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# How Should A Person Be Sheila Heti

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The Vietri Project

*How Should A Person  
Be Sheila Heti*

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## **KOBE WHITAKER**

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*How Did You Get This Number Abrams*

A love story told in the form of an auction catalog. Auction catalogs can tell you a lot about a person -- their passions and vanities, peccadilloes and aesthetics; their flush years and lean. Think of the collections of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Truman Capote, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. In Leanne Shapton's marvelously inventive and invented auction catalog, the 325 lots up for auction are what remain from the relationship between Lenore Doolan and

Harold Morris (who aren't real people, but might as well be). Through photographs of the couple's personal effects -- the usual auction items (jewelry, fine art, and rare furniture) and the seemingly worthless (pajamas, Post-it notes, worn paperbacks) -- the story of a failed love affair vividly (and cleverly) emerges. From first meeting to final separation, the progress and rituals of intimacy are revealed through the couple's accumulated relics and memorabilia. And a love story, in all its tenderness and struggle, emerges from the evidence that has been left behind, laid out for us to appraise and appreciate. In an earlier work, Was She

Pretty?, Shapton, a talented artist and illustrator, subtly explored the seemingly simple yet powerfully complicated nature of sexual jealousy. In *Important Artifacts and Personal Property* from the Collection of Lenore Doolan and Harold Morris—a very different yet equally original book—she invites us to contemplate what is truly valuable, and to consider the art we make of our private lives.

*MFA vs NYC* New Directions Publishing Named One of the 100 Best Nonfiction Books Written by the New York Times Magazine, a Publishers Weekly Best Book of the Year, and a New York Times Editors' Choice. When John D'Agata helps his mother move to Las Vegas one summer, he begins to follow a story about the federal government's plan to

store nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain; the result is a startling portrait that compels a reexamination of the future of human life.

**Ticknor** Simon and Schuster

The “quiet emergence from despair rings true” (Kirkus Reviews) in this resonant debut novel about retreating from the world after losing everything. Wren Wells is hiding out. Though she lived through the accident that killed her boyfriend Patrick, the girl she used to be didn't survive. Instead of heading off to college as planned, Wren retreats to her father's studio in the northern woods of Maine. All she wants is a little quiet, a place where she can be in control. Then she meets Cal Owen. Dealing with his own troubles, Cal is hiding out too. When the chemistry between them threatens to

pull Wren from her hard-won exile, Wren has to choose: risk opening her broken heart to the world again, or join the ghosts who haunt her.

**Green Girl** Henry Holt and Company  
Chosen as one of fifteen remarkable books by women that are shaping the way we read and write in the 21st century by the book critics of The New York Times "Funny...odd, original, and nearly unclassifiable...unlike any novel I can think of."—David Haglund, The New York Times Book Review "Brutally honest and stylistically inventive, cerebral, and sexy."—San Francisco Chronicle Named a Book of the Year by The New York Times Book Review, The New Yorker, San Francisco Chronicle, Salon, Flavorpill, The New Republic, The New York Observer, The Huffington Post A

raw, startling, genre-defying novel of friendship, sex, and love in the new millennium—a compulsive read that's like "spending a day with your new best friend" (Bookforum) Reeling from a failed marriage, Sheila, a twentysomething playwright, finds herself unsure of how to live and create. When Margaux, a talented painter and free spirit, and Israel, a sexy and depraved artist, enter her life, Sheila hopes that through close—sometimes too close—observation of her new friend, her new lover, and herself, she might regain her footing in art and life. Using transcribed conversations, real emails, plus heavy doses of fiction, the brilliant and always innovative Sheila Heti crafts a work that is part literary novel, part self-help manual, and part bawdy

confessional. It's a totally shameless and dynamic exploration into the way we live now, which breathes fresh wisdom into the eternal questions: What is the sincerest way to love? What kind of person should you be?

*How Should a Person Be?* W. W. Norton & Company

Should neighborhoods change? Is wearing a suit a good way to quit smoking? Why do people think that if you do one thing, you're against something else? Is monogamy a trick? Why isn't making the city more fun for you and your friends a super-noble political goal? Why does a computer last only three years? How often should you see your parents? How should we behave at parties? Is marriage getting easier? What can spam tell us about the

world? Misha Glouberman's friend and collaborator, Sheila Heti, wanted her next book to be a compilation of everything Misha knew. Together, they made a list of subjects. As Misha talked, Sheila typed. He talked about games, relationships, cities, negotiation, improvisation, Casablanca, conferences, and making friends. His subjects ranged from the sublime to the ridiculous. But sometimes what had seemed trivial began to seem important—and what had seemed important began to seem less so. *The Chairs Are Where the People Go* is refreshing, appealing, and kind of profound. It's a self-help book for people who don't feel they need help, and a how-to book that urges you to do things you don't really need to do.

