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# SUMMER READING GUIDE

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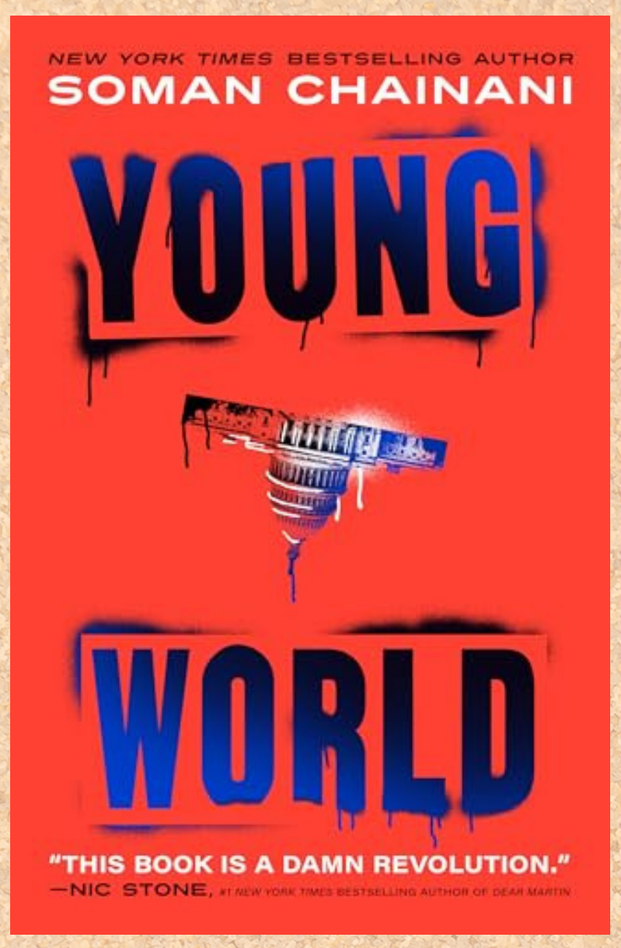
# Young Adult Fiction



# Young World

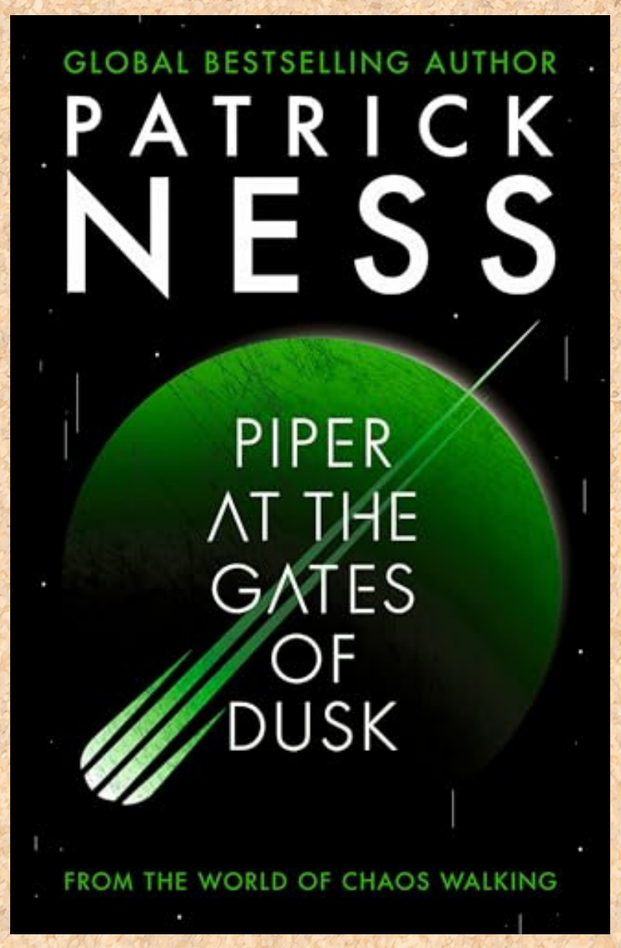
by Soman Chainani




With America collapsing, high schooler Benton Young's impulsive viral video sparks a global youth revolt, landing him in the White House. Soon, eight world powers are led by teenagers. At their first summit in Sweden, the dream of a new era is shattered when a leader is murdered. As the prime suspect, Benton must navigate a lethal web of betrayal and power plays. Hunted and desperate, he has to find the real killer before the world's new leadership—and the future itself—crumbles into ruin.

# Piper at the Gates of Dusk

by Patrick Ness




Twenty years after the war on New World, Todd and Viola's sons, Ben and Max, live in a fragile peace that shatters when a "Noise" sickness infects the youth with their darkest thoughts. As children begin to vanish, suspicion falls on the indigenous Spackle and a mysterious celestial object. Ben and Max embark on separate, perilous quests to find the truth, testing their courage and their faith in their parents as they fight to save their generation and the future of their planet.

# Change of Plans

by Sarah Dessen




Finley, accustomed to living in her magnetic boyfriend's shadow, finds her life roadmap erased when their relationship collapses. During a summer trip to her mother's secret family vacation home, she meets her estranged relatives and the tight-knit crew at a local diner, including the soulful Ben. As Finley uncovers the truth behind her mother's long absence, she begins to reclaim her identity. Letting go of her rigid plans, she embraces a transformative summer of independence and love.

# Shards of Silence

by Brian Lee Young

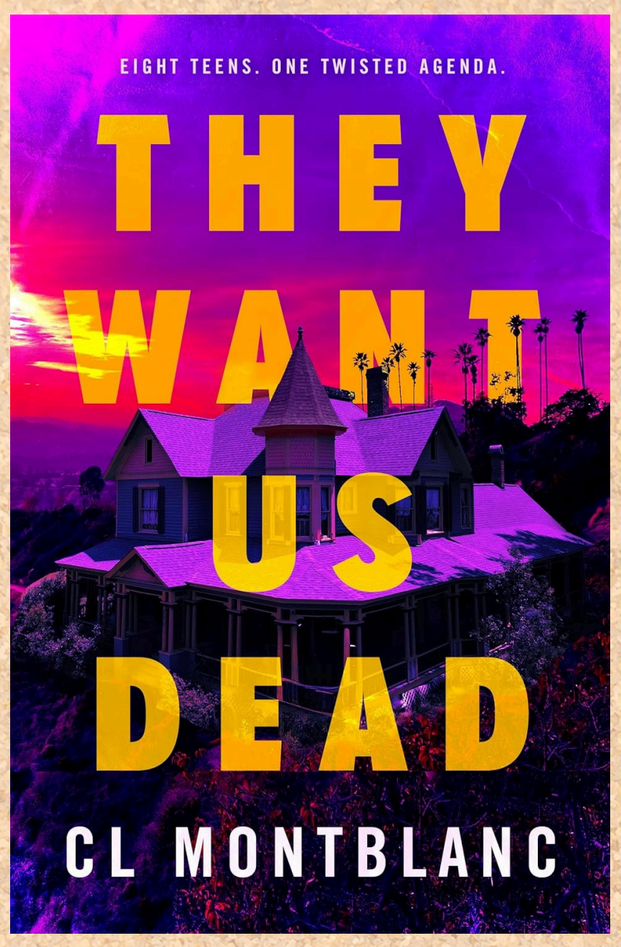



Derrick leaves his Navajo home for a scholarship at Sagefield Academy, an elite East Coast boarding school where he battles grueling academics and cultural isolation. As his great-grandmother Mildred's health fades, she begs him to leave, haunted by her own trauma in federal Native boarding schools. Determined to honor her, Derrick centers his term paper on her past. To carry her voice forward, he must break a generational silence, uncovering a story that will change his family forever.



