

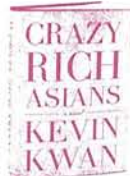
printed matter

the only reading guide you'll need this summer.

shelf help

crazy rich asians

By Kevin Kwan (Doubleday)



Rachel Chu never dreamed her unassuming boyfriend, Nicholas Young, might be the heir to a shipping conglomerate, but this is what she discovers after he invites her to the Khoo wedding in his native Singapore. What ensues is a power struggle within the highest echelons of the new-money "Overseas Chinese" diaspora, and Nick is at the center. Circling Nick, ruthless players jockey for position in an exclusive web of rich families, and battle lines are drawn as independently minded children pit themselves against the stodgy customs of older generations. On one side, there is Nick's mother, Eleanor, her consort of social advisers, and a few younger, ambitious allies. Luckily for Rachel, she has some friends as well: Astrid, Nick's prodigal fashionista cousin, Colin, the humble bridegroom, and Oliver, another cousin and adroit social schemer. Kwan gleefully opens a peephole into a "secretive, rarefied circle of families virtually unknown to outsiders," although clunky footnotes tacked to long passages of exposition can make the book feel like a primer on the rise of China. Kwan's female characters are a diverse and particular lot; however, male characters are assigned to one of two positions: paragons of virtue and restraint, or money-grubbing, power-hungry financiers. SETH SATTERLEE

chocolates for breakfast

By Pamela Moore (Harper Perennial)

Over the years, the "poor little rich girl" character has been at the heart of many of the most salacious page-turners, but in *Chocolates for Breakfast*, re-released this month after being out of print, Miss Courtney Farrell shows them all how it's done. Born into privilege, Courtney grows up faster than an eager teenager can shotgun a beer. From her elite East Coast boarding school, Courtney fantasizes about living the fast life. By the time she makes it into the NYC deb scene, she's already a world-weary 17-year-old, complete with ex-lovers, a stint in a sanitarium, and a tolerance level that would rival the most calloused barflies. J. ERRICO



bobcat

By Rebecca Lee (Algonquin)

Rebecca Lee's new collection is a reminder of how powerful short fiction can be. Even when discussing the everyday, Lee underscores the vast ripple effects our choices can have in a way that makes everything feel consequential—full of potential and fragility. In one story, a college freshman plagiarizes a paper and unwittingly inserts herself into a discourse about responsibility and treachery during wartime, a subject her professor knows intimately. Lee isn't afraid to escalate, to think deeply, and to write beautifully, and the result is a book that feels refreshingly serious without being grave. JESS SAUER

taipei

By Tao Lin (Vintage)

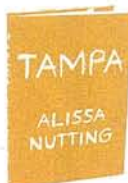
With each book that Tao Lin has published, he's increasingly become a lightning rod for a generation of writers who've come of age online. *Taipei* follows Paul as he awkwardly navigates a social life in New York City, one which he only participates in, admittedly, for the purpose of finding a girlfriend. He ends up finding one via the Internet, and *Taipei* chronicles the drug use, shotgun wedding, and Taipei trip that follow, with a MacBook never too far away. It's a poignant, if quiet, novel about modern relationships—and how advancements in communication haven't actually made communication any easier. MALLORY RICE



tampa

By Alissa Nutting (Ecco)

The Sunshine State is often anything but sunny—from sinkholes that swallow people whole to bizarre crimes involving manatees and/or bath salts. So it's fitting that Alissa Nutting decided to title her new novel about a 26-year-old teacher hell-bent on seducing her 14-year-old student *Tampa*. The city, thanks to Jill Kelley, the RNC, et al., is, like the state, shorthand for "something here is fucked up" and Nutting's protagonist is single-minded and remorseless enough to make good on the label. MR



don't kiss me

by Lindsay Hunter (FSG Originals)

The best stories often take readers someplace they don't want to go in order to reveal something important, and Lindsay Hunter's accomplished second collection, *Don't Kiss Me*, escorts us through mostly uncomfortable and derelict terrain. Her narrators—down-and-out drifters, oversexed teens, and even a post-scandal Richard Nixon—tell their wacked-out tales with a forthright tone, but Hunter's magical prose is the sort of thing that might happen if George Saunders and Gertrude Stein co-edited Raymond Carver. The stories vary wildly in pace and procedure, but each has its own visceral language that goes straight to the gut. ASHLEY BAKER



love, dishonor, marry, die, cherish, perish

By David Rakoff (Doubleday)

Known for his essays and contributions to *This American Life*, the late David Rakoff's slim novel in verse contains the amalgamation of sensitivity and wit that has characterized the work that preceded it. There's tension in the way that the gravity of the subject matter sometimes feels at odds with the playfulness of rhyme, and Rakoff, a real pro, makes the most of this. The book itself, designed by Chipp Kid, is a first-rate tribute. MR

