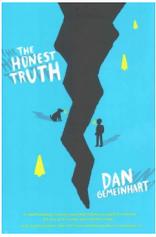


Staff Picks: The Honest Truth



[view in catalog](#)

Reviewed by Ginny H.

Mark has been sick for a long time and after receiving bad news from the doctors, he's had enough. He's angry, scared, and just wants to disappear. So he does.

Mark sets out with his dog, Beau, to climb Mount Rainier. He encounters all kinds of people and obstacles along the way, all the while documenting his travels with his camera and writing haikus. While he misses his mom and dad and his best friend, Jess, he keeps going, even when he starts getting sicker.

This book was a really intense adventure novel. I found myself relating to the character in huge ways.

The bond between Mark and his dog, Beau, was so relatable and real. When they got into some of the more dramatic parts, I was literally holding my breath!

If you like adventure and action, you'll love this book by Dan Gemeinhart.

Posted by Alejandria G. on January 22, 2019

[The Honest Truth](#)

[Adventure](#)

[Animals](#)

[Dog](#)

[Fiction](#)

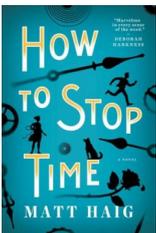
[Read](#)

[Travel](#)

[Oh, the Thinks You Can Think](#)

[Alejandria G.'s blog](#)

How to Stop Time



[view in catalog](#)

Despite being over four hundred years old?alive in the time of Shakespeare?Tom Hazard (one of his many *non de plumes*) is still learning how to live life.

Recently, he relocated to London, and became a history teacher in a secondary school. While lecturing about Elizabethan England or Mussolini during World War II, Tom gets tripped on things he actually saw, versus things he should only be familiar about through books. The students notice and look at him quizzically. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on June 27, 2018

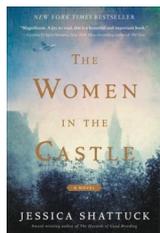
[How to Stop Time](#)

[Fiction](#)

[For the Love of Reading](#)

[Dory L.'s blog](#)

The Women in the Castle



[view in catalog](#)

War, it is said, tears families apart and brings strangers together. In this compelling WWII novel, two German widows of Nazi-resisters and a third woman, a refugee from the East, move in together, along with their children. They help each other with child-rearing and preparing meals, despite the privations of rationing. Most importantly, they give each other deep emotional support, as good families do.

The novel opens on a grand harvest party in a castle, ramshackle and falling apart, near a small town in Bavaria. Marianne, the main character, plays host for its ailing owner, Countess von Lingenfels, her husband Albrecht's aunt. Marianne brings to hosting the skills of someone who has an eye for beauty and taste and particularly the complicated dynamics of relationships between people. She greets, cajoles, and introduces strangers with the flair and manners of a great lady. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on November 9, 2017

[The Women in the Castle: A Novel](#)

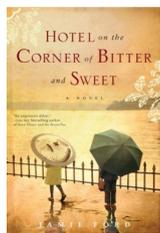
[Female Friendships](#)

[Fiction](#)

[For the Love of Reading](#)

[Dory L.'s blog](#)

Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet



[view in catalog](#)

On November 17, author Jamie Ford speaks at the Buskirk-Chumley Theater in Bloomington for the [NEA Big Read](#) and the library's biennial [Power of Words](#) program. Tickets are free, and can be picked up at the Main Library (at the [Friends of the Library Bookstore](#) or the [Friends office](#)) or [ordered online](#). As he often does, Jamie Ford writes about the clashing and melding of different cultures in his three historical novels: *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet*, *Songs of Willow Frost*, and *Love and Other Consolation Prizes*. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on November 8, 2017

[Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet: A Novel](#)

[American History](#)

[Coming of Age](#)

[Family Relationships](#)

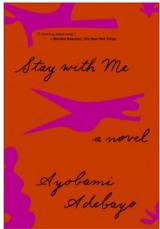
[Fiction](#)

[Multicultural](#)

[For the Love of Reading](#)

[Dory L.'s blog](#)

Stay with Me



[view in catalog](#)

With economy of language and a taut emotional underlying, [Ayobami Adebayo](#) tells the parallel tales of a young couple's marriage, alongside Nigeria's struggle for independence.

Told alternately by Yejide and her husband, Akin, the book opens late in the story to a woman packing her bags. She's done this many, many times before, but something—whether deep feelings or fear—has always stopped her from making the trip to her southwestern Nigerian hometown of Ilesa, once the site of a magical kingdom. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on October 31, 2017

[Stay with Me](#)

[Family Relationships](#)

[Fiction](#)

[Multicultural](#)

[For the Love of Reading](#)

[Dory L.'s blog](#)

Bleaker House: Chasing My Novel to the End of the World



[view in catalog](#)

Say you've just finished your graduate degree in writing from Boston College, and a rich donor provides you with funds to travel anywhere in the world. Where do you pick? Tahiti, Paris, Buenos Aires? For British citizen Nell Stevens, it's none of the above. Instead, she chooses the remote Falklands Islands, where South America meets Antarctica—in June, which is winter there.