# They Want Us Dead

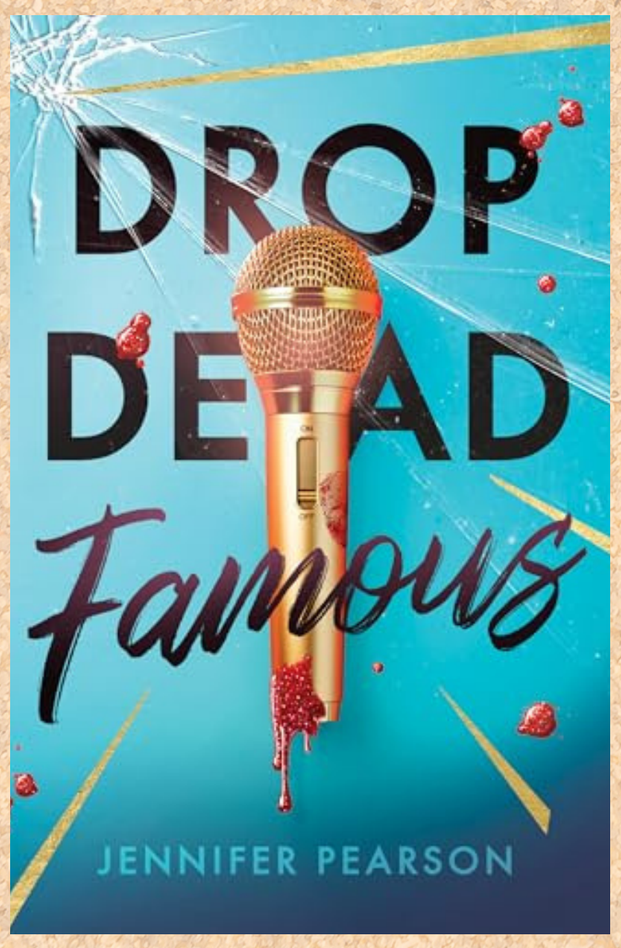
by CL Montblanc




To grow their true crime channel, 17-year-old Sam Tombs attends a creator event at an eerie Victorian mansion. But when a creator is murdered overnight, the group is left stranded. Sam's only alibi and ally is their dorky internet nemesis, Dylan. Putting their rivalry aside, the two must use their investigative skills to unmask the killer among the remaining teens before their own deaths become tomorrow's trending content.

# Drop Dead Famous

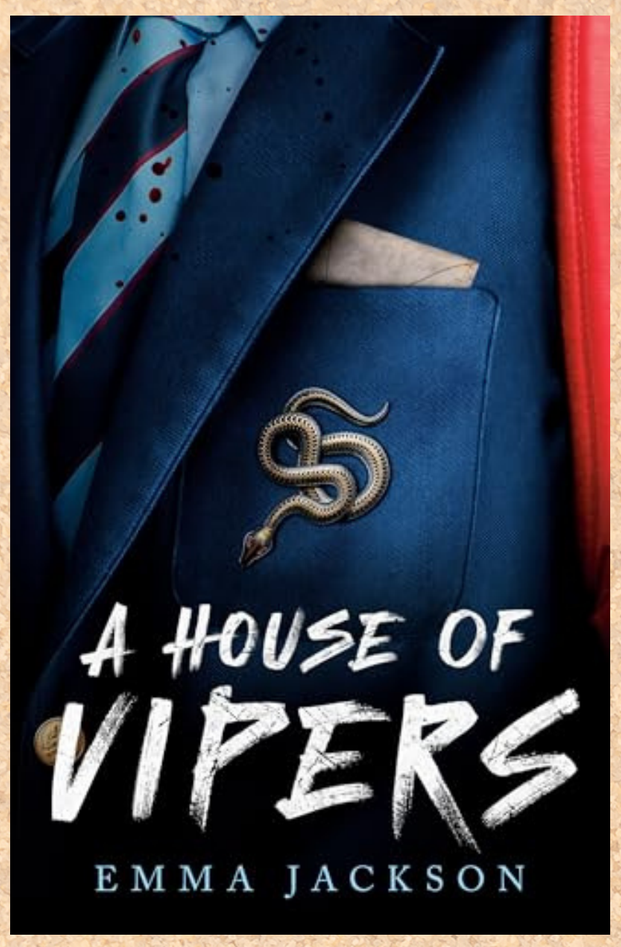
by Jennifer Pearson




When superstar Blair Baker is murdered just before her homecoming concert, her younger sister, Stevie, vows to find the killer. Haunted by a past tragedy she couldn't solve as a kid, Stevie refuses to let the truth slip away this time. Her investigation plunges her into the dark side of global fame and uncovers dangerous secrets close to home. As the mystery unravels, Stevie must face the deadly lengths someone will go to keep those secrets hidden.

# A House of Vipers

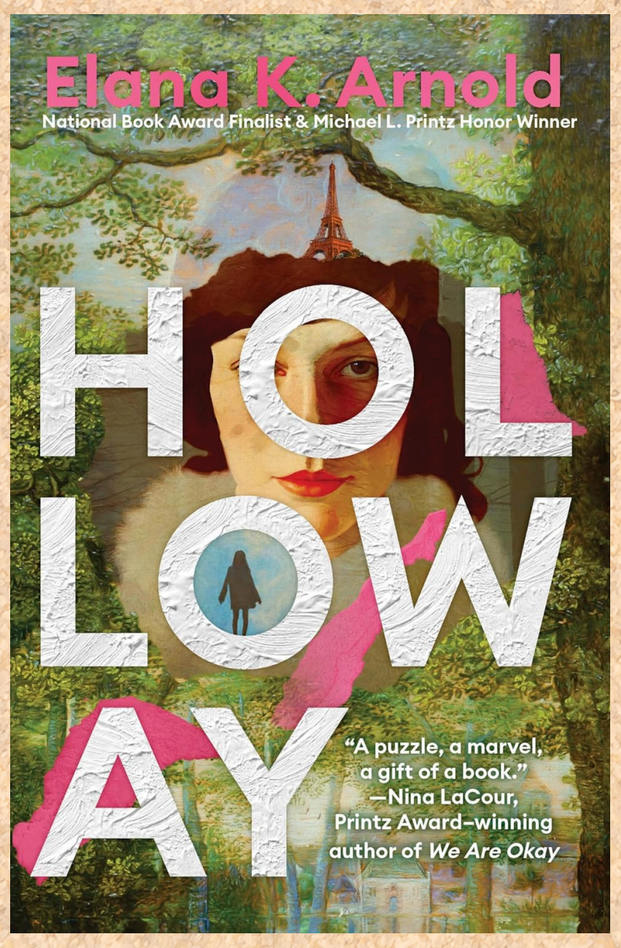
by Emma Jackson




Eighteen months after his brother Lawson vanished from Meddlehart Academy, Sutter Heyward refuses to give up hope. When he and his friends discover clues that Lawson was hunting for the school's rumored buried treasure, they trace his disappearance to a secret society: the Order of the Vipers. Joining the hunt, they face dangerous initiation rituals. But as Sutter edges closer to solving the mystery, he realizes some deadly truths were meant to stay buried.

# Holloway

by Elana K. Arnold




In late summer 2021, a grieving girl named Nora arrives in France carrying her mother's ashes, seeking to fulfill a silent promise. Devastated by pandemic losses and haunted by guilt, she ends up fleeing into a dark forest at night. When she wakes, Nora discovers she has inexplicably slipped through time. Stranded in a foreign, war-torn past defined by death and fear, she must navigate this broken world to honor her mother, question her own sanity, and finally find a way to heal herself.

