

May 21, 2023

EDITORS' CHOICE/STAFF PICKS FROM THE BOOK REVIEW

THE COVENANT OF WATER, by Abraham Verghese. (Grove, \$30.) Verghese's first novel since the enormously successful "Cutting for Stone" follows generations of a family across 77 years in southwestern India as they contend with political strife and other troubles — capped by a shocking discovery the matriarch's granddaughter, a doctor, will make.

OUR BEST INTENTIONS, by Vibhuti Jain. (Morrow, \$30.) Jain's debut novel looks at race, class and privilege in a wealthy Westchester suburb where a white high school student has been stabbed. Soon after, a Black fellow student, who becomes a suspect in the crime, goes missing, prompting a quest for the truth, a search that is clouded by assumptions and agendas.

HOW TO THINK LIKE A WOMAN: Four Women Philosophers Who Taught Me How to Love the Life of the Mind, by Regan Penaluna. (Grove, \$28.) This provocative consideration of four early modern women philosophers — all but Mary Wollstonecraft now obscure — doubles as an indictment of sexism in the field, by an author who, deflated by the prejudice she saw, abandoned academia for journalism.

PICASSO THE FOREIGNER: An Artist in France, 1900-1973, by Annie Cohen-Solal. Translated by Sam Taylor. (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$40.) Fifty years after Pablo Picasso's death, Cohen-Solal offers an outsize but propulsive tribute with a peppery goal: to paint the Spanish master as a cultural outcast and to indict the culture — French — that made him one.

THE EXCEPTIONS: Nancy Hopkins, MIT, and the Fight for Women in Science, by Kate Zernike. (Scribner, \$30.) Zernike's excellent and infuriating tale of the fight for fairness at M.I.T. and beyond is not merely a fast-paced account of one woman's accomplishments but a larger history of women in STEM (or lack thereof).

THIS IS NOT MIAMI, by Fernanda Melchor. Translated by Sophie Hughes. (New Directions, paperback, \$15.95.) Melchor roots around in the shadows of Veracruz, Mexico, for her dark and powerful collection of narrative nonfiction, full of murderers, thieves, stowaways and ghost hunters. These accounts detail real events and testimonies, but the author's subjectivity — and singular voice — loom large.

THE EDEN TEST, by Adam Sternbergh. (Flatiron, \$27.99.) In this domestic thriller, a New York couple head to the woods for a weeklong retreat to save their marriage. But each day brings ever stranger circumstances and increasingly hostile neighbors, until their idyll becomes more of an ordeal.

GUARDIANS OF THE VALLEY: John Muir and the Friendship That Saved Yosemite, by Dean King. (Scribner, \$30.) This lyrical account of the battle to save what became Yosemite National Park devotes equal attention to the two men at its center: a naturalist and a newsman. Their unlikely alliance is rendered another, smaller victory.

LILIANA'S INVINCIBLE SUMMER: A Sister's Search for Justice, by Cristina Rivera Garza. (Hogarth, \$28.) In 1990, Rivera Garza's 20-year-old sister was murdered in Mexico. That case is the inspiration and launching point for Rivera Garza's new memoir, a personal and cultural look at femicide in Mexico.

The full reviews of these and other recent books are on the web: [nytimes.com/books](https://www.nytimes.com/books).