



MAY '19

The Guest Book: A Novel

By Sarah Blake

"I began *The Guest Book* expecting an excellent family saga set, in part, on an island in Maine. The magic of the family home is palpable as three generations build loyalty, identity, and memories there. But what I read was far, far more. This is a history of our country's evolution through matters of race, class, and politics, and it relates compellingly to our current struggles with those topics as the characters grapple with the underpinnings of privilege, familial love, and morality. Sarah Blake has written a stunning and complex novel that lingers in your mind long after the last page."

—Dana Brigham, Brookline Booksmith, Brookline, MA



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MAY '19

Normal People: A Novel

By Sally Rooney

"What a treat to discover Sally Rooney! This novel stands out shining from the current onslaught of mediocre prose and less-than-suspenseful thriller plots. *Normal People* is the story of a relationship between two high school classmates in a small town in Ireland, and how it changes over time, through their last year of college in Dublin. Rooney's spare and brilliant writing illuminates her insight and makes the unfolding of these two personalities completely compelling."

—Georgiana Dix Blomberg, Magnolia's Bookstore, Seattle, WA



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The Seven or Eight Deaths of Stella Fortuna: A Novel

By Juliet Grames

"Stella Fortuna: With a name like this, she should not be subjected to so many near-death accidents. Is she unlucky or cursed? Juliet Grames does a masterful job of parsing out Stella's story, from growing up in an isolated mountain village to immigrating to America and navigating the perils of a patriarchal society along the way. This story explores familial bonds, discontentment, betrayal, and the damage of keeping secrets. Readers, get comfortable because you will not want to put this book down. I loved Stella."

—Patricia Moody, Hickory Stick Bookshop, Washington Depot, CT



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Rough Magic: Riding the World's Loneliest Horse Race

By Lara Prior-Palmer

"Lara Prior-Palmer's journey in the Mongol Derby is one of excitement, pain, and profound inner dialogue. There was not a moment in this fast-paced memoir where my attention wavered. Prior-Palmer weaves a coming-of-age tale with expert grace and worldly knowledge alongside an intensely riveting competition against herself and the land. *Rough Magic* is a fantastically written and introspective memoir worthy of great praise."

—Travis McGuire, Skylark Bookshop, Columbia, MO



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Lanny: A Novel

By Max Porter

"The genius of Max Porter is that he can write a village in its entirety—a mother's love for her son, a brilliant artist's loneliness, a young boy's whimsical adventures, a mythological creature's inner monologue, a whole village worth of secrets and wishes and terrible thoughts—and make it into a bizarre but highly enjoyable little novel. You'll find yourself thrilled by the dark humor Porter captures in his story of one village and its characters, both real and mythologized, as *Lanny* follows the eponymous young boy and the lives he impacts around him."

—Erin Mazza, BookBar, Denver, CO



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Furious Hours: Murder, Fraud, and the Last Trial of Harper Lee

By Casey Cep

"*In Cold Blood* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* kept me up reading all night as a teen, and I can now add *Furious Hours* to the list of couldn't-put-it-down tomes. I was enthralled, educated, and awestruck by Casey Cep's well-researched and masterfully written true-crime account of a rural minister, his lawyer, and his killer. Thankfully, Cep discovered and brought to light what surely could have been Harper Lee's second bestseller. Now...off to get a good night's rest!"

—Beth Stroh, Viewpoint Books, Columbus, IN



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Out East: Memoir of a Montauk Summer

By John Glynn

"I absolutely loved *Out East*. It kept me up until 2:30 in the morning because I needed to read one more scene, one more chapter, to find out what happened with all of the characters. As I read, I was able to put myself into the Hive along with the rest of the housemates. The sensory details—music, food, descriptions of the people who populate Montauk—allowed me to step into this world as if I were a housemate myself. The emotional experience, too, was vivid and relatable, and brought me back to my own roller-coaster experiences of first love, longing, and heartache."

—Chris Klim, Buffalo Street Books, Ithaca, NY



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The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek: A Novel

By Kim Michele Richardson

"I loved this wonderful story about Cussy Mary, a pack horse librarian in eastern Kentucky in the 1930s and one of the last of the blue-skinned people of that area. As Cussy faces pressure to marry and difficulties maintaining her arduous book route through twisty and dangerous mountain passes, she earns the respect of the mountain people she serves so faithfully. Beautifully written and heartbreaking at times, this is a story I will never forget."

—Mary Patterson, The Little Bookshop, Midlothian, VA



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Courting Mr. Lincoln: A Novel

By Louis Bayard

"This is a beautifully rendered, historically compelling exploration of the idea that the powerful and unseen gravitational force acting on what we know to have been a complicated courtship between Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd was Lincoln's ambiguous friendship with Joshua Speed. Bayard's complex characters live believably on these pages, reminding us that love is not—and never has been, even for the iconic figures of history—a this-or-that thing, but instead takes on many forms, depending on its circumstances. A great book club selection!"

—Nina Barrett, Bookends & Beginnings, Evanston, IL



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Southern Lady Code: Essays

By Helen Ellis

"I had forgotten how to laugh, but after opening this book and starting to read, I couldn't help myself—it just came bubbling up. What a wonderful thing it is to hold in your hands something that has the power to make one erupt with hoots and howls. Helen Ellis is a treasure and a gift from the gods; she tells it like it is in Southern lady speak and we love her all the more for the joy she has given us."

