

## Best of the Best

### Fiction 2015

**Alcott, Kate** **A Touch of Stardust** Julie Crawford, aspiring screenwriter, lands a job working on publicity for **Gone With the Wind**, loses it, and becomes assistant to Carole Lombard.

**Allende, Isabel** **The Japanese Lover** Alma Belasco is nearing the end of her life and leaves her mansion to move to Lark House, a quirky progressive care facility. Although her initial need for care is minimal, she soon hires Irina, an immigrant, to assist her. Irina and Alma's son, intrigued by mysterious letters begin to investigate Alma's past and her liaison with Ichi, a Japanese gardener.

**Atkinson, Kate** **A God in Ruins** A companion book to **Life After Life**, the life of Teddy Todd through most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Attenberg, Jamie** **Saint Mazie** Mazie Phillips is the owner of the famed Manhattan Venice movie theater who finds her calling helping the homeless during the Great Depression. Tracing her life from a wild childhood in the city, the book tells her story through interviews, and diary postings compiled by a fictional documentarian.

**Barrows, Annie** **The Truth According to Us** When her father, a senator, cuts off her allowance and forces her to take a WPA job, socialite Laila Beck finds herself in Macedonia, West Virginia, living in a room in the Romeyn household, directed to interview the 'first families' for a history of the small town. The Romeyns were one of those families but after a series of scandals and a mysterious deadly fire have fallen in status. Laila befriends Jottie Romeyn and is intrigued by Felix, her brother and father to Willa and Bird, girls being raised by Lottie. Willa is less thrilled with Laila and decides to investigate some of the mysteries surrounding her family.

**Boyle, TC** **The Harder They Come** On vacation in Costa Rica, Sten Stensen kills a gunman who tries to rob his tour group at gunpoint. Celebrated as a hero on his return to California, Sten becomes involved with a citizens' group concerned with possible drug cartel activity in the Northern California hills. His son Adam, is spiraling out of control; he is obsessed with 19<sup>th</sup> century mountain man John Colter, has created a hidden camp in the forest and grows his own opium poppies. He has also become involved with Sara, a right wing sovereign citizen. When a member of the citizen's group is shot by Adam, he becomes the subject of a huge manhunt.

**Brooks, Geraldine** **The Secret Chord** The life of a very human King David as told by his prophet Nathan.

**Carter MJ** **The Strangled Vine** William Avery is a junior officer in the East India Company. He is ordered to join the enigmatic Jeremiah Blake in a search for Xavier Mountstuart, India's most famous author who has disappeared.

**Egan, Elizabeth** **A Window Opens** Passed over for a promotion to partner in his NY law firm, Alice Pearse's husband decides to open his own practice in their New Jersey town. Alice, concerned about the family income, needs to find a full time job, leaving behind her part time position as a book editor

for a women's magazine. She is flattered to be approached by representatives of Scroll, 'the future of reading', for a job working their trendy start up of ebook lounges.

**Evans, Lissa Crooked Heart** Ten year old Noel Bostock evacuated from London during the Blitz, is taken in by Viola Sedge, who plans to use Noel, who limps, in her scam to solicit money from the unsuspecting public. Noel, unconventionally raised by a former suffragette, however, has his own scheme in mind and forms an unlikely partnership with Viola.

**Flournoy, Angela The Turner House** The Turners bought the house on Yarrow Street in Detroit to raise their thirteen children after reuniting and leaving their southern home. Now, matriarch Viola is dying, living with her oldest son and the children must decide how to deal with the house, still mortgaged but worth far less in its marginal neighborhood.

**Franklin, Ariana and Norman, Samantha The Siege Winter** During the 12<sup>th</sup> century English Civil war, all of the country lies in anarchy. A victim of a deranged monk, Em has been left near dead in a burned out church. She is rescued by Gwil, a mercenary archer, who disguises her as a boy (renamed Penda) and trains her as an archer. The two find themselves fighting for Empress Matilda at Kenilworth, where young Maud rules.

**Galbraith, Robert Career of Evil** Delivery of a severed woman's leg at Cormoran Strike's detective agency leads him to think of several old enemies who may have sent the limb as a threat. But while Cormoran tries to shield assistant Robin from the dangers of the investigation, Robin is determined to prove her abilities and come to grips with her own past.

**Grafton, Sue X** Kinsey Millhone is taken in by a wealthy woman who plans to relieve her ex-husband of a valuable painting while also helping out a friend settle business affairs of her late detective husband, Pete Wolinsky. Kinsey has long questioned Pete's honesty but her discovery of cryptic materials leads her to a possible serial killer.

**Groff, Lauren Fates and Furies** A portrait of a marriage told in two parts, the first half focuses on Lotto Satterwhite, the second his wife Mathilde.

**Hannah, Kristin The Nightingale** Sisters Viane and Isabelle face the horrors of the Nazi occupation of France, each fighting for their country and their own survival in different ways.

**Hooper, Emma Etta and Otto and Russell and James** Eighty-three year old Etta has never seen the ocean so after leaving her husband Otto a note, she gathers a few supplies and sets off on a walk from Saskatchewan to the Atlantic coast. Her journey prompts memories of her life and relationships and brings Otto and Russell to journeys of their own.

**Mallon, Thomas Finale; A Novel of the Reagan Years** Told through voices real and fictional, Mallon examines the political and social atmosphere of the Reagan administration prior to the Iran Contra scandal, bringing to light the personalities of the people around the president who remains at the end an enigma.

**Moyes, Jojo** **After You** What happened to **Me Before You**'s Louisa Clark after the Will's suicide.

**Penny, Louise** **The Nature of the Beast** Armand Gamache has retired to Three Pines, recovering from his past as Quebec's chief of homicide, only to have the peaceful village shattered by the death of a boy, Laurent. Laurent had been telling tales of a huge gun hidden in the surrounding forest. Brushed off as exaggeration by the villagers, his death leads investigators to find that he was telling the truth.

**Robinson, Marilynn** **Lila** Taking shelter in a church in Gilead, Lila meets her future husband, Rev. John Ames. As she ponders her future, she recounts her troubled past.

**Russell, Mary Doria** **Epitaph** Continuing the story begun in **Doc**, the book chronicles the politics and tensions leading to the shootout at the OK Corral its aftermath for survivor Wyatt Earp, and the creation of his legendary image..

**Stone, Michele Young** **Above Us Only Sky** Prudence Eleanor Vilkas was raised by a single mother but at age 15 (a troubled time in her life) meets her paternal grandparents. Her grandparents introduce her to her Lithuanian heritage and the family's tragic history. Born with wings surgically removed as an infant, Prudence was still haunted by their loss. She learns that she was not the only family member born with wings and discovers some of their stories especially during a trip to Lithuania after the fall of the Berlin wall.

**Stewart, Amy** **Girl Waits With Gun** Constance Kopp lives a quiet farm life with her sisters. Taking a trip into town, the family buggy is hit by a car driven by a wealthy and powerful silk factory owner. Attempting to collect damages from him, makes the family a target of threats and violence, leading Constance to join the local sheriff to bring down the villain.

**Stradal, J. Ryan** **Kitchens of the Great Midwest** Lars Thorvall's wife falls in love with wine and a sommelier, leaving him with their infant daughter Eva. Lars is determined to pass on his love of food to his daughter but dies early and she is raised by an aunt and uncle. She eventually uses her knowledge of food to become becomes a hot young chef holding popup dinners at different locales for a select and wealthy clientele.

**Weir, Andy** **The Martian** Left for dead when the rest of the Mars landing crew is forced to leave the planet, Mark Watney is determined to survive and return to earth.