

BOOK DROP

A PROGRESSIVE DINNER WITH RENOWNED AUTHORS



JENNA BUSH HAGER

Jenna Bush Hager is the cohost of the fourth hour of the TODAY show with Hoda Kotb and the founder of the TODAY book club Read with Jenna. She is the coauthor of the #1 New York Times bestselling *Ana's Story* and two children's books that she wrote with her mother, Laura—*Our Great Big Backyard* and *Read All About It*.



OCTAVIA SPENCER

A veteran character actress and one of Hollywood's most sought-after talents, Octavia Spencer has become a familiar fixture on both television and silver screen. Her critically acclaimed performance as Minny in the DreamWorks feature film *The Help* won her a 2012 Academy Award, and more. *Randi Rhodes, Ninja Detective: The Case of the Time-Capsule Bandit* was her first novel.



KATHRYN STOCKETT

Kathryn Stockett, American novelist well-known for her 2009 debut novel, *The Help*, was born and raised in Jackson, Mississippi. After graduating from the University of Alabama with a degree in English and creative writing, she moved to New York City, where she worked in magazine publishing and marketing for sixteen years. She currently lives in Atlanta with her husband and daughter.

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MARIE BENEDICT

Marie Benedict, a mission-driven author determined to unearth the hidden stories of women, is the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of *The Mitford Affair*, *Her Hidden Genius*, *The Mystery of Mrs. Christie*, *The Only Woman in the Room*, *Lady Clementine*, *Carnegie's Maid*, *The Other Einstein*, and with Victoria Christopher Murray, the *Good Morning America* Book Club pick *The Personal Librarian* and the *Target Book of the Year*, *The First Ladies*. All have been translated into multiple languages, and many have been selected for the *Barnes & Noble Book Club*, *Target Book Club*, *Costco Book Club*, *Indie Next List*, and *LibraryReads List*. Her next novel is the February 2025 release, *The Queens of Crime*. A graduate of *Boston College* and the *Boston University School of Law* who also writes as *Heather Terrell*, she lives in *Pittsburgh* with her family, but spends significant time in *South Carolina*.



TAYARI JONES

New York Times best-selling author Tayari Jones is the author of four novels, most recently *An American Marriage*. Published in 2018, *An American Marriage* is an *Oprah's Book Club Selection* and also appeared on *Barack Obama's* summer reading list as well as his year-end roundup. The novel was awarded the *Women's Prize for Fiction* (formerly known as the *Orange Prize*), *Aspen Words Prize* and an *NAACP Image Award*. It has been published in two dozen countries.



DENISE KIERNAN

Denise Kiernan is an author, journalist, producer, and host of “*CRAFT: Authors in Conversation*.” Her titles *The Last Castle* and *The Girls of Atomic City* were both instant *New York Times* bestsellers in both hardcover and paperback. *The Last Castle* was also a *Wall Street Journal* bestseller, a finalist for the 2018 *Thomas Wolfe Memorial Literary Award* and a finalist for the *Southern Book Prize*.

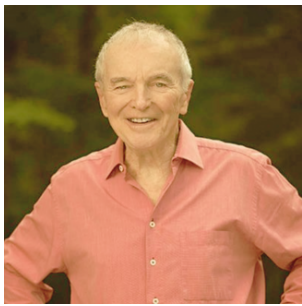
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CASSANDRA KING

Cassandra King is an award-winning author of five novels, a book of nonfiction, numerous short stories, magazine articles, and essays. She has taught creative writing on the college level, conducted corporate writing seminars, and worked as a human interest reporter. Often told in first person, her novels portray strong and memorable characters who struggle with the same timely issues and dilemmas that readers face in their own lives.



JAY BERGEN

Jay Bergen was a trial lawyer in New York City for forty-five years. He is the author of *Lennon, the Mobster and the Lawyer*, the untold story of Bergen's star-studded case representing friend John Lennon against mobster Morris Levy.



ASHLEY ELSTON

Ashley Elston is the author of #1 New York Times bestseller and Reese's Book Club pick, *First Lie Wins*. *First Lie Wins* has been optioned for television by ABC Signature with Octavia Spencer and Krista Vernoff attached to the project. She is also the author of six YA books. Ashley lives in Louisiana with her husband and three sons.



