



JULY '13

The Ocean at the End of the Lane

A Novel, by Neil Gaiman

"Gaiman is a magnificent storyteller, creating scenes so complete that you aren't just reading, but rather inhabiting a universe that's thoroughly believable yet truly otherworldly. The story's terror—the claustrophobia and vulnerability of childhood, the way a child's wants, needs, and fears go unnoticed by adults, and the horrors that can result—is perfectly balanced against the consolation of books, the magic of the natural world, and the power of those who do listen, understand, and take action to set the universe to rights at whatever cost to themselves. Painful and wonderful, gorgeous and horrifying, truly fantastic, essential and classic, this is a book to return to again and again."

—Carol Schneck Varner, Schuler Books & Music, Okemos, MI

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JULY '13

The Illusion of Separateness

A Novel, by Simon Van Booy

"Van Booy's newest novel simply reminded me about what it means to take joy in reading. The story, spanning a number of decades, delicately intertwines the lives of several characters who, at a glance, seem like strangers but are, in fact, making an unforgettable impact on each other's lives. This book sinks its teeth into the hell of war, the pain and unspeakable joy of loving another human being, and what it means to grow up and grow older. With the introduction of each new character, pieces of the story begin to fall into place, building on a truth that Van Booy clings to—that there are no coincidences and the experiences we share with others are vital in shaping who we are as individuals. I could not put this book down!"

—Hannah Hester, Lemuria Bookstore, Jackson, MS

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JULY '13

Letters From Skye

A Novel, by Jessica Brockmole

"'A letter isn't always just a letter. Words on the page can drench the soul. If only you knew.' Through letters, Brockmole shares an exquisitely crafted story of love and loss, sacrifice and perseverance. The novel actually tells two stories: one, the relationship between Scottish writer Elspeth and Davey, an American college student who writes her after being enthralled by her poetry; the second the search that Elspeth's daughter, Margaret, undertakes nearly 30 years later, to decipher the mystery of her mother's past. The beautiful language and haunting account of two strangers who form an unbreakable bond despite the uncertainties of war and the impossibilities of life is a story that will be read and read again."

—Katie Bedard-Oytowski, The Cottage Book Shop, Glen Arbor, MI

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JULY '13

Lexicon

A Novel, by Max Barry

"Barry's newest novel manages to be a gripping, page-turning thriller as well as a phenomenally intelligent dissertation on language's raw, neurological power. Barry manages to maintain a blistering pace in an ingenious, complex plot structure with seeming ease, while at the same time exploring conspiracy theories, intense paranoia, privacy concerns in internet era, and countless other frightening ideas for the reader to ponder long after the book is finished. Lexicon is simultaneously brainy and muscular, like a Heisman Trophy winner who just happens to work as a semiotics professor on the side."

—Hank Stephenson, Flyleaf Books, Chapel Hill, NC

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The Impossible Lives of Greta Wells

A Novel, by Andrew Sean Greer

"This exquisitely rendered novel captures one character in three distinct and historically significant periods: during the flu epidemic of 1918, the wartime world of 1945, and the full-blown AIDS terror of 1985. Greer manages to achieve the near impossible in making Greta believable in all three eras. Greta suffers and learns in each circumstance, though her hard-won, accumulated knowledge is of little help in solving the essential riddle that is life. Still, hers is a grand and brave journey that will not soon be forgotten."

—Marion Abbott, Mrs. Dalloway's Literary and Garden Arts, Berkeley, CA



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JULY '13

Whistling Past the Graveyard

A Novel, by Susan Crandall

"Fall in love with spunky Starla Claudelle, who runs away from a strict grandmother in 1963 Mississippi to find the mother she hasn't seen since she was three. As she journeys with a black woman named Eula, Starla has her eyes opened to larger issues of race and segregation. This wonderful novel will be devoured by book clubs and will cause every parent who finishes it to immediately want to find and hug their children."

