

# 2021 BIG READ

## • ALIKE CATALOG

This catalog contains our recommendations for books that might appeal to readers who enjoyed Nnedi Okorafor's *Binti: The Complete Trilogy*.

### ***BINTI: THE COMPLETE TRILOGY* (2019). NNEDI OKORAFOR**

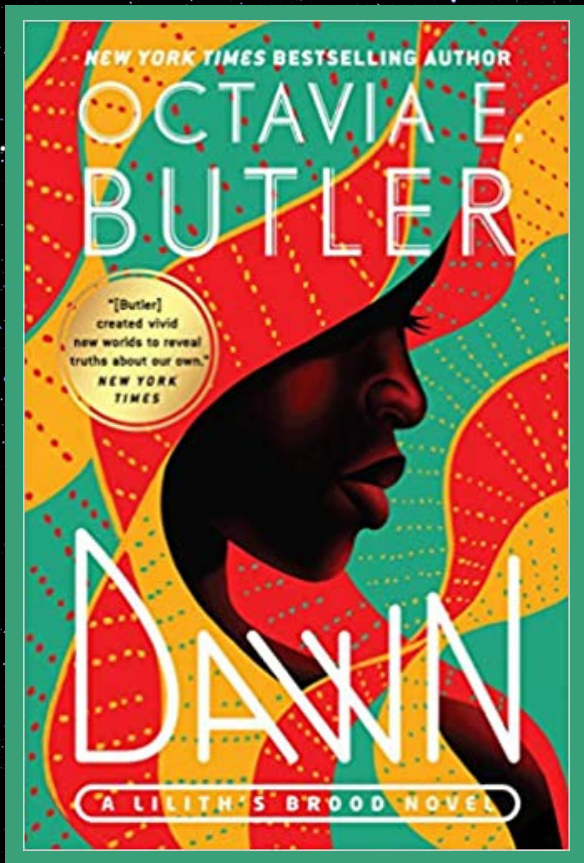


Nnedi Okorafor is a bestselling, Nigerian-American writer who has quickly gained a reputation as one of the foremost voices in contemporary science fiction. The *Binti* series introduces us to a unique brand of “Africanfuturism,” Okorafor’s term for the deep investment in “African culture, history, mythology, and point-of-view” that pervades her fiction. Set on earth and in space, the *Binti* trilogy tells the story of a young woman from Namibia who negotiates the stress of leaving home and heading off to college, confronting past tradition and future prospects as she struggles to find her place in an alien environment. Relying on her love of mathematics and also newfound friendships, Binti must negotiate prejudice, self-doubt, and trauma as the narrative builds to high-stakes conflicts between groups on Earth and beyond.

Okorafor’s stories have been praised by critics. Neil Gaiman, for instance, writes, “Nnedi Okorafor writes glorious futures . . . . Her worlds open your mind to new things, always rooted in the red clay of reality. Prepare to fall in love with *Binti*.”



## DAWN (1987). OCTAVIA BUTLER



### SUMMARY:

When Lilith Iyapo wakes from a centuries-long sleep, she finds herself aboard the vast spaceship of the Oankali. She discovers that the Oankali—a seemingly benevolent alien race—intervened in the fate of the humanity hundreds of years ago, saving everyone who survived a nuclear war from a dying, ruined Earth and then putting them into a deep sleep.

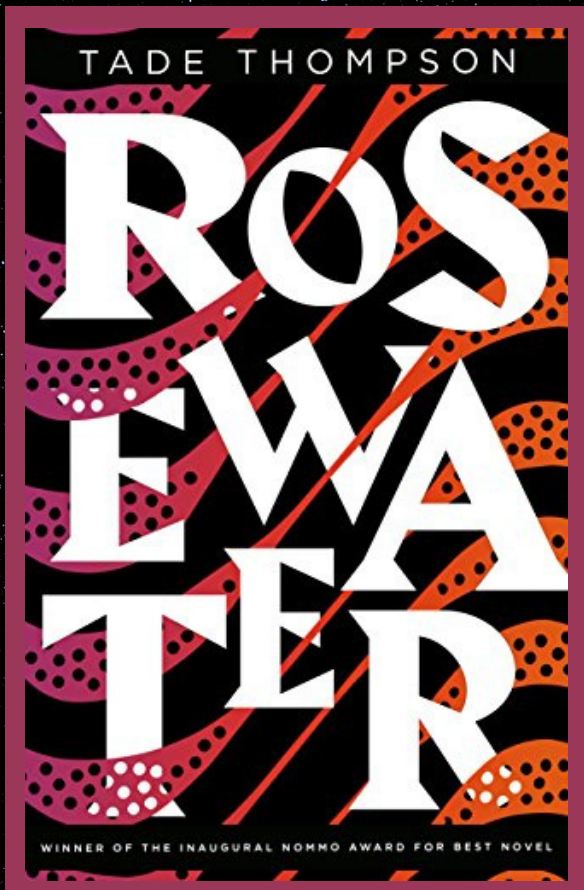
After learning all they could about Earth and its beings, the Oankali healed the planet, cured cancer, increased human strength, and they now want Lilith to lead her people back to Earth—but salvation comes at a price.

