

# Show me the money: books that make sense of dollars and cents

BY TIFFANY SPEAKS

Not enough cash and too much financial stress? The following books will ease the angst. From banking basics to retiring rich, these selections provide fascinating insight into the world of money.

## Promising prosperity

Procrastinators rejoice! The author of bestsellers such as *The Automatic Millionaire*, *Smart Women Finish Rich* and *Smart Couples Finish Rich* brings good news with his latest book, **Start Late, Finish Rich: A No-Fail Plan for Achieving Financial Freedom at Any Age** (Broadway, \$25, 328 pages, ISBN 0767919467). With feel-good sensibilities, David Bach delivers levelheaded strategies for reaching financial goals. “You don’t prepare for a marathon by trying to run 26 miles the first day of training,” advises the writer. “You build up to it gradually.”

In this book, Bach’s previously coined “Latte Factor” is turbocharged to become the “Double Latte Factor.” The premise for both is cutting back on little things like fancy coffee drinks and premium cable. These extravagancies add up and could be building a nest egg rather than just a waistline.

Bach’s clever approach will make readers feel as if they’re having a one-on-one conversation with a friendly personal financial counselor. His good-news message requires a shift from focusing on past mistakes to planning and preparing for attainable future goals. Each page offers easy-to-follow life-changing tips, including a four-week action plan for getting a raise. Powerful, poignant and pleasing, **Start Late, Finish Rich** can’t be read fast enough. Bach doesn’t claim to have the Midas touch, but this book is pure gold.

## On your mark, get set, go!

Steven B. Smith’s **Money for Life Success Planner: A 12-Week Companion to Achieve Financial Fitness** (Dearborn, \$17.95, 174 pages, ISBN 0793195152) supplies a knockout punch to banking blues. This guide supplements the author’s *Money for Life*, a budgeting how-to book, but is also an excellent independent source, providing worksheets, tips and activities for managing money. With 12 weeks of action plans, Smith gives defined goals and step-by-step tactics. He insists the secret to financial fitness isn’t making more money, but spending less. Based on the envelope-budgeting method in *Money for Life*, Smith’s new book motivates consumers to stay with a plan and carefully monitor their transactions. Preparing for a “cashless” society and staying out of turmoil requires changing habits and behaviors. With a simple approach, online tools and perforated pages, this planner relieves the challenge of getting fiscally fit. Smith, CEO of In2M Corporation, a financial software and services company, lays the groundwork and coaches and coaxes the reader to the finish line.

## Economics with ease

Kenneth M. Morris and Virginia B. Morris explain finance in a clear, easy manner. Their newest editions of **The Wall Street Journal guides** (Fireside, \$15.95, 176

pages) are must-haves for understanding money matters. With clear and colorful illustrations, the guides break down financial jargon and the what’s what of banking. Color-coded sections enable readers to flip to the section that best addresses their current needs.

Whether heading to college and curious about checking accounts or paying for college and trying to understand financial aid, **The WSJ Guide to Understanding Personal Finance** (ISBN 0743266323) speaks to the money-handler in all of us. This fourth edition covers the latest in online banking, new check-cashing policies and estate planning. Confused by various interest rates on savings accounts? The authors smartly use a loaf of bread to explain the differences. Mastering basic economics in a short guide is quite a feat; this guide is the book you might have wished for when struggling through Econ 101 in college.

The latest edition of **The WSJ Guide to Understanding Money & Investing** (ISBN 0743266331), another successful Morris update, delves into the world of finance with clarity and wisdom. This short guide is encyclopedic—covering everything from the introduction of the euro to the role of technology in changing markets—and should be required reading for all individual investors. The bold graphics and simple explanations turn the overwhelming into the accessible. Offering fascinating history lessons, such as the background of the words “salary” and “greenback,” the guide explains in layman’s terms the world of Wall Street. Easy to digest, this third edition is a welcome addition to the libraries of new investors and old pros.

## It’s elementary, my dear . . .

From finance guru Robert Kiyosaki’s best-selling Rich Dad’s Advisors series comes **The ABC’s of Getting Out of Debt** (Warner Business, \$16.95, 240 pages, ISBN 0446694096). Garrett Sutton, a *Business Week* best-selling author and corporate attorney, offers practical advice and explains how debt and credit aren’t all bad news, despite worrisome statistics. In 15 years U.S. consumer credit card debt climbed from \$200 billion in 1990 to a projected \$985 billion this year. With simple direction, Sutton provides a “road map for winning with credit.” His advice for having a written plan and avoiding identity theft are top-notch, and he aptly explains why your credit report is “more important than any school report card.” Using real-life examples, the author tackles the woes and blows of credit.

From battling the debt collectors to reading a credit report and making repairs, Sutton’s book is salve for credit wounds. Tips such as writing the credit bureau short concise handwritten letters are particularly helpful. **The ABC’s of Getting Out of Debt** makes credit and debt management seem, well, almost elementary. ☺

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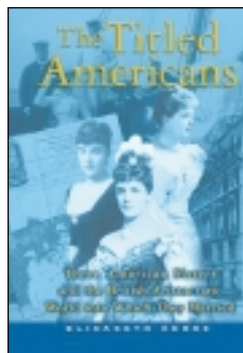
## BIOGRAPHY

### Such devoted sisters

BY ANNE BARTLETT

Winston Churchill was indisputably one of the great political figures of the 20th century. But as a young man just starting out, he had more than a little help from his mom. With the assistance of her male friends, Jennie Jerome Churchill got her boy Winston into a good cavalry regiment, despite a less than stellar academic performance at the British equivalent of West Point. She got him accredited as a war correspondent. She got him his first book contract. He took it from there.

Jennie—smart, loyal, generous—was one of the earliest and most remarkable of a bevy of rich American women who married British aristocrats in the late 19th century, injecting cash and energy into families that often had little of either. Her equally charming sisters, Clara and Leonie, took a similar path. The three of them, their husbands and children are the subject of Elisabeth Kehoe’s first book, *The Titled Americans: Three American Sisters and the English*



### The Titled Americans

By Elisabeth Kehoe

Atlantic Monthly  
\$27.50, 454 pages  
ISBN 0871139243

*Aristocratic World into Which They Married*, which meshes biography with social and political history to create a beguiling chronicle of a long-gone world.

The Jerome girls’ own mother was a social climber, but they insisted on marrying for love—sometimes to their later regret. The aristocrats they chose—Lord Randolph Churchill for Jennie, Moreton Frewen for Clara, Jack Leslie for Leonie—were disappointing husbands, to various degrees. But all three women remained emotionally loyal, even as they found extramarital romance with assorted European royals.

Though in decline, the aristocrats still ran the British Empire. Kehoe capably describes the Jerome clan’s roles in the struggle over Irish Home Rule, the Boer War, the First World War and the Russian Revolution. But she is most effective in bringing us into an exotic social world where the rich could do pretty much anything they wanted, as long as they did it behind closed doors and kept their mouths shut. The Jeromes didn’t escape the tragedies that afflict all families. But along the way, they had more fun than most—and accomplished much still worth knowing about. Winston may have been named Churchill, but he was a Jerome at heart. ☺

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