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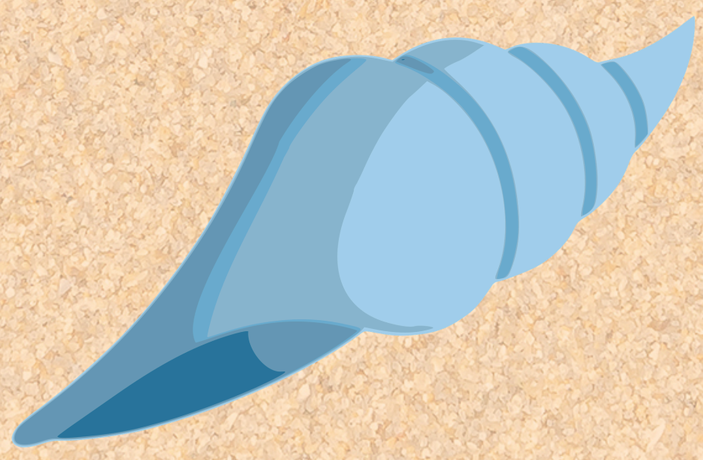
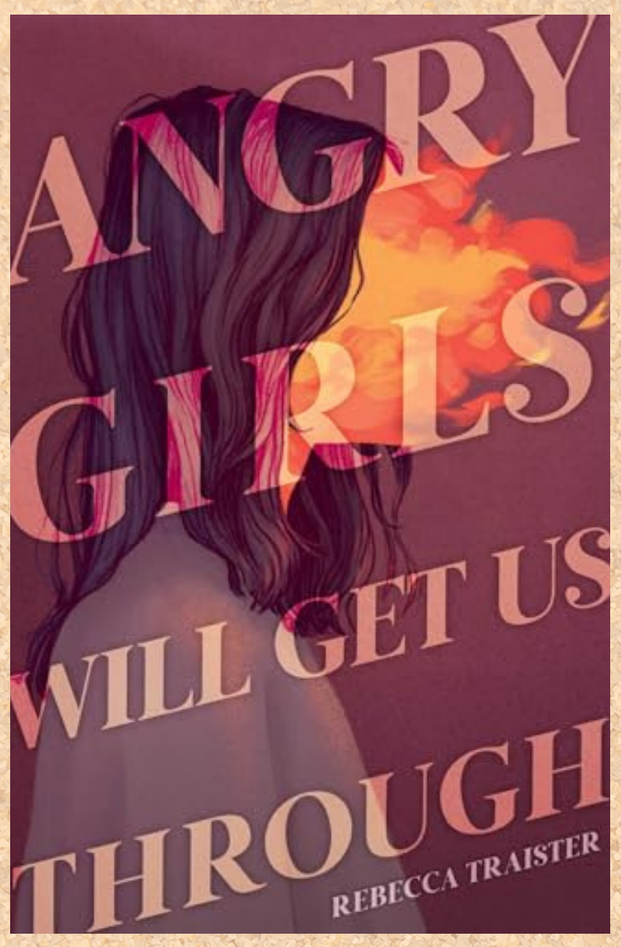
# Young Adult Nonfiction



# Angry Girls Will Get Us Through

by Rebecca Traister

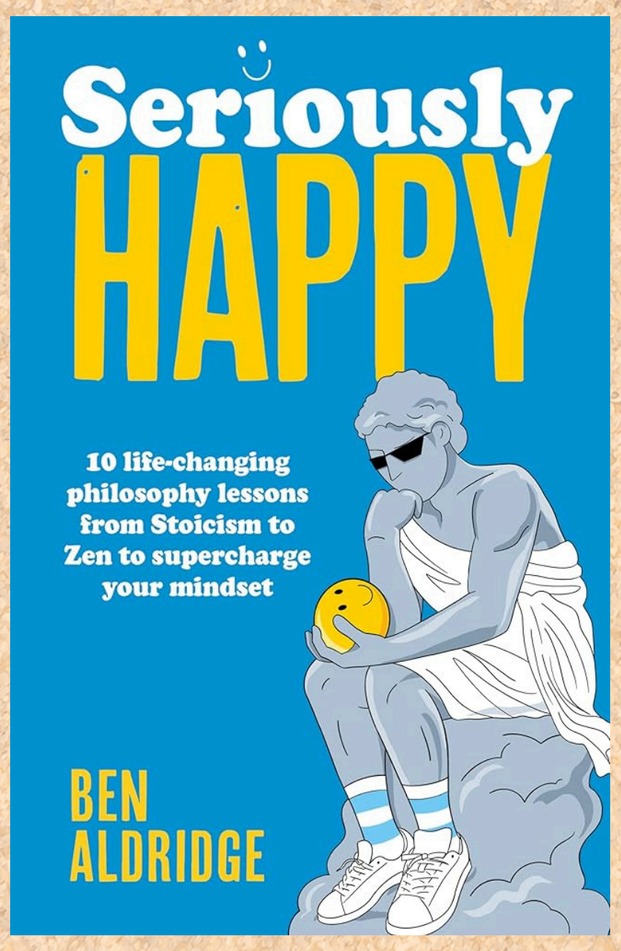



From an early age, young girls are taught anger isn't an emotion they should express. They're told—either implicitly or explicitly—to spend their lives keeping their fury locked inside for the benefit of others. But partly, Traister argues, that's because the anger of women and girls has been a crucial catalyst for change, putting in motion some of the most defining social and political movements in our nation's history. And it's that anger that will blaze the path forward for the future.



# Seriously Happy

by Ben Aldridge




In Seriously Happy, author Ben Aldridge shares how Stoicism, Zen, Aristotle, and Cynicism helped him overcome anxiety and restore peace. Written for young adults, this practical self-help guide features 10 life-changing lessons and over 20 hands-on challenges—like "shame attacking," meditation, and Tai-Chi. Paired with Michelle Brackenborough's illustrations, the book shows how ancient wisdom can boost confidence, build mental resilience, and conquer modern real-world stress.



# Fallout

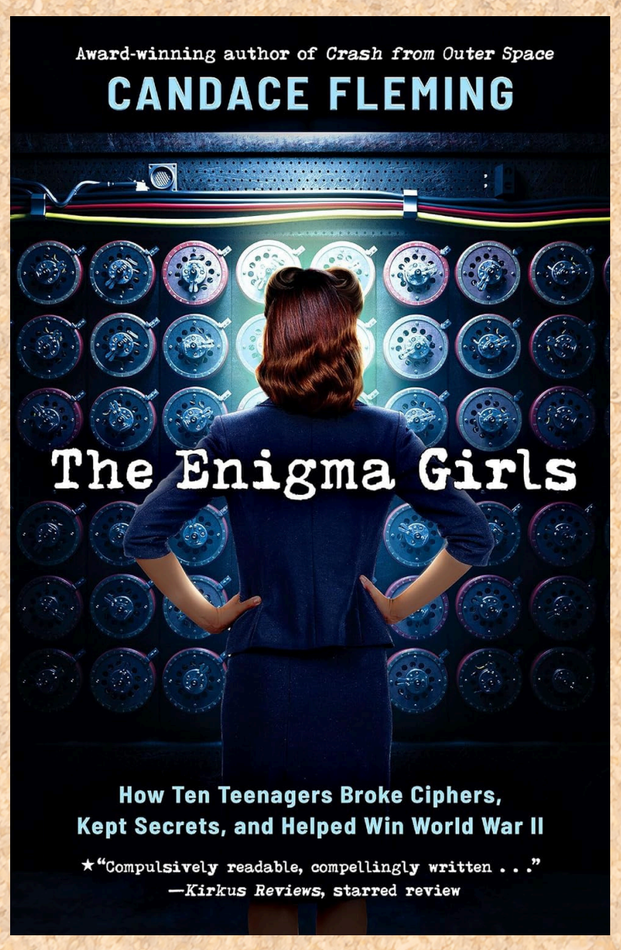
## by Steve Sheinkin




Post-WWII, the US and USSR emerge as rival superpowers with opposing ideologies. Sparked by the atomic bomb and the spread of communism, they enter a fierce competition spanning the arms race and the Space Race. Utilizing spy planes, submarines, and undercover agents, both nations engage in a precarious battle for dominance. This decades-long showdown peaks with the Cuban Missile Crisis, bringing the world terrifyingly close to a third—and final—world war.

