look at his professional career, interspersed with tips for productive creativity ("Don't wait for someone else to make the thing you want to see") and advice ("Your portfolio is your true voice"). Though directed at aspiring designers, de la Esperiella's sensitive and sensible mentorship should prove helpful to anyone striving to succeed in a creative career.

De la Esperiella's account of building skills, focus, and a reputation in his early years will hold the most appeal for general readers. As a young man with a background in computer science, he decides he wants to be an animator and does all



Clear, practical, drawn-from-life guide to achieving success in a creative field.

Great for fans of Ellen Lupton's *Design Is Storytelling*, Julia Cameron's *Living the Artist's Way*.

De la Esperiella writes especially well about handling rejection and insecurity, pulling no punches: "Each denial brought a wave of emotional collapse," he admits. His persistence and devotion to improvement see him through, and he describes with clarity and power how he kept going and what steps he took in the face of setbacks. The second half of the book shares much clear-eyed, hard-won, industry-specific advice and guidelines. *Finding Pixel Dust* offers a practical approach to thriving and succeeding by "uncovering something rare and meaningful in the everyday work we do."

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

BUSINESS & PERSONAL FINANCE

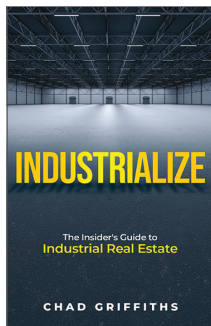
Industrialize: The Insider's Guide to Industrial Real Estate

Chad Griffiths | Industrialize Media, Ltd.

250p, hardcover, \$29.99, ISBN 978-1-068-94741-4

Industrial real estate is "the backbone of global commerce and everyday life," Griffiths asserts in this informative debut, defining the different types of industrial property, what role it plays globally, and the prognosis for its future impacts. Industry-dedicated spaces pose a two trillion-dollar market in North America alone, he cites, underscoring the crucial purpose of buildings that include data centers, factories, warehouses, and more—while asserting that global commerce could fail without that infrastructure in place. Griffiths bases his advice for potential investors on two primary themes: the value of industrial properties directly correlates with its service to tenants, and establishing risk management procedures is key.

For those thinking of venturing into the high risk, high reward world of industrial real estate, the first step, according to Griffiths, is to focus less on the potential rewards and instead invest time in understanding and quantifying downside risks. Though he offers no guarantees, he identifies three fundamentals to help investors



Comprehensive, easy-to-understand guide to industrial real estate.

Great for fans of Obie R. Silverwood's *Industrial Real Estate Investing and Management*, John B. Jackson's *Warehouse Veteran*.

achieve success: understand the tenant, understand the building, and understand the market. His guidance is well-organized and packed with examples, structured in easy-to-digest chapters that cover distinct concerns: drainage, insurance, environmental proceedings, permit challenges, zoning regulations, and more. Though the topic may not be glamorous, Griffiths tackles it with gusto, offering would-be industrial real estate moguls a practical handbook that takes into account finances, technical aspects, networking, and legal considerations. His methodical approach models the importance of planning and hard work, and he includes appendices that outline specific steps to acquiring lucrative properties, a glossary of industry-related terms, and resources for further learning. That clear, straightforward style—and occasional photo for clarity—simplifies what could be a complex subject, firmly establishing industrial real estate as "a dynamic, foundational industry that supports thriving businesses, catalyzes innovation, and sustains economies worldwide."

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

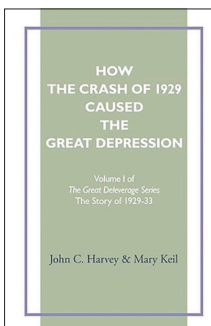
HISTORY & MILITARY

How the Crash of 1929 Caused the Great Depression: Volume I of the Great Deleverage Series, The Story of 1929-1933

John C. Harvey and Mary Keil | Four Directions Press

389p, hardcover, \$45, ISBN 979-8-9910734-0-0

This surprising and illuminating study makes the case that one crucial—even possibly "predominant"—factor that led to the Great Depression has long been overlooked by historians and economists. In the wake of Black Friday, the authors argue, it wasn't just the traditional theories (monetary collapse; a precipitous drop in fixed investment) that powered the national economic crackup. A key contributor, suggested by data recently discovered in National Bureau of Economic reports, was a sudden surge of responsibility on the part of the millions of people who recently had been dubbed "consumers." Simply put, Harvey and Keil demonstrate persuasively that, after "the whirl" and "speculative frenzy" of the 1920s, a public that had increasingly taken on debt for homes, cars, radios, and more stopped spending and started paying back. "Indebted U.S. individuals repaid \$4+ billion dollars to U.S. banks and other U.S. corporations in 1930 alone," the authors write, "crushing" the amount spent in the consumption and speculation that had previously driven the economy. In 1931, the authors



Persuasive case that consumer debt repayment was a key to the Depression.

Great for fans of Ben Bernanke's *Essays on the Great Depression*, Charles R. Morris's *A Rabble of Dead Money*.

Acknowledging that neither is a trained economist, Harvey and Keil commit to showing the work, sometimes more exhaustively than lay readers will prefer, while respectfully exploring long-prevalent economic theories in light of their findings. Detailed, insightful discussions of Keynes and Friedman abound, plus many others.

Their core argument is powerful, and their reconsideration of some familiar issues is persuasive, as when they praise Hoover's "qualities, qualifications and energy" while conceding that his efforts to stave off the collapse were "severely inhibited" by his convictions about government's "proper role." Their case is well conceived and clearly argued.