*About a Mountain* Farrar, Straus and

Giroux

With the fierce emotional and intellectual power of such classics as Jean Rhys's *Good Morning, Midnight*, Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*, and Clarice Lispector's *The Hour of the Star*, Kate Zambreno's novel *Green Girl* is a provocative, sharply etched portrait of a young woman navigating the spectrum between anomie and epiphany. First published in 2011 in a small press edition, *Green Girl* was named one of the best books of the year by critics including Dennis Cooper and Roxane Gay. In *Bookforum*, James Greer called it "ambitious in a way few works of fiction are." This summer it is being republished in an all-new Harper Perennial trade paperback, significantly revised by the author, and including an extensive P.S.

section including never before published outtakes, an interview with the author, and a new essay by Zambreno. Zambreno's heroine, Ruth, is a young American in London, kin to Jean Seberg gamines and contemporary celebutantes, by day spritzing perfume at the department store she calls *Horrids*, by night trying desperately to navigate a world colored by the unwanted gaze of others and the uncertainty of her own self-regard. Ruth, the green girl, joins the canon of young people existing in that important, frightening, and exhilarating period of drift and anxiety between youth and adulthood, and her story is told through the eyes of one of the most surprising and unforgettable narrators in recent fiction—a voice at once distanced and

maternal, indulgent yet blackly funny. And the result is a piercing yet humane meditation on alienation, consumerism, the city, self-awareness, and desire, by a novelist who has been compared with Jean Rhys, Virginia Woolf, and Elfriede Jelinek.

**A Novel** Coffee House Press

The audacious, savagely funny debut of a writer of razor-sharp wit and surprising tenderness: a collection of stories that gives us a fresh take on adolescence, death, sex; on being Jewish-ish; and on finding one's way as a young woman in the world. A New Yorker, trying not to be jaded, accompanies a cash-strapped pot grower to a "clothing optional resort" in California. A nerdy high-schooler has her first sexual experience at Geology Camp. A college student, on the night of her

father's funeral, watches a video of her bat mitzvah, hypnotized by the image of the girl she used to be . . . Frank and irreverent, Rebecca Schiff's stories offer a singular view of growing up (or not) and finding love (or not) in today's ever-uncertain landscape. In its bone-dry humor, its pithy observations, and its thrilling ability to unmask the most revealing moments of human interaction—no matter how fleeting—*The Bed Moved* announces a new talent to be reckoned with.

Dice Man Atlantic Books

Why is it so difficult to find the time to help others? When Seb Hunter became aware of a nagging ache in the place where his soul ought to be, he embarked on a two year odyssey of volunteering—with hilarious results. He



collects litter, teaches pensioners how to use the internet, works at Oxfam (where he meets Gladys, his septuagenarian nemesis), mans a steam train line, becomes a star DJ on hospital radio, visits prisoners, and runs a very long way for charity. But will his quest for self-improvement be successful? How to Be a Better Person is the tale of a cynic's attempt to become a better person by helping others. For nothing. It's a volunteering call-to-arms! Oh no it's not! Well it is, sort of . . .

**A Novel** RDR Books

Two couples, each with a twelve-year-old child, travel to Paris; within a few moments of discovering each other in a crowd, one of their children disappears. A day later, one of the mothers disappears, too. The story that follows is

a wonderfully strange, beautifully composed examination of happiness and desperation, complete with a man in a bear suit, a teen pop star, and eight really excellent songs. Sheila Heti's debut play was first commissioned in 2001, for a feminist theater company that never ended up staging it. Its turbulent creation became the backdrop of Heti's last novel, *How Should a Person Be?*, which was named a Best Book of the Year by the New York Times and the New Yorker—and now the play itself can be revealed at last. With new introductions by Sheila Heti and director Jordan Tannahill, *All Our Happy Days Are Stupid* offers a novel's worth of wisdom and humor, of wild hope and dreamlike confrontations, and page after page of unforgettable lines. Seen until now only

by a lucky few, its publication is a cause for celebration.