—Jill Hendrix, Fiction Addiction, Greenville, SC



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Amy Falls Down

A Novel, by Jincy Willett

"A once-famed writer considered the voice of her generation 30 years ago, Amy now teaches creative writing online and lives a hermit's life. One day, she falls down in her yard and receives a concussion, and afterward gives a most peculiar and stirring interview, none of which she remembers. While seemingly inconsequential, the interview restarts her career, and within a year Amy is once again the voice of writers everywhere. *Amy Falls Down* is a wonderful exploration of the business of writing in our modern era."

—Meaghan Beasley, Island Bookstore, Duck, NC



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JULY '13

Crime of Privilege

A Novel, by Walter Walker

"This terrific thriller about a young Cape Cod lawyer ensnared in the political machinations of those in power will bring to mind the best of Scott Turow and John Grisham. Nuanced and subtle, this engrossing page-turner takes on themes of guilt, social class, and responsibility. The story is action-packed and exciting, as well as an intimate reflection on the sin of omission and the ways that our inaction can haunt us and color our lives. Thought-provoking and a great read. Highly recommended!"

—Tova Beiser, Brown University Bookstore, Providence, RI



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The Curiosity

A Novel, by Stephen Kiernan

"In this novel, a group of scientists have been reanimating small creatures frozen deep in Arctic ice. Upon discovering a man in the ice, dubbed Jeremiah, they bring him back to their lab and try to reanimate him. Imagine a man from 1906 waking up in the world today. Imagine the scientists who stand to make a lot of money and fame for themselves from such an accomplishment. Imagine also other scientists with a moral compass who try to figure out what is best and right in such a situation. I didn't want to put this book down!"

—Diane Grenkow, The Galaxy Bookshop, Hardwick, VT



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JULY '13



The Boys in the Boat

Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, by Daniel James Brown

"In the early 1930s, nine young University of Washington students were part of the rowing crew striving to become the final team picked to represent the USA at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, even as Hitler was brazenly building his Third Reich. This is the emotional story of the crew and those who put their trust in them. Fiercely determined by the hard times of the Great Depression, they poured their hearts into sculpting a victorious team. A most impressive story, expertly told!"

—Carol Hicks, Bookshelf at Hooligan Rocks, Truckee, CA



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In the House Upon the Dirt Between the Lake and the Woods

A Novel, by Matt Bell

"In a narrative voice like smooth bourbon, Bell's excellent debut novel is a modern folktale of opposing elements: lake and dirt, bear and squid, song and ghost. Telling the tale with a quiet brutality, Bell finds heart and perseverance in nature that is red in tooth and claw, as the unnamed narrator inexorably strives against forces vastly more powerful than he could ever hope to be, for the woman he loves and the family life he wants."

—Josh Cook, Porter Square Books, Cambridge, MA



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Sweet Salt Air

A Novel, by Barbara Delinsky

"Sweet Salt Air transported me to the coast of Maine and had me savoring the local cooking, smelling the ocean breezes, and falling in love. This is the story of two friends who are trying to rekindle their relationship. Each has had her own reason for the space that has grown between them, but both now hope that writing a cookbook together over the span of the summer can help them move forward. A wonderful summer read!"

—Sarah Galvin, The Bookstore Plus, Lake Placid, NY



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Children of the Jacaranda Tree

A Novel, by Sahar Delijani

"Reading Delijani's novel is like peering into the living rooms of families torn apart by counter-revolution measures in Iran. The intensely intimate moments she depicts and the highly personal struggles she focuses on show life under the regime through the eyes of those most devastated by its vicious tyranny. The struggles of three generations fill the pages, as they try to hold their lives together, to find and sustain love, to support their families, to heal from unspeakable wounds, and to live with unthinkable absences. A deeply moving story of life, death, persecution, and survival."

—Nichole McCown, Bookshop Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, CA



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JULY '13

Sisterland

A Novel, by Curtis Sittenfeld

"Sisters always have special relationships, but identical twin sisters are a world unto themselves, especially if they have ESP. The lives of Violet and Kate go from mad closeness to fragile separation as they attend different colleges and then return to their native St. Louis. Clairvoyance has colored their lives, and suddenly Vi is the one on national news to warn of an earthquake that will strike within a week and wreck havoc in everyone's life. Kate, meanwhile, has tried to ignore her visions and is married and raising two children. Sittenfeld is a funny and sagacious chronicler of the world we live in and the ways — sometimes quirky, sometimes conventional — in which we seek security, loyalty, and love."

