

## BEST OF THE BEST

### Fiction 2017

#### **In the Midst of Winter**, Isabel Allende

After rear-ending a car driven by Guatemalan (illegal) immigrant Evelyn Ortega, scholar Richard Bowmaster and his tenant, Professor Lucia Maraz are drawn into a series of events when the desparate nanny shows up at his home needing advice and help with a suspected murder.

#### **Beartown**, Frederic Backman

The tiny community of Beartown is pinning its future hopes on a successful junior ice hockey team, since developing their hockey status is the key to a more prosperous future. But an incident at an teen after party celebrating a semi-final win, rocks and divides the town, and leaves the daughter of the coach traumatized.

#### **New Boy**, Tracy Chevalier

11 year old Osei, a diplomat's son, begins the school year at yet another school, the 5<sup>th</sup> in 5 years. Befriended by popular Dee, it looks like he may be able to fit in but jealous Ian is determined to destroy their budding friendship in this retelling of **Othello**.

#### **Manhattan Beach**, Jennifer Egan

Anna Kerrigan takes a job at the Brooklyn Navy Yard where because of WWII, more job opportunities are available to women, but her dream is to become a Navy diver, still a male only field. In accomplishing her goal, she also hopes to uncover the truth about her father's disappearance.

#### **A Column of Fire**, Ken Follett

Ned Willard, working for his family's import business in 1558, returns to Kingsbridge hoping to marry his long-time sweetheart, Margery Fitzgerald. But her family forces her to marry their choice of husband, and after business setbacks, Ned goes to work for Princess Elizabeth putting him in the middle of the religious conflicts that dominate the era.

#### **Love and Other Consolation Prizes**, Jamie Ford

Ernest Young, a 12 year old half-Chinese orphan, finds himself the prize in a raffle at the 1909 Seattle World's Fair; the prize won by the madam of a high class brothel. But the brothel becomes a home for Ernest and he forms the only family he has ever known.

#### **Grief Cottage**, Gail Godwin

After the death of his mother, 11 year old Marcus is sent to live with his only relative, an aunt he has never met. Living on a small South Carolina island, Aunt Charlotte has made a career of painting, particularly scenes of an abandoned cottage where a boy and his family disappeared after a hurricane. As Marcus explores the island, he encounters a ghostly boy of Grief Cottage.

#### **Y is for Yesterday**, Sue Grafton

When Kinsey Milhone is hired by the parents of a recently released convict who received a blackmail note claiming to have a long missing tape of an assault of a teenage girl,, she investigates both the extortion and the original crime committed ten years earlier.

**The Dry**, Jane Harper

Aaron Falks returns to the town he and his father fled years before to the funeral of his best friend, Luke, summoned by a note from Luke's family. Aaron was accused of murder 20 years before and Luke was his alibi. But with Luke's death, it is clear that someone knows that alibi was not the truth.

**Celine**, Peter Heller

Celine is a successful private investigator who specializes in missing persons cases, succeeding often when others failed. She agrees to take on the case of a young woman who is looking for her father, a famous photographer who went missing in a wilderness area. She and her partner travel to Yellowstone to investigate, but find themselves followed by others interested in the disappearance.

**The Rules of Magic**, Alice Hoffman

Cursed since 1620, Susanna Owens wants to protect her children show signs of magical powers, and sets down rules for them, hoping to save them from those powers. When the children visit their Aunt Isabelle in Massachusetts, they learn family secrets and begin to understand their own identities.

**Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine**, Gail Honeyman

Eleanor struggles with social behavior though she manages to hold a job. Weekends find her with frozen pizza and vodka, and phone calls from her mother. Then she meets Raymond, the company IT guy whose intervention in Eleanor's life leads her to develop friendships and begin to heal her life.

**Magpie Murders**, Anthony Horowitz

Editor Susan Ryeland works with best selling author Alan Conway and finds a hidden story in the last manuscript of his successful series. When Alan is murdered, she is compelled to investigate.

**The Almost Sisters**, Joshilyn Jackson

Graphic novelist Leia Birch Briggs, returns to Alabama to care for her 90 year old grandmother, reportedly 'losing her mind', and to set her grandmother's affairs in order. Leia also needs to break the news of her pregnancy to her family and as she cleans house, discovers long hidden family secrets.

**A Piece of the World**, Christina Baker Kline

A novelization of the life of Christina Olson, the subject of Andrew Wyeth's Christina's World.

**Pachinko**, Min Jin Lee

A multi-generational saga of a Korean family, immigrants to Japan.

