Hiddensee: A Tale of the Once and Future Nutcracker
By Gregory Maguire
(William Morrow Paperback, 9780062884370, $16.99)
“This origin story of the Nutcracker’s creator blurs the lines of fantasy. In it, we are treated to the best commentary on mythology, whether Greek or Germanic. Resurrected from death at a young age, Dirk Drosselmeyer returns to the living with a gift from the great god Pan. As he grows older, Dirk remains young at heart and becomes a master figure and toy maker. Maguire’s gift at fleshing out characters of beloved and classic tales is so evident in Hiddensee that it will keep you reading at all costs.”
—TJ Byrnes, Oblong Books and Music, Millerton, NY

Signal Loss
By Garry Disher
(Soho Crime, 9781616959753, 15.95)
“Set in Australia, the seventh in Disher’s Challis and Detry series is just as action-packed and exciting as the previous books. Meth kingpins, hit men, and a serial rapist are the villains of this instalment, and the Australian location adds interest and flavor.”
—Susan Taylor, The Book House of Stuyvesant Plaza, Albany, NY

Sometimes I Lie: A Novel
By Alice Feeney
(Fiatron Books, 9781250144850, $16.99)
“I feel messed up after finishing this, which is what I look for in a thriller. The twists and turns are dizzying, leading to an ending you won’t see coming. Amber is recovering from a car crash, and since she’s not quite out of her coma, we get to see flashbacks of her life and the events that brought her to where she is today. Everything—her radio job, her writer husband, and her perfect sister, Claire—is not what it seems. But then, neither is Amber. A perfect thriller to discuss and deconstruct with your book club!”
—Kate Towery, The Fountain Bookstore, Richmond, VA

Spineless: The Science of Jellyfish and the Art of Growing a Backbone
By Juli Berwald
(Riverhead Books, 9780735212858, $16)
“Reading Spineless made me think of Nabokov’s butterflies: The subject is distant to the extent that it feels almost extraterrestrial, but the author’s passion is contagious. The complexity, the evolution, and the mystery of the organism grows on you, and, suddenly, you’re excited about…well, jellyfish! Spineless gives climate change a story, and with it some much needed empathy.”
—Sarah Reif, Kramerbooks, Washington, DC

White Houses: A Novel
By Amy Bloom
(Random House Trade Paperbacks, 9780812985696, $17)
“Lorena Hickok, the most prominent female reporter in America, meets Eleanor Roosevelt in 1932 while reporting on Franklin Roosevelt’s first presidential campaign. Almost immediately, Hick and Eleanor connect passionately and deeply, and Hick moves into the White House as ‘First Friend.’ The story of their bond is told with art and grace and a bit of intrigue by the wise and gifted Amy Bloom. A love story and historical novel, based on a true romance and unabashedly sensual, White Houses is extraordinary.”
—Cathy Langer, Tattered Cover Book Store, Denver, CO

The Wine Lover’s Daughter: A Memoir
By Anne Fadiman
(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 9780374537944, $16)
“I loved this memoir! The reader does not need to care about wine or know who Anne Fadiman is or Clifton Fadiman was. This is a book about family and how the differences between us can be one of the many things that actually draw us together. It is also about the life of a man who became a literary critic, editor, and radio host and was also the author’s beloved father. Anne Fadiman is a fine writer with an ability to bring life to a variety of subjects, as has been shown in her previous essays and memoirs. One of the best memoirs to arrive on our scene in quite a while.”
—Penny McConnell, Norwich Bookstore, Norwich, VT