# The Enigma Girls

## by Candace Fleming




Candace Fleming's narrative nonfiction book highlights the teen girls who kept Britain's secret WWII code-breaking hub, Bletchley Park, running. Summoned by cryptic telegrams in 1941, these young women had no idea what to expect. Equipped with math or language skills, they operated unwieldy bombe machines, deciphered wireless waves, and sorted decoded Nazi messages. Their hard work, determination, and absolute secrecy turned the tide of World War II for the Allies.

# Why Summer Reading is Crutial

## What is the Summer Slide?

The summer slide refers to the loss of academic skills and knowledge over the summer months. According to the “Kids & Family Reading Report” by Scholastic, nearly half of parents are unaware of this phenomenon, yet it has a significant impact on student success.

Researchers from the Kids & Family Reading Report estimate that by middle school, summer reading loss can accumulate to a two-year lag in reading achievement.

## The Power of Summer Reading for Kids

Summer reading is not just a nice-to-have activity for kids; it’s essential for bridging the gap between school years. When kids engage in regular reading over the summer, they retain and build upon what they’ve learned during the school year, ensuring they start the next grade level on a strong footing.

According to the report, 77% of kids agree that reading during the summer helps them perform better in school. However, there is a troubling trend: an increasing number of children, especially older ones, report reading zero books over the summer. For instance, 32% of kids aged 15-17 read no books at all during their break. This trend is concerning as it signifies a missed opportunity for academic growth and development.

## Challenges and Solutions

Despite the benefits, the report indicates an increase in the number of children who do not read any books over the summer. Access to books is a significant issue, especially for underserved communities.

The report found that 53% of children get most of their books from school, so when schools are closed, access to books decreases dramatically.

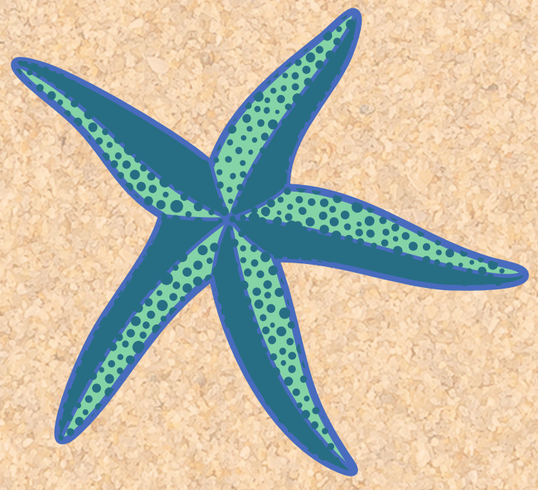
Public libraries and community programs can play a crucial role in bridging this gap. Many libraries offer summer reading programs and events that encourage children to read. Additionally, community initiatives can help provide books to children who might not otherwise have access to them. For example, districts that provide books and literacy nights see a significant reduction in summer reading loss among students.

## How Parents Can Help

Parents can take several steps to encourage summer reading:

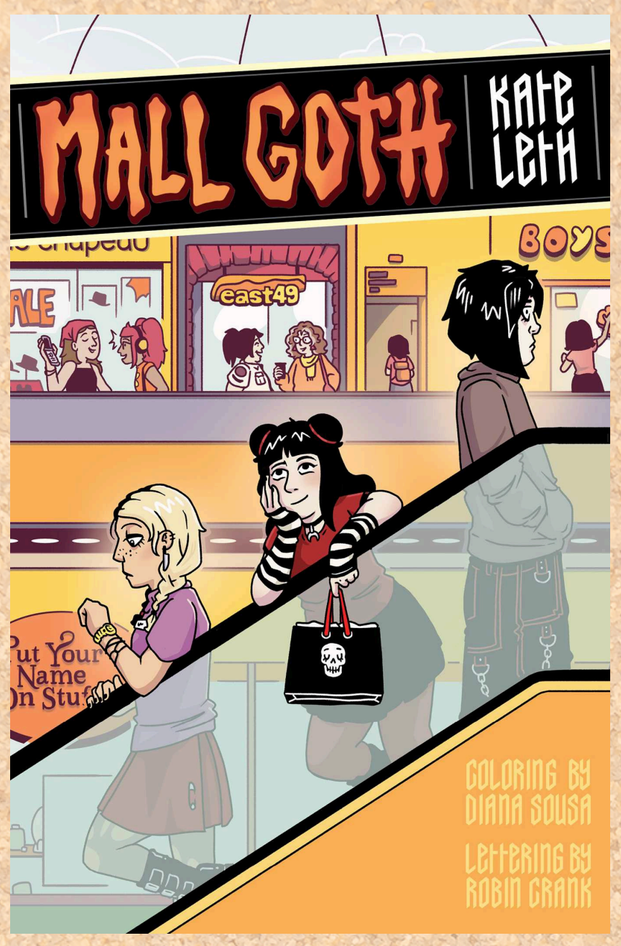
- Visit the library: Regular library trips can provide children access to a wide range of books and reading materials.
- Set a routine: Incorporating reading into the daily routine can help make it a habit.
- Limit screen time: Reducing time spent on electronic devices can make more time for reading.
- Join reading programs: Many libraries and community centers offer summer reading programs that make reading fun and engaging.

# Graphic NOVELS



# Mall Goth

by Kate Leth




Fifteen-year-old bisexual goth Liv Holme struggles to find her place after moving to a new town. Faced with high school bullies and an unsettling dynamic with a teacher, she seeks refuge in the local mall. Amid the fluorescent lights and food courts, Liv finds the anonymity and agency she craves, escaping her parents' failing marriage. This suburban sanctuary becomes the backdrop for her journey toward self-acceptance as she learns to navigate complex relationships and find true community.

# Ready or Not

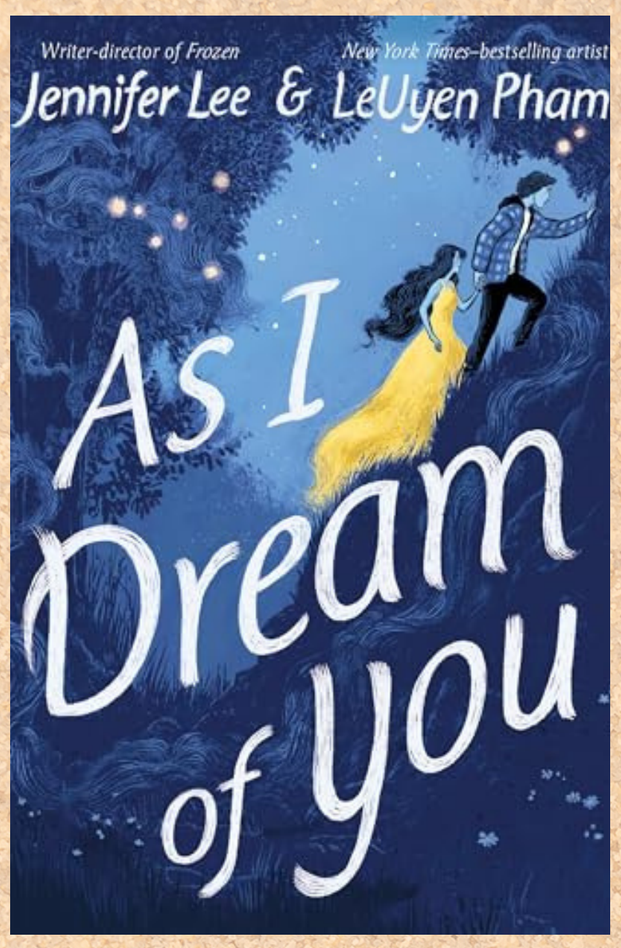
by Andi Porretta




High school graduation is over, and Cassie is the only one in her friend group without a clear path forward. With her best friends—artist Marcy, competitive Aaron, and her crush Nico—set to scatter across the globe for college, Cassie is desperate to hold on. She launches a month of adventurous, outrageous childhood dares across NYC to cement their bond. As August unfolds, Cassie hopes these risks will ensure their friendship survives a future she’s not yet ready to face alone.

