

Thursday, June 27, 6:00 pm

# BEYOND BOOK CLUB

## Tattered Cover Aspen Grove

### Recommended Reading Book Talk

Our Aspen Grove booksellers are excited to share their favorite books for adult readers and book groups.  
*Everyone is welcome!*

[How It Feels To Float](#) by Helena Fox

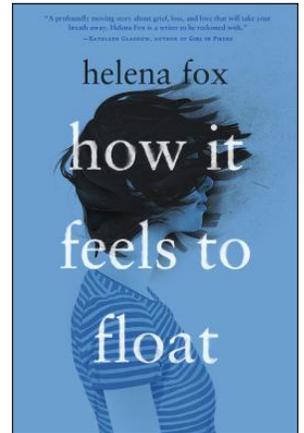
reviewed by Aspen Grove Bookseller Alina Mathews

**H**ow It Feels To Float by Helena Fox is about a teenage girl struggling to move past the death of her father, and dealing with some mental health issues. She meets the new boy in school, and goes on a journey to all of the places that were special to her father in order to heal. I would definitely give this book to my friends who like contemporary stories that deal with some powerful topics.

This book is broken up into four major sections, and each "chapter" is only a couple pages long. The whole thing had a very poetic feel, which I thought benefited the story greatly. The purpose of this book is to talk about depression and anxiety, and how hard it is to lose a parent so young in life. Fox goes more in-depth about mental illness in teenagers than other YA author that I have read. It hints at the main character having schizophrenia, which is a first for young adult books that I have read.

There is a great scene where Biz, the main character, and her best friend Grace get pushed out of their friend group. Grace's boyfriend just broke up with her, so she gets drunk and goes to vandalize his house with Biz. I also loved Sylvia. She was such a wonderful parental figure for the main character, and she was so sweet and such a breath of fresh air compared to the darker tone of the novel.

Heartfelt, lyrical, and stronger than anything.



[They Were Her Property: White Women as Slave Owners in the American South](#)

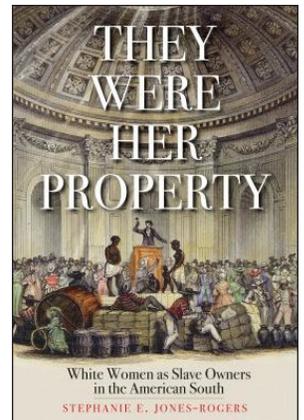
by Stephanie Jones-Rogers

reviewed by Magazine Buyer Gerald Davis

“They Were Her Property” is a clear-eyed, steady march against the prevailing consensus that women in the South were not involved in the business of slavery. In part, this territory was not explored previously because of a belief in the absolute sway of the doctrine of “couverture,” the idea that men had complete legal watch over their wives assets. On the other side of the coin, however, the book serves as a reminder of how entrenched and blinding the myths that help societies live with their darker moments are.

Ms. Jones-Rogers explores a large amount of legal documents, newspaper announcements, and other testimony that confirm oral testimony by slaves themselves that they were often bought, managed, punished and sold by women. In a tragic irony, the ownership of slaves seems the avenue where women of the south, deprived of independence by the legal fiction of “couverture”, could find a measure of financial and social freedom.

Ms. Jones-Rogers is a careful, methodical historian. and the need for a meticulous review of the evidence slows the narrative somewhat. In return for this close reading of the material available, the book makes a thousand cuts to the myth of a mostly benevolent care, an almost maternal treatment, of slaves. The book, however, reads not as an attack on Southern women, but as an attempt to better chart the historical map by which we interpret the presence of slavery in the history, the homes, the fields and the battlefields of the United States.



[The Spy and the Traitor](#) by Ben Macintyre

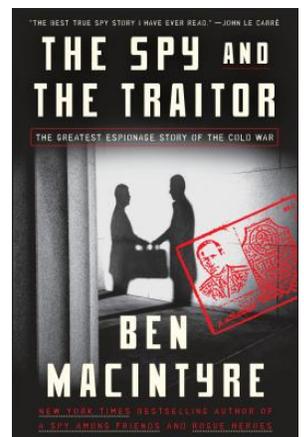
reviewed by Aspen Grove Bookseller Kathy Baum

**I**f you like the TV show *The Americans* or spy thrillers and political and/or history books, you'll love the real-world spy intrigue and its overlaps with the show. **The Spy and the Traitor** by Ben Macintyre is the true story about a KGB double-agent who helped turn the tide of the Cold War. Oleg Gordievsky, a complex man who took great risk to deescalate tensions between Russia and the West turns against the KGB in favor of MI6. Oleg's attempted escape from Russia with the help of Britain's MI6 spies had my heart racing.

