

Welcome to our Staff Picks newsletter where we will share with you what we are reading, listening to or watching.

All Good Things

Author: Sarah Turnbull

Format: eBook

For many people, finding the love of your life and moving to Paris would come pretty close to having it all. Having shared her story in the bestselling *Almost French*, Sarah Turnbull seemed to have had more than her fair share of dreams come true. But there was still one dream she was beginning to fear might be impossible. Then out of the blue an opportunity to embark on another adventure offers a new beginning - and new hope. Leaving Paris behind was never going to be easy. But it helps when your destination is known as paradise on earth, Tahiti...



Mad Honey

Author: Jodi Picoult

Format: eAudiobook, Book

Olivia McAfee knows what it feels like to start over. Her picture-perfect life-living in Boston, married to a brilliant cardiothoracic surgeon, raising a beautiful son, Asher-was upended when her husband revealed a darker side. She never imagined she would end up back in her sleepy New Hampshire hometown, living in the house she grew up in, and taking over her father's beekeeping business. Lily Campanello is familiar with do-overs, too. When she and her mom relocate to Adams, New Hampshire, for her final year of high school, they both hope it will be a fresh start. And for just a short while, these new beginnings are exactly what Olivia and Lily need. Their paths cross when Asher falls for the new girl in school, and Lily can't help but fall for him, too. With Ash, she feels happy for the first time. Yet at times, she wonders if she can she trust him completely . . . Then one day, Olivia receives a phone call: Lily is dead, and Asher is being questioned by the police. Olivia is adamant that her son is innocent. But she would be lying if she didn't acknowledge the flashes of his father's temper in him, and as the case against him unfolds, she realises he's hidden more than he's shared with her.

The Dark Lord

Author: Jack Heckel

Format: eBook

To become a Dark Lord is no easy thing. The simple ambition to hold dominion over the world and bend all to your Will sounds straightforward but it's not. There are armies to raise, fortresses to build, heroes to defeat, battles to be fought, hours of endless soliloquy in front of the mirror – it's a never ending job. After many spectacular failures, Evil decided to lend more than inspiration to these would be tyrants. He wrote an easy to follow Dark Lord's Handbook. And yet the next Dark Lord that came along screwed up like all the others. It had been hundreds of years, and the Handbook was lost in the annals of time, along with all that was mythic and exciting in the world. Then one day a randy dragon had a chance encounter. Nine months later a Dark Lord was born. In time, the Handbook found its way to this new contender, Morden. To become a Dark Lord is no easy thing. Morden had better be a quick study.

The Promise of Home

Author: Nicola Marsh

Format: eAudiobook, eBook, Audio Disc

Entrusted to run her grandfather's real estate business, Karlana Vogel is determined to make it thrive. Pop raised her in small-town Acacia Haven after her parents died, so the family legacy is her pride and joy. When the competition, a cocky city mogul, breezes into town with a deal to take over, she's incensed. Hudson Grenville came from less than nothing and has worked nonstop to turn it all around. But he's only a hard-nosed salesman on the outside – buying the Vogels' agency is the lynchpin he needs to make his housing project for homeless kids work. Unless he's willing to let down all those counting on him, he has no choice but to stick around town and try to persuade Karly to sell. Despite being on opposite sides of the boardroom, the deal is complicated by the chemistry that keeps bringing them back to the table. Both parties will have to assess what they want out of life. And what they're willing to give up.

Private Beijing

Author: James Patterson
Format: eAudiobook, Book

Private Beijing is left devastated after an attack sees its lead agent, Lee Sheung, captured. With Private now under scrutiny by the Beijing police, Sheung's second-in-command calls on Jack Morgan, global head of the world's finest PI agency, to investigate. As more Private detectives find themselves in the firing line, Justine Smith conducts her own investigation in New York and quickly becomes entangled in a web of deceit. It's clear the conspiracy is closer to home than first thought. And as Jack works in unfamiliar territory, a ghost from the past is on his tail...