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

he can to make it happen: he takes art courses at a community college and eventually secures a temp position in the decidedly nonartistic department of resort reservations. Step by step, de la Esperiella parlayed that unpromising office gig into an artistic career, and *Finding Pixel Dust's* straightforward, practical study of dues-paying actually paying off proves inspirational.

De la Esperiella writes especially well about handling rejection and insecurity, pulling no punches: "Each denial brought a wave of emotional collapse," he admits. His persistence and devotion to improvement see him through, and he describes with clarity and power how he kept going and what steps he took in the face of setbacks. The second half of the book shares much clear-eyed, hard-won, industry-specific advice and guidelines. *Finding Pixel Dust* offers a practical approach to thriving and succeeding by "uncovering something rare and meaningful in the everyday work we do."

achieve success: understand the tenant, understand the building, and understand the market. His guidance is well-organized and packed with examples, structured in easy-to-digest chapters that cover distinct concerns: drainage, insurance, environmental proceedings, permit challenges, zoning regulations, and more.

Though the topic may not be glamorous, Griffiths tackles it with gusto, offering would-be industrial real estate

moguls a practical handbook that takes into account finances, technical aspects, networking, and legal considerations. His methodical approach models the importance of planning and hard work, and he includes appendices that outline specific steps to acquiring lucrative properties, a glossary of industry-related terms, and resources for further learning. That clear, straightforward style—and occasional photo for clarity—simplifies what could be a complex subject, firmly establishing industrial real estate as "a dynamic, foundational industry that supports thriving businesses, catalyzes innovation, and sustains economies worldwide."

estimate, repayments to financial institutions and purveyors of "so-called 'easy credit'" jumped to \$7 billion.

These numbers are new, and at times speculative. The authors explore throughout *How the Crash of 1929 Caused the Great Depression*, the first of a projected series, how the discovery of this surge in repayments changes what we know about the Depression—and about economics itself.

Acknowledging that neither is a trained economist, Harvey and Keil commit to showing the work, sometimes more exhaustively than lay readers will prefer, while respectfully exploring long-prevalent economic theories in light of their findings. Detailed, insightful discussions of Keynes and Friedman abound, plus many others.

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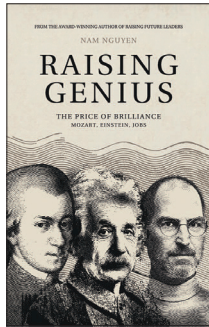
HISTORY & MILITARY

Raising Genius: Mozart, Einstein, Jobs

Nam Nguyen | Octomind Publishing
320p, e-book, \$4.99, ASIN B0FR2NQ2J5

Nguyen (*Perfect Parents Don't Exist*) reimagines the early years of historical figures Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Albert Einstein, and Steve Jobs in this consuming narrative, counting their parents as significant influences on their genius. Starting with six-year-old Mozart in 1762 Vienna, Nguyen chronicles how his father, Leopold, aggressively executed a plan to “shape, polish, and present his son to the world”—ambition that Nguyen credits to Leopold's wish to be immortalized. Einstein is portrayed as an unconventional child, with behavior that “unsettled visitors” and a mother, Pauline, determined to drive his greatness. The most recent figure Nguyen presents is Jobs, described as “a problem” at school but burning with the desire to reshape the world.

Where Nguyen shines is in his portrayal of the obstacles each man must overcome to accomplish great feats in life. He both commends and critiques the parents of all three, noting that “Parents do not create genius, but they shape its path—some-



Relatable, immersive narrative of the parents driving important figures.

Great for fans of Laurel Davis Huber's *The Velveteen Daughter*, Jan Helen McGee's *Carriers of Genius*.

accept responsibility for his daughter, Lisa, reminding him that “Family is not optional. You owe her what we gave you.”

The power of parental approval and support forms the framework of Nguyen's writing, rendering the “true cost of genius” as something more subtle and obscured, a behind-the-scenes, pervasive force that can build up—or tear down. Through fictionalized narrative and historical context, Nguyen prompts readers to remember not just some of history's well-known men and their most noted victories, but the “guiding, pushing, protecting, [and] failing” parents driving their success.

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

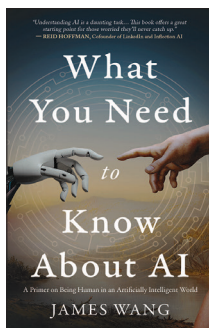
SCIENCE/NATURE/TECHNOLOGY

What You Need to Know About AI: A Primer on Being Human in an Artificially Intelligent World

James Wang | Manuscripts
288p, e-book, \$12.99, ISBN 979-8-88926-584-9

Wang deciphers the societal, emotional, and technological impacts of artificial intelligence in this down-to-earth debut, intended for “everyday people who do not have a deep technical background.” He structures the guide into three parts: understanding AI, its applications in the real world, and its implications for humanity. In demystifying AI's technical foundations, Wang differentiates the two primary approaches to AI development—symbolic and connectionism—and highlights key milestones like the perceptron and AlexNet breakthroughs, tracing AI's historical revolution while addressing philosophical concerns about its future. Technological disruptions aren't new, Wang argues, but AI's sweeping advancements warrant a comprehensive understanding of its abilities, downsides, and potential.

Wang's writing balances accessibility with depth, making it a valuable resource for anyone seeking clarity on AI's role in shaping our world. He explains the technical



Down-to-earth examination of AI's abilities, limitations, and potential.