# As I Dream of You

## by Jennifer Lee and LeUyen Pham




Falling in love is supposed to hurt. That's what Franny and Sam, two cynical teenagers raised on tales of heartbreak and loss, have come to understand. Yet when they fall for each other, they find the reality of love is something else it's electrifying, all-encompassing, and easy. Theirs is a love that can conquer anything...perhaps even death.

But Franny and Sam's quest to stay together—no matter the cost—soon blurs the line between reality and fantasy, and their shared dream threatens to turn into a nightmare.

# To the Last Gram



## by Shreya Davies and Vanessa Wong




Through her school days, where she must negotiate a precarious balancing act between her culture and fitting in, to her teenage years where appetites must be managed to keep up appearances, to her early adulthood where responsibilities feel overwhelming, Divya journeys from feelings of emptiness to finally finding fulfilment within.

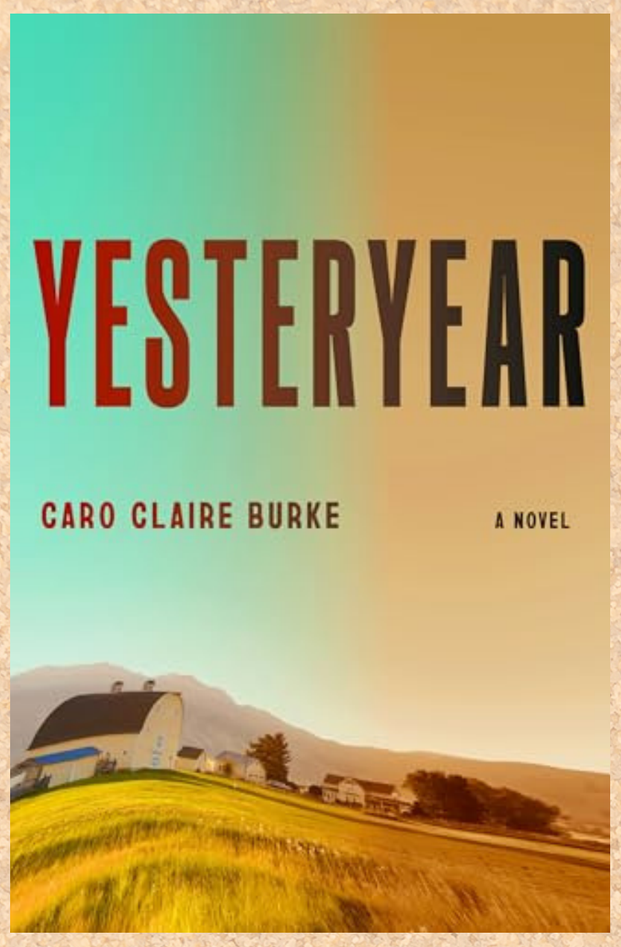
To the Last Gram is an honest and hopeful story of feeling at odds with and finding a home in one's community, family, and body, and of the yet-unfurling journey to embrace the fullness of life.

# Adult
# FICTION



# Yesteryear

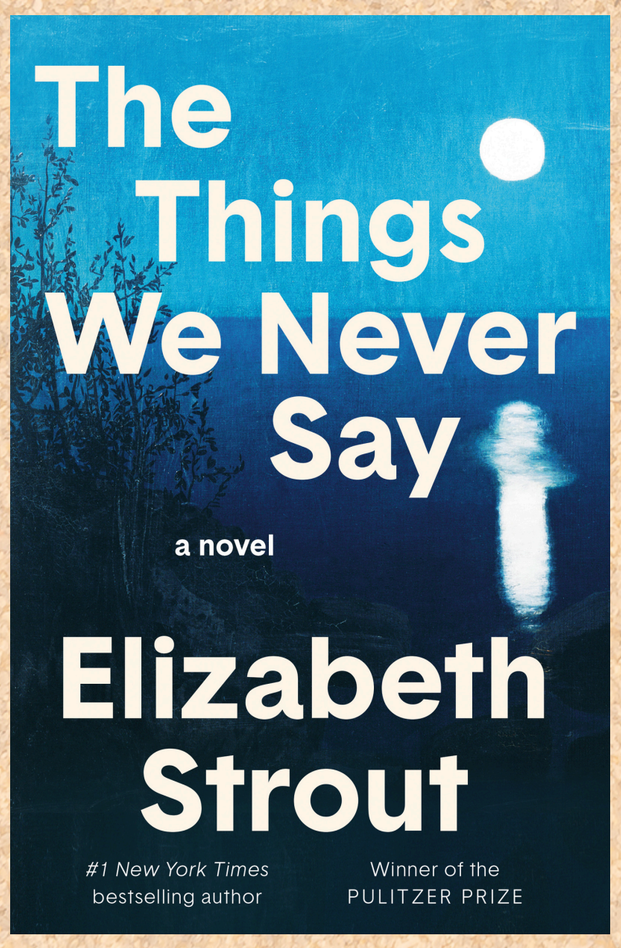
by Caro Claire Burke




Natalie, a trad-wife influencer with 8 million followers, enjoys a curated empire built on rustic aesthetics and hidden nannies. Her polished world shatters when she wakes up in a gritty, primitive reality. Her "cowboy" husband is now a hardened farmer, and her industrial kitchen has vanished. Forced into grueling labor and facing a life-threatening injury, Natalie must discern if she’s in a reality show, a divine test, or a temporal rift—and escape the nightmare at any cost.

# The Things We Never Say

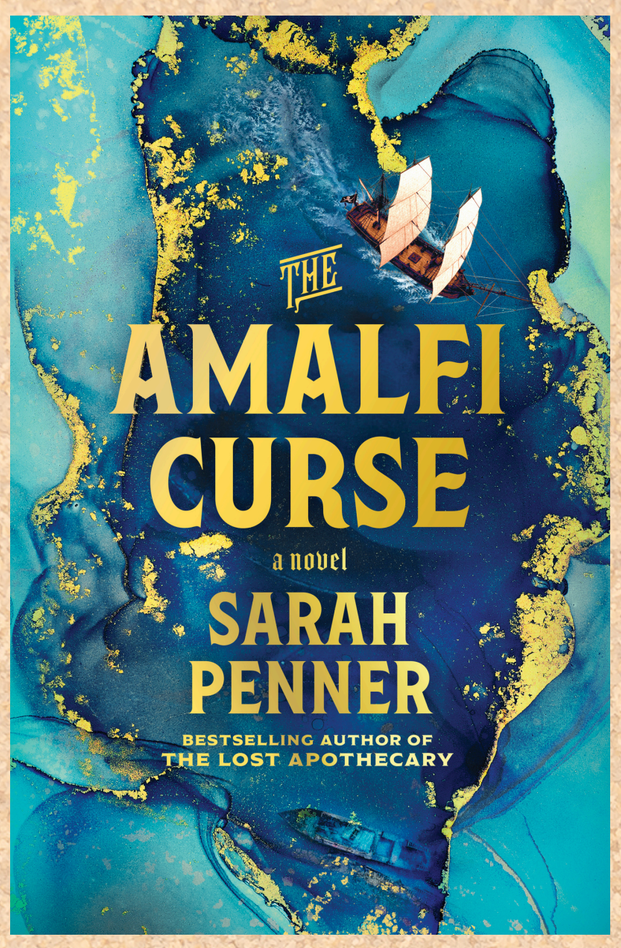
by Elizabeth Strout




Artie Dam is a beloved history teacher leading a seemingly idyllic life in Massachusetts, complete with a long marriage and weekend sailing. Yet, beneath his polished exterior, he is haunted by profound isolation and the realization that humans remain strangers to one another. When a world-altering secret is revealed, Artie’s reality is upended. Forced to navigate this new truth, he must re-evaluate his closest bonds and finally confront the deep, unsolvable mysteries of human existence.

