



HOLIDAY GIFTS FOR BROADWAY LOVERS

MICHAEL GILTZ | DECEMBER 13, 2016

SHARE 

The savvy reader's favorite website [BookFilter.com](#) chooses the best theater books ready for wrapping, exclusively for Broadway Direct

Hey, even Santa can't get good seats to *Hamilton*! Luckily, there are plenty of other great options when searching for what to give the theater buffs in your life. We've rounded up some terrific new books and tossed in the best of the rest we covered throughout 2016. Consider your holiday shopping done! Luckily, that leaves you more time for reading, so what are you waiting for?

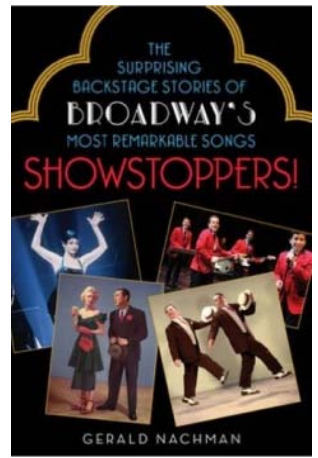
SHOWSTOPPERS!

By Gerald Nachman

\$19.99, Chicago Review Press

Broadway historian Gerald Nachman focuses like a laser on that defining moment of musical theater: the showstopper, the song that knocks 'em

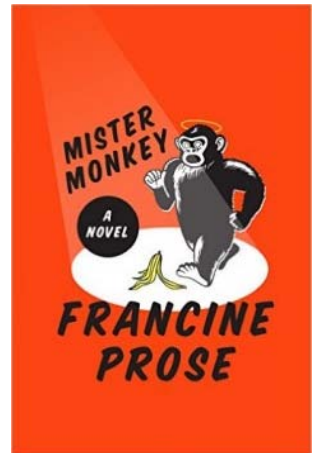
dead. How did they come about? When was the magical moment it all clicked? And, more interestingly, *why* did it click? Chita Rivera, Tommy Tune, Patti LuPone, and Jerry Herman have all watched it happen and often *made* it happen, and naturally they're thrilled to relive those career-making stories. Anyone who dreams of being a part of theatrical history will want the skinny on how a showstopper was done. [Learn more.](#)



MISTER MONKEY

By Francine Prose
\$26.99, Harper

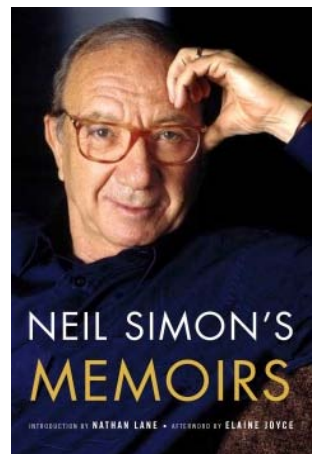
This is the theatrical novel of the year, sure to become a cult favorite for anyone crazy about performing. It's set in the soul-crushing world of kiddie theater, specifically the Off-Off-Off-Off-Broadway show *Mister Monkey*, a musical that's been running forever about an adorable scamp of a chimpanzee. No one is spared in this comedy, from the adults trapped in miserable roles to the child star who finds new inspiration for his performance in a suddenly burgeoning adolescence to the very unimpressed audience and even Mister Monkey himself. Not to be missed. [Learn more.](#)



NEIL SIMON'S MEMOIRS

By Neil Simon
\$25, Hogarth

Easily the most successful American playwright of all time, Neil Simon delivered the goods in not one but two bestselling memoirs. They covered everything, from his childhood to those crazy days in TV and then hit after hit after hit, stopping along the way to open up about his private life and loves. This omnibus edition collects both books plus adds a new intro and afterword, telling his story with humor (of course) and not incidentally giving



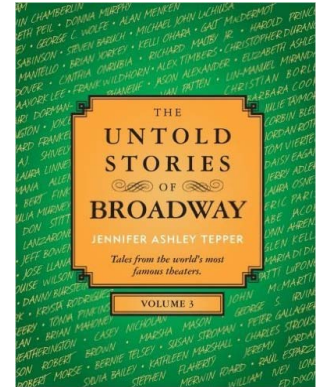
an excellent overview of five decades of Broadway history. [Learn more.](#)