I think this is an important read, because although this true spy story took place in the 80s, it is still relevant in today's turbulent world. **The Spy and the Traitor** is a fascinating, eye-opening, thrilling read perfect for mystery thriller and history buffs alike.

“The best true spy story I have ever read.” —John le Carré

“The subtitle of Macintyre's latest real-life spy thriller calls it ‘The Greatest Espionage Story of the Cold War.’ Like pretty much everything in this fine book, the description is accurate... Macintyre is fastidious about tradecraft details... [he] has become the preeminent popular chronicler of British intelligence history because he understands the essence of the business.” —*Washington Post*



## Gingerbread by Helen Oyeyemi

reviewed by Aspen Grove Buyer Margaret Noteman

There are some myths we know so well they become part of our consciousness. Helen Oyeyemi's **Gingerbread** is a brilliant and dazzling new take on the old story of the Gingerbread House, Gretel and gingerbread itself.

Harriet Lee, a single mother of a teenage daughter, Perdita, immigrated to London from the quite possibly imaginary land of Drubdstrana, with her mother Margot. Their family's recipe for gingerbread creates magic and mystery, death and delight. **Gingerbread** is a reminder that no matter how far we go from home, we never really leave it behind, and our past is with us in our present as well as our future. Harriet's fate will always be intertwined with that of her childhood friend Gretel.

**Gingerbread** is a tale about longing for what we don't have, power, wealth, heritage and possibility. **Gingerbread** is one of those very special books you don't want to end, yet can't wait to finish and find out how it all turns out. Enter Harriet's world, you won't be sorry.

## White Elephant by Julie Langsdorf

reviewed by Aspen Grove Manager Portia Graf

Our pick for the Aspen Grove Fiction Book Club this June is **White Elephant** by Julie Langsdorf, a title that we not only received physical Advanced Reading Copies for from Galley Match (a website that sends ARCs of books to book clubs to read and discuss), but that I also received as an Advanced Listening Copy from Libro.fm. Even more exciting is that for our meeting, Julie Langsdorf will be joining us as well! (More information will be announced soon...) Hence, me reading it well ahead of time.

In the quiet suburban town of Willard Park, citizens take care of the environment, neighbors support independent businesses like Lucy's, all the houses are small and cozy, and everyone knows everyone's business. The dynamic is very personal and homey, at least until it's upset by the big shot Cox family. Nick and Kaye Cox—two entrepreneurial types—move in next to Allison and Ted Miller, and to the entire neighborhoods' dismay build a massive white home dwarfing the rest of the Sears houses. It's nickname: the White Elephant.

On top of this, the tearing out of trees around the neighborhood creates an atmosphere of gossip and distrust, leading everyone to question everyone else. And like I said, everyone knows everyone's business. We follow the awkward move-in of the Cox's next door neighbor, the Millers, as they struggle with their marital issues (particularly Allison's crush on the new neighbor and Ted's unrelated hatred of him), the unusual and somewhat "frowned upon" friendship blooming between the tweenage girls Lindy Cox and Jillian Miller, the sudden pregnancy of another new couple in town Suzanne and Grant, and many others in the neighborhood.

The romantic in me really enjoyed the cute moments between Nick Cox and Allison Miller, particularly when he runs into her at Lucy's (and he cannot figure out what the deal with the mugs is). It's awkward and sweet, and although they are both married and old enough to know better, it's a refreshing moment of positive humor in the midst of the chaos. Plus, who doesn't like the image of two dogs tangling two people crushing on one another with their leashes?? It's adorable.

I really loved listening to this book. The drama of these little suburban families rings so true (especially of the Littleton area, where I grew up) to the point where I thought, "oh my god, that happened to so-and-so!" And Langsdorf's little quips—I mean she named the impeding family Cox—are so thoroughly entertaining. If you enjoy those fluffy, fun slice-of-life books, full of drama and humor, pick **White Elephant** up!

