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# Remarkably Bright Creatures A Read With Jenna Pick

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*Remarkably Bright  
 Creatures A Read With  
 Jenna Pick*

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## **RODERICK HERNANDEZ**

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*Lily and the Octopus* Open Road Media  
 There were no surprises in Gatlin County. We were pretty much the epicenter of the middle of nowhere. At least, that's what I thought. Turns out, I couldn't have been more wrong. There was a curse. There was a girl. And in the end, there was a grave. Lena Duchannes is unlike anyone the small Southern town of Gatlin has ever seen, and she's struggling to conceal her power and a curse that has haunted her family for generations. But even within the overgrown gardens, murky swamps and crumbling graveyards of the forgotten South, a secret cannot stay hidden forever. Ethan Wate, who has been

counting the months until he can escape from Gatlin, is haunted by dreams of a beautiful girl he has never met. When Lena moves into the town's oldest and most infamous plantation, Ethan is inexplicably drawn to her and determined to uncover the connection between them. In a town with no surprises, one secret could change everything.

[Good Rich People](#) HarperCollins

The brilliant, chilling debut of Karen White's New York Times bestselling Tradd Street series, featuring a Charleston real estate agent who loves old houses—and the secret histories inside them. Practical Melanie Middleton hates to admit she can see ghosts. But she's going to have to accept it. An old man she recently met has died, leaving her his historic Tradd Street home, complete with housekeeper, dog—and a family of ghosts anxious to tell

her their secrets. Enter Jack Trenholm, a gorgeous writer obsessed with unsolved mysteries. He has reason to believe that diamonds from the Confederate Treasury are hidden in the house. So he turns the charm on with Melanie, only to discover he's the smitten one... It turns out Jack's search has caught the attention of a malevolent ghost. Now, Jack and Melanie must unravel a mystery of passion, heartbreak—and even murder.

**Summary of Remarkably Bright Creatures by Shelby Van Pelt:A Read with Jenna Pick** Lake Union Publishing  
 A genre-defying debut, this queer historical YA centers a wild and reckless trio who fly in the face of small-town tradition—full of compassion, love, and determination to live the lives of their choosing. It's 1904 on an island just west of Norway, and Asta Hedstrom doesn't

want to marry her odious betrothed, Nils. But her mother believes she should be grateful for the possibility of any domestic future, given her single-sided deafness, unconventional appearance, and even stranger notions. Asta would rather spend her life performing in the village theater with her fellow outcasts: her best friend Gunnar Fuglestad and his secret boyfriend, wealthy Erlend Fournier. But the situation takes a dire turn when Nils lashes out in jealousy—gravely injuring Gunnar. Shunning marriage for good, Asta moves with Gunnar and Erlend to their secluded cabin above town. With few ties left to their families, they have one shot at gaining enough kroner to secure their way of life: win the village's annual horse race. Despite Gunnar's increasing misgivings, Asta and Erlend intend to prove this unheard-of arrangement will succeed. Asta trains as a blacksmith; Erlend cares for recovering Gunnar. But as race day approaches, the villagers' hateful ignorance only grows stronger. With this year's competition proving dangerous for the trio, Asta and Erlend soon find they face another equally deadly peril: the possibility of losing Gunnar, and their found family, forever.

**This May End Badly** Ballantine Books  
 "In this luminous story full of mystery and magic, Elana K. Arnold weaves a shimmering tapestry about the lovely and surprising ways we're connected to each other. Heart-healing, hopeful, and wonderfully inventive, this beautiful novel by a master storyteller is not to be missed." —Katherine Applegate, Newbery Medal-winning author of *The One and Only Ivan* Alder has always lived in his cozy little house in Southern California. And for as long as he can remember, the old, reliable, comforting walnut tree has stood between his house and the one next door. That is, until a new family—with a particularly annoying girl his age—moves into the neighboring house and, without warning, cuts it down. Oak doesn't understand why her family had to move to Southern California. She has to attend a new school, find new friends, and live in a new house that isn't even ready—her mother had to cut down a tree on their property line in order to make room for a second floor. And now a strange boy next door won't stop staring at her, like she did something wrong moving here in the first place. As Oak and Alder start school together, they can't imagine ever becoming friends. But the two of them soon discover a series of connections between them—mysterious, possibly even magical puzzles they can't put together. At least not without each other's help.

