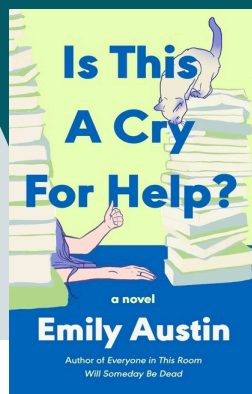




January 2026

The Top Ten Adult Fiction and Nonfiction Chosen Monthly by America's Library Staff

Find out more at www.LibraryReads.org

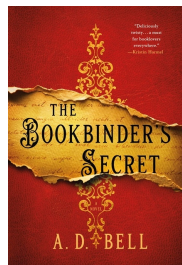


Is This a Cry for Help?
Emily Austin
(Atria Books)

TOP PICK

After she learns of the death of her ex-boyfriend, librarian Darcy has a mental breakdown and takes a leave from her job at a public library. With time, therapy, and support from her wife, Darcy returns to work while coping with guilt and book-banning protests. This reflective, heartwarming, and character-driven read delves into grief and identity with care and humor.

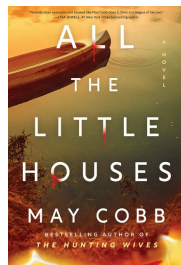
—Kristin Skinner, Flat River Community Library, MI
NovelList read-alike: *Mostly Dead Things* by Kristen Arnett



The Bookbinder's Secret
A.D. Bell
(St. Martin's Press)

Lily is in limbo. She loves books and her binding trade, but her father is distant and her employer seems not to value her. Her life is turned upside down when she is given a burned book and the secrets it holds. This is truly a wonderful read full of mystery, love, and intrigue.

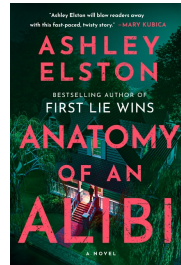
—Susan Willis, Chanute Public Library, KS
NovelList read-alike: *The Binding* by Bridget Collins



All the Little Houses
May Cobb
(Sourcebooks Landmark)

Cobb's latest gasp-out-loud read doesn't disappoint, bringing readers back to the East Texas town of Longview, where wealth, booze, secrets, sex, and very bad—some might even say murderous—behavior abound. Readers will not be able to take their eyes off this propulsive thriller.

—Carol Ann Tack, Merrick Library, NY
NovelList read-alike: *The Empress of Cooke County* by Elizabeth Bass Parman



Anatomy of an Alibi: A Novel
Ashley Elston
(Pamela Dorman Books)

This is a tale of two women: Wealthy Camille is living the high life, while Aubrey works as a bartender. Who is telling the truth? An unhappy marriage, skeletons in the closet, and a murdered husband make this a story worth reading!

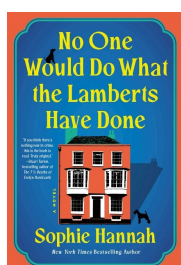
—Jo Hic, Phillips Public Library, WI
NovelList read-alike: *The Kind Worth Killing* by Peter Swanson



Women of a Promiscuous Nature
Donna Everhart
(Kensington)

In this stunning character-driven novel set in the 1940s, Everhart introduces the inmates and staff of the Industrial Farm Colony for Women. As readers are drawn into the life of the Colony, the lofty goals as well as the terrible cruelty and injustice of the place are slowly revealed. Highly recommended.

—Vicki Nesting, St. Charles Parish Library, LA
NovelList read-alike: *The Last Carolina Girl* by Meagan Church



No One Would Do What the Lamberts Have Done
Sophie Hannah
(Sourcebooks Landmark)

In this satirical book-within-a-book, the Lamberts' dog, Champ, is accused of biting the neighbor's daughter. The eccentric pet-obsessed matriarch Sally refuses to believe this, so the family goes on the run with Champ in tow. Twisty and puzzling.

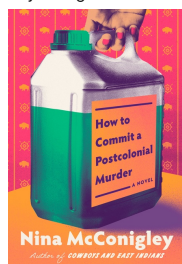
—Magan Szwarc, LibraryReads Ambassador, IL
NovelList read-alike: *Cat Fight* by Kit Conway



It Should Have Been You: A Novel
Andrea Mara
(Pamela Dorman Books)

When a woman accidentally sends a private message meant for her sisters to the entire neighborhood group chat, the ensuing chain of events exposes secrets and causes deadly anguish. This book was a wild ride that will captivate readers from the first page

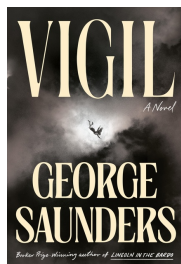
—Debbie Frizzell, Johnson County Library, KS
NovelList read-alike: *You Deserve to Know* by Aggie Bloom Thompson



How to Commit a Postcolonial Murder: A Novel
Nina McConigley
(Pantheon)

When their uncle arrives from India, two sisters' adjustment to a dual culture life in small-town Wyoming in the mid-1980s becomes complicated. This debut hits on touchy subjects with grace, as the sisters choose to fight instead of being silent victims. Those of us who spent many hours at teen sleepovers will delight in the nostalgia scattered amidst the actual crime and justice served.

