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BUZZ

Amazon Charts: Hunter tracks down the top spot

Cara Hunter's **ALL THE RAGE** (#4 in the **DETECTIVE FAWLEY** series, Penguin) has stormed into the Amazon Charts' Most-Sold: Fiction top spot, earning the "highly quotable" tag—readers highlighted passages more frequently in **ALL THE RAGE** than any other title. In this volume, a teenage girl is found wandering the outskirts of Oxford, dazed and distressed. She was grabbed off the street, a plastic bag pulled over her face, then driven to an isolated location where she was subjected to what sounds like an assault. Yet she refuses to press charges.

It knocked Andrzej Sapkowski's **THE LAST WISH** (Gollancz) into to second place, while Adele Parks' **LIES LIES LIES** (HQ) rose to join it in third. However, **THE LAST WISH** 's sequel **BLOOD OF ELVES** hit the top 20 for the first time.

THE LAST WISH is a collection of short stories introducing Geralt of Rivia, to be followed by the first novel in the actual **WITCHER** series, **BLOOD OF ELVES**.

In Adele Parks' **LIES LIES LIES**, married couple Simon and Daisy can't agree on whether to keep trying for another child. Then Simon gets drunk and hits their daughter with the car, ending up in prison.

Terry Pratchett made his solo début on the Most-Sold: Fiction chart, with **DISCWORLD** title **MEN AT ARMS** (Transworld) barreling into 12th place. **DISCWORLD** is a comic fantasy book series set on the fictional Discworld, a flat disc balanced on the backs of four elephants which in turn stand on the back of a giant turtle, Great A'Tuin.

While the Harry Potter books once again dominated Most-Read: Fiction, **ALL THE RAGE** rose seven places to claim 11th.

PINCH OF NOM: Everyday Light (Bluebird) held the Most-Sold: Non-Fiction pole, as it clinched a fifth week in total in the Nielsen BookScan's UK Official Top 50 number one spot.

The Lisa Gray's **PI JESSICA SHAW** Series

Translation rights now sold, for Book 1, **THIN AIR**, in Sweden, Taiwan, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Sweden, Czech Republic, Russia, Slovenia, Slovakia and Turkey

The novel is a Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, and Amazon Charts bestseller.

The series set around Los Angeles, California, and follows Private Investigator Jessica Shaw, who specialises in missing person cases.

Anna Dempsey, Kerry Hood and Iain Rowan have been nominated for the Costa Short Story Award 2019.

The prize-winner will be decided by the public vote and announced at the Costa Book Awards ceremony on 28th January. The winner receives £3,500, second place £1,000 and third place £500. Established in 2012, the award – run in association with the Costa Book Awards but judged independently of the main five-category system – is judged anonymously, without the name of the author being known throughout the process.

Dempsey is an American-born writer and teacher based in south-east London and she is in the running for **THE DEDICATED DANCERS OF THE GREATER OAKS COMMUNITY**. Currently completing her debut YA novel, which is set in Florida, she has an MA in Children's Literature and Creative Writing from Goldsmiths College and an MA in Education from Touro College in NYC. Her short story is her first piece of short fiction. It follows a jaded New Yorker who heads south for the holidays and finds healing on the dance floor.

Hood is full-time writer based in Devon, who was highly commended for the 2017's Costa Short Story Award, and she is shortlisted for **THE DOG FRIEND OF DASTARDLY**, the story of Viv, on a visit to her dad, who must keep down all the Terrible Words. A dark, funny story set somewhere between hate and love. Also an English Literature graduate, Hood is starting a bleakly funny collection of stories and has also written 10 plays with residencies at the National Theatre, Traverse Theatre and RADA.

Rowan is a Sunderland-based author who wrote the crime novel **ONE OF US** (2012) and he competes with **BIRDS OF THE MOUNTAIN**. Rowan has already been shortlisted for both the Crime Writers' Association Début Dagger and for the 2017 Bath Novel Award, and in 2018 he won a Northern Writers' Award for his then novel-in-progress, **GOING UNDER**, which is now out on submission. He founded the Sunderland Festival of Creative Writing and the Sunderland writers' group Holmeside Writers too.

In **ONE OF US**, Anna fled her own country when the police murdered her brother and her father. When she used her medical school experience to treat a man with a gunshot wound, she thought it would be a way to a better life. But it leads to a world of people trafficking, prostitution, murder and the biggest decision of Anna's life.

In **BIRDS OF THE MOUNTAIN**, a troubled father walking in the hills with the son he adores faces an impossible decision.

Three additional stories were highly commended by judges: **NOT CONTAGIOUS** by Haleh Agar, "**[A GUIDE TO HOUSEHOLD INFESTATIONS** by Edward Hogan and **INSIDE THE BOX** by Lydia Vincent. The panel judges are Sarah Franklin, founder of Short Stories Aloud and senior lecturer in Publishing at Oxford Brookes University, Radio 2 Book Club producer Joe Haddow, literary agent Simon Trewin, and authors Adele Parks and Kit de Waal, the latter a finalist for the Costa Short Story Award in 2013.

