

Friday, May 31, 6:00 pm

TATTERED COVER ASPEN GROVE BOOK TALK

Our Aspen Grove booksellers are excited to share their favorite books for adult readers and book groups.

Everyone is welcome!

Women Talking by Miriam Toews

reviewed by Aspen Grove Bookseller Kathy Baum

Women Talking offers a unique perspective of today's discussions about sexual harassment and discrimination, showing there's no class, creed, or group of women in any profession exempt from harassment and assault.

The novel tells the story of eight Mennonite women who must make a decision—stay and fight or leave—in the aftermath of sexual assaults against them by men in their colony. It's based on a true story. According to Margaret Atwood, "This amazing, sad, shocking, but touching novel, based on a real-life event, could be right out of *The Handmaid's Tale*."

From the book jacket: "Based on real events and told through the minutes of the women's all-female symposium, Toews's masterful novel uses wry, politically engaged humor to relate this tale of women claiming their own power to decide."

I listened to the audio book and found it much slower than I initially anticipated, but I found myself savoring each moment as the story progressed. If you like books with a lot of action and a fast pace, **Women Talking** may not be for you. But if you appreciate a book with beautiful writing and a measured pace, you will definitely enjoy it. Plus, Gerald says: "Good cover!"

Daisy Jones and the Six by Taylor Jenkins Reid

reviewed by Aspen Grove Fiction Book Club Member Kira Buono

Meet Daisy Jones: a free spirited girl without a care in the world, she is the epitome of drugs, sex, and rock n roll. Meet Billy Dunne: a denim-clad rocker with a catalog of love songs. Pair them together and get **Daisy Jones & the Six**.

In interview/oral history format, the readers get the story of this band from the perspective of all seven members and from various other people connected to the band and the industry. You see the fights, the tears, the drunken moments, the love, and the making of the music. I tore through this book at an unreasonably fast pace. This would be an excellent vacation read due to the conversational format and the differing of perspectives of the same events from different characters.

This book is structured as an oral history. I liken this book to reading a very long *Rolling Stone* magazine interview. The format of this book is what makes the story so interesting—you can almost hear each of the band members talking about their band stories. Part of me forgot that this was a fictional band—I so wanted to search for their songs on YouTube and was a little disappointed when I couldn't hear the live versions of these hits. The best sections in the book involve the writing/creating process of the music. As someone who enjoys learning about song writing and creative processes, these were fascinating sections of the book. Also, Taylor Jenkins Reid includes lyrics to all of the bands big hits in the back of the book. I'm sure I am not the only one who is hoping that this is turned into an album or TV miniseries just to experience the music!

While yes, this book is about a fictional 70s rock band, it is also about so much more: the power of family and friends who are practically family members. Without a support system, it is easy to get "lost" in the world. Alternatively, with a family support system, there is a drive to pick yourself up and find yourself in a world with vices and temptations galore. Despite the various opinions about him by his band members, Billy Dunne is the glue that holds the band together, he creates the music, and he transforms the most in the book. For those of you that like understanding the artistic process and the story behind the music, you will really enjoy his character.

I just recommended it to my cousin last week, but I would honestly recommend this to anyone who loves rock bands, who loves the 70s, and who loves music/band culture in general. From the *New York Times Review*: "In the end, that's the most surprising gift of **Daisy Jones & The Six**—it's a way to love the rock 'n' roll of the 70s, without apology, without cynicism, bell-bottoms and all." I have not read any book like this, as the style and the subject are so unique.

