

Words Are My Matter 2000 2016

First released in the Spring of 1999, *How People Learn* has been expanded to show how the theories and insights from the original book can translate into actions and practice, now making a real connection between classroom activities and learning behavior. This edition includes far-reaching suggestions for research that could increase the impact that classroom teaching has on actual learning. Like the original edition, this book offers exciting new research about the mind and the brain that provides answers to a number of compelling questions. When do infants begin to learn? How do experts learn and how is this different from non-experts? What can teachers and schools do—with curricula, classroom settings, and teaching methods—to help children learn most effectively? New evidence from many branches of science has significantly added to our understanding of what it means to know, from the neural processes that occur during learning to the influence of culture on what people see and absorb. *How People Learn* examines these findings and their implications for what we teach, how we teach it, and how we assess what our children learn. The book uses exemplary teaching to illustrate how approaches based on what we now know result in in-depth learning. This new knowledge calls into question concepts and practices firmly entrenched in our current education system. Topics include: How learning actually changes the physical structure of the brain. How existing knowledge affects what people notice and how they learn. What the thought processes of experts tell us about how to teach. The amazing learning potential of infants. The relationship of classroom learning and everyday settings of community and workplace. Learning needs and opportunities for teachers. A realistic look at the role of technology in education. David Crystal's classic *English as a Global Language* considers the history, present status and future of the English language, focusing on its role as the leading international language. English has been deemed the most 'successful' language ever, with 1500 million speakers internationally, presenting a difficult task to those who wish to investigate it in its entirety. However, Crystal explores the subject in a measured but engaging way, always backing up observations with facts and figures. Written in a detailed and fascinating manner, this is a book written by an expert both for specialists in the subject and for general readers interested in the English language.

Do you have a real relationship with God, or do you just have a religion? Do you know God, or do you just know about God? In *How Big Is Your God?* Paul Coutinho, SJ, challenges us to grow stronger and deeper in our faith and in our relationship with God—a God whose love knows no bounds. To help us on our way, Coutinho introduces us to people in various world religions—from Hindu friends to Buddhist teachers to St. Ignatius of Loyola—who have shaped his spiritual life and made possible his deep, personal relationship with God.

This open access book examines the modern role of the European School system within the European Union, at a time when the global economy demands a new vision for contemporary education. The European schools are currently in a state of crisis: their 60-year-old tradition of bilingual and multilingual education is being strained by rapid EU expansion and the removal of English speaking teachers as a result of Brexit. Their tried and tested model of mathematics and science education has rapidly been overtaken by new developments in pedagogy and assessment research, while recruitment and retention of students and teachers has become increasingly fraught as European member states review what they are, and what they are not, prepared to fund. The authors draw on original and empirical research to assess the European Schools' place in a new Europe where the entire post-war European Project is potentially at risk. This well-researched volume will be of interest to practitioners working in European schools as well as students and scholars of EU politics and international education.

