In 1930, at the height of the Great Depression, Theadora Atwell is forced to leave the only home she has ever known and the family she cherishes for Girls. In 1936, the Sri Lankan tensions between the Tamil and the Singhalese broke into civil war. On quiet, solitary Sal Mal Lane, the Horvaths and their neighbors are not sheltered from the turmoil, and the prejudices of the greater world find their way onto their secluded street. The coming of age of the children on Sal Mal Lane and the loss of one innocent in particular shatters their world. On Sal Mal Lane is a beautifully written, heartbreaking story of a foreign yet somehow familiar time and place. —Ellen Richmond, Children’s Book Cellar, Waterville, ME

The Rosie Project
A Novel by Graeme Simsion
(Simon & Schuster, 9781476729091, $15.99)
“Don Tillman is a brilliant geneticist, but he has always been rather socially maladroit. Imagine his surprise when a friend tells him that he would make a wonderful husband. Intrigued, he starts The Wife Project and commences the search for the perfect spouse. While in the midst of his extremely precise hunt for a wife, Rosie Jarman blows into Don’s life like a wild wind. Rosie is on a quest of her own—The Father Project—the search for her biological father. Much ado about a comedy of errors ensues in this hilarious, quirky romance!” —Rachel King, Bookhouse of Stuyvesant Plaza, Albany, NY

On Sal Mal Lane
A Novel by Ru Freeman
(Graywolf Press, 9781555976767, $16)
“In 1983, the Sri Lankan tensions between the Tamils and the Singhalese broke into civil war. On quiet, solitary Sal Mal Lane, the Horvaths and their neighbors are not sheltered from the turmoil, and the prejudices of the greater world find their way onto their secluded street. The coming of age of the children on Sal Mal Lane and the loss of one innocent in particular shatters their world. On Sal Mal Lane is a beautifully written, heartbreaking story of a foreign yet somehow familiar time and place. —Ellen Richmond, Children’s Book Cellar, Waterville, ME

In the House Upon the Dirt Between the Lake and the Woods
A Novel by Matt Bell
(Soho Press, 9781616953720, $15)
“In a narrative voice like smooth bourbon, Bell’s excellent debut novel is a modern tale of opposing elements: lake and dirt, bear and squid, lake and lake, dirt and dirt. 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 pour their hearts into sculpting a victorious team. A most impressive story, expertly told!” —Carol Hicks, The Bookshelf, Truckee, CA

The Cartographer of No Man’s Land
A Novel by P.S. Duffy
(Liveright, 9780062255662, $14.99)
“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 way a child’s wants, needs, and fears go unnoticed by adults, and the horrors that can result—is perfectly balanced with the conflation 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. This is a book to return to again and again.” —Carol Schneck Varner, Schuler Books & Music, Okemos, MI

On Sal Mal Lane
(Algonquin, 978162038081, $14.95)
“Focusing on Highland Hospital in Asheville, North Carolina, where Zelda Fitzgerald died in the hospital as a young child, Evalina Toussaint who was sent to the hospital as a patient. Evalina’s narrative is an example of the brutal early treatment of mental illness, when some patients became subjects for medical experiments. Any fan of the Fitzgerallds, the medical profession, or the history of medicine in the early 1900s will enjoy this book.” —Jackie Willey, Fiction Addiction, Greenville, SC

The Rosie Project
(Back Bay Books, 9780316230841, $15)
“Bulawayo gives her character Darling an emotionally powerful voice while telling her story in such sparse and brilliantly crafted sentences, I had to put the book down just to savor the writing and take a break from the heartbreaking scenes of the strife in Zimbabwe. Bulawayo takes us on one young immigrant’s journey from a country being destroyed by violence to one where the grandness and wealth are overwhelming and the black Micah cold piercing. Not to be missed!” —Sara Peyton, CoffeeTree Books, Morehead, KY