CAIT HOYT

Cait Hoyt is a Book Agent at leading entertainment and sports agency Creative Artists Agency (CAA). Hoyt works in the New York office and represents many of the world's leading activists, journalists, actors, musicians, writers, directors and producers in the publishing industry, including Will Smith, Lady Gaga, Anna Kendrick, Dustin Lance Black, Hoda Kotb, Jenna Bush, Kerry Washington, Channing Tatum, Eva Chen, Tim McGraw, DeRay Mckesson, and Jimmy Fallon.

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PATTI CALLAHAN HENRY

Patti Callahan Henry is a New York Times, Globe and Mail, and USA Today bestselling author of seventeen novels, including her newest, *The Secret Book of Flora Lea*. She's also a podcast host of original content for her novels, *Surviving Savannah* and *Becoming Mrs. Lewis*.



MARY ALICE MONROE

Mary Alice Monroe is the New York Times bestselling author of 27 books, including *The Summer of Lost and Found*, the 2021 installment in her beloved *Beach House* series. Monroe has also published children's books which complement the environmental themes she is known for in her adult novels.



CINELLE BARNES

Cinelle Barnes is a formerly undocumented memoirist, essayist, and educator from Manila, Philippines, and is the author of *Monsoon Mansion: A Memoir* (Little A, 2018, Booklist starred review) and *Malaya: Essays on Freedom* (Little A, 2019), and the editor of the New York Times New & Noteworthy book, *A Measure of Belonging: 21 Writers of Color on the New American South* (Hub City Press, 2020).



GEORGE DAWES GREEN

George Dawes Green, founder of The Moth and Unchained, is an internationally celebrated author. His first novel, *The Caveman's Valentine*, won the Edgar Award and became a motion picture starring Samuel L. Jackson. *The Juror* was an international bestseller in more than twenty languages and the basis for the movie starring Demi Moore and Alec Baldwin. *Ravens* was chosen as one of the best books of 2009 by the Los Angeles Times, the Wall Street Journal, the Daily Mail of London, and many other publications. Green grew up in Georgia and now lives in Brooklyn, New York.

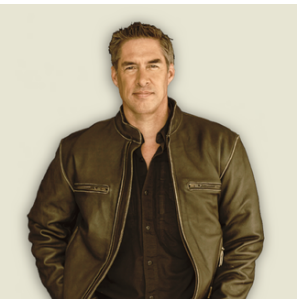
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GERVAIS HAGERTY

Gervais Hagerty grew up in Charleston, South Carolina. She earned her B.A. in psychology from Vanderbilt University. After a post-college stint in Southern California, she returned to the East Coast, where she worked as a news reporter and producer for both radio and television broadcasts. In 2013, she earned her M.B.A. from The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina, and soon after became a professor teaching Leadership Communications. She is a board member of The Charleston Council for International Visitors and serves on Charleston's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. She lives in Charleston with her husband and daughters. *In Polite Company* is her first novel



BRAD TAYLOR

Brad Taylor was born on Okinawa, Japan, but grew up on 40-acres in rural Texas. Graduating from the University of Texas, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army Infantry. Brad served for more than 21 years, retiring as a Special Forces Lieutenant Colonel. During that time he held numerous Infantry and Special Forces positions, including eight years in 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment – Delta where he commanded multiple troops and a squadron. He has conducted operations in support of US national interests in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other classified locations.

His final assignment was as the Assistant Professor of Military Science at The Citadel in Charleston, SC. He holds a Master's of Science in Defense Analysis from the Naval Postgraduate School, with a concentration in Irregular Warfare. In 2011, Brad published his debut novel, *One Rough Man*, which was an immediate success and launched the Pike Logan series. Now with more than 18 installments and nearly 4 million copies sold, the series has consistently hit the New York Times bestseller list. When not writing, he serves as a security consultant on asymmetric threats for various agencies. He lives in Charleston, SC with his wife and two daughters.

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WILEY CASH

Wiley Cash is the New York Times bestselling author of four novels and the founder of This Is Working, an online creative community. He's been a fellow at Yaddo and the MacDowell Colony, and he teaches fiction writing and literature at the University of North Carolina-Asheville. He lives in North Carolina with his wife, photographer Mallory Cash, and their daughters.

Cash's short stories and essays have appeared in *The Oxford American*, *Garden & Gun*, *Our State Magazine*, and other publications, and his fiction has been adapted for the stage and film. He has taught creative writing and literature at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Bethany College, the University of North Carolina-Asheville, and the University of Louisiana-Lafayette. He holds a Ph.D. in American Literature from UL-Lafayette, an M.A. in English from the University of North Carolina-Greensboro, and a B.A. in Literature from UNC-Asheville.