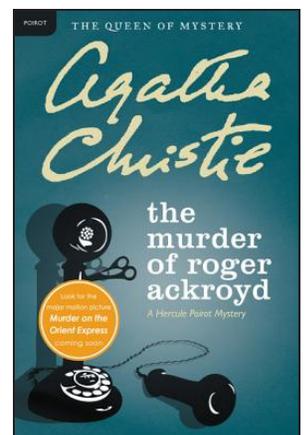
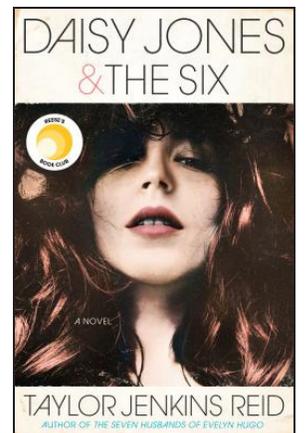
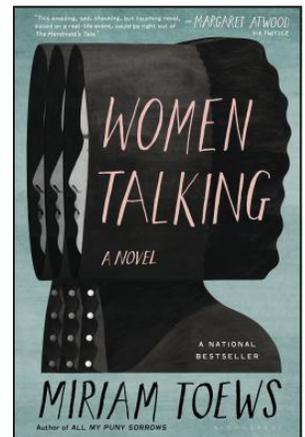
The Murder of Roger Ackroyd by Agatha Christie

reviewed by Aspen Grove Manager Margaret Shaheen

The Murder of Roger Ackroyd is a classic must-read mystery from the queen of the genre herself, Agatha Christie. I have enjoyed her other books in the past, but particularly liked this installment of her famed *Hercule Poirot* series.

Bored with retirement, Poirot is growing vegetable marrows in Kings Abbott when he is called on to investigate the murder of Roger Ackroyd. Dr. James Sheppard, a resident of the small village of King's Abbot, wakes up on Friday morning to learn that Mrs. Ferrars has died. He's sent to care for her, but he's too late. He determines that Ferrars has overdosed on a sleeping medication. His sister, Caroline, with whom he lives, tells him that she's sure Mrs. Ferrars killed herself out of remorse for having killed her husband, Mr. Ashley Ferrars, the previous year.

It's a terrific, well-plotted mystery peppered with the funny quirks of Hercule Poirot. I had no idea who did it until the very end—then it all made sense! It's a great for adults and a great suggestion for young teen readers who aren't quite ready for some of the tell-tale themes found in so much modern young adult content.



The Department of Sensitive Crimes by Alexander McCall Smith

reviewed by Aspen Grove Buyer Margaret Noteman

Fans of *Scotland Street* and *Philosophy Club* rejoice—Alexander McCall Smith debuts a new series featuring Detective Varg: *The Department of Sensitive Crimes*.

First in an original sub-genre—the author wanted to write a Scandinavian mystery that was NOT noir—Scandi-Blanc, Varg and his Swedish colleagues investigate quiet little crimes one may not ever hear about, as much crimes of the heart and spirit as against the law. As Varg investigates a stabbing in a most unusual place, the possible disappearance of a possible boyfriend and strange happenings at a hotel belonging to a relative of the Police Commissioner, he also navigates his relationship with Anna, a married coworker, his therapist, and his dog.

The Department of Sensitive Crimes is classic Alexander McCall Smith—enjoyable, light hearted and engaging. It's a great read for gentle mystery readers and fans of cozies. I look forward to future adventures of Varg and the Department of Sensitive Crimes.

“With astonishing heart and mind, Alexander McCall Smith launches a bold and original new series. With **The Department of Sensitive Crimes**, he invents a new and compassionate genre: Scandi Blanc. I didn't know whether to laugh or cry, but in the end I did both. I'm already looking forward to the next one.” —Alan Bradley, best-selling author of the *Flavia de Luce* series

Speaker for the Dead by Orson Scott Card

reviewed by Aspen Grove Bookseller Daniel Thorne

Speaker for the Dead by Orson Scott Card is the sequel to **Ender's Game**. It was recommended to me by a friend and on my reading list because I like the author. After leaving the academy, Ender travels throughout the galaxy investigating the lives of the dead in order to speak on their behalf. In the process he travels at near-light speed, leaving him isolated and disconnected from those in his former life. His only companions are his work and his shipboard computer, Jane. We see him take on new struggles with the same earnestness as in **Ender's Game**. He takes things seriously and is bound to what he does by his fortitude and the profundity of his task.