Great for fans of Christian Siregar's *Unpacking AI*, Miles Kenner's *Intelligent Ignorance*.

underpinnings of AI, such as neural networks and transformers, while emphasizing their limitations, including hallucinations and lack of true reasoning in expert systems. Particularly intriguing is Wang's deep dive into the rivalry between symbolic AI and connectionist approaches, illustrating how hybrid models like AlphaGo combine strengths

from both schools. In Wang's examination of AI applications for business, healthcare, and warfare, he notes how AI is disrupting industries and explores relevant ethical dilemmas, such as AI's role in military conflicts and disinformation campaigns. Wang's final section reflects on AI's philosophical implications, arguing that while it lacks creativity and intentionality, it complements human strengths. “AI works best with humans, not in replacement or opposition,” he writes. Wang concludes with hope that AI could help challenges such as aging populations and climate change, rounding out this insightful, balanced exploration with a dash of optimism and a prediction that AI will be “extraordinarily beneficial to humankind in the long term.”

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

SELF-HELP

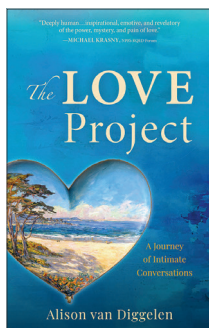
EDITOR'S PICK

The Love Project: A Journey of Intimate Conversations

Alison van Diggelen | Luminare Press
310p, e-book, \$7.99, ISBN 979-8-88679-971-2

Tech reporter van Diggelen debuts with a heartfelt collection of love stories that upend traditional romance, formed from whispered revelations and “empowering, perilous, and mysterious secrets” born from the intimate lives of residents in her hometown of Carmel, California. After experiencing a traumatic accident while hiking, van Diggelen turns inward, seeking solace from life's uncertainties. What she finds are unconventional and deeply authentic stories of passion and devotion, all gleaned from interviews with her neighbors. The personal, touching tales that emerge inspire, embolden, and remind readers of “the transformative power of connection.”

Van Diggelen's interviews expand the range of ways that people show love for themselves, each other, and the world in general. There's Linda, whose respect for Carmel's natural environment reminds readers that “every breath we take is like a gift”; the widowed Daisy, in her 80s, who embarked on “one last love affair” with the unhappily-married Miguel; and Syrian immigrant Bashar, devoted to the Druze



Stirring reminder of love's quiet power shaping our lives.

Great for fans of Daniel Jones's *Modern Love*, Aaron Feinberg et al.'s *Meet Cutes*.

religion and confident “that all the problems in the world is because of lack of love, all aspects of love.” Each conversation feels distinct and unforgettable, connected but never blending, as if van Diggelen entered the private lives of every person she spoke to and captured something uniquely human. *The Love Project* is insightful, refreshingly honest, and beautifully open, and, as van Diggelen gets to know her neighbors more intimately, she unveils truths about her own life as well. An unconventional date with her husband, Frank, sparks a reminder of her own inner power, while a chance encounter with an older man wracked by loneliness calls to mind love's ability to embolden and fortify. At its core, van Diggelen's writing reminds us that love is a driving force, the key ingredient that shapes our choices and fuels both our most generous and our most flawed human moments.

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

SELF-HELP

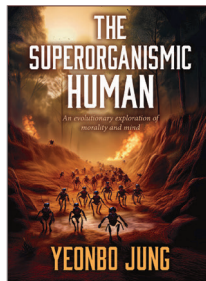
The Superorganismic Human: An Evolutionary Exploration of Morality and Mind

Yeonbo Jung | Bookbaby

413p, hardcover, \$40, ISBN 979-8-31780-082-6

Jung's perceptive debut explores the evolution of morality and the human mind through the lens of biology and sociology, positing that human societies function as imperfect superorganisms, akin to ant colonies—where cooperation and competition shape survival and societal fitness. He covers a variety of topics—ethics, justice, freedom, human dignity, and more—while arguing that these concepts are rooted in evolutionary mechanisms. Both ethics and justice serve as pillars for societal survival, Jung states: ethics promotes altruism and justice ensures fairness. By examining the interplay between individual desires and collective needs, the book offers a fresh perspective on morality and the future of human societies.

The Superorganismic Human delves into core philosophical conflicts such as determinism versus free will, altruism versus self-interest, and the illusion of a fixed self, while introducing a wide range of thinkers and debates. Jung's central



Enlightening approach to morality and justice, rooted in science.

Great for fans of Nicholas A. Christakis's *Blueprint*, Peter A. Corning's *Superorganism*.

argument—that human societies are a form of superorganisms—provides a compelling framework for understanding cooperation and competition. “A highly fit human society has a cooperative culture,” he asserts, though the degree of cooperation adapts to each society's unique culture, leadership, and morality. Jung links both altruistic and selfish behaviors

to innate desires such as equality, aggression, and affiliation, noting that human actions stem from whichever is deemed more important: the fitness of the individual or the fitness of the ingroup. Similarly, Jung's analysis of ethical dilemmas, economic justice, and religion sheds light on the intricacies of moral relativism.

Jung often reduces these ideas to first principles. While the book is complex and occasionally repetitive, its interdisciplinary approach, bridging biology, sociology, and philosophy, makes it a valuable tool for understanding human nature and societal evolution. Readers seeking a scientific approach to morality and justice will find Jung's arguments both provocative and enlightening.

