

Friends Read

Booklist

April 10, 2025

Can't We Talk about Something More Pleasant? by Roz Chast

In her first memoir, New Yorker cartoonist Roz Chast brings her signature wit to the topic of aging parents. Spanning the last several years of their lives and told through four-color cartoons, family photos, and documents, and a narrative as rife with laughs as it is with tears, Chast's memoir is both comfort and comic relief for anyone experiencing the life-altering loss of elderly parents.

While the particulars are Chast-ian in their idiosyncrasies--an anxious father who had relied heavily on his wife for stability as he slipped into dementia and a former assistant principal mother whose overbearing personality had sidelined Roz for decades--the themes are universal: adult children accepting a parental role; aging and unstable parents leaving a family home for an institution; dealing with uncomfortable physical intimacies; and hiring strangers to provide the most personal care.

An amazing portrait of two lives at their end and an only child coping as best she can, *Can't We Talk about Something More Pleasant* shows the full range of Roz Chast's talent as cartoonist and storyteller.

An Elderly Lady Must Not Be Crossed by Helen Tursten

Everyone's favorite octogenarian killer is back in this new collection of stories by Swedish crime writer Helene Tursten that is sure to have you in stitches.

Eighty-eight-year-old Maud is never looking for trouble, but it always seems to find her. First, a woman in her building met an untimely end: tragic. Then, just recently, a dead body mysteriously appeared in her very own apartment, prompting an investigation by the local Gothenburg authorities. Such a strange coincidence. When it seems suspicion has fallen on her, little old lady that she is, Maud decides to skip town and splurges on a trip to South Africa for herself.

In these six interlocking stories, memories of unfortunate incidents from Maud's past keep bubbling to the surface, each triggered by something in the present: an image, a word, even a taste. When she lands in Johannesburg at last, eager to move on from the bloody ordeal last summer, she finds certain problems seem to be following her. Luckily, Maud is no stranger to taking matters into her own hands . . . even if it means she has to get a little blood on them in the process.

Don't let her age fool you. Maud may be nearly ninety, but this elderly lady still has a few tricks before she's ready to call it quits.

Includes cookie recipes

Foster by Claire Keegan

Claire Keegan's piercing contemporary classic *Foster* is a heartbreaking story of childhood, loss, and love, now released as a standalone book for the first time ever in the US. It is a hot summer in rural Ireland. A child is taken by her father to live with relatives on a farm, not knowing when or if she will be brought home again. In the Kinsellas' house, she finds an affection and warmth she has not known and slowly, in their care, begins to blossom. But there is something unspoken in this new household--where everything is so well tended to--and this summer must soon come to an end. Winner of the prestigious Davy Byrnes Award and published in an abridged version in the *New Yorker*, this internationally bestselling contemporary classic is now available for the first time in the US in a full, standalone edition. A story of astonishing emotional depth, *Foster* showcases Claire Keegan's great talent and secures her reputation as one of our most important storytellers"-- Provided by publisher.

In Broad Daylight by Harry Maclean

Ken Rex McElroy terrorized the residents of several counties in northwestern Missouri. He raped young girls and brutalized them after they went to live with him or even married him; he shot at least two men; he stole cattle and hogs, and burned down the houses of some who interfered with his criminal activities. Thanks to the expert efforts of his lawyer and the pro-defendant bias of state laws, he served no more than a few days in jail, the author shows.

In 1981, sentenced for the shooting of a popular grocer and free on bail, he was killed by the men of Skidmore, the center of his felonies; they closed ranks against all attempts to identify those who had pulled the triggers. This is an engrossing, credible examination of the way vigilante action can take over when the law appears to be powerless.

Johnny Got His Gun by Dalton Trumbo

The Searing Portrayal Of War That Has Stunned And Galvanized Generations Of Readers

An immediate bestseller upon its original publication in 1939, Dalton Trumbo's stark, profoundly troubling masterpiece about the horrors of World War I brilliantly crystallized the uncompromising brutality of war and became the most influential protest novel of the Vietnam era. With a compelling new foreword by fellow award-winning writer E. L. Doctorow, *Johnny Got His Gun* is an undisputed classic of antiwar literature that's as timely as ever.

The Ride of Her Life by Elizabeth Letts

The incredible true story of a woman who rode her horse across America in the 1950s, fulfilling her dying wish to see the Pacific Ocean, from the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Perfect Horse* and *The Eighty-Dollar Champion* .

In 1954, Annie Wilkins, a sixty-three-year-old farmer from Maine, embarked on an impossible journey. She had no relatives left, she'd lost her family farm to back taxes, and her doctor had just given her two

years to live--but only if she lived restfully. He offered her a spot in the county's charity home. Instead, she decided she wanted to see the Pacific Ocean just once before she died. She bought a cast-off brown gelding named Tarzan, donned men's dungarees, loaded up her horse, and headed out from Maine in mid-November, hoping to beat the snow. She had no map, no GPS, no phone. But she had her ex-racehorse, her faithful mutt, and her own unfailing belief that Americans would treat a stranger with kindness.

Between 1954 and 1956, Annie, Tarzan, and her dog, Depeche Toi, journeyed more than 4,000 miles, through America's big cities and small towns, meeting ordinary people and celebrities--from Andrew Wyeth (who sketched Tarzan) to Art Linkletter and Groucho Marx. She received many offers--a permanent home at a riding stable in New Jersey, a job at a gas station in rural Kentucky, even a marriage proposal from a Wyoming rancher who loved animals as much as she did. As Annie trudged through blizzards, forded rivers, climbed mountains, and clung to the narrow shoulder as cars whipped by her at terrifying speeds, she captured the imagination of an apprehensive Cold War America. At a time when small towns were being bypassed by Eisenhower's brand-new interstate highway system, and the reach and impact of television was just beginning to be understood, Annie and her four-footed companions inspired an outpouring of neighborliness in a rapidly changing world.

Still Life by Louise Penny

The discovery of a dead body in the woods on Thanksgiving Weekend brings Chief Inspector Armand Gamache and his colleagues from the Surete du Quebec to a small village in the Eastern Townships. Gamache cannot understand why anyone would want to deliberately kill well-loved artist Jane Neal, especially any of the residents of Three Pines - a place so free from crime it doesn't even have its own police force.

But Gamache knows that evil is lurking somewhere behind the white picket fences and that, if he watches closely enough, Three Pines will start to give up its dark secrets...

A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens

A Tale of Two Cities is Charles Dickens's great historical novel, set against the violent upheaval of the French Revolution. The most famous and perhaps the most popular of his works, it compresses an event of immense complexity to the scale of a family history, with a cast of characters that includes a bloodthirsty ogress and an antihero as believably flawed as any in modern fiction. Though the least typical of the author's novels, *A Tale of Two Cities* still underscores many of his enduring themes—imprisonment, injustice, social anarchy, resurrection, and the renunciation that fosters renewal.