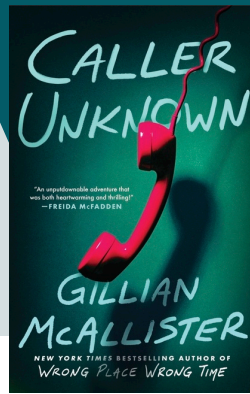




May 2026

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

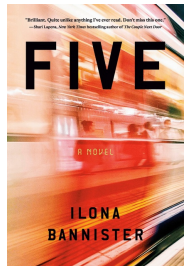
Find out more at www.LibraryReads.org



Caller Unknown
Gillian McAllister
(William Morrow)

Simone comes to Texas from the UK to visit her daughter, Lucy. Lucy is kidnapped, and the perpetrators force Simone into trafficking drugs into Mexico for Lucy's safe return. When a confrontation goes wrong, Lucy and Simone are reunited, but are suddenly on the run from the law. The story is breathtaking, and readers will constantly be on edge, wondering if and when the pair will be caught—and what the consequences will be.

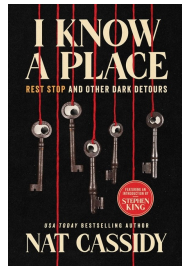
—Cari Dubiel, Twinsburg Public Library, OH
NovelList read-alike: *Mother, May I?* by Joshilyn Jackson



Five: A Novel
Ilona Bannister
(Crown)

Five strangers meet at a train station, but only four will leave alive. Readers are challenged to predict the victim from among a cast of flawed, unlikable characters whose backstories are unexpectedly gripping. This thought-provoking thriller is an ideal book club pick that will spark a different debate for every reader.

—Marika Zemke, Commerce Twp Community Library, MI
NovelList read-alike: *59 Minutes* by Holly Seddon



I Know A Place: Rest Stop and Other Dark Detours
Nat Cassidy
(Shortwave Publishing)

Nat Cassidy is one of horror's more unique voices. This short story collection is terrifying and filled with relatable characters. These wild, grim, violent stories unfold as if the author has sidled up to you at a bar and started sharing them. And you simply can't stop listening.

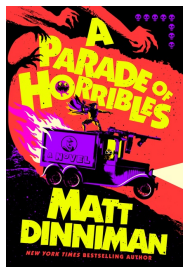
—Lila Denning, St Petersburg Library System, FL
NovelList read-alike: *Midnight Somewhere* by Johnny Compton



The Burning Side
Sarah Damoff
(Simon & Schuster)

April and Leo's marriage is already on the brink when a devastating fire levels their home. Forced to retreat to April's childhood home with their children, they must navigate generational trauma and deep-seated grief alongside her parents and siblings. Amidst the literal and figurative ashes, the couple struggles to determine if their relationship is worth salvaging.

—Emily Orth, Surprise Public Library, AZ
NovelList read-alike: *The Heart of Winter* by Jonathan Evison



A Parade of Horribles
Matt Dinniman
(Ace)

Coming in off the back of a complex and scope-changing Book 7, Book 8 reminds readers of the horrible truth of the Dungeon: for all of their drive and cleverness, Carl and Princess Donut are still just a man and his talking cat trapped in an AI-controlled game that is trying to kill them. This interesting shift in scope and pacing reminds readers of the players' predicament.

—Aaron Mason, Radford Public Library, VA
NovelList read-alike: *Delicious in Dungeon* series by Ryoko Kui



The Last Page
Katie Holt
(Alcove Press)

Ella thinks she's going to inherit the used bookstore where she has worked for years, but is devastated when a grandson shows up as the new owner. Now they must put aside their rivalry, and their off-the-charts chemistry, to save the store. The characters' clever book reviews at the start of every chapter also serve to carry the plot forward.

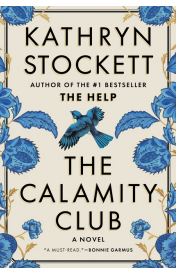
—Migdalia Jimenez, Chicago Public Library, IL
NovelList read-alike: *Battle of the Bookstores* by Ali Brady



A Fortune of Sand
Ruta Sepetys
(Ballantine Books)

When Marjorie covertly joins an artists' residency in Prohibition Era Detroit run by a secretive benefactor, she finds both inspiration and compelling secrets. Intriguing family dynamics and cons-within-cons abound in this novel set among monied families with ties to the growing auto industry.