Brilliantly crafted, the writing is just enough to comprehend the implications of relativistic time dilation, but to also weave a story through them in such a masterful and compelling way is just brilliant. I think it describes isolation in service of a cause in a way I've never seen elsewhere. In general, people tend to either read this after **Ender's Game** or they read **Ender's Shadow**—not both—and they're two very different courses. Someone who was recklessly and unflinchingly devoted to something with little or no hope of reward, or who has just read the first book, will enjoy this.

It's moving, compelling, heartbreaking, and poignant.

The Wolf and the Watchman by Niklas Nattochdag

reviewed by Aspen Grove Bookseller Jennifer Martin

I picked this publisher “Advanced Reading Copy” up because I wanted a good mystery—fast-paced and suspenseful—and *Publishers Weekly* had given it a star review. It did not disappoint. **The Wolf and the Watchman** by Niklas Natt och Dag is great for anyone who likes historical fiction mysteries. It is a well-written and an impressive debut.

In late eighteenth-century Sweden, a man's torso is found in a lake, pulled ashore by watchman Mickel Cardell. Haunted by a war that cost him his best friend as well as his left arm, Cardell feels himself drawn to find answers about the mutilated corpse. The police, meanwhile, are caught in the politics of a corrupt and paranoid regime. So the chief asks Cecil Winge, a brilliant lawyer dying of consumption, to quietly investigate the murder. Thus the crime, and thus the pair of mismatched detectives.

The book has 4 parts: The first introduces the mystery and ends with a seeming dead end. The second part goes back a few months, as a series of letters a young farm-boy writes to his sister about his adventures in Stockholm, and ends in the commission of the crime. The third part is somewhat tangential, concerning a young woman accused of whoring, who gets caught in a callous and corrupt system. She, however, is able to provide key information for Winge and Cardell to solve the crime in part four. It's an interesting structure, especially for a mystery.

The Wolf and the Watchman won the Best Debut Novel of 2017 by the Swedish Academy of Crime Writers. The editor for the publisher, in his letter to advanced copy readers, compared it to: **Perfume**, **The Alienist**, **The Crimson Petal and the White**, **Sherlock Holmes**, and **Les Misérables**. It was more than I was expecting, and I can see the comparison to **Les Misérables**. As far as I can tell, the world-building is excellent, although all I know about late-eighteenth-century Sweden is that it probably exists. I can see book clubs liking this one.

Feast Your Eyes by Myla Goldberg

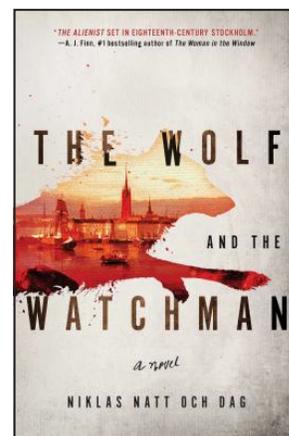
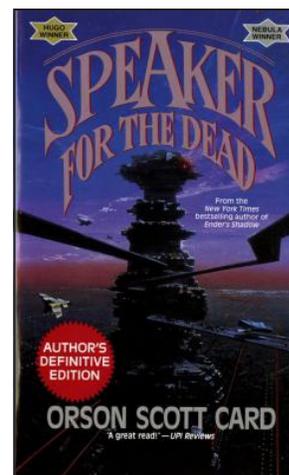
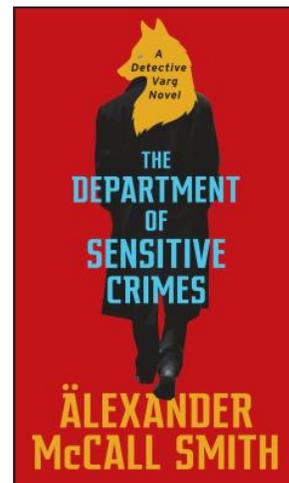
reviewed by Aspen Grove Buyer Margaret Noteman

I picked up a publisher “Advanced Reading Copy” for the book **Feast Your Eyes** by Myla Goldberg, the author of **Bee Season**, and I absolutely loved it. Told through a catalogue for an exhibition, **Feast Your Eyes** is the story of Lillian Preston—an infamous photographer known for the “Samantha Series” (photos of herself and her young daughter), her arrest for pornography, and the resulting First Amendment Case that goes all the way to the US Supreme Court. Lillian's journal entries dating from age 17 until her untimely death, letters, interviews with her family and friends are interwoven with descriptions of her photographs by her daughter Samantha.

