



City on Fire: A novel

By Garth Risk Hallberg

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National Best Seller • Named a Best Book of the Year by: *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *NPR*, *Vogue*, *The Atlantic*, *Newsday*

“A novel of head-snapping ambition and heart-stopping power—a novel that attests to its young author’s boundless and unflagging talents.” —Michiko Kakutani, *New York Times*

New York City, 1976. Meet Regan and William Hamilton-Sweeney, estranged heirs to one of the city’s great fortunes; Keith and Mercer, the men who, for better or worse, love them; Charlie and Samantha, two suburban teenagers seduced by downtown’s punk scene; an obsessive magazine reporter and his idealistic neighbor—and the detective trying to figure out what any of them have to do with a shooting in Central Park on New Year’s Eve.

The mystery, as it reverberates through families, friendships, and the corridors of power, will open up even the loneliest-seeming corners of the crowded city. And when the blackout of July 13, 1977, plunges this world into darkness, each of these lives will be changed forever.

City on Fire is an unforgettable novel about love and betrayal and forgiveness, about art and truth and rock ‘n’ roll: about what people need from each other in order to live . . . and about what makes the living worth doing in the first place.

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City on Fire: A novel By Garth Risk Hallberg **Bibliography**

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

An Amazon Best Book of October 2015: Find a comfortable chair, a lamp, and mix yourself a Manhattan, because this book is going to steal your time and throw you into the swirling mayhem of 1970s New York City – where the lives of the wealthy, punks, artists, cops, anarchists, and fleeing teens collide – and you are not going to want it to end. Garth Risk Hallberg has not only written one of the most anticipated debuts of the year, but has done so with enormous ambition and giddy success. Told through multiple perspectives, Hallberg’s novel reveals a vast and varied web of characters whose lives intertwine around a shooting and the New York City blackout of 1977. This is a novel of America, of hopes and dreams, of old money a la F. Scott Fitzgerald, of families and rebellion and how “no matter what you deserve, how far you run, your fate stays stuck to your heels.” Rendered with cinematic detail and crisp-cracking prose, Garth Risk Hallberg’s *City on Fire* is electric. --Al Woodworth

Review

“*City on Fire*, by Garth Risk Hallberg: Dickensian, massively entertaining, as close to a great American novel as this century has produced.” —**Stephen King**

“The year’s most exciting fiction debut . . . A book that is truly that great, rare thing: a wholly inhabitable universe, reflecting back our lives while also offering an exhilarating escape from them.” —**Rolling Stone**

“*City on Fire* is a spectacular debut.” —**Emily St. John Mandel, author of *Station Eleven***

“*City on Fire* is a big, stunning first novel and an amazing virtual reality machine, whisking us back to New York City in the 1970s with bravura swagger and style and heart . . . The ghosts of New York memorialized by earlier writers—F. Scott Fitzgerald, J. D. Salinger, Richard Price—hover over *City on Fire*. At the same time, the novel’s ambition and Dickensian storytelling ardor will remind many readers of Donna Tartt’s dazzling *The Goldfinch*, while its fuel-injected prose and nimble stacking of plot complications will recall for others Martin Amis’s classic portrait of Gotham in *Money*. But this novel is defiantly and indelibly Hallberg’s own: a symphonic epic that reaches a crashing crescendo during the blackout of July 13, 1977 . . . [In] Hallberg’s XXL tool kit as a storyteller: a love of language and the handsprings he can make it perform; a bone-deep knowledge of his characters’ inner lives that’s as unerring as that of the young Salinger; an instinctive gift for spinning suspense. He also possesses a journalistic eye for those telling details that can trigger memories of the reader’s own like small Proustian grenades . . . A novel of head-snapping ambition and heart-stopping power—a novel that attests to its young author’s boundless and unflagging talents.”

—**Michiko Kakutani, New York Times**

“Dazzling . . . *City on Fire* is an extraordinary performance . . . Hallberg inhabits the minds of whites and blacks, men and women, old and young, gay and straight with equal fidelity . . . making every one of them thrum with real life . . . And what endlessly fascinating characters they are! . . . [The novel’s] Whitmanesque arms embrace an entire city of lovers and strivers, saints and killers.” —**Ron Charles, Washington Post**

“A singular achievement . . . The story engages from the first page.” —**Entertainment Weekly**

“An uncommon pleasure . . . It’s easy to understand the excitement. City on Fire is an epic and absorbing novel.” —**USA Today**

“Profoundly illuminating . . . Timeless . . . Hallberg ties these characters’ fates together with an artful intricacy that is truly remarkable.” —**Seattle Times**

“A probing look at New York City in the mid-1970s. The plot winds and twists through just about every corner of the city . . . And all this amid the blinding light of love, in a great midsummer blackout.” —**Scott Simon, NPR/Weekend Edition**