The Year that Changed Everything

Author: Cathy Kelly, Cathy
Format: Book

Three women celebrate their birthdays... 30. 40. 50. But their milestone birthdays mark the start of a year that will change everything... Ginger isn't spending her 30th the way she would have planned. Tonight might be the first night of the rest of her life - or a total disaster. Sam is finally pregnant after years of trying. When her waters break on the morning of her 40th birthday, she panics: forget labour, how is she going to be a mother Callie is celebrating her 50th at a big party in her Dublin home. Then a knock at the door mid-party turns her perfect life upside down...

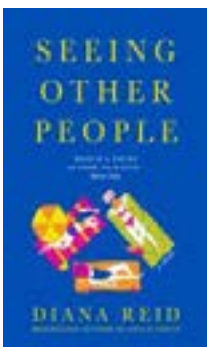
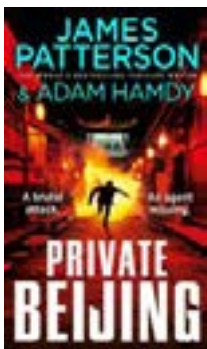
Seeing Other People

Author: Diana Reid
Format: Book

After two years of lockdowns, there's change in the air. Eleanor has just broken up with her boyfriend, Charlie's career as an actress is starting up again. They're finally ready to pursue their dreams - relationships, career, family - if only they can work out what it is they really want. When principles and desires clash, Eleanor and Charlie are forced to ask: where is the line between self-love and selfishness? In all their confusion, mistakes will be made and lies will be told as they reckon with the limits of their own self-awareness.

84 Charing Cross Road

Format: DVD



In 1949, Helene Hanff began a 20-year relationship with staff at Marks & Co. second-hand book shop in London, where she preferred to obtain out-of-print English books than buy them from stores in New York, where she lived. Her ardour for "Olde England" and its literature, great sense of humour, and flair for communication soon drives the story, along with the perfectly-English responses from "her book shop", and in short order she is on first-name basis with the staff at 84 Charing Cross Road. Learning of the nations rations, she sent care packages to be shared among them, forging a lifelong reciprocation of more than books. This read-in-a-day book (published 1970) was compiled from correspondence between Hanff (herself by then a published author and screenwriter), Frank Doel (of Marks & Co.), Frank's wife Nora, and other employees at the book shop. The story is one of real human fellowship, despite great distances and frequent large pauses in communication, and an absolute delight to read. Most mystifying to me, though, was the speed with which letters travelled across the Atlantic - this was the great era of letter writing and postal delivery! It was adapted for stage and screen, released as a film in 1987 starring Anne Bancroft as Helene and Anthony Hopkins as Frank. I happened to watch this the day I finished reading the book (not something I usually recommend doing, preferring a blurring of details through time between formats), and was pleased to find it was very nicely done, bringing to life the brash busyness of New York and the restrained bustle of London, along with the interactions between the people.

Love & Autism

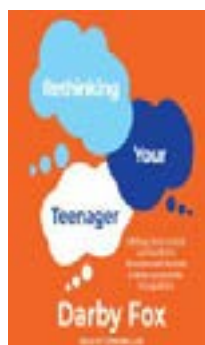
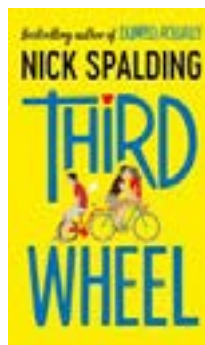
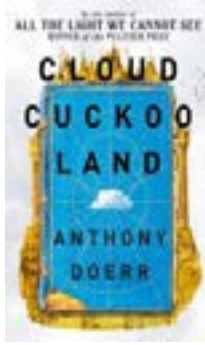
Author: Kay Kerr
Format: eBook, eAudiobook

Read by the author, this collection of real people's experiences of love as neurodivergent humans is honest and real. Not just romantic love, Kerr also explores love for family and friends, and provides some tips for parents looking to help steer their neurodivergent children through potentially-dangerous waters. We meet Michael from hit show Love on the Spectrum; math-start Chloe; Noor, a Muslim from a difficult home environment; Jess, who spent her life being put into different "boxes"; and Tim, a non-speaking autistic who was underestimated all his life, but uses technology and willpower to triumph.

