



Book Reviews

The hour I First Believed-Wally Lamb

About a couple where the wife is a teacher at Columbine and hides in the closet. Although, she survived physically she did not emotionally. The couple moves to Connecticut where the husband finds out stuff about his past and ancestors that effect the both of them. The story allows the reader to develop an intimate relationship with the characters.

The Given Day- Dennis Lehane

Same author as *Mystic River* and *Gone Baby Gone*. *The Given Day* tells the story of two families—one black, one white—swept up in a maelstrom of revolutionaries and anarchists, immigrants and ward bosses, Brahmins and ordinary citizens, all engaged in a battle for survival and power. Beat cop Danny Coughlin, the son of one of the city's most beloved and powerful police captains, joins a burgeoning union movement and the hunt for violent radicals. Luther Laurence, on the run after a deadly confrontation with a crime boss in Tulsa, works for the Coughlin family and tries desperately to find his way home to his pregnant wife.

Here, too, are some of the most influential figures of the era—Babe Ruth; Eugene O'Neill; leftist activist Jack Reed; NAACP founder W. E. B. DuBois; Mitchell Palmer, Woodrow Wilson's ruthless Red-chasing attorney general; cunning Massachusetts governor Calvin Coolidge; and an ambitious young Department of Justice lawyer named John Hoover.

Coursing through some of the pivotal events of the time—including the Spanish Influenza pandemic—and culminating in the Boston Police Strike of 1919, *The Given Day* explores the crippling violence and irrepressible exuberance of a country at war with, and in the thrall of, itself. As Danny, Luther, and those around them struggle to define themselves in increasingly turbulent times, they gradually find family in one another and, together, ride a rising storm of hardship, deprivation, and hope that will change all their lives.- Haper Collins

One Fifth Avenue- Candace Bushnell

From one of the most consistently astute and engaging social commentators of our day comes another look at the tough and tender women of New York City—this time, through the lens of where they live.- Everyone Woman's voice

Hurry Down Sunshine- Michael Greenberg

Hurry Down Sunshine tells the story of the extraordinary summer when, at the age of fifteen, Michael Greenberg's daughter was struck mad. It begins with Sally's sudden visionary crack-up on the streets of Greenwich Village, and continues, among other places, in the out-of-time world of a Manhattan psychiatric ward during the city's most sweltering months. "I feel like I'm traveling and traveling with nowhere to go back to," Sally says in a burst of lucidity while hurtling away toward some place her father could not dream of or imagine. *Hurry Down Sunshine* is the chronicle of that journey, and its effect on Sally and those

closest to her—her mother and stepmother, her brother and grandmother, and, not least of all, the author himself.

Among Greenberg's unforgettable gallery of characters are an unconventional psychiatrist, an Orthodox Jewish patient, a manic Classics professor, a movie producer, and a landlord with literary aspirations. Unsentimental, nuanced, and deeply humane, *Hurry Down Sunshine* holds the listener in a mesmerizing state of suspension between the mundane and the transcendent.- Random House

LuLu In Marrakech- Diane Johnson

A shocking scene late in Diane Johnson's latest novel, "Lulu in Marrakech," is a reminder of the dark terrain her cultured characters trod upon so frequently. Lulu Sawyer is a CIA agent dispatched to Morocco for long-term intelligence work in the war on terror. She has what appears to be the perfect cover: an English boyfriend, with whom she plans to live and who shares an interest in the type of social work that first drew them together. The book develops gradually, subtly, almost as a novel of manners. Along the way, we're treated to artful descriptions that belie the trouble ahead. ---The Associated Press

The Night of the Gun- David Carr

It's a common conception that our pasts are better than we make them out to be. Former *Twin Cities Reader* editor and *New York Times* columnist David Carr proves that the opposite is possible in his new book which recounts his past as an addict through journalistic investigation. As he reports his past, he realizes that things were much worse than he made them out to be. Memories change and become uncovered with time; the friend he believed once pulled a gun on him reveals it was Carr who pointed the gun. His belief that he became sober after his children were born becomes unproven.-The Rake Magazine

Smart Girls Like Me- Diane Vadino

It's always nice to see a fellow fashion blogger take that giant leap from the computer screen to actual paper. Diane Vadino, who writes for the one of my favorite blogs BunnyShop.org, has just put out her first novel called *Smart Girls Like Me*.