Last year's winner of the prize was **BREATHING WATER** by Caroline Ward Vine, a former magazine publisher from Kent.

BOOKREPORT

COMEDY

MY TYPE ON PAPER by Chloe Seager (GB) - published by SCHOLASTIC , February 2020, 288 pages

Comedy, Romantic Comedy

Location: United Kingdom

Epoch: 21st century

Evaluation : 0/3

This is extremely fun, silly nonsense, a perfect winter warmer.

Chloe Seager is a literary agent at the Madeleine Milburn Literary Agency and a writer. She previously published EDITING EMMA (HQ, 2017) and FRIENDSHIP FAILS OF EMMA NASH (HQ, 2018).

Maya is down in the dumps ... quite literally. She's just been pied off by her boyfriend before what was supposed to be their last romantic summer before heading off to Uni. Luckily help is at hand in the form of her friends, determined to hook her up with a fun summer romance, no strings attached. And with a summer job working at fancy new beach resort in town, how can she fail to meet the guy of her dreams? Hot weather, hot guys, hot summer romance... it's a dead cert. But with three perfect-on-paper guys to choose from, not to mention her snakey ex re-entering the picture, how will she know which guy to go for?

Report available

DRAMEDY

RELATIVELY FAMOUS by Roger Averill (AU) - published by TRANSIT LOUNGE, April 2018, 304 pages

[Dramedy](#)

[Location:](#) Australia

[Epoch:](#) 21st century

[Evaluation :](#) 0/3

Roger Averill is an Australian writer. His books include EXILE: The lives and hopes of Werner Pelz, the novel KEEPING FAITH, and a travel memoir, BOY HE CRY: An island odyssey. EXILE won the Western Australian Premier's Prize for Non-fiction in 2012 and was shortlisted for the New South Wales Premier's Literary Awards.

Michael and Majorie Madigan refuse to be interviewed by biographer Sinclair Hughes for his new book Inside the Lion's Den: The Literary Life of Gilbert Madigan. This is not surprising as Gilbert is Marjorie's ex-husband and Michael's mostly absent father.

In Roger Averill's novel, **RELATIVELY FAMOUS**, Gilbert Madigan is Australia's first Booker Prize winner, a feted and much-lauded author that the U.K. and U.S. now like to call their own. Michael cannot escape his father's life and work, and at times his own life seems swallowed by it. His father's success is a source of undeniable pleasure but also of great turmoil. How does one live in the shadow of a famous relative who we never seem to be able to live up to?

In a world increasingly obsessed with fame and celebrity, this engrossing novel subtly explores notions of success, masculinity, betrayal and loss, and ultimately what it might mean to live a good life.

CADRÒ, SOGNANDO DI VOLARE by Fabio Genovesi (IT) - published by MONDADORI EDITORE, January 2020, 312 pages

[Dramedy](#)

[Location:](#) Italy, Tuscan seaside town; convent on the Apuan mountains, Cesenatico

[Epoch:](#) 20th century, 21st century, summer of 1998 / epilogue in 2004

[Evaluation :](#) 2/3

Translation rights sold: options in Germany, Greece, Albania, Korea, Israel

Fabio Genovesi is an Italian writer. His books include LIVE BAIT (2014), which has been

translated into over ten languages, **VERSILIA ROCK CITY**, the memoir **MORTE DEI MARMI (2012)**, and the Young Reader's Strega Prize winning-novel, **CHI MANDA LE ONDE (2015)**.

Fabio is twenty-four years old and studies law, even though his heart isn't really in it. Like many other kids from his generation, he is prisoner of a life that isn't his own. And so, he drudgingly goes through the motions, until one day in 1998 when he is sent to the mountains to do community service as an alternative to the draft. He is assigned to a retirement home for old priests that is run by an eighty-year-old former missionary: he is a gruff and moody man who barely leaves his room having lost interest in everything; he is mean to everyone except for Gina, a girl who considered herself a hen. Nonetheless, Fabio and Don Basagni share something in common: their passion for cycling. They start watching the Giro d'Italia together, identifying in Marco Pantani the incarnation of a dream: a brave man, tormented and alone, facing colossal champions whose strength is caution and control during the race. Pantani instead doesn't plan ahead, he follows his instinct and exerts massive efforts that allow him to move the border: that "terrible border between possible and impossible, between what we would like to do and what we can do." Thanks to this marvelous madness, Fabio and Don Basagni will find in themselves the courage buried within them to question the solid, reliable existence they were accustomed to put up with.

Reports available

ENVOLE-MOI by Sarah Barukh (FR) - published by ALBIN MICHEL, January 2020, 304 pages

[Dramedy](#)

[Location:](#) France, Nice, Paris

[Epoch:](#) 20th century, 21st century, 90s / nowadays

[Evaluation :](#) 2.14/3

Translation rights sold: Italy (option)

Sarah Barukh is a Parisian businesswoman. Her books include ELLE VOULAIT JUSTE MARCHER TOUT DROIT, which was translated in the US and other countries, and LE CAS ZÉRO, which is being adapted for TV.

