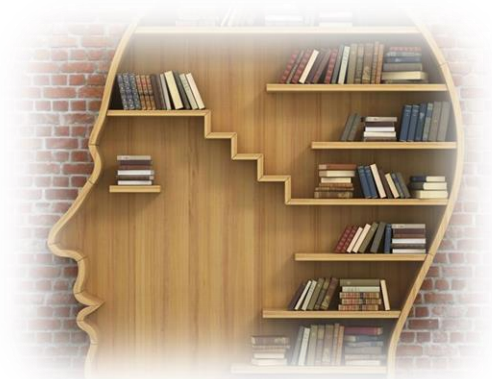


BOOK THOUGHTS

BATCH 23
BATCH 23



1. WE SPREAD - IAN REID
2. THE ANIMALS - CARY FAGAN
3. WE ARE THE LIGHT - MATTHEW QUICK
4. 10 DAYS THAT SHAPED MODERN CANADA - AARON W. HUGHES
5. GENTRIFICATION IS INEVITABLE - LESLIE KERNS
6. REPUTATION - SARAH VAUGHAN
7. IS THERE BACON IN HEAVEN? - ALI HASSAN
8. NSFW - ISABEL KAPLAN
9. MAKING A SCENE - CONSTANZE WU
10. FOR THE LOVE OF LEARNING - KRISTIN PHILLIPS

BLUE = MEMOIR OR BIOGRAPHICAL

BLACK = FICTION

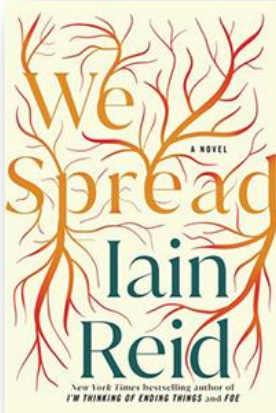
DARK RED = EDUCATIONAL

PURPLE = ESSAY OR STORIES

ORANGE = POETRY

WE SPREAD

IAN REID



Are we all dying, shackled in routine, long before we fade away?

How did the book make me feel/think?

I sit down and read a few pages.

Fear races through my veins.

It's 30 degrees Celsius out (86 Fahrenheit).

The sun is beating down like a tinsmith working his craft. Goose bumps are popping all over my body like dominos rolling in reverse.

I walk three more blocks.

I need to stop and read more.

I don't want to – I can't stop myself.

I walk another three blocks. My spine is tingling. I shiver.

I stop again. I walk three more blocks. Stop. I plop down on a brick wall along the sidewalk. I've never sat here before.

1

I'm terrified. I want more. Am I living the life of Penny?

What is the point of tomorrow if you can't remember today?

What's worse, losing yourself and your memories or being kept alive to have the last ounces of productivity squeezed from your vanishing life?

Are we all dying, shackled in routine, long before we fade away?

We Spread, shakes the psyche to the core. It's a non-put-downable ride far more terrifying than any horror story imaginable. There is no wasted word; terror drips from every page – I walk three more blocks and realize: I eat at the same time daily, and I go to sleep at the same time nightly. As much as the dread of facing the end is an inescapable reality; what scared me most in this sublime read is the realization, at least for me, that we need to live life to the fullest because when the end arrives, what's the point of being well rested and fed?

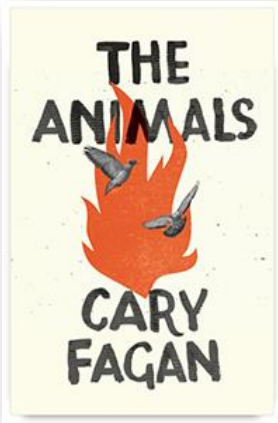
Ian Reid subtly expounds on the vital importance of shaking life up, to live it fully; something I will do – once I stop shaking.

Death may be final, but at least, while we're still here, we must protect our memories; for as long as we can.

WRITTEN: 4 September 2022

THE ANIMALS

CARY FAGAN



Sometimes, saving yourself first is the only way to become a superhero.

How did the book make me feel/think?

A massive INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER takes the literary world by storm.

The Animals by Cary Fagan carries a powerful, nuanced punch.

I could barely feel it; a page flips, and I find myself inside the book.

Dorn is dull. The town he lives in is dull. Competitiveness fuels every village in the world, in order to survive.

Tourism is the answer. Can tourism ever be the answer? Or is tourism not the means to devastation and the end of everything?

Dorn simply wants to live. He wants love, but he is far too awkward to bring desires to fruition. He's a simple man. Characters are injected into the plotline. Mixing them all together, the characters become each of us.

Another punch.

I'm feeling it now.

I'm deep inside the book.

I'm absolutely; what's a word more than absolutely? – loving it! An all-time favourite.