They resonate so well, feeling so real and so true that I had to keep reminding myself I was reading fiction, not nonfiction. I enjoyed Lillian Preston's character, because she knows who she is and what she wants, and I love how the story is told by different people through different methods.

I rate **Feast Your Eyes** five out of five stars. It's a great addition to the shelf of any literary fiction fan. Myla Goldberg has written a masterpiece that I think will quickly become a modern classic.

“From **Bee Season** (2000) onward, Goldberg has portrayed girls and young women with fluent sensitivity. In her brilliantly structured fourth novel, she revisits the theme again, in the story of photographer Lillian Preston, who, chronically shy yet determined, flees Cleveland for New York in 1953 at 17 and becomes an accidental single mother at 19... This is a novel of infinite depth, of caring authenticity both intimate and societal, of mothers and daughters, art and pain, and transcendent love.” —*Booklist*, starred



The Girl on the Velvet Swing by Simon Baatz
reviewed by Aspen Grove Manager Portia Graf

The subtitle of **The Girl on the Velvet Swing** by Simon Baatz says it all: **Sex, Murder, and Madness at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century.**

This true crime account covers the fascinating drama that surrounded the 1901 case of Evelyn Nesbit, Harry Thaw and Stanford White. In Manhattan 1901 Evelyn Nesbit was a 16 year old chorus girl who got by in the big city performing small parts as well as posing for photographers. She spent an evening drinking champagne with Stanford White, a highly successful architect and celebrity interested in a bit more than just photographs of a pretty, underaged girl. Nesbit woke the next morning naked in bed next to White, who had raped her. She never spoke of it until she married millionaire playboy Harry Thaw five or so years later. No one really understood the extent of Thaw's rage until they all attended a theater performance at Madison Square Garden, with a finale of Thaw shooting White dead in front of hundreds of theatergoers.

If you thought the scandal of the murder itself was intense, just wait until you hear about the following trials (yes, plural.) Americans were of divided opinion: most citizens found Thaw's actions just—as they not only avenged his wife but also led to the discovery of a ring of men committing similar atrocities—while court officials and the city's district attorney expected him to go to the electric chair. The first trial was indecisive.

The second trial brought out Evelyn Nesbit's testimony, one so explicit that President Roosevelt advised newspapers to not print it. Ultimately, Thaw lands in an asylum, but the crazy doesn't stop there. Of course, there are scandals within the hospital walls that only came to light due to Thaw being committed.

This was a really well written book that I was completely sucked into. When I was super, bedridden sick, I listened to the audio and had a very bizarre experience. My stuffed up sick brain was in and out of focus for the first third of the book, but rather than it messing up my understanding of the content, I actually experienced the story of the murder in a dreamlike sequence. If I could bottle that and sell it, I'd be rich overnight, I swear. The trials and the murder itself felt very much like a movie, in the moment and exhilarating to read, while still presenting the facts. As I was listening, I couldn't help but constantly think, "this is nonfiction??" Plus, who doesn't want to read about sex, scandal, and murder?

Days Without End by Sebastian Barry
reviewed by Magazine Buyer Gerald Davis

I had planned my Sunday bus reading too ambitiously for the longish journey home from our Aspen Grove store. **Days Without End** by Sebastian Barry was face out on the shelves and had a sticker on the cover advertising that it had won the Costa Award.