## Transmetropolitan by Warren Ellis

reviewed by Aspen Grove Bookseller Daniel Thorne

I think **Transmetropolitan** by Warren Ellis is one of the best cult graphic novels. Our psychotic hero, rogue journalist Spider Jerusalem, descends from his mountain hideaway to rejoin the sprawling cyberpunk dystopia from which he was in self-imposed exile. He proceeds to wreak havoc and crack wise as he revisits The City and its technologically altered patrons. I love Spider Jerusalem for his anarchic, hysterically funny attitude.

In this first volume, Spider ventures into the dangerous Angels 8 district, home of the Transients—humans who have decided to become aliens through cosmetic surgery. But Spider's interview with the Transients' leader gets him a scoop he didn't bargain for. And don't miss Spider's first confrontation with the President of the United States...in a men's room.

This series of graphic novels has a small but dedicated following. Whenever I see a smiley face with three eyes it's like a special code, and I can guess with approximately 87% certainty that the person is cool.

"**Transmetropolitan** has been the dark lord of the graphic novel genre. The tale of disillusioned journalist Spider Jerusalem returning to the city has offered page-turning brain-reward to hundreds of thousands of enthralled readers." —*Wired*

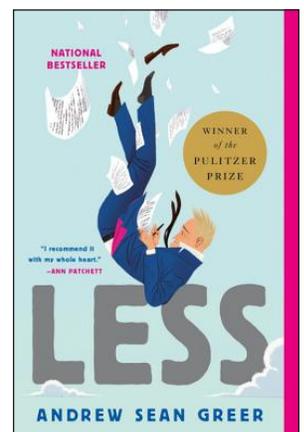
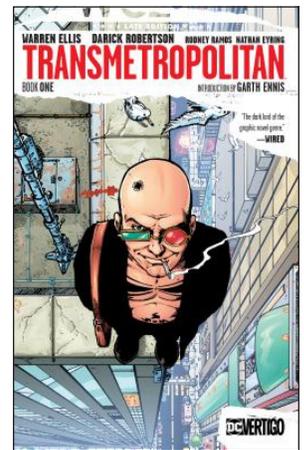
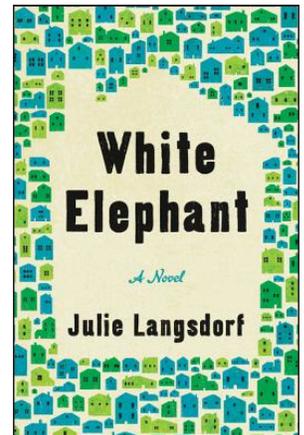
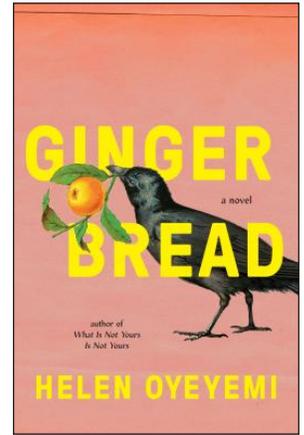
## Less by Andrew Sean Greer

reviewed by Aspen Grove Bookseller Jennifer Martin

ENCORE RECOMMENDATION

Anyone who wants a light read that's not frivolous, pick up **Less** by Andrew Sean Greer. I picked it up, because it won the Pulitzer—and didn't sound awful—and found that I enjoyed it. Plus, Gerald, the magazine buyer, nominated it as one of his Best of 2018 books and it's sold incredibly well at Tattered Cover. The story is about a man named Arthur Less. To avoid the social awkwardness of attending the wedding of his younger lover of nine years, Arthur orchestrates a round-the-world tour in order to be (politely) otherwise disposed.

Much has been made of the humor in this book (including the Pulitzer committee almost treating it like a flaw). I did not find this book uproarious, as some did, but I was amused throughout and often chuckled. More to the point, the style is a feature, not a bug, and **Less** is full of pathos—I was surprised how much pathos is in this book, in fact—that simply would not be there if Greer had opted for something more standard. Furthermore, this book is meta without being fourth-wall-breaking, and has a wonderful turn at the end that made me want to read it again. For those who enjoyed the humor of **The Idiot** by Elif Batuman or those who like the living-with-genius aspect of **The Wife** by Meg Wolitzer or even readers of Michael Chabon will enjoy Greer's **Less**.