Dorn's brother is a selfish jerk, but is he?

A wolf kills a man, but does it?

Stay away from the mink.

Sometimes, saving yourself first is the only way to become a superhero.

And if and when you do, maybe love will catch your fall.

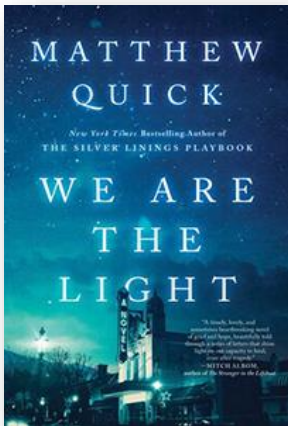
The Animals deftly will draw you in, and by the end, you will be absolutely ecstatic it did as it lingers with you long after you've devoured the last word.

If you only read a small stack of books this year, The Animals should undoubtedly rise to the top.

WRITTEN: 22 August 2022

WE ARE THE LIGHT

MATTHEW QUICK



Every page oozes with empathy, compassion, understanding, and kindness.

How did the book make me feel/think?

Matthew,

Thank you.

Really, that's all that needs to be said. But I'll expound more.

I'm thanking you because "We Are the Light" is a needed tonic for the heart & soul in this vastly confounding world.

Occasionally, depression kicks in my door. I fight it. I don't know where it's coming from. How deep are the roots? What parts of it are self-inflicted?

I must gain an understanding of what might have been wreaked upon me – through my upbringing.

I don't want to wallow. I must find strength and laughter – I need to be okay.

3

I go for walks. 20 miles, every day, for a month. I leave my sadness at home.

Why don't you run?

Because I don't want to return to my crippling thoughts, quickly, walking gives them alone time.

How do we survive when a horrific tragedy touches our lives?

Anger is part of the process. And rightfully so. While anger has its place, it's not a place of healing. I don't think.

Hatred springs to mind. But how can we hate when we don't understand the roots of a toxic mind, a desperate mind, a fractured soul?

Quick has an intrinsic ability to bring us together, having those who suffered understand we can't paint all with the same brush. A brother of a mass shooter, although he may have been diseased with the same toxicity growing up, as his brother – deserves a chance, and maybe, just maybe, he shouldn't have to hide to survive.

Every page of "We Are the Light" oozes empathy, compassion, understanding, and kindness.

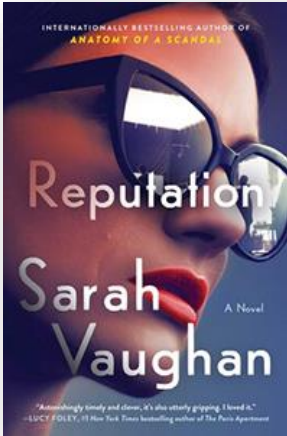
So, Matthew, thanks once more. I am ecstatic you fought through writer's block and personal challenges to find a way to bring us – NO – *being the light* – offering a different outlook on living in a confusing world.

My eyes welled up several times while reading the final chapter – my tears were cleansing.

WRITTEN: 13 August 2022

REPUTATION

SARAH VAUGHAN



Engrossing. Exhilarating. Captivating.

How did the book make me feel/think?

Engrossing. Exhilarating. Captivating.

Book thoughts complete. It doesn't get better than this.

A favourite!

Sarah Vaughan is a lyrical genius. I would read a book by Sarah describing things and love it. But, of course, this is much more. Our world is changing dramatically with every breath we take.

The illness that is misogyny is fighting for survival; everything it wants is being erased because of its unquenchable thirst. Power requires money.

4 It was easy to control when men were the family's sole breadwinners and could lord their power over everyone. But because one income isn't sufficient to survive in today's world—everything is changing. Narcissistic, misogynistic men still want control. They still want to be fed, cleansed, and coddled. However, misogynistic oppression is in crisis as more and more women become politicians and business champions.

Unfortunately, dinosaurs are lurking. They want to hold on to the past, salve their fragile egos and—

How far would you go to protect your reputation?

Would you sacrifice your family?

Would you sacrifice your life?

What price is too high?

“Reputation” is a thrill ride from the first page, twisting and turning, helping us understand the battle between man and woman is in its infancy—to the last page.

That's how this book made me feel.

P.S. I cheered for Emma Webster on every page.

WRITTEN: 13 August 2022

10 DAYS-THAT SHAPED MODERN CANADA

AARON W. HUGHES

Canada is a cultural mosaic, and despite its flaws, Canadians always seem to unite.

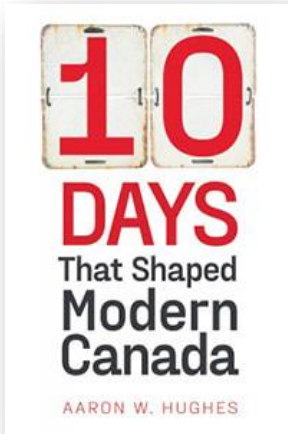
How did the book make me feel/think?