# The Amalfi Curse

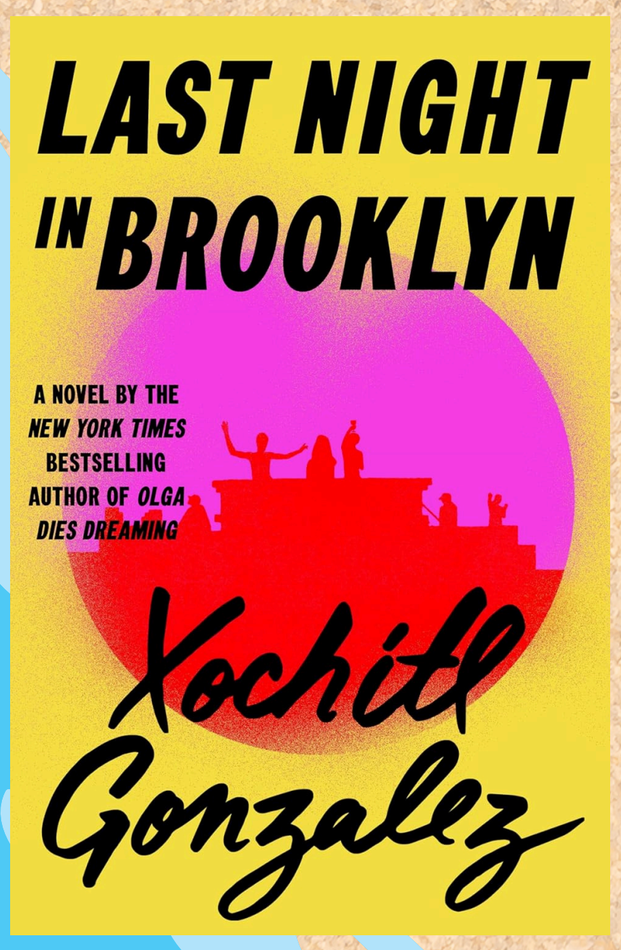
by Sarah Penner




Nautical archaeologist Haven Ambrose arrives in Positano to investigate shipwrecks, secretly seeking a gemstone trove lost by her late father. Her arrival coincides with violent, unnatural storms plaguing the Amalfi Coast. As she dives deeper, Haven uncovers a link to stregheria—ancient ocean sorcery used by a woman centuries ago. To stop the mounting destruction, Haven must unravel the "Amalfi Curse," blurring the line between maritime science and legendary magic to save the region.

# Last Night in Brooklyn

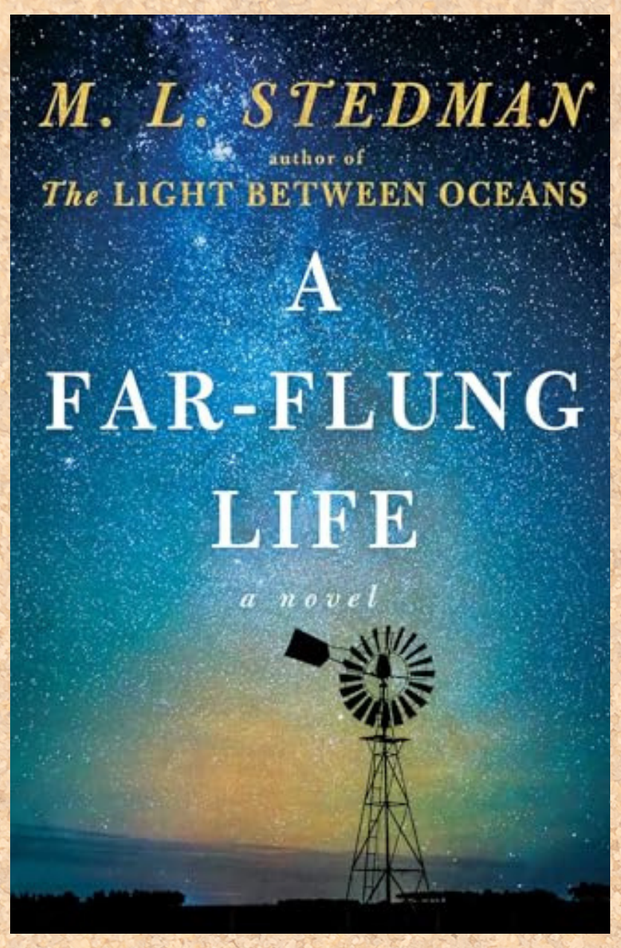
by Xochitl Gonzalez




Twenty-six-year-old Alicia feels trapped by her mother’s expectations and a looming, predictable marriage. Seeking liberation, she moves to Fort Greene, Brooklyn, drawn to a vibrant circle of creatives. She becomes obsessed with La Garza, a fearless fashion designer whose bold lifestyle represents everything Alicia lacks. However, when her wealthy cousin enters the scene, Alicia is pulled into the volatile, high-stakes worlds of both men, forcing her to confront the cost of her new identity.

# A Far-Flung Life

by M. L. Stedman

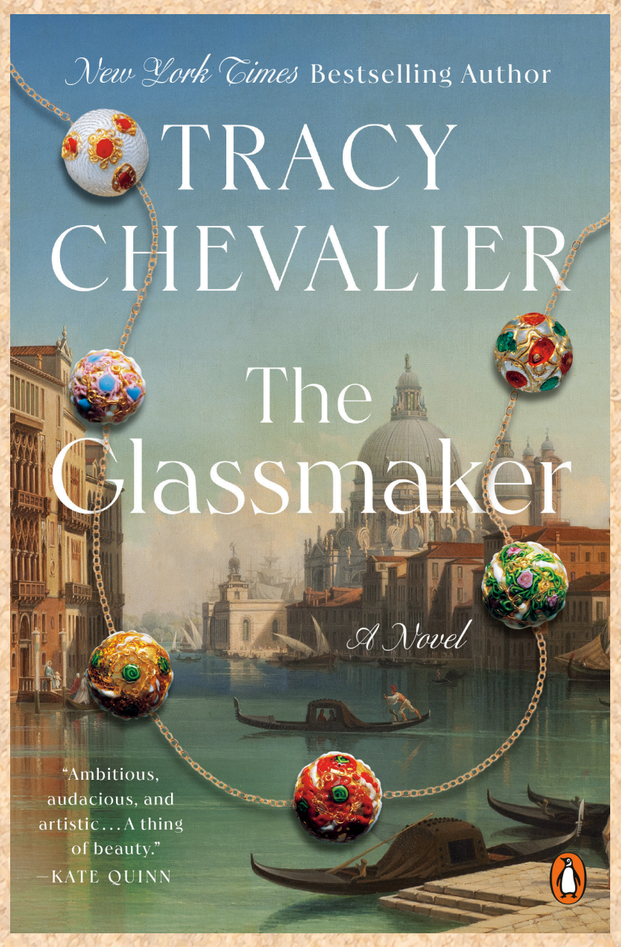



In M. L. Stedman's *A Far-flung Life*, a 1958 car accident on a remote Australian sheep station shatters the MacBride family forever. Following a series of tragic consequences, one sibling loses their life while another sacrifices everything for an innocent child. Youngest son Matt is thrust into a grueling moral odyssey, navigating a world of secrets and irreversible choices. This epic tale explores the agonizing friction between love and duty, and how one finds a path when the map is gone.