In Stanley, the Falklands' capital, Nell researches the archives for her first novel, and also meets some of the less-than-friendly Falklanders there. After a few weeks, Nell hops a plane for even more remote Bleaker Island, about which a writer friend quips, "Oh, you're writing *Bleaker House*." [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on August 2, 2017

[Bleaker House: Chasing My Novel to the End of the World](#)

[Adventure](#)

[Fiction](#)

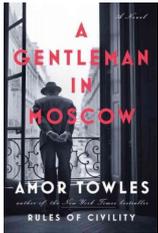
[Memoir](#)

[For the Love of Reading](#)

[Information, Answers & Reviews](#)

[Dory L.'s blog](#)

A Gentleman in Moscow



[view in catalog](#)

During the first half of the twentieth century, thousands of Russians suffered fates much worse than life-long imprisonment. Joseph Stalin sent many artists, writers, and politicians to the Gulag or killed them outright.

This is the fictional story of Count Rostov, an educated aristocrat devoted to the literary arts, who found after the first Russian Revolution that being a count was not only illegal, but dangerous. The Count traveled to Paris, and unlike many of his contemporaries visiting abroad, decided to return home. But in the 1920s, under Stalin's Article 58 banning counterrevolution, Rostov stood before a tribunal, and was sentenced to permanent imprisonment at the luxury Metropol Hotel for writing a poem that he never wrote. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on July 19, 2017

[A Gentleman in Moscow](#)

[Fiction](#)

[Friendship](#)

[Historical](#)

[For the Love of Reading](#)

[Information, Answers & Reviews](#)

[Dory L.'s blog](#)

Exit West



[view in catalog](#)

Several books use the concept of a magical door to provide characters entry into other worlds, or to better places in this one. *Exit West*, a timely novel about refugees by [Man Booker Prize](#) winner [Mohsin Hamid](#), employs this device but because of the power of his plotting and beauty of his prose, it's highly believable.

The novel begins when a young man, Saeed, meets Nadia in an adult evening class in an unnamed country at some point in the near future. Civil war wracks the country; terrorists and militants roam the streets. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on June 14, 2017

[Exit West: A Novel](#)

[Fiction](#)

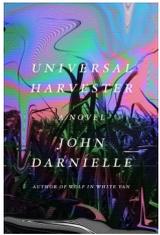
[Multicultural](#)

[For the Love of Reading](#)

[Information, Answers & Reviews](#)

[Dory L.'s blog](#)

Review: Universal Harvester



[view in catalog](#)

This is the second novel from Bloomington-born author John Darnielle, known also for the past twenty-five years as the songwriter in his band the Mountain Goats. While *Universal Harvester's* trailer video [*YouTube*] suggests a horror story, the only slight chills come from the unexpected shifts between third and first person narration. And the eeriness is almost comforting, providing a profound depth and hopefulness to lives that may outwardly appear unremarkable.

[Read more](#)

Posted by Ryan S. on May 15, 2017

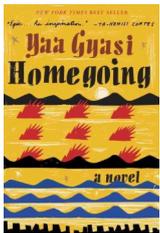
[Universal Harvester: A Novel](#)

[Fiction](#)

[Information, Answers & Reviews](#)

[Ryan S.'s blog](#)

Homegoing



[view in catalog](#)

A Ghana proverb says, "By going and coming, a bird weaves its nest." The title of this novel tells the story of many people from Ghana who were forcibly removed from their African home, yet centuries later, two descendants return to find their family.

If you liked Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad*, Yaa Gyasi's novel will make the perfect follow-up. Hard to believe that she started writing this in her early twenties and finished it by age twenty-six. It covers much more ground than Whitehead's historical novel: Africa and the U.S., and much more time, from the mid-seventeen hundreds to now.

At one point in the novel, a black history teacher describes history as storytelling. Gyasi presents many eloquent and heart-rending stories here. What ties them together is that all the characters belong to one extended family, who were once royalty in Ghana. They became both slave-sellers and slaves. Many came to America.

Gyasi follows two tracks of this family: one remained in Ghana, the other was forced into slavery in the U.S. It follows their descendants after the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the great migration north.

Gyasi visited Africa as a student to do research on a book about mothers and daughters. But when she toured Ghana's Cape Coast Castle, something in the rooms, the cellar where slaves were chained and abused in dungeons called out to her. She immediately decided to focus on the African slave trade and its diaspora later in the U.S. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on April 25, 2017

[Homegoing](#)

[African American](#)

[Fiction](#)

