

JANUARY '19



Watching You: A Novel

By Lisa Jewell

"The picturesque painted houses at the top the of the street hide a delicate web of past and present intrigue. Complicated relationships abound: sisters and brothers, teacher and student, innocent love and the timeless theme of marital infidelity, and, of course, a murder. Jewell's understanding of the human psyche and its idiosyncrasies makes for a deliciously hard-to-put-down whodunit that hits all too close to home. She is a story weaver like no other and she had me guessing the whole way through."

—Laura Taylor, The Oxford Exchange, Tampa, FL



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The Dreamers: A Novel

By Karen Thompson Walker

"A strange virus invades a small university community, sending its victims into deep, seemingly endless sleep and infecting them with extremely powerful dreams. This backdrop provides a perfect scenario for examining the delicate, often unrecognized line between reality and perception. As the crisis deepens, the characters are caught up in a phantasmagorical world that challenges normal conceptions of existence. A thoughtful, provocative novel of strength and beauty."

—Bill Cusumano, Square Books, Oxford, MS



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The Water Cure: A Novel

By Sophie Mackintosh

"Here's what they know: men hurt women, even if they don't mean to. And the island is the only safe place in a world that has been completely corrupted by pollution—at least that's what they've been told. So sisters Grace, Lia, and Sky occupy themselves with the painful rituals their parents have devised, exercises that will make them stronger and immune to love's sickness. Every day is the same until their father disappears and three strange men appear in his place. Violence is inevitable, but who will be the perpetrator? Gorgeously, perfectly written, *The Water Cure* luxuriates in an atmosphere of haunting, Atwoodian strangeness."

—Lauren Peugh, Powell's Books, Portland, OR



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Ghost Wall: A Novel

By Sarah Moss

"Sarah Moss writes with a lyricism and an intelligence unlike any other author, and in *Ghost Wall* she deftly weaves threads of history, power, gender, and obsession into a stunning story that envelops you from the very first page. Lovely and haunting, *Ghost Wall* is both a powerful glimpse at how humanity interprets its history and a chilling reminder that the lines between past, present, and future are not always as clear as they seem."

—Rebecca Speas, One More Page Books, Arlington, VA



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Freefall: A Novel

By Jessica Barry

"There used to be a carnival ride where you would stand against a wall and as the ride spun faster and faster, the floor would drop out but the force of the spin would keep you pinned to the wall. I got the same feeling when reading Jessica Barry's *Freefall*. The plot moved faster and faster until I felt myself holding my breath, right up until the final page. Clear your schedule and order takeout before you start this thriller!"

—Mary O'Malley, Anderson's Bookshop, La Grange, IL



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Inheritance: A Memoir of Genealogy, Paternity, and Love

By Dani Shapiro

"Who are we? Does who we think we are change when we learn a family secret that alters the source of our identity? Shapiro has explored issues of identity in her previous memoirs, but in her latest she applies her signature candor and heart to a riveting, provocative, and inspiring genealogical mystery and journey of discovery."

—Roxanne Coady, R.J. Julia Booksellers, Madison, CT



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An Anonymous Girl: A Novel

By Greer Hendricks, Sarah Pekkanen

"Fascinating turns abound in this story, which swirls around characters whose livelihoods are meant to hold them to the very highest of moral standards, including a psychologist conducting a study on morality who finds the perfect subject while she arranges for a duplicitous test of her husband's fidelity. This book is unrelenting in its tension, but in the best way. I stayed up well past 3:00 a.m. sorting out the very last pages, with no regrets the next day. I highly recommend you keep your eye on Hendricks and Pekkanen, for any project these ladies engage upon will surely delight!"

—Melissa Middleton, Joseph-Beth Booksellers, Cincinnati, OH



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The Far Field: A Novel

By Madhuri Vijay

"Few seasoned novelists—let alone a first-time novelist like Madhuri Vijay—are able to construct scene after scene with compelling interior drama, tension, and forward momentum, but you'll never want to stop reading as Vijay skillfully combines a personal journey and family mystery with a political examination of the Kashmiri-Indian troubles. Shalini, the narrator of this extraordinary work, has a mother who immediately belongs on any shortlist of literature's great characters. If I read a better novel in 2019, then 2019 will become my favorite year of the 21st century."

—Brian Lampkin, Scuppernon Books, Greensboro, NC



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Looker: A Novel

By Laura Sims

"Wow, wow, wow! Anyone who has ever appreciated an unreliable narrator will be transfixed by this story of obsession and creeping madness. In the wake of infertility and a looming divorce, our unnamed protagonist becomes more and more preoccupied by the seemingly perfect actress who lives down the block. You'll read *Looker* in one sitting and want to pass it on to everyone you know—this is a stunner and a fantastic debut."

—Emilie Sommer, East City Bookshop, Washington, DC



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The Winter of the Witch: A Novel (Winternight Trilogy #3)

By Katherine Arden

"*The Winter of the Witch* takes place immediately after the events in *The Girl in the Tower*. The world of the old gods is fading, and a new religion is claiming the hearts of Vasya's people. Rus is on the brink of war, and Vasya, it seems, is up against the whole world. With the help of new allies, Vasya is determined to save all that she holds dear even if it means sacrificing everything. Vasya is the kind of character you cheer for, cry with, and roar alongside. 'Petrichor,' the word used to describe that sweet, earthy smell after it rains, is how I would describe the Winternight Trilogy. Arden's storytelling encompasses all your senses, so grab a hot mug of your favorite drink and settle in for Vasya's adventures in *The Winter of the Witch*."