### REVIEW:

"Clear-headed and brutally unsentimental. . . . If you haven't read Butler, you don't yet understand how rich the possibilities of science fiction can be."

—*Fantasy & Science Fiction*

## ROSEWATER (2016). TADE THOMPSON



### SUMMARY:

Rosewater is a town on the edge. A community formed around the edges of a mysterious alien biodome, its residents comprise the hopeful, the hungry, and the helpless—people eager for a glimpse inside the dome or a taste of its rumored healing powers.

Kaaro is a government agent with a criminal past. He has seen inside the biodome, and doesn't care to again—but when something begins killing off others like himself, Kaaro must defy his masters to search for an answer, facing his dark history and coming to a realization about a horrifying future.

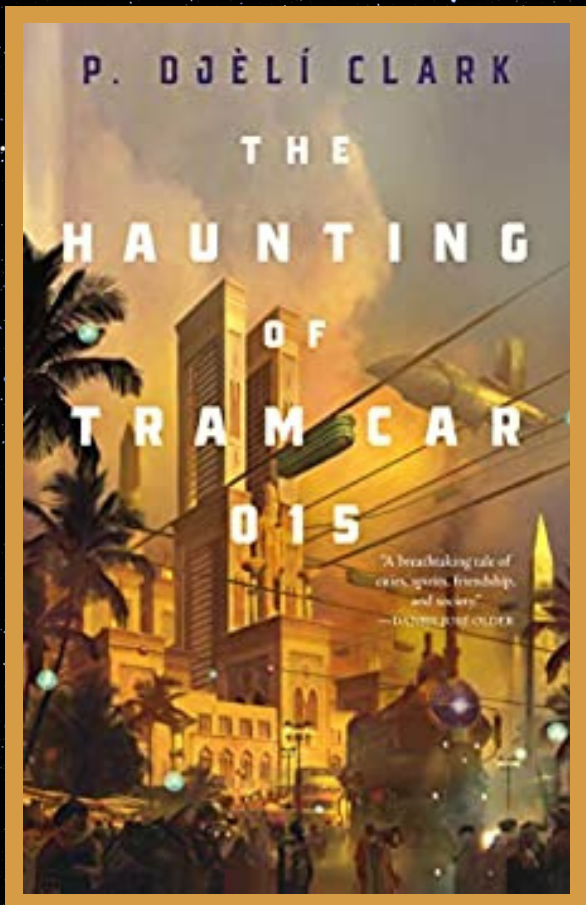
### REVIEW:

"A sharply satirical, ingenious thriller about an alien invasion that's disturbingly familiar. Tade Thompson has built a fascinating world that will suck you in and keep you guessing. This book will eat you alive, and you'll like it."

—Annalee Newitz, author of *Autonomous*



**THE HAUNTING OF TRAM CAR 015 (2019).  
P. DJÈLÍ CLARK**



**SUMMARY:**

Cairo, 1912: The case started as a simple one for the Ministry of Alchemy, Enchantments and Supernatural Entities—handling a possessed tram car.