**and Other Stories** Simon and Schuster The celebrated author of *The Group* offers a “clever, witty, polished” portrait of the 1940s NYC literary bohemia she knew so well in this debut novel (*The New York Times*). Margaret Sargent is young and fearless, a deep thinker inspired by the bohemian energy that abounds in New York City in the years leading up to the Second World War. With careless abandon, she destroys her marriage and numerous love affairs as she moves through the social circles of artists and writers, playing at the fringes of political extremism. She is an enigma, often wanton and frivolous, but possessing intelligence and a razor-sharp wit, as well as a troubling core of

inner darkness, self-doubt, and puzzling tendencies toward self-destruction. For Margaret, urban life in the 1930s is an ongoing adventure—ever-changing, always surprising, and deeply, profoundly unsatisfying. Mary McCarthy, author of the bestselling American classic *The Group*, burst boldly onto the literary scene with her provocative debut, *The Company She Keeps*. A brilliant, stylistically inventive novel, it offers a rich portrait of a truly fascinating protagonist in six revealing episodes. Love her, despise her, or fear for her, you will never forget Margaret Sargent. This ebook features an illustrated biography of Mary McCarthy including rare images from the author’s estate.

**A Garden of Creatures** Random House Facing a creative dilemma after a failed

marriage, Sheila gathers inspiration from a depraved and free-spirited artist who becomes her lover, in a tale based on incidents from the author's true life. *I Love Dick* Random House Incorporated  
THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER  
Women in Clothes is a book unlike any other. It is essentially a conversation among hundreds of women of all nationalities—famous, anonymous, religious, secular, married, single, young, old—on the subject of clothing, and how the garments we put on every day define and shape our lives. It began with a survey. The editors composed a list of more than fifty questions designed to prompt women to think more deeply about their personal style. Writers, activists, and artists including Cindy Sherman, Kim Gordon, Kalpona Akter,

Sarah Nicole Prickett, Tavi Gevinson, Miranda July, Roxane Gay, Lena Dunham, and Molly Ringwald answered these questions with photographs, interviews, personal testimonies, and illustrations. Even our most basic clothing choices can give us confidence, show the connection between our appearance and our habits of mind, express our values and our politics, bond us with our friends, or function as armor or disguise. They are the tools we use to reinvent ourselves and to transform how others see us. Women in Clothes embraces the complexity of women's style decisions, revealing the sometimes funny, sometimes strange, always thoughtful impulses that influence our daily ritual of getting dressed.  
*The Two Cultures of American Fiction*

Sarah Crichton Books

Facing a creative dilemma after a failed marriage, Sheila gathers inspiration from a depraved and free-spirited artist who becomes her lover, in a tale based on incidents from the author's true life that combines literary observations, self-help advice and unstinting confessions. By the author of *Ticknor*.

**Six Lectures ; Reported, with**

**Emendations and Additions** Vintage  
The son of a singer mother whose career forcibly separated her from her family and an influential father who runs an orphan work camp, Pak Jun Do rises to prominence using instinctive talents and eventually becomes a professional kidnapper and romantic rival to Kim Jong Il. By the author of *Parasites Like Us*.  
*Leaving the Atocha Station* McSweeney's

Adam Gordon is a brilliant, if highly unreliable, young American poet on a prestigious fellowship in Madrid, struggling to establish his sense of self and his relationship to art. What is actual when our experiences are mediated by language, technology, medication, and the arts? Is poetry an essential art form, or merely a screen for the reader's projections? Instead of following the dictates of his fellowship, Adam's "research" becomes a meditation on the possibility of the genuine in the arts and beyond: are his relationships with the people he meets in Spain as fraudulent as he fears his poems are? A witness to the 2004 Madrid train bombings and their aftermath, does he participate in historic events or merely watch them pass him by? In prose that veers

between the comic and tragic, the self-contemptuous and the inspired, *Leaving the Atocha Station* is a portrait of the artist as a young man in an age of Google searches, pharmaceuticals, and spectacle. Born in Topeka, Kansas, in 1979, Ben Lerner is the author of three books of poetry *The Lichtenberg Figures*, *Angle of Yaw*, and *Mean Free Path*. He has been a finalist for the National Book Award and the Northern California Book Award, a Fulbright Scholar in Spain, and the recipient of a 2010-2011 Howard Foundation Fellowship. In 2011 he became the first American to win the *Preis der Stadt Münster für Internationale Poesie*. *Leaving the Atocha Station* is his first novel. *Reality Hunger* Farrar, Straus and Giroux  
Literary ombudsman John Crace never

met an important book he didnt like to deconstruct. From Salman Rushdie to John Grisham, Crace retells the big books in just 500 biting satirical words, pointing his pen at the clunky plots, stylistic tics and pretensions to Big Ideas, as he turns publishers golden dream books into dross. In the grand tradition of Tom Lehrer and Stan Freberg, Crace takes the books that produce the most media hype and retells each story in its authors inimitable style. Philip Roth, Don DeLillo, Margaret Drabble, Paul Auster, Alice Sebold, John Updike, Tom Wolfe, Ruth Rendell, A.S. Byatt, John LeCarre, Michael Crichton and Ian McEwan all emerge delightfully scathed in this book that makes it easy to talk knowingly about books youve never bothered to read or, for that

matter, should have.