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

SPIRITUALITY/INSPIRATIONAL

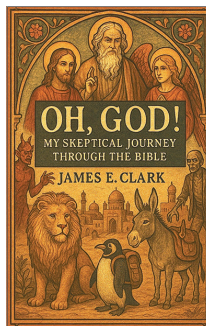
Oh, God! My Skeptical Journey Through the Bible

James E. Clark

334p, mass market, \$24.99, ISBN 979-8-999-53420-0

Clark takes a searing, satirical look at the Bible's teachings in this spirited debut, aiming to “help religious neighbors resist fear and paranoia and embrace nuance” while nudging them closer to the empathy, humility, and love Jesus espoused. Starting with the Genesis story of creation, he questions the science and God's choices, before moving on to Noah's flood, the 10 plagues of Egypt, and more. Each section references passages from scripture, sometimes comparing different versions and the discrepancies that accompany them, and Clark remarks on alternative sources as well, from archeological records to linguistic interpretations.

The writing is as humorous as it is sharp, with tongue-in-cheek commentary on long-held Christian beliefs shared as easily as Clark declares his appreciation for the Bible's literary loveliness: chapter 13 of Corinthians is a standout, he contends—“one of the most beautiful meditations on love ever written.” Clark shapes these ancient stories for contemporary audiences, judging the “rap battle” between



Satirical, searching examination of the Bible via a contemporary lens.

Great for fans of Joe Wenke's *You Got to Be Kidding!*, Dan Barker's *God*.

view on marriage or Isaiah's admonishment to “feed the hungry, house the homeless, and care for your own kin.”

Clark writes to believers and non-believers alike, though he makes clear his intention to “plant seeds of doubt through thoughtful conversation, shared inquiry, and consistent example.” To that end, he lists what he views as common biblical fallacies and suggests potential arguments to use when addressing those, urging readers to stand against the “weaponization of faith and the rise of religiously tinted authoritarianism.” Backmatter includes resources for further reading, skeptical answers to questions like “did Jesus exist?” and a suggested timeline of biblical chronology.

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

MEMOIR

EDITOR'S PICK

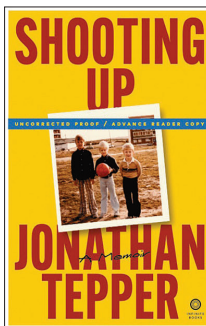
Shooting Up: A Memoir

Jonathan Tepper | Otterpine

312p, hardcover, \$32.95, ISBN 9781964378138

This rousing memoir chronicles Tepper's upbringing with his missionary parents, Mary and Elliot Tepper, and his three brothers, David, Peter, and Timothy in Madrid, Spain. Often tasked with passing out religious tracts to heroin addicts, Tepper recalls setting his “toy soldiers aside” and approaching hollow-eyed, drifting strangers with words of comfort and the promise of help, inviting them into the family's home for Bible study. During the height of the AIDS epidemic, Tepper and his family offer compassion and friendship, building a community for those affected by the perils of drug addiction and the onset of—at the time—a deadly disease.

As Tepper (*The Myth of Capitalism*) shares his story from childhood to college years, readers get a firsthand glimpse of a family that selflessly and willingly lives below their means to dispense grace and mercy to those in need. Leaning heavily on his spiritual faith, Tepper grapples with shocking grief and loss, feeling different from his peers, and deciding what path he will take with his own life. His storytelling is visceral, depicting addicts blinded by shooting up heroin laced with rat poison,



Riveting memoir exploring missionary work, addiction, and human kindness.

Great for fans of Apricot Irving's *The Gospel of Trees*, Mary Wilder's *Dust and Devotion*.

his mother cleaning out infected track marks for men visiting their home, and the many people his family lost to the AIDS epidemic. Tepper's family eventually developed Betel International, a nonprofit drug center built from scratch, originally situated in the San Blas neighborhood of Madrid. Offering addicts a chance to recover, learn work skills, and embark on new beginnings, Betel has since grown into a worldwide rehabilitation network, allowing Tepper's family legacy—resilience, strength, and human kindness—to sweep across the globe. Tepper used that unique heritage as a compass in his own life, eventually becoming a Rhodes scholar and working in the finance industry. He closes with a collection of candid photographs and a reminder to readers that, no matter how dire the situation, “tragedy holds within itself the possibility of joy.”

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

MEMOIR

EDITOR'S PICK

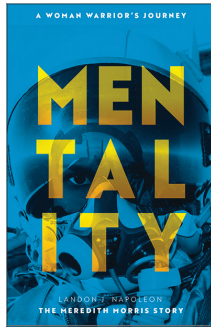
Mentality: The Meredith Morris Story

Landon J. Napoleon | Avery Press

343p, trade paper, \$14.95, ISBN 978-1-7348774-8-9

This inspiring account by Napoleon (*Angels Three*) chronicles the life and resilience of Meredith Sheldon Morris, a woman who, in her pursuit of becoming a fighter-jet pilot, repeatedly cheated death and confronted overwhelming adversity with courage and fortitude. The work starts in Meredith's childhood, at the tender age of nine, as Meredith, her sister, and their mother pick up the pieces after her parents' divorce—and try to adjust to city life in Richmond, Virginia following their move from the country. An inquisitive girl from the start, with “explorer DNA” running through her veins, Meredith faces intense prejudice and trauma, though her desire—to be a pilot never wavers.

Whether saving her fire battalion captain from an inferno, serving on a rescue squad, working as a 911 dispatcher, or even engaging in lighthearted moments like catching a greased pig, Morris's spirit shines throughout Napoleon's writing



Unflinching memoir of courage, fortitude, and resilience.

Great for fans of Doris J. Summer's *Life at Camp*, Khadijah Queen's *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*.