Back when I was attending university, if I had a book like Aaron Hughes's **10 Days-That Shaped Modern Canada**, life might have taken a different path.

At the very least, university would have been more interesting.

The world is at a crossroads; we are facing choices affecting who we are (globally and as Canadians). How do we want to live? And who do we want to be?

Hughes addresses these questions with glaring clarity in this fabulous read about the modern-day history of



5 Canada. Every day mentioned is connected and helped cobble Canada into the vibrant mosaic we've become.

But it is fragile. Forces are trying to pull us apart; our history is littered with complications. Do we move forward together as proud Canadians, or do we trip into the abyss of divisiveness, allowing the evil voices on our shoulders to dismantle what has taken generations to create?

What Hughes helps us understand is as much as Canada is a cultural mosaic – he exposes our flaws; and how, like few nations on this planet, we've come together despite our differences – seemingly insurmountable – at times.

Because if we don't collectively live as one and reckon with the warts of our journey and past, we could come to a place where we surrender our progress and wave our future goodbye.

Every Canadian must read **10 Days-That Shaped Modern Canada** – if they want to gain an understanding of who we are.

Each of us could benefit from the inspiration Gord Downie of the Tragically Hip gifted us – a man who showed us what unconditionally loving who we are – means. (Chapter 9).

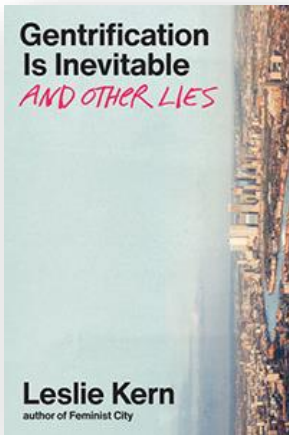
WRITTEN: 13 September 2022

GENTRIFICATION IS INEVITABLE – AND OTHER LIES

LESLIE KERN

Unfettered capitalism and the carnage it leaves in its wake.

How did the book make me feel/think?



Gentrification Is Inevitable, And Other Lies is an essential read about looking at the perils of unfettered capitalism and the carnage it leaves in its wake.

Kern rips the covers off gentrification and the ugly truths lying within.

Kern unmasks the direction cities are taking (globally), all battling for the dollars of the entitled, destroying what makes cities sing.

I'm doubtful the fundamental change for all to live harmoniously is possible.

How can we convince someone a mom-and-pop restaurant is as important as the new eatery with 100 beers on tap?

6 A flight attendant says there are no more favourite cities because they are all the same.

Airbnb owners often have multiple listings, a product of being born into privilege. The rest of us are unaware these listings are forcing families onto the street, all while, a disinterested tourist, snaps photos of a Steam Clock, and then, dares to complain about the homeless.

Poor people buy sodas at fast-food restaurants because they allow you to fill your own cups. The last place where soda conglomerates can create heavy users.

Builders need homeless people for their shiny towers to rise. Buildings the closest they'll come to living in it is beside the dumpster in the laneway.

If you live long enough to be on a fixed income, gentrification screams, you might have made a mistake.

Kern expounds on thinking before you consume, begging the question, what type of city do you want to live in: one only for the privileged, dripping in racist, ageist, misogynistic attitudes – vapid and shiny without a pulse?

Or one teeming with all walks of life, where we understand I am no more important than you?

And being poor, doesn't mean; I shouldn't have a chance.

WRITTEN: 7 September 2022

NSFW

ISABEL KAPLAN



Whip-smart, whip-funny, whip...

How did the book make me feel/think?

We, men, we sure can be fragile (expletives).

Power is our drug. Lording over others our centuries of advantage – leads us far down a misogynistic rabbit hole.

What does that even mean?

Flex. Neanderthal. Don't grow.

I am stronger than you.

I didn't earn my power.

I took it.

You mustn't play along. *Fight it.* Us. You are more intelligent.

I laugh on almost every page. I gain an understanding of who I don't want to be. On another page, *subtlety* causes my side to split.

We are in control. You must outsmart us.

Why is there a war between us? Why can't we accept our equals?

We're no better. We are just bigger, stronger, and more insecure. You've earned your way up – we need you to know we allowed it – we can break you. If you fight us – futility will be your outcome – we control the eventual outcome. Me too.

OUR DAYS ON TOP ARE NUMBERED

Why?

Because you are climbing, + some of us don't want to be "that guy" anymore.

Isabel Kaplan is whip-smart, whip-funny, whip... misogyny is a devious beast, but with the covers pulled back, it's pathetic. Kaplan rips the covers off the misogyny of the entertainment industry with flowing dexterity which will leave you gasping, laughing, and most importantly, exposes the frailty of being a man.