A Google itch beyond my meager powers of resisting overcame me. The Costa Award is the sponsorship name of the former Whitbread Award, in case you too faced a momentary Google urge. I, briefly, was bemused by a mental image of the complete commercial conquest of the intellectual world—and the possibility of Pepsi University at Harvard Yard. I let the book sit on the back workstation a while.

The blurb from Kazuo Ishiguro praised the book as a "left-field wonder" and a "violent, superbly lyrical Western offering," which lost me a little at "violent" and "Western". But, I was still curious. Then I read an online review that demanded this book should come with a warning that it "glorifies homosexuality" and the sentence ended with three exclamation marks.

I bought the book.

As I surmised from the blurbs, the story glorifies scarcely much of its fictional time. It is as violent a novel as I have read—at least one not appearing on a syllabus. Its beauty lies in the language and keen observations of the narrator, an Irish lad who escaped the deadly Irish potato famine, only to face the hardships of survival in the American west. He initially finds his way by donning a dress and dancing with roughened men out west for a fifty cents a night, and then, a little older, by donning the Union Blue. Danger of death, soul challenging wars with Indians and Confederates, and gut twisting hunger fill most of the pages. Poetry, it seems to me.

Support the Glorification without Warning of Homosexuality (& bold literary craft)!!!

The Traitor's Kiss by Erin Beaty
reviewed by Aspen Grove Manager Portia Graf

“An obstinate girl who will not be married. A soldier desperate to prove himself. A kingdom on the brink of war.”

For those who liked Kristen Cashore's *Graceling* series or any similar fairytale like work with strong characters avoiding the lovey-dovey happily ever after ending, **The Traitor's Kiss** by Erin Beaty should be your next read.

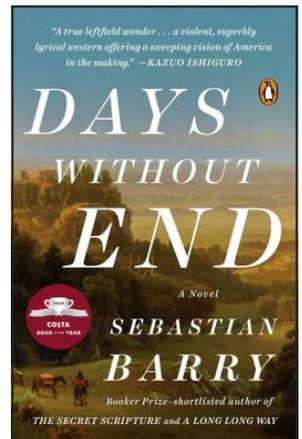
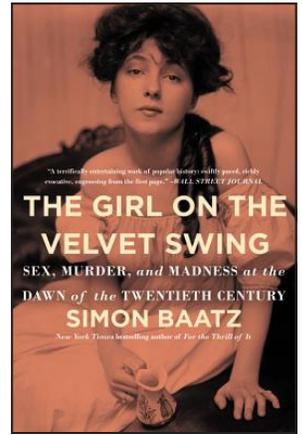
In this fantasy world, we meet a young girl named Sage Fowler—the daughter of a scandalous man and woman who did not rely on a matchmaker to fall in love—who spent a majority of her life living in the forest with her father. When her father dies, she is sent off to her more proper relatives, the Broadmoor family, who as quickly as possible try to marry her off via the matchmaker Mistress Rodelle. It doesn't go over well.

Unmarriageable, Sage becomes Mistress Rodelle's assistant, learning the tricks of the trade and later embarking on a journey with the other candidates to the Concordium, a lavish mixer where high ranking officials can meet and match with Mistress Rodelle's elegant ladies.

During this trying journey to the next kingdom over, the start of a war has been brewing between their homeland and a rival land nearby. Hence, the troupe travelling with Captain Alexander Quinn and his men, posing as suitors, escorts, and the help. Sage and Quinn butt heads as they snoop around each other's peers, suspecting the worst, bringing them closer together than they ever expected to be.

I find both Sage and Quinn to be refreshing characters. Most of the time in these renaissance-esque worlds, there's the classic knight in shining armor love story, and often in young adult novels, there's the classic enemies falling in love trope. In this, Sage and Quinn fall more into the latter category, but they are both kicking and screaming the entire time. Neither one of them want to fulfill the obvious plot line, and it helps their character development and gives them an incredible drive that ends up saving entire kingdoms from destruction.

This story really succeeds at balancing the plots we readers know—romance, politics between royal families and governments, coming-of-age, and more—while also emphasizing strong lead characters that are both male and female. It's a really fun read for someone looking for a new fairytale-like guilty pleasure.



