

Best Fiction of 2019

A Selection of the Best Fiction Books of 2019 Chosen by *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Library Journal*, *Publisher's Weekly*, *Time*, *AV Club*, *New Yorker*, and Amazon Editors

All titles listed can be obtained as an e-book or e-audiobook through the West Haven Public Library.

* An asterisk indicates that the title was chosen by more than one publication.

Descriptions adapted from amazon.com.

***All This Could Be Yours* by Jami Attenberg**

A novel of family secrets: the drama of *Big Little Lies* set in a New Orleans summer. Explores being caught in the web of a toxic man who abused his power and how those webs can tangle a family for generations.

***Ask Again, Yes* by Mary Beth Keane**

A novel about two neighboring families in a suburban town, the friendship between their children, a tragedy that reverberates over four decades, the daily intimacies of marriage, and the power of forgiveness.

*** *Black Leopard, Red Wolf* by Marlon James**

In the first book in the Dark Star trilogy, myth, fantasy, and history combine as James explores what happens when a mercenary is hired to find a missing child.

***City of Girls* by Elizabeth Gilbert**

A love story set in the NYC theater world during the 1940s. An older woman looks back on her youth with both pleasure and regret; explores themes of female sexuality and promiscuity, as well as the idiosyncrasies of true love.

***Daisy Jones & The Six* by Taylor Jenkins Reid**

A gripping novel about the whirlwind rise of a 1970s rock group and their beautiful lead singer, revealing the mystery behind their breakup.

*** *Disappearing Earth* by Julia Phillips**

On the shoreline at the northeastern edge of Russia, two sisters go missing, and the police investigation turns up nothing. The disappearance reverberates across a tightly woven community.

*** *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* by Olga Tokarczuk**

Winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature

A thriller as fairy tale, a provocative exploration of the murky border between sanity and madness, justice and tradition, autonomy and fate. Whom do we deem sane? Who is worthy of a voice?

*** *Ducks, Newburyport* by Lucy Ellmann**

An Ohio housewife contemplates her four kids, husband, cats and chickens, America's ignoble past, and her own regrets.

***The Dutch House* by Ann Patchett**

A richly moving story that explores the indelible bond between two siblings, the house of their childhood, and a past that will not let them go.

*** *Exhalation* by Ted Chiang**

Nine provocative and poignant stories that tackle some of humanity's oldest questions along with new quandaries.

*** *Girl, Woman, Other* by Bernardine Evaristo**

Co-winner of the 2019 Booker Prize

The intersections of identity and a moving, hopeful story of an interconnected group of Black British women. A vivid portrait of contemporary Britain and the legacy of colonial history.

***Grand Union: Stories* by Zadie Smith**

Moving across genres, from the historic to the current to the dystopian, a collection about time and place, identity and rebirth, and the legacies that haunt our present and our future.

***Inland* by Téa Obreht**

In the lawless, drought-ridden lands of the Arizona Territory in 1893, two extraordinary lives unfold: Nora, an unflinching frontierswoman awaiting the return of the men in her life, and Lurie, a former outlaw and a man haunted by ghosts.

*** *Lost Children Archive* by Valeria Luiselli**

A family's road trip across America collides with an immigration crisis at the southwestern border—an indelible journey told with breathtaking imagery, spare lyricism, and profound humanity.

*** *Mostly Dead Things* by Kristen Arnett**

One morning, Jessa walks into the family taxidermy shop to find that her father has committed suicide. Shocked and grieving, she steps up to manage the failing business while the rest of the family crumbles.

*** *Mrs. Everything* by Jennifer Weiner**

Two sisters' lives from the 1950s to the present as they struggle to find their places—and be true to themselves—in a rapidly evolving world. Do we change or does the world change us?

*** *The Need* by Helen Phillips**

Home alone with her two young children, Molly hears footsteps in the living room. Suddenly, she finds herself face-to-face with an intruder who knows far too much about her and her family.