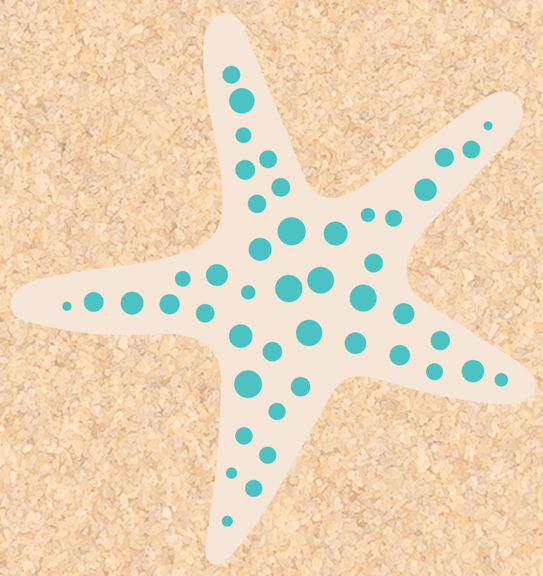
# The Glassmaker

by Tracy Chevalier



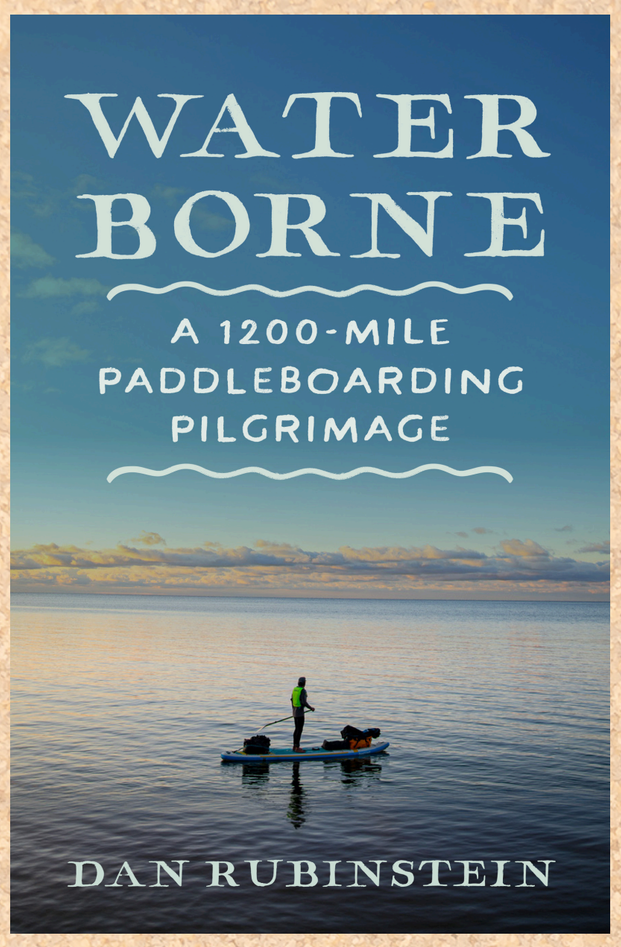

In 1486 Venice, Orsola Rosso defies tradition by secretly practicing the male-dominated art of glassmaking to save her family. As time flows unusually on the island of Murano, the story skips through centuries of war, plague, and triumph. Orsola hones her craft until her beads adorn the elite of Europe, yet she remains haunted by a desire for respect from her own community. It is a sweeping tale of a woman's persistence and the enduring, transformative power of art across the ages.

# Adult
# NONFICTION



# Water Borne

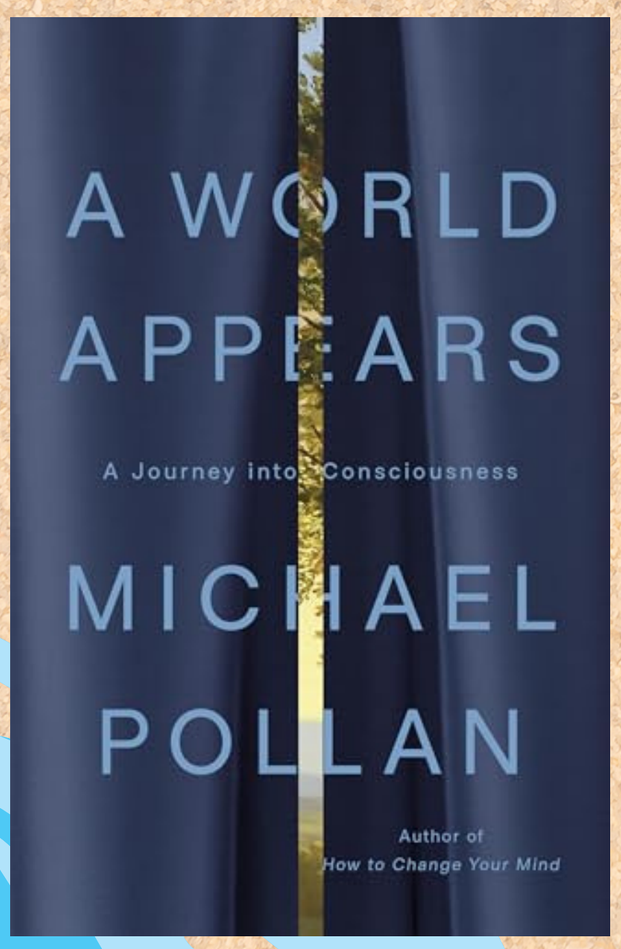
by Dan Rubinstein




In June 2023, Dan Rubinstein began a 1,200-mile solo paddleboard loop through Ottawa, NYC, and Toronto. His 10-week journey explored the power of "blue space"—the aquatic version of green space—to improve mental and physical health. Beyond personal healing, Rubinstein discovered that water acts as a vital bridge between diverse communities and geographies. Mixing research with a raw, anticolonial adventure, *Water Borne* argues that we don't need epic treks to find renewal; simple local waters hold the key to solving modern challenges.

# A World Appears

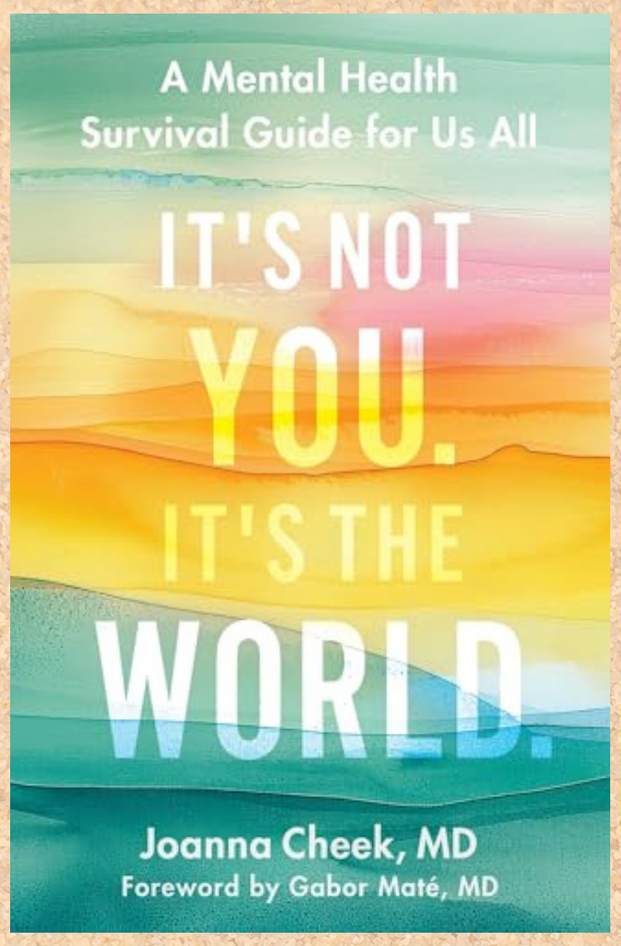
by Michael Pollan




In Pollan's dazzling exploration of consciousness, he discovers a world far deeper and stranger than our everyday reality. Eye-opening and mind-expanding, *A World Appears* takes us into the laboratories of our own minds, ultimately showing us how we might make better use of the gift of awareness to more meaningfully connect with the world and our deepest selves.