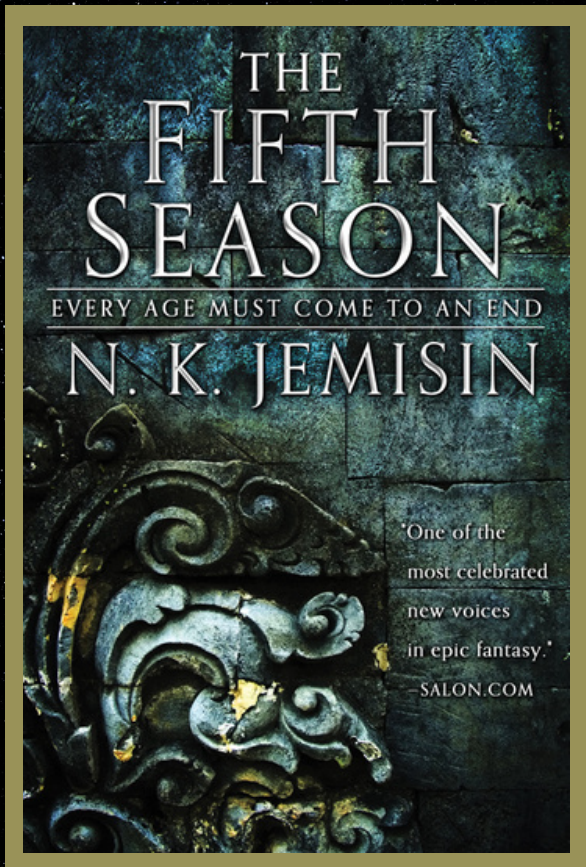
Soon, however, Agent Hamed Nasr and his new partner Agent Onsi Youssef are exposed to a new side of Cairo stirring with suffragettes, secret societies, and sentient automatons in a race against time to protect the city from an encroaching danger that crosses the line between the magical and the mundane.

**REVIEW:**

"*The Haunting of Tram Car 015* is a witty, political, magical visit to an alternate 1912 Cairo suffused with richly imagined sights, tastes, and a dash of bureaucracy. Forget the Ministry of Magic; you want to be there when the agents of the Ministry of Alchemy, Enchantments and Supernatural Entities get to work on a case."

—Nebula and Sturgeon Award-winning author Sarah Pinsker

**THE FIFTH SEASON (2015). N. K. JEMISIN**



**SUMMARY:**

This is the way the world ends . . . for the last time.

It starts with the great red rift across the heart of the world's sole continent, spewing ash that blots out the sun. It starts with death, with a murdered son and a missing daughter. It starts with betrayal, and long dormant wounds rising up to fester.

This is the Stillness, a land long familiar with catastrophe, where the power of the earth is wielded as a weapon. And where there is no mercy.

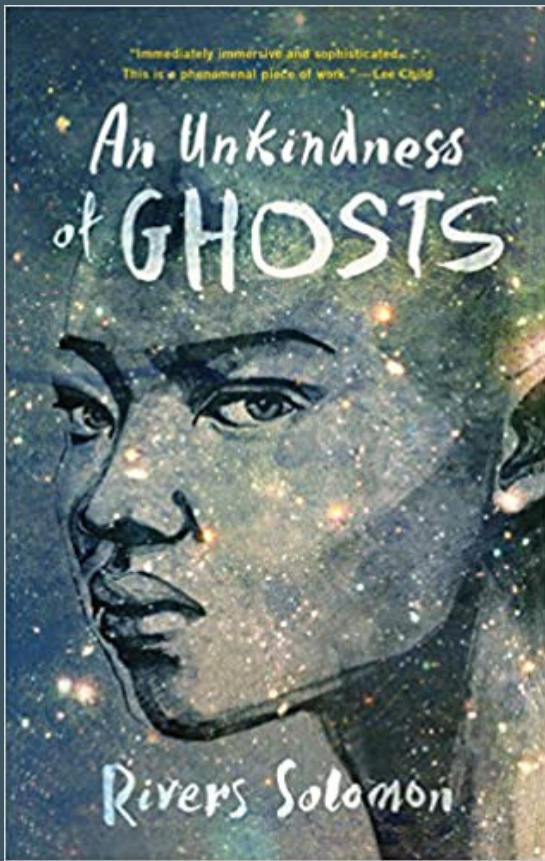
**REVIEW:**

"[*The Fifth Season* is] an ambitious book, with a shifting point of view, and a protagonist whose full complexity doesn't become apparent till toward the end of the novel. . . . Jemisin's work itself is part of a slow but definite change in sci-fi and fantasy."

