

OCTOBER '19



Red at the Bone: A Novel

By Jacqueline Woodson

"Although you can read Jacqueline Woodson's newest novel over the course of one evening, there is nothing breezy about the richness of its story, nothing short about the depth of its characters, nothing quick about the way this book stays with you after you finish reading. Told through five distinct voices, *Red at the Bone* tracks an African-American family through time and place as an unexpected pregnancy upends and reshapes family and class expectations as well as individual trajectories. Ultimately, the novel is about legacy in every sense of the word. And since Woodson's writing packs the emotional punch of an epic in a novella number of pages, the legacy of her book is to be read over and over and over again."

—Kelly Brown, Magic City Books, Tulsa, OK



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The Dutch House: A Novel

By Ann Patchett

"Meeting the Conroy family and stepping into their elaborate Dutch house—part museum, part home, with all its secrets and charm, comfort and sadness—enthralled me as the mystery unfolded like a gentle call to arms. From poverty to wealth and from wealth to poverty, we see through Danny's eyes the struggle to hold the family together against grief, greed, and the heartbreak of losing all that once bound them. Patchett paints a masterpiece here; there's no looking away. It lingers in your imagination long after the story has been told."

—Diane McGuire, Valley Bookseller, Stillwater, MN



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Ninth House: A Novel

By Leigh Bardugo

"Queen Leigh's first foray into adult fantasy is a sensational success! One of the best fantasy books I've read in a long while, *Ninth House* contains Yale secret societies, ghosts, magic, morally gray characters, and murder. Bardugo balances dual timelines with intricate precision, and the history and world-building of her fantastical New Haven is superb. I couldn't put this book down; I had to know what was going to happen next. I savored every moment reading this novel, and I am jealous of readers who get to experience it for the first time!"

—Isabella Ogbolumani, Page 1 Books, Evanston, IL



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Olive, Again: A Novel

By Elizabeth Strout

"Thank goodness Elizabeth Strout decided to return for another round with one of the most beloved, maddening, confounding, and compelling characters I have ever had the pleasure of meeting. Readers will delight in the fact that *Olive*, while forging new relationships and puzzling over long-existing ones, remains the crazy, complicated family member you just can't quit. Add in spare yet beautifully rendered prose about the rugged, breathtaking state of Maine and you've got a gem of a book, one that leaves you rooting for Olive, despite her numerous shortcomings, as she stumbles through love, friendship, loss, and what it means to grow old. Strout, through *Olive*, reminds us that it's a messy business being human, but it's a privilege to be along for the ride."

—Page Berger, Barrett Bookstore, Darien, CT



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The Water Dancer: A Novel

By Ta-Nehisi Coates

"Ta-Nehisi Coates understands something big and he understands it better than anyone else right now. *The Water Dancer* led me on a journey up and down the landscape of American slavery with a narrative that feels like *The Book of Exodus* meets, well, Ta-Nehisi Coates. Over 400 pages I have cried, I have laughed, I have been educated, and I have been enlightened. Coates writes with an honesty that can only come from a sublime, even spiritual, understanding of the souls of the white man and the black man in America. Written with poignancy and humanity, *The Water Dancer* left me stunned but clear-headed, like I had just been woken up from a deep, dream-filled sleep."

—Norris Rettiger, Lemuria Bookstore, Jackson, MS



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The World That We Knew: A Novel

By Alice Hoffman

"Alice Hoffman, author of numerous novels—*The Dovekeepers*, *The Marriage of Opposites*, and *The Museum of Extraordinary Things*, among others—does her magic again with *The World That We Knew*. This is a story of great love and loss, a story of strong characters who, with heartfelt courage, save others by risking their own lives. The reader is taken on a journey of the world that once was—of memories of a past tainted by hatred during WWII. Alice Hoffman's writing is passionate, poetic, and profound. This novel captivated me from the start and left me spellbound. A must-read!"

—Mollie Loughlin, The Book Vine, Cherokee, IA



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Celestial Bodies: A Novel

By Jokha Alharthi; Marilyn Booth (Transl.)