"I recommend this book highly as one of the 10 most important 'must read' books published this year," Robert Plotkin, Founding President, World Trade Center San Diego. "Three Steps to Wealth & Financial Security – All That Glitters Isn't Gold" is a back to basics, easy to use guide to reassert financial control and secure your financial future. The book draws on real world examples that husband-and-wife authors attorney Gary Laturno, Esq. and Victoria Kuick, MBA, have encountered in counseling over two thousand homeowners in financial distress since 2007. As a result, the book will be an easy read for people who find financial matters confusing or even frightening. The authors' straightforward guidance and recommendations will help many take charge of their financial futures. Comments by Readers: I read your book last night. I'm incredibly impressed! It's a huge undertaking to present an enormous wealth of REALLY important and helpful information in a streamlined way...but you guys did it! And, I think your readers will really appreciate the genuine tone and straightforward approach—life changing stuff. Great job! I see this book distributed in high schools, colleges (law schools particularly—some lawyers are not great when it comes to financial matters), vocational schools, and the like. I hope you're aiming to reach the masses with this one—the subject matter is so salient right now, and this information is really resonating with people. Jennifer Manganello, Esq., University of California, Hastings College of the Law I just finished reading your book. Outstanding! I love the unique way it was written in PowerPoint format—original, straightforward, and easy to follow. The information the book contains, and how it is explained, makes it stand out. You do not allow the reader to blame others or make excuses about their financial situation. You tell them to look in the mirror, take responsibility, and you show them that money problems are not hopeless but fixable. The stock and real estate investing sections are informative and easy to understand. You take the complexity out of stock market investing. You show real estate investors the pitfalls to avoid. Readers will especially benefit from how you compare and contrast real estate investing with the stock market and other investments — bonds, precious metals and cash. It's evident the book was written from firsthand experience, making it truly authentic. I am impressed both by your credentials and your experience counseling over 2,000 homeowners in financial distress since 2007. This book cuts to the core of what people need to know and do to put their financial house in order. I highly recommend your book! Read it and you will substantially increase your financial I.Q. Dory Laramore, Certified Registered Tax Preparer, and author of *Get Your Finances Right: The Foundation for Success* "Three Steps to Wealth & Financial Security" is well written, concise and provides a wealth of financial advice for every American. The authors ask and answer a number of profound questions. What are the lessons of the housing crisis? Why are savings rates in the United States so low? Why do so many retire on Social Security only? Why do so many mismanage their financial affairs? How do we put our financial house in order? What do we need to know and do to be financially secure? Understand the mistakes that so many made and continue to make. Fine tune your financial plan and money management skills. Recommendation: Read the book! Money management, financial planning, and wealth building are mandatory subjects not electives. Andrew J. Sussman, Esq., Partner, RSR Law Group, San Diego, California

George Orwell set out 'to make political writing into an art', and to a wide extent this aim shaped the future of English literature – his descriptions of authoritarian regimes helped to form a new vocabulary that is fundamental to understanding totalitarianism. While *1984* and *Animal Farm* are amongst the most popular classic novels in the English language, this new series of Orwell's essays seeks to bring a wider selection of his writing on politics and literature to a new readership. In *Politics and the English Language*, the second in the Orwell's Essays series, Orwell takes aim at the language used in politics, which, he says, 'is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind'. In an age where the language used in politics is constantly under the microscope, Orwell's *Politics and the English Language* is just as relevant today, and gives the reader a vital understanding of the tactics at play. 'A writer who can – and must – be rediscovered with every age.' — Irish Times

Cahliir Decker and Bizay Donneeter had an extraordinary involvement that resulted in more than either of them ever intended. Their connection went deeper than the sexual chemistry that sizzled to life

between the powerful corporate consultant and the lingerie entrepreneur. At least, that was what Biz thought until their enjoyable time together ended when she woke one morning to an empty bed and no sign of Cahlr. Biz refused to acknowledge how deeply the man had wounded her—how deeply her feelings for him had grown in the short span of time they had known each other. She was angry and hurt and leaned on a fair amount of hate to survive. Not a bad plan until she received word that her family's advertising firm was in trouble and that Cahlr was its new owner. Biz didn't have time to let fear register over the unexpected turn of events. Fear however, did eventually find its way to the forefront of her mind as did a healthy dose of suspicion. Did Cahlr know that she'd left San Diego pregnant with their child? What would he do when he realized she'd had their daughter and had kept her from him for four years?

A fireman in charge of burning books meets a revolutionary school teacher who dares to read. Depicts a future world in which all printed reading material is burned.

More people write for The Associated Press than for any newspaper in the world, and writers—nearly two million of them—have bought more copies of The AP Stylebook than of any other journalism reference. It provides facts and references for reporters, and defines usage, spelling, and grammar for editors. There are separate sections for journalists specializing in sports and business, and complete guidelines for how to write photo captions, file copy over the wire, proofread text, handle copyrights, and avoid libel. This edition of The AP Stylebook keeps pace with world events, common usage, and AP procedures.

