

Best of 2020:

Staff Favourites from the Past Year



This is a poignant comedy about a crime that never took place, a would-be bank robber who disappears into thin air, and eight extremely anxious strangers who find they have more in common than they ever imagined.

Viewing an apartment normally doesn't turn into a life-or-death situation, but this particular open house becomes just that when a failed bank robber bursts in and takes everyone in the apartment hostage. As the pressure mounts, the eight strangers slowly begin opening up to one another and reveal long-hidden truths.

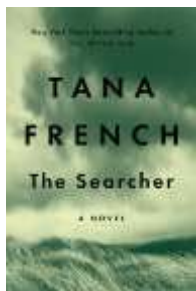
As police surround the premises and television channels broadcast the hostage situation live, the tension mounts and even deeper secrets are slowly revealed. Before long, the robber must decide which is the more terrifying prospect: going out to face the police, or staying in the apartment with this group of impossible people.



Getting snowed in at a beautiful, rustic mountain chalet doesn't sound like the worst problem in the world, especially when there's a breathtaking vista, a cozy fire, and company to keep you warm. But what happens when that company is eight of your coworkers...and you can't trust any of them?

When an off-site company retreat meant to promote mindfulness and collaboration goes utterly

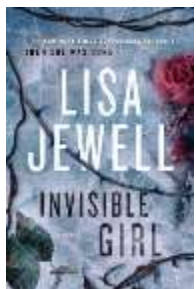
wrong when an avalanche hits, the corporate food chain becomes irrelevant and survival trumps togetherness. Come Monday morning, how many members short will the team be?



Retired detective Cal Hooper moves to a remote village in rural Ireland. His plans are to fix up the dilapidated cottage he's bought, to walk the mountains, to put his old police instincts to bed forever.

Then a local boy appeals to him for help. His brother is missing, and no one in the village, least of all the police, seems to care. And once again, Cal feels that restless itch.

Something is wrong in this community, and he must find out what, even if it brings trouble to his door.

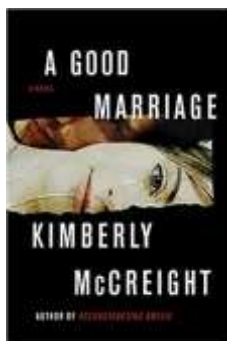


Owen Pick's life is falling apart.

In his thirties, a virgin, and living in his aunt's spare bedroom, he has just been suspended from his job as a geography teacher after accusations of sexual misconduct, which he strongly denies. Searching for professional advice online, he is inadvertently sucked into the dark world of incel—involuntary celibate—forums, where he meets the charismatic, mysterious, and sinister Bryn.

Across the street from Owen lives the Fours family, headed by mom Cate, a physiotherapist, and dad Roan, a child psychologist. But the Fours family have a bad feeling about their neighbor Owen. He's a bit creepy and their teenaged daughter swears he followed her home from the train station one night.

Meanwhile, young Saffyre Maddox spent three years as a patient of Roan Fours. Feeling abandoned when their therapy ends, she searches for other ways to maintain her connection with him, following him in the shadows and learning more than she wanted to know about Roan and his family. Then, on Valentine's night, Saffyre Maddox disappears—and the last person to see her alive is Owen Pick.



Lizzie Kitsakis is working late when she gets the call. Grueling hours are standard at elite law firms like Young & Crane, but they'd be easier to swallow if Lizzie was there voluntarily. Until recently, she'd been a happily underpaid federal prosecutor. That job and her brilliant, devoted husband Sam—she had everything she'd ever wanted. And then, suddenly, it all fell apart.

No. That's a lie. It wasn't sudden, was it? Long ago the cracks in Lizzie's marriage had started to show. She was just good at averting her eyes.

The last thing Lizzie needs right now is a call from an inmate at Rikers asking for help—even if Zach Grayson is an old friend. But Zach is desperate: his wife, Amanda, has been found dead at the bottom of the stairs in their Brooklyn brownstone. And Zach's the primary suspect.