*Stories How Should a Person Be?* A Novel from Life

A Lithub, Good Reads, Bustle, and The Millions Most Anticipated Book of 2021 "The Vietri Project is a riveting, shifting quest, an evocative trip to Rome, and a beautiful portrayal of the ways you need to return to the past in order to move forward. A great delight from start to finish."--Lily King, New York Times bestselling author of *Writers and Lovers* A search for a mysterious customer in Rome leads a young bookseller to confront the complicated history of her family, and that of Italy itself, in this achingly intimate debut with echoes of Lily King and Elif Batuman. Working at a bookstore in Berkeley in the years after college, Gabriele becomes intrigued by

the orders of signor Vietri, a customer from Rome whose numerous purchases grow increasingly mystical and esoteric. Restless and uncertain of her future, Gabriele quits her job and, landing in Rome, decides to look up Vietri. Unable to locate him, she begins a quest to unearth the well-concealed facts of his life. Following a trail of obituaries and military records, a memoir of life in a village forgotten by modernity, and the court records of a communist murder trial, Gabriele meets an eclectic assortment of the city's inhabitants, from the widow of an Italian prisoner of war to members of a generation set adrift by the financial crisis. Each encounter draws her unexpectedly closer to her own painful past and complicated family history—an Italian

mother diagnosed with schizophrenia and institutionalized during her childhood, and an extended family in Rome still recovering from the losses and betrayals in their past. Through these voices and histories, Gabriele will discover what it means to be a person in the world; a member of a family and a citizen of a country—and how reconciling these stories may be the key to understanding her own.

A Novel McSweeney's

Called “remarkable” (The Wall Street Journal) and “an ambitious, colossal debut novel” (Publishers Weekly), Helen DeWitt’s *The Last Samurai* is back in print at last. Helen DeWitt’s 2000 debut, *The Last Samurai*, was “destined to become a cult classic” (Miramax). The enterprising publisher sold the rights in

twenty countries, so “Why not just, ‘destined to become a classic?’” (Garth Risk Hallberg) And why must cultists tell the uninitiated it has nothing to do with Tom Cruise? Sibylla, an American-at-Oxford turned loose on London, finds herself trapped as a single mother after a misguided one-night stand. High-minded principles of child-rearing work disastrously well. J. S. Mill (taught Greek at three) and Yo Yo Ma (Bach at two) claimed the methods would work with any child; when these succeed with the boy Ludo, he causes havoc at school and is home again in a month. (Is he a prodigy, a genius? Readers looking over Ludo’s shoulder find themselves easily reading Greek and more.) Lacking male role models for a fatherless boy, Sibylla turns to endless replays of Kurosawa’s

masterpiece *Seven Samurai*. But Ludo is obsessed with the one thing he wants and doesn't know: his father's name. At eleven, inspired by his own take on the classic film, he sets out on a secret quest for the father he never knew. He'll be punched, sliced, and threatened with retribution. He may not live to see twelve. Or he may find a real samurai and save a mother who thinks boredom a fate worse than death.

*The Middle Stories* Macmillan

How Should a Person Be? A Novel from Life Henry Holt and Company

**On Heroes, Hero-worship, & the Heroic in History** Penguin

From the author of the sensational bestseller *I Was Told There'd Be Cake* comes a new book of personal essays brimming with all the charm and wit that

have earned Sloane Crosley widespread acclaim, award nominations, and an ever-growing cadre of loyal fans. In *Cake* readers were introduced to the foibles of Crosley's life in New York City—always teetering between the glamour of Manhattan parties, the indignity of entry-level work, and the special joy of suburban nostalgia—and to a literary voice that mixed Dorothy Parker with David Sedaris and became something all its own. Crosley still lives and works in New York City, but she's no longer the newcomer for whom a trip beyond the Upper West Side is a big adventure. She can pack up her sensibility and takes us with her to Paris, to Portugal (having picked it by spinning a globe and putting down her finger, and finally falling in with a group of Portuguese clowns), and



even to Alaska, where the "bear bells" on her fellow bridesmaids' ponytails seemed silly until a grizzly cub dramatically intrudes. Meanwhile, back in New York, where new apartments beckon and taxi rides go awry, her sense of the city has become more layered, her relationships with friends and family more complicated. As always, Crosley's voice is fueled by the perfect witticism, buoyant optimism, flair for drama, and

easy charm in the face of minor suffering or potential drudgery. But in *How Did You Get This Number* it has also become increasingly sophisticated, quicker and sharper to the point, more complex and lasting in the emotions it explores. And yet, Crosley remains the unfailingly hilarious young Everywoman, healthily equipped with intelligence and poise to fend off any potential mundanity in maturity.

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