One of "our most insightful social observers"* cracks the great political mystery of our time: how conservatism, once a marker of class privilege, became the creed of millions of ordinary Americans. With his acclaimed wit and acuity, Thomas Frank turns his eye on what he calls the "thirty-year backlash"—the populist revolt against a supposedly liberal establishment. The high point of that backlash is the Republican Party's success in building the most unnatural of alliances: between blue-collar Midwesterners and Wall Street business interests, workers and bosses, populists and right-wingers. In asking "what 's the matter with Kansas?"—how a place famous for its radicalism became one of the most conservative states in the union—Frank, a native Kansan and onetime Republican, seeks to answer some broader American riddles: Why do so many of us vote against our economic interests? Where's the outrage at corporate manipulators? And whatever happened to middle-American progressivism? The questions are urgent as well as provocative. Frank answers them by examining pop conservatism—the bestsellers, the radio talk shows, the vicious political combat—and showing how our long culture wars have left us with an electorate far more concerned with their leaders' "values" and down-home qualities than with their stands on hard questions of policy. A brilliant analysis—and funny to boot—What's the Matter with Kansas? presents a critical assessment of who we are, while telling a remarkable story of how a group of frat boys, lawyers, and CEOs came to convince a nation that they spoke on behalf of the People. *Los Angeles Times

Silent Hero: Another Philadelphia Fable (The Pursuit of Happiness meets Secret Santa) A story about Harry Hess, an everyday working class citizen of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, who subsequently becomes homeless through a series of ill-fated events. He survives on the streets in and around the Love Park, Suburban Station area of center city blending in with the rest of the homeless population. The journey continues as Harry endures the struggle of homelessness and street survival, as the hardship of a weak economy and poor job market plays against him. But through these struggles, Harry's eyes are opened to the harsh reality and he finds himself seeking a new purpose for living. After one night of catharsis, he miraculously experiences a life-altering event, that would compel him to dedicate his life as a promise to God, to changing the lives of others, using the most tangibly bizarre methods of giving back. Driven by the motivation of the occupy movement, his philanthropic acts are a symbol of silent protest against corporate greed of the one-percenters. This is a hero's story that will have you praising the good guy in the end. This is a breathtaking homeless adventure.

Amoral, cunning, ruthless, and instructive, this multi-million-copy New York Times bestseller is the definitive manual for anyone interested in gaining, observing, or defending against ultimate control – from the author of The Laws of Human Nature. In the book that People magazine proclaimed "beguiling" and "fascinating," Robert Greene and Joost Elffers have distilled three thousand years of the history of power into 48 essential laws by drawing from the philosophies of Machiavelli, Sun Tzu, and Carl Von Clausewitz and also from the lives of figures ranging from Henry Kissinger to P.T. Barnum. Some laws teach the need for prudence ("Law 1: Never Outshine the Master"), others teach the value of confidence ("Law 28: Enter Action with Boldness"), and many recommend absolute self-preservation ("Law 15: Crush Your Enemy Totally"). Every law, though, has one thing in common: an interest in total domination. In a bold and arresting two-color package, The 48 Laws of Power is ideal whether your aim is conquest, self-defense, or simply to understand the rules of the game.

A collection of essays on life and literature, from one of the most iconic authors and astute critics in contemporary letters. Words Are My Matter is essential reading: a collection of talks, essays, and criticism by Ursula K. Le Guin, a literary legend and unparalleled voice of our social conscience. Here she investigates the depth and breadth of contemporary fiction—and, through the lens of literature, gives us a way of exploring the world around us. In "Freedom," Le Guin notes: "Hard times are coming, when we'll be wanting the voices of writers who can see alternatives to how we live now ... to other ways of being, and even imagine real grounds for hope. We'll need writers who can remember freedom—poets, visionaries—realists of a larger reality." Le Guin was one of those authors and in Words Are My Matter she gives us just that: a vision of a better reality, fueled by the power and might and hope of language and literature. Describes the March on Washington on August 28, 1963 during which Martin Luther King, Jr., gave the I Have a Dream speech, and discusses segregation, the civil rights movement, and Dr. King's life.

