

## Inside the List

ELISABETH EGAN

Lisa Jewell was walking her dog near her home in London when she caught a glimpse of a man standing at a bay window inside a scruffy stucco building. Suddenly she knew she wanted to write about him — or a character inspired by



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him — in her 21st book. The man was “utterly nondescript,” the suspense novelist said in a phone interview. He could have been 40 years old or he could have been 60. “I could see that his apartment had no softness to it, nothing on the walls,” Jewell explained. “For whatever reason, there was something that just suggested all sorts of dark stories and secrets I wanted to uncover.”

As Jewell continued on her way, a name popped into her head: Walter. Not long after, a surname followed. “I thought, I’ve got him,” Jewell said. “He’s Walter Fair.” She already had a few ideas brewing for the novel that would become her latest best seller, “None of This Is True.” But Walter Fair was, as she put it, “the key that opened the last door” to the rest of the story. Four months later, she completed a rough first draft.

A name won’t necessarily serve as a springboard to inspiration, but Jewell always puts a lot of stock in the christening of characters. She said, “It’s almost the same level of attention to detail as when you name your own child.” She prefers a literary-sounding option to a popular one — for instance, she said, “I don’t like to use commonplace names like Sarah or Mike.” Jewell prefers one-syllable surnames; and within that category, she admits to a particular weakness for animal-themed monikers like “Fox,” “Wolf” and “Lamb.”

When it comes to families, Jewell tries to strike a balance between complementary and matchy. “I love naming characters’ children,” she said. “You have to name them in a way that parents would name a group of siblings.”

Does Jewell ever forget the names of characters from earlier books? “Subsidiary ones, yes,” she admitted. But there’s usually a cast of five or six central players in each of her novels, and each is, as she put it, “like a friend I’ve known for many years.”

Despite her strong feelings on this subject, Jewell is willing to offer naming rights for a good cause. In the acknowledgments section of “None of This Is True,” she explains how the name of a main character’s friend, Giovanni, was provided by the winner of an auction to raise funds for the charity Young Lives vs Cancer. Jewell estimates that Giovanni is the eighth name she’s donated to this particular group. What would she do if she received one she didn’t like? “I tend to have to sort of shoehorn them in somehow,” she said. □

## PRINT / HARDCOVER BEST SELLERS

SALES PERIOD OF AUGUST 27-SEPTEMBER 2

| THIS WEEK |    | LAST WEEK |    | Fiction  |  | WEEKS ON LIST |    |
|-----------|----|-----------|----|--|--|---------------|----|
| 1         | 1  | 1         | 1  | <b>FOURTH WING</b> , by Rebecca Yarros. (Red Tower) Violet Sorrengail is urged by the commanding general, who also is her mother, to become a candidate for the elite dragon riders.   |  |               | 17 |
| 2         | 2  | 2         | 2  | <b>TOM LAKE</b> , by Ann Patchett. (Harper) Three daughters, who return to their family orchard in the spring of 2020, learn about their mother’s relationship with a famous actor.  |  |               | 5  |
| 3         | 4  | 4         | 4  | <b>LESSONS IN CHEMISTRY</b> , by Bonnie Garmus. (Doubleday) A scientist and single mother living in California in the 1960s becomes a star on a TV cooking show.   |  |               | 69 |
| 4         | 5  | 5         | 5  | <b>DEMON COPPERHEAD</b> , by Barbara Kingsolver. (Harper) Winner of a 2023 Pulitzer Prize for fiction. A reimagining of Charles Dickens’s “David Copperfield.”   |  |               | 44 |
| 5         |    |           |    | <b>THE BREAKAWAY</b> , by Jennifer Weiner. (Atria) As her wedding to a man she met at a childhood weight-loss camp approaches, Abby goes on a cycling trip to Niagara Falls in a group that includes an old fling.                         |  |               | 1  |
| 6         | 10 | 10        | 10 | <b>THE HEAVEN &amp; EARTH GROCERY STORE</b> , by James McBride. (Riverhead) Secrets held by the residents of a dilapidated neighborhood come to life when a skeleton is found at the bottom of a well.                                     |  |               | 4  |
| 7         | 7  | 7         | 7  | <b>THE COVENANT OF WATER</b> , by Abraham Verghese. (Grove) Three generations of a family living on South India’s Malabar Coast suffer the loss of a family member by drowning.  |  |               | 18 |
| 8         |    |           |    | <b>THE GIRL IN THE EAGLE’S TALONS</b> , by Karin Smirnov. (Knopf) The seventh book in the Girl With the Dragon Tattoo series. When violence disrupts Mikael Blomkvist’s daughter’s marriage, Lisbeth Salander appears to be his last hope. |  |               | 1  |
| 9         | 8  | 8         | 8  | <b>NONE OF THIS IS TRUE</b> , by Lisa Jewell. (Atria) After meeting a woman who shares the same birthday, Alix Summer becomes the subject of her own true crime podcast.   |  |               | 4  |
| 10        | 9  | 9         | 9  | <b>LION &amp; LAMB</b> , by James Patterson and Duane Swierczynski. (Little, Brown) The Eagles’ starting quarterback is murdered and his wife, a Grammy-winning singer, is the prime suspect.  |  |               | 3  |