After a decade of silence, Anaïs, 38 years old, receives a phone call from her best friend from high school, the beautiful, seductive, crazy Marie. Anaïs left Paris (where they both grew up, in the multicultural and problematic neighbourhood of the 19th arrondissement) to restart a life on the seaside, in Nice; she is undergoing the painful process of IVF and fears she will lose her partner if she cannot get pregnant. At this turning point in her existence, Marie's call opens up the Pandora's box of their shared past, and Anaïs gets dragged into a crazy road trip that will push her to confront all her forgotten and hidden fears.

Report available

CRIME FICTION

NERO COME LA NOTTE by Tullio Avoledo (IT) - published by MARSILIO EDITORI, January 2020, 524 pages

Crime fiction, Thriller

Location: Italy, city in the Italian North-East

Epoch: 21st century

Evaluation : 2.14/3

Tullio Avoledo is an Italian writer. His first novel, L'ELENCO TELEFONICO DI ATLANTIDE (2003) turned into a best-seller and won the Fort Village Montblanc Award for the best debut writer. He won the prestigious Grinzane Award with this fourth book in 2006. BREVE STORIA DI LUNGI TRADIMENTI inspired a movie directed by Davide Marengo, released in 2013.

Stokar, an ex-cop with Nazi sympathies wakes up after almost getting killed in an abandoned building occupied by a motley community of migrants. As he's hired to work as their informal sheriff, a series of brutal homicides forces him to discover the obscure reality of his North-Eastern Italian city.

With the help of Albert, a young African geek, Nadia, a Romanian former judge with an obscure past, and Lorenzo, a left-wing journalist who is one of the few friends emerging from Stokar's past, the former cop is determined to find out the truth - both on the series of murders, and on the truth hidden behind his own trauma-induced memory loss.

Report available

L'ANNÉE DU GEL by Agathe Portail (FR) - published by CALMANN-LEVY, January 2020, 416 pages

Crime fiction, Detective novel

Location: France

Epoch: 21st century

Evaluation : 2/3

Debut novel

Agathe Portail has a communication job in the wine-growing field. She lives in the Bordeaux

region.

It is the summer of 2017, and the baker arrives early to deliver bread at Haut Méac, the ancient castle of the Mazet family. Bernard Mazet, a winemaker, and his wife Alexane have just started renting out some of their rooms through Airbnb to better sustain themselves, especially after the frost has damaged the year's harvest. But, as he wanders in the cold room of the castle's kitchen, the baker discovers the body of Clara, one of the guests who have arrived at Haut Méac two days before...

Report available

LE DON DE SKULLARS NEWTON by Jean-François Chabas (FR) - published by CALMANN-LEVY, January 2020, 378 pages

[Crime fiction, Thriller](#)

[Location:](#) Austria, Jamaica, Kingston, Austrian Alps; supernatural elements

[Epoch:](#) 21st century, supernatural elements

[Evaluation :](#) 2.14/3

Jean-François Chabas is a French writer. Since UNE MOITIÉ DE WASICUN published in 1995, he has written more than 60 books for various publishers. Besides his children's books, he has co-created comics with Hervé Blondon, David Sala, or Joanna Concejo.

The adventures of Skullars Newton, a Rastafari from the ghetto of Kingston in Jamaica, who has a special gift: he can see inside the mind and body of other people. Thus, he knows all the crimes of his old friend, Jay Jay who, now that he is a gangster, wants to eliminate him. For this reason, Skullars has to leave Jamaica and hide all around the world not to be found by private detectives hired by Jay Jay.

Report available

LA DEUXIÈME FEMME by Louise Mey (FR) - published by LE MASQUE, January 2020, 300 pages

[Crime fiction, Psychological Thriller](#)

Location: France

Epoch: 21st century

Evaluation : 2/3

Louise Mey is a French writer. Her books include LES RAVAGÉ(E)S.

Sandrine is a young single woman, highly unhappy. Her father was violent and abusive, her mother was weak, she lives alone, finds her appearance awful (too fat, too ugly), cuts herself... She is a mess, longing for a man who can love her. One day she sees on the TV news a man, Patrice Langlois, crying in front of the camera because his wife Caroline has disappeared. Sandrine is so moved by the man that she joins the public march in honour of Caroline and soon falls in love with Patrice. The man is very nice to her, and this is the first time in her life. Patrice courts her and very quickly asks her to move in with him and his little boy Mathias.

It is the beginning of a dream for Sandrine. She loves Patrice, she is soon attached to little Mathias, who is a shy and troubled kid, unable to talk. But then, from time to time, Patrice starts to get angry at her, to sometimes shout bad words at her, and to force her to have sex...

And one day Caroline, the first wife, comes back, having lost her memories of what happened to her.

