



PULITZER PICKS

| | | <u>InstaPlot: what happens, 10 words or less</u> | <u>Commitment: page count, listening length</u> | <u>Memory Hook: Did-I-read- this-already scene</u> |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2023 | “Demon Copperhead” By Barbara Kingsolver | Young man recalls childhood/young adulthood of epic systemic fails, occasional kindness. | 560-page book of sadness that reads fast with deadpan sarcasm; 21 listening hours. | Teenager’s foster care bedroom is the laundry room floor/dog room. |
| 2023 | “Trust” By Hernan Diaz | Tycoon’s rise to power, egoism, self-duplicity during Roaring 20s/Depression. | Decide who and what you can trust in the novel’s ten listening hours/416 pages. | You’re reading the second part of the book and think: Isn’t this what I just read but different? |
| 2022 | “The Netanyahus” by Joshua Cohen | Jewish professor hosts nightmare Israeli job candidate and his unexpected family. | Mostly a quick read at 248 Pages or 8.5 listening hours with plenty of laughs. | Nose job precipitated by doorknob. |
| 2021 | “The Night Watchman” By Louise Erdrich | Nightwatchman spends days fighting Congressional bill to terminate Native Americans rights. | 451 pages or 13.5 listening hours, moves quickly either way. | Patrice performs underwater in a poisonous mermaid/ox costume. |
| 2020 | “The Nickel Boys” by Coleson Whitehead | Bright Black boy, wrongly arrested, sent to horrific “reform” school | A short, riveting, emotionally demanding novel in 224 pages or 6 CDs. | Elwood is viciously beaten because he protected a little boy from bullies. |
| 2019 | “The Overstory” by Richard Powers | Tree lover/eco activist stories converge; planet’s destiny at stake | Redwood-sized book at 512-pages or 20 CDs/23 hours. | Couple lives atop a giant redwood for a year to protect it; helicopter arrives to destroy Mimas, the majestic 300-foot-tall tree. |
| 2018 | “Less” by Andrew Sean Greer | Author travels world to avoid 50th, marriage of former lover | 272 delightful pages; Audio 8 ¼ hours | Less has outfit drama at Parisian dinner party populated with people who just met. Wishes he wore his signature blue suit. |
| 2017 | “The Underground Railroad” by Coleson Whitehead | Enslaved woman escapes via actual underground railroad, finds other hells | A fast but painful journey through 320 pages, 10+ hours. | Slave catcher Ridgeway discovers Cora hiding under a bed. |
| 2016 | “The Sympathizer” by Thanh Nguyen | Viet Cong spy operates in Siagon, LA, guerila mission | 371 pages, 14 hours on CD. Not an easy read given disturbing content, double meanings/double life of the narrator, and when some key details about the narrator are revealed. | Narrator’s interrogation breakdown strategy: 27/4 in white room, white clothing, florescent lights on, continuous loop of Hank Williams “Hey, Good Lookin.” |
| 2015 | “All the Light We Cannot See” by Anthony Doerr | WW2 German radio savant connects with blind French resistance girl | 544 engaging pages or 16 hours. | Frederick, the nerdy vision-impaired weak link in a German boot camp, is the only person willing to stand up to prevent water torture. |