The Elements of Style William Strunk concentrated on specific questions of usage—and the cultivation of good writing—with the recommendation "Make every word tell"; hence the 17th principle of composition is the simple instruction: "Omit needless words." The book was also listed as one of the 100 best and most influential books written in English since 1923 by Time in its 2011 list.

Now a classic, this is the fundamental text for those seeking a "Spiritual Understanding of Nature on the Basis of Goethe's Method of Training Observation and Thought." Working out of a detailed history of science, Lehrs reveals to the reader not only how science has been inescapably led to the illusions it holds today, but more importantly, how the reader may correct in himself these misconceptions brought into his world view through modern education.

For more than four decades, Ursula K. Le Guin has enthralled readers with her imagination, clarity, and moral vision. The recipient of numerous literary prizes, including the National Book Award, the Kafka Award, and five Hugo and five Nebula Awards, this renowned writer has, in each story and novel, created a provocative, ever-evolving universe filled with diverse worlds and rich characters reminiscent of our

earthly selves. Now, in *The Birthday of the World*, this gifted artist returns to these worlds in eight brilliant short works, including a never-before-published novella, each of which probes the essence of humanity. Here are stories that explore complex social interactions and troublesome issues of gender and sex; that define and defy notions of personal relationships and of society itself; that examine loyalty, survival, and introversion; that bring to light the vicissitudes of slavery and the meaning of transformation, religion, and history. The first six tales in this spectacular volume are set in the author's signature world of the Ekumen, "my pseudo-coherent universe with holes in the elbows," as Le Guin describes it -- a world made familiar in her award-winning novel *The Left Hand of Darkness*. The seventh, title story was hailed by *Publishers Weekly* as "remarkable . . . a standout." The final offering in the collection, *Paradises Lost*, is a mesmerizing novella of space exploration and the pursuit of happiness. In her foreword, Ursula K. Le Guin writes, "to create difference-to establish strangeness-then to let the fiery arc of human emotion leap and close the gap: this acrobatics of the imagination fascinates and satisfies me as no other." In *The Birthday of the World*, this gifted literary acrobat exhibits a dazzling array of skills that will fascinate and satisfy us all.

A family relocates to a small house on Ash Tree Lane and discovers that the inside of their new home seems to be without boundaries

In 1967, after a session with a psychiatrist she'd never seen before, eighteen-year-old Susanna Kaysen was put in a taxi and sent to McLean Hospital. She spent most of the next two years in the ward for teenage girls in a psychiatric hospital as renowned for its famous clientele—Sylvia Plath, Robert Lowell, James Taylor, and Ray Charles—as for its progressive methods of treating those who could afford its sanctuary. Kaysen's memoir encompasses horror and razor-edged perception while providing vivid portraits of her fellow patients and their keepers. It is a brilliant evocation of a "parallel universe" set within the kaleidoscopically shifting landscape of the late sixties. *Girl, Interrupted* is a clear-sighted, unflinching document that gives lasting and specific dimension to our definitions of sane and insane, mental illness and recovery.

The chilling *Saga of Darren Shan*, the ordinary schoolboy plunged into the vampire world.

A collection of essays on life and literature, from one of the most iconic authors and astute critics in contemporary letters. *Words Are My Matter* is essential reading: a collection of talks, essays, and criticism by Ursula K. Le Guin, a literary legend and unparalleled voice of our social conscience. Here she investigates the depth and breadth of contemporary fiction--and, through the lens of literature, gives us a way of exploring the world around us. In "Freedom," Le Guin notes: "Hard times are coming, when we'll be wanting the voices of writers who can see alternatives to how we live now ... to other ways of being, and even imagine real grounds for hope. We'll need writers who can remember freedom--poets, visionaries--realists of a larger reality." Le Guin was one of those authors and in *Words Are My Matter* she gives us just that: a vision of a better reality, fueled by the power and might and hope of language and literature.

