

2023 Choices

Thursday, January 19 2023

One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel García Márquez

The brilliant, bestselling, landmark novel that tells the story of the Buendia family, and chronicles the irreconcilable conflict between the desire for solitude and the need for love—in rich, imaginative prose that has come to define an entire genre known as "magical realism.". *Copies of the book will be available to pick up between December 15 and December 21.*

Thursday, February 16 2023

City of Light, City of Poison: Murder, Magic, and the First Police Chief of Paris by Holly Tucker

Appointed to conquer the 'crime capital of the world', the first police chief of Paris faces an epidemic of murder in the late 1600s. Assigned by Louis XIV, Nicolas de La Reynie begins by clearing the streets of filth, and installing lanterns throughout Paris, turning it into the City of Light. The fearless La Reynie pursues criminals through the labyrinthine neighborhoods of the city. He unearths a tightly knit cabal of poisoners, witches, and renegade priests. As he exposes their unholy work, he soon learns that no one is safe from black magic—not even the Sun King. In a world where a royal glance can turn success into disgrace, the distance between the quietly back-stabbing world of the king's court, and the criminal underground proves disturbingly short. Nobles settle scores by employing witches to craft poisons, and by hiring priests to perform dark rituals in Paris' most illustrious churches and cathedrals. As La Reynie continues his investigations, he is haunted by a single question: Could Louis' mistresses be involved in such nefarious plots? The pragmatic, and principled, La Reynie must decide just how far he will go to protect his king. From secret courtrooms to torture chambers, *City of Light, City of Poison* is a gripping true-crime tale of deception and murder. Based on thousands of pages of court transcripts, and La Reynie's compulsive note-taking, as well as on letters and diaries, Tucker's riveting narrative makes the fascinating, real-life characters breathe on the page. *Copies of the book will be available to pick up between January 19 and January 25.*

Thursday, March 16 2023

The Pope and Mussolini: The Secret History of Pius XI and the Rise of Fascism in Europe by David I. Kertzer

From National Book Award finalist David I. Kertzer comes the gripping story of Pope Pius XI's secret relations with Italian dictator Benito Mussolini. This groundbreaking work, based on seven years of research in the Vatican and Fascist archives, including reports from Mussolini's spies inside the highest levels of the Church, will forever change our understanding of the Vatican's role in the rise of Fascism in Europe. *The Pope and Mussolini* tells the story of two men who came to power in 1922, and together changed the course of twentieth-century history. *Copies of the book will be available to pick up between February 16 and February 23.*

Thursday, April 20 2023

A (Very) Short History of Life On Earth by Henry Gee

This lyrical and moving account takes us back to the early history of the earth, a wildly inhospitable place with swirling seas, constant volcanic eruptions and an unstable atmosphere. The triumph of life as it emerges, survives and evolves in this hostile setting is Henry Gee's riveting subject: he traces the story of life on earth from its turbulent beginnings to the emergence of early hominids and the miracle of the first creatures to fly. You'll never look at our planet in the same way again. *Copies of the book will be available to pick up between March 16 and March 23.*

Thursday, May 18 2023

The Swerve: How the World Became Modern by Stephen Greenblatt

One of the world's most celebrated scholars, Stephen Greenblatt has crafted both an innovative work of history and a thrilling story of discovery, in which one manuscript, plucked from a thousand years of

neglect, changed the course of human thought and made possible the world as we know it. Nearly six hundred years ago, a short, genial, cannily alert man in his late thirties took a very old manuscript off a library shelf, saw with excitement what he had discovered, and ordered that it be copied. That book was the last surviving manuscript of an ancient Roman philosophical epic, *On the Nature of Things*, by Lucretius—a beautiful poem of the most dangerous ideas: that the universe functioned without the aid of gods, that religious fear was damaging to human life, and that matter was made up of very small particles in eternal motion, colliding and swerving in new directions. The copying and translation of this ancient book—the greatest discovery of the greatest book-hunter of his age—fueled the Renaissance, inspiring artists such as Botticelli and thinkers such as Giordano Bruno; shaped the thought of Galileo and Freud, Darwin and Einstein; and had a revolutionary influence on writers such as Montaigne and Shakespeare and even Thomas Jefferson. *Copies of the book will be available to pick up between April 20 and April 27.*