—Sarah Bagby, Watermark Books and Café, Wichita, KS



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JULY '13

Cinnamon and Gunpowder

A Novel, by Eli Brown

"A swashbuckling story is always fun, especially when it includes a gourmet chef on board. Mad Hannah Mabbot, a tall, redheaded pirate, kidnaps Owen Wedgewood, a lord's chef, and tells him he must cook for her once a week. A supporting cast of characters that will 'shiver your timbers' and depictions of Owen's weekly meals for Hannah are an absolute riot, especially as he has little in the way of ingredients and his galley is miniscule. An exciting and delightful story of pirates both on the high seas and in the kitchen!"

—Susan Wasson, Bookworks, Albuquerque, NM



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JULY '13

Loyalty

A Novel, by Ingrid Thoft

"Flunking out of law school was probably the best thing to happen to Fina Ludlow. The most interesting work at her family's law firm was not done by their lawyers, but by their lead investigator, Frank Gillis. Fina learns her trade from Frank and takes over when he leaves the firm. Private investigation is an ideal fit for Fina, and her talents at both discretion and deception as well as her skill with a lock pick, get her through a lot of doors. Fina's family loyalty is strong, but when her sister-in-law goes missing and her niece locks her bedroom door at night, Fina has to decide between loyalty to family and the truth. A brilliant start to a gripping new series."

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



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JULY '13

The Resurrectionist

A Novel, by Matthew Guinn

"In the mid 19th century, Nemo Johnston is sold to the fledging South Carolina Medical College, where he will act as janitor, butler, and grave-robber. After all, medical students do need to work on human cadavers. A century and a half later, when construction workers unearth hundreds of bones of African-American slaves in the cellar of one of the school's original buildings, the administration wants to avoid media coverage at all costs. As he investigates the college's past and his own family history, Dr. Jacob Thacker is forced to decide between his own future and the future of the school. This is a suspenseful medical history lesson wrapped up in a story of power, politics, secrecy, and revenge."

—Jennifer Gwydir, Blue Willow Bookshop, Houston, TX



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Fin & Lady

A Novel, by Cathleen Schine

"Fin is a charmer. The bright, 11-year-old boy's life changes when his mother dies and he is consigned to the care of his older half-sister, Lady. Fin leaves behind the bucolic Connecticut countryside of his mother's dairy farm and heads to Greenwich Village. Lady might be older, but it soon becomes clear that Fin is the protector of his spirited sister, a woman beset by unsuitable suitors and prone to impetuous actions. Set in the 1960s, the era of the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War, this delightful story is a comic romp about the bonds between a brother and a sister."

—Deon Stonehouse, Sunriver Books & Music, Sunriver, OR



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JULY '13

Imperfect Harmony

Finding Happiness Singing With Others, by Stacy Horn

"Listening to choral music has always been moving for me, but I never realized the profound emotions felt by the chorus members. In this delightful, charmingly self-effacing memoir, Horn explains how singing with the Choral Society of New York's Grace Church has been life-affirming, and even life-saving. Drawing on the reflections of other singers, composers of choral music, and scientific evidence, as well as her own experience, Horn beautifully puts into words the joy of singing in harmony with others. Any lover of choral music will love this book!"

—Samantha Flynn, Quail Ridge Books & Music, Raleigh, NC



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JULY '13

Instructions for a Heat Wave

A Novel, by Maggie O'Farrell

"What happens to one Irish family living in London during the oppressive 1976 summer heatwave when patriarch Richard Riordan mysteriously disappears on a seemingly simple walk to buy the morning newspaper? As his three adult children return home to support their mother, Gretta, past resentments and longstanding secrets emerge in this insightful portrait of a family in crisis. I was immediately engaged by all of the characters, who are not only vulnerable, but also endearing. Subtle, graceful writing at its best!"

—Jane Glaser, Boswell Book Company, Milwaukee, WI



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