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Hench: A Novel
By Natasha Zita Walschots
(William Morrow, 9780062978578, $27.99)

Hench is absolutely thrilled to announce that Hench has found a fresh, original, feminist angle on the trope of superheroes and supervillains. This is a very, very novel. Hench is fundamentally subscriptions to beef jerky to job—ever supervillains need to hear for their data entry—when she becomes collateral damage in a supervillain's scheme. A Dover's hand is suddenly and incautiously given an opportunity to use her ability to fight back against the co-opted forces of good. Very exciting.

—Carole Shrock, Valperger, Scholastic Books, Okemos, MI

The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue: A Novel
By V.E. Schwab
(William Morrow, 9780062880783, $27.99)

Type, beautifully written, heartwarming, and heartbreaking, The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue is a contemplation on life, death, what makes us real, and a quest to make your mark on the world, and why we so fear it. Addie makes deals with a demon as she can live her life without needing to be good. Most deals, like hers are fulfilled, there are strings attached—and those strings make it so she is forgotten by everyone she meets. Dancing about time, she is barely holding herself together—is it even possible?

—Lindsey Patterson, R.J. Julia Bookstores, Madison, CT

Stakes Is High: Life After the American Dream
By Mychal Denzel Smith
(Serif, 9780879517728, $27.99)

Here it is: the book we’ve been waiting for that didn’t really come out until the right time. The level of writing is high, and the resolution is beautiful. This book will make your blood boil over just in time to bring it to the polls in November. Like a mother, it tickles you up as you strive—whether you mean to—the next step in our nation’s advancement and demands for racial justice. Thank goodness this book exists.

—Ellen Sandmeyer, Sandmeyer’s Bookstore, Chicago, IL

Leave the World Behind: A Novel
By Rebecca Roanhorse
(Saga Press, 9781534437678, $27.99)

As an avid fantasy reader and an Indigenous person, I cannot adequately describe how much it meant to read Black Sun and how it resonated with me. This is a non-white fantasy based on cultures from the Americas. This book is so well done! I loved all of the characters (especially the swashbuckling, magic-using ship captain), the settings were beautiful, and the magic in this is fascinating. If you’re looking for marvelous sea women, larger-than-life crooks in redcoats returning to wreak even past violence, political intrigues, and dash of romance, look no further. It also really appreciates the way that queer and non-binary characters are portrayed. Roanhorse has written a perfect fantasy novel and I cannot wait to see what she takes on next.

—Hillary Smith, Copperfield’s Books, Calistoga, CA

Ready or Not: A Novel
By Brie Carver
(Hachette Book Group, 9780062978547, $27.99)

We’ve all heard the horror stories of women kept captive in basements, bearing children to madmen, only to escape after years of torture with a world that they no longer remember and a public filled with fascination at their stories. Dear Children features two such women, victims of the same abductor, but who suffer very different fates. It is also the story of men who love too hard, in both the right and the wrong ways. At its heart is the story of family, of what we will do to the people we love, and the choices we make.

—Laura Graveline, Brazos Bookstore, Houston, TX

Cuyahoga: A Novel
By Pete Beatty
(Knopf, 9780525532434, $27)

Petey Beatty’s Cuyahoga is difficult to categorize: a slapstick epic, an upside-down creation story, a post-apocalyptic road tale. This book is a document of the inescapable and how it serves to shame us, both real and surreal, and hope for a better future shining through. House rough, house a gripping and emotional journey that should not be missed.

—Jennifer Green, Green Bean Books, Portland, OR

The Bell in the Lake: A Novel
By Lura Myring, Deborah Dawkin (Trans.)
(By The Book, 9781908644969, $16.95)

Perfect for fans of Karen Millen Hargreaves’s The Mermaid, this Norwegian bestseller is an atmosphere-laden dream. Set in the secluded village of Butangen in 1910s, The Bell in the Lake chronicles its residents’ lives, all centered around a 700-year-old church and its mystical bells. Myrting effortlessly captures the push and pull between history and modernity, moving her characters’ much-needed reset through a variety of avenues: charming, beautifully written, and redemptive. If you like memoirs, this one is fantastic.

—Peggy Malpique, Quick Ridge Books, Raleigh, NC

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