Thursday, June 15 2023

Seven Brief Lessons on Physics by Carlo Rovelli

All the beauty of modern physics in fewer than a hundred pages. This is a book about the joy of discovery. A playful, entertaining, and mind-bending introduction to modern physics, it's already a major bestseller in Italy and the United Kingdom. Carlo Rovelli offers surprising—and surprisingly easy to grasp—explanations of general relativity, quantum mechanics, elementary particles, gravity, black holes, the complex architecture of the universe, and the role humans play in this weird and wonderful world. He takes us to the frontiers of our knowledge: to the most minute reaches of the fabric of space, back to the origins of the cosmos, and into the workings of our minds. “Here, on the edge of what we know, in contact with the ocean of the unknown, shines the mystery and the beauty of the world,” Rovelli writes. “And it’s breathtaking.” *Copies of the book will be available to pick up between May 18 and May 25.*

Thursday, July 20 2023

The Rise and Reign of the Mammals by Steve Brusatte

In *The Rise and Reign of the Mammals*, palaeontologist Steve Brusatte weaves together the history and evolution of our mammal forebears with stories of the scientists whose fieldwork and discoveries underlie our knowledge, both of iconic mammals like the mammoths and sabre-toothed tigers of which we have all heard, and of fascinating species that few of us are aware of. For what we see today is but a very limited range of the mammals that have existed; in this fascinating and ground-breaking book, Steve Brusatte tells their – and our – story. *Copies of the book will be available to pick up between June 15 and June 22.*

Thursday, August 17 2023

A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles

From the New York Times bestselling author of *Rules of Civility*, a transporting novel about a man who is ordered to spend the rest of his life inside a luxury hotel. With his breakout debut novel, *Rules of Civility*, Amor Towles established himself as a master of absorbing, sophisticated fiction, bringing late 1930s Manhattan to life with splendid atmosphere and a flawless command of style. Readers and critics were enchanted; as NPR commented, “Towles writes with grace and verve about the mores and manners of a society on the cusp of radical change. *A Gentleman in Moscow* immerses us in another elegantly drawn era with the story of Count Alexander Rostov. When, in 1922, he was deemed an unrepentant aristocrat by a Bolshevik tribunal, the count was sentenced to house arrest in the Metropol, a grand hotel across the street from the Kremlin. Rostov, an indomitable man of erudition and wit, has never worked a day in his life, and must now live in an attic room while some of the most tumultuous decades in Russian history are unfolding outside the hotel’s doors. Unexpectedly, his reduced circumstances provide him a doorway into a much larger world of emotional discovery. Brimming with humour, a glittering cast of characters, and one beautifully rendered scene after another, this singular novel casts a spell as it relates the count’s endeavor to

gain a deeper understanding of what it means to be a man of purpose. *Copies of the book will be available to pick up between July 20 and July 27.*

Thursday, September 21 2023

The Map Thief: The Gripping Story of an Esteemed Rare-Map Dealer Who Made Millions Stealing Priceless Maps by Michael Blanding

