

10 TITLES to Pick Up Now

The Rise & Fall of Great Powers

By Tom Rachman

After a helter-skelter childhood stretching from Brooklyn to Bangkok, Tooty Zylberberg receives disorienting news that sends her on a quest to decipher her past. A smart, rollicking novel.

In a Rocket Made of Ice

By Gail Gutradt

A wrenching memoir of the time Gutradt spent volunteering at Wat Opot, a residence for Cambodian children and teens living with HIV and AIDS.

Your Face in Mine

By Jess Row

A philosophical thriller about a former radio host who begins to feel uneasy in his own skin after chronicling his friend's "racial reassignment" procedure.

The Story of Land and Sea

By Katy Simpson Smith

A luminous debut in which a father attempts to save his daughter by spiriting her away on a ship to Bermuda.

The Removers

By Andrew Meredith

A father and son bond while working as "removers," transporting the bodies of those who die at home to the morgue, in a darkly funny memoir about family reckonings.

2 A.M. at The Cat's Pajamas

By Marie-Helene Bertino

Happenstance brings Madeleine, a puckish 9-year-old; Sarina, an

undervalued recent divorcée; and Lorca, a wayward soon-to-be former bar owner, together one snow globe of a Christmas Eve.

The Remarkable Courtship of General Tom Thumb

By Nicholas Rinaldi

A historical novel starring Tom Thumb, who at 25 inches tall saw it all, gracing stages in the United States and Europe, garnering a kiss from Queen Victoria, and even picking up a diminutive companion along the way.

Diary of the Fall

By Michel Laub

A man looks back on his father's struggle with Alzheimer's, his grandfather's surviving Auschwitz, and the role he played in a prank gone horribly awry in this sensitive reflection on forgiveness and forgetting.

The Story Hour

By Thrity Umrigar

Past misdeeds threaten the friendship of a psychologist and her immigrant patient in a fictional tale that asks, are we more than the sum of our mistakes?

The Search for Heinrich Schlägel

By Martha Baillie

In this bewitching riddle of a novel, an archivist chronicles the strange disappearance of a young man on a trek to a remote Canadian island.

—SARAH MEYER



COLOR ME ALIENATED

An ode to the pleasures of feeling, by a contemporary master.



"YOU CAN HIDE MEMORIES, but you can't erase the history that produced them." Such is the mantra of Tsukuru Tazaki, the 36-year-old train station designer at the center of Haruki Murakami's breathtaking 13th novel. An elegant page-turner distinguished by Murakami's trademarks—bizarre dreams, stories within stories, the telescoping of worlds—**Colorless Tsukuru**

Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage (Knopf) will thrill longtime readers and captivate new ones.

As a high school student, Tsukuru was part of a group of five friends whose bond was unusually close: "The whole convergence was like a lucky but entirely accidental chemical fusion, something that could only happen once." With the exception of Tsukuru, each friend's name contained a color, and these colors became nicknames—the boys were called Red and Blue, the girls White and Black. Tsukuru, however, "just remained Tsukuru," a name that in Japanese means "to build." When he is banished from the group without explanation during college, he's devastated. Sixteen years later, he remains unable to fully engage with anyone—in particular, his girlfriend, Sara. Tsukuru the builder has been stripped of his identity and must create himself anew. This is not a love story, but a story about how love stories become possible.

Fans of vintage Murakami will appreciate the novel's tight focus and inventive revisiting of his earlier work. The narration jumps between story lines and time frames with ease; the result is grand, immersing storytelling that plumbs characters' psyches as it entralls and challenges the reader.

More than ever, Murakami's writing comforts as much as it disconcerts. Memory reverberates in the echo chamber of our lives, reminding us that when it comes to heartbreak, time is fluid. There is no such thing as forgetting. To move ahead, Tsukuru must return to the beginning. —KELLY LUCE