One of the best reads of the year!

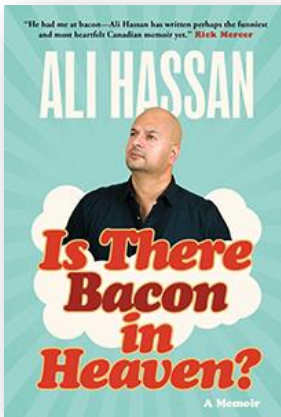
WRITTEN: 6 August 2022

IS THERE BACON IN HEAVEN

ALI HASSAN

It's rare to find a book that tickles your funny bone while...

How did the book make me feel/think?



I've never sat down with a Muslim friend, had a conversation, and really got to know him/her.

I'm sure I've sat down with a Muslim before, but I can't say for sure — until now.

Until I sat down for two days with Ali Hassan and dove into his memoir; about bacon?

Hassan has been gifted with the uncanny ability to make you laugh on one page — and before you flip to the next, ponder about the state of humanity. I'm 62, lived my entire life in Canada, and shamefully, I don't think I've ever had

an Indian (brown friend).

I'm grateful to Ali for introducing me to a world within our neighbourhoods where we all crave the same things with each passing day.

I was going to list the "things," but I decided against it just in case yours differ from mine.

Thanks, Ali; it's rare to find a book that tickles your funny bone (I think that might be a dated reference) while ruffling the mind, and although we crave the same things, our paths are distinctly our own — hopefully leading to kindness, and understanding, if we only talked with each other, there really is no reason to hate.

I just ordered a BLT, and as I come to the last page, I will look at the world through a slightly different lens from this page forward.

WRITTEN: 3 September 2022

MAKE A SCENE

CONSTANZE WU



Unflinching beauty can only be found in vulnerability.

How did the book make me feel/think?

Yippee—a memoir written by a celebrity. This most certainly will be dreary. Why Constanze? Why?

Fresh Off the Boat was delightful, essential, and groundbreaking.

Crazy Rich Asians, thumbs way up!

Constanze you're a star!!! Why?

Flip the page. You are a star, but you are ordinary. I'm relating with you. I understand what traumatic events and life pressure is like—the insecurity, the questioning of sanity, the brushing aside of one's ghosts to fit in. To live in

denial to protect the future. I know what it is like to take devastating truths, sweep them aside, and then convince yourself the biggest deals in life are nothing to lose sleep over.

Why do we do it?

To try desperately to remain unscathed.

It's impossible.

Constanze Wu's; Making a Scene flips from ordinary to extraordinary because of the unflinching beauty Constanze shares, only found in vulnerability.

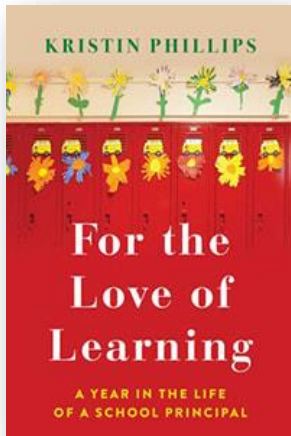
The last chapter left my heart pounding.

As a man, I could never comprehend the unbearable weight of being a rising Asian Star in a misogynistic world controlled mainly by Caucasian males (duh). The burden must be crushing. After reading your story, I must thank you for sharing and letting the rest of us know that being a star doesn't mean you are not human.

WRITTEN: 27 August 2022

FOR THE LOVE OF LEARNING

KRISTIN PHILLIPS



Educators genuinely love the kids

How did the book make me feel/think?

I'm 62. Want to go back to school?

Not really.

Elementary school?

No.

Why am I in this hallway? I thought I finished here in 1972.

Being a principal must be outrageously challenging and conflicting.

You want control.

You must control.

10

You are at the top of the pinnacle.

Was I a good kid? A manageable kid?

I think so.

In "For the Love of Learning," Phillips enrolls us back in class, showing us the life of an educator from inside the halls. Leaders (Principals) must navigate a never-ending list of morals and values, egos, and frailty. Principals walk a fine line between total control and an understanding of the diversity of students, families, and teachers, balancing tenuously on the edges of ensuring education reaches everyone and is delivered in such a way to give each one of us a chance to thrive.

Being a Principal is an all-consuming passion—chock-full of love, empathy, and compassion. Where regardless of what's transpiring in a Principals' personal life (some of the best parts of the book).

"For the Love of Learning" helps us understand something I never considered in 1972: educators genuinely love the kids, and their work will never be complete—and as much as we believe them to be rocks—at the end of class, they are human too.

Class dismissed.

WRITTEN: 13 August 2022