

Recommended Nonfiction 2024

129 ROA

Spook: Science Tackles the Afterlife by Mary Roach

Spook sets out to test a range of theories and beliefs about what happens to the human soul after death. With scientific precision and a sharp sense of humor, Roach describes man's search for the soul or spirit in the microscopic structures of the body. As she identifies the diverse beliefs ascribed to the activities of the soul at the instant of death and beyond, she shares anecdotes of her own research into the afterlife. From ectoplasm to electromagnetism, soul-weighing to seances, Roach explores the afterlife with equal parts cynicism and reverence.

345.744 MIL

The Borden Murders: Lizzie Borden and the Trial of the Century by Cara Robertson

The story of the 1892 ax murder of Andrew and Abby Borden of Fall River, Massachusetts, is well known, as are the trial and subsequent acquittal of Lizzie Borden for the crime. In this book, written for a young adult audience, author Sarah Miller revisits the case, which has never been solved. Miller provides background information on wealthy Andrew Borden; his second wife, Abby; and his daughter Lizzie, who was Abby's stepdaughter. She takes readers to the crime scene and the courtroom, where 32-year-old Lizzie faced execution if she was found guilty. In presenting a chronological account of the crime and trial, Miller sifts fact from the sensational press coverage that clouded the case.

371.829 SLA

Accountable: The True Story of a Racist Social Media Account and the Teenagers Whose Lives It Changed by Dashka Slater

When a high school student started a private Instagram account that used racist and sexist memes to make his friends laugh, he thought it was "edgy" humor. Then a few other kids found out about the account and soon, everyone knew. Unfortunately, no one in the small town of Albany, CA was safe from the repercussions of the account's discovery. In the end, no one was laughing. And everyone was left asking: where does accountability end for online speech that harms? And what does accountability even mean?

796 BLU

Let Me Play - the Story of Title IX: the Law That Changed the Future of Girls in America by Karen Blumenthal

Chronicles the story behind the controversial Title IX, a landmark legal development in the progress toward equal rights between the sexes. Blumenthal follows the arduous process of conceiving, debating, and passing the law that prohibited discrimination against girls and women in primary, secondary, and intercollegiate athletics. Photographs and stories of the socio-political movements and arguments that lead to its passage, including the personal accounts of congresswomen, protesters, and athletes, accompany the story of the legislation's passage.

796.332 SHE

Undefeated: Jim Thorpe and the Carlisle Indian School Football Team by Steve Sheinkin

Undefeated: Jim Thorpe and the Carlisle Indian School Football Team is an astonishing underdog sports story—and more. It's an unflinching look at the U.S. government's violent persecution of Native Americans and the school that was designed to erase Indian cultures. Expertly told by three-time National Book Award finalist Steve Sheinkin, it's the story of a group of young men who came together at that school, the overwhelming obstacles they faced both on and off the field, and their absolute refusal to accept defeat.

811 GRI

Ordinary Hazards: A Memoir by Nikki Grimes

Growing up with a mother suffering from paranoid schizophrenia and a mostly absent father, Nikki Grimes found herself terrorized by babysitters, shunted from foster family to foster family, and preyed upon by those she trusted. At the age of six, she poured her pain onto a piece of paper late one night - and discovered the magic and impact of writing. For many years, Nikki's notebooks were her most enduring companions. In this accessible and inspiring memoir she shows how the power of those words helped her conquer the hazards - ordinary and extraordinary - of her life.

940.53 GAD

Flowers in the Gutter: The True Story of the Edelweiss Pirates, Teenagers Who Resisted the Nazis by K. R. Gaddy

Fritz, Gertrud, and Jean were classic outsiders: their clothes were different, their music was rebellious, and they weren't afraid to fight. But they were also Germans living under Hitler, and any nonconformity could get them arrested or worse. As children in 1933, they saw their world change. Their earliest memories were of the Nazi rise to power and of their parents fighting Brownshirts in the streets, being sent to prison, or just disappearing.

940.54 HEI

Torpedoed: The True Story of the World War II Sinking of "The Children's Ship" by Deborah Heiligman

In 1940, the passenger ship *City of Benares* set sail from Britain, carrying 200 passengers, many of them children hoping to escape the ravages of war. Before they could reach safety, the ship was struck by a torpedo, and a tragic race to save the passengers began. Cinematic language, extensive back matter, archival photos and dramatic illustrations bring this suspenseful and devastating story to life.

940.54 SEI

Ghosts in the Fog: The Untold Story of Alaska's WWII Invasion by Samantha Seiple

Ghosts in the Fog is the first narrative nonfiction book for young adults to tell the riveting story of how the Japanese invaded and occupied the Aleutian Islands in Alaska during World War II. This fascinating little-known piece of American history is told from the point of view of the American civilians who were captured and taken prisoner, along with the American and Japanese soldiers who fought in one of the bloodiest battles of hand-to-hand combat during the war.