Report available

MICTLAN by Sébastien Rutés (FR) - published by GALLIMARD, January 2020, 160 pages

Crime fiction, Noir

Location: United States, Mexico, unidentified country which recalls Mexico; magical realism elements

Epoch: 21st century, magical realism elements

Evaluation : 2/3

Sébastien Rutés is a French university lecturer and writer. He has written novels as well as several essays about Latin-American literature, noir fiction and intertextuality.

The novel is inspired by a real news item having taken place in Mexico, where a truck filled with unidentified corpses was found in a deserted area near Guadalajara; as morgues were full and there was no way to identify or store the corpses, the truck travelled for days before authorities could find a solution. The book is set in an unidentified country, which recalls Mexico. It is ruled by an authoritative Governor directly supported by a Commandant. Protagonists, whose names are not mentioned either, are "Old" and "Fat". Their job consists in driving a truck in which the Governor hides the corpses of those whose murder he has ordered, which he wants Old and Fat to finally get

rid of...

Report available

THE OTHER YOU by Jon Stock (pseudonym: J. S. Monroe) (GB) - published by HEAD OF ZEUS, January 2020, 249 pages

[Crime fiction, Psychological Thriller](#)

[Location:](#) United Kingdom, Cornwall

[Epoch:](#) 21st century

[Evaluation :](#) 2.14/3

Pitched for fans of J.P. Delaney and Louise Candlish.

JS Monroe (pseudonym of Jon Stock) read English at Cambridge, worked as a Foreign Correspondent in Delhi, and was the Weekend editor of the Daily Telegraph before becoming a full-time writer. He has previously published the thrillers FIND ME (2017) and FORGET MY NAME (2019).

Kate used to be good at recognising people. So good, she worked for the police, identifying criminals in crowds of thousands. But six months ago, a devastating car accident led to a brain injury. Now the woman who never forgot a face can barely recognise herself in the mirror.

At least she has Rob. Kate met him just after her accident, and he nursed her back to health in his high-tech modernist house on the Cornish coast. When she's with him, the nightmares of the accident fade, and she feels safe and loved.

Until, one day, she looks at Rob anew – and knows, with absolute certainty, that he has been replaced by an impostor. Is she right? Have her old recognition skills returned? Or is it all in her damaged mind?

Report available

YOUR SHADOW IS A MONDAY by Kim Jung-hyuk (KR) - CHANGBI, Korea,

Crime fiction, Noir

Location: South Korea, Norway

Epoch: 21st century

Evaluation : 2.43/3

So far we only have a partial translation but the plot has a great concept at its heart and Gu Dongchi is an interesting, secretive character.

YOUR SHADOW IS MONDAY features many familiar conventions of the noir detective genre, but it is also an original Korean take on the themes. It is filled with strange, eccentric characters, and deals with such major contemporary issues as the redevelopment of old neighborhoods, oftentimes at the detriment of poor residents, the corruption of major corporations, and the dark side of the country's thriving entertainment industry.

Kim Jung-hyuk (born 1971) is a Korean writer, film critic, music columnist, and cartoonist. He has received the Dongin Literary Award and Lee Hyo-seok Literary Award. His books have been translated into English and French, among other languages.

Set in Seoul. Gu Dongchi has an office in a smelly old block of flats. There, he does his very private work as a deleter, getting rid of a person's social media and paperwork after they die. He only takes on clients who've been personally recommended to him by another client. It started with a novelist who didn't want any legacy left. Gu cleared every trace of that writer from the world, but he couldn't quite get rid of them all. He kept some notebooks and has them under lock and key. He considers secret things too precious to actually delete, so he half-deletes them and they exist only for him.

When one of his neighbours falls off the roof of their building in a suspected murder, Gu Dongchi gets involved quickly. The police officer investigating comes to understand what Gu does for a living and asks him to investigate the digital footprint of the murder victim. In amongst his files is a video recording of a very violent gang. It seems this is why the man was killed. The investigator asks Gu not to reveal the video until they can bring down the entire gang. When the investigating officer is killed, having become a client of Gu Dongchi, whom he has charged with destroying one particular photograph, Gu escapes to Norway. There, he finds the investigator's son and hands over a photograph the son does not want. Gu has changed his ways, potentially forever.

SUSPENSE

YAS by Eduardo de los Santos (ES) - published by ALFAGUARA, January 2020, 304 pages

[Mystery, Suspense](#)

[Location](#): Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Spain, United States, Madrid

[Epoch](#): 21st century

[Evaluation](#) : 2/3

Debut novel

In 2017, the author won a scholarship in Cordoba, where he spent eight months writing this novel, as a member of the XVI edition of the Fundación Antonio Gala para Jóvenes Creadores, a foundation which promotes the creation of young artists and writers.

Eduardo de los Santos is a Spanish writer. He has worked in a bookshop in Madrid since 2014 and some of his short stories have been awarded and featured in different anthologies.