"In this gripping family saga, author Jokha Alharthi—the first female Omani writer to be translated into English—involves you deeply in the personal drama of her characters and in the extended family system, which includes former servants and masters, while also somehow telling the modern history of the country of Oman. I was immediately enthralled by the power and clarity of Alharthi's book, which won the 2019 Man Booker International Prize and is the first book written in Arabic to win it. Don't miss the opportunity to let this important new book sweep you away!"

—Arlo Klahr, Skylight Books, Los Angeles, CA



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Imaginary Friend: A Novel

By Stephen Chbosky

"*Imaginary Friend* has, in my humble opinion, already earned its spot on the top shelf of classic horror novels. Reminiscent of Stephen King's *It* and Neil Gaiman's *Coraline*, it is one of the most compulsively terrifying, eerily uncanny novels of our time. Once you pick up this book, you won't put it down until you've devoured it whole (or, should I say, it has devoured you), and once finished, you will feel the dangerous urge to turn to the first page and start all over again. It is an utterly original masterpiece of fear. Thank you, Stephen Chbosky, for the lost sleep and the goosebumps! Signed, a hard-to-scare horror fanatic."

—Tianna Moxley, the river's end bookstore, Oswego, NY



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A Cosmology of Monsters: A Novel

By Shaun Hamill

"When is the last time a horror novel was both scary and charming? *A Cosmology of Monsters* is that book! Riffing on themes from H.P. Lovecraft and Ray Bradbury, Hamill weaves a complex tale of lost cities, haunted Halloween attractions, and doorways to other worlds. I really enjoyed this literary horror story, which starts out as a love story (don't ALL good horror tales?) and grows progressively creepier. The book posits the questions: Who are the real monsters, and why do we love to be scared? Truly an uber-creepy yet delightful homage. I loved it."

—William Carl, *An Unlikely Story*, Plainville, MA



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The Butterfly Girl: A Novel

By Rene Denfeld

"Rene Denfeld has done it again: written a mystery that sucks you in and thoroughly absorbs you until you're done. We pick up the story with Naomi Cottle, who has been searching for the sister she left behind when she escaped the clutches of their childhood kidnapper. Haunted by guilt, her search leads her back to her hometown, where a number of young girls have been murdered. By chance or by fate, she encounters Celia, a 12-year-old girl living on the streets who may be the key to everything—including finding her sister and a rapacious killer. Heart-wrenching, thought-provoking, and utterly unputdownable, this really should be the gold standard for mysteries."

—Destinee Hodge, *East City Bookshop*, Washington, DC



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The Topeka School: A Novel

By Ben Lerner

"It's the late '90s in Topeka, and high school senior Adam Gordon is partying, going to school, and preparing for a national speech and debate competition—living a life he expects to reflect back upon with irony and detachment in some urbane, imaginary future. Lerner shifts between perspectives, stealing stylistic bits from autofiction and documentary; he reinvents the way narrative can place the moments of our lives in the context of history, both global and hyper-local, exploring how history inflicts trauma onto us and how we, in turn, inflict that trauma back onto history. And he does all this while toying with language and the spaces where it breaks down as we attempt to self-define. Simply put, *The Topeka School* is a work of genius."

—Chris Lee, *Boswell Book Company*, Milwaukee, WI



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Tuesday Mooney Talks to Ghosts: A Novel

By Kate Racculia

"Tuesday Mooney is smart, intrepid, and just a little bit lost—even 20 years after her best friend disappears without a trace. A prospect researcher by trade, she dives in deep when a strange and reclusive billionaire dies and leaves puzzles throughout the city in an elaborate treasure hunt. While this fun and affecting book could have won me over just by being a romp, there is more here. Tuesday and her compatriots are all forced to confront the traumas that have stunted their lives and find new strength in their relationships. I couldn't have asked for more!"

—Anmiryam Budner, *Main Point Books*, Wayne, PA



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How to Catch a Mole: Wisdom From a Life Lived in Nature

By Marc Hamer

"Sublimely touching (and with the softest of hands), this book has that balance of warmth and cold that makes for good nature writing. Hamer's observations demonstrate both a refusal to look away and a tender love for the environment around him. His memoir of a life spent catching moles waxes and wanes, at times gruesome, sensual, violent, and awestruck. This is a book for fans of the way that Mary Oliver lived and talked about her life."