As Lizzie is drawn into the dark heart of idyllic Park Slope, she learns that Zach and Amanda weren't what they seemed—and that their friends, a close-knit group of fellow parents at the exclusive Grace Hall private school, might be protecting troubling secrets of their own. In the end, she's left wondering not only whether her own marriage can be saved, but what it means to have a good marriage in the first place.



Six years after the fight that ended their friendship, Daphne Berg is shocked when Drue Cavanaugh walks back into her life, looking as lovely and successful as ever, with a massive favor to ask. Daphne hasn't spoken one word to Drue in all this time—she doesn't even hate-follow her ex-best friend on social media—so when Drue asks if she will be her maid-of-honor at the society wedding of the summer, Daphne is rightfully speechless.

Drue was always the one who had everything—except the ability to hold onto friends. Meanwhile, Daphne's no longer the same self-effacing sidekick she was back in high school. She's built a life that she loves, including a growing career as a plus-size Instagram influencer. Letting glamorous, seductive Drue back into her life is risky, but it comes with an invitation to spend a weekend in a waterfront Cape Cod mansion. When Drue begs and pleads and dangles the prospect of cute single guys, Daphne finds herself powerless as ever to resist her friend's siren song.



Kim Ji-young is the most common name for Korean women born in the 1980s.

Kim Ji-young is representative of her generation:

At home, she is an unfavoured sister to her princeling little brother.

In primary school, she is a girl who has to line up behind the boys at lunchtime.

In high school, she is a daughter whose father blames her for being harassed late at night.

In university, she is a good student who doesn't get put forward for internships by her professor.

In the office, she is an exemplary employee who is overlooked for promotion by her manager.

At home, she is a wife who has given up her career to take care of her husband and her baby.

Kim Ji-young is depressed.

Kim Ji-young has started acting out.

Kim Ji-young is her own woman.

Kim Ji-young is insane.

Kim Ji-young is sent by her husband to a psychiatrist.

This is his clinical assessment of the everywoman in contemporary Korea.

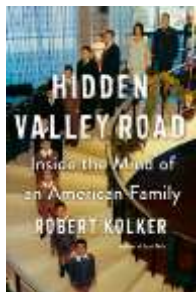


Eudora Honeysett is done with this noisy, moronic world—all of it. She has witnessed the indignities and suffering of old age and has lived a full life. At eighty-five, she isn't going to leave things to chance. Her end will be on her terms. With one call to a clinic in Switzerland, a plan is set in motion.

Then she meets ten-year-old Rose Trewidney, a whirling, pint-sized rainbow of color and sparkling cheer. All Eudora wants is to be left alone to set her affairs in order. Instead, she finds herself embarking on a series of adventures with the irrepressible Rose and their affable neighbor, the recently widowed Stanley—afternoon tea, shopping sprees, trips to the beach, birthday celebrations, pizza parties.

While the trio of unlikely BFFs grow closer and anxiously await the arrival of Rose's new baby sister, Eudora is reminded of her own childhood—of losing her father during World War II and the devastating impact it had on her entire family. In reflecting on her past, Eudora realizes she must come to terms with what lies ahead.

But now that her joy for life has been rekindled, how can she possibly say goodbye?



Don and Mimi Galvin seemed to be living the American dream. After World War II, Don's work with the Air Force brought them to Colorado, where their twelve children perfectly spanned the baby boom: the oldest born in 1945, the youngest in 1965. In those years, there was an established script for a family like the Galvins—ambition, hard work, upward mobility, domestic harmony—and they worked hard to play their parts. But behind the scenes was a different story: psychological breakdown, sudden shocking violence, hidden abuse. By the mid-1970s, six of the ten Galvin boys, one after another, were diagnosed as schizophrenic. How could all this happen to one family?

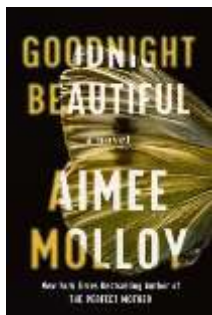
What took place inside the house on Hidden Valley Road was so extraordinary that the Galvins became one of the first families to be studied by the National Institute of Mental Health. Their story offers a shadow history of the science of schizophrenia, from the era of institutionalization, lobotomy, and the schizophrenogenic mother to the search for genetic markers for the disease, always amid profound disagreements about the nature of the illness itself. And unbeknownst to the Galvins, samples of their DNA informed decades of genetic research that continues today, offering paths to treatment, prediction, and even eradication of the disease for future generations.