“Locating the best of times within the worst of times is no mean trick, especially in a historical novel where the history is recent enough that many readers remember firsthand just how bad those times were. That’s the delicate and ultimately moving balancing act that Garth Risk Hallberg pulls off in City on Fire . . . His talent is as conspicuous as the book’s heft. There’s rarely a less than finely honed sentence or a moment when you don’t feel that a sophisticated intelligence is at work . . . [The climax] is a tour de force.” —**Frank Rich, New York Times Book Review**

“Spectacular . . . New York City in the 1970s comes pulsingly alive . . . The book clearly reflects the work of an exciting new talent.” —**People**

“City on Fire is a novel of connection, forgiveness, and empathy . . . Skillfully drawn and beautifully shaded.” —**A.O. Scott, GQ**

“Captivating . . . It’s immediately apparent that this is a writer who knows how to do suspense. You’re soon zipping through Hallberg’s vividly realized New York like a child discovering Hogwarts for the first time. Every sentence has been carefully crafted by a literary sensibility in thrall to punk and Balzac, yet it’s unpretentious and funny.” —**The Times (UK)**

“Gorgeous . . . deeply felt . . . Hallberg is such a natural writer . . . No matter where you come from, who you love or what you do, you can slip into the skin of (almost) any one of his characters and feel the world like a real, round, and living thing closing its fist around you . . . It really is amazing.” —**Jason Sheehan, NPR.org**

“Hallberg writes with style and sophistication about everything from urban decay and punk rock to domestic terrorism and the dissolution of the nuclear family, seamlessly melding disparate character arcs, and deploying a host of storytelling modes in the process . . . It’s exciting to see a writer start his career with such an extravagant display of talent and assurance.” —**San Francisco Chronicle**

“To a person who did live in New York in the nineteen-seventies—to wit, this person—Hallberg’s powers of evocation are uncanny . . . It’s not the facts that bring the nineteen-seventies to life in City on Fire. What Hallberg is after is an atmosphere, and he gets it.” —**Louis Menand, The New Yorker**

“Poetic, expansive, and ingeniously plotted . . . It’s the very dissonance between Hallberg’s ornate structure of storytelling and his out-of-control subject that’s part of the jarring allure of City on Fire.” —**Maureen Corrigan, NPR/Fresh Air**

“The book’s lifeblood is its almost sociological look at the clashes of culture and wealth that threaten to engulf the city whole, and Hallberg’s characters, who manage to unearth moments of hope and connection amid such impending calamity. It is in these small glimpses of humanity that the book becomes as big as its

author's ideas." —**Esquire**

"Extraordinarily well-written . . . pitch-perfect . . . [The book] is undeniably mimetic of Golden Age TV. But *City on Fire* can equally be seen as a challenge to contemporary television: *Everything you can do I can do better.*" —**The Atlantic**

"Too good to miss . . . There's humorous description; thought-provoking aperçus; sharp dialogue and emotional grit." —**Spectator (UK)**

"Thrilling . . . brings gritty 1970s Manhattan to life . . . A kind of punk *Bleak House* . . . An exuberant, Zeitgeisty New York novel, like *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, *The Emperor's Children*, or *The Goldfinch.*" —**Megan O'Grady, Vogue**

"Dazzling . . . Beautifully choreographed . . . Hallberg's taken what seems like an all-American crime thriller and turned it into a literary epic." —**Independent**

"A debut of remarkable promise . . . There is prose in *City on Fire* as transporting as any you're likely to see in a book in the next ten years." —**The Guardian**

"Stunning . . . A weave of multiple storylines that humanize and vividly evoke [New York in the '70s] with effortless authenticity. Like Jonathan Franzen and Michael Chabon, Hallberg is brilliant at communicating the special energy of Manhattan. Unlike them, however, he paints on a much broader canvas. And the emotions run deep . . . *City on Fire* has the scope of a classic Russian novel." —**Pittsburgh Post-Gazette**

"Garth Risk Hallberg has written the kind of debut novel that only comes around once every 20 years or so—one that everyone who's read it roots for . . . An edge-of-your-seat epic, which is as tightly told as it is ambitious." —**Elle**

"There is an extraordinary romantic nostalgia for an imagined New York that colours the air of the novel, and calls to mind Jonathan Lethem's masterful *Fortress of Solitude* and Michael Chabon's *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay* . . . The language is lapidary." —**Observer (UK)**

"Warm and generous . . . Beautifully written, fantastically plotted—suspenseful and moving and full of interesting people and ideas. It's a book written to create communion between reader and writer . . . contemporary and fresh." —**Lydia Kiesling, The Millions**

"A soaring debut . . . Over the course of Hallberg's magisterial epic, distinctions of class, race, geography, and generation give way to an impression of the human condition that is both ambitious and sublime." —**Vanity Fair**