940.54 WEI

A Thousand Sisters: The Heroic Airwomen of the Soviet Union in World War II by Elizabeth Wein

A thrilling, richly detailed account of the regiments of female Russian aviators who fought in World War II as pilots, mechanics, and navigators. Through extensive research, descriptive personal stories, and examples of overcoming misogynist social norms, this powerful account shows the bravery and camaraderie needed to change history.

976.6 COL

Black Birds in the Sky: The Story and Legacy of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre by Brandy Colbert

In the early morning of June 1, 1921, a white mob marched across the train tracks in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and into its predominantly Black Greenwood District--a thriving, affluent neighborhood known as America's Black Wall Street. They brought with them firearms, gasoline, and explosives. In a few short hours, they'd razed thirty-five square blocks to the ground, leaving hundreds dead. The Tulsa Race Massacre is one of the most devastating acts of racial violence in US history. But how did it come to pass? What exactly happened? And why are the events unknown to so many of us today? These are the questions that award-winning author Brandy Colbert seeks to answer in this unflinching nonfiction account of the Tulsa Race Massacre.

976.6004 GRA

Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI by David Grann

In 1920s Oklahoma, members of the Osage Indian nation lived on territory the US government had allocated to them. When that land began to yield oil, the Osage became incredibly wealthy. Since their land rights could only be obtained through inheritance, some whites tried to get rich by marrying into Osage families. Others tried to kill the Osage off. Grann revisits the spree of killings that plagued the Oklahoma Osage. More than two dozen Osage were killed by poisonings, bombings, shootings, and other means. When local law enforcement failed to identify the perpetrator, J. Edgar Hoover and the young FBI took over the case. Although the FBI's investigation did not run smoothly, the participants in the murder spree that became known as the Reign of Terror were eventually identified.

B EQUIANO

Nearer My Freedom: The Interesting Life of Olaudah Equiano by Himself by Monica Edinger and Lesley Younge

Olaudah Equiano was born in modern-day Nigeria and kidnapped by slavers when he was eleven. He experienced the horrific conditions of the sea passage to Britain's Caribbean colonies and was later enslaved in the Virginia Colony. He was eventually bought by an officer in the Royal Naval and taken to England where he learned to read and write. After purchasing his freedom in 1766, Equiano became an apprentice hairdresser, traveled widely, and was active in the abolitionist movement. His 1789 autobiography was very popular in England and helped inspire the nation to end the Transatlantic slave trade in 1807. In this work, authors Monica Edinger and Lesley Younge have taken Equiano's autobiography and repurposed it as a found narrative to shed new light on his life and quest for freedom.

B MUFLEH

From Here by Luma Mufleh

Luma may not have known what to call the feelings she had growing up in Jordan during the 1980s, but she knew well enough to keep them secret. It was clear that not only would her family have trouble accepting her, but trapped in a conservative religious society, she could've also been killed if anyone discovered her sexuality. Luma spent her teenage years increasingly desperate to find a way out, and finally found one when she was accepted into college in the United States. Once there, Luma begins the agonizing process of applying for political asylum, which ensures her safety—but causes her family to break ties with her.

B MUHAMMAD

Proud: Living My American Dream by Ibtihaj Muhammad

At the 2016 Olympic Games, Ibtihaj Muhammad smashed barriers as the first American to compete wearing hijab, and she made history as the first Muslim American woman to win a medal. But before she was an Olympian, activist, and entrepreneur, Ibtihaj was a young outsider trying to find her place. Growing up in suburban New Jersey, Ibtihaj was often the only African American Muslim student in her class. When she discovered and fell in love with fencing, a sport most popular with affluent young white people, she stood out even more. Yet she powered on, rising above bigotry and other obstacles on the path to pursue her dream.

B NIJINSKY

The Great Nijinsky: God of Dance by Lynn Curlee

With striking portraits and bold prose, Curlee details the life of the prodigal dancer Vaslav Nijinsky, who, unencumbered by sexuality and gender norms, rapidly ascended to stardom before tragically succumbing to mental illness. Curlee pushes the boundaries of the traditional young-adult biography with extravagant design and uncompromising frankness.

B PHAM

Family Style: Memories of an American from Vietnam by Thien Pham

Thien's first memory isn't a sight or a sound. It's the sweetness of watermelon and the saltiness of fish. It's the taste of the foods he ate while adrift at sea as his family fled Vietnam. After the Pham family arrives at a refugee camp in Thailand, they struggle to survive. Things don't get much easier once they resettle in California. And through each chapter of their lives, food takes on a new meaning. Strawberries come to signify struggle as Thien's mom and dad look for work. Potato chips are an indulgence that bring Thien so much joy that they become a necessity. Behind every cut of steak and inside every croissant lies a story. And for Thien Pham, that story is about a search-- for belonging, for happiness, for the American dream.

B UWIRINGIYIMANA

How Dare the Sun Rise: Memoirs of a War Child by Sandra Uwiringiyimana

This profoundly moving memoir is the remarkable and inspiring true story of Sandra Uwiringiyimana, a girl from the Democratic Republic of the Congo who tells the tale of how she survived a massacre, immigrated to America, and overcame her trauma through art and activism.