| THIS WEEK |    | LAST WEEK |    | Nonfiction   |  | WEEKS ON LIST |    |
|-----------|----|-----------|----|--|--|---------------|----|
| 1         | 1  | 1         | 1  | <b>OUTLIVE</b> , by Peter Attia with Bill Gifford. (Harmony) A look at recent scientific research on aging and longevity.  |  |               | 23 |
| 2         | 3  | 3         | 3  | <b>THE WAGER</b> , by David Grann. (Doubleday) The survivors of a shipwrecked British vessel on a secret mission during an imperial war with Spain have different accounts of events; by the author of “Killers of the Flower Moon.” |  |               | 20 |
| 3         | 4  | 4         | 4  | <b>I’M GLAD MY MOM DIED</b> , by Jennette McCurdy. (Simon & Schuster) The actress, podcaster and filmmaker describes her eating disorders and difficult relationship with her mother.  |  |               | 56 |
| 4         | 2  | 2         | 2  | <b>GAMBLER</b> , by Billy Walters with Armen Keteyian. (Avid Reader) The sports gambler shares his life story and gives insights on his betting system. (†)  |  |               | 2  |
| 5         | 8  | 8         | 8  | <b>POVERTY, BY AMERICA</b> , by Matthew Desmond. (Crown) The Pulitzer Prize-winning author of “Evicted” examines the ways in which affluent Americans keep poor people poor.   |  |               | 17 |
| 6         | 6  | 6         | 6  | <b>NEVER ENOUGH</b> , by Jennifer Breheny Wallace. (Portfolio) The journalist and social commentator looks at how the pressure to succeed affects parents, educators and children. (†)   |  |               | 2  |
| 7         | 7  | 7         | 7  | <b>THE IN-BETWEEN</b> , by Hadley Vlahos. (Ballantine) A hospice nurse shares some of her most impactful experiences and questions some of society’s beliefs around end-of-life care.  |  |               | 12 |
| 8         | 11 | 11        | 11 | <b>WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?</b> , by Bruce D. Perry and Oprah Winfrey. (Flatiron) An approach to dealing with trauma that shifts an essential question used to investigate it.  |  |               | 56 |
| 9         | 9  | 9         | 9  | <b>BEYOND THE STORY</b> , by BTS and Myeongseok Kang. (Flatiron) An oral history of the K-pop group that is celebrating its 10th anniversary.  |  |               | 8  |
| 10        |    |           |    | <b>ADVERSITY FOR SALE</b> , by Jay “Jeezy” Jenkins with Benjamin Meadows-Ingram. (HarperCollins Leadership) The Grammy-nominated recording artist shares how he overcame obstacles in his life and career. (†)                       |  |               | 2  |

An asterisk (\*) indicates that a book’s sales are barely distinguishable from those of the book above. A dagger (†) indicates that some bookstores report receiving bulk orders.

## Paperback Row / BY SHREYA CHATTOPADHYAY



**CHASING ME TO MY GRAVE: An Artist’s Memoir of the Jim Crow South**, by Winfred Rembert and Erin I. Kelly. (Bloomsbury, 320 pp., \$22.99.) Rembert, who painted life onto leather, grew up in the cotton fields of Georgia and weathered a near-lynching and prison before becoming a celebrated artist. “I wanted people to know where I came from,” he writes in his posthumous memoir, which won the 2022 Pulitzer Prize and includes 76 color prints.



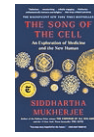
**OUR SHARE OF NIGHT**, by Mariana Enriquez. Translated by Megan McDowell. (Hogarth, 608 pp., \$18.99.) The Order, a secret society of occultists seeking immortality, covets the ability to summon “the Darkness.” Juan and his son Gaspar have that skill, but they soon find that the line between understanding those powers and being subsumed by them is thin.



**WHO’S RAISING THE KIDS?: Big Tech, Big Business, and the Lives of Children**, by Susan Linn. (The New Press, 352 pp., \$18.99.) Children should be raised “in communities that value them, not by entities that profit from their exploitation,” the psychologist writes. Her book provides evidence that apps like Instagram and TikTok are supplanting the crucial process of childhood play with consumption, and argues in favor of policy change to reduce their impact.



**BLISS MONTAGE: Stories**, by Ling Ma. (Picador, 240 pp., \$17.) The author of “Severance” puts forth stories about women coping with disconnection, from living with 100 ex-boyfriends to romancing a Yeti. The collection, which was an Editors’ Choice pick, shows “a gifted writer curious about the limits of theoretical possibility,” Lovia Gyarkye wrote in her review.



**THE SONG OF THE CELL: An Exploration of Medicine and the New Human**, by Siddhartha Mukherjee. (Scribner, 496 pp., \$21.) The oncologist and Pulitzer Prize-winning author turns his eye to the basic unit of life. His deep dive probes the discovery and function of cells, emerging cellular technology treatments and the mysteries of inter-cell interaction. “We have learned the names of the bushes,” he writes, “but not the songs that move between the trees.”



**PERFECTLY NICE NEIGHBORS**, by Kya Abdullah. (Putnam, 352 pp., \$18.) Salma is excited to move to a new suburb with her British-Bangladeshi family, but her excitement is dampened when a white neighbor rips out their “Black Lives Matter” lawn sign. Abdullah’s thriller tracks the conflict as it careens toward disaster, growing to include vandalism, murder and, of course, Twitter.