Every novella by Ursula K. Le Guin, an icon in American literature, collected for the first time in one breathtaking volume. Ursula K. Le Guin has won multiple prizes and accolades from the Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters to the Newbery Honor, the Nebula, Hugo, World Fantasy, and PEN/Malamud Awards. She has had her work collected over the years, but never as a complete retrospective of her longer works as represented in the wonderful *The Found and the Lost*. Includes: -*Vaster Than Empires and More Slow* -*Buffalo Gals, Won't You Come Out Tonight* -*Hernes* -*The Matter of Seggri* -*Another Story or a Fisherman of the Inland Sea* -*Forgiveness Day* -*A Man of the People* -*A Woman's Liberation* -*Old Music and the Slave Women* -*The Finder* -*On the High Marsh* -*Dragonfly* -*Paradises Lost* This collection is a literary treasure chest that belongs in every home library.

Words Are My Matter Writings on Life and Books Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

George Orr discovers that his dreams possess the remarkable ability to change the world, and when he falls into the hands of a power-mad psychiatrist, he counters by dreaming up a perfect world that can overcome his nightmares, in a new edition of the classic science fiction novel. Reprint. 20,000 first printing.

INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER • WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE • PEN/HEMINGWAY AWARD WINNER. With a new foreword by Domenico Starnone, this stunning debut collection flawlessly charts the emotional journeys of characters seeking love beyond the barriers of nations and generations. With accomplished precision and gentle eloquence, Jhumpa Lahiri traces the crosscurrents set in motion when immigrants, expatriates, and their children arrive, quite literally, at a cultural divide. A blackout forces a young Indian American couple to make confessions that unravel their tattered domestic peace. An Indian American girl recognizes her cultural identity during a Halloween celebration while the Pakistani civil war rages on television in the background. A latchkey kid with a single working mother finds affinity with a woman from Calcutta. In the title story, an interpreter guides an American family through the India of their ancestors and hears an astonishing confession. Imbued with the sensual details of Indian culture, these stories speak with passion and wisdom to everyone who has ever felt like a foreigner. Like the interpreter of the title story, Lahiri translates between the strict traditions of her ancestors and a baffling new world.

The hidden brain is the voice in our ear when we make the most important decisions in our lives—but we're never aware of it. The hidden brain decides whom we fall in love with and whom we hate. It tells us to vote for the white candidate and convict the dark-skinned defendant, to hire the thin woman but pay her less than the man doing the same job. It can direct us to safety when disaster strikes and move us to extraordinary acts of altruism. But it can also be manipulated to turn an ordinary person into a suicide terrorist or a group of bystanders into a mob. In a series of compulsively readable narratives, Shankar Vedantam journeys through the latest discoveries in neuroscience, psychology, and behavioral science to uncover the darkest corner of our minds and its decisive impact on the choices we make as individuals and as a society. Filled with fascinating characters, dramatic storytelling, and cutting-edge science, this is an engrossing exploration of the secrets our brains keep from us—and how they are revealed.

From acclaimed author Ursula K. Le Guin, a collection of thoughts--always adroit, often acerbic--on aging, belief, the state of literature, and the state of the nation

By the authors of the bestselling *13th Gen*, an incisive, in-depth examination of the Millennials--the generation born after 1982. In this remarkable account, certain to stir the interest of educators, counselors, parents, and people in all types of business as well as young people themselves, Neil Howe and William Strauss provide the definitive analysis of a powerful generation: the Millennials. Having looked at oceans of data, taken their own polls, talked to hundreds of kids, parents, and teachers, and reflected on the rhythms of history, Howe and Strauss explain how Millennials have turned out to be so dramatically different from Xers and boomers. *Millennials Rising* provides a fascinating narrative of America's next great generation.