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| 2014 | "The Goldfinch" by Donna Tartt | NYC teen with stolen master painting, BFF, drugs, and trouble | Epically long 784 pages or 32+ audio hours of bad stuff happening is binge-inducing | Boris and Popchix the Maltese reunite in NYC |
| 2013 | "The Orphan Master's Son" by Adam Johnson | Abused North Korean orphan assumes identity of high profile commander | Relentlessly heartbreaking content can make the 443 pages or 15 CDs (19 ½ hours) feel longer. | Hmm, which trauma to choose? Shark attack, starvation, kidnapping, lobotomies performed with a nail? Let's go with murder via blood harvesting. |
| 2011 | "A Visit from the Goon Squad" by Jennifer Egan | People in NY record producer's orbit connect over time | Short and binge-inducing. 288 pages or 8 CDs/10 hours. | Dead fish wrapped in newspaper in a hipster NYC office. |
| 2010 | "Tinkers" by Paul Harding | Dying old clock-fixer remembers his life, his epileptic dad's | Watch the clock and see how long you savor the 191 pages or enjoy 5 hours of listening time. | Howard has a seizure at the dinner table; nearly bites off son George's fingers |
| 2009 | "Olive Kitteridge" by Elizabeth Strout | Crotchety, big, old lady interacts with small town Maine neighbors | Quick read at 320 or 12 audio hours | Daughter-in-law Dr. Sue trash-talks her mother-of-the-bride dress, so Olive trashes Sue's sweater with a marker, steals one shoe and snags a piece of jewelry. |
| 2008 | "The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao" by Junot Diaz | Rutgers nerd boy falls in love; NJ, Santo Domingo trauma | 352 pages or 13 CDs/16 hours. Many snarky historical footnotes, lots of untranslated Spanish. | Beli's epic beatdown in the cane field is echoed years later with Oscar's beating. |
| 2007 | "The Road" by Cormac McCarthy | Father & son struggle to survive in post-apocalyptic world | Riveting 287 pages, 6+ hours | Papa washes blood and brains out of his son's hair after shooting man who threatened his son with a knife |
| 2006 | "March" by Geraldine Brooks | "Little Women's" Mr. March is not the guy you imagined | Way shorter than "LittleWomen" at 320 pages; 9 CDs (10 hours, 19 minutes) | Marmee rushes to DC and meets March's nurse |
| 2005 | "Gilead" by Marilynne Robinson | Dying minister's letter to son about his Congregationalist extended family | Short novel, 247 pages or 7 CDs; go slowly so content sinks in fully | John Ames Boughton tells John Ames about his the identify of his wife |
| 2004 | "The Known World" by Edward P. Jones | Fates of those from freed Black slave owner's plantation | 432 or 14+ listening hours; non-linear, so take your time | A slave patroller vindictively eats the manumission paper – sole proof of free status – of a free man who is then kidnapped, abused and sold back into slavery. |
| 2003 | "Middlesex" by Jeffrey Eugenides | Greek American family secrets lead to gender identity quest | Epic tale of 544 pages or 17 CDs (21 hours). Humor and adventure temper the heavy content. | Young Callie notices what's between those legs, thinks of it as a crocus, doesn't know if crocus is "normal" or not. |



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| 2002 | “Empire Falls” by Richard Russo | Life is complicated for single-dad diner manager in Maine | 483 pages, 20+ listening hours move fast. | Outcast boy befriended by diner dad and his daughter loses it in the classroom. |
| 2001 | “The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay” by Michael Chabon | Jewish cousins create cartoon empire with Hitler fighting hero | Engaging throughout the epic 684-page novel or 22 CDs/26.5 hours | Tracy surprises Sammy at 1am on the 81st floor observation deck of the Empire State Building with wine and a gourmet meal and it’s love illuminated by lightning strikes. |
| 2000 | “Interpreter of Maladies” by Jhumpa Lahiri | Title story: Indian medical clinic interpreter stretches talent during tour guide side-hustle | A short short story collection of 198 pages; 26 pages for the title story. | Mrs. Das confesses to tour guide that one of her sons is not her husband’s. |
| 1999 | “The Hours” by Michael Cunningham | Connected days-in-life: Virginia Woolf, NYC editor; LA mom | Short at 240 pages or 6+ hours and, no coincidence, about the same length as Mrs Dalloway. | Clarissa Vaughan’s friend Richard, a gay poet dying of AIDs, and the window. |
| 1998 | “American Pastoral” by Philip Roth | Newark jockstar bizman marries Miss NJ, spawn terrorist daughter | Longish at 423 pages, 15 hours. Human and livestock beauty pageants, sports, marine training, and glove-making temper sad family drama and politics. | All-American rich, handsome, jock, marine dad sees his emaciated terrorist Jain daughter and the filthy hideout hovel where has been living and not stuttering. |
| 1997 | “Martin Dressler: The Tale of an American Dreamer” by Steven Millhauser | Big imagination creates turn-of-century empire, minus some important stuff | Short at 293 pages, 8+ hours on audio, great if you’re into architectural detail. | Wedding night nightmare: rejection, affair, tutorial demanded from mother-in-law. |
| 1996 | “Independence Day” by Richard Ford | Divorced realtor’s holiday weekend with son doesn’t go as planned | 400 pages or 20 hours; feels like a long holiday weekend | Vermonters wearing “ball-packer” shorts enchanted with house with visual and olfactory red flags; wife doesn’t want to live next to a prison. |
| 1995 | “The Stone Diaries” by Carol Shields | Family saga centered on stone-lover dad, gardener columnist daughter | Longish, but easy reading. 361 pages; 13.5 CD hours. | Teenager repairs ceiling crack and realizes it’s also possible to change herself and become kind, thoughtful, and a good listener. |
| 1994 | “The Shipping News” by E. Annie Proulx | Single dad moves to Newfoundland with daughters, aunt, family secrets | 352 pages or a long car ride (13 hours on 11 CDs) | Reporter/inexperienced sailor rescued after his shoddy \$50 boat capsizes. |