Dan Peres wasn't born to be a media insider. As an awkward, magic-obsessed adolescent, nothing was further from his reality than the catwalks of Paris or the hallways of glossy magazine publishers. A gifted writer and shrewd cultural observer, Peres eventually took the leap—even when it meant he had to fake a sense of belonging in a new world of famed fashion designers, celebrities, and some of media's biggest names. But he had a secret: opiates.

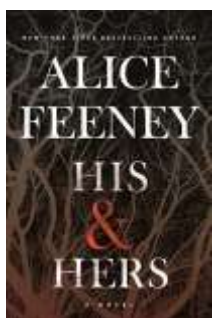
Peres's career as an editor at *W* magazine and *Details* is well known, but little is known about his private life as a high-functioning drug addict. In *As Needed for Pain*, Peres lays bare for the first time the extent of his drug use—at one point a 60-pill-a-day habit.

By turns humorous and gripping, Peres's story is a cautionary coming-of-age tale filled with unforgettable characters and breathtaking brushes with disaster. But the heart of the book is his journey from outsider to insecure insider, what it took to get him there, and how he found his way back from a killing addiction.



Newlyweds Sam Statler and Annie Potter are head over heels, and excited to say good-bye to New York and start a life together in Sam's sleepy hometown in upstate New York. Or, it turns out, a life where Annie spends most of her time alone while Sam, her therapist husband, works long hours in his downstairs office, tending to the egos of his (mostly female) clientele. Little does Sam know that through a vent in his ceiling, every word of his sessions can be heard from the room upstairs. The pharmacist's wife, contemplating a divorce. The well-known painter whose boyfriend doesn't satisfy her in bed. Who could resist listening? Everything is fine until the French girl in the green mini Cooper shows up, and Sam decides to go to work and not come home, throwing a wrench into Sam and Annie's happily ever after.

Showcasing Molloy's deft ability to subvert norms and culminating in the kind of stunning twist that is becoming her trademark, *Goodnight Beautiful* is a thrilling tale of domestic suspense that not only questions assumptions but defies expectations.



Anna Andrews finally has what she wants. Almost. She's worked hard to become the main TV presenter of the BBC's lunchtime news, putting work before friends, family, and her now ex-husband. So, when someone threatens to take her dream job away, she'll do almost anything to keep it.

When asked to cover a murder in Blackdown—the sleepy countryside village where she grew up—Anna is reluctant to go. But when the victim turns out to be one of her childhood friends, she can't leave. It soon becomes clear that Anna isn't just covering the story, she's at the heart of it.

DCI Jack Harper left London for a reason, but never thought he'd end up working in a place like Blackdown. When the body of a young woman is discovered, Jack decides not to tell anyone that he knew the victim, until he begins to realise he is a suspect in his own murder investigation.



A bracing, provocative, and perspective-shifting book from one of Canada's most celebrated and uncompromising writers, Desmond Cole. *The Skin We're In* will spark a national conversation, influence policy, and inspire activists.

In his 2015 cover story for *Toronto Life* magazine, Desmond Cole exposed the racist actions of the Toronto police force, detailing the dozens of times he had been stopped and interrogated under the controversial practice of carding. The story quickly came to national prominence, shaking the country to its core and catapulting its author into the public sphere. Cole used his newfound profile to draw insistent, unyielding attention to the injustices faced by Black Canadians on a daily basis.

