

## BRIEFLY NOTED

**Bound**, by *Antonya Nelson* (Bloomsbury; \$25). Although the real-life BTK serial killer hovers in the background of Nelson's latest novel, the author is far more preoccupied with the bonds of affection than she is with rope and duct tape. Oliver Desplaines, a handsome Wichita entrepreneur pushing seventy, is thinking about leaving his third wife, Catherine, for his much younger lover. Catherine, oblivious, dutifully visits her furious mother in a nursing home and watches over Oliver's concerns. But then her wild best friend from high school, whom she hasn't seen in decades, dies in a car crash, and the couple learn that Catherine is the guardian of an adolescent daughter, who is missing. As this claim redirects Catherine's life, Nelson illuminates the ugly questions that shadow our intimate relationships. Why do we torture those we love? Why do we court danger? And do we strain against the ties that bind us to break free, or to reassure ourselves that they will hold?

**The Golden Mean**, by *Annabel Lyon* (Knopf; \$24.95). This vivid imagining of the encounter between Aristotle and the young Alexander the Great casts the philosopher as a manic-depressive, veering "from black melancholy to golden joy." At the novel's start, Aristotle is in his early forties, his major treatises still ahead of him. He longs to be in Athens, pursuing a life of the mind; instead, he languishes in the backwater of Macedon, pressed into service as a tutor to Alexander, the thirteen-year-old future conqueror. The boy proves a brilliant but restive student, torn between his teacher's ideals—the notion that the intellect is "the divine seed in man that no other animal shares"—and the demands of his militaristic culture, in which to call a man an animal is praise. Lyon's evocation of the ancient

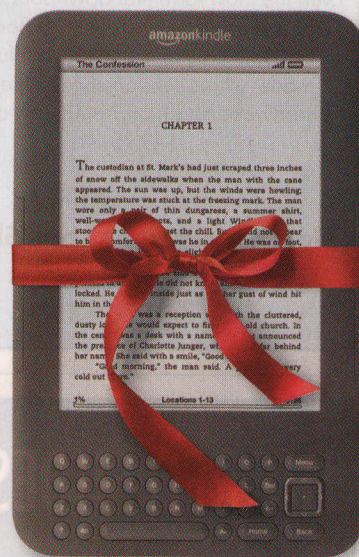
world is earthy and immediate, as when Aristotle finally goes to war: waiting in the medics' tent to yank arrows out of dying soldiers, he hears the first sounds of battle "like a distant ocean."

**Must You Go?**, by *Antonia Fraser* (Nan A. Talese/Doubleday; \$28.95). Fraser calls this delicate and absorbing memoir of her nearly thirty-year marriage to Harold Pinter a "love story," but it is perhaps best read as a love letter to the late playwright. "As usual, triumph and tragedy, or just drama, attends Harold in all he does," she writes in one of the many spellbound diary entries that form the book's structure. Fraser is a dutiful custodian of Pinter's reputation among critics and the public, which at times suffered from, as she cheekily puts it, "what we might euphemistically call his outspokenness." Yet her position as a partisan makes for an intimate biography, giving the reader such scenes as Pinter feverishly reading opening-night reviews, or in conversation with his idol and friend Samuel Beckett. Above all, though, the book is a stirring celebration of what Fraser, reflecting near the end of Pinter's life, observed as a union "to the infinite degree happy beyond all possible expectations."

**And the Show Went On**, by *Alan Riding* (Knopf; \$28.95). The world of the arts in Nazi-occupied Paris is brought to life in this meticulous chronicle of writers, dancers, filmmakers, theatrical producers, and others. Riding persuasively analyzes the themes of Jean Anouilh's "Antigone" from both a resistance and a collaborationist perspective, and provides vivid character sketches and narratives, such as the story of Rose Valland, who took extraordinary risks to save works of art being looted by the Nazis. Writers like Camus, Sartre, and Céline (at his very worst) get plenty of well-deserved space, but so, too, do heroes like Varian Fry, a young American who came to Paris with a list of two hundred cultural figures he wanted to ferry out of France, and who ended up helping two thousand escape.



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