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| 1993 | “A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain” by Robert Olen Butler | Title Story: Dying old Vietnamese immigrant dreams of Ho Chi Minh | Short collection of short stories: 269 pages for entire book; just 17 pages for the title story. | Ho Chi Minh appears in a dream smelling strongly of sugar, with sugar-sticky fingers. |
| 1992 | “A Thousand Acres” by Jane Smiley | Father gives family farm and major emotional baggage to daughters | 384 or 14+ listening hours | Father says horrible things to his daughters – calls them whores and more – then storms out of the Iowa farmhouse and into a violent storm. |
| 1991 | “Rabbit At Rest” by John Updike | Bigot flees to avoid heart issues, son’s drug addiction | Deep philosophical statements interspersed with comic descriptions of bad behavior take you through 608 pages or 19 listening hours. | When a badly-piloted Sunfish capsizes, deaths are narrowly averted, in large part by a singing child. |
| 1990 | “The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love” by Oscar Hijuelos | Cuban American musician performs, drinks, womanizes, mourns in NYC | The 408 pages are an orgy of alcohol, sex, women treated like hell, food and music. | Cesar and Nestor Castillo meet Lucy and perform with Desi on “I Love Lucy.” |
| 1989 | “Breathing Lessons” by Anne Tyler | Ditzy wife, husband with broken dreams on funeral day trip | Quick 339-page read. Or a 10-CD road trip. | “Love is a Many Splendored Thing” funeral duet. Singers are old classmates because husband refuses to sing with his wife. |
| 1988 | “Beloved” by Toni Morrison | Former slave’s unimaginable past, PTSD, ghost, intrusive visitor, and loves | 12 hours narrated by Toni Morrison or 321 pages challenge the reader with shocking content that unfolds via “rememory” flashback fragments from several characters. | Sethe describes infanticide. |
| 1987 | “A Summons to Memphis” by Peter Taylor | Adult siblings want to revenge-block elderly widow father’s remarriage | Short at 209 pages or 6+ listening hours | Father calls suitor Wyant a likely deceiver and ends his daughter’s marriage before it starts. |
| 1986 | “Lonesome Dove” by Larry McMurtry | Ex-Texas rangers on epic Texas - Montana cattle drive/ character test | One of longest Pulitzer Fiction winners, weighing in at 864 pages; enough content for a 36+ hour from Texas to Montana round-trip drive (in a car). | Hanging of horse thieves/murders, one of whom was a former Texas Ranger and friend. |
| 1985 | “Foreign Affairs” by Alison Lurie | American professors major in love during London sabbatical | Short, easy to track book; 304 pages, 11 listening hours. | Three quarts of watercress avocado soup spills; love ensues. |