Coincidence Makers by Yoav Blum

reviewed by Aspen Grove Bookseller Jennifer Martin

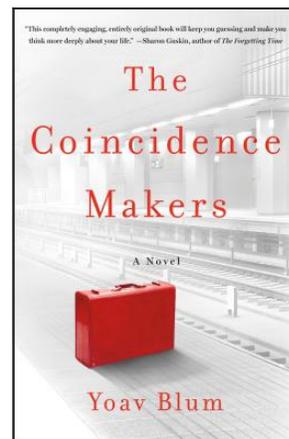
ENCORE RECOMMENDATION

The *Coincidence Makers* by Yoav Blum is a genre bending and melding “urban fairy tale”, something good for both adult and young adult audiences. It’s a good blend of genres, and in-between chapters are excerpts from in-world manuals and textbooks on coincidence-making, making it both quick paced and engrossing.

Guy, Emily, and Eric are *Coincidence Makers*—the most subtle of event planners, they manipulate situations so that the participants aren’t even aware it. Just a coincidence. Every assignment has a specific goal, limitations, and waiver line to quit the job. And one day, Emily signs it. It’s an entertaining read. I particularly liked at the end of the second chapter, Guy gets an assignment that is a single piece of paper asking if he’d mind getting kicked in the head.

I first picked this book up as a publisher “Advanced Reading Copy” (it’s coming out in paperback this March) plus Lizz Lewis—one of the Aspen Grove Fiction Book Club moderators—recommended it recently. Our Macmillan representative also declared this the Best Book of the Year last January when he was talking upcoming 2018 books. All I could think was, Dude it’s January. And while Best Book of the Year sets the bar unfairly high, this is a gripping read, with a really fun twist at the end.

For anyone looking for a light read that’s not fluff and people who enjoy urban fantasy and romance—though it’s nothing like paranormal romances. It’s my kind of beach read.



The Thief of Always by Clive Barker

reviewed by Aspen Grove Bookseller Roxie Harrington

ENCORE RECOMMENDATION

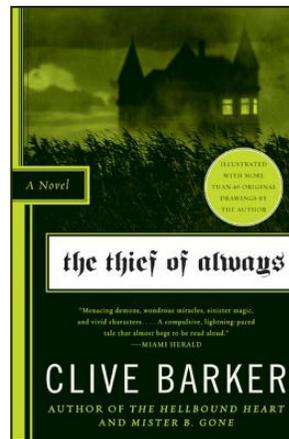
I purchased this in the latter days of our own cold February, 2019. It looked intriguing on the shelf, and seemed to call my name. And so I bought it, and began reading it, aloud—for effect. And it hooked me from its first mention of Harvey Swick being eaten alive by “THE GREAT gray beast February.” Not of February, but by February itself—that teasing, aggravating, shivering animal of a month.

I am doomed, I fear. I shall have to read it clear through to see if Harvey Swick has truly been consumed, or if it’s a trick of a wicked writer...

And now I have read it. You should read it, too!

Superb language, perfect pacing, terrifying moments which leave you with a sense of unease, even when all is said and done. This was my first Clive Barker. It will not be my last.

Warning: The author’s artwork strewn throughout the book stops your breathing from time to time. Just cover it with one hand, while you turn the page with the other. You’ll breathe again.



Aspen Grove Book Talks

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.

Tattered Cover 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.

TC LoDo Book Club • Meets at 6:00 pm on the first Monday of every other month at the Tattered Cover Historic LoDo.

Travel Lovers' Book Club • Meets at 5:30 pm on the second Monday of each month at the Tattered Cover Colfax Avenue.

Third Thursday Book Club • Meets at 7:00 pm on the third Thursday of every other month at the Tattered Cover Colfax Avenue.

Mystery Book Club • Meets at 7:00 pm on the third Thursday of every other month at the Tattered Cover Colfax Avenue.

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.

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. All events are subject to changes beyond our control.



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