Award-winning author Elana K. Arnold returns with an unforgettable story of the strange, wondrous threads that run between all of us, whether we know they're there or not.

**Unlikely Animals** Dark Ink

From the New York Times bestselling author of *Star Wars: Brotherhood* A Best Of pick and Most Anticipated Sci Fi and Fantasy novel, as selected by Goodreads • Buzzfeed • BookRiot • The Portalist • IO9 • BookBub • SheReads • BiblioLifestyle • Den of Geek • GeekDad "A rich backstory... a highly satisfying ending... All the stars for Chen's warmhearted space-travel story." —Kirkus, starred review Every family has issues. Most can't blame them on extraterrestrials. Evie Shao and her sister, Kass, aren't on speaking terms. Fifteen years ago on a family camping trip, their father and brother vanished. Their dad turned up days later, dehydrated and confused—and convinced he'd been abducted by aliens. Their brother, Jakob, remained missing. The women dealt with it very differently. Kass, suspecting her college-dropout twin simply ran off, became the rock of the family. Evie traded academics to pursue alien conspiracy theories, always looking for Jakob. When Evie's UFO network uncovers a new event, she goes to investigate. And discovers Jakob is back. He's different—older, stranger, and talking of an intergalactic war—but the tensions between the siblings haven't changed at all. If the family is going to come together to help Jakob, then Kass and Evie are going to have to fix their issues, and fast. Because the FBI is after Jakob, and if their brother is telling the truth, possibly an entire space armada, too. The perfect combination of action, imagination and heart, *Light Years from Home* is a touching drama about a challenge as difficult as saving the galaxy: making peace with your family...and yourself. "With heart and insight...Chen crosses the stakes and imagination of a space opera with the emotional depth and intricacy of a family drama." —Erika Swyler, bestselling author of *Light from Other Stars*

***The House on Tradd Street*** Simon and Schuster

A national bestseller combining the emotional depth of *The Art of Racing in the Rain* with the magical spirit of *The Life of Pi*, "Lily and the Octopus is the dog book you must read this summer" (The Washington Post). Ted—a gay, single, struggling writer is stuck: unable to open himself up to intimacy except through the steadfast companionship of Lily, his elderly dachshund. When Lily's health is compromised, Ted vows to save her by

any means necessary. By turns hilarious and poignant, an adventure with spins into magic realism and beautifully evoked truths of loss and longing, Lily and the Octopus reminds us how it feels to love fiercely, how difficult it can be to let go, and how the fight for those we love is the greatest fight of all. Introducing a dazzling and completely original new voice in fiction and an unforgettable hound that will break your heart—and put it back together again. Remember the last book you told someone they had to read? Lily and the Octopus is the next one.

"Startlingly imaginative...this love story is sure to assert its place in the canine lit pack...Be prepared for outright laughs and searing or silly moments of canine and human recognition. And grab a tissue: "THERE! WILL! BE! EYE! RAIN!" (New York Newsday).