*** *The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead**

The story of two boys sentenced to a hellish reform school in Jim Crow-era Florida.

*** *Night Boat to Tangier* by Kevin Barry**

In the dark waiting room of a Spanish ferry terminal, two aging Irish criminals, longtime partners in drug smuggling, sit and reminisce as they wait for the possible arrival of the estranged daughter of one.

***The Night Tiger* by Yangsze Choo**

Quick-witted, ambitious Ji Lin is stuck as an apprentice dressmaker, moonlighting as a dancehall girl to help pay off her mother's Mahjong debts. When a dance partner leaves behind a gruesome souvenir, she is plunged into a dark adventure.

***Normal People* by Sally Rooney**

Connell and Marianne grew up in the same small town, but the similarities end there. At school, Connell is popular, while Marianne is a loner. But when the two strike up a conversation—awkward but electrifying—something life-changing begins.

***Nothing to See Here* by Kevin Wilson**

A woman finds meaning in her life when she begins caring for twins with a remarkable ability: they spontaneously combust when they get agitated, flames leaping from their skin in a startling but beautiful way.

*** *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* by Ocean Vuong**

A letter from a son to a mother who cannot read unearths a family's history and serves as a doorway into parts of his life his mother has never known, all leading to an unforgettable revelation.

***Quichotte* by Salman Rushdie**

Inspired by Don Quixote, Sam DuChamp, a mediocre spy thriller writer, creates Quichotte, a courtly, addled salesman who falls in impossible love with a TV star. With his imaginary son, he sets off across America to prove worthy of her hand. Meanwhile, his creator has equally urgent challenges of his own.

***Red at the Bone* by Jacqueline Woodson**

An unexpected teenage pregnancy pulls together two families from different social classes, and exposes the private hopes, disappointments, and longings that can bind us or divide us from each other.

***The Shadow King* by Maaza Mengiste**

Set during Mussolini's 1935 invasion of Ethiopia, the novel takes us back to the first real conflict of World War II, casting light on the women soldiers who were left out of the historical record.

***The Starless Sea* by Erin Morgenstern**

A timeless love story set in a secret underground world—a place of pirates, painters, lovers, liars, and ships that sail upon a starless sea.

*** *The Topeka School* by Ben Lerner**

A tender, expansive family drama set in the Midwest at the turn of the century: a tale of adolescence, transgression, and the conditions that have given rise to the trolls and tyrants of the New Right.

*** *Trust Exercise* by Susan Choi**

Winner of the National Book Award for Fiction

In a suburb in the early 1980s, two students at a highly competitive performing arts high school fall headlong into love, and their passion does not go unnoticed. The outside world of family life and economic status, of academic pressure and of their future adult lives, fails to penetrate this school's walls—until it does, in a spiral of events.

*** *The Water Dancer* by Ta-Nehisi Coates**

Young Hiram Walker was born into bondage. When his mother was sold away, Hiram was robbed of all memory of her, but was gifted with a mysterious power. Years later, when he almost drowns in a river, that same power saves his life. This brush with death births an urgency in Hiram and a daring scheme: to escape from the only home he's ever known.

***A Woman Is No Man* by Etaf Rum**

The story of three generations of Palestinian-American women struggling to express their individual desires within the confines of their Arab culture in the wake of shocking intimate violence in their community—a story of culture and honor, secrets and betrayals, love and violence.

*** *Women Talking* by Miriam Toews**

One evening, eight Mennonite women climb into a hayloft to conduct a secret meeting. For the past two years, these women and more than 100 others have been violated in the night by demons punishing them for their sins. They have learned they were drugged and attacked by men from their own community, and they are determined to protect themselves and their daughters from future harm.

***The World That We Knew* by Alice Hoffman**

Set in Berlin in 1941, during humanity's darkest hour, three unforgettable young women must act with courage and love to survive.