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| 1984 | "Ironweed" by William Kennedy Albany Depression-era baseball star becomes homeless alcoholic, talks to dead | 240 pages, 8 listening hours of sadness Comand performance 8-hour narration by Alice Walker or 304 addictive pages | Dead infant son tells living father to atone and end his guilty, suicidal lifestyle. Shug Avery gives Celie a mirror and explains sex. |
| 1983 | "The Color Purple" by Alice Walker Black Georgia woman endures abuse, poverty; finds love, sisterhood, career | | |
| 1982 | "Rabbit Is Rich" by John Updike Bad behavior of bigoted womanizer suburban Philly WASP Toyota dealer | 544 pages or 19.5 listening hours of disgusting behavior served up as cringe-inducing satire that will make you laugh but feel guilty about doing that. | Partner swapping on a Caribbean vacation. |
| 1981 | "A Confederacy of Dunces" by John Kennedy Toole Wacky failure-to-lauch son tries on jobs in New Orleans | 405 fast-moving pages or a fabulous 13.5 hour spoken performance | 12" of Paradise Hot Dog cart sign. |
| 1980 | "The Executioner's Song" by Norman Mailer Bio of Gary Gilmore, murderer who wants own execution | Ridiculously long at 1136 pages/42 hours, including yucky explicit correspondence. | Horrific, graphically-rendered murders of Benny Bushnell, working a motel night shift, and Max Jensen, a cooperative gas station attendant, committed for \$400 used truck payment. |
| 1979 | "The Stories of John Cheever" by John Cheever Short Story: "The Swimmer" Alcoholic man pool-hops WASPy neighborhood. | Reading Cheever stories one at a time – ten pages or so – is delicious. Reading 61 stories in a row as a book of 704 pages is gorging an entire buffet. | Drunk Neddy removes swim trunks to meet rich, elderly pool owners |
| 1978 | "Elbow Room" by James Alan McPherson Title Story: Parents on both sides object to mixed-race marriage | The title story is 31 pages; entirety of Elbow Room is 288 pages; no spoken book version | Car full of children call Paul, who is White, "nigger." His Black wife couldn't understand why he was upset: "I just laughed at the little crumbsnatchers." |
| 1976 | "Humboldt's Gift" by Saul Bellow Friendship blows up as one writer succeeds, other loses it | 18 audio hours or 512 demanding pages. Endless intellectual winks, references and asides along with pop-up philosophical wonderings. | Charlie follows orders and hands-off a roll of \$50s in the Playboy Club while chatting with a well-known gossip columnist, only to be told by gun-toting gangster that he screwed up and must turn over the money again in front of a different audience. |
| 1975 | "The Killer Angels" by Michael Shaara Why Lee loses Battle of Gettysburg | 368 pages or 13+ listening hours of historical backstory | Fix bayonets and charge |



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| 1973 | “The Optimist’s Daughter” by Eudora Welty | Daughter, same-age step-mother tangle after Optimist’s primitive surgery | Very short at 180 pages with lots of white space; 4 audio hours | After weeks of stillness and sandbags to promote recovery from eye surgery, wife gets rough with her much-older husband and tells him to “snap out of it.” |
| 1972 | “Angle of Repose” by Wallace Stegner | Historian with disability writes grandmother’s artsy wilderness heartbreak life story | Long, messy life story, long book: 672 pages or 22 listening hours | Artist/writer wife tells mining engineer husband to invent hydraulic cement, so he does |
| 1970 | “Collected Stories” by Jean Stafford | Short Story: “The Interior Castle.” Disfigured car accident victim’s hospital stay | Read back-to-back, 31 stories told in 512 pages feels like a lot. An individual story like “The Interior Castle” feels, well, short at 20 pages. | ENT surgeon from the days of primitive anesthesia crams cocaine-soaked gauze pads up both of Pansy’s nostrils. |
| 1969 | “House Made of Dawn” by N. Scott Momaday | WW2 vet returns to reservation with PTSD; alcohol, reintegration issues | Short at 212 pages or 6.5 listening hours, but challenging given depressing content and writing that fuses poetry, chants, journal entries, cultural mythology, and religious sermons. | Defense at murder trial for murder via knife: killing-snake-in-sand. |
| 1968 | “The Confessions of Nat Turner” by William Styron | First-person fictionalized account leader of uprising of enslaved people | Styron accepted James Baldwin’s dare to write his 480-page novel in the first person. | Nat strikes first blow with hatchet, fails to draw first blood in the revolt. |
| 1967 | “The Fixer” by Bernard Malamud | Innocent man framed for boy’s murder by pre-Revolutionary Russian anti-Semites | 352 pages or 10 listening hours. Compelling; you might just read it in one or two sittings. | Deputy Warden’s body search. |
| 1966 | “The Collected Stories of Katherine Ann Porter” by Katherine Anne Porter | Short Story: “Flowering Judas” Young American woman teacher/volunteer deals with Mexican revolutionary’s advances | 26 stories told in 495 pages. Reading that many stories back-to-back is not the best way to enjoy them. | Laura comes home exhausted after a long day’s work and, yet again, must listen to the awful serenades of the besotted married physically unappealing guy who is paying her salary. |
| 1965 | “The Keepers of the House” by Shirley Ann Grau | Three generations respond to racial prejudice in their Alabama town | Relatively short at 320 pages or 9+ listening hours. | Rich guy meets love of his life after hunting for a moonshine still in a swamp. |
| 1963 | “The Reivers” by William Faulkner | Southern boy grows up: unauthorized road trip, bordello, horseracing hijinks | 320 pages or 11 listening hours | Grandfather’s car gets stuck in a mudhole in Hell Creek bottom. |
| 1962 | “The Edge of Sadness” by Edwin O’Connor | Hard times for Boston parish and its alcoholic priest | 664 pages of sadness. | Priest lies about his father to a wealthy, pitiless elderly man on his deathbed. Old man lives on believing the priest’s father liked and respected him. |