**Bodies Are Cool!** HarperCollins

"This tragicomic novel is heartfelt, touching, and delightfully quirky. You'll fall in love with the offbeat cast of characters (both living and dead) and find yourself rooting for them right through the last page."—Good Housekeeping (Book Club pick) A lost young woman returns to small-town New Hampshire under the strangest of circumstances in this one-of-a-kind novel of life, death, and whatever comes after from the acclaimed author of *Rabbit Cake*. ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR: The Washington Post, Book Riot • Longlisted for the Joyce Carol Oates Prize It was a source of entertainment at Maple Street Cemetery. Both funny and sad, the kind of story we like best. Natural-born healer Emma Starling once had big plans for her life, but she's lost her way. A medical school dropout, she's come back to small-town Everton, New Hampshire, to care for her father, who is dying from a mysterious brain disease. Clive Starling has been hallucinating small animals, as well as having visions of the ghost of a long-dead naturalist, Ernest Harold Baynes, once known for letting wild animals live in his house. This ghost has been giving Clive some ideas on how to spend his final days. Emma arrives home knowing she must face her dad's illness, her mom's judgment, and her younger brother's recent stint in rehab, but she's unprepared to find that her former best friend from high school is missing, with no one bothering to look for her. The police say they don't spend much time looking for drug addicts. Emma's dad is the only one convinced the young woman might still be alive, and Emma is hopeful he could be right. Someone should look for her, at least. Emma isn't really trying to be a hero, but somehow she and her father

bring about just the kind of miracle the town needs. Set against the backdrop of a small town in the throes of a very real opioid crisis, *Unlikely Animals* is a tragicomic novel about familial expectations, imperfect friendships, and the possibility of resurrecting that which had been thought irrevocably lost.

*The Brilliant Life of Eudora Honeysett*  
HarperCollins

Hannah Morrissey's *Hello, Transcriber* is a captivating mystery suspense debut featuring a female police transcriber who goes beyond the limits to solve a harrowing case. Every night, while the street lamps shed the only light on Wisconsin's most crime-ridden city, police transcriber Hazel Greenlee listens as detectives divulge Black Harbor's gruesome secrets. As an aspiring writer, Hazel believes that writing a novel could be her only ticket out of this frozen hellscape. And then her neighbor confesses to hiding the body of an overdose victim in a dumpster. The suspicious death is linked to Candy Man, a notorious drug dealer. Now Hazel has a first row seat to the investigation and becomes captivated by the lead detective, Nikolai Kole. Intrigued by the prospects of gathering eyewitness intel for her book, Hazel joins Kole in exploring Black Harbor's darkest side. As the investigation unfolds, Hazel will learn just how far she'll go for a good story—even if it means destroying her marriage and luring the killer to her as she plunges deeper into the city she's desperate to claw her way out of.

*The Many Daughters of Afong Moy* Atria Books

Two friends. One pact. The performance of their lives. Hannah Abbott is stuck in a dead-end relationship and at a job she loves but that barely pays the bills. The four walls of her tiny New York City apartment have never seemed so small. She's barely toasted her thirtieth birthday when her old college friend Will knocks on her door with an unexpected proposal. Will Thorne never forgot the marriage pact he made with Hannah, but he also never imagined he'd be the one to initiate it. One ex-fiancée and an almost-career-ending mistake later, however, he finds himself outside Hannah's door, on bended knee, to collect on their graduation-night pinky promise. With both of their futures at stake, Hannah and Will take a leap of faith. Now, all they have to do is convince their friends and family that they're madly in love. As long as they follow the list of rules they've drafted, everything should go smoothly. Except Will has never been good with rules, and Hannah can't stop

overthinking the sleeping arrangements. Turning thirty has never been so promising.

*Light Years from Home* Simon and Schuster

Two moms as opposite as a Happy Meal and a quinoa bowl. What a difference a week makes in a heartfelt, laugh-out-loud novel by the Washington Post bestselling author of *The Overdue Life of Amy Byler*. Celeste Mason is the Pinterest stay-at-home supermom of other mothers' nightmares. Despite her all-organic, SunButter-loving, free-range kids, her immaculate home, and her volunteering awards, she still has time to relax with a nice glass of pinot at the end of the day. The only thing that ruins it all is her workaholic, career-obsessed neighbor, who makes no secret of what she thinks of Celeste's life choices every chance she gets. Wendy Charles is a celebrated productivity consultant, columnist, and speaker. On a minute-by-minute schedule, she makes the working-mom hustle look easy. She even spends at least one waking hour a day with her kids. She's not apologizing for a thing. Especially to Celeste, who plays her superior parenting against Wendy whenever she can. Who do Celeste and Wendy think they are? They're about to find out thanks to one freaky week. After a neighborhood potluck and too much sangria, they wake up--um, what?--in each other's bodies. Everything Celeste and Wendy thought they knew about the "other kind of mom" is flipped upside down--along with their messy, complicated, maybe not so different lives.

