



Michael Giltz, Contributor BookFilter creator

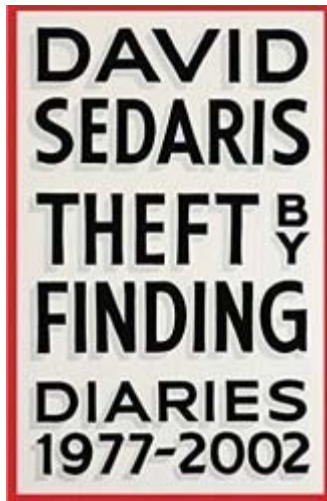
BookFilter: David Sedaris and Al Franken Make Funny; New Fantasy From J.R.R. Tolkien

06/01/2017 05:06 pm ET

Hey Book Lovers! Welcome to our latest Top Picks Of The Week! We're at the BookExpo Of America all week. That's an annual gathering of publishers and bookstore owners and librarians, an event where writers are rock stars and publicists are generals (at least for a day). We let you know what the big titles of the week are out of the hundreds of thousands being published every year. How do we do it? In part by heading to BEA and discovering what books are going to be buzzed about come summer and fall and beyond. You're welcome! (OK, it's actually really fun.) Whether you're about to go to your favorite bookstore, library or online retailer, head first to BookFilter and you'll discover all the best new releases in every genre. Then let us know what you think about the newsletter and when it arrives in your box! And stay cool!

What we're reading:

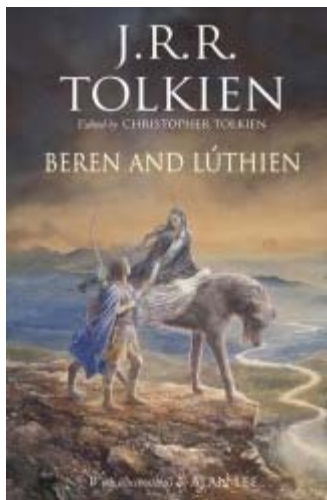
- THEFT BY FINDING: DIARIES 1977-2002 by David Sedaris (**memoir, humor**)
- BEREN AND LUTHIEN by J.R.R. Tolkien (**fantasy**)
- AL FRANKEN, GIANT OF THE SENATE by Al Franken (**current events, memoir**)
- CROSSING EBENEZER CREEK by Tonya Bolden (**young adult**)
- ON THE CAMINO by Jason (**comics, travel, faith**)
- NIGHTHAWK by Clive Cussler and Graham Brown (**thriller**)
- RUTHLESS RIVER by Holly FitzGerald (**travel, memoir**)
- ANOTHER BROOKLYN by Jacqueline Woodson (**fiction**)
- HERO OF THE EMPIRE by Candice Millard (**history, biography**)



THEFT BY FINDING: DIARIES 1977-2002 by David Sedaris

David Sedaris in the raw! No, he's not naked, but he is offering up entries from his diaries over a 25 year period. It's the raw material that he has mined for choice essays and of course some stories entirely new. He's a terrific writer though can anyone really blame you if you prefer the audiobook version? Heck, we'd probably do the same with Mark Twain if such a thing were available.... [Read More.](#)

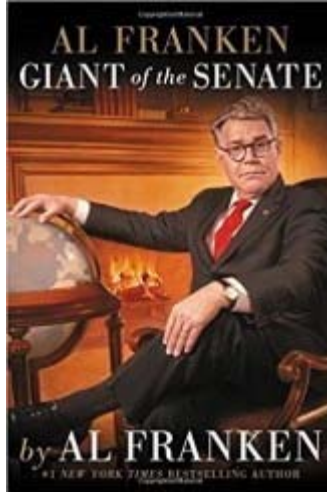
[Discover 11 New Humor/Pop Culture Titles Here!](#)[Discover 20 New Biographies Here!](#)



BEREN AND LUTHIEN by J.R.R. Tolkien

As a child, I devoured "The Hobbit" and "The Lord Of The Rings." Tolkien died so imagine my shock and delight when "The Silmarillion" appeared. More LOTR! Except it was more like reading the footnotes to the LOTR. Then came book after book, scholarly collections of the massive backstory and world-building and

