

## October 2021 Staff Picks

### **Anthony Bourdain Remembered**

A beautiful tribute with photos and notes from friends & fans. If you are a fan of Bourdain's cookbooks or TV shows, this is a quick glimpse into his legacy.

### **Author: Amanda Gorman Title: The Hill We Climb**

On January 20, 2021, Amanda Gorman became the sixth and youngest poet to deliver a poetry reading at a presidential inauguration. This book is a simple, straightforward dictation of her amazing poem with a few lines per page. While a quick read, it is a reminder at the beauty and impact poetry can have for each reader.

### **Author: Nicole LaPorte Title: Guilty Admissions**

Utterly fascinating and impossible to put down. Reporter LaPorte shares an entertaining exposé into the Southern California college bribery scandal that was all over the news recently. She provides insight into the systemic inequality, admissions chaos, and the sociology of a gilded class families.

### **Author: Ree Drummond Title: Frontier Follies**

Ree is relatable, funny, and charming when sharing these stories about her life: marriage, motherhood, and country farming. The first page transports you into her family and soon you are chuckling at the humorous tales. It makes me want to plan a trip to northern OK to visit her Mercantile and maybe a glimpse of the author herself.

### **Author: Wendy Williams Title: The Language of Butterflies**

*The Language of Butterflies* is a fascinating look at an insect most people think they know extremely well. Journalist Wendy Williams encapsulates the latest research on butterflies in an exciting fashion. She elevates the place of this tiny insect in the scientific community and describes butterfly "addicts" such as herself. Williams also gives an overview of the butterflies' evolution and how scientists discovered their origins. One of the greatest butterfly researchers, Maria Sibylla Merian, proved that the caterpillar and the butterfly were a single creature in the 17th century. Before this discovery, no one believed caterpillars pupated into butterflies. This was a fun and interesting read.

### **Author: Simone St. James Title: The Sun Down Motel**

Strange events have been occurring at the Sun Down Motel since the eighties. The past timeline shares the story of Viv's experience working at the mote. The current timeline follows her niece Carly who goes to work at the Motel and solve the mystery of Viv's disappearance. What's best about the novel is the way the two women mirror each other. Both are courageous and fiercely determined to solve crimes. The surprising twist at the end will enthrall most readers.

**Author: Eva Mozes Kor Title: Surviving the Angel of Death: The Story of a Mengele Twin in Auschwitz**

Everyone should read this true account of Eva Mozes Kor—how she and her twin survived deadly experiments in Auschwitz. Though this memoir is written for young adults, people of all ages will marvel at their story.

Separated from their parents, and placed under Dr. Mengele's program they are given some meager privileges. They are allowed to wear their own clothes and given a respite from labor.

One of the most harrowing moments is the time Mengele injects Eva with a deadly pathogen. Miraculously, she survives. She tricks the nurses into thinking her temperature is going down so that she can be reunited with her twin. The subterfuge saves her life. Had she stayed in the infirmary the poor nutrition and dearth of water would have killed her. Dr. Mengele also experiments on Miriam, giving her something that causes her kidneys to eventually fail. Remarkably, Eva creates an organization called C.A.N.D.L.E.S (Children of Auschwitz Nazi's Deadly Lab Experiment Survivors) and forgives all Nazis, including Dr. Mengele.

**Author: Julie Heaberlin Title: Black-Eyed Susans**

Years after a horrific crime, Tessie, the only survivor in the "Black-eyed Susan" murders, is beginning to doubt that the right person has been convicted for the heinous crime. Tessie was nearly killed and blinded by a "monster." After the horrific attack, Tessie suffers memory loss and psychological blindness—a conversion disorder. She begins to hear the voices of the other *Susans* in her head. The grown-up Tessie thinks her monster has been planting batches of black-eyed susan's to traumatize her. Tessie, however, is reluctant to delve into her past to determine who the real killer is. Heaberlin unveils the chilling story in back and forth chapters that contrasts events near the time of the crime with its aftershock seventeen years later. The twist at the end packs a wallop.

**Author: Grady Hendrix Title: The Final Girl Support Group**

I loved the character development of the Final Girls and the nods to slasher films. I didn't see the plot twists coming and couldn't put the book down. Suspenseful without being scary/horror and actually funny in moments.

**Author: Jim DeFede Title: The Day the World Came to Town: 9/11 in Gander, Newfoundland**

Very interesting read. It is now a stage production as well. This is the true story of planes that were flying to the US from Europe on 9/11. They were diverted to Newfoundland since all aircraft were grounded and none could enter the country. One of the stories is about a family from Wells, Texas and the baby girl they adopted from China.

**Author: Christopher Kimball Title: Tuesday Nights Mediterranean**

Very tasty, different, & fairly healthy recipes. The pictures are very appetizing! The recipes are arranged a couple of different ways, including by time so you can zero-in on what you want without looking through the entire book. So far the items I have made are not difficult to follow, easy enough for the basic at-home cook.

**Author: Stephen Graham Jones Title: My Heart is a Chainsaw**

The main character Jade is obsessed with Slasher films and the author delivers with well-developed knowledge. I was at first unsure if I liked the frantic, wordy ramblings that Jade would have around Slasher lore (and imaginings if it happened in real life.) I am glad that I pushed past my comfort level to keep reading, as the character development really helped. The story wavered between a realistic thriller and supernatural horror. The final chapters picked up the pace, kept the suspense nonstop, and unforgettable. I would love to see this as a movie someday.

**Author: Chip Gaines Title: No Pain, No Gains**

This book was a raw, revealing look at the TV persona Chip Gaines. It felt like a long conversation with him as he shares his philosophy on making human connections. He is vulnerable, unapologetic with his candor--- each reader may feel a different way when reading this book--- but it felt honest. It does make you want to examine your own meaning of life & community.

**Author: Brian Moylan Title: The Housewives: The Real Story Behind The Real Housewives**

Entertaining read for fans of the various TV series. The author has written Vulture's beloved recaps for years and is now sharing the full story (at least through the 2018 season) with his inside scoop. However, it is not a complete overview as Bravo did limit the interviews he could have. Still, if you were not ardently following Moylan's writing, then this is new & humorous material about your favorite Housewives.

**Author: Michael Faber Title: The Book of Strange New Things**

This is an intriguing, slow burn of a novel that asks important questions and, as such, is a perfect catalyst for debate. A husband and wife face huge challenges in this speculative novel. Peter is a Christian missionary who offers to bring the Christian faith to a new planet's inhabitants. Their former pastor, Kurzberg, has mysteriously gone missing. Peter chooses to live amongst the aliens in their rustic settlement in extreme humidity. He returns to the company base every few weeks to communicate with his wife via a primitive communication system called "The Shoot." His interactions with the aliens are rewarding and he gains a new sense of religious purpose. As time goes on, wife Bea writes less and less. The growing psychological gulf between Peter and Bea tests his faith. Unlike a thriller, revelations develop slowly in this well-thought out philosophical novel.

**Author: Kelley Armstrong Title: The Summoning**

Chloe Saunders is a teenage girl who is capable of seeing ghosts and after a particularly disturbing event she is sent away to a Lyle House, a home for mentally troubled individuals. However the house isn't what it seems. A great YA Urban Fantasy novel with supernatural characters, romance, and action.