—Jen Steele, Boswell Book Company, Milwaukee, WI



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Sugar Run: A Novel

By Mesha Maren

"This is the gritty Southern novel I've always wanted. Maren deftly navigates between two periods in time, telling interconnected, muddled love stories and mixing in stunning images of the West Virginia landscape her characters inhabit. She uses the presence of fracking on the family farm as a multifaceted metaphor, demonstrating how easily we fall prey to the type of immediate relief that will eventually destroy and poison us from within. Dark, yes, but so well-developed, timely, and shocking in its delivery that I absolutely could not put this book down."

—Maggie Fixler, Carmichael's Bookstore, Louisville, KY



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Golden State: A Novel

By Ben Winters

"*Golden State* is a gripping and brainy page-turner. Winters asks his readers to imagine California as a sovereign (and surveillance) state in which intentionally lying is the greatest federal offense. The 'Byzantine business of reality maintenance' is carried out by a team of federal agents, including our hero, Laszlo Ratesic. *Golden State* is a mystery in both form and content. In addition to the seemingly simple incident Laszlo investigates at the start of the novel, there's the bigger question of what a novel really is, or means, or can do in the 'good, golden, safe' world its readers are transported to. Winters is especially good at keeping his readers off-balance. Not even his biggest fans will see some of the twists and turns he's built into this, his best book yet."

—John Francisconi, Bank Square Books, Mystic, CT



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The Paragon Hotel: A Novel

By Lyndsay Faye

"Good gracious. I just adore all things written by Lyndsay Faye. Like her glorious Gods of Gotham series, *The Paragon Hotel* is a clever, fast-paced read with a unique ensemble of characters. Set during the Prohibition era, the novel bounces between the mafia-ridden streets of Harlem and the racially tense community of Portland, Oregon. Steeped in historical detail, *The Paragon Hotel* is wickedly smart and wholly entertaining. Faye has given readers another deviously delicious story."

—Anderson McKean, Page and Palette, Fairhope, AL



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Mouthful of Birds: Stories

By Samanta Schweblin

"Samanta Schweblin set a high standard with her translated debut novel *Fever Dream*, a standard she has now miraculously surpassed with this unnerving new collection of short stories, a must-read for anyone who doubts the written word's ability to touch reality. *Mouthful of Birds* will rattle your bones, infiltrate your mind, and engulf you in a surreal dream-state of bewilderment and ferocity that will leave you fearing to turn the page, even as you beg for more."

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



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The Orphan of Salt Winds: A Novel

By Elizabeth Brooks

"As 2015 winds down, so does the life of Virginia, who at the age of 86 has decided to let a sign from her mysterious past give her reason to walk out into the treacherous marsh of the Salt Winds that claimed her foster father when she was a child. As Virginia ponders her fate, a young woman appears on her doorstep and complicates her plan, bringing a tidal wave of memories that cause her to see her last day in an altogether darker light. Told in alternating timelines that follow Virginia as a child in the early stages of WWII and as she plots out her last day alive in 2015, Elizabeth Brooks' novel of memories past and present plays out as a locked-room mystery Agatha Christie would be envious of."

—Javier Ramirez, The Book Table, Oak Park, IL



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The Last Whalers: Three Years in the Far Pacific With a Courageous Tribe and a Vanishing Way of Life

By Doug Bock Clark

"A good book can open your eyes to a world you never knew existed; a great book will make you care about those who inhabit that world. *The Last Whalers* is just such a book, inviting us into the lives of one of the last whaling tribes in existence as they struggle to hold onto the values of their past while the present beckons to the younger generations. With gripping hunting scenes, tender family moments, and conflicts as family members choose between tradition and hope, Doug Bock Clark's clean prose brings each of these moments to life and gives voice to this singular community."

—Luisa Smith, Book Passage, Corte Madera, CA



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The Gown: A Novel of the Royal Wedding

By Jennifer Robson

"Ann and Miriam are working for Norman Hartwell as embroiderers in 1947 when his firm receives a commission to create the wedding gown for Princess Elizabeth. As the two become best friends, we learn about their lives before the war and follow them as the gown is created. A fascinating look at life in post-WWII England, a time of both deprivation and joy as the country celebrates the wedding of their princess."

—Beth Carpenter, The Country Bookshop, Southern Pines, NC



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The Au Pair: A Novel

By Emma Rous

"If you love beautiful English country houses full of secrets, you'll devour *The Au Pair*. Rumors have always surrounded the family that lives at Summerbourne. As Seraphine sorts through her recently deceased father's possessions, she finds a photo from the day she and her brother were born but doesn't know why only one twin is in the photo. The answers to that question might lie with the au pair who took care of her older brother, Edwin. When Seraphine starts looking into the past, she doesn't realize the danger it will pose to her and her family. Rous immediately throws you into the fray with Seraphine's family, and it won't take long before you're furiously flipping the pages to find out what happens."

—John Kwiatkowski, Murder by the Book, Houston, TX



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To Keep the Sun Alive: A Novel

By Rabeah Ghaffari

"Set during the Iranian Revolution, *To Keep the Sun Alive* is a beautifully written family epic that will completely wrap you up. It's a sweeping novel about identity and tradition, and it's full of characters you won't soon forget. Ghaffari masterfully blends the historical with the imagined, and her writing is wise and precise. An excellent novel!"

—Sarah Cassavant, SubText Books, St. Paul, MN



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In an Absent Dream (Wayward Children)

By Seanan McGuire

"Seanan McGuire's fourth installment in the lovely, spare Wayward Children series might be my favorite yet. Lundy is a returning character from the first book, and knowing how her story ends makes the journey to the end that much more poignant. This book, as well as the entire series, illustrates just how much we are defined both by the choices we make and the choices we refuse to make. Beautifully written, atmospheric, and just long enough to leave you longing for more, *In an Absent Dream* is perfect winter reading."

—Chelsea Bauer, Union Avenue Books, Knoxville, TN



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