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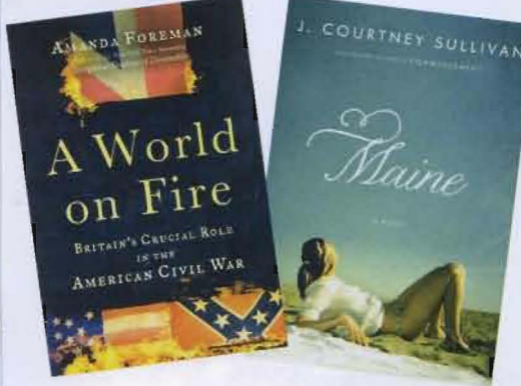
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## BETWEEN THE LINES

Visit our Lit Life blog for weekly book reviews from our summer reading list. Below, our take on guilt-free beach read *Maine* and the brain-boggling historical epic *A World on Fire*.

J. Courtney Sullivan, whose smart-girl brand of chick lit earned her debut, *Commencement*, praise from Gloria Steinem herself, beguiles us again with sophomore novel *Maine* (Knopf), a crackling-smart character study of the Kelleher women, who retreat to their oceanfront Maine compound unearthing 60 years of family secrets, grudges, and regrets. Leading the brood is Alice, the acerbic, boozing matriarch, joined by her troubled worm-farmer daughter, Kathleen; her pregnant—and newly single—granddaughter Maggie; and her repressed daughter-in-law, Ann Marie. As summer comes to an end, their quiescent troubles explode.—*NATASHA CLARK*

It took 12 years for historian Amanda Foreman (whose best-selling biography, *Georgiana: Duchess of Devonshire*, inspired the 2008 Keira Knightley costume drama *The Duchess*) to research and write *A World on Fire* (Random House), her 1,008-page doorstop chronicling Britain's all but forgotten hand in the American Civil War. The painstaking result is what Foreman has called "history in the round," a sprawling, cinematic account (the BBC is already adapting it into a miniseries) that slips effortlessly back and forth across the Atlantic, from battlefield to backroom political barter. With her keen eye for the colorful personal details buried under those musty history books, Foreman confers dazzling—if fleeting—life on each of the book's almost two-hundred-strong cast of politicians, aristocrats, soldiers, and civilians, bringing clarity to the political imbroglio and humanity to the killing fields.—*NOJAN AMINOSHAREI*