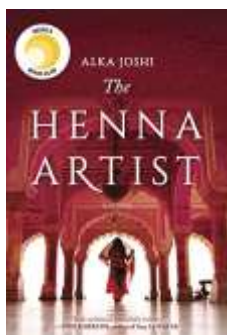
Both Cole's activism and journalism find vibrant expression in his first book, *The Skin We're In*. Puncturing the bubble of Canadian smugness and naive assumptions of a post-racial nation, Cole chronicles just one year—2017—in the struggle against racism in this country. It was a year that saw calls for tighter borders when Black refugees braved frigid temperatures to cross into Manitoba from the States, Indigenous land and water protectors resisting the celebration of Canada's 150th birthday, police across the country rallying around an officer accused of murder, and more.



Alice Wright marries handsome American Bennett Van Cleve hoping to escape her stifling life in England. But small-town Kentucky quickly proves equally claustrophobic, especially living alongside her overbearing father-in-law. So when a call goes out for a team of women to deliver books as part of Eleanor Roosevelt's new traveling library, Alice signs on enthusiastically.

The leader, and soon Alice's greatest ally, is Margery, a smart-talking, self-sufficient woman who's never asked a man's permission for anything. They will be joined by three other singular women who become known as the Packhorse Librarians of Kentucky.

What happens to them—and to the men they love—becomes an unforgettable drama of loyalty, justice, humanity and passion. These heroic women refuse to be cowed by men or by convention. And though they face all kinds of dangers in a landscape that is at times breathtakingly beautiful, at others brutal, they're committed to their job: bringing books to people who have never had any, arming them with facts that will change their lives.



Escaping from an abusive marriage, seventeen-year-old Lakshmi makes her way alone to the vibrant 1950s pink city of Jaipur. There she becomes the most highly requested henna artist—and confidante—to the wealthy women of the upper class. But trusted with the secrets of the wealthy, she can never reveal her own...

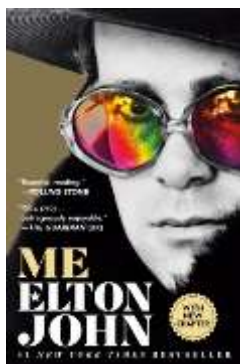
Known for her original designs and sage advice, Lakshmi must tread carefully to avoid the jealous gossips who could ruin her reputation and her livelihood. As she pursues her dream of an independent life, she is startled one day when she is confronted by her husband, who has tracked her down these many years later with a high-spirited young girl in tow—a sister Lakshmi never knew she had. Suddenly the caution that she has carefully cultivated as protection is threatened. Still she perseveres, applying her talents and lifting up those that surround her as she does.



The remote Antarctic island of South Georgia is about to send off its last boat of the summer – which signifies safety to resident glaciologist Felicity Lloyd.

Felicity lives in fear – fear that her ex-husband Freddie will find her, even out here. She took a job on this isolated island to hide from him, but now that he's out of prison, having served a term for murder, she knows he won't give up until he finds her.

But a doctor delving into the background of Felicity and Freddie's relationship, back in Cambridge, learns that Felicity has been on the edge for a long time. Heading to South Georgia himself to try and get to her first is the only way he can think of to help her.



Elton John is the most enduringly successful singer-songwriter of all time. His life is extraordinary, packed with incredible highs and lows, from a troubled childhood to chart-topping superstardom, from cocaine addiction to friendships with John Lennon, George Michael and Princess Diana, from outrageous excess to finding happiness as a husband and father. Now, in his own words and with his usual honesty, he shares his story—every hilarious, heartbreaking moment.



On an island off the coast of Ireland, guests gather to celebrate two people joining their lives together as one. The groom: handsome and charming, a rising television star. The bride:

smart and ambitious, a magazine publisher. It's a wedding for a magazine, or for a celebrity: the designer dress, the remote location, the luxe party favors, the boutique whiskey. The cell phone service may be spotty and the waves may be rough, but every detail has been expertly planned and will be expertly executed.

But perfection is for plans, and people are all too human. As the champagne is popped and the festivities begin, resentments and petty jealousies begin to mingle with the reminiscences and well wishes. The groomsmen begin the drinking game from their school days. The bridesmaid not-so-accidentally ruins her dress. The bride's oldest (male) friend gives an uncomfortably caring toast.

And then someone turns up dead. Who didn't wish the happy couple well? And perhaps more important, why?

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