

Editor's Choice

THE PATRIARCH: *The Remarkable Life and Turbulent Times of Joseph P. Kennedy*, by David Nasaw. (Penguin Press, \$40.) This riveting history captures the sweep of Kennedy's life — as Wall Street speculator, moviemaker, ambassador and dynastic founder.

MARRIED LOVE: *And Other Stories*, by Tessa Hadley. (Harper Perennial, paper, \$14.99.) Hadley's understatedly beautiful collection is filled with exquisitely calibrated gradations and expressions of class.

DARKEST AMERICA: *Black Minstrelsy From Slavery to Hip-Hop*, by Yuval Taylor and Jake Austen. (Norton, \$26.95.) The authors examine the complex history of black performers and the minstrel tradition.

ON SAUDI ARABIA: *Its People, Past, Religion, Fault Lines — and Future*, by Karen Elliott House. (Knopf, \$28.95.) A Pulitzer-Prize-winning journalist unveils this inscrutable country, comparing its calcified regime to the Soviet Union in its final days.

DEAR LIFE: *Stories*, by Alice Munro. (Knopf, \$26.95.) This volume offers further proof of Munro's mastery, and shows her striking out in the direction of a new, late style that sums up her whole career.

MARVEL COMICS: *The Untold Story*, by Sean Howe. (Harper/HarperCollins, \$26.99.) Howe has collected the history of this scrappy company with a fanboy's dedication to continuity and detail.

THE PARTISAN: *The Life of William Rehnquist*, by John A. Jenkins. (PublicAffairs, \$28.99.) Rehnquist's greatest influence was as a model for a new breed of ideological justices, this judicious narrative argues.

LA FOLIE BAUDELAIRE, by Roberto Calasso. Translated by Alastair McEwen. (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$35.) A challenging study of 19th-century art.

THAT'S NOT A FEELING, by Dan Josefsen. (Soho, paper, \$15.95.) This mordant, cockeyed first novel is set at a "School for Troubled Teens."

The full reviews of these and other recent books are on the Web: nytimes.com/books.

Paperback Row

CARRY THE ONE, by Carol Anshaw. (Simon & Schuster, \$15.) Beginning with a bohemian wedding in Wisconsin in 1983 and spanning some 25 years, this wry, humane novel follows a group of friends bound together by a fatal accident. With her characters taking refuge in art, drugs, social justice and love, Anshaw, as she did in her 1992 novel, "Aquamarine," explores how one event or choice can irretrievably alter a life.

DA VINCI'S GHOST: Genius, Obsession, and How Leonardo Created the World in His Own Image, by Toby Lester. (Free Press, \$16.) "Vitruvian Man," Leonardo's famous 1490 drawing of a man inscribed in both a circle and a square, is the subject of this rewarding history. Lester traces the conceptual origins of the drawing back to ancient Greece, and to Vitruvius himself, reconstructing Leonardo's fascination with the idea of man as a microcosm of the universe.

GHOST LIGHTS, by Lydia Millet. (Norton, \$15.95.) A mission to a Central American jungle becomes a soul-searching expedition for Hal, the I.R.S. bureaucrat and cuckolded protagonist of Millet's novel. Amid the aftershocks of nearby civil wars, postcolonial politics and environmental degradation, the

novel "provides a fascinating glimpse of what can happen when the self's rhythms and certainties are shaken," Josh Emmons wrote in the Book Review.

THE JOURNALS OF SPALDING GRAY, edited by Nell Casey. (Vintage, \$16.) The actor-writer Spalding Gray mined his own life for material in celebrated monologues like "Swimming to Cambodia." ("The well-told partial truth to deflect the private raw truth," he noted in his journal.) Casey admirably knits together a selection of Gray's journal entries, which darken as they approach his suicide in 2004, with interviews and her own thoughtful appraisals.

THE DEATH OF KING ARTHUR: Thomas Malory's "Le Morte d'Arthur," retold by Peter Ackroyd. (Penguin, \$17.) Ackroyd describes his vigorous retelling of Malory's 15th-century classic as "a loose, rather than punctilious, translation," one that aims to present the exploits of Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table in "a more contemporary idiom."

BLOODLANDS: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin, by Timothy Snyder. (Basic Books, \$18.99.) Snyder, a professor of history at Yale, concentrates

on the vast territory between Germany and Russia (Poland, Ukraine, the Baltics and Belarus) and looks squarely at the full range of destruction committed between 1933 and 1945, first by Stalin's regime and then by Hitler's Reich.

ANGELMAKER, by Nick Harkaway. (Vintage Contemporaries, \$15.95.) Joe Spork, the hero of Harkaway's wildly inventive thriller, fixes clocks for a living, having turned his back on his father's legacy as a fearsome London gangster. But in repairing a particularly unusual clockwork mechanism, Joe may have inadvertently triggered a 1950s doomsday machine.

RIGHTS GONE WRONG: How Law Corrupts the Struggle for Equality, by Richard Thompson Ford. (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$17.) The progressive left and the colorblind right are guilty of the same error, Ford, a Stanford law professor, argues: defining discrimination too abstractly and condemning it too categorically, with similarly perverse results.