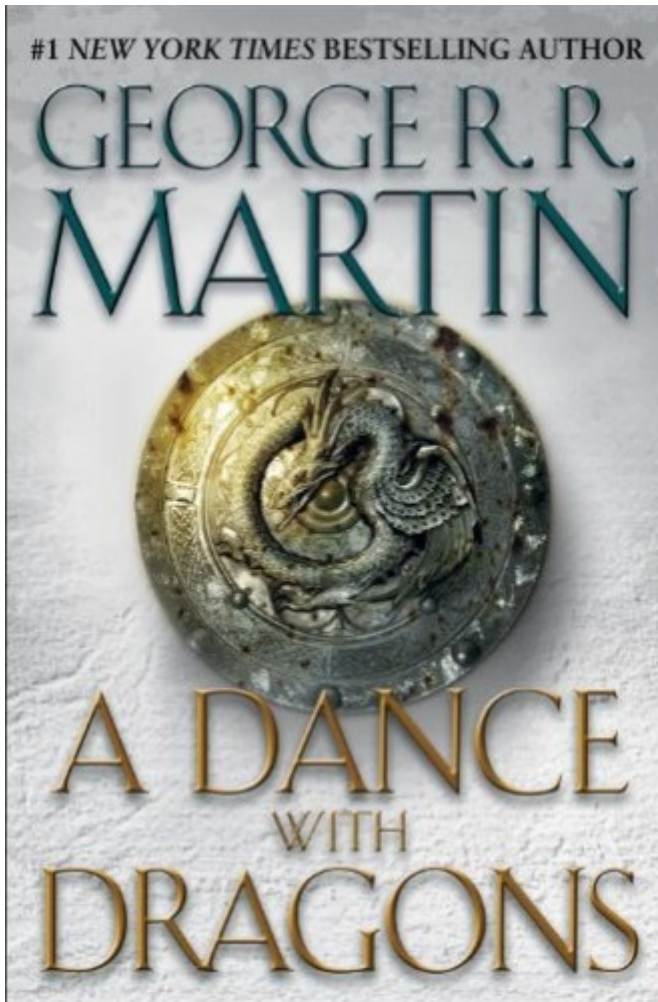


# Summer reading list

By [Janet Potter](#)