—Guardian



**AN UNKINDNESS OF GHOSTS (2017).  
RIVERS SOLOMON**



**SUMMARY:**

Aster lives in the lowdeck slums of the HSS *Matilda*, a space vessel organized much like the antebellum South. For generations, *Matilda* has ferried the last of humanity to a mythical Promised Land. On its way, the ship's leaders have imposed harsh moral restrictions and deep indignities on dark-skinned sharecroppers like Aster. Embroiled in a grudge with a brutal overseer, Aster learns there may be a way to improve her lot—if she's willing to sow the seeds of civil war.

**REVIEW:**

"Harrowing and beautiful, this is SF at its best: showing the possible future but warning of the danger of bringing old prejudices and cruelties to that new world. While a story about enslaved people in space could be a one-note polemic, the fully rounded characters bring nuance and genuine pathos to this amazing debut."

*-Library Journal, Starred Review*

**ALL SYSTEMS RED (2017). MARTHA WELLS**

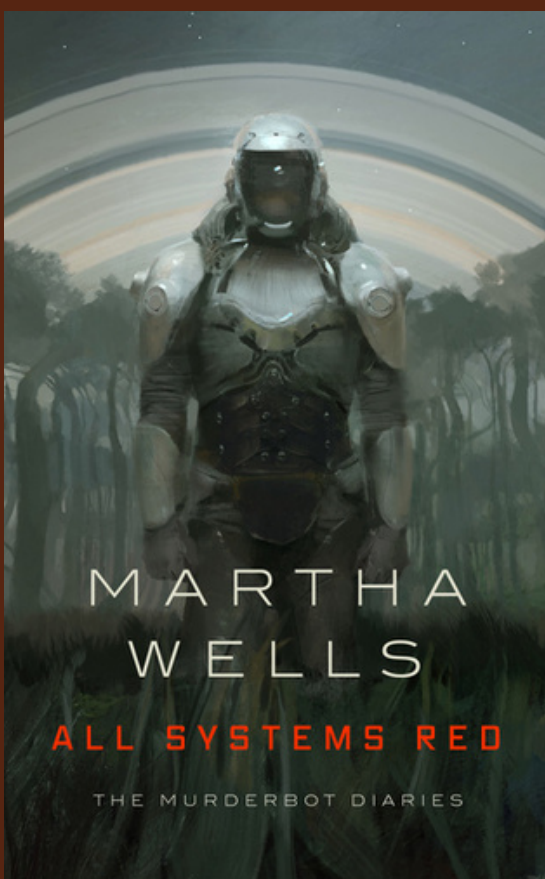
**SUMMARY:**

In a corporate-dominated spacefaring future, planetary missions must be approved and supplied by the Company. Exploratory teams are accompanied by Company-supplied security androids, for their own safety. But in a society where contracts are awarded to the lowest bidder, safety isn't a primary concern. On a distant planet, a team of scientists are conducting surface tests, shadowed by their Company-supplied 'droid—a self-aware SecUnit that has hacked its own governor module, and refers to itself (though never out loud) as "Murderbot." Scornful of humans, all it really wants is to be left alone long enough to figure out who it is. But when a neighboring mission goes dark, it's up to the scientists and their Murderbot to get to the truth.

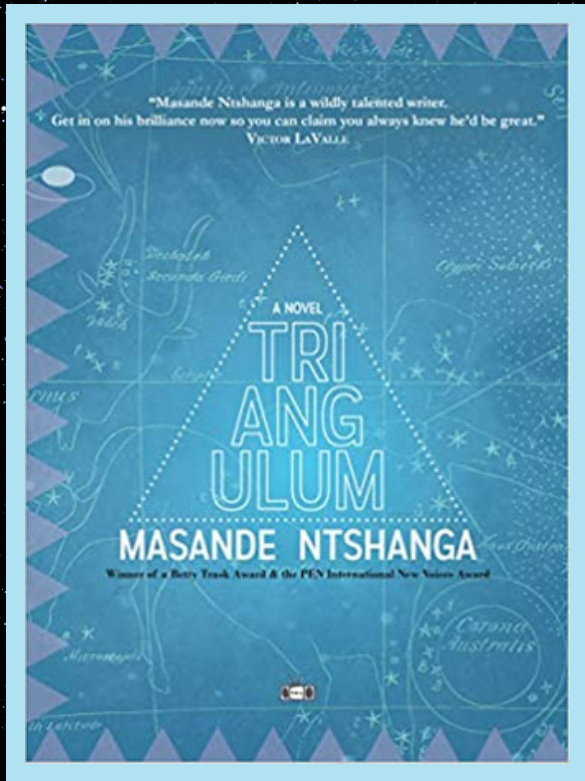
**REVIEW:**

"Wells imbued Murderbot with extraordinary humanity, and while this is a fun read, don't make the mistake of thinking it's not a profound one."