Morris's own poems, reflections, and personal photographs are woven throughout the book, providing thoughtful pauses between chapters and allowing readers to catch their breath from her litany of feats and accomplishments. Napoleon's compelling writing captures how one woman's mental toughness earned her not just a place in the “boys' club” despite institutional misogyny, but also the opportunity to fly, serve, and ultimately find love. The narrative occasionally jumps forward and backward in time, but it doesn't lose its incredible power, leaving readers with a gripping portrait of a woman who, despite life's trials, never fails to rise again.

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

PICTURE BOOKS

Grandpa's Still Watching

Dan Loftus

26p, trade paper, \$15, ISBN 979-8-9917100-0-8

Loftus's moving children's book explores family, love, and the afterlife as a doting grandfather watches on as his grandchildren learn and grow. From being potty trained to enjoying a summer swim, Grandpa is always there with his grandkids, sharing in their moments of joy, sadness, and pain. While the kids build sandcastles on the beach, Grandpa lounges nearby under a colorful umbrella. When his granddaughter slips and falls in the rain, he is there to offer a helping hand. Though they can't see him, they can feel his influence through the stories their parents share and through the love of his spiritual presence.

This emotive tale explores the grief of losing a loved one in a gentle, compassionate way that children will find comforting and supportive. The rhyming, easy-to-follow prose provides an uplifting message about family and the bonds of love, from the joy of celebrating holidays to appreciating simple, everyday moments. The book is ideal for anyone with young, inquisitive children who are grappling with understanding death and loss—or wanting to learn more about someone who passed



Wise, touching children's book about facing the loss of a family member.

Great for fans of Tamara Ellis Smith's *Grief Is an Elephant*, René Marsh's *The Nature of Change*.

away before they had the chance to meet them. Parents and grandparents will find this story helpful and engaging when explaining loss to the kids in their lives. Nadia Ronquillo's vivid illustrations show how Grandpa is a silent observer, a joyful cheerleader, and a quiet companion in the lives of each of his grandchildren. Wearing a bright green shirt and a bowler hat that cannot hide his full head of gray curls, Grandpa observes family moments from the sidelines, his eyes twinkling as his grandchildren run, jump, and play. The home has believable details such as puzzle pieces on the floor and art on the walls that hint at the family's love and connection. Ultimately, this teachable book helps adults talk to their children about death and consider how a parent's legacy lives on through future generations.

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

PICTURE BOOKS

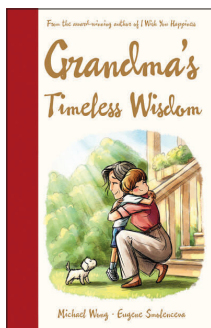
Grandma's Timeless Wisdom: Inspiring Conversations on Love, Kindness, and Life Lessons Between a Grandmother and Her Grandchild

Michael Wong | Picco Puppy

120p, hardcover, \$24.99, ISBN 978-1-76158-509-8

In this heartwarming picture book by Wong (author of *The Unconditional Love for Sofia* series), an inquisitive young boy named Charlie visits his grandmother, peppering her with insightful questions about life as they explore nature and enjoy each other's company. The two discuss a host of issues, starting with why Grandma's hugs are so tight: “Because it's how I show you I love you,” she whispers to Charlie. Grandma's willingness to answer question after question, never wearying of Charlie's extraordinary curiosity, makes her the perfect sounding board, as Charlie queries her about happiness, career success, and what to do when he feels afraid of trying new things. Through it all, Grandma imparts her wisdom, helping Charlie learn how to dream big, be kind, and stay open-minded.

This upbeat, moving narrative is both informative and inviting, as Charlie's grandmother does her best to answer his questions with honesty and helpful advice. The bond that emerges through the pair's conversation is touching, and Eugene



Timeless story of grandmother sharing love and wisdom.

Great for fans of Raven Ishak's *The Little Book of Abuelita Wisdom*, Charlotte Offsay's *A Grandma's Magic*.

Smolenceva's illustrations—crafted with bold, incisive strokes—accentuate their love as the story's driving force. Most of the images are black and white, with small pops of color sprinkled throughout, and Smolenceva punctuates those with a handful of kaleidoscopic watercolor spreads that enchant, showing Charlie and his grandmother riding bicycles by the water, practicing sunset yoga on the beach, and flying a kite.

Readers will be drawn into this emotive narrative, and adults will appreciate the story's many teaching points. Lessons such as working hard toward a dream, making time for fun and for loved ones, and being true to oneself—despite what others think—serve as opportunities for discussion between kids and their adult readers. Grandma's lessons are perfect for any age, particularly her reminder to Charlie that “you are more than enough. You are kind, loving, beautiful, and so very special. There's no one in the world like you.”

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

PICTURE BOOKS

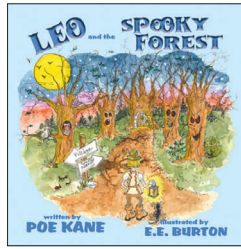
Leo and the Spooky Forest

Poe Kane | Solander Press

40p, e-book, \$3.99, ISBN 978-1-966675-29-7

In Kane's motivating picture book for young children, a little boy named Leo learns the importance of being brave—and that not everything is what it seems. Leo lives in an idyllic village where the grownups love to tell scary stories about the spooky forest that surrounds them. They whisper about trees that know secrets, “shadows that move on their own,” and, scariest of all, glowing red eyes that lurk in the darkness, watching anyone who walks past. Not easily deterred, Leo longs to explore the forbidden woods. One night he sets off with a lantern in hand and his dog, Snaggle, by his side to see what mysteries he can uncover.