**The Reckless Kind** Penguin

An extraordinary story of a girl, her grandfather and one of nature's most mysterious and beguiling creatures: the honeybee. Meredith May recalls the first time a honeybee crawled on her arm. She was five years old, her parents had recently split and suddenly she found herself in the care of her grandfather, an eccentric beekeeper who made honey in a rusty old military bus in the yard. That first close encounter was at once terrifying and exhilarating for May, and in that moment she discovered that everything she needed to know about life and family was right before her eyes, in the secret world of bees. May turned to her grandfather and the art of beekeeping as an escape from her troubled reality. Her mother had receded into a volatile cycle of neurosis and despair and spent most days locked away in the bedroom. It was during this pivotal time in May's childhood that she learned to take care of herself, forged an unbreakable bond with her grandfather and opened her eyes to the magic and

wisdom of nature. The bees became a guiding force in May's life, teaching her about family and community, loyalty and survival and the unequivocal relationship between a mother and her child. Part memoir, part beekeeping odyssey, *The Honey Bus* is an unforgettable story about finding home in the most unusual of places, and how a tiny, little-understood insect could save a life.

**Above the Timberline** Minotaur Books  
AN AMERICAN BOOKSELLERS ASSOCIATION ADULT DEBUT HONOR BOOK  
WINNER OF THE AUDIE AWARD FOR BEST FEMALE NARRATOR LOS ANGELES TIMES BESTSELLER A sparkling talent makes her fiction debut with this infectious novel that combines the charming pluck of *Eloise*, the poignant psychological quirks of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* and the page-turning spirit of *Where'd You Go, Bernadette*. Reclusive literary legend M. M. "Mimi" Banning has been holed up in her Bel Air mansion for years. But after falling prey to a Bernie Madoff-style ponzi scheme, she's flat broke. Now Mimi must write a new book for the first time in decades, and to ensure the timely delivery of her manuscript, her New York publisher sends an assistant to monitor her progress. The prickly Mimi reluctantly complies—with a few stipulations: No Ivy-Leaguers or English majors. Must drive, cook, tidy. Computer whiz. Good with kids. Quiet, discreet, sane. When Alice Whitley arrives at the Banning mansion, she's put to work right away—as a full-time companion to Frank, the writer's eccentric nine-year-old, a boy with the wit of Noel Coward, the wardrobe of a 1930s movie star, and very little in common with his fellow fourth-graders. As she slowly gets to know Frank, Alice becomes consumed with finding out who Frank's father is, how his gorgeous "piano teacher and itinerant male role model" Xander fits into the Banning family equation—and whether Mimi will ever finish that book. Full of heart and countless "only-in-Hollywood" moments, *Be Frank with Me* is a captivating and unconventional story of an unusual mother and son, and the intrepid young woman who finds herself irresistibly pulled into their unforgettable world.

**The Soul of an Octopus** Forge Books  
USA TODAY BESTSELLER! "One adorably British odd couple . . . Charming." — People "An exquisitely poignant tale of life, friendship and facing death . . . heart-breaking yet ultimately uplifting . . . Everyone should read this book." — Ruth Hogan, author of *Queenie Malone's Paradise Hotel* Infused with the emotional power of *Me Before You* and the irresistible

