



FEBRUARY '12

A Good American

A Novel, by Alex George

"In these crazy, sad times, when fear and greed seem to be defining our responses, it was wonderful to be reminded of the irreplaceable role immigration has played in making our country great and of the various ways of being 'a good American.' Frederick and Jette flee Prussia in 1904 and make their new home in Missouri. Their story is told by their grandson, James, and like the best family stories, is filled with the coincidences, missed connections, and both the tragedy and magic of ordinary life. George breaks your heart with the quiet sacrifices and secrets of his characters but never forgets the wonder and humor of living. Carrying the reader across the generations with music and food, religion and prohibition, racism and patriotism, *A Good American* makes this unique family's story seem familiar in the best of ways."

—Leslie Reiner, Inkwood Books, Tampa, FL



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Defending Jacob

A Novel, by William Landay

"Engrossing from the first page, *Defending Jacob* will keep you on the edge of your seat and then it will break your heart. What appears to be the story of a lovely family with a teenage son becomes a nightmare of suspicions, accusations, isolation, condemnation, and ultimately tragedy when an assistant district attorney and his wife watch as their only son is arrested for the murder of a classmate. We tend to see those we love with our hearts, which is not always the same as reality, and life can come crashing down in a hurry. I was blown away by this book!"

—Susan Wasson, Bookworks, Albuquerque, NM



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The Snow Child

A Novel, by Eowyn Ivey

"This love story, set in Alaska, is really a love story about Alaska. Ivey describes the achingly beautiful landscape without making it seem an easy place to live. Based on an old fairy tale, this is the story of a childless couple who make a snow child one evening only to find a real little girl the next day. As the girl grows through the years, we know that this enchanting story will have the twists that we have come to expect with tales that teach us lessons about life. Friendships, marriage, parenthood, and survival—all set in an unforgiving but entrancing landscape. I loved it!"

—Valerie Koehler, Blue Willow Book Shop, Houston, TX



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The Mirage

A Novel, by Matt Ruff

"Here's another page-turning, mind-reeling masterpiece by Ruff. Imagine a world where the United Arab States is threatened by Christian fundamentalist terrorists, a world where a few good Homeland Security Agents have to fight corruption and conspiracies to protect all they believe in. I predict this is the novel that everyone will be talking about in 2012. And it's not just provocative, it's a darn good read!"

—Tegan Tigani, Queen Anne Avenue Books, Seattle, WA



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A Grown-Up Kind of Pretty

A Novel, by Joshilyn Jackson

"The Slocumb women have the curse of having to deal with bad men and early motherhood. Mother Liza and grandmother Jenny are doing everything in their power to make sure that 15-year-old Mosey doesn't find herself in the same predicament. Jenny unearths human bones while digging in the backyard, and with Liza too ill to explain them, Mosey decides to take it upon herself to find the answers to her family's secrets and end the curse once and for all. This is a fast-paced and enthralling read that pulls you in and won't let you go until the very end."

—Morgan Kiedrowski, Next Chapter Bookshop, Mequon, WI



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The Flight of Gemma Hardy

A Novel, by Margot Livesey

"There is nothing like a good visit with old friends, and that is what it's like to savor this novel. Even better, really, since in this retelling of *Jane Eyre* the characters are imbued with a more modern sensibility—and this time around Mr. Rochester is not a reprehensible misogynist! Livesey's Gemma remains true to the spirit of Jane, and the dark settings of Scotland and the Orkney Islands are as atmospheric as they come. This is the perfect book to curl up with for a weekend with a pot o' tea—or perhaps a wee dram of something stronger."

—Emily Crowe, The Odyssey Bookshop, South Hadley, MA



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FEBRUARY '12

The Art of Hearing Heartbeats

by Jan-Philipp Sendker

"This is one of the most beautiful love stories I've ever read. Two people, doomed to a life of misery, find pure happiness in sharing their love even when time, distance, and family keep them apart. While you are reading this wonderful novel, your life might actually change; you will notice things you never did before, and your senses will be heightened and sharpened whether hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, or even seeing. Read this book—you will neither regret nor forget it."

—Jean-Paul Adriaansen, Water Street Books, Exeter, NH



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FEBRUARY '12

History of a Pleasure Seeker

A Novel, by Richard Mason

"Set in Amsterdam during the Belle Epoque, *History of a Pleasure Seeker* follows Piet Barol, the poor but cultured young tutor to a wealthy Dutch family. Piet is determined to drink life to the fullest, and this ambition alters not only his own life, but also the lives of those around him. Skillfully and evocatively rendered, this novel feels like its own guilty pleasure, redolent of lazy afternoons and late night liaisons."

—Stesha Brandon, University Book Store, Seattle, WA



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FEBRUARY '12



The Chalk Girl

A Mallory Novel, by Carol O'Connell

"Mallory has been one of my favorite series characters since I first encountered her in *Mallory's Oracle* many years ago. It is hard to feel sympathy for her because she doesn't need any, but this story of a damaged woman trying to help a damaged child is very moving. The crimes are solved in Mallory's unique outside-the-box method, and, as always, justice is all that matters to her. I look forward to handselling this book and introducing more readers to Mallory."

—Ann Carlson, Harborwalk Books, Georgetown, SC



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The Odds

A Love Story, by Stewart O'Nan

"This is a small novel that packs an emotional wallop. Art and Marion Fowler are at the end of their rope, with their marriage, careers, and finances unraveling at an alarming rate. A last hurrah, a Valentine's Day weekend at a posh gambling resort on the Canadian side of Niagara Falls—which they can ill afford—will determine their future. Anyone in a long relationship will both nod and cringe as O'Nan subtly and brilliantly lays out Art and Marion's frailties, strengths, foibles, and deep affection. Both suspenseful and sweet, I loved this gem of a novel."