## Quiet by Susan Cain

reviewed by Aspen Grove Bookseller Jennifer Martin

After sitting on my reading list since it was published (it was a bestseller) and selling well ever since at the Tattered Cover, I finally got to Susan Cain's psychology book **Quiet**.

An introvert herself, Cain pretty much wrote the book to unmask the assumptions we have about introversion & extroversion (and in some ways, as a self-study). Society and culture has developed—and clings to—what Cain calls “the extrovert ideal.” We value extroverted qualities over introverted ones—sometimes overtly, sometimes subconsciously—but often to detriment of the individual and society both. Cain navigates studies, research, history, and anecdotes to show “the power of introverts.”

The chapters are organized into four sections concerning how extroversion rose to such prominence in the West, how biology affects temperament, the East and introversion, and finally how introverts interact with the world. The subject-matter is well-presented, and thorough without being inaccessibly academic. Although she's occasionally hobbled by her bias, the research she cites is eye-opening, fascinating, and makes you want to learn more.

As a fairly scientific work, **Quiet** may need an update soon, but I still found it illuminating and thought-provoking (and discussion-provoking) especially for readers who like insight into personality, temperament, and how humans function in general.

## Emily Eternal by M.G. Wheaton

reviewed by Aspen Grove Manager Portia Graf

Meet Emily, the artificial consciousness that “can solve advanced mathematical problems, unlock the mind's deepest secrets and even fix your truck's air con” ... Though that does little to help mankind, as she cannot restart the sun.

Facing the end of the world and the inevitable extinction of mankind and all other earthly inhabitants, Emily and the crew of scientists that created her are working against the clock to find a solution. It's not until Emily's central programmer, Nathan, is murdered and her servers stolen that she realizes that she's stumbled on something big, like save mankind big. And for some reason, someone doesn't want her pursuing it.

This dystopian novel is a great read for anyone who likes science fiction, but wants to stay in a more realistic, analytical realm than that of alien spaceships and the like. I tend towards books with a sense of the fantastic, whether it be magical realism, horror, science fiction or the like. This is a solidly science fiction book for sure, but it also has this underlying commentary about the human experience and human psyche as it is juxtaposed with this unique creation melding man with machine. Sure, this is far from an obscure trope in the science fiction world—**Ex Machina**, **I, Robot**, **Blade Runner**, etc.—but this is purely from the internal point of view of the creation itself. And that really changes how the plot and commentary flows.

Emily is such a fascinating character. In an *Ex-Machina* style narrative, we understand that Emily is a construct—a complex super-computer built to replicate a human consciousness, though with fatal flaws—but it feels like she is a real three-dimensional, flesh and blood human in her emotional (yes, she has complex emotions) reactions and thought processes. Though Emily has the capability to appear anywhere in an instant, or to fast-forward or slow down her own perception of time, she chooses to exist in the same time and space as her human counterparts. I loved the downtime that she partakes in, spending it daydreaming about her crush Jason and imagining a life as a real live person.

It's a particularly fun book to listen to—as I did via Libro.fm—because it makes her feel that much more realistic when she is literally a voice in an electronic device telling her story. If you enjoy classic robot-human interaction plots like that of Isaac Asimov or Philip K. Dick, this is a fun modernized rendition.

## Chasing Denali: The Sourdoughs, Cheechakos, and Frauds Behind the Most Unbelievable Feat in Mountaineering by Jon Waterman