—Afton Montgomery, Tattered Cover Book Store, Denver, CO



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The Giver of Stars: A Novel

By Jojo Moyes

"In the late 1930s, the Works Progress Administration developed a number of projects intended to provide employment opportunities for unemployed artists, writers, and craftsmen. One of those projects was the Pack Horse Library Initiative, in which mounted horsewomen picked their way along snowy hillsides and through muddy creeks with a simple goal: to deliver reading material to Kentucky's isolated mountain communities. In *The Giver of Stars*, Moyes has brought to life the amazing, funny, adventurous stories of a few of these trailblazing women. Historical fiction lovers will devour this story of a little-known piece of U.S. history."

—Angie Tally, The Country Bookshop, Southern Pines, NC



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Toil & Trouble: A Memoir

By Augusten Burroughs

"Augusten Burroughs never ceases to amaze his readers with his honest stories, and *Toil & Trouble* won't disappoint his fans! A gift shared with his mother, witchcraft has been passed down his family tree and has guided his life. Moving from the city life to the wilds of Connecticut, Burroughs' gift guides him and husband Christopher to the right place at the right time—and saves them with a little premonition! You are invited (perhaps welcomed?) to be skeptical, but once you finish the book you might just wonder why you ever were."

—Jennifer Kandarian, Books on the Square, Providence, RI



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No Judgments: A Novel

By Meg Cabot

"Cabot delights again in this one-off romance about finding compassion for other people and for animals in the midst of natural disaster. Light and fun, this book is a joy to read, full of well-crafted prose, engaging characters, and a plot perfect for the times. Cabot's fabulous escape into the written word will leave you with that warm fuzzy feeling and also some knowledge on how to prepare for a hurricane."

—Kendolyn Roe, Where the Sidewalk Ends, Chatham, MA



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How We Fight for Our Lives: A Memoir

By Saeed Jones

"Saeed Jones is supremely talented, so I expected his memoir to be great. I did NOT expect, however, to be left immobile in my chair after reading that final paragraph, processing the beauty of his words and those indelible sentences he's generous enough to share with us. *How We Fight for Our Lives* is a moving and intimate portrait of the writer growing up as a young, gay black man and trying to understand the complex realities of his identity. We also gain insight to Jones' relationship with his mother, a story that left me in pieces by the end. *How We Fight for Our Lives* is raw, difficult, and truthful, and completely stuffed with love."

—Eugenia Vela, BookPeople, Austin, TX



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Opioid, Indiana: A Novel

By Brian Allen Carr

"You'll read this book in one breathless sitting, but the story will stay with you. Riggle, the 17-year-old orphaned protagonist, is exactly what we all need. He's on a deadline but out of cell phone data to search for answers. Toggling between his memory and the present, he must discern for himself what he feels, how he will survive, and how he will process his grief; in so doing, he is able to better empathize with everyone he encounters. Riggle is also very funny and filled with all of the wonderful contradictions that make us human. *Opioid, Indiana* is vulnerable and unflinching. It's a beautiful, original story."

—Tiffany Lauderdale Phillips, Wild Geese Books, Franklin, IN



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Full Throttle: Stories

By Joe Hill

"What a ride! This book of stories (two written with Stephen King) is a fast ride through Hill's considerable imagination. He takes us through 13 stories of suspense, from the back of a motorcycle and outrunning a murderous semi-truck driver to an American sea monster, then on to a young girl who befriends a machine, and ending with, well, the end of the world. His stories are reminiscent of a certain well-known horror writer, but are clearly his own brand of terror. I enjoyed each of them and wished that some might morph into full-length books because it was hard to let them go. I always look forward to Hill's books, and this one did not disappoint."

—Sarah Harmuth Letke, Redbery Books, Cable, WI



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Grand Union: Stories

By Zadie Smith

"Whether she's telling a very short story about a mother and daughter discussing animal cruelty while on vacation or a longer story about a trio of celebrities on a road trip to escape New York, *Grand Union* shows that Zadie Smith is as adept with short fiction as she is with the novel. For a form of literature that always seems to enhance the faults of lesser writers, short stories, for Smith, seem only to make her shine brighter than ever."

—Bennard Fajardo, Politics and Prose Bookstore, Washington, DC



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