Sitting there, facing Bond Street, he had his face turned to the sea. His pallor showed how recently he had emerged from it into the port: so did his lack of interest in the schoolgirls opposite. He was like the lagging finger of the barometer, still pointing to Fair long after its companion had moved to Stormy. Below him the black clerks moved churchward, but their wives in brilliant afternoon dresses of blue and cerise aroused no interest in Wilson. He was alone on the balcony except for one bearded Indian in a turban who had already tried to tell his fortune: this was not

the hour or the day for white men they would be at the beach five miles away, but Wilson had no car. He felt almost intolerably lonely. On either side of the school the tin roofs sloped towards the sea, and the corrugated iron above his head clanged and clattered as a vulture alighted.

"Extra Libris: Essays, Reader's Guides, and More"--Page [345].

"A 22-volume, highly illustrated, A-Z general encyclopedia for all ages, featuring sections on how to use World Book, other research aids, pronunciation key, a student guide to better writing, speaking, and research skills, and comprehensive index"--

Ursula K. Le Guin discusses her fiction, nonfiction, and poetry?both her process and her philosophy?with all the wisdom, profundity, and rigor we expect from one of the great writers of the last century. When the New York Times referred to Ursula K. Le Guin as America's greatest writer of science fiction, they just might have undersold her legacy. It's hard to look at her vast body of work?novels and stories across multiple genres, poems, translations, essays, speeches, and criticism?and see anything but one of our greatest writers, period. In a series of interviews with David Naimon (Between the Covers), Le Guin discusses craft, aesthetics, and philosophy in her fiction, poetry, and nonfiction respectively. The discussions provide ample advice and guidance for writers of every level, but also give Le Guin a chance to sound off on some of her favorite subjects: the genre wars, the patriarchy, the natural world, and what, in her opinion, makes for great writing. With excerpts from her own books and those that she looked to for inspiration, this volume is a treat for Le Guin's longtime readers, a perfect introduction for those first approaching her writing, and a tribute to her incredible life and work.

The idea of "The Green Book" is to give the Motorist and Tourist a Guide not only of the Hotels and Tourist Homes in all of the large cities, but other classifications that will be found useful wherever he may be. Also facts and information that the Negro Motorist can use and depend upon. There are thousands of places that the public doesn't know about and aren't listed. Perhaps you know of some? If so send in their names and addresses and the kind of business, so that we might pass it along to the rest of your fellow Motorists. You will find it handy on your travels, whether at home or in some other state, and is up to date. Each year we are compiling new lists as some of these places move, or go out of business and new business places are started giving added employment to members of our race.

A collection of short stories by the legendary and iconic Ursula K. Le Guin—selected with an introduction by the author, and combined in one volume for the first time. The Unreal and the Real is a collection of some of Ursula K. Le Guin's best short stories. She has won multiple prizes and accolades from the Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters to the Newbery Honor, the Nebula, Hugo, World Fantasy, and PEN/Malamud Awards. She has had her work collected over the years, but this is the first short story volume combining a full range of her work. Stories include: -Brothers and Sisters -A Week in the Country -Unlocking the Air -Imaginary Countries -The Diary of the Rose -Direction of the Road -The White Donkey -Gwilan's Harp -May's Lion -Buffalo Gals, Won't You Come Out Tonight -Horse Camp -The Water Is Wide -The Lost Children -Texts -Sleepwalkers -Hand, Cup, Shell -Ether, Or -Half Past Four -The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas -Semely's Necklace -Nine Lives -Mazes -The First Contact with the Gorgonids -The Shobies' Story -Betrayals -The Matter of Seggri -Solitude -The Wild Girls -The Flyers of Gy -The Silence of the Asonu -The Ascent of the North Face -The Author of the Acacia Seeds -The Wife's Story -The Rule of Names -Small Change -The Poacher -Sur -She Unnames Them -The Jar of Water

A sampling of the writings of Chinese women poets from ancient times to the twentieth century is accompanied by brief biographies and a discussion of their influence on Chinese literature.