As Leo ventures outside of town, he sees long, ominous shadows and hears the wind whistling through the trees, but he is not afraid. Finally he encounters a small door at the base of a tall, twisted tree. When he dares to crawl through to the other side, he finds something incredible that changes his perspective. With his newfound knowledge and a magical seed in hand, Leo helps everyone in his village see that



A boy learns the importance of being brave and that not everything is what it seems.

Great for fans of Levi Pinfold's *Black Dog*, Gaia Cornwall's *Jabari Jumps*.

the fearsome forest is really a place of acceptance and kindness. Through Leo's bravery, kids will learn to face their own fears—and begin to understand that sometimes scary things are just misunderstood.

E.E. Burton's distinctive illustrations create a believable old-timey world complete with thatched-roof cottages, dirt roads, and characters wearing flowing dresses and pointed hats. Kids will especially enjoy the spooky forest, where the trees have glowing red eyes and tall, hairy monsters lurk around every corner. With his face set in a soft smile and a cheery red feather stuck in his hat, Leo brings a positive vibe to the much-reviled forest, showing that sometimes people's perceptions are the only thing that needs to change.

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

MIDDLE GRADE

EDITOR'S PICK

Fromage

Kathleen Donovan

60p, mass market, \$5.99, ISBN 979-8-9999993-0-6

Donovan whisks young readers to 17th-century France for *Fromage*, the charming exploits of an upper-crust kitten determined to defy expectations. Fromage's mother repeatedly tells her that “lady cats do not have adventures,” but she doesn't understand why her brothers, Chocolate and Café, get to have all the fun. Her bright, cheddar-colored fur glows next to her dark-coated brothers, but the spirited Fromage wants to be known for her actions, not her appearance. Growing up in the coastal town of Honfleur, she envisions herself going off to sea as a ship's cat, tasked with menacing pesky rats.

But when she takes the first opportunity to scare off rodents, Fromage meets Aloysius, a Scottish orphan rat as partial to marmalade as he is to gallantry. The friendship of Fromage and Aloysius sustains them both, and they flout tradition by choosing loyalty over enmity—proving that compassion and companionship are mightier than tooth and claw. Their adventures include retrieving a stolen emerald bracelet from a mischievous mermaid, and they provide young readers



Animal adversaries establish a life-changing friendship in playful historical capers.

Great for fans of Brian Jacques's *Redwall* series; Lynne Rae Perkins's *Nuts to You*.

with a model of diplomacy and courage that emphasizes kindness and cleverness over violence. With *Fromage*, Donovan launches a middle-grade series that builds on this unlikely friendship.

Her sparkling prose is sprinkled with French phrases and Scots dialect, and this whimsical tale features literary cameos—Dumas's musketeer D'Artagnan—as well as lively descriptions of port towns, royal courts, and seafaring adventures. The narrative tumbles forward in a series of rapid-fire episodes, as exuberant as its charming heroine. At its core, Donovan's debut seeks to bridge divides: between male and female, between nationalities, and even between natural enemies. Adults will smile at the sly historical nods, while young readers will be drawn in by talking animals, fencing lessons, and fantastical escapades. In *Fromage*, a restless kitten and forlorn rat support each other in their quest for adventure.

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

MIDDLE GRADE

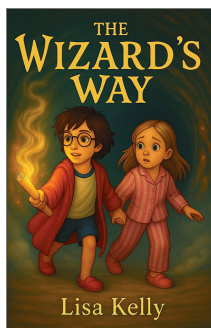
The Wizard's Way

Lisa Kelly | Magic Light Press

300p, trade paper, \$12.99, ISBN 979-8-9991847-0-2

Kelly's debut middle grade fantasy stars 12-year-old Katie, who's always felt at odds with her family. She hopes a summer at her grandpa's creepy mansion will be different—and it is, as she discovers a gateway to another world concealed inside her grandpa's fireplace. This secret passage leads into O'Mirra, a place populated by elves, magic, and wizards. It's not a paradise though—O'Mirra is in grave danger: the wizard Madgar, struggling with his troubled past, has been possessed by the “soul parasite” Diabolus and is attempting to make himself king. When Katie's grandfather goes in to help and doesn't come back, she knows she needs to do something. With the aid of her sister Jenny, and the elven apprentice Aiden, Katie journeys into the unknown to save her grandfather—and the world.

This classic fantasy world has all the dressings of an adrenaline-pumping adventure: whimsical magic, fearsome beasts, and an adorable animal companion. Readers will easily connect with Katie, a spirited activist who struggles with self-doubt and perseveres through love, and Kelly explores complicated topics—divorce, grief, anxiety—through Katie's unique worldview. Once the sisters travel



Heartfelt middle-grade fantasy about discovering your place in the world.

Great for fans of B.B. Alston's *Supernatural Investigations* series; Roshani Chokshi's *The Spirit Glass*.

into O'Mirra, they enter a darker, more dangerous world, one that resembles Earth in many ways, where even the monsters take on more mature hues: “Clawed hands, not hooves, dug into the dirt, and long, gleaming fangs jutted from its open mouth.”

Those are weighty concepts, but Kelly examines them with simple language and analogies, keeping the story well-grounded for her audience. The black and white, uncredited images provide additional charm, though their representation of characters can feel inconsistent at times. Regardless, these tried-and-true fantasy elements build a story that is familiar and comforting, making *The Wizard's Way* an entertaining introduction to the genre that touches on big ideas and deep emotions without becoming too complex or disheartening.