charm of Eleanor Oliphant *Is Completely Fine and Be Frank with Me*, a moving and joyous novel about an elderly woman ready to embrace death and the little girl who reminds her what it means to live. It's never too late to start living. Eudora Honeysett is done with this noisy, moronic world—all of it. She has witnessed the indignities and suffering of old age and has lived a full life. At eighty-five, she isn't going to leave things to chance. Her end will be on her terms. With one call to a clinic in Switzerland, a plan is set in motion. Then she meets ten-year-old Rose Trewidney, a whirling, pint-sized rainbow of sparkling cheer. All Eudora wants is to be left alone to set her affairs in order. Instead, she finds herself embarking on a series of adventures with the irrepressible Rose and their affable neighbor, the recently widowed Stanley—afternoon tea, shopping sprees, trips to the beach, birthday celebrations, pizza parties. While the trio of unlikely BFFs grow closer and anxiously await the arrival of Rose's new baby sister, Eudora is reminded of her own childhood—of losing her father during World War II and the devastating impact it had on her entire family. In reflecting on her past, Eudora realizes she must come to terms with what lies ahead. But now that her joy for life has been rekindled, how can she possibly say goodbye?

***The Elephant's Girl*** Penguin

"Debut novel about a wealthy man who has reached a crossroads after a lifetime of repression and denial, sending him--and his family--into a slow spiral towards a total breakdown"--

***Beautiful Creatures*** HarperCollins Sarah Dessen meets Adam Silvera in the debut YA romance everyone is talking about! "A breathtaking tour de force of angst and longing. Heartbreaking, painfully romantic, and deeply human." —STEPHANIE GARBNER, #1 bestselling author of *Caraval* "A novel you can make yourself at home in, with characters so real it feels like you've known them for ages." —JENNA EVANS WELCH, bestselling author of *Love & Gelato* "This book comes with its own aching heartbeat. Be forewarned, it's stronger than it looks." —STACEY LEE, award-winning author of *The Downstairs Girl* Ellis and Easton have been inseparable since childhood. But when a rash decision throws Ellis's life—and her relationship with Easton—into chaos, she's forced to move halfway across the country, far from everything she's ever known. Now Ellis hasn't spoken to Easton in a year, and maybe it's better that way; maybe eventually the Easton-shaped hole in her heart will heal. But when Easton's mom

invites her home for a visit, Ellis finds herself tangled up in the web of heartache, betrayal, and anger she left behind . . . and with the boy she never stopped loving.

***The House That Wasn't There*** Penguin In a dark, dark room, in a soft, soft voice, tell a scary story! Newly reillustrated, this classic I Can Read full of spooky stories is perfect for beginning readers who love a bit of a scare. Victor Rivas's silly and spooky art will introduce a new generation to stories inspired by traditional folktales like "The Teeth," "In the Graveyard," "The Green Ribbon," "In A Dark, Dark Room," "The Night It Rained," "The Pirate," and "The Ghost of John." The original edition has won many state awards and is an ALA Notable Children's Book. In a Dark, Dark Room is a Level Two I Can Read book, geared for kids who read on their own but still need a little help.

***Dread Journey*** Simon and Schuster Finalist for the National Book Award for Nonfiction \* New York Times Bestseller \* A Huffington Post Notable Nonfiction Book of the Year \* One of the Best Books of the Month on Goodreads \* Library Journal Best Sci-Tech Book of the Year \* An American Library Association Notable Book of the Year "Sy Montgomery's *The Soul of an Octopus* does for the creature what Helen Macdonald's *H Is for Hawk* did for raptors." —New Statesman, UK "One of the best science books of the year." —Science Friday, NPR Another New York Times bestseller from the author of *The Good Good Pig*, this