*-LA Times*







**SUMMARY:**

In 2040, the South African National Space Agency receives a mysterious package from an unnamed woman who claims the world will end in ten years. Assigned to the case, Dr. Naomi Buthelezi is hired to investigate the veracity of the materials, and whether or not the woman's claim to have heard from a "force more powerful than humankind" is genuine. Thus begins TRIANGULUM, a found manuscript composed of the mysterious woman's memoir and her recordings. Haunted by visions of a mysterious machine, the narrator is a seemingly adrift 17-year-old girl, whose sick father never recovered from the shock of losing his wife. She struggles to navigate school, sexual experimentation, and friendship across racial barriers in post-apartheid South Africa.

**REVIEW:**

"Masande Ntshanga's poetic language haunts. . . . Ntshanga has crafted a novel that triangulates South Africa's past, present, and future, using each to better surmise the nature of the others."

-Rachel Z. Arndt, *The Believer*

**REMOTE CONTROL (2021). NNEDI OKORAFOR**

**SUMMARY:**

The day Fatima forgot her name, Death paid a visit. From hereon in she would be known as Sankofa—a name that meant nothing to anyone but her, the only tie to her family and her past.

Her touch is death, and with a glance a town can fall. And she walks—alone, except for her fox companion—searching for the object that came from the sky and gave itself to her when the meteors fell and when she was yet unchanged; searching for answers.

But is there a greater purpose for Sankofa, now that Death is her constant companion?

**REVIEW:**

"This imaginative, thought-provoking story uses elements of the fantastic to investigate the complexities of gender and community outside of a European, colonial imagination. Readers will be blown away."

-Publishers Weekly, Starred Review





**SUMMARY:**

The world fell in love with her in the movie. Now, the Black Panther's techno-genius sister launches her own adventures—written by best-selling Afrofuturist author Nnedi Okorafor and drawn by Eisner-nominated artist Leonardo Romero! The Black Panther has disappeared, lost on a mission in space. And in his absence, everyone's looking at the next in line for the throne. But Shuri is happiest in a lab, surrounded by gadgets of her own creation. She'd rather be testing gauntlets than throwing them. But a nation without a leader is a vulnerable one—and Shuri may have to choose between Wakanda's welfare and her own.

**REVIEW:**

"Okorafor does a great job of integrating African politics and the more mystical aspects of Wakandan history into the story, Romero brings a striking visual style, and the charming likeability of the leading lady keeps the pages turning throughout. Well worth a look."

—Craig Neilson-Adams, *Big Comic Page*

**ON A SUNBEAM (2018). TILLIE WALDEN****SUMMARY:**

Two timelines. Second chances. One love.

A ragtag crew travels to the deepest reaches of space, rebuilding beautiful, broken structures to piece the past together.

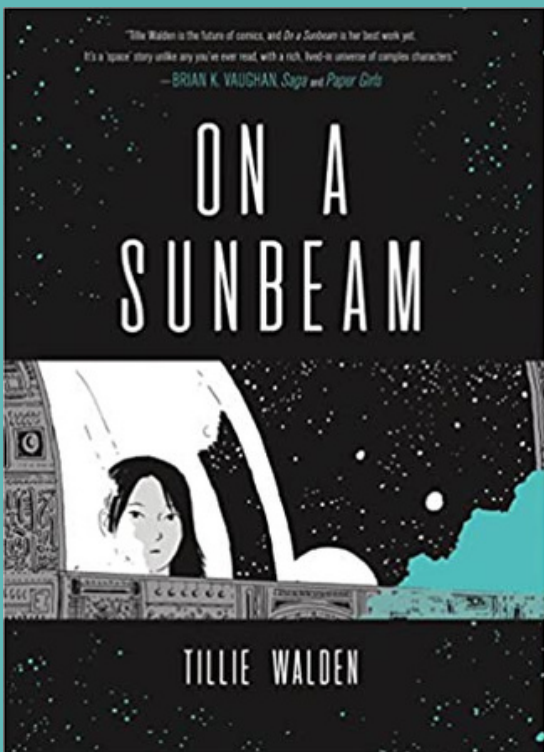
Two girls meet in boarding school and fall deeply in love—only to learn the pain of loss.

