



**THE WORD EXCHANGE,** Alena Graedon, \$30.

This debut novel from Brooklyn writer Alena Graedon is both a cracking good thriller and a thoughtful meditation on language. The action takes place in a future world where people no longer use words to communicate; even emails are obsolete. Smartphones called Memes have taken over and can anticipate people's needs, hailing taxis and ordering food the minute their stomachs rumble.

Doug Johnson, a noted lexicographer and one of the few holdouts, disappears on the eve of publishing what might be the last English dictionary. He leaves only a one-word clue for his daughter, Anana. The search for her father leads her into an intriguing shadow world of secret societies, hidden passageways and the boardrooms of an evil online retailing site, Synchronic. Anana's joined in her quest by Bart, who worked with her father on the dictionary and has long adored her from afar. But Bart soon succumbs to the menacing "word flu" that is engulfing the world and causing sufferers to lose their language.

Philosophically complex, *The Word Exchange* is a compelling and thought-provoking read. After reading this ambitiously inventive story about the intersection of language and technology, you'll never look at your smartphone the same way.

If You Love the Sound of This, Try...



**THE EYRE AFFAIR**  
Jasper Fforde  
In a surreal version of Great Britain circa 1985, characters from literary classics come to life.



**THE CIRCLE**  
Dave Eggers  
Mae Holland's new job at a powerful internet company seems too good to be true; turns out she's right.



**NEVERWHERE**  
Neil Gaiman  
Inhabited by monsters, saints and angels, a secret world is revealed beneath the streets of London.



**THE SHADOW OF THE WIND**  
Carlos Ruiz Zafón  
Barcelona, 1945: A bookseller's son makes a terrifying discovery.

SHORT STORIES

*small*  
**DELIGHTS**

Two young women capture the wonder of the world



**ABOUT VIOLET**

**Age:** 24  
**Education:** Mount Holyoke College, a prestigious women's liberal arts school in Massachusetts.

**The backstory:**

- Violet's father is American; her mother, a refugee from Vietnam.
- She received a Fulbright Fellowship to teach in Vietnam's Mekong Delta.
- She works late into the night, and her ghost stories scare her so much she keeps all the lights blazing.

**FOLK MEETS FUTURE**

In her first book, Violet Kupersmith reworks the traditional Vietnamese ghost stories told to her by her grandmother, with a modern twist. In these entertaining yet eerie stories, everyday people run up against supernatural creatures who are seldom what they seem. Expect to meet an alluring woman who has an insatiable thirst, a kindly old man who transforms into a gigantic serpent and other magical beings.

**THE FRANGIPANI HOTEL,** Violet Kupersmith, \$30.—M.M.



**ABOUT MARINA**

**Education:** Graduated magna cum laude from Yale with a concentration in writing.

**The backstory:**

- Marina was a journalist, playwright, actor and activist.
- She landed a coveted job at the *New Yorker*.
- She was killed in a car accident mere days after graduating at age 22.

**A LIFE CUT SHORT**

This posthumous collection of essays and stories by Marina Keegan depicts the struggles millennials face as they search for a meaningful place in the world. Keegan captures all the hope, excitement, love, loss and uncertainty of a generation growing up with the War on Terror and a global financial crisis. Her non-fiction essays give us a heartbreaking glimpse of how she wanted to live and are a reminder of how life can change in an instant.

**THE OPPOSITE OF LONELINESS,** Marina Keegan, \$27.—K.Q.