"*City on Fire* weaves a web through 1970s New York City, flashing forward and back, and uptown and downtown, with cinematic flair . . . It's *Clue* meets legendary music club CBGB, but Hallberg elevates his whodunit with poignancy." —**TIME**

"The novel immerse[s] the reader in a city that has yet to evolve from gritty to gentrified . . . a city that is scummy and at breaking point but also alive with possibility." —**Financial Times**

"Engrossing . . . When the city goes dark, [it] is like *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Manhattan edition . . . As in the fiction of Saul Bellow, Hallberg's heroes are theorists of their own universe . . . Every ley line is a life

story, every subplot a window on a New York niche . . . The story itself is dramatic, intermixing a police procedural with a terrorist plot, an addiction plot, an art plot, various adultery plots . . . The result is a narrative that is immense." —**Bookforum**

"Gasp-inducing . . . A novel that word by word reaches out to capture the smallness of life, the minute particularity that stacks up until—woha, baby—you've got a whole universe on your hands." —**The Rumpus**

*"Good news for the American novel: *City on Fire* lives up to the hype. It's a sprawling, deeply lived-in, thoroughly accessible fresco in the tradition of Dickens."* —**Dallas Morning News**

"Like the work of other literary masters (Don DeLillo, David Foster Wallace, and Donna Tartt are just a few of the novelists worth drawing comparisons to) this is a book that will endure." —**Bookpage**

"Exciting, imaginative, and perfectly paced . . . Astounding." —**The Telegraph (UK)**

"A nostalgic, keenly observed book, one that understands how, for all its graffiti-sprayed vastness, for all its teeming, sooty chaos, New York is a lonely city." —**More magazine**

"Absorbing . . . Astounding . . . Hallberg does a masterful job of getting inside the characters' minds . . . The real power of the book is the unfolding web of relationships that curve and bend, revealing new facets and connections that roil through the chapters with unending surprise." —**Jackson Clarion-Ledger (MS)**

*"Immersive . . . Impressively diverse . . . Fascinating . . . As you give yourself over to the spell of *City on Fire*, you'll appreciate that any shorter and less intricately constructed work wouldn't have done justice to the ambition and power of Hallberg's transfixing vision."* —**Minneapolis Star Tribune**

*"Hallberg comes as close to the great New York City novel as any I've read in my lifetime . . . He's so masterful at describing the city, at perfectly dreaming it for us, that it does exactly what great literature can do: stand up as accurate even as it knocks us over with its beauty . . . *City on Fire* is one of those rare big novels that actually succeeds on a micro level; every sentence is a song."* —**Interview magazine**

"Readers will be swept along by the suspenseful tale, whizzing through pages without speed bumps." —**The Economist**

"A great American novel . . . Hallberg's novel is a commingling of F. Scott Fitzgerald, J. D. Salinger, and Tom Wolfe. There is even some salt and pepper from McInerney and Pynchon . . . Excellent." —**Paste magazine**

"Definitely a compelling read." —**Daily Mail**

*"Intoxicating . . . A singular work of art . . . It could easily support another hundred pages. That's right. *City on Fire*—all 900-plus pages of it—is, if anything too short."* —**The Herald (Scotland)**

"Epic, well-written, and highly entertaining . . . Throughout, Hallberg expertly handles the multiple shifts in perspective, vibrantly portraying a specific time and place and creating memorable characters." —**Library Journal (starred)**

"Completely engrossing . . . This magnificent first novel is full to bursting with plot, character, and emotion,

all set within an exquisitely grungy 1970s New York City . . . Graceful in execution, hugely entertaining, and most concerned with the longing for connection, a theme that reaches full realization during the blackout of 1977, this epic tale is both a compelling mystery and a literary tour de force." —Booklist (starred)

"A remarkably assured, multivalent tale . . . an epic panorama of musicians, writers, and power brokers and the surprising ways they connect . . . At times the novel feels like a metafictional tribute to America's finest doorstop manufacturers, circa 1970 to the present: Price (street-wise cops), Wolfe (top-tier wealth), Franzen (busted families), Wallace (the seductions of drugs and pop culture), and DeLillo (the unseen forces behind everything) . . . As his various plotlines braid tighter during the July 1977 blackout, his novel becomes an ambitious showpiece for just how much the novel can contain without busting apart." —Kirkus

Reviews (starred)

About the Author

GARTH RISK HALLBERG lives in New York with his wife and children. This is his first novel.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Gina Keller:

What do you consider book? It is just for students as they are still students or it for all people in the world, exactly what the best subject for that? Only you can be answered for that issue above. Every person has various personality and hobby per other. Don't to be pushed someone or something that they don't need do that. You must know how great and also important the book City on Fire: A novel. All type of book is it possible to see on many methods. You can look for the internet options or other social media.

Pamela Watkins:

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