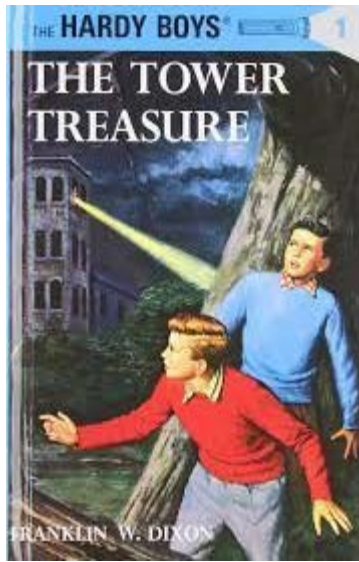
linguistic effort Tolkien embarked on to give LOTR the remarkable weight of history and believability that made it so influential. Only recently has his son Christopher edited more readable extracts, such as the satisfying novel "Children Of Hurin." It ain't LOTR but it's something! Now comes the romantic tale of Beren and Lúthien, which was peppered throughout "The Silmarillion" and foreshadowed Aragorn's romance. Fans will find it in a far more concise version here, along with hints as to how it would evolve.... [Read More](#).[Discover 12 New Fantasy/Sci-Fi Titles Here!](#)



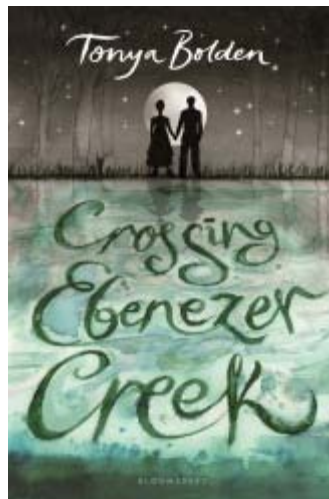
AL FRANKEN, GIANT OF THE SENATE by Al Franken

When comic writer Al Franken was elected to the US Senate, he made a conscious effort to stick to his knitting: no national press, a laser focus on his constituents and no jokes so no one would think he wasn't taking the job seriously. Now that Franken has proven himself, he feels free to let down his hair (metaphorically, obviously) and the result is this biting but serious memoir a bout running for office and what it's like to deal with issues of such import while constantly having to beg for money so you can stay in office. We've had some great writers become politicians but surely not since Lincoln have we had one this funny..... [Read More](#).[Discover 15 New Current Events Books Here!](#)[Discover 11 New Humor/Pop Culture Titles Here!](#)[Discover 20 New Biographies Here!](#)

THE HARDY BOYS DEBUT 90 YEARS AGO



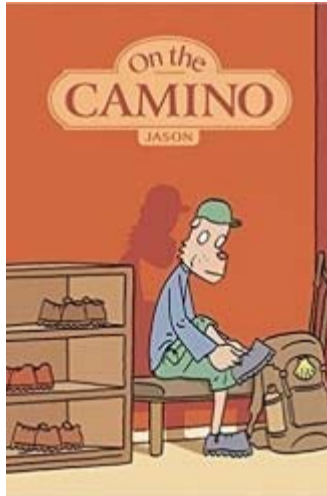
The first Hardy Boys adventure appeared on June 1, 1927. The mystery was called The Tower Treasure and almost two hundred more would follow in the main series. (Or just 57 if you wanna get geeky and argue about the canon.) The author was Franklin W. Dixon, though of course there was no Franklin W. Dixon. That was just a name used by syndicator Edward Stratemeyer, who developed the characters and ultimately had the books written by a stable of writers. Like Nancy Drew, the characters of Frank and Joe have been softened and modernized repeatedly. Ironically, the writing was a cut above back in 1927 for juvenile fiction; now it's usually a cut below because young adult books are so much more respectable now as literature. Still, the Hardy Boys continue to sell about a million copies a year.