June 21, 2011

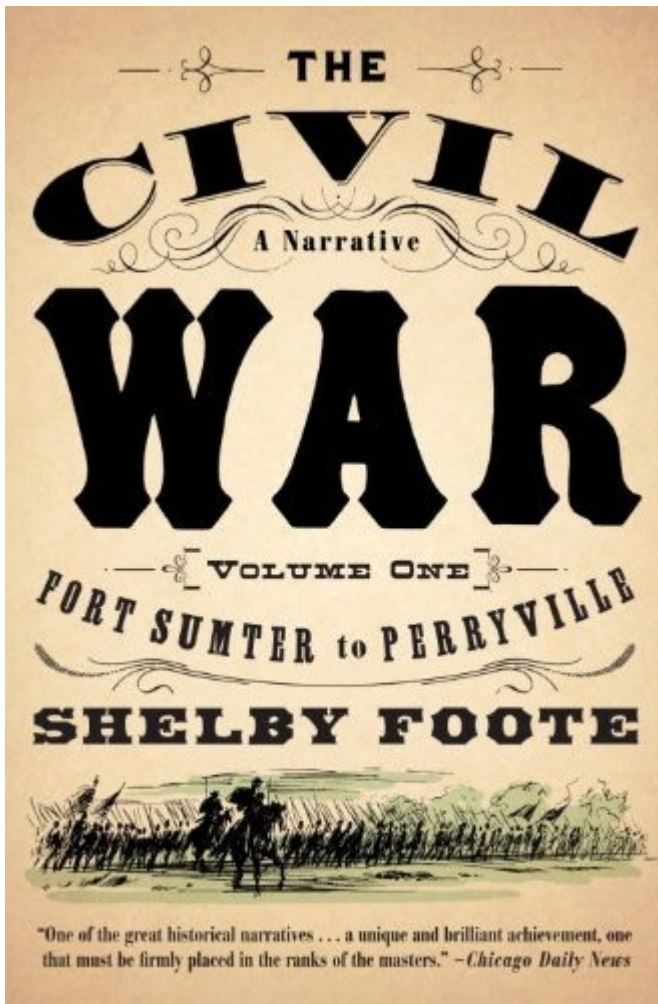
## In Review



### **A Dance With Dragons**

by George R. R. Martin

Bantam



## The Civil War

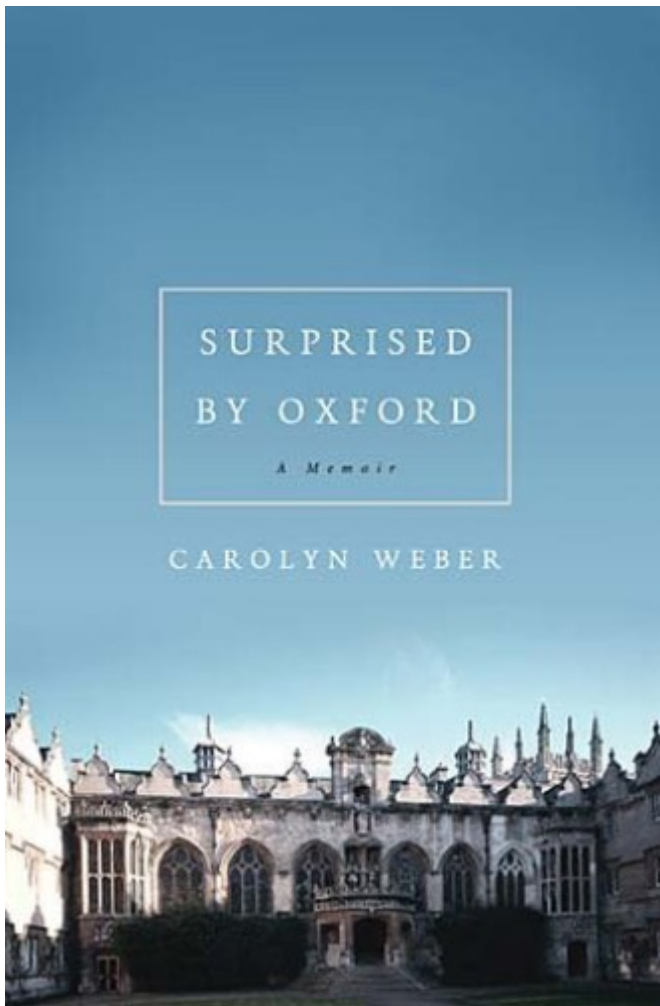
by Shelby Foote

Vintage



## **The Magician King**

by Lev Grossman  
Viking Adult



## **Surprised by Oxford**

by Carolyn Weber  
Thomas Nelson

*What are you hoping to read this summer? We posed this question to the Century staff, a group of people with diverse tastes and interests. Along with commenting on our choices, feel free to post your own in the comments. --Ed.*

I have two major reading projects that I'll be continuing in tandem this summer. They may sound like polar opposites, but I find them to be quite similar.

The first is George R.R. Martin's epic fantasy series, *A Song of Ice and Fire*, which I'm reading feverishly in the

hopes of being caught up when the latest installment, *A Dance With Dragons*, comes out in July. Set amidst the political power struggles of the fictional land of Westeros, the series develops complicated, unpredictable characters better than most fiction I've read.

The second is Shelby Foote's three-volume history of the Civil War. Over the past two years, I've been reading biographies of the American presidents in chronological order, and I've just reached Lincoln. It seemed like a good time to tackle this monumental and universally praised work--and also to take a Civil War road trip in August.

One project is epic fiction; the other is American history. But both are lengthy testaments to the Tolstoyan view of history. I eat that stuff up.

On the shorter-than-2,000-pages side of things, I'm looking forward to *The Magician King*, by Lev Grossman, the second book in his Fillory series. The book critic for *Time* magazine, Grossman set out to write a darker version of Harry Potter or The Chronicles of Narnia. His characters also find out that they're wizards (of a sort), but it makes their lives neither magical nor easy.

*Surprised by Oxford*, by Carolyn Weber, is also on my summer pile. It's the memoir of a feminist agnostic who moves to Oxford to pursue a graduate degree and finds her intellectual and social pursuits leading her toward converting to Christianity.