Published in September 2021, Cash's novel *When Ghosts Come Home* was a national bestseller. The novel won the Southern Book Prize and was an Indie Next Pick and one of Amazon's top 20 books of the year. In 2017, Cash's novel *The Last Ballad* was an American Library Association Book of the Year and a Chicago Public Library Best Book of 2017. The novel received the Southern Book Prize, the Sir Walter Raleigh Award for Fiction, the Weatherford Award, and the Bloodroot Mountain Prize. His second novel, *This Dark Road to Mercy*, was a national bestseller and received the Crime Writers Association's Novel of the Year in the United Kingdom. It was a finalist for both the Edgar Award for Best Novel and the Southern Book Prize. Cash's debut novel, *A Land More Kind Than Home*, won the Thomas Wolfe Book Prize, the Maine Reader's Choice Award, the Southern Book Prize, the Crook's Corner Book Prize, the Appalachian Writers Association's Book of the Year, the Crime Writers Association's Debut of the Year in the UK. The novel was a finalist for the American Bookseller Association's Debut of the Year and the PEN/Robert W. Bingham Prize. Cash has received the Pat Conroy Legacy Award from the Southern Independent Booksellers' Alliance, the Mary Frances Hobson Prize from Chowan University, and the Appalachian Heritage Prize from Shepherd University.



LYDIA FITZPATRICK

Lydia Fitzpatrick is a Princeton University graduate and a recipient of a Stegner Fellowship from Stanford University. Her debut novel, *Lights All Night Long*, came out from Penguin Press, and her short stories have appeared in *The Best American Mystery Stories*, *One Story*, and elsewhere. She lives in Charleston, and her second novel is forthcoming from Knopf.

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VICTORIA BENTON FRANK

Victoria Benton Frank was born in New York City, raised in Montclair, New Jersey, but considers herself to have dual residency in the Lowcountry. She is a graduate of the College of Charleston and the French Culinary Institute. Victoria worked in restaurants in New York before returning to Charleston, South Carolina, which she considers home, with her husband, two kids, and sweet pup. When she isn't writing, she is reading, cooking, playing Mahjong or chasing her children. She is headed on the road Summer 2024 for the release of the paperback of *My Magnolia Summer*.



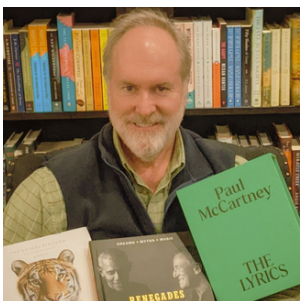
SIGNE PIKE

Signe Pike was born in Ithaca, NY, and graduated from Cornell University with her Bachelor of Science in Communication. She worked as an acquisitions editor at Random House and then Penguin before leaving to write her first book, a travel memoir entitled *Faery Tale: One Woman's Search for Enchantment in a Modern World*. Pike has researched and written about Celtic history for the past fifteen years. Her writings have also been published by Salon, Charleston City Paper, Book Riot and NPR.org.



STACY WILLINGHAM

Stacy Willingham is the New York Times, USA Today and internationally bestselling author of *A Flicker in the Dark*, *All the Dangerous Things* and *Only If You're Lucky*. Her debut, *A Flicker in the Dark*, was a 2022 finalist for the Book of the Month's Book of the Year award, Goodreads Choice Best Debut award, Goodreads Choice Best Mystery & Thriller award, and ITW's Best First Novel award. Her work has been translated in more than thirty languages. Before turning to fiction, she was a copywriter and brand strategist for various marketing agencies. She earned her B.A. in magazine journalism from the University of Georgia and M.F.A. in writing from the Savannah College of Art and Design. She currently lives in Charleston, South Carolina, with her husband, Britt, her newborn daughter Avery, and Labradoodle, Mako.



JULIAN BUXTON

Julian T. Buxton III, and his wife Polly are native Charlestonians with deep roots in South Carolina. Their passion and respect for the history, culture and people here inspire and guide their every decision for Tour Charleston, LLC as well as their love of literature guiding their local book store, Buxton Books. Julian is author of *The Ghosts of Charleston*, which recounts some of the myriad ghosts stories of the city. These stories are of real, existing specters, including the plight of the headless confederate soldier on the city's High Battery Seawall, and many others. He currently lives in Charleston, SC with his wife Polly.