CROSSING EBENEZER CREEK by Tonya Bolden

A solid, deceptively simple work that gets across the tangled complexity of what it means to be freed as

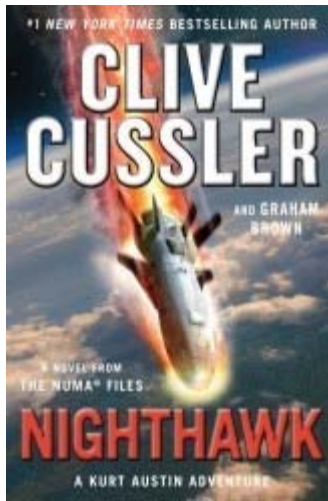
opposed to what it means to be free. Mariah has been freed...but her troubles aren't over by any stretch. In this young adult novel, writer Tonya Bolden shows great restraint in describing the plight of people who have been enslaved but suddenly taste freedom after Yankee soldiers plunder the estate they've been trapped on. Some are too enfeebled or scared to leave (or simply can't bear the thought of losing all possibility of tracking down loved ones by abandoning the one place they could be found). But Mariah is young, attractive, smart and strong; she takes her little brother Zeke and attaches herself to the Union troops. On the surface, this is a budding romance as a Union black man Caleb befriends her and they begin a tentative romance. But Holden brings out a great deal of complexity. Not all (or even most) Union soldiers care about ending slavery. Mariah and others are under constant physical threat both from rebel soldiers harassing the Yankees and from the Yankees themselves.... Read More. Discover 24 New Young Adult Titles Here!



ON THE CAMINO by Jason

For a while you had to say "graphic novelist" so people would know it was serious art. But now apparently we can say "cartoonist" or even "comics" and you'll understand that hey, it could be art. Jason is a Norwegian talent who has steadily risen in stature over the years. Here's his most explicitly autobiographical work to date (assuming the time travel tale "I Killed Hitler" was fiction.) It's about Jason walking a famed pilgrimage in Spain and the people he meets along the way. For travel book fans, people of faith (or little faith or no faith) and anyone who wonders what all the fuss about graphic novels -- I mean comics -- is about.... Read More.

Discover 17 New Comics Titles Here! Discover 4 New Faith & Philosophy Titles Here! Discover 5 New Travel Books Here!



NIGHTHAWK by Clive Cussler and Graham Brown

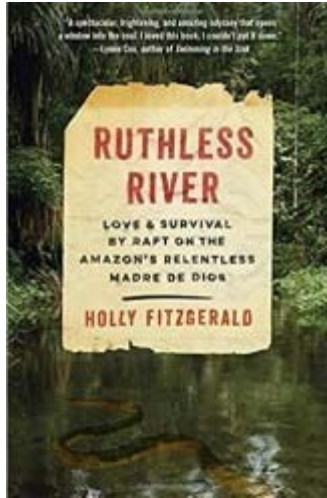
Best-selling thriller writer Clive Cussler is most famous for Dirk Pitt. (It won't be long before they try to launch another movie franchise around him.) But surely the trippiest fact about him is that Cussler invented the National Underwater and Marine Agency in his thrillers and then spun that off into its own free-standing series called the NUMA files. And then Cussler created a real-life NUMA devoted to discovering shipwrecks and funded by royalties from his books. "Nighthawk" involves a high-tech plane crashing into the ocean with NUMA racing to rescue it before China or Russia get their hands on the tech. Did we mention the cargo onboard that could devastate humanity if it is accidentally unleashed?... [Read More](#). [Discover 28 New Thriller & Mysteries Here!](#)



WALT WHITMAN IS BORN ON MAY 31

On May 31, 1819 poet and essayist Walt Whitman is born on Long Island. The father of free verse has been pretty busy lately: scholars have "unearthed" an ode to fitness and a comic novel that was serialized in a

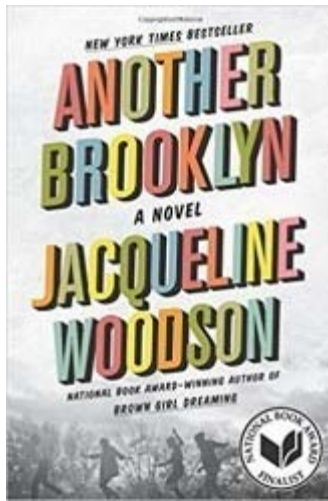
newspaper. But Whitman will be forever remembered for his diary of the home front during the Civil War, his essays and above all his poetry, including the landmark *Leaves of Grass*. Only Emily Dickinson and a precious few others have proven as influential as Whitman on American poetry. Plus his beard is so flowing and his free love ethos so shocking for the time (and even today) that Whitman remains a sort of beatnik Santa Claus celebrated in movies like *Dead Poets Society*. *****