THE UNTOLD STORIES OF BROADWAY: VOLUME 3

By Jennifer Ashley Tepper

\$20, CreateSpace

Head to the increasingly essential cabaret space Michael Feinstein's/54 Below and you might just bump into Jennifer Ashley Tepper, the director of programming. When she's not busy making shows happen on that stage, Tepper is apparently busy talking to anyone and everyone about what's happened on every other stage in the Theatre District. Her third volume of Broadway lore contains stories from the people in the spotlight and, more intriguing, the people just *outside* the spotlight. By focusing her attention on individual theatres, Tepper brings alive eight more Broadway houses along with the history made within them. [Learn more.](#)

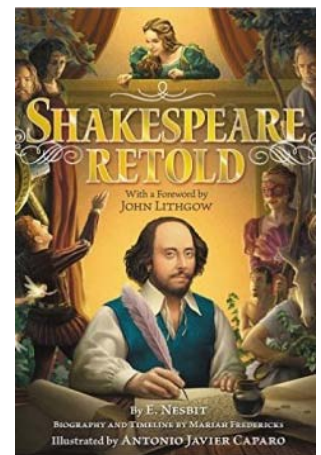


SHAKESPEARE RETOLD

By E. Nesbit, foreword by John Lithgow

\$19.99, HarperCollins

Looking to introduce kids to the joys of the Bard? You can't go wrong with beloved British author E. Nesbit (*The Railway Children* and many, many others). Her classic prose adaptations of *Romeo & Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and other works are models of concision and clarity that tell the stories and bring young readers that much closer to the plays themselves. This edition includes a forward by actor John Lithgow, who talks about performing in Shakespeare when he was a child and why these works will always matter. [Learn more.](#)

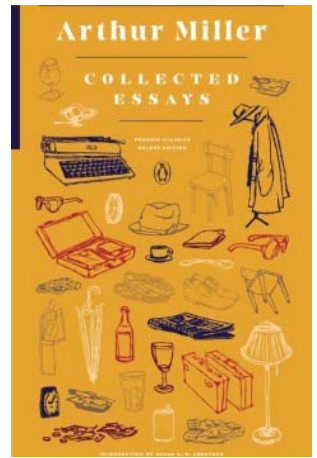


COLLECTED ESSAYS

By Arthur Miller

\$35, Penguin Classics

A feast for lovers of theater and good writing, this one-volume collection focuses on the essays of Miller, who is one of America's greatest playwrights, a terrific memoirist, and a great essayist to boot. Here we feast on the essays. One section is devoted to wide-ranging topics such as the Great Depression; his intellectual rigor is impressive. But a second section focuses strictly on theater and the arts, while the last lasers in on individual plays like *Death of a Salesman*. Indispensable. [Learn more.](#)

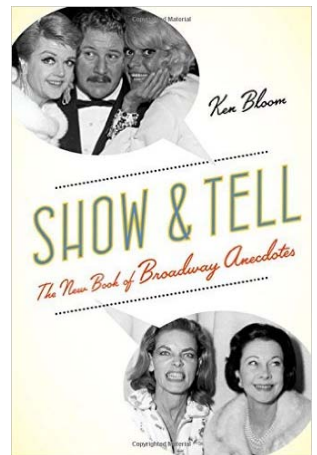


SHOW AND TELL: THE NEW BOOK OF BROADWAY ANECDOTES

By Ken Bloom

\$19.95, Oxford University Press

Catnip for Broadway babies, historian Ken Bloom's latest is no magisterial tome that charts a stuffy path through the major signposts of American musical theater. Instead, it's a can't-read-just-one compilation of stories and tales plucked from the byways of showbiz lore, like the head-spinning fact that Frank Sinatra almost appeared in the original *Fiddler on the Roof*. Dip into it and you'll be lost for hours. [Learn more.](#)

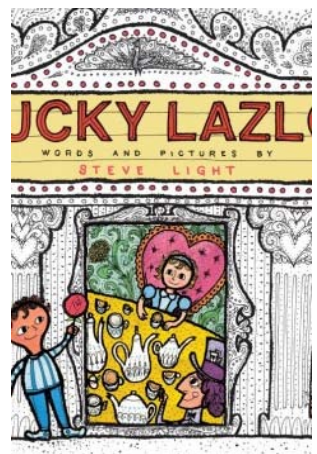


LUCKY LAZLO

By Steve Light

\$16.99, Candlewick

The latest picture book from bestselling author Steve Light (*Have You Seen My Dragon?*) is a backstage romp that parents might enjoy just as much if not more than the children they'll think they're buying it for. A besotted young man plucks a rose and heads off to the theatre to present it to the girl he adores. She happens to be starring in a production of *Alice in Wonderland*, so the result is a dizzying combination of Lewis Carroll and behind-the-scenes antics. Be prepared to arrange a backstage tour of



some theatre somewhere so the tykes can check out the fun themselves. [Learn more.](#)