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| 1961 | “To Kill A Mockingbird” by Harper Lee Black man wrongly accused of murder; children lose innocence. | Short, straight-forward 296 pages; 11 CDs (12.5 hours) | Courtroom defense of Tom Robinson. |
| 1960 | “Advise and Consent” by Allen Drury Dirty politics, communism, Senator’s personal life, shape Senate confirmation hearing | Long book at 616 pages or 33+ hours. Slow-ish narrator might trigger play-back speed-up. Feels like a filibuster at times | Supreme Court justice finds/steals envelope that contains a secret which reveals the prejudice of the day as well the integrity of all privy to the contents of that envelope. |
| 1959 | “The Travels of Jaimie McPheeters” by Robert Lewis Taylor Father, son make BFFs, fight bad guys on Gold Rush trail | Long but lively 548 pages. | Jaimie realizes the identity of the gold-swindler couple. |
| 1958 | “A Death In The Family” by James Agee Sudden death underlines family’s differences in religion, class, emotional IQ | Short, gripping 310 pages or 10.5 listening hours. | Phone call requesting a man in the family to come because there’s been a serious accident. |
| 1956 | “Andersonville” by MacKinlay Kantor Abuse of Union soldiers in notorious Georgia POW stockade | A lot at 768 pages or 37 listening hours, but it’s hard to get away from Andersonville | Union soldiers arrive in stockade prison and find no shelter, clean water, or sanitation |
| 1955 | “A Fable” by William Faulkner Corporal and dozen followers mutiny and stop French WWI battle | Earn a literary battlefield medal if you make it through either 512 pages or 20 listening hours. | Corporal found with a crown of barbed wire. |
| 1953 | “The Old Man and the Sea” by Ernest Hemingway Old Cuban fisherman fights marlin, mentors boy, loves NY Yankees | Very short, completely captivating. 127 pages; 3 CDs | Keep the shark imagery out of your head. Remember when the Old man thrills at his first sight of the marlin leaping from the sea. |
| 1952 | “The Caine Mutiny” by Herman Wouk Captain Queeg steers his crew toward disaster and court-martial | Max page-turning speed throughout the 560 pages or 26.5 hour cruise | Ship’s towline is cut because Captain Queeg is too busy dressing down a sailor with a sloppy shirttail. |
| 1951 | “The Town” by Conrad Richter Family’s pre-Civil war transition from log cabin settlers to townies. | 448 pages or 13.5 hours that can feel a good piece longer cause of how people are a talkin’ | Little feller Chancey runs away to his “real parents,” gets lost on the river. |
| 1950 | “The Way West” by A. B. Guthrie Missouri to Oregon wagon train pioneers struggle to be decent humans | 352 pages; 12 hours. You’ll feel sucker-punched early and several times later. | Lovestruck teen pioneer chisels Mercy McBee Brownie Evens July 2, 1845; meets Sioux. |
| 1949 | “Guard of Honor” by James Gould Cozzens Bigotry toward Tuskegee airman and cover-up on Florida Air base | 642 pages summarize three days. It reads quickly. Not found as a spoken book. | Black U.S. Air Force officers – Tuskegee airmen -- enter the Officer’s Club and are arrested. |

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1948 "Tales of the South Pacific" by James A. Michener

Short Story: "A Boar's Tooth" Navy men attend ceremonial pig sacrifice.

The book of short stories is 357. The story "A Boar's Tooth" is 14 pages. Spoken book not found.

Boar's tooth becomes a circular ivory bracelet when tusks grow through the pig's face and jawbone.