# It's Not You, It's the World

by Joanna Cheek




With mental health conditions affecting half of us by age 40, Dr. Joanna Cheek argues our symptoms aren't "disorders" but brilliant alarms adapting to a disordered world. In *It's Not You. It's the World*, Cheek suggests that self-improvement isn't enough when our systems are collapsing. Instead of fixing "broken" individuals, we must heal the societal imbalances making us sick. Featuring a foreword by Gabor Maté, this guide teaches readers to befriend their alarms and take collective action to find hope in a world on fire.

# Two Springs, One Summer

by Frank Wolf

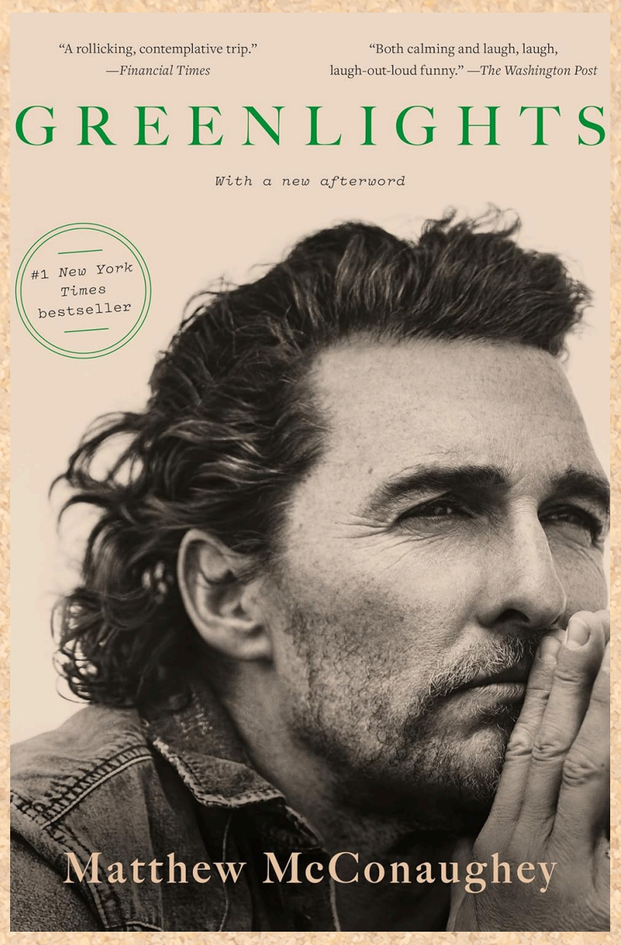



Adventurer Frank Wolf tackled three epic treks in one year: skiing Baffin Island and John Rae's 1854 route, plus a 1750-km canoe trip. While traversing glaciers and tundra rivers is grueling, Wolf finds modern life harder. For this "misfit," the mental weight of "fallow times" at home is more taxing than any remote wilderness, proving he is more at home in the wild than in civilization.

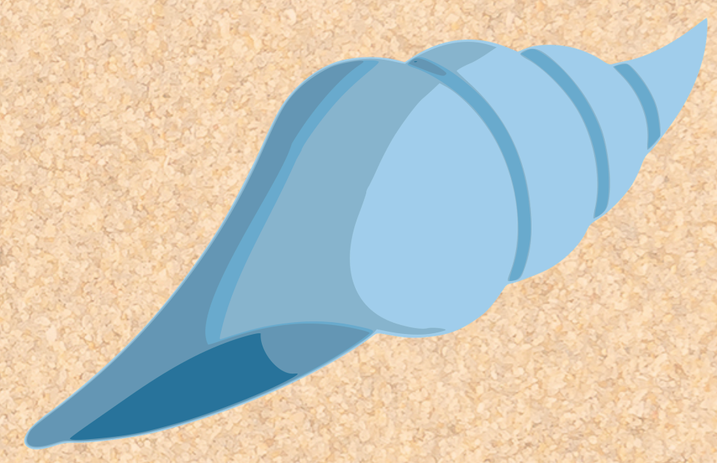


# Greenlights

## by Matthew McConaughey

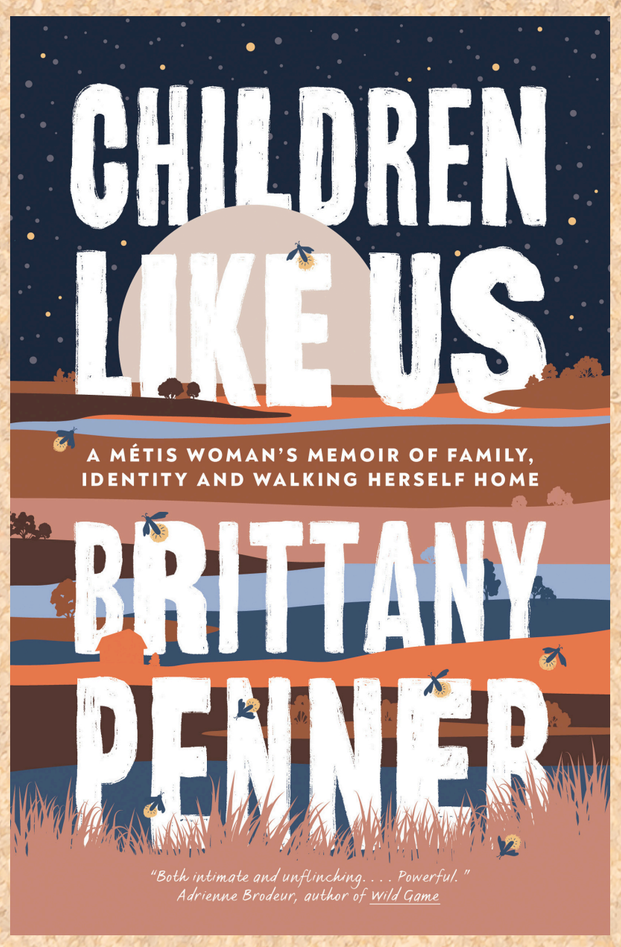



Matthew McConaughey's Greenlights is a soulful, gritty guide to "the art of livin'." Drawing from 36 years of journals, he shares tales of Texas brawls, Hollywood fame, and spiritual quests. His philosophy? Hardships (red and yellow lights) are often greenlights in disguise. It's a roadmap to catching more "go" signals by embracing life's rhythms with honesty and a bit of "alright, alright, alright."



# Children Like Us

## by Brittany Penner




Brittany Penner, a Métis woman adopted by a white Mennonite family, grew up as the "lucky one" while watching 21 foster siblings leave. To stay, she forced herself to be the "perfect" child, all while searching for her hidden roots.

*Children Like Us* follows her journey to find her biological mother, only to discover that the truth is far more tangled than she imagined. It is a powerful exploration of identity, the weight of assimilation, and the complex reality of belonging.

Happy

# READING