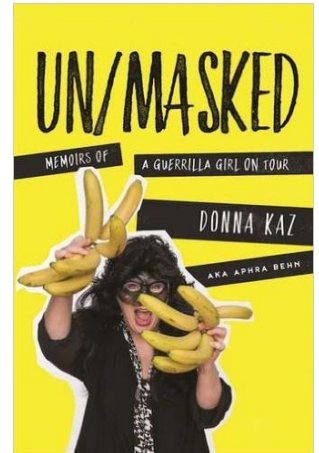
UN/MASKED: MEMOIRS OF A GUERRILLA GIRL ON TOUR

By Donna Kaz

\$24.99, Skyhorse Publishing

The Guerrilla Girls were radical feminist performance artists who created a stir in the 1980s by appearing in public in gorilla masks, taking the names of dead female artists and calling out the arts community to live up to its ideals and reject sexism. Now one of those pioneers — Donna Kaz, a.k.a. Aphra Behn — has come forward, taken off her mask, and told her story, which includes domestic abuse, a lifelong love of theater, and how artistic activism can be just as creative and fun and fulfilling as treading the boards. [Learn](#)

[more.r](#)

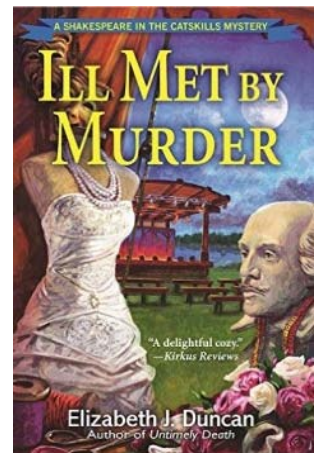


ILL MET BY MURDER

By Elizabeth J. Duncan

\$25.99, Crooked Lane Books

The second in a cozy mystery series that was launched to strong reviews with *Untimely Death*. Costume designer Charlotte Fairfax must juggle her responsibilities with the Catskills Shakespeare Theatre Company while investigating a murder that has ensnared the soon-to-be-married daughter of one of their biggest patrons. It would indeed encourage a healthy donation if Charlotte could clear the fiancé's good name. On the other hand, it's hard to focus on murder when you're trying to combine the lewd silliness of an ass's head with the magical beauty of a fairy queen. [Learn more.](#)

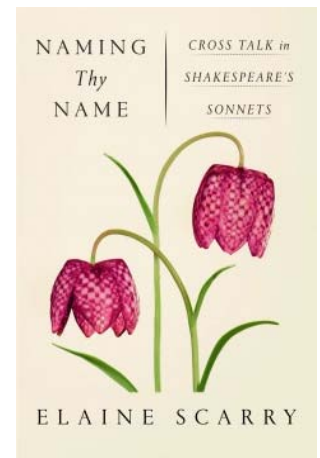


NAMING THY NAME: CROSS TALK IN SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS

By Elaine Scarry

\$27, Farrar Straus and Giroux

Sure, this focuses on the sonnets and not the plays, but anything about



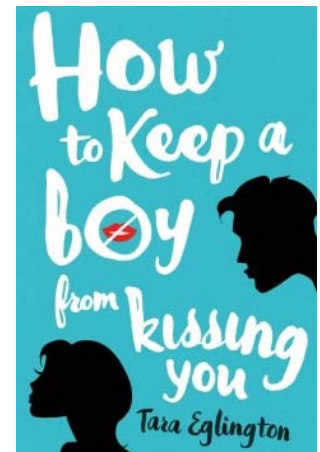
Shakespeare is of interest, and this work of literary scholarship is an academic blockbuster. Among author Elaine Scarry's numerous accomplishments here, she convincingly names poet Henry Constable as Shakespeare's great love, James I as the Rival Poet, suggests Constable was by his side when Shakespeare died and signed his will, *and* attributes an unsigned poem about the widely beloved Constable to Shakespeare for good measure. Any one of these would be a brash claim. But Scarry does it all, using scholarship, biography, and a close reading of the sonnets to tie it all together in a web of interlocking clues and insight that illuminate his series of poems like never before. [Learn more.](#)