YAS begins in 2019, when a young journalist and frustrated poet called Manuel Valero gets out of bed in the middle of the night to wander the streets of Madrid, leaving behind his sleeping girlfriend, Irene. Valero is supposed to be interviewing a poet called Leonardo Espacio the following day, but is considering missing the interview because the two men have a history: six years earlier Espacio ran off to New York with Valero's then-girlfriend, a Spanish jazz singer and trumpet player called Tania Almada. Valero's main reason for even considering the interview is that Espacio's latest collection of poems is called Yas, which was also the name of a song sung only once by Almada while on tour in the USA, shortly before she mysteriously vanished. Although never recorded, Yas has subsequently attained a mythical status in the jazz world, and Valero is hoping that Espacio might be able to shed some light on Almada's disappearance.

Report available

DRAMA

SCHATTENSEITE by Jonas Ems (DE) - published by Plötz & Betzholz, November 2019, 352 pages

Drama

Location: Germany

Epoch: 21st century

Evaluation : 0/3

In the vein of "13 Reasons Why" and "Gossip Girl".

This is timely and topical. Only recently, hackers released personal data of countless celebrities. Cyberbullying and hacker attacks are a growing threat, especially for young people. Blind trust in the Internet is dangerous, when cloud synchronizations store our personal photos and videos, when passwords and website history are recorded in the browser and all social media platforms have access to our personal data.

Jonas Ems' previous bestselling title DIE ANDERE VERBINDUNG (THE OTHER CONNECTION) was optioned by a German production company in 2019.

Jonas Ems is an all-rounder. With 2.5 million subscribers on his YouTube channel he is one of Germany's most popular YouTubers. His books PEINLICH FÜR DIE WELT and DIE ANDERE VERBINDUNG both hit the Spiegel bestseller list. Ems is an actor, writes screenplays for short films and appeared in the movie "Das schönste Mädchen der Welt".

It is the year 2020. Corvin, Nola and Seymon are about to take their Abitur exams. They lead ordinary teenage lives attending high school in a quiet village. What matters are friends, family, school, party, blogging, studying, browsing, sports, relationships, traveling, sex, liking and sharing. Until the Dark Site changes everything. A website that drops all of one's personal information in an instant. Every bit of intimate information and every well-kept secret are suddenly accessible and visible to everyone. Corvin is the first amongst his friends and fellow students who is hit by the site. Yesterday he was the inconspicuous nerd, today he consumes transport porn, works as a software hacker and has taken a picture of his penis every day since the age of 14. Little by little the site hits more and more students. The pressure grows on everyone. One day Nola's and Seymon's Dark Site is also published. The days of truth begin and everyone - even the headmaster of their school - appear in a different light. Nobody knows who is behind the Dark Site, or how it works. All attempts to take the site down, fail. Instead, more private data emerges - chat progressions, screenshots, nude photos. No one is safe anymore and everyone must live with the consequences of any information unknowingly posted on the net. With the Dark Site leaks, students have to learn that in times of cloud synchronization and server-based online messaging their secrets are not safe. The protected life as they knew it is over and they are experiencing firsthand what it means when everybody knows everything about you. Who is behind the site? And what does that have to do with the recent death of fellow student Linus?

REAL DIFFERENCES by S. L. Lim (SG) - published by TRANSIT LOUNGE, January 2019, 288 pages

Drama

Location: Australia

Epoch: 21st century

Evaluation : 0/3

S. L. Lim was born in Singapore, moved to Sydney at the age of one, and has spent a good part of her life toggling back and forth between the two places. At university she edited the undergraduate magazine 'Tharunka', igniting blood feuds and running exposes of dodgy student societies. After dropping out of law school she graduated with an economics degree and lived the life of a suit for a while before going freelance. Her manuscript REVENGE to be published by Transit Lounge in 2020 was longlisted for the 2017 Epigram Fiction Prize.

Middle-class, clever and white, Nick is a child of privilege while his best friend Andie is the daughter of Indo-Chinese refugees. Despite their very different backgrounds, they share a conviction they can change the world for the better.

At the outset, Nick is pushing papers in a dead-end job while Andie is embarking on a secular crusade against world poverty. This generates conflict with her white husband Benjamin, who feels that Australians should come first. Meanwhile, Andie's cousin, the teenage Tony is burdened by his parents' traumatic past and impossible expectations. To their dismay, he finds solace in radical faith.

S. L. Lim acutely captures the dreams and disaffections of a millennial generation.

REAL DIFFERENCES is an emotionally resonant novel about idealism, ethical ambition, and love. It ultimately asks us the most important question of all: What is our life for?

IL TRENO DI CRISTALLO by Nicola Lecca (IT) - published by MONDADORI EDITORE, January 2020, 252 pages

Drama

Location: Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Slovakia, United Kingdom, Zagreb, Broadstairs,

Hamburg, Prague

Epoch: 20th century, 21st century, 1993

Evaluation : 2/3

Nicola Lecca is an Italian author. He received the Hemmingway Prize at 27. His 1999 debut collection of short stories CONCERTI SENZA ORCHESTRA was a finalist in the Strega Prize and the Chiara Prize and winner of the Rhegium Julii Prize for debut work and the Basilicata Literary Prize. In 2013 he won the Fenice-Europe Prize with the novel LA PIRAMIDE DEL CAFFÈ.

