

November 2021 Staff Picks

Author: John Scalzi **Title: Lock In** Vivid descriptions, good character development, and mixture of interesting scientific knowledge with a whodunit mystery. Intriguing and entertaining.

Author: Anna Lee Huber **Title: The Anatomist's Wife**

A fast-paced, atmospheric, and chilling debut.... a cross between a gothic novel and a mystery with a decidedly unusual heroine who has a shocking past and a talent for detection.

Author: James Cambias **Title: A Darkling Sea**

Excellent development of the alien characters. A really smart and different science fiction story that explores alien politics in a fast paced and fun way.

Author: Sarah Penner **Title: The Lost Apothecary**

Both a historical mystery and a thrilling treasure hunt, *The Lost Apothecary* intrigues readers on many levels. The apothecary, Nessa, is a historian recording the stories of women whose stories would otherwise be forgotten. In uncovering Nessa and Eliza's story, Caroline breaks free from her past and reconnects with her dreams. Most of the story is realistic but there is a hint of the supernatural in it as well.

Author: Dean Koontz **Title: Phantoms**

This is the first book that actually scared me. I read it my first year of college and it still haunts me. The first hundred or so pages grip you by the collar and won't let go. The horror is real and it's one of the few mysteries that don't disappoint once you learn what's going on. Dean Koontz has had a long and lucrative career. *Phantoms* was written when he just seemed to want to tell a good story and not worry about creating a best seller. If you want to feel real terror, give this a try. Read the book, skip the movie.

Author: Christopher Moore **Title: A Dirty Job**

Moore loves to write off-beat comic novels that not only amuse you, but fill you with a whole gamut of emotions: joy, sadness, pity. *A Dirty Job* presents Death as a job, a slog, a bureaucratic nightmare, a web of rules and procedures that can lead to catastrophe if not precisely followed. And if you like Moore's style of writing, his whole catalog is filled with quirky fare.

Author: Marc-Uwe Kling **Title: Qualityland**

It never fails, you buy one ballpoint pen and Amazon will spend the next several weeks trying to sell you a dozen more, maybe a different brand or color, but still. Well that doesn't happen in *Qualityland*, the dystopian (utopian?) novel by Marc-Uwe Kling.

TheShop knows what you want, no what you NEED, at all times and will deliver it to you before you order it. If you get something you don't want, don't blame the company, it's you who are wrong. It's like Big Brother with free shipping. After reading this novel you should try to track down *Jennifer Government* by Max Berry.

Author: Lucy Foley Title: The Guest List

While a little hard to keep up with at first because the author tells the story from the point of view of a different character in each chapter, you can't help but be drawn in by all of their backgrounds and the secrets. It tells of a successful magazine publisher marrying a well-known actor on a small and eerie remote island. Once family and guest begin to arrive, secrets are exposed and everyone wants revenge. *The Guest List* leaves you guessing who's innocent and who's not until the very end!

Author: Noah Charney Title: The Art of Forgery

Fascinating and gripping stories. I really liked this nonfiction book because it did a great job of going over the history of art forgery without being dry.

Author: Natalie Zina Walschots Title: Hench: A Novel

This book examines the consequences of superheroes' collateral damage. Usually I don't prefer those kinds of stories, but this book approached it in an interesting enough way to keep me reading until the characters got me hooked. Anna is very analytical and it's fascinating to watch the story unfold through the eyes of someone whose talent is statistics and careful planning.

Author: Marianne Cronin Title: The One Hundred Years of Lenni and Margot

So many wonderful adjectives: charming, funny, touching—could describe this special book about a multi-generational friendship. Just a lovely read.

Author: Charlotte Mcconaghy Title: Migrations

This is a novel that does not shy away from the largest questions and the most daunting topics: animal instincts, madness, desire, and survival. A family "curse" has made Franny a perpetual wanderer; and thus, she never stays in one place for long. Even as a child, she loved birds, mostly crows, but now she decides to track the last few migrating Arctic terns. Against all odds, she convinces the captain of a fishing vessel, Ennis, to let her become part of his crew. Though she tells them she is a scientist tracking the arctic terns for scientific research, Franny harbors a huge secret which is only gradually divulged. *Migrations* offers a startling portrait of highly complex character who is unimaginable brave and fiercely determined.

Author: Connie Berry Title: A Legacy of Murder

A nice cozy mystery that provided a much needed and enjoyable escape. American antique dealer Kate Hamilton's Christmastime jaunt to a charming English village leads to an investigation of a missing ruby... and a chain of murders.

Author: Jessica Brody and Joanne Rendell Title: Sky Without Stars

This is a delightful cyberpunk retelling of Victor Hugo's epic classic *Les Misérables*. As most of us are probably familiar with the musical version of this story (I sure am!), certain characters and plotlines of this book may be unfamiliar since this plot follows the novel. However, I'm very pleased to say that this story is actually very true to Hugo's epic novel!

Sky Without Stars is set in the distant future, on the dystopian planet of Laterre (France), in which cyborgs, sub-dermal microchips, and holographic projections are part of everyday life. Laterre is ruled by a dictator named Patriarche Paresse and his top enforcer, General Bonnefaçon. Anyone in opposition to their ruthless Regime is sent off to the frigid prison planet of Bastille. On Laterre, the elite few live in luxury while the masses live in squalor. The plot follows three teenagers who live in **very** different conditions. Chatine Renard (Éponine Thénardier), lives in "the frets" among the poorest of the citizens and must steal in order to survive the harsh conditions. Alouette Taureau (Cosette), was raised by her father (himself a mysterious character) in an underground shelter run by a covert group of "sisters." Marcellus Bonnefaçon (Marius Pontmercy), the grandson of General Bonnefaçon, was raised and specially trained by his grandfather after his father was sent off to Bastille for "supposedly" inciting a riot against the Regime. When the lives of these three teens intersect, a revolution begins!

Even those who are not familiar with Hugo's novel *Les Misérables*, or those unfamiliar with the cyberpunk genre will still enjoy this trilogy for its amazing intersecting plotlines, the insightful and resonating characters, and the thrilling curveballs that break your heart! I promise you will stay engaged until the climax!