—Cathy Langer, Tattered Cover Book Store, Denver, CO



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Contents May Have Shifted

A Novel, by Pam Houston

"Houston's *Cowboys Are My Weakness* was the book that sent all of us gals out West, and kept us here. In her new novel—a thinly disguised narrative featuring a central character named Pam—Houston showcases her wiser, more mature voice as she drops the reader into locales as far-flung as Alaska, Bhutan, Northern California, and Durango, Colorado. The prose is read-aloud gorgeous. Each mini-chapter reads almost like a Zen koan, inviting us to ponder its significance in this beautiful testament to the way good friends and the incomparable perspective of travel can help us find home and family."

—Libby Cowles, Maria's Bookshop, Durango, CO



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Immortal Bird

A Family Memoir, by Doron Weber

"To open the cover of *Immortal Bird* is to enter the intimate, admirable, mournfully beautiful life of the Weber family. Damon is the center of the family, a larger-than-life teenager who was born with a potentially fatal heart defect. Damon was also born with an unstoppable personality and the emotional heart of a lion. His father, Doron, tells the family story in an open manner that makes you feel that you are sitting around the family dinner table, laughing at their jokes and rooting when Damon yet again rallies. This is a story that makes your own heart stronger for reading it."

—Janis Segress, Eagle Harbor Book Company, Bainbridge Island, WA



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FEBRUARY '12



All That I Am

A Novel, by Anna Funder

"Set in Germany and London before and after Hitler's rise to power, this book is written from the perspective of one the members of an underground resistance group in Germany fighting against the regime. A powerful look at the social life of pre-Hitler Germany, when 'speakeasy' bars, free love, and feminism were a part of the culture, is intertwined with the story of an intense attempt to inform the world of the coming horrors of Nazism. The cruelty and far-reaching arm of Hitler's supporters and the courage of the resisters stayed with me long after I finished this book."

—Patricia Lyon-Surrey, Bear Pond Books of Montpelier, Montpelier, VT



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The Lost Saints of Tennessee

A Novel, by Amy Franklin-Willis

"Ezekiel Cooper, a 42-year-old divorcee living in Tennessee and still grieving the death of his twin brother 10 years earlier, has decided to end his life and the life of Tucker, his brother's dog. Luckily for the reader he is unsuccessful, and we share his voyage from the 1940s to the 1980s as a son, brother, husband, and father. Ezekiel and his mother relate their tales of mistakes made, the need for forgiveness, and the real meaning of family in a story full of love and grace. You will not want to put this book down."

—Karen Briggs, Great Northern Books & Hobbies, Oscoda, MI



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What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank

Stories, by Nathan Englander

"Ranging from historical and autobiographical fiction to modern tall tales, Englander's stories are written with a ferocious, startling energy. They also pose difficult questions—dilemmas requiring Solomonian wisdom to resolve—and they don't let anyone off the hook. Above all, Englander is after the truth, and he takes notions of transparency to ends both logical and absurd to make his characters—and his readers—bare their souls and see what's there. This is powerful fiction that will haunt you after you close the book."

—Laurie Greer, Politics & Prose Bookstore, Washington, DC



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Three Weeks in December

by Audrey Schulman

"Two stories set in Africa a century apart create a beautiful depiction of the fragility and delicacy of life. Jeremy, a railroad engineer at the turn of the 20th century, and Max, a botanist entering the 21st, contend not only with their personal demons but also with the environment and wildlife that threaten to overwhelm their world. This is compelling writing that shows the constant tension between humans and nature and how the balance is swayed by the slightest of factors."

—Bill Cusumano, Nicola's Books, Ann Arbor, MI



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FEBRUARY '12



Quiet

The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking, by Susan Cain

"This is a wonderfully important book which just may help the human race survive and thrive. In a clear and readable style, combining emerging science and sociological perspective as well as deep empathy and intelligence, Cain does a superb job of making us think. Readers will recognize behaviors at both ends of the introvert/extrovert personality spectrum as well as everything in between and will feel empowered to find their own comfort level for living."

—Karen Frank, Northshire Bookstore, Manchester Center, VT



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FEBRUARY '12



No One Is Here Except All of Us

A Novel, by Ramona Ausubel

"An isolated hamlet in south central Europe, 1939. The Jewish residents decide the only way to survive is cut all ties with the rest of the world and act as if the world is only what and who they see within their own village. A young girl shares the story of her community and how it changes. Imaginative, complex, and gently rewriting relationships, *No One Is Here Except All of Us* is hypnotic. I've never read anything like it."

—Becky Milner, Vintage Books, Vancouver, WA



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Heft

A Novel, by Liz Moore

"*Heft* is a novel both heartbreaking and hopeful, with characters who navigate the waters of love and family as if afraid of drowning. Arthur Opp, initially larger-than-life only in the physical sense, emerges as an intelligent and caring man, who the reader eagerly cheers on in his attempts to trust himself and others. Moore's writing hums as she gives voice to those we've chosen not to hear and illuminates those we've chosen not to see."

—Dawn Rennert, The Concord Bookshop, Concord, MA



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The Face Thief

A Novel, by Eli Gottlieb

"*The Face Thief* pushes you down the stairs on the first page and never lets you get your feet back under you. Extraordinary characters are at the heart of a very believable series of events. The story shifts back and forth between the three main characters' points of view. Gottlieb expertly guides you through the minds and emotions of the people who drive this crafty psychological thriller. Love, parenting, relationships, temptation, money, and green living are explored in an honest voice that doesn't take sides. This is a must-read."

—Shawn Bridges, Literary Lion, Stephenville, TX



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