"fascinating...touching...informative...entertaining" (The Daily Beast) book explores the emotional and physical world of the octopus—a surprisingly complex, intelligent, and spirited creature—and the remarkable connections it makes with humans. In pursuit of the wild, solitary, predatory octopus, popular naturalist Sy Montgomery has practiced true immersion journalism. From New England aquarium tanks to the reefs of French Polynesia and the Gulf of Mexico, she has befriended octopuses with strikingly different personalities—gentle Athena, assertive Octavia, curious Kali, and joyful Karma. Each creature shows her cleverness in myriad ways: escaping enclosures like an orangutan; jetting water to bounce balls; and endlessly tricking companions with multiple "sleights of hand" to get food. Scientists have only recently accepted the intelligence of dogs, birds, and chimpanzees but now are watching octopuses solve problems and are trying to decipher the meaning of the animal's color-changing techniques. With her "joyful passion for these intelligent and

fascinating creatures" (Library Journal Editors' Spring Pick), Montgomery chronicles the growing appreciation of this mollusk as she tells a unique love story. By turns funny, entertaining, touching, and profound, *The Soul of an Octopus* reveals what octopuses can teach us about the meeting of two very different minds.

***The Nine Lives of Rose Napolitano*** Yearling

A magical adventure for fans of Katherine Applegate and Jennifer Holm about a girl with a mysterious connection to the elephant who saved her life. An elephant never forgets, but Lexington Willow can't remember her past. Swept away by a tornado as a toddler, she was dropped in a nearby Nebraska zoo, where an elephant named Nyah protected her from the storm. With no trace of her family, Lex grew up at the zoo with her foster father, Roger; her best friend, Fisher; and the wind whispering in her ear. Years later, Nyah sends Lex a telepathic image of the woods outside the zoo. Soon, Lex is wrapped up in an adventure involving ghosts, lost treasure, and a puzzle that might be the key to finding her family. Can Lex summon the courage to discover who she really is--and why the tornado brought her here all those years ago?

***Remarkable Creatures*** Redhook

INSTANT NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER!

"If you liked *Where the Crawdads Sing*, you'll love *This Tender Land*...This story is as big-hearted as they come." —Parade The unforgettable story of four orphans who travel the Mississippi River on a life-changing odyssey during the Great Depression. In the summer of 1932, on the banks of Minnesota's Gilead River, Odie O'Banion is an orphan confined to the Lincoln Indian Training School, a pitiless place where his lively nature earns him the superintendent's wrath. Forced to flee after committing a terrible crime, he and his brother, Albert, their best friend, Mose, and a brokenhearted little girl named Emmy steal away in a canoe, heading for the mighty Mississippi and a place to call their own. Over the course of one summer, these four orphans journey into the unknown and cross paths with others who are adrift, from struggling farmers and traveling faith healers to displaced families and lost souls of all kinds. With the feel of a modern classic, *This Tender Land* is an enthralling, big-hearted epic that shows how the magnificent American landscape connects us all, haunts our dreams, and makes us whole.

***Opposites Abstract*** Groundwood Books Ltd A Read With Jenna Today Show Book Club Pick! "Remarkably Bright Creatures is a beautiful examination of how loneliness

can be transformed, cracked open, with the slightest touch from another living thing." -- Kevin Wilson, author of *Nothing to See Here* For fans of *A Man Called Ove*, a charming, witty and compulsively readable exploration of friendship, reckoning, and hope that traces a widow's unlikely connection with a giant Pacific octopus After Tova Sullivan's husband died, she began working the night shift at the Sowell Bay Aquarium, mopping floors

and tidying up. Keeping busy has always helped her cope, which she's been doing since her eighteen-year-old son, Erik, mysteriously vanished on a boat in Puget Sound over thirty years ago. Tova becomes acquainted with curmudgeonly Marcellus, a giant Pacific octopus living at the aquarium. Marcellus knows more than anyone can imagine but wouldn't dream of lifting one of his eight arms for his human

captors—until he forms a remarkable friendship with Tova. Ever the detective, Marcellus deduces what happened the night Tova's son disappeared. And now Marcellus must use every trick his old invertebrate body can muster to unearth the truth for her before it's too late. Shelby Van Pelt's debut novel is a gentle reminder that sometimes taking a hard look at the past can help uncover a future that once felt impossible.

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