**Earthly Remains**, Donna Leon

On leave from the Questura, Guido Brunetti is staying at an island villa outside Venice. The caretaker, an old friend of his father, becomes his companion rowing the lagoon and introducing Brunetti to bee keeping, but the bees now disappearing from the lagoon. When the caretaker's corpse is found following a storm, Brunetti suspects that the death was no accident..

**Five Carat Soul**, James McBride

A collection of short stories including a tale of a rare toy commissioned by Robert E. Lee, an encounter with Abraham Lincoln, to interactions of animals in a zoo.

**The Ninth Hour**, Alice McDermott

When a young father commits suicide, nuns from Brooklyn's Little Sisters of the Sick Poor, intervene to save his pregnant widow and her daughter.

**Little Fires Everywhere**, Celeste Ng

Artist and single mother Mia Warren arrives in suburban Shaker Heights with her daughter Pearl and rents a house from the Richardsons, whose teenage children befriend the daughter and her mother, attracted by their unconventional life. When a custody battle rocks the town, Mia and Mrs Richardson find themselves on opposite sides, and the controlling Richardson determines to find out more about Mia's secretive background.

**Glass Houses**, Louise Penny

Armand Gamache, now Chief Superintendent of the Surete, constructs a ruse to thwart drug dealers as Three Pines copes with a mysterious figure in black who is disconcerting the villagers.

**The Old Man**, Thomas Perry

Dan Chase lives a quiet life in Vermont, ostensibly a retiree living with his dogs in a rural area, but his past in intelligence taught him to take precautions and not let down his guard. When he suspects his discovery by old enemies, he puts his backup plans into action and must confront his actions from his past in Libya.

**The Alice Network**, Kate Quinn

Pregnant college student Charlie St. Clair is in post war Europe at her parents' demand to 'solve her little problem.' But Charlie's goal differs from her wealthy parents: she wants to learn the fate of her cousin Rose, presumed dead during the war. Her quest leads back to a group of women spies in France.

**Lillian Boxfish Takes a Walk**, Kathleen Rooney

New Years Eve 1984: 85 year old Lillian Boxfish, former advertising star, takes a walk through NY, reminiscing about her past.

**Lincoln in the Bardo**, George Saunders.

Grieving the loss of his son Willie, Abraham Lincoln returns to the cemetery crypt to hold his son as its ghostly inhabitants seek to free Willie into the afterlife.

**The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane**, Lisa See

Li-yan, raised in the remote Yunnan village, defies her society by giving up her child to an orphanage, leaving only a block of tea in the girl's blankets as a clue to her identity. Li-yan has learned tea culture from her family, providing her with a background enabling her to go beyond her tiny village and eventually having success in the tea trade, while yearning to know what became of her daughter.

**The Women in the Castle**, Jessica Shattuck

Society parties were once the highlight of life in a Bavarian castle but WWII changed that. After the war, a widow of a German war resister, gathers a group of other widows and children to begin a new life in the castle.

**The Rise and Fall of D.O.D.O**, Neal Stephenson and Ncole Galland

Melisande Stokes, a linguistic scholar, is approached by Tristan Lyons with a request to translate some old documents, an offer too lucrative to turn down. The documents prove that magic had existed and though practiced for centuries, had now disappeared. Tristan must learn what happened and find a way to bring it back.

**My Name is Lucy Barton**, Elizabeth Strout

Confined to a hospital following an operation, Lucy Barton's estranged mother engages her daughter in conversations about the people in Amgast, Illinois, her childhood home, leading Lucy to recall her impoverished and troubled childhood, her desire to be an author, and her love for her own daughters.

**Anything is Possible**, Elizabeth Strout

Linked short stories that bring to life the Allash characters introduced in **My Name is Lucy Barton**.

**Saints for All Occasions**, J. Courtney Sullivan

Irish immigrant sisters Nora and Theresa are opposite personalities, Nora serious with reservations about her fiancé and leaving her village, and Teresa reveling in her new life in Boston. When Theresa becomes pregnant, Nora hatches a plan to pretend the child is her own and despite the ensuing rift between the sisters, raises her sister's son as her own. Fifty years later, Nora is head of a large family, Theresa a cloistered nun, but the death of the son, leads the sisters to confront their estrangement and their past.

**Sing, Unburied, Sing**, Jesmyn Ward

Jojo is thirteen, trying to figure out what it is to be a man. He lives with his admired grandfather, his dying grandmother, his three year old sister, and sometimes his mother, Leonie, a drug addict. When his white father is released from prison, his mother packs Jojo and his sister Kayla, together with her friend Misty into a car to bring his father home.