



## Reverend Katz Library

### New Book Reviews

March 2023

During March, as Autumn approaches, we invite you to come and make your selection from our wonderful collection of varied and interesting books. These are some of the interesting new books awaiting you.

#### **Jonah Lehrer, *Mystery: A seduction, A strategy, A solution* LIT LEH**

New York Times bestselling author Jonah Lehrer “unravels the mystery of mysteries” in this “absolute delight” (Malcolm Gladwell) of a book that blends psychology, neuroscience, and anthropology to shine a new light on everything from the formulas of our favourite detective shows to the tricks of successful advertising campaigns and the calculated risks of the stock market.

Why is mystery so compelling? What draws us to the unknown? Jonah Lehrer sets out to answer these questions in a vividly entertaining and surprisingly profound journey through the science of suspense. He finds that nothing can capture a person’s attention as strongly as mystery, and that mystery is the key principle in how humans view and understand the world. Whenever patterns are broken, we are hard-wired to find out why. Without our curiosity driving us to pursue new discoveries and solve stubborn problems, we would never have achieved the breakthroughs that have revolutionized human medicine, technology—and culture. From Shakespeare’s plays to the earliest works of the detective genre, our entertainment and media have continually reinvented successful forms of mystery to hook audiences.

Here, Lehrer interviews individuals in unconventional fields—from dedicated small-business owners to innovative schoolteachers—who use mystery to challenge themselves and to motivate others to reach to new heights. Fascinating, illuminating, and fun, *Mystery* explores the many surprising ways in which embracing a sense of awe and curiosity can enrich our lives.

#### **Alwin Meyer, *Never Forget your name: the children of Auschwitz* HOL MEY**

*The children of Auschwitz*: this is the darkest spot in the ocean of suffering that was the Holocaust. They were deported to the concentration camp with their families, with most being murdered in the gas chambers upon their arrival or were born there under unimaginable circumstances. While 232,000 children and juveniles were deported to Auschwitz, only 750 were liberated in the death camp at the end of January 1945. Most of them were under 15 years of age. Alwin Meyer's masterwork is the culmination of decades of research and interviews with the children and their descendants, sensitively reconstructing their stories before, during and after Auschwitz.

The camp would remain with them throughout their lives: on their forearms, as a tattooed number, and in their minds, in the memory of heart-rending separation from parents and siblings, medical experiments, abject confusion, ceaseless hunger and a perpetual longing for home and security. Once the purported liberation came, there was no blueprint for piecing together personal biographies after the unthinkable had happened. Many of the children, often orphaned, had forgotten their names or ages, and had only fragmented understandings of where they came from.

While some struggled to reconnect to the parents from whom they had been separated, others had known nothing other than the camp. Some children grew up without the ability to trust and to play. Survival is not yet life – it is an in-between stage which requires individuals to learn how to live. The liberated children had to learn how to be young again in order to grow into adults like others did.

This remarkable book tells the stories of the most vulnerable victims of the Nazis' systematic attempt to extinguish innocent lives, and rescues their voices from historical oblivion. It is a unique testimony to the horrific suffering endured by millions in humanity's darkest hour.

### **Tova Friedman and Malcolm Brabant, *The daughter of Auschwitz* HOL FRI**

Tova Friedman was one of the youngest people to emerge from Auschwitz. After surviving the liquidation of the Jewish ghetto in Central Poland where she lived as a toddler, Tova was four when she and her parents were sent to a Nazi labour camp, and almost six when she and her mother were forced into a packed cattle truck and sent to Auschwitz II, also known as the Birkenau extermination camp, while her father was transported to Dachau.

During six months of incarceration in Birkenau, Tova witnessed atrocities that she could never forget, and experienced numerous escapes from death. She is one of a handful of Jews to have entered a gas chamber and lived to tell the tale.

As Nazi killing squads roamed Birkenau before abandoning the camp in January 1945, Tova and her mother hid among corpses. After being liberated by the Russians they made their way back to their hometown in Poland. Eventually Tova's father tracked them down and the family was reunited.

In *The Daughter of Auschwitz*, Tova immortalizes what she saw, to keep the story of the Holocaust alive, at a time when it's in danger of fading from memory. She has used those memories that have shaped her life to honour the victims. Written with award-winning former war reporter Malcolm Brabant, this is an extremely important book. Brabant's meticulous research has helped Tova recall her experiences in searing detail. Together they have painstakingly recreated Tova's extraordinary story about the world's worst ever crime.

### **Dirk Smillie, *The business of tomorrow: the visionary life of Harry Guggenheim- from aviation to rocketry to the creation of an art dynasty* BIO GUG**

A veteran Forbes journalist brings to life the brilliant and complex Harry Guggenheim in the first-ever biography on this ground breaking American figure.

At the turn of the last century, the Guggenheim family ran the most powerful mining conglomerate on earth. Decades later came the Guggenheim Museum, which became the hub of the world's most powerful art brand. In between, the Guggenheim name was uttered in every field from aviation to politics, from journalism to rocketry.

But who was behind this epic sphere of influence? It took three generations of Guggenheims to build the wealth in its first era. Yet it was the singular force of Harry Guggenheim who would guide the family's next generation of businesses into modernity. Part angel investor, part entrepreneur, part technologist, Harry launched businesses whose impact on 20th century America went far beyond the Guggenheims' mines or museum. His visionary investments continue to profoundly influence our world and hold valuable business lessons for billionaire dynasty builders like Jeff Bezos and Elon

Musk. A flawed but brilliant man, Harry Guggenheim was the confidante to five American presidents and a key financial force behind commercial aviation and space exploration, two innovations that catapulted the nation into the future.

With unprecedented archival access, Dirk Smillie astutely examines Harry's business acumen, intellectual curiosities, and the world he lived in. Whether it was his paradoxical friendship with Charles Lindbergh or his dynamic and ambitious family members, Smillie puts Harry's life and work in rich context. Epic and intimate, *The Business of Tomorrow* reveals the fascinating life of an American icon.

**Lily Brett, *Old seems to be other people* LIT BRE**

In *Old Seems to be Other People*, Lily Brett's unique take on getting older is simultaneously hilarious, serious, and utterly irresistible. Most of us would like to live to an old age, but few of us actually want to be old. In this disarming, intimate and self-deprecating collection of vignettes about aging, Lily Brett gives us snapshots of her life in New York. After avoiding a large dog that turns out to be a fire hydrant, and mistaking a tall, grey-haired woman for her husband, Lily must concede that her ophthalmologist is right: she does need cataract surgery. She's transfixed by a speed-dating dinner at a local cafe and is told they also have speed-dating dinners for seniors. In the crowded Apple store, in Soho, two young Apple assistants decide it will take both to help her.

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