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

YOUNG ADULT

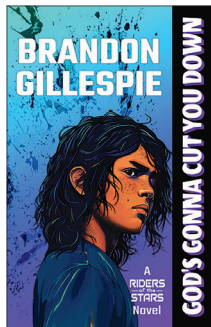
God's Gonna Cut You Down

Brandon Gillespie

446p, hardcover, \$29.99, ISBN 978-0-9987499-5-2

Gillespie's gripping dystopian tale is set aboard Serenity Orbital, a decaying space station plagued by mutated growlers, void terrors, and the oppressive rule of religious group La Familia. The story follows 13-year-old Diego, accused of summoning a monstrous Kraal that destroyed his family, as he's exiled to Serenity's lower rings—a veritable death sentence. There, Diego discovers an unlikely friend, Raphael, who once ridiculed him for being different: not only can Diego sense the void terrors stalking Serenity, he can make himself invisible to them. The boys—forced to work together to survive—form a tenuous bond, though their past conflict and clouded future soon threaten those shaky beginnings.

Gillespie (*Atom Bomb Baby*) excels at worldbuilding, vividly portraying the decayed remnants of Serenity Orbital and the dangers that lurk within, such as the mutated biosphere and chilling Deathmark encounters. Careful attention to detail immerses readers in a universe both familiar and alien, where every corner



Thought-provoking YA sci-fi exploring survival, humanity, and self-acceptance.

Great for fans of Caryn Lix's *Sanctuary*, Marie Lu's *Skyhunter*.

this a thought-provoking and compelling read. Diego's transformation from a self-loathing outcast to a determined leader inspires, and Raphael serves as a chilling antagonist, embodying the dangers of unchecked ambition—though his evolution to power-hungry adversary could benefit from more nuanced development. Also striking is the bittersweet ending to Diego's relationship with Donna—a twist that delivers haunting motivation for Diego's final act. Gillespie's exploration of metaphysical powers, redemption, and the blurred lines between humanity and monstrosity will leave readers questioning the true cost of survival—and wondering, much like Diego does, if our unwanted, censored traits are not “something to fear... [but] something to embrace.”

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

YOUNG ADULT

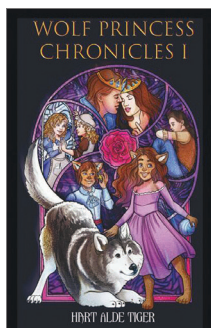
Wolf Princess Chronicles 1

Hart Alde Tiger | Windy City Publishers

394p, e-book, \$3.99, ISBN 978-1-953-29460-9

A big-hearted princess cursed to be part wolf brings together a group of friends who help each other heal from trauma—and face a mysterious summons from an enchantress—in Tiger's debut fantasy, which takes place after the happy ending of the Beauty and the Beast legend. Blending found-family warmth, spirited accounts of fantasy living and friendship, and frankness about life's harshness, this empathetic series starter tells, in each of its several “books,” the stories of troubled young children who come together in the Enchanted Castle and build deep connections. Jeanette, the Wolf Princess of the title, and her brother, Eglin, are the children of the Beast, now known as Conner. The Beast's curse has passed on to them, leaving both part wolf. Facing difficulty being accepted by the children of the town, they're understanding and accepting when Galen, a former child soldier, and Angeline, who doesn't speak, arrive at the castle with their own dark pasts.

Tiger opens with the darkest of these stories: Galen, age nine, facing the horrors



Warm, inventive found-family fantasy in the Enchanted Castle of a beloved beast.

Great for fans of Melissa Albert's Hazel Wood series, Seanan McGuire's Wayward Children series.

of war within a mercenary unit. Tiger is unsparing in painful detail when recounting all that Galen witnesses and endures. Fortunately, that same attentiveness to the textures of life extends to the many happier pages that follow, as Tiger details, with wit and warmth, the process of acclimating to a marvelous castle alive with secrets and wonders; embarking on the enchantress's journey; a trip to the

opera and much ado about plays; some rowdy barroom tale-spinning; and the joy of making friends. At the castle, each child is met with care and love, while Tiger ensures readers connect with every character and witness each—including the king—continue to grow. Nobody is healed or made fully happy just by walking through the doors. Episodic plotting and unhurried pacing will appeal to readers who relish seeing perfectly imperfect characters work on themselves while supporting each other—with the help of a faithful wolf and a few cats.

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

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The following are reviews of self-published titles that have previously appeared in *PW*

FICTION

François!

F.A. Loomis. Storm Peak, \$12.95 trade paper (196p)

ISBN 979-8-3381-4784-9

Loomis follows up *Blue Duwamish* with a lively if mystifying portrait of French Canadian fur trader François Payette (1793–1844) and those in his orbit during his exploration of the Pacific Northwest. Framed as an oral history, most of the narrative comes from Payette himself as he chronicles the day-to-day events of his life as a trapper, including his dealings with Indigenous peoples, such as a woman named Wades in Marsh Water, who gives birth to his son. Their child, Baptiste, narrates his own section about his experiences in the residential school system, while Wades in Marsh Water describes her work as a healer and medicine woman. Others, such as settlers to the region, discuss their relations with Native Americans and the taking of their lands. Loomis makes clear in an author's note that he's taken liberties with the historical record, but a few anachronisms stick out, such as a mention of Alberta long before the name was used. Still, the writing is energetic and colorful, as in Payette's description of his fallen scout during an attack by Walawalaŋa Indians ("He looked like a porcupine after he was showered with arrows and crawling"). Western fans ought to take a look.