HOW TO KEEP A BOY FROM KISSING YOU

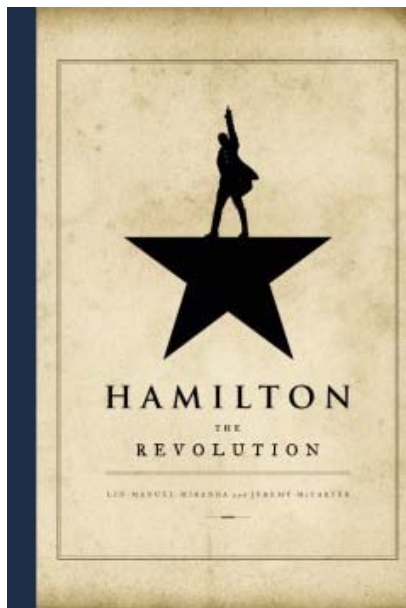
By Tara Eglington

\$18.99, A Thomas Dunne Book for St. Martin's Griffin

Some kids in school dread public speaking. Others dread having to change in the locker room for gym. But those who love acting in school plays face one particular dilemma time and again: the onstage kiss. Aurora is 16 and has never been kissed, and she wants it to be special. (Duh.) Unfortunately, she's been cast opposite her annoying next-door neighbor, Hayden, in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and not for nothing, he is not going to be her first kiss, fake or not. No way. Never. [Learn more.](#)



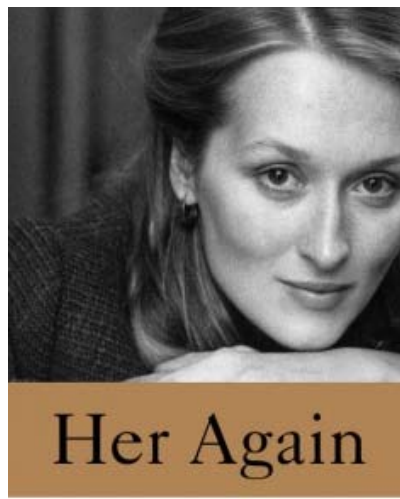
And the best of what we covered earlier in 2016...



HAMILTON: THE REVOLUTION

By Lin-Manuel Miranda and Jeremy McCarter

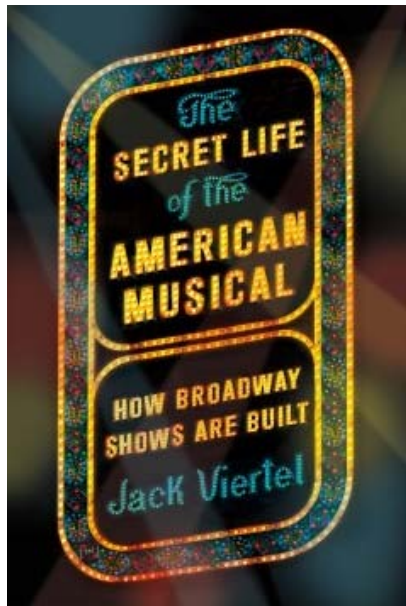
\$40, Grand Central Publishing



HER AGAIN: BECOMING MERYL STREEP

By Michael Schulman

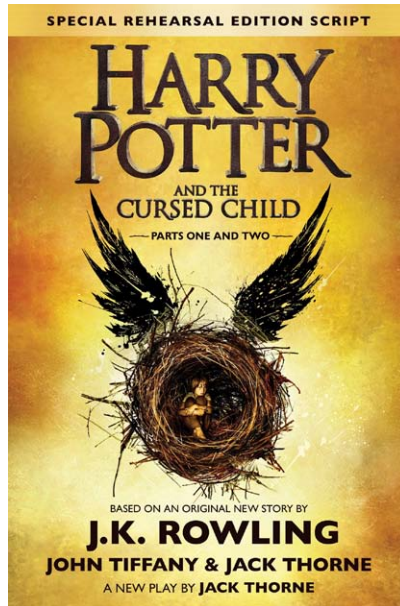
\$26.99, Harper



THE SECRET LIFE OF THE AMERICAN MUSICAL

By Jack Viertel

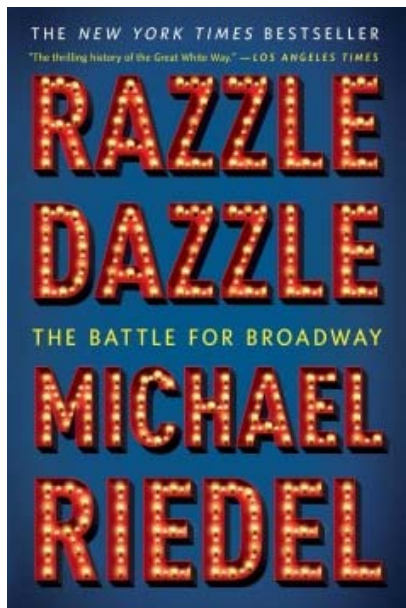
\$28, Sarah Crichton Books



HARRY POTTER AND THE CURSED CHILD

By Jack Thorne; based on an original story by J.K. Rowling, Jack Thorne & John Tiffany

