

BOOKS

What We're Reading

By STEPH OPITZ

1. AT THE EDGE OF THE ORCHARD

by Tracy Chevalier (Viking)

Another vividly imagined historical novel from the best-selling Tracy Chevalier (*Girl With a Pearl Earring*)—this time set in 1800s America. It begins with Johnny Appleseed schooling the Goodenough family on starting an orchard in an Ohio swamp. Fast-forward 15 years: The family's youngest is longing for the troubled home he left behind.

2. INNOCENTS AND OTHERS

by Dana Spiotta (Scribner)

The scene: Los Angeles, circa the 1980s. The lie: Meadow Mori tells her parents she's road-tripping across the U.S. with her BFF to a filmmaking commune before heading off to college. (This is all before a woman named Jelly, a sexless phone-sex operator and recluse, comes into their lives.) The truth: This title is impossible to put down.

3. SHELTER

by Jung Yun (Picador)

A debt-ridden couple decide to sell their house, but when they meet with a realtor, the family's matriarch is found wandering naked and beaten in the backyard. What follows is the unfolding of a horrific and complicated crime—not to mention a horrific and complicated hidden family history.

4. WHAT IS NOT YOURS IS NOT YOURS

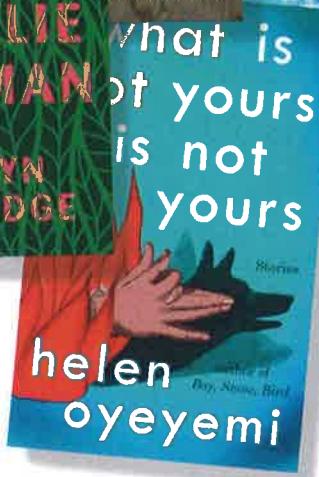
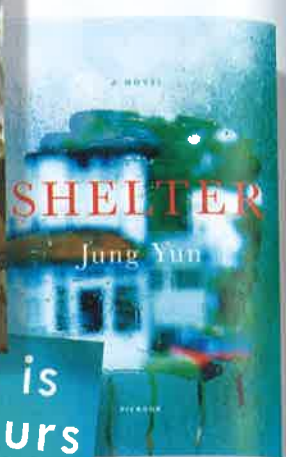
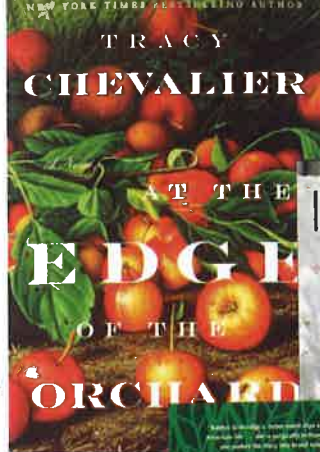
by Helen Oyeyemi (Riverhead Books)

These modern fairy tales from award-winning author Helen Oyeyemi (*Boy, Snow, Bird*) will unlock your imagination with stories of love, loss, and ... keys. From doors to hearts (and, of course, secrets—even secret gardens!), keys and locks play a pivotal role throughout these magical, feverish, spooky, and delightful pages.

5. WE LOVE YOU, CHARLIE FREEMAN

by Kaitlyn Greenidge (Algonquin)

In her intense and original debut, Kaitlyn Greenidge centers on the Freemans, an African-American family putting to use sign-language skills in an unconventional way—they live with a chimpanzee and teach it ASL. From there, the story unspools, through different points of view that'll leave you, well, speechless.



BEHIND THE PAGES

FAMILY DRAMA

Nothing makes your dysfunctional clan look good like another's—meet the Plumb siblings, caught up in a trust fund battle, in Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney's *The Nest* (Ecco)



MARIE CLAIRE: What is it about sibling relationships that makes for such great drama?
CYNTHIA D'APRIX SWEENEY: I'm fascinated by how adult siblings

navigate their relationships. They become really complicated, as people get married and their lives diverge. There's this idea that because you're born into the same family, somehow you're also going to share the same ideas or desires for the future.

MC: The Plumbs share the same duplicitous ways.

CDS: It's what happens to you when you've put off things in your life. I was interested in exploring what happens when you are delaying adulthood or delaying decisions or delaying responsibility because you think that, somewhere down the line, something

easier is going to happen.

MC: Why inheritance?

CDS: When I began, I really thought about the 2008 financial crisis—I read *The Big Short*, or parts of it, over and over—the microcosm of those years, the entitlement, the scheming, the hurt, the anger, the very real pain and loss versus the perceived pain and loss. All of that exists so often, on a smaller scale, within a family unit. The older the siblings get, the more likely financial and emotional fortunes diverge, and that's where things get, er, interesting.

MC: Will this book lead to a surprise second career in financial planning?

CDS: Well, everyone wants to tell me about family money problems. I had someone say to me, "You're making me rethink leaving money to my kids." If I can talk one person out of leaving money to their kids, I feel like I will have done a service to the world. —S.O.