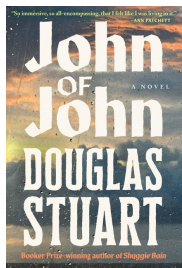
—Jessica Trotter, Capital Area District Libraries, MI
NovelList read-alike: *Crucible* by John Sayles



The Calamity Club
Kathryn Stockett
(Spiegel & Grau)

In Depression-era Mississippi, a girl trapped in a Dickensian orphanage and a young woman trying to lift her family out of financial ruin cross paths. Young Meg feels trapped, while Birdy is faced with family issues that run deep. This dual-narrated story is totally engrossing, and readers will be rooting for the characters.

—Donna Ballard, LibraryReads Ambassador, NJ
NovelList read-alike: *The Truth According to Us* by Annie Barrows



John of John
Douglas Stuart
(Grove Atlantic)

Aimless art student Cal returns to his isolated Scottish home, forced to navigate his grandmother's illness and a community that won't accept his sexuality. The story leans into incredible dialogue and raw, evolving relationships with complicated people readers can't help but care about.

—Magan Szwarc, LibraryReads Ambassador, IL
NovelList read-alike: *Family Meal* by Bryan Washington



Bone of My Bone
Johanna van Veen
(Poisoned Pen Press)

Sister Ursula, a nun fleeing brutal soldiers in 1635, meets Elsebeth, a peasant surviving the Thirty Years' War. They escape into the Bavarian forest, experiencing the horrors of the undead while followed by a necromancer. This atmospheric, haunting folk horror read is told from multiple points of view.

—Kristin Skinner, Flat River Community Library, MI
NovelList read-alike: *Angel Down* by Daniel Kraus

Bonus pick:



The Last Contract of Isako
Fonda Lee
(Orbit)

Notable Nonfiction:



Make Believe: On Telling Stories to Children
Mac Barnett
(Little, Brown and Company)

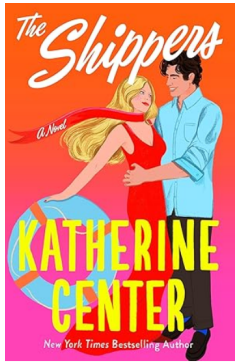
Be sure to check out our social media for the Bonus Pick annotations!



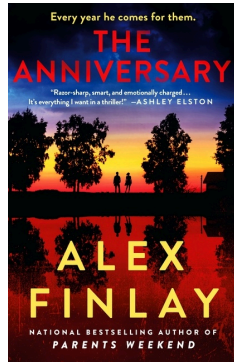
May 2026 HALL OF FAME TITLES

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



The Shippers
Katherine Center
(St. Martin's Press)



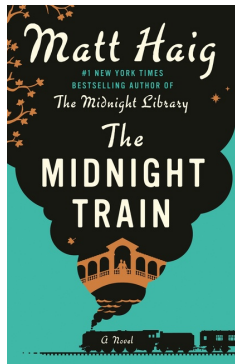
The Anniversary
Alex Finlay
(Minotaur Books)



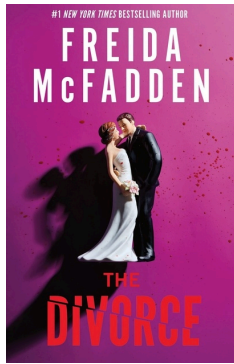
Our Perfect Storm
Carley Fortune
(Berkley)



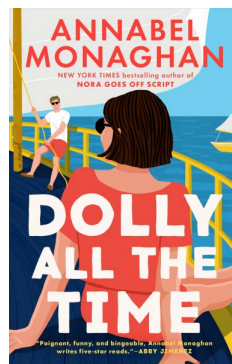
Make Me Better
Sarah Gailey
(Tor Books)



The Midnight Train: A Novel
Matt Haig
(Viking)



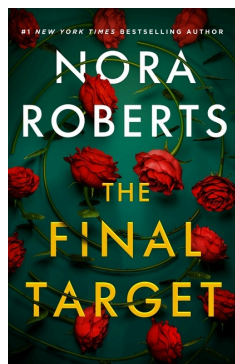
The Divorce
Freida McFadden
(Poisoned Pen Press)



Dolly All the Time
Annabel Monaghan
(G.P. Putnam's Sons)



First and Forever
Lynn Painter
(Berkley)



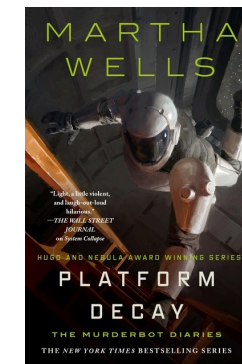
The Final Target
Nora Roberts
(St. Martin's Press)



Seek the Traitor's Son
Veronica Roth
(Tor Books)



The Things We Never Say: A Novel
Elizabeth Strout
(Random House)



Platform Decay
Martha Wells
(Tor Books)