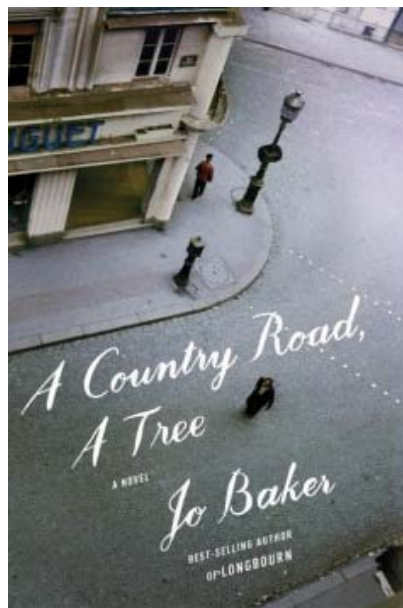
\$34.99, Arthur A. Levine Books



RAZZLE DAZZLE

By Michael Riedel

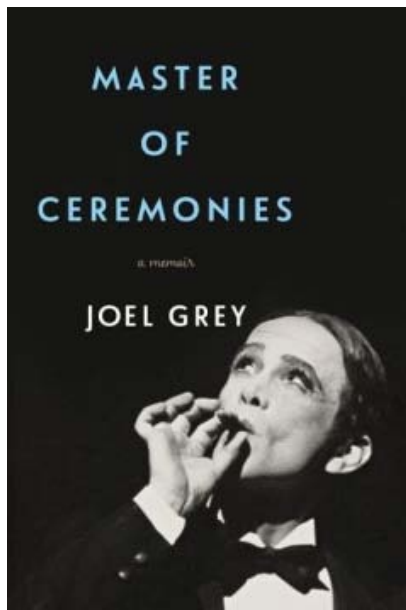
\$17, Simon & Schuster



A COUNTRY ROAD, A TREE

By Jo Baker

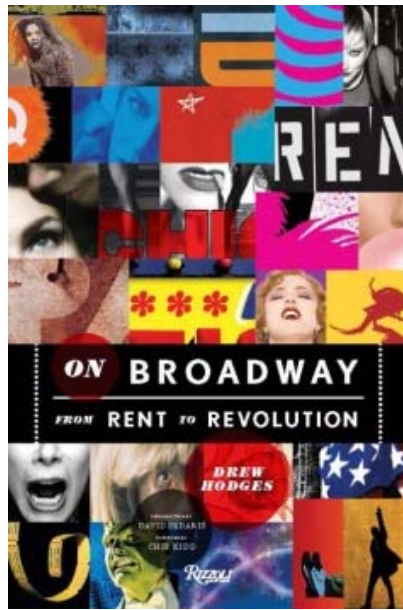
\$26.99, Harper



MASTER OF CEREMONIES

By Joel Grey

\$27.99, Flatiron Books



ON BROADWAY

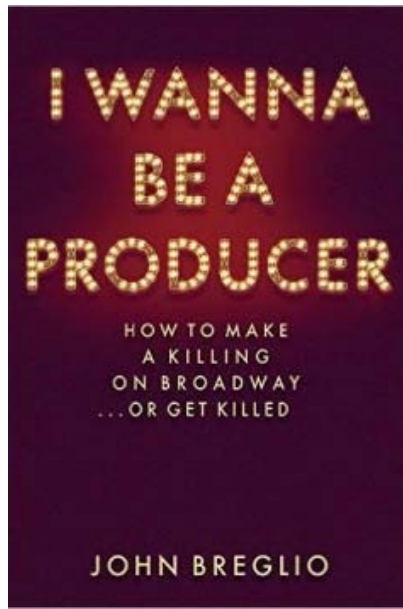
By Drew Hodges

\$45, Rizzoli



**SOME ENCHANTED EVENINGS:
THE GLITTERING LIFE AND TIMES
OF MARY MARTIN**

By David Kaufman
\$29.99, St. Martin's Press



I WANNA BE A PRODUCER

By John Breglio
\$29.99, Applause Theatre & Cinema
Books

KEEP READING:



A Christmas Story and Rent to Receive Live TV Productions



Sneak Peek: *Sunday in the Park with George*



Tony Winner Idina Menzel Set for Off-Broadway Premiere of Skintight

[SEE ALL NEWS](#)

BROADWAY **DIRECT** 

[Join Our Newsletter](#)

[General Info](#)

[Find Shows](#)

[Broadway Venues](#)