—Beth Reynolds, Norwich Bookstore, Norwich, VT



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Rules for Visiting: A Novel

By Jessica Francis Kane

"A skillful writer can show how things that seem unrelated are actually intertwined. In this way, Kane quietly reminds us that friendships and plants may be deeply rooted but need tending to bloom completely, that words matter, that going back to their roots may change how we think about what we say, and that a quiet life can be a full one. This gentle book grows on you (the puns just keep coming), but it is a refreshing change from the stresses of our digital age or the angst of so many recent books about contemporary life. Entertaining and erudite, I highly recommend this book."

—Ann Carlson, Waterfront Books, Georgetown, SC



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Disappearing Earth: A Novel

By Julia Phillips

"Julia Phillips is an author to watch. She beautifully transports us to a region of the world that I had never heard of and now can't stop thinking about. The stories of the women there—their family dynamics, their hopes and fears, the economic and cultural divide of various communities—tell a moving story about this place in a moment in time, but ultimately about the universal struggle of women living with the expectations placed on them. A remarkable debut."

—Casey Coonerty, Bookshop Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, CA



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Loudermilk: Or, the Real Poet; Or, the Origin of the World

By Lucy Ives

"Lucy Ives has created something special in *Loudermilk*. The early 2000s setting is unmistakable, and while all the characters are both familiar (in all the right ways) and written with at least some degree of love, none are spared by Ives' razor-sharp satire. Unlike so many other satirical novels, *Loudermilk* is nuanced and feels like it has something to say, rather than just skewering for the sake of skewering. And it's consistently laugh-out-loud funny throughout."

—Lane Jacobson, Paulina Springs Books, Sisters, OR



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The Bride Test: A Novel

By Helen Hoang

"This follow-up to *The Kiss Quotient* is an incredibly diverse and fun story about Khai, Michael's cousin from the previous novel. He is Vietnamese-American, autistic, and believes himself to be incapable of the emotions that matter. I would recommend this to those who enjoyed *The Rosie Effect* and *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine*. Hoang is making important waves, one sweet, sexy romance novel at a time."

—Stephanie Csaszar, Books Around the Corner, Gresham, OR



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Cape May: A Novel

By Chip Cheek

"This book is extraordinary. In a small, empty beachside town after the season ends, a couple on their ill-planned honeymoon, slowly awakening to all the ways they can disappoint each other, stumble across a Gatsby-ish household of worldly beautiful people who embrace them wholeheartedly. The days pass in a glorious gin-soaked daze; erotic tension charges every encounter. Chip writes like James Salter, with a sense of a humor and a fuller appreciation and understanding of female desire. Moving, so gorgeous, and absolutely brilliant."

—Mary Cotton, Newtonville Books, Newton Centre, MA



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Once More We Saw Stars: A Memoir

By Jayson Greene

"Some memoirs transcend the author's experience and become universal—I always thought of those as the good ones. Then I read Jayson Greene's memoir of loss and grief and was forced to confront the fullness of his individual humanity in a way I hadn't experienced before. Grief is distinctly personal and Greene's story of the death of his two-year-old child is simply unfathomable to me, yet his honesty and willingness to sit in the fearfulness of this new life resonated deeply. *Once More We Saw Stars* is a wonderfully written memoir that connects on the most basic human level."

—Michelle Cavalier, Cavalier House Books, Denham Springs, LA



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Miracle Creek: A Novel

By Angie Kim

"*Miracle Creek* is a courtroom drama with impeccable pacing, an original plot, and stellar writing. It's also a remarkably empathetic book, exploring the ripple effects of causality and the urgent need to do right by each other in big and small ways, recognizing that even the best of us will fail once in a while. It is a lovely reminder that even when doing the right thing feels like swimming upstream, we never know what harm may be prevented and what good might come from our actions. A great read that deserves broad success."

—Sara Hinckley, Hudson Booksellers, Marietta, GA



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MAY '19

Exhalation: Stories

By Ted Chiang

"WOW. My first experience with Ted Chiang absolutely blew me out of the water. Each story left me with wide eyes and a racing mind, running to my husband to read a passage so we could both be knocked over with wonder. *Exhalation* filled me with so many questions about our collective past, present, and future, I'll be coming back to this book again and again trying to find the answers."

—Kasey Kane, Country Bookshelf, Bozeman, MT



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MAY '19

The Binding: A Novel

By Bridget Collins

"An absolutely gorgeous novel! Collins writes Emmett in such a way that readers will experience his confusion and frustration and then have it unknotted simultaneously as his tale unfolds. The three parts of the novel are brilliantly ordered to deliver a powerful tale that will tear your heart to pieces slowly and, in one spectacular scene, mend it completely with hope and love. Do Binders provide healing and comfort, or are they wicked magicians determined to leave you empty? What are you willing to risk for someone you love?"

—Angela Shores, Adventure Bound Books, Morganton, NC



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Light From Other Stars: A Novel

By Erika Swyler

"It's a little tricky to set up the premise of *Light From Other Stars* without giving too much away and alienating readers who might have a knee-jerk reaction to a plot involving space travel and a temporal anomaly. But at its heart—and it's a big, generous heart—this book is about love and what ultimately makes us human. The sci-fi/magical realism elements act like a series of lenses that magnify and, in wonderfully odd and unexpected ways, deepen our connection to those themes."

—Steve Haruch, Parnassus Books, Nashville, TN



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