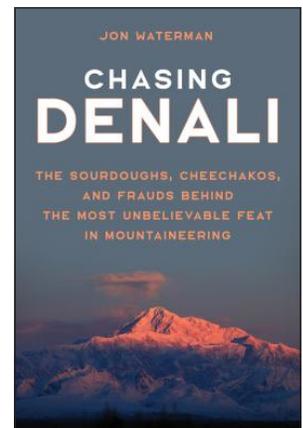
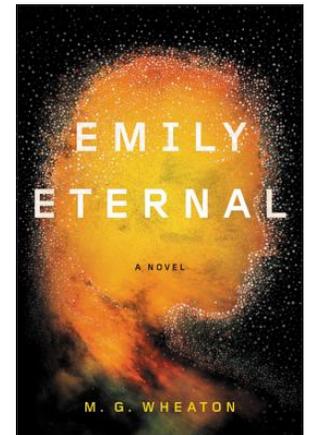
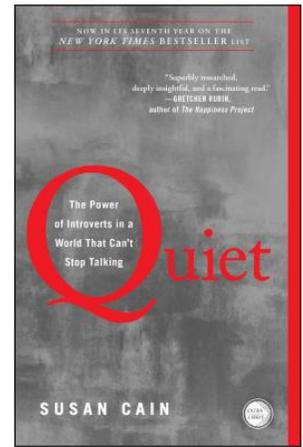
reviewed by Aspen Grove Bookseller Roxie Harrington

It is not simply that I enjoyed meeting Jon Waterman at a reading at the Tattered Cover Aspen Grove, hearing him discuss what urged him to begin his trek up Denali in the footsteps of the four men (called Sourdoughs for reasons you will read in the book) who said they completed the climb in 1910 wearing home sewn, mattress ticking coats, fur moccasins, carrying hand axes, and no ropes, but it is also that the book's cover with its luminous picture of the mountain grabs you by the eyes, the subtitle twangs your curiosity, and the smooth, well laid out, almost casual writing style, which reads more like a private conversation about family legends, true and untrue, rather than a highly detailed, deeply researched, sterile reportage of personal and historic events, weave a completely satisfying read, with two unsolved mysteries for the price of one!

Jon's broad knowledge of the history of Alaska, his personal experience in mountaineering, and his intimate knowledge of treading the snow and breathing the air of Denali itself, combined with his wondering whether he himself could make yet another climb to the peak as he neared his sixtieth birthday, color and parallel the puzzling tale of the four Sourdough climbers. The skepticism about both achievements is ripe and full throughout the read, both in Jon's writing, and in the reader's mind. The almost hilarious details about the rivalries among other early climbers wanting to debunk any claim the Sourdoughs had for reaching the peak are a riot to read. Egos abounded, as did ridiculous plans on mastering the mountain by age old, time wasting, cumbersome methods. The Sourdoughs offered advice, and even some sourdough starter to some who doubted them. Fools, all... ignoring the advice, spilling the sourdough, failing to find their way. Who knew so many would want a piece of the glory? The Alaskans always came out ahead, it would seem.

READ THIS! It will resolve any questions you might have about a one hundred eight year old mystery, and it will clarify how far one man was able to go to prove himself to himself. You will not regret you picked up this book! You may even find yourself, as I did, pulling on your boots, and hiking down the street, imagining yourself atop your biggest challenge—fist up, heart pumping, one with the air you breathe!

P.S. I still call it Mt. McKinley... climbing it was once the goal of those of us who worked at McKinley Mortgage Co (named for the mountain, and now long defunct) back in the 80s, well before my own 60th birthday. Now, I'll simply enjoy Jon Waterman's viewpoint.



### The Likeness by Tana French

reviewed by Aspen Grove Fiction Book Club Moderator Lizz Lewis

I've read a handful of Tana French's novels, and she never disappoints. So when my mom mentioned that she was going to read **The Likeness** (French's second novel) and I remembered my copy that had been sitting unread for an embarrassing length of time, I decided to join her so we could talk about it together.

French has been a bestseller many times over, and won the Edgar Award for her first novel, **In The Woods**. **The Likeness** is a sort-of sequel to **In The Woods**, furthering following the story of Detective Cassie Maddox. The good news is, you do not have to have read **In The Woods** to understand what is happening in **The Likeness**. The more good news is that if you have read **In The Woods**, you get to see how one of the main characters deals with the aftermath of working a difficult case and what her life looks like in the soon-after. In **The Likeness**, Detective Maddox is pseudo-happily working a boring desk job in the Domestic Violence unit when one day, she is called to view a murder scene. The victim turns out to be her doppelganger and bears identification claiming she is Alexandra Maddison, an alias that Det. Maddox created for an undercover job some number of years ago. Det. Maddox is then thrown back into an undercover position like nothing she has ever tried before—and she becomes dangerously close to losing herself and the life she has scraped back together in the process.