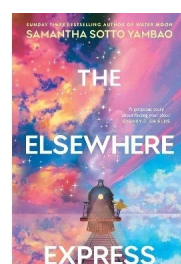
—Kimberly McGee, Lake Travis Community Library, Austin, TX
NovelList read-alike: *My Sister, the Serial Killer* by Oyinkan Braithwaite



Vigil: A Novel
George Saunders
(Random House)

Saunders knows how to capture the essence of life in a story all about death. This message is wrapped in a Christmas Carol package about a ghost ushering a greedy, selfish man into the afterlife. This climate story effectively hammers home that climate change affects everyone and everything irreparably, but we must also carry on.

—Sabrina Unrein, Mahwah Public Library, NJ
NovelList read-alike: *The Apology* by Jimin Han

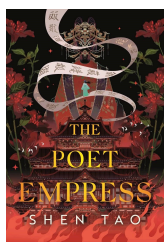


The Elsewhere Express: A Novel
Samantha Sotto Yambao
(Del Rey)

This enchanting, whimsical fantasy is a warm hug for the soul. A magical train that appears to those who are lost is absolutely charming, and creativity shines in the descriptions of the train's wondrous cars, from lily-pod picnics to jellyfish swimming through clouds. A journey not just through a magical world, but also of self-discovery, hope, and finding one's sense of purpose.

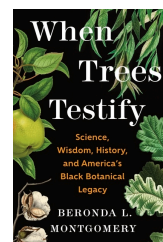
—Lee V., New York Public Library, NY
NovelList read-alike: *The Rainfall Market* by Yeong Gwang You

Bonus pick:



The Poet Empress
Shen Tao
(Bramble)

Notable Nonfiction:



When Trees Testify: Science, Wisdom, History, and America's Black Botanical Legacy
Beronda L. Montgomery
(Henry Holt & Co.)

Be sure to check out our social media for the Bonus Pick annotations!



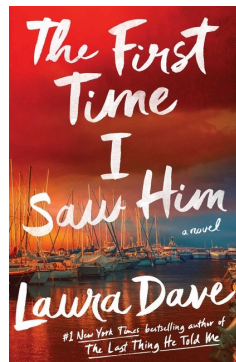
January 2026 HALL OF FAME TITLES

The LibraryReads Hall of Fame designation honors authors who have had multiple titles appear on the monthly list since 2013.

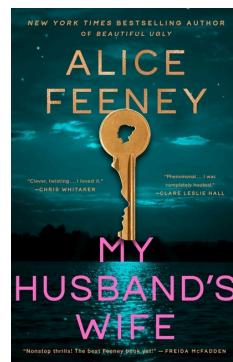
Find out more at www.LibraryReads.org/HOF



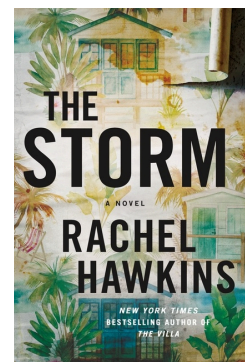
Twelve Months
Jim Butcher
(Ace)



The First Time I Saw Him
Laura Dave
(Scribner)



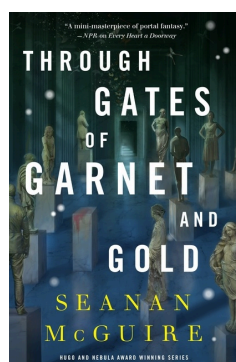
My Husband's Wife
Alice Feeney
(Flatiron Books:
Pine & Cedar)



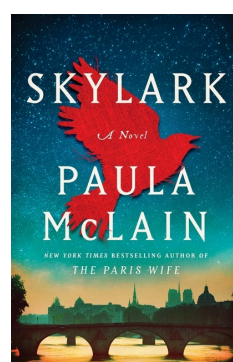
The Storm
Rachel Hawkins
(St. Martin's Press)



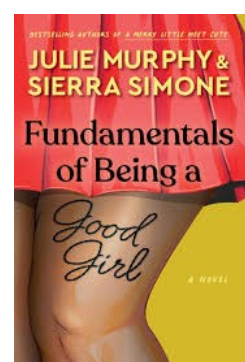
Dear Debbie
Freida McFadden
(Poisoned Pen Press)



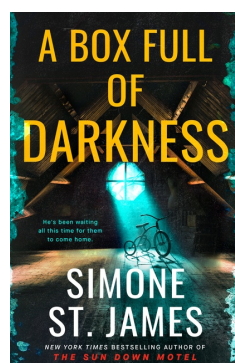
Through Gates of Garnet and Gold
Seanán McGuire
(Tordotcom)



Skylark: A Novel
Paula McLain
(Atria)



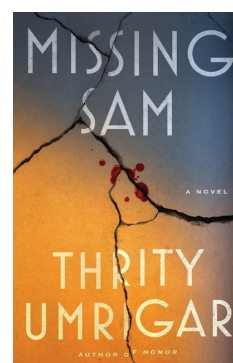
Fundamentals of Being a Good Girl
Julie Murphy and Sierra Simone
(Avon)



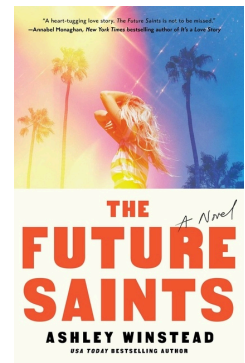
A Box Full of Darkness
Simone St. James
(Berkley)



The Lust Crusade
Jo Segura
(Berkley)



Missing Sam
Thrity Umrigar
(Algonquin Books)



The Future Saints
Ashley Winstead
(Atria)