With interwoven timelines and stunning art, award-winning graphic novelist Tillie Walden creates an inventive world, breathtaking romance, and an epic quest for love.

**REVIEW:**

"*On a Sunbeam* is a rare treat. It's both a slow-burn romance and a found-family space opera adventure with an engaging cast of characters. But it's the world building that really stands out, with a blend of SF and fantasy in a gloriously strange setting that is so brilliantly original I have no idea how to describe it. I enjoyed every bit of it."

—Martha Wells, author of *The Murderbot Diaries*





**SUMMARY:**

The year is 2172. Climate change and nuclear disasters have rendered much of earth unlivable. Only the lucky ones have escaped to space colonies in the sky.

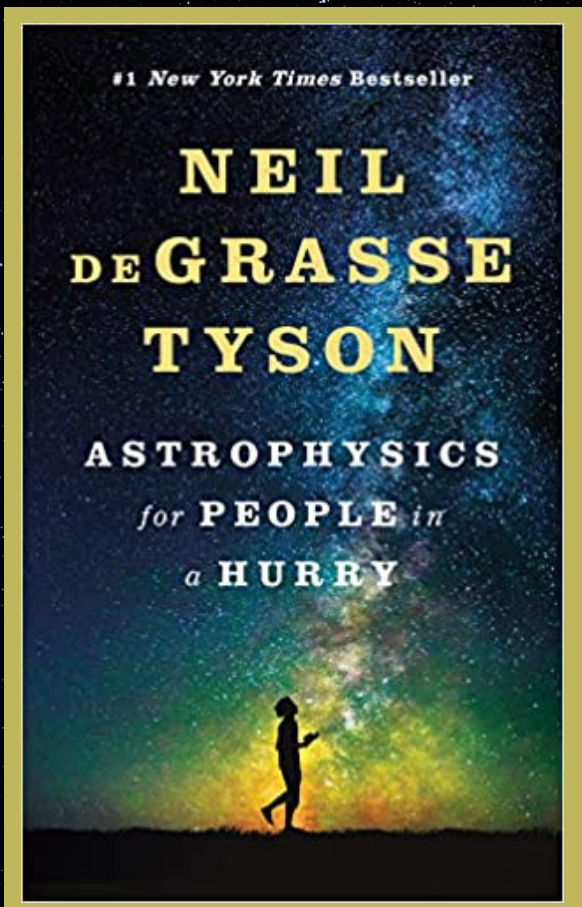
In a war-torn Nigeria, battles are fought using flying, deadly mechs and soldiers are outfitted with bionic limbs and artificial organs meant to protect them from the harsh, radiation-heavy climate. Across the nation, as the years-long civil war wages on, survival becomes the only way of life.

Two sisters, Onyii and Ify, dream of more. Their lives have been marked by violence and political unrest. Still, they dream of peace, of hope, of a future together. And they're willing to fight an entire war to get there.

**REVIEW:**

"Onyebuchi has created a fascinating futuristic Nigeria and a plot filled with left hooks and upper cuts, even as he nobly illuminates one of the most pervasive conditions of the human experience."

-The New York Times Book Review

**ASTROPHYSICS FOR PEOPLE IN A HURRY  
(2017). NEIL DEGRASSE TYSON**
**SUMMARY:**

What is the nature of space and time? How do we fit within the universe? How does the universe fit within us? There's no better guide through these mind-expanding questions than acclaimed astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson. Tyson brings the universe down to Earth succinctly and clearly, with sparkling wit, in tasty chapters consumable anytime and anywhere in your busy day. *Astrophysics for People in a Hurry* will reveal just what you need to be fluent and ready for the next cosmic headlines: from the Big Bang to black holes, from quarks to quantum mechanics, and from the search for planets to the search for life in the universe.

**REVIEW:**

"Infectiously enthusiastic, humorous and, above all, accessible. . . . reading *Astrophysics for People in a Hurry* is both a humbling and exhilarating experience."

-BookPage





**FOLLOW THE**

**&**



**PURDUE  
UNIVERSITY®**

Department of English



@EnglishPurdue



@Purdue\_English



@Purdue\_English