Broadstairs is a charming town on the English coast where Aaron works as an apprentice in the historic ice-cream shop Morelli. He lives in symbiosis with Anja, his depressed and over-protective mother who hides his father's identity and tells him nothing about Zagreb, the city they fled when he was just a little boy. Luckily, his best friend Gennarino is a volcano of joy, colouring the greyness of Anja's melancholy with his optimism.

As for Aaron, he has learned to be happy with little. All he needs is the flavour of tangerine ice cream, his lonely walks by the steep cliffs overlooking the sea, and the conversations with Crystal, the girl he loves. They met each other online and their relationship has been going on for just over a year, but it is only virtual. Every time he tries to arrange a meeting in real life, she finds a thousand excuses to postpone. And yet, Aaron prefers her incomplete presence to the pain of being alone.

Until an unexpected event changes everything. Aaron receives a letter from a notary in Croatia informing him about the death of his father, whose identity was kept hidden from him his entire life. Furthermore, the missive also invites him to Zagreb to attend the reading of the deceased's last will and testament, annexing an interrail ticket to cover the journey.

Ill-equipped and unprepared for life, Aaron faces his little Odyssey in search of truth with courage. He travels from the United Kingdom to Zagreb passing through Hamburg, Prague, Ljubljana, Bratislava, and Szentgotthárd, finally confronting the world. He will face challenges, risks, and temptations, as well as unexpected encounters and immense beauty.

Reports available

KOKKÁL by Halldór Laxness Halldórsson (pseudonym: Dóri DNA) (IS) - published by Bjartur, October 2019, 336 pages

Drama

Location: Iceland, United States, Chicago

Epoch: 21st century

Evaluation : 2.14/3

CUCKOLD, which is the author's first novel, went straight to the bestseller lists. On the Eymundsson bookseller list in 2019 Cuckold was #7 in hardcover fiction (after Arnaldur, Yrsa, Ragnar Jonasson, Olaf Olafsson and two other experienced and popular authors). On the Publishers' Association besetseller list, it was #15 of all titles in 2019 and #7 in Icelandic fiction.

5,000 copies sold in hardcover in Iceland (equivalent to 100,000 copies in the UK).

The book starts when Össi, a young and handsome guy in the advertising business, invites his girlfriend to Chicago. The trip is meant to be luxurious and memorable. We find them in a hotel room after a great night out partying. Össi is sitting in a chair, watching his beautiful girlfriend and a black guy who are about to go to bed together. Then we go back in his life - how did he get there with his girlfriend - and where do they go from there. It's a modern novel in which you laugh and you cry, and may be offended - but it's a book you won't forget.

Report available

I MIGLIORI ANNI by Cinzia Giorgio (IT) - published by NEWTON COMPTON, January 2020, 320 pages

Drama

Location: France, Italy, Southern Italy, Bari, Paris, Rome

Epoch: 20th century, World War II, 1933 / between 1943 and 1948 / 1975 / 2005

Evaluation : 1.71/3

A nice romantic story, in the vein of some of the old-fashioned books mentioned by the protagonist - LIALA, or GONE WITH THE WIND - that could work for a TV/cinema adaptation, especially with its focus on the environment of Southern Italy and a region - Basilicata - which hasn't been as much on the radars as Sicily or Puglia.

Cinzia Giorgio is an Italian writer and professor. She wrote a play inspired by her first novel, SOTTO IL FIUME in 2007. Her books include the LE RAGAZZE DI JANE AUSTEN series. In 2011 she was selected for the Mondadori Mystery Award Premio Tedeschi with the novel L'ENIGMA BOTTICELLI.

Matilde Carbiana is almost 50 years old, it is April 5, 1975, the day of her birthday, and she is waiting for her husband in a café: together, they have to go to the hospital where their daughter

Eleonora is about to give birth to their first granddaughter. Her husband is late, so Matilde melancholically gets lost in her childhood memories. Matilde, daughter of Fausto and Rosa Maria, has always been a determined and self-confident girl, as well as beautiful and cultured. Matilde and her family live in Venosa, and the girl just convinced her father to let her go and study in Bari.

Thus, in the autumn of 1943 - while Italy is divided between the South liberated by the Allies and the North still in the hands of the Nazis - Matilde and her brother Alfonso go to Bari where they stay at Mrs. Nereide's house: Nereide has hosted other students, namely Mauro and two brothers, Saverio and Gregorio. As soon as she arrives in Bari, Matilde impresses the imperturbable Gregorio, and the two begin to have conversations habitually, in particular about books and literature. Matilde and Gregorio start having feelings for each other, but the war still rages on and their love story will have a thousand obstacles.