RUTHLESS RIVER by Holly FitzGerald

Think "The Amazing Race: Nightmare Edition." Like many newlyweds, Holly FitzGerald and her husband decided to fund an "experience," an adventure. They planned a year-long trek across the globe. Unfortunately, it began with a plane crash in the Amazon (at a penal colony), a desperate raft ride on a few long stretches through two countries and hundreds of miles, ending at a dead end where the couple could stay on the raft and die or swim for shore and hope somehow to eventually find their way back to civilization. Minor problem: the water is infested with piranha. This true life tale is either the best beginning to a marriage (if your relationship can survive this...!) or the worst..... [Read More.](#)

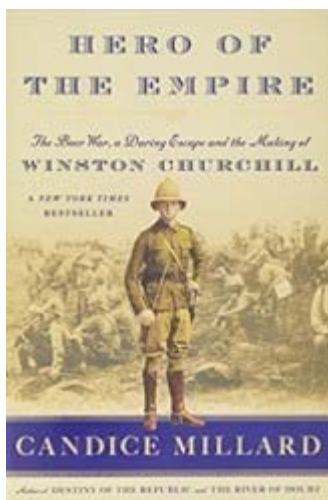
[Discover 5 New Travel Books Here!](#)[Discover 20 New Memoirs/Biographies Here!](#)



ANOTHER BROOKLYN by Jacqueline Woodson

How fresh and vivid it feels to be alive when the entire world can be encompassed on a single block in New York City! And how sadly inevitable when that block cannot keep out the realities of life. Woodson's newest work is brief, but overbrimming with the sights and sounds, the taste and feel of childhood -- specifically the childhood of a young girl of color coming of age in Brooklyn in the 1970s. Her name is August and she watches over her little brother while their dad toils away at an unforgiving job. Nothing and everything happens, with Woodson moving the story forward in an imagistic rush, drunk on the world August is soaking up with the eagerness of a future artist. It's a bold, beautiful, bewitching work, both heartbreaking in its truth and strong because Woodson remembers it all.... Read More.

Discover 21 New Fiction Titles Here!



HERO OF THE EMPIRE by Candice Millard

Historian Candice Millard captures Winston Churchill at the very start of his remarkable career. Having lost his first political campaign, Churchill yearned to prove himself in the crucible of battle...and any battle would do. He banged the drum for a war with the Boers and by god Churchill got it. Millard ably shows this world-striding figure in all his eager, complicated glory. One does not think of Churchill as a man of action, but that's exactly his role here. More famous for who his father and forebears were, Churchill bulled his way into every situation: he became the highest paid correspondent covering the war, he distinguished himself in the field (even though journalists were not supposed to play a role in battle), his capture by the Boers made headlines around the world and just when Britain's fortunes were at their low tide, Churchill's foolhardy but successful escape ignited joy. Typically, he then enlisted and headed right back into the field of battle. No one would accuse him of being cowardly.... Read More.

Discover 16 New History Titles Here! Discover 20 New Biographies Here!

Thanks for reading our latest BookFilter newsletter! Tell us what you think -- drop a line at newsletter@bookfilter.com. Do you want more picks? Fewer? Did you click on any of the links like "More Fiction!" to find even more great new picks? Will you share it with a friend? Will we keep asking questions? If you love it, share it with your friends -- forward them the newsletter or just send them this link so they can sign up for themselves.

Michael Giltz is the founder and CEO of the forthcoming website BookFilter, a book lover's best friend. Trying to decide what to read next? Head to BookFilter! Need a smart and easy gift? Head to BookFilter? Wondering what new titles came out this week in your favorite categories, like cookbooks and mystery and more? Head to BookFilter! It's a website that lets you browse for books online the way you do in a physical bookstore, provides comprehensive info on new releases every week in every category and offers passionate personal recommendations every step of the way. It's like a fall book preview or holiday gift guide — but every week in every category. He's also the cohost of Showbiz Sandbox, a weekly pop culture podcast that reveals the industry take on entertainment news of the day and features top journalists and opinion makers as guests. It's available for free on iTunes. Visit Michael Giltz at his website and his daily blog. Download his podcast of celebrity interviews and his radio show, also called Popsurfing and also available for free on iTunes.