The author presents a collection of nonfiction writings, including essays on such topics as Tolstoy, Tolkien, women's shoes, Mark Twain, family life, and beauty, as well as autobiographical writings and reflections on the arts of reading and writing.

Teenaged Christine Wainwright's parents regard her and her musical ambitions as inconveniences. Christine's earnest, vain elder brother David is the star of the family: an up-and-coming novelist who has married into the richest family in State City, Iowa. The middle child, Melissa, is struggling with her teaching career and a choice between two men: steady, pragmatic Leander Washington and worshipful Connor Lowe. When Christine disappears, suspicion falls on the Wainwrights' scheming neighbor, Andy Palinkas, who loathes Christine's parents. The unfolding mystery exposes the truth behind the Wainwrights' respectable facade: a convoluted saga of unwanted children, disastrous marriages, romantic double-crosses, and domestic plots and counter-plots. Joseph Dobrian's new novel, *Ambitions* (Rex Imperator, 426 pps., trade paperback, \$17.95, ISBN 978-0-9835572-3-4) is a stark, elegantly written family drama set in a Midwestern university town. It's a story of aspiration, adoration, and betrayal that explores some of the ugliest realities of human interactions. At the same time, it conveys a message of hope to readers who strive to realize their own ambitions. REVIEW BY JEFF-CHARIS CARLSON, in the IOWA CITY PRESS-CITIZEN: Like "Anna Karenina," Joseph Dobrian's new novel, "Ambitions," should be required reading in premarital counseling or pre-parenting classes. Like Leo Tolstoy 140 years before him, Dobrian understands intimately the profound truth within the axiom: "Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." And like the thousand-page Russian masterpiece, Dobrian's 440-page "Ambitions" provides a veritable catalog of various unhappy marriages and parent-child relationships. Unlike Tolstoy's Konstantin Levin, however, Dobrian's authorial stand-in character, Andy Palinkas, isn't working his way through one of the family relationships in question. Instead, as the middle-aged owner of a men's clothing store, he remains an unmarried, well-dressed man who, disappointedly, tends to give off the wrong vibe to the women he finds attractive. Yet Andy's bachelor-status also leaves him free to observe, gossip about and learn from the failings of his coupled and kidded customers, colleagues and fellow citizens. And his mentoring relationship with his neighbors' teenage daughter - whose life he saved when she was a child - provides him with a good deal of behind-the-scenes dirt on the main characters. Throw in Andy's many business contacts and his frequent appearances at various School of Music concerts, and the

character soon has all the information he needs to narrate a compelling story, seven years after the fact, from a third-person, limited-omniscient (and highly snarky) perspective. Dobrain's own sepia-tinged narrative style often makes the 2000s setting of the novel feel more like a half-century earlier. And despite the novel's dramatic opening with the disappearance of that teen-age neighbor, "Ambitions" is much more a multi-generational character study than a plot-driven mystery. Set against the backdrop of a thinly fictionalized version of Iowa City - State City, a UNESCO-designated "City of Music" - Dobrian's already on-target psychological insights hit even closer to home. Although there are many times in which both Andy and Dobrian seem to be having almost too much fun at others' expense, Dobrian generally is empathetic with his characters whose mundane lives are drowning in their own ordinariness. As with Dobrian's Writers' Group columns and his earlier essay collection, "Seldom Right But Never in Doubt," there are a few times when you feel like throwing the book across the room - mainly in frustration at the blitheness in which the characters go about ruining their lives. But the novel proves to be surprisingly addictive. (I found it so hard to put down that I made it through 300 pages in the first night and had to go to work bleary-eyed the next day.)"

Follows White Jenna from her birth and childhood among warrior women, to her adulthood and complex relationship with her dark sister

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