



SPICE UP YOUR BOOKSHELF!

FROM A COFFEE-TABLE GEM TO A MODERN CLASSIC, THESE FIVE PAGE-TURNERS ARE PERFECT FOR YOUR TABLET OR YOUR TRAVELS

1 THE FIRE THIS TIME

The more things change, the more they remain the same. That's the sad yet urgent message you will find in the riveting new book **Firefight: The Century-Long Battle to Integrate New York's Bravest** (Palgrave Macmillan Trade, \$28). Journalist Ginger Adams Otis exhaustively examines the causes that led to the Big Apple's 2014 settlement of a \$98 million discrimination lawsuit. Cases went as far back as 1919 with the hiring of Wesley Williams. Nearly a century later, New York City has about 300 Black firefighters—roughly just 3 percent of the 11,000 serving a city with 2 million African-Americans. Eye-opening, this is a must-read.

2 MOTHER'S DAY TREASURES

Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Alysia Burton Steele turned her camera to a group of women many



Alysia Burton Steele

of us know, but the world seldom celebrates: church elders. In **Delta Jewels** (Center Street,

\$28), an exquisite tome, Steele gathers more than 50 Mississippi church "muvahs" in all their beauty and power. Recounting their stories of survival, *Jewels* is the ultimate testament of faith and courage in the face of insurmountable odds.

3 BLACK & WHITE

Mat Johnson has rightfully earned lavish critical praise for risk-taking novels such as *Pym* (2011) and *Drop* (2000). **Loving Day** (Spiegel & Grau, \$26), a take-no-prisoners view of interracial relationships and hysteria, may at last bring Johnson to a wider readership. In *Loving Day* we meet biracial Warren Duffy, who has returned to Philadelphia after his marriage to a Welsh woman unravels, his comic shop in Cardiff, Wales, goes out



Mat Johnson

of business and his Irish-American father dies. It's hardly grist for a funny novel, but once Warren moves into what he believes is a haunted mansion, all hell breaks loose. You will marvel at the finesse with which Johnson handles this story.

4 LOVE STORY

Bernice L. McFadden was one of the best writers to emerge in the post-*Waiting to Exhale* explosion that introduced at least a dozen Black female novelists. **Loving Donovan** (Akashic, \$15.95) has generated near-cult status among readers. After more than a decade since it appeared, *Donovan* is being reissued. How fitting that Terry McMillan has written a new introduction. If you've read *Donovan* before, you will fall in love all over again. And if this is your first time, prepare yourself for an intense romance between an enigmatic antihero and a heroine who will feel like your homegirl.



Bernice L. McFadden

5 FAMILY SECRETS

In her more than three decades in the news business, executive Paula Williams Madison had heard and seen it all.

That is, until she stumbled onto a shut-your-mouth revelation that would send her on an unforgettable journey. **Finding Samuel Lowe**

(Amistad, \$25.99) reads like an epic tale, but is, in fact, a true story. Your heart will break for Nell Vera Lowe, Madison's mother. Growing up she had been cut off from Samuel, her Chinese father. Nell, who inherits her father's features, moves to New York City and eventually has her own family. When the author's only grandchild

is born, she becomes obsessed with her legacy. How Madison ultimately connects with her grandfather's descendants in China will produce more OMG moments than any prime-time drama on cable or Netflix could ever hope to elicit.



Paula Williams Madison

