

GREAT READS



2021

Presented by Staff

FEATURED BOOKS

Crying in H Mart by Michelle Zauner

An unflinching, powerful memoir about growing up Korean American, losing her mother, and forging her own identity.

Infinite Country by Patricia Engel

Moving their family to what they believe will be a safer but temporary home in Houston, two young parents are forced to choose between an undocumented status in America and returning to the violence of war-torn Bogata.

Anxious People by Fredrik Backman

Taken hostage by a failed bank robber while attending an open house, eight anxiety-prone strangers—including a redemption-seeking bank director, two couples who would fix their marriages and a plucky octogenarian—discover their unexpected common traits.

House of Hollow by Krystal Sutherland

Iris and Vivi work to uncover their dark, dangerous, and possibly magical past when their older sister Grey goes missing.

Velvet Was the Night by Silvia Moreno-Garcia

In 1970s Mexico City, Maite, a secretary with a penchant for romance novels, searches for her missing neighbor, Leonora, a beautiful art student, which leads her to an eccentric gangster who longs to escape his own life, and together, they set out to discover the dangerous truth.

What Kind of Woman by Kate Baer

Through poems that are as unforgettably beautiful as they are accessible, Kate proves herself to truly be an exemplary voice in modern poetry. Kate's words make women feel seen in their own bodies, in their own marriages, and in their own lives.

Somebody's Daughter by Ashley C. Ford

One of the most prominent voices of her generation debuts with an extraordinarily powerful memoir: the story of a childhood defined by the ever-looming absence of her incarcerated father and the path we must take to both honor and overcome our origins.

Brood by Jackie Polzin

An unnamed narrator recounts her year-long attempt to overcome a loss while taking pains to safeguard four chickens from challenges ranging from predators and an interfering mother to a tornado and a brutal Minnesota winter.

Notes on Grief by Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche

An exquisite work of meditation, remembrance, and hope, written in the wake of the death of the author's beloved father in the summer of 2020.

***Star Wars: The Rising Storm* by Cavan Scott**

A previously unexplored era of Star Wars storytelling comes to action-packed life in this second book in a major cross-publishing event: The all-new High Republic.

***Star Wars: Light of the Jedi* by Charles Soule**

A new Star Wars saga set 200 years before the events of *The Phantom Menace* finds the heroes of the Jedi Order confronted by an unexpected sinister force while defending the Republic from a catastrophic hyperspace disaster.

***Truly Like Lightning* by David Duchovny**

Follows the experiences of a former Hollywood stuntman-turned-Mormon polygamist who is blackmailed by an ambitious developer to enroll his children in public school.

***Death Washes Ashore* by Patricia Skalka**

Chasing leads, Sheriff Dave Cubiak suddenly finds himself amid a troupe of live-action role players living in an ersatz Camelot. In a setting where pretense is the norm, Cubiak must determine if suspects are who they say they are or if their made-up identities conceal a ruthless killer.

***Outlawed* by Anna North**

A riveting adventure story features a fugitive girl, a mysterious gang of robbers, and their dangerous mission to transform the Wild West.

***Fox & I* by Catherine Raven**

A solitary woman's inspiring, moving, surprising, and often funny memoir about the transformative power of her unusual friendship with a wild fox.

***Clarity and Connection* by Yung Pueblo**

From the celebrated author of *Inward* comes a new collection of poetry and short prose focused on understanding how past wounds impact our present relationships.

***Later* by Stephen King**

Born with an unnatural ability his mom urges him to keep secret, Jamie can see what no one else can see and learn what no one else can learn. But the cost of using this ability is higher than Jamie can imagine - as he discovers when an NYPD detective draws him into the pursuit of a killer who has threatened to strike from beyond the grave.

***You'll Never Believe What Happened to Lacey* by Amber Ruffin & Lacey Lamar**

Writer and performer Amber Ruffin writes with her sister Lacey Lamar with humor and heart to share absurd anecdotes about everyday experiences of racism.

***Fuzz* by Mary Roach**

Join "America's funniest science writer" (Peter Carlson, *Washington Post*), Mary Roach, on an irresistible investigation into the unpredictable world where wildlife and humans meet.

***To Be Honest* by Michael Leviton**

Michael Leviton's extraordinary account of being raised in a family he calls a "little honesty cult." When honesty slowly poisoned a great romance, Michael decided there had to be something to lying after all.

***Trejo: My Life of Crime, Redemption, and Hollywood* by Danny Trejo and Donal Logue**

Danny takes us through the incredible ups and downs of his life, including meeting one of the world's most notorious serial killers in prison and working with legends like Charles Bronson and Robert De Niro.