Reports available

NON SUPERARE LE DOSI CONSIGLIATE by Costanza Rizzacasa (IT) - published by GUANDA, January 2020, 272 pages

[Drama](#)

[Location:](#) Italy, United States

[Epoch:](#) 20th century, 21st century

[Evaluation :](#) 2.14/3

Debut novel

Costanza Rizzacasa is an Italian writer and journalist. She graduated in creative writing from Columbia University in New York. She writes the anyBody column, Ogni corpo vale (Every body is worthy).

“Have you ever been so fat that you can’t tie your shoes? That you can’t find shoes, or bras, socks, panties that fit you?” “To many,” the narrator writes, “my story will seem disgusting.” Continually addressing and interrogating her reader, Costanza Rizzacasa unpacks the main connotations of shame - shame about ourselves, our bodies, our parents. She does so from an intimate perspective, while framing her own life journey between Italy and the US, two cultures both far removed from each other, and, in her story, in conversation. She examines a series of memories that repeats cyclically and tackles the themes of binge eating, bulimia, anorexia and obesity. The book points to the coexistence of these diseases in the same person. And, more importantly, it makes us understand the chain of responsibility: Matilde, for instance, had a mother who encouraged her to puke after eating, who addressed her in derogatory terms, and a father who would disappear for days at a time. All up to the point in which, at 40, Matilde is ready to rethink her life: from a place of healing, she can look back to when she was 18 and extremely thin as well as to when she was 130kg.

Report available

LA FANTASIA by Loris Chavanette (FR) - published by ALBIN MICHEL, January 2020, 288 pages

[Drama](#)

[Location](#): Algeria, France, Montpellier

[Epoch](#): 20th century, 21st century

[Evaluation](#) : 2/3

Debut novel

Loris Chavanette is a French historian, specialised in the French Revolution, the Terror and the First French Empire. His history books include WATERLOO, acteurs, historiens, écrivains (2015) and QUATRE-VINGT-QUINZE, la Terreur en procès (2017, awarded the Prix de la Fondation Stéphane Bern - Institut de France).

Mariane, an old lady living in Montpellier (south of France) feels the end coming closer and decides to confess to her grandson, Antoine, the secrets of her past before dying. She was born in Algeria, where her family used to live when it was a French colony. Her father is very strict with her but when she turns 18 she succeeds in going out alone for a ball. Here she meets a young French soldier who will become her husband. They have three children but they are not happy, and one day Mariane has an encounter that will change her life...

Short report available

FACTUAL

HO TORNAREM A FER by Jordi Cuixart (ES) - published by UDL, June 2019, 64 pages

Factual, Memoirs

Location: Spain, Catalonia

Epoch: 21st century

Evaluation : 0/3

3 editions in Catalan, with 25.000 copies sold

Jordi Cuixart is a Spanish businessman, politician and cultural activist from Catalonia. He is the president of Òmnium Cultural, a non-profit cultural organisation founded in 1961 with more than 160,000 members in Catalonia. As part of his role in the pro-independence demonstrations prior to the Catalan independence referendum of 2017, he has been imprisoned since October 2017 under charges of sedition and violent rebellion brought by the Spanish prosecutor's office.

A book written from jail by Jordi Cuixart, who has made his imprisonment a tool to denounce repression and defend human rights.

WE'LL DO IT AGAIN is a personal and collective manifesto, vital and political, meditated after more than 20 months in prison and 52 sessions at the Democracy Judgment of the Supreme Court. An emotional manifesto but rigorous, direct and brave, which leads us to lose our fear and conscientiously exercise the fundamental freedoms threatened in Catalonia and throughout the world.

It invites us not to faint, to protest, to listen... and to the permanent nonviolent mobilization. Because when injustice is the law, civil disobedience is a right.

When you have been robbed of freedom as a result of an injustice, what do you have left? You have the possibility of obeying your conscience and not falling into resignation or frustration. Neither as a person nor as a people. Jordi Cuixart, the president of Òmnium Cultural, has decided to transform the sadness of a cell into the best expression of the shared struggle for self-determination and human rights.

So that our children can live in a fairer and freer country, we will do it again.

With a foreword by Jamila Raqib, Executive Director of the Albert Einstein Institution in the United States, founded in 1983 by Gene Sharp and dedicated to promoting the study and use of nonviolent action.

MIJN NAAM IS SELMA by Selma Van de Perre (NL) - published by Thomas Rapp, January 2020, 256 pages

Factual, Memoirs

Location: Netherlands, United Kingdom

Epoch: 20th century, World War II

Evaluation : 0/3

Translation rights sold: US (pre-empt, in a six-figure deal), UK (pre-empt), Germany, Italy, Israël, Poland, Finland

For six figures, Scribner's Valerie Steiker nabbed North American rights to this WWII memoir by Selma van de Perre, a Dutch resistance fighter and concentration camp survivor. The book sold in a number of foreign rights deals. Released on January 9 2020 in the Netherlands, the book has, to date, sold in Germany, Italy, and the U.K.

