

## Editors' Choice

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**THE BLIZZARD**, by Vladimir Sorokin. Translated by Jamey Gambrell. (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$23.) A doctor struggles through a snowstorm to aid the victims of a zombie plague in this combination satire and dystopian tale set in the near future.

**THE ENGLISH AND THEIR HISTORY**, by Robert Tombs. (Knopf, \$45.) A Cambridge historian's clear-sighted retelling of English history also analyzes how the English themselves have viewed their past.

**FAILURE: Why Science Is So Successful**, by Stuart Firestein. (Oxford University, \$21.95.) Great discoveries arise out of failed attempts that continue to puzzle, a scientist argues.

**INFECTIOUS MADNESS: The Surprising Science of How We "Catch" Mental Illness**, by Harriet A. Washington. (Little, Brown, \$28.) An enthusiastic report on research suggesting that some mental illnesses are partly caused by pathogens.

**THE WAR ON ALCOHOL: Prohibition and the Rise of the American State**, by Lisa McGirr. (Norton, \$27.95.) The attempt to remake drinking habits gave birth to big government, McGirr contends.

**THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR**, by Pierre Razoux. Translated by Nicholas Elliott. (Belknap/Harvard University, \$39.95.) Razoux draws on interviews and newly available archives to describe this brutal 1980s conflict.

**ABBA EBAN: A Biography**, by Asaf Siniver. (Overlook Duckworth, \$40.) Siniver's levelheaded account looks at the history of Israel through the life of the country's eloquent defender.

**PLANETFALL**, by Emma Newman. (Roc, paper, \$15.) Big secrets are kept by the leaders of a human colony on a planet in a distant star system.

**MARTIN JOHN**, by Anakana Schofield. (John Metcalf/Biblioasis, paper, \$15.95.) Schofield's novel imagines the lives of a sex offender and his mother.

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

## Paperback Row

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**THE NAZIS NEXT DOOR: How America Became a Safe Haven for Hitler's Men**, by Eric Lichtblau. (Mariner/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, \$15.95.) Drawing on interviews and a trove of released documents, Lichtblau, a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter for The New York Times, recounts how America accepted approximately 10,000 Nazis in the wake of World War II. Many of these were recruited to work as scientists or as spies for the United States government, while others immigrated as "refugees."

**THE WITCH: And Other Tales Re-Told**, by Jean Thompson. (Plume, \$16.) Inspired by classic fairy tales — including "Hansel and Gretel," "Cinderella" and "Red Riding Hood" — Thompson adapts their story lines to contemporary times. "At their best, Thompson's stories invoke the dark homeliness of Shirley Jackson's short fiction," our reviewer, Laura Miller, wrote.

**HOW TO SPEAK MONEY: What the Money People Say — And What It Really Means**, by John Lanchester. (Norton, \$16.95.) In a series of pointed and witty essays, the author translates a bevy of examples of the common, though often misunderstood, jargon favored by financial institutions.

Arguing that financial fluency is necessary to overcome economic inequality, he provides a glossary of many of the industry's most maddening and opaque terms.

**GOODHOUSE**, by Peyton Marshall. (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$14.) In Marshall's dystopia, sons of felons are taken to state-run "Goodhouses," juvenile boardinghouses-cum-prisons tasked with their rehabilitation. James, the novel's teenage protagonist, has transferred to a new campus after a radical church set fire to his last house as part of a widespread effort to purify society.

**THE LOST BOOK OF MORMON: A Quest for the Book That Just Might Be the Great American Novel**, by Avi Steinberg. (Anchor, \$16.95.) Steinberg's playful narrative, both a memoir and a travelogue, charts his journey through places that figure in the Book of Mormon, including Jerusalem, the Mayan ruins of Mexico, and upstate New York. Fascinated by Joseph Smith, the Mormon Church's founder, whom he calls an "underdog, an underground American writer," Steinberg suggests that this distinctly American holy text belongs in the canon.

**UNBECOMING**, by Rebecca Scherm. (Penguin, \$16.) Scherm's debut novel follows Grace as she dons and sheds a series of identities: a young bride in her small Tennessee hometown; an N.Y.U. art student; a scholar in the Czech Republic; and finally, a thief in Paris. Meanwhile, her husband, now on parole after serving jail time for a crime she planned, is on the trail to find her.

**LIMONOV: The Outrageous Adventures of the Radical Soviet Poet Who Became a Bum in New York, a Sensation in France, and a Political Antihero in Russia**, by Emmanuel Carrère. Translated by John Lambert. (Picador/Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$20.) Carrère's book is billed as a "pseudobiography" of Eduard Limonov, a dynamic Russian who defies categorization.

JOUMANA KHATIB

Six new paperbacks to check out this week. BETTER LIVING THROUGH CRITICISM: How to Think About Art, Pleasure, Beauty, and Truth, by A.O. Scott. (Penguin, \$17.). The author, a co-chief film critic for The New York Times, reconsiders the relationship between criticism and the art it assesses; rather than art's antithesis, such evaluations are part and parcel of the creative process. "Criticism, far from sapping the vitality of art, is instead what supplies its lifeblood," Scott writes.