***One Last Stop* by Casey McQuiston**

Cynical August starts to believe in the impossible when he meets Jane on the subway, a mysterious punk rocker she forms a crush on, who is literally displaced in time from the 1970s and is trying to find her way back.

MORE GREAT READS OF 2021

FICTION

A Marvelous Light by Freya Marske

Robin Blyth is accidentally named the civil service liaison to a hidden magical society and is forced to contend with the beauty and danger operating beneath normal reality while uncovering what happened to his predecessor.

Build Your House Around My Body by Violet Kupersmith

The fate of an unhappy woman who disappears in 2011 while living in Saigon is entwined with a teenager who gets lost in an abandoned rubber plantation in 1986 and a woman who captures a two-headed cobra in 2009.

Cloud Cuckoo Land by Anthony Doerr

Follows four young dreamers and outcasts through time and space, from 1453 Constantinople to the future, as they discover resourcefulness and hope amidst peril in the new novel by the Pulitzer Prize--winning author *All the Light We Cannot See*.

Crossroads by Jonathan Franzen

Crossroads is the first novel in Jonathan Franzen's *A Key to All Mythologies*. The trilogy tells the story of a Midwestern family across three generations, mirroring the preoccupations and dilemmas of the United States from the Vietnam War to the 2020s.

Everyone in this Room will Someday be Dead by Emily Austin

A morbidly anxious woman stumbles into a job as a receptionist at a Catholic church and becomes obsessed with her predecessor's mysterious death.

The Four Winds by Kristin Hannah

A Depression-era woman confronts a wrenching choice between fighting for the Dust Bowl-ravaged land she loves in Texas or pursuing an uncertain future in California.

Heard it in a Love Song by Tracey Garvis Graves

Newly divorced and lonely, Layla Hilding cautiously gets to know a newly-separated dad whose daughter attends the elementary school where she teaches music in the new novel from the best-selling author of *The Girl He Used to Know*.

Hour of the Witch by Chris Bohjalian

A resourceful Puritan woman in 1662 Boston plots to escape a violent marriage only to find herself targeted by her disapproving and superstitious neighbors for failing to save a child's life.

How Beautiful We Were by Imbolo Mbue

A young revolutionary risks everything to secure her people's freedom when her small African village is decimated by an American oil company that reneges on promises of reparation.

Intimacies by Katie Kitamura

Seeking a fresh start an interpreter takes a position at the International Court at The Hague and is drawn into numerous personal dramas, including her lover's ongoing entanglement in his marriage and her friend witnessing a random act of violence.

Judge's List by John Grisham

While on the hunt for a serial killer, Lacy Stoltz, an investigator for the Florida Board on Judicial Conduct, discovers that a man hiding behind the black robe may not only taking bribes but may be taking lives.

Klara and the Sun by Kazuo Ishiguro

Waiting to be chosen by a customer, an Artificial Friend programmed with high perception observes the activities of shoppers while exploring fundamental questions about what it means to love.

***The Lincoln Highway* by Amor Towles**

In June of 1954, 18-year-old Emmett Watson, released after serving 15 months for involuntary manslaughter, discovers that two friends from the work farm have hidden themselves in the trunk of the warden's car and have hatched a different plan for Emmett's future.

***The Love Songs of W.E.B. Du Bois* by Honorée Fanonne Jeffers**

To come to terms with who she is and what she wants, Ailey, the daughter of an accomplished doctor and a strict schoolteacher, embarks on a journey through her family's past, helping her embrace her full heritage, which is the story of the Black experience in itself.

***My Heart is a Chainsaw* by Stephen Graham Jones**

Protected by horror movies -- especially the ones where the masked killer seeks revenge on a world that wronged them, Jade Daniels, an angry, half-Indian outcast, pulls us into her dark mind when blood actually starts to spill into the waters of Indian lake.

***Once There Were Wolves* by Charlotte McConaghy**

When a farmer is mauled to death after she reintroduces 14 gray wolves into the remote Scottish Highlands, Inti Flynn knows where the town will lay blame and makes a reckless decision to protect them no matter what the cost.

***The Other Black Girl* by Zakiya Dalila Harris**

Tired of being the only Black employee at Wagner Books, 26-year-old editorial assistant Nella Rogers is thrilled when Harlem-born and bred Hazel is hired until she after a string uncomfortable events, is elevated to Office Darling, leaving Nella in the dust.

***Peaces* by Helen Oyeyemi**

Honeymooning aboard a historic former tea-smuggling train, newlyweds Otto and Xavier enjoy the locomotive's fantastical accommodations before encountering a secretive fellow passenger, who imparts a surprising message.