Smart Girls Like Me is a story about Betsey Nilssen, a 24-year-old assistant editor of a dot-com fashion magazine, who is convinced the world is going to end on January 1, 2000. When Betsey isn't stocking up on freeze dried foods for the "end of the world" she is busy planning her best friend's wedding and crushing on a hot co-worker in her office. As Betsey counts down to the New Year she can't help but feel lonely as her best friend is getting married and she has to go solo. This book has looks at relationships with friends and the opposite sex in a smart and funny fashion.

The book is already receiving a ton of praise and has readers actually laughing out loud. Nylon magazine says "beautiful". Marie Claire says "seriously good writing" and Entertainment Weekly says "raw and honest." I can't wait to read it so I can add to the flurry of positive reviews.- Style List

Testimony- Anita Shreve

When Mike Borden, the headmaster of a prestigious private school in Vermont, is handed a tape by his secretary, he isn't sure what to expect. He certainly doesn't expect to see two highly respected students and a third post-graduate student engaging in sexual intercourse with a 14 year old girl, but that's precisely what he does see. The last thing he anticipates is the explosive effect that this single tape - that this single evening - will have on so many lives, both in and out of the small town in which the private school is located.

This is quite an overwhelming book. The story is immensely more complex than I've just described, but it's very difficult not to give away any details and still write a summary. The author rotates viewpoints, featuring the girl, the boys, the headmaster, some of the parents, and other related people. It really reads like a collection of testimonies from all the players in the very serious events of those few days that determined many futures. At times this is disorienting. Each person's narrative is written in a distinct style so that they're easily distinguished, but it's very easy to lose track of where you are in the story, particularly when a person's chapter is only two or three pages long. They also skip around in the book's timeline, and as I read quickly, occasionally I'd wonder just what was happening with the other people at the time because it didn't seem clear to me. Perhaps if I had spent more time on each perspective, this wouldn't have mattered, but I also really wanted to work out just what happened.

On the other hand, the emotional power of this book is not to be missed. Anita Shreve carefully gathers in all the threads of her tale and brings it to a startling climax that you don't expect until only a page or two before it happens; looking back, however, you can see how the rest of the day's events led to it. It feels carefully crafted to evoke this particular outcome and to minutely examine how everyone felt about the tape.

In the end, I'd call this a very good book. It has compelling characters, a riveting plotline, and terrific attention to detail. The rotating viewpoints

are a minor problem, but one that I could get past to enjoy the book.- Medieval Book Worm

Time of My Life- Allison Winn Scotch

"*Time of My Life* is a fabulous, madcap read, but don't be fooled: Allison Winn Scotch's narrator is wrestling with some tough issues: how do I find my place in the world? Can I become a wife and mother without losing myself? Would I have been happier if I had chosen another path? Scotch's book is hilarious and true. I loved it." -Amanda Eyre Ward, author of *Sleep Toward Heaven, How To Be Lost and Forgive Me*

American Wife- Curtis Sittenfeld

It is, in short, a fictional examination of the life of the First Lady that mingles real facts and incidents with the author's imaginative, fanciful, sometimes sexually charged musings. The result is a masterful highbrow-lowbrow mash-up that satisfies as ass-kicking literary fiction and juicy gossip simultaneously. From discovering that her grandmother is a lesbian, killing her high school crush with her car at age 16 (this incident at least is based in fact--Laura Bush was involved in a fatal car accident at that age), having sex with his brother, getting an abortion, and descriptions of sex with the president, Alice's antics are sure to have tongues chattering from coast to coast.-Huffington Post