#1 on the Dutch bestseller list (January 2020)

The 97-year-old author became a journalist after the war and has worked for the BBC and as a foreign correspondent for a Dutch television station. In 1983 she won the Dutch Resistance Commemoration Cross. She lives in London.

Selma was seventeen when WWII broke out. Until then, being Jewish had never played a large role in her life, however it suddenly became a question of life or death. Though she was summoned to register for a work camp in 1942, she managed to evade it. She joined the resistance: under the pseudonym Margareta van der Kuit, Marga for short, she forged documents and delivered them throughout the entire country. She escaped the Nazis on multiple occasions, but in July of 1944 she was betrayed and transported via Camp Vught to Ravensbrück. Unlike her sister and parents, she survived the horrors of the camp. During that time no one knew that she was Jewish, and no one knew her real name. It was only after the war that she dared say it again: My name is Selma.

VÆNGJABYTUR VONARINNAR by Margret Dagmar Ericsdottir (IS) - published by Bjartur, October 2019, 389 pages

Factual, Memoirs

Location: Iceland, United States, Austin, Texas

Epoch: 21st century

Evaluation : 0/3

In Iceland the book immediately became a hit and a runaway bestseller.

The author is a close friend to Kate Winslet, and together they have initiated The Golden Hat foundation, working for to improve lifes for children with autism. Kate Winslet is available to help promote this book- which profit will exclusively go to the (expensive) treatments and special schools Dagmar has her son attend.

Margret Dagmar Ericsdottir is Icelandic. She produced the documentary The Sunshine Boy about autism and her son Keli Thorsteinsson. That film was originally only meant to be a short informative program for Icelandic TV but spiralled into a major international documentary project, with international recognition and distribution. Following the making of The Sunshine Boy the family relocated to Austin, Texas where Keli got admitted to regular school to obtain regular academic education. He graduated from High School in 2019 with high marks. Shortly after relocating to the US, Margret co-founded The Golden Hat Foundation, along with the Oscar winning actress Kate Winslet. In 2012 Margret and Kate along with Keli, co-authored and published the book THE GOLDEN HAT: Talking back to Autism to throw light on the plight of autistic non-verbal individuals and to raise awareness of how crucial communication is for us all.

I AM REAL by Icelandic Margret Dagmar Ericsdottir tells her story of having a severely disabled child.

This is a dramatic and difficult story, but is also full of hope, joy and humorous situations. The book recounts in a very heartfelt manner how deep a mother's love for her offspring is and it shows that no power on earth is a match for the determination and strong headedness rooted in the care of a mother. After the first few years that brought the family to the brink of destruction, there is finally a let-up and things start to move in the right direction. We learn how Margret is able to turn an adverse situation to her advantage and completely change the outlook and quality of life for her son.

At age three and a half Margret's son Keli was diagnosed autistic and severely developmentally disabled. That was reaffirmed when he was 7 years old, and then the family was told he had the mental acuity of a two-year-old and that was as far as they could expect him to develop. Keli could not speak and had a severe form of autism. He had limited motor skills and body awareness, but again Margret refused to give up. She set out on a journey to educate others about autism. She quit her job and started production of a documentary about the condition. Through that project she discovered a place in Austin, Texas, where Keli could be taught communication using the alphabet. At the age of ten, he finally found his voice. The first sentence he wrote was "I am real." They discover that he has an affinity for music, is brilliant at math and likes sushi! Turning their world upside down, this wonderful discovery makes the family move to Texas, USA where Keli gets a proper education and a totally new outlook on life. He is no longer considered intellectually challenged and he can work on his passion for music and writing.

It is a book about triumph, determination and love. It is about how you deal with challenges that life

throws your way, both the sweet and the sour and so it appeals to everyone, since we all have our share of the hard knocks of life. It demonstrates the importance of having the right attitude to make the best out of every situation. It shows that with determination and positive attitude of never giving up and to refuse defeat, you can turn any situation around and make that "mission impossible" possible.

BIOPICS

LA CHUTE by Jacques Ravenne (FR) - published by PERRIN, January 2020, 240 pages

Biopics

Location: France

Epoch: 18th century

Evaluation : 2.14/3

French writer Jacques Ravenne is the pseudonym of a high-ranking French Freemason with intimate knowledge of the history and culture of the Order. The series with hero Commissioner Marcas that he created with journalist Eric Giacometti has sold over 2 million copies all over the world.

In this historical thriller, Jacques Ravenne focuses on the last three days of Maximilien de Robespierre's leadership and life. The novel opens on 28 July 1794, when the bodies of twenty-two men executed by guillotine, including Robespierre's, are thrown into a mass grave. The narration then moves back to the 26th of July, when Robespierre, after having remained silent for weeks, delivers a long speech at the Convention; it follows chronologically from there, illustrating the chain of events which eventually led to Robespierre's arrest and death, and describing the tensions and conflicts that ravaged the French Republic during those three crucial days.