The Girl Who Fell into Myth

Kay Kenyon. Kay Kenyon, \$14.99 trade paper (400p)

ISBN 978-17336746-3-8

At the start of this entertaining but uneven series-launching fantasy from Kenyon (*Prince of Storms*), 21-year-old Yevliesza is whisked from the mundane world to magical Numinasi, her ancestral homeland, by a dragon-like creature known as a dactyl. Once in this unfamiliar land, one of many alternate realities evolved from human myths, Yevliesza is taken under the wing of dashing ne'er-do-well Lord Valenty. While feeling like an outsider and struggling to adjust to matriarchal Numinasi's political and magical workings (and lack of modern conveniences), Yevliesza discovers unex-

pected abilities and becomes infatuated with handsome elven prince Tirhan. Danger arises in the form of enemy forces known in this world as the Volkish, but which Yevliesza recognizes as Nazi troops from Earth. When the Volkish threaten to invade, Yevliesza must master her powers in time to stop them. Kenyon's worldbuilding is vivid, ambitious, and expansive, but it often raises more questions than it answers. Frequent shifts in point of view, meanwhile, result in some characters being less developed than others and a slightly overcomplicated plot. Still, the romantic tension is well drawn, the heroine is easy to root for, and Kenyon lays solid groundwork for future installments. Readers will be excited for more.

Heliacal Star

Victor Bahna. Bahna Publishing, \$8.99 e-book (410p)

ISBN 979-8-988277-10-1

Bahna debuts with a sturdy, suspenseful thriller set in the world of competitive horse racing. After visiting Long Island's Belmont Park when he was 10 years old, Matt Galiano became obsessed with the sport and devoted himself to finding out the best ways to predict winners. That pursuit endeared him to his father, a mobster who was murdered when Matt was a teenager. Now 30, Matt is hoping to leave behind his work as a gangster's bookmaker and finally go straight. However, when he accidentally gets inside information that the trainer of his favorite horse, Heliacal Star, is being ordered to throw a race, he's pulled back into the fray. Shielding him from danger is Kristine Connelly, a beautiful trainer who's made it her mission to thwart the proliferation of performance-enhancing drugs and money laundering in horse racing. As Matt's past threatens to catch up with the duo, Bahna keeps the pace fleet and the violence sharp—a fitting combination that evokes the speed and brutality of racehorses charging around the track. Dick and Felix Francis fans will relish this.

Indelicate Deception

V.S. Kemanis. Opus Nine, \$7.99 e-book (350p)

ISBN 978-1-73784-792-2

In the propulsive latest from Kemanis

(*Thursday's List*), a young woman tries to find out what happened to her long-lost mother. Feisty firefighter Delicate Soul "Caty" Robertson, 19, was raised by her Black father, Paul Leroy "Roy" Robertson, in early 1990s Berkeley, Calif., after her white mother, Leonore "Len" Witaker, took off when she was an infant. In search of clues, Caty visits her estranged maternal grandmother, who tells Caty a private investigator tracked Len to Los Angeles shortly after her disappearance, but the trail went cold. Caty travels to L.A., where she manages to track down a woman who might be Len. In a parallel narrative set in the 1970s, flower child Len falls in love with Vietnam War veteran Roy, who dreams of opening his own restaurant. Len's well-off parents disapprove of the relationship and threaten to cut Len off from the trust fund established by her grandmother. Shortly before Caty is born, Len makes a startling choice that forever alters her and Roy's lives. A further twist near the end of the novel strains credulity, but for the most part, Kemanis adroitly portrays the longing that drives Caty's search. Readers who enjoy family dramas will find much to admire in this buoyant tale.

Outrage: Sister Molly Cleary vs. the Catholic Church

Avery Michael. MindStir, \$23.99 trade paper (436p)

ISBN 978-1-963844-53-5

Michael debuts with an energetic tale of a nun's rise in the 1960s women's movement. Raised in a Catholic family in an impoverished area of Chicago, Molly Cleary joins the sisterhood in the 1950s. Sometime after Vatican II in the 1960s, she dedicates herself to working in women's shelters, having survived sexual abuse from her father and her twin brother, Thomas. She quickly locks horns with Thomas, a priest, when he counsels a parishioner to return to her abusive husband, who goes on to kill the woman. Molly then helps a Black woman gain custody of her children from her abusive partner. Meanwhile, Molly begins to develop romantic feelings for a community leader, which causes her anguish, since she took a vow of chastity.

Her struggles with her faith eventually lead her to chair a national secular women's organization. The dialogue is often didactic ("Nowhere is it written that a penis is required for saying Mass and offering the sacraments," Molly says at one point), but readers will cheer on the novel's boisterous and likable protagonist in her earnest fight for social justice. It's a rousing story of resilience and advocacy.

Some Like It Hott

Serena Bell. Serena Bell, \$17.99 trade paper (320p)

ISBN 978-1-953498-33-5

Bell's diverting third *Hott Springs Eternal* contemporary (after *Hott Take*) finds New York City financial analyst Preston Hott angling to cinch a promotion when he learns of the life-altering provisions in his curmudgeonly late grandfather's will. To keep *Hott Springs Eternal*—the wedding venue run by Preston's sister, Hanna—in the family, Preston must return to the Oregon property and create an activities program for the town's upcoming summer festival. If the program gets less than a 4.5 rating from attendees, the family land and business will be sold to a mining company. Fortunately, uptight Preston will have help from Natalie Archer, *Hott Springs Eternal's* spunky activities coordinator. As they work together, sparks fly and Preston quickly realizes how much he needs Natalie's creative flair in his life. Their chemistry soon becomes too much to ignore, but will their relationship survive Preston's return to his high-flying life in New York? Bell mines her leads' opposites-attract dynamic for some heady sexual tension. The result is both sizzling and poignant.