The story of an infamous crime, a revered map dealer with an unsavory secret and the ruthless subculture that consumed him. Maps have long exerted a special fascination on viewers—both as beautiful work of art and as practical tools to navigate the world. But to those who collect them, the map trade can be a cutthroat business, inhabited by quirky and sometimes disreputable characters in search of a finite number of extremely rare objects. Once considered a respectable antiquarian map dealer, E. Forbes Smiley spent years doubling as a map thief—until he was finally arrested slipping maps out of books in the Yale University library. *The Map Thief* delves into the untold history of this fascinating high-stakes criminal and the inside story of the industry that consumed him. Acclaimed reporter Michael Blanding has interviewed all the key players in this stranger-than-fiction story, and shares the fascinating histories of maps that charted the New World, and how they went from being practical instruments to quirky heirlooms to highly coveted objects. Though pieces of the map theft story have been written before, Blanding is the first reporter to explore the story in full—and had the rare privilege of having access to Smiley himself after he'd gone silent in the wake of his crimes. Moreover, although Smiley swears he has admitted to all of the maps he stole, libraries claim he stole hundreds more—and offer intriguing clues to prove it. Now, through a series of exclusive interviews with Smiley and other key individuals, Blanding teases out an astonishing tale of destruction and redemption. *The Map Thief* interweaves Smiley's escapades with the stories of the explorers and mapmakers he knew better than anyone. Tracking a series of thefts as brazen as the art heists in *Provenance* and a subculture as obsessive as the oenophiles in *The Billionaire's Vinegar*, Blanding has pieced together an unforgettable story of high-stakes crime. **August 17 to August 24.**

Thursday, October 19 2023

Brooklyn by Colm Tóibín

Hauntingly beautiful and heartbreaking, Colm Tóibín's sixth novel, *Brooklyn*, is set in Brooklyn and Ireland in the early 1950s, when one young woman crosses the ocean to make a new life for herself. Eilis Lacey has come of age in small-town Ireland in the years following World War Two. Though skilled at bookkeeping, she cannot find a job in the miserable Irish economy. When an Irish priest from Brooklyn offers to sponsor Eilis in America--to live and work in a Brooklyn neighborhood just like Ireland--she decides she must go, leaving her fragile mother and her charismatic sister behind. Eilis finds work in a department store on Fulton Street, and when she least expects it, finds love. Tony, a blond Italian from a big family, slowly wins her over with patient charm. He takes Eilis to Coney Island and Ebbets Field, and home to dinner in the two-room apartment he shares with his brothers and parents. He talks of having children who are Dodgers fans. But just as Eilis begins to fall in love with Tony, devastating news from Ireland threatens the promise of her future. **September 21 and 28.**

Thursday, November 16 2023

Hamnet by Maggie O'Farrell

Drawing on Maggie O'Farrell's long-term fascination with the little-known story behind Shakespeare's most enigmatic play, *Hamnet* is a luminous portrait of a marriage, at its heart the loss of a beloved child. Warwickshire in the 1580s. Agnes is a woman as feared as she is sought after for her unusual gifts. She settles with her husband in Henley Street, Stratford, and has three children: a daughter, Susanna, and then twins, Hamnet and Judith. The boy, Hamnet, dies in 1596, aged eleven. Four years or so later, the husband writes a play called *Hamlet*. Award-winning author Maggie O'Farrell's new novel breathes full-blooded life into the story of a loss usually consigned to literary footnotes, and provides an unforgettable vindication of Agnes, a woman intriguingly absent from history. **October 19 and 26.**

Thursday, December 21 2023

The Lincoln Highway by Amor Towles

The bestselling author of *A Gentleman in Moscow* and *Rules of Civility* and master of absorbing, sophisticated fiction returns with a stylish and propulsive novel set in 1950s America. In June, 1954, eighteen-year-old Emmett Watson is driven home to Nebraska by the warden of the work farm where he has just served a year for involuntary manslaughter. His mother long gone, his father recently deceased, and the family farm foreclosed upon by the bank, Emmett's intention is to pick up his eight-year-old brother and head west where they can start their lives anew. But when the warden drives away, Emmett discovers that two friends from the work farm have hidden themselves in the trunk of the warden's car. Together, they have hatched an altogether different plan for Emmett's future. Spanning just ten days and told from multiple points of view, Towles's third novel will satisfy fans of his multi-layered literary styling while providing them an array of new and richly imagined settings, characters, and themes. *November 16 and 23.*