At times creepy, sad, hopeful and touching, French spins a web that is hard to stop thinking about. I love her creaky-door-creepy style...it's the literary equivalent to seeing something move in the shadows, and then you look—and nothing is there. She's a clever story-teller, and you are able to connect and feel for her characters in ways that stick with you. This is a great novel for anyone who loves a good murder mystery with a little bit of ghost story, cop story and good old fashioned page turning.

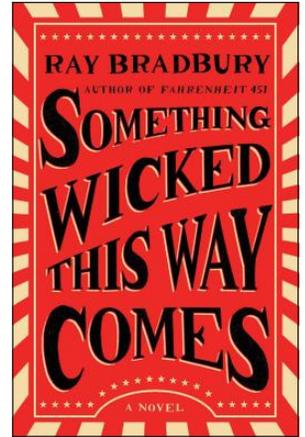
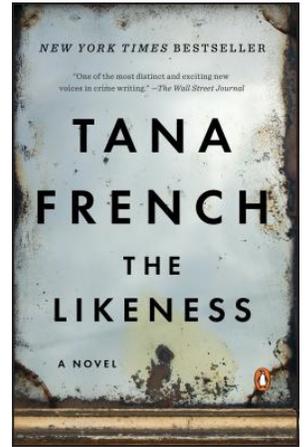
### Something Wicked This Way Comes by Ray Bradbury

reviewed by Aspen Grove Bookseller Daniel Thorne

I loved this book. **Something Wicked This Way Comes** is lesser known in general than Ray Bradbury's famed **Fahrenheit 451**. But among science fiction and fantasy readers, it holds a special place in the Bradbury canon. I read it, because I like the author and have a bit of a taste for the eerie and the macabre.

A small town is graced with a visit from traveling circus Cooger & Dark's Pandemonium Shadow Show. The ring leader is the mysterious Mr. Dark, who seemingly wields the power to grant the townspeople's secret desires, but only at a price. Two best friends—Jim Nightshade and William Halloway—set out to figure out what's really going on behind the mirror maze and the gasping calliope.

Any Bradbury fan, or fan of **The Martian Chronicles**, **IT**, **Goosebumps**, or Neil Gaiman will love this. Can't get enough? Check out the creepy Disney movie from 1983.



## Beyond Book Club

Last Thursday of every month, 6:00 pm,  
Tattered Cover Aspen Grove

Our Aspen Grove booksellers are excited to share their favorite books for adult readers and book groups. Receive 10 % off any recommended book during the evening of the book talk.

## Aspen Grove Book Clubs

Everyone is welcome to join us for one (or more!) of the following book club meetings. For book selections, please pick up a monthly calendar in-store or check online at [www.tatteredcover.com/tc-weekly-bestsellers](http://www.tatteredcover.com/tc-weekly-bestsellers).

**Aspen Grove Fiction Book Club** • Meets at 3:00 pm on the third Saturday of every month at the Tattered Cover Aspen Grove.

**Aspen Grove Nonfiction Book Club** • Meets at 6:30 pm on the third Saturday of every month at the Tattered Cover Aspen Grove.

## Other Book Clubs

**Denver7 Book Club** • Meteorologist Lisa Hidalgo not only knows the weather, she knows great books, and is an avid reader! Join us each month for light refreshments and a lively discussion of Lisa's monthly book pick. The Denver7 Book Club is reserved for guests 21+. Registration is required, visit [tatteredcover.com](http://tatteredcover.com).

## Book Club Discounts

- Quantity discounts: 5 to 24 copies of the same title - 10 % discount; 25+ of the same title - 15% discount
- TC Book Club Books - 10% discount on books presented during that month
- Recommended Reading Books - 10% discount the day of the talk

## Upcoming Events

The Tattered Cover has a long history of hosting author events, averaging over 500 a year. For complete and up-to-date information on the happenings at Tattered Cover, please pick up a monthly calendar in our stores or visit [tatteredcover.com/events](http://tatteredcover.com/events). All events are subject to changes beyond our control.



## Beyond Book Club Playlist!

Tattered Cover has teamed up with our friends at Libro.fm to create a playlist of all Aspen Grove's recommends for the month. To visit use the code on the left or go to <https://libro.fm/playlists/beyond-book-club>.



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Sunday, 10:00 am - 6:00 pm

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