***The Personal Librarian: A Novel* by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray**

Hired by J. P. Morgan to curate a collection of rare manuscripts, books and artwork for his newly built Pierpont Morgan Library, Belle de Costa Greene becomes one of the most powerful women in New York despite the dangerous secret she keeps.

***Project Hail Mary* by Andy Weir**

Ryland Grace is the sole survivor on a desperate, last-chance mission--and if he fails, humanity and the earth itself will perish. Except that right now, he doesn't know that.

***The Push* by Ashley Audrain**

A devoted mother with a painful past gradually realizes that something is very wrong with her daughter, a fear that is complicated by her husband's dismissive views and the birth of a healthy son.

***Quiet in Her Bones* by Nalini Singh**

In this gripping thriller set in New Zealand, New York Times bestselling author Nalini Singh takes you into the twisted world of an exclusive cul-de-sac located on the edge of a sprawling forest.

***The Sentence* by Louise Erdrich**

The Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award-winning author presents this unusual novel in which a small independent bookstore in Minneapolis is haunted from November 2019 to November 2020 by the store's most annoying customer.

***We Were Never Here: A Novel* by Andrea Bartz**

After a backpacking trip in Chile with her best friend Kristen goes horribly wrong, Emily is forced to confront their violent past and wonders if she can outrun the secrets they share or if they will destroy her relationship, freedom and even her life.

NONFICTION

***All the Frequent Troubles of Our Days* by Rebecca Donner**

In this stunning literary achievement, Donner chronicles the extraordinary life and brutal death of her great-great-aunt Mildred Harnack, the American leader of one of the largest underground resistance groups in Germany during WWII—a page-turner story of espionage, love and betrayal.

***Empire of Pain: The Secret History of the Sackler Dynasty* by Patrick Radden Keefe**

A masterpiece of narrative reporting and writing, exhaustively documented and ferociously compelling. It is a portrait of the excesses of America's second Gilded Age, a study of impunity among the super elite and a relentless investigation of the naked greed and indifference to human suffering that built one of the world's great fortunes.

***Finding the Mother Tree* by Suzanne Simard**

Simard writes—in inspiring, illuminating, and accessible ways—how trees, living side by side for hundreds of years, have evolved, how they perceive one another, learn and adapt their behaviors, recognize neighbors, and remember the past.

***Girly Drinks: A World History of Woman and Alcohol* by Mallory O'Meara**

With whip-smart insight and boundless curiosity, *Girly Drinks* unveils an entire untold history of the female distillers, drinkers and brewers who have played a vital role in the creation and consumption of alcohol, from ancient Sumerian beer goddess Ninkasi to iconic 1920s bartender Ada Coleman.

***How the Word is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery Across America* by Clint Smith**

Beginning in his hometown of New Orleans, Clint Smith leads the reader on an unforgettable tour of monuments and landmarks that offer an intergenerational story of how slavery has been central in shaping our nation's collective history, and ourselves.

***Invisible Child: Poverty, Survival & Hope in an American City* by Andrea Elliott**

Invisible Child tells an astonishing story about the power of resilience, the importance of family, and the cost of inequality. Based on nearly a decade of reporting, *Invisible Child* illuminates some of the most critical issues in contemporary America through the life of one remarkable girl.

***Kennedy's Avenger: Assassination, Conspiracy, and the Forgotten Trial of Jack Ruby* by Dan Abrams and David Fisher**

Featuring a colorful cast of characters, including the nation's most flamboyant lawyer pitted against a tough-as-Texas prosecutor, award-winning authors Dan Abrams and David Fisher unveil the astonishing details behind the first major trial of the television century.

***On Juneteenth* by Annette Gordon-Reed**

Combining personal anecdotes with poignant facts gleaned from the annals of American history, Gordon-Reed shows how, from the earliest presence of Black people in Texas, African-Americans played an integral role in the Texas story.

***Shooting Midnight Cowboy: Art, Sex, Loneliness, Liberation, and the Making of a Dark Classic* by Glenn Frankel**

By turns madcap and serious, and enriched by interviews with Hoffman, Voight, and others, this book is not only the definitive account of the film that unleashed a new wave of innovation in American cinema, but also the story of a country—and an industry—beginning to break free from decades of cultural and sexual repression.

***Tacky: Love Letters to the Worst Culture We Have to Offer* by Rax King**

Tacky is about the power of pop culture—like any art—to imprint itself on our lives and shape our experiences, no matter one's commitment to "good" taste. A nostalgia-soaked antidote to the millennial generation's obsession with irony, putting the aesthetics we hate to love into kinder and sharper perspective.