Cloud Cuckoo Land

Author: Anthony Doerr
Format: eBook, Book

From the Pulitzer Prize--winning author of *All the Light We Cannot See*, perhaps the most bestselling and beloved literary fiction of our time, comes a triumph of imagination and compassion, a soaring novel about children on the cusp of adulthood in a broken world, who find resilience, hope, and story. The heroes of *Cloud Cuckoo Land* are trying to figure out the world around them: Anna and Omeir, on opposite sides of the formidable city walls during the 1453 siege of Constantinople; teenage idealist Seymour in an attack on a public library in present day Idaho; and Konstance, on an interstellar ship bound for an exoplanet, decades from now. Like Marie-Laure and Werner in *All the Light We Cannot See*, Anna, Omeir, Seymour, and Konstance are dreamers and outsiders who find resourcefulness and hope in the midst of peril. An ancient text--the story of Aethon, who longs to be turned into a bird so that he can fly to a utopian paradise in the sky--provides solace and mystery to these unforgettable characters. Doerr has created a tapestry of times and places that reflects our vast interconnectedness--with other species, with each other, with those who lived before us and those who will be here after we're gone. Dedicated to "the librarians then, now, and in the years to come," *Cloud Cuckoo Land* is a hauntingly beautiful and redemptive novel about stewardship--of the book, of the Earth, of the human heart.



Rethinking Your Teenager

Author: Darby Fox
Format: eAudiobook

The teenage years. . . parents fear this stage, dreading it even while watching their adorable toddlers explore the world. When it arrives, they try to control their teenager, in turn causing their teenager to push back more intensely. It's a natural instinct on both sides: teenagers are changing in every way while trying to assert their independence, and parents are faced with the challenge of coming up with rules, expectations, and standards for behavior without a genuine understanding of what is happening. But the result of this pattern is a parent-child relationship defined by conflict and reactivity--a breeding ground for stress, anger, and anxiety, all of which reinforcing those same cultural stereotypes and worst fears.

The Last Remains

Author: Elly Griffiths
Format: Book

Harry Nelson and Dr Ruth Galloway, Head of Archaeology at the nearby University of North Norfolk. Ruth is preoccupied with the threatened closure of her department and by her ever-complicated relationship with Nelson. However, she agrees to look at the case. Ruth sees at once that the bones are modern. They are identified as the remains of Emily Pickering, a young archaeology student who went missing in the 1990s. Emily attended a course run by her Cambridge tutor. Suspicion falls on him and also on another course member - Ruth's friend Cathbad, who is still frail following his near death from Covid. As they investigate, Nelson and his team uncover a tangled web of relationships within the student group and the adults leading them. What was the link between the group and the King's Lynn cafe where Emily's bones were found? Then, just when the team seem to be making progress, Cathbad disappears. Was it guilt that led him to flee? The trail leads Ruth and Nelson to the Neolithic flint mines in Grimes Graves which are as spooky as their name. The race is on, first to find Cathbad and then to exonerate him, but will Ruth and Nelson uncover the truth in time to save their friend?

Third Wheel

Author: Nick Spalding
Format: Book

Jake Carlisle is living his best life, thanks to the crazily successful influencer channel he created with his best friend Sy. Reviewing whacky hobbies and adrenaline-fuelled adventures, Sy has pushed Jake into doing more exciting stuff than either ever thought possible. Then disaster strikes. When newbie Helena joins the team, Sy quickly falls head over heels for her... All of a sudden, with romance blossoming and the business dynamic shifting, Jake is horrified to find himself becoming the dreaded third wheel. Being the odd one out was not what he signed up for. And he'll do anything to get his best friend back -- even if that involves a little light sabotage, an unhealthy amount of jealousy... and one very unfortunate pair of tartan Speedos. Will Jake be relegated to the background from now on? Or will he finally learn to stand on his own two feet and succeed at getting his life -- along with his friendship -- back on track?