

An Illustrated Guide to Spring's Essential Reads

What happens on page 76 in three of this season's books, as envisioned by the artist Marcus Jahmal.

March 19, 2020



The Glass Hotel

A novel by Emily St. John Mandel

"Is it oppressive? Having someone follow you around all the time?"

They were leaning on the balustrade, contemplating the terrace. The other women looked like a flock of tropical birds. It was Vincent's first time in Florida, and she'd noticed that the people wore much brighter colors here than in New York or Connecticut.

Vincent is bartending at a Vancouver Island hotel one night when her half-sibling, Paul, writes an ominous message on a lobby wall. The words' meaning becomes clearer after Vincent begins a relationship with the hotel owner, who turns out to be a crooked financier bound to spend his last years in prison. She, Paul and others affected by his crimes try to move on — Vincent to a container ship on which she becomes a cook — even as their pasts remain present. To be published by Knopf on March 24.



Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982

A novel by Cho Nam-Joo, translated from the Korean by Jamie Chang

The mother yawned again and tossed him a pillow and a blanket, and the father asked his one and only son to sleep out on the living-room floor with him, but was rejected for stinking of alcohol. That didn't dampen his good mood as he wrapped the blanket around him like a cape without washing first, threw himself down on the living-room floor, and shortly afterwards began to snore.

When she suddenly starts speaking like other women — her mother, an old friend — Kim Jiyoung, a typical 33-year-old woman living in Seoul, South Korea, is sent to therapy by her husband. We then receive a detailed account of Jiyoung's life story, which, considering her family's wish for a boy, is riddled with sexism from its very start and suggests that her affliction is the result of having been made to feel of such little worth. To be published by Liveright on April 14.



The Night Watchman

A novel by Louise Erdrich

There was the scent of pressed cloth above the meat in the pan. The glass kerosene lantern glowed on the table. Thomas went into the next room and kissed Rose on her neck. She smelled like the ironing, like the clean wash.

Thomas Wazhashk (a character based on the author's grandfather) and his niece Patrice both work at the jewel-bearing plant near North Dakota's Turtle Mountain Reservation, but they also have other duties — to their tribe and to their family. When the United States Congress introduces a new bill, 1953's House Concurrent Resolution 108, that threatens their already strained way of life, Thomas makes plans to go to Washington, D.C. Patrice, meanwhile, heads for Minneapolis, where her sister was last seen before vanishing. Published by Harper on March 3.