



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>
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.
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.



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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.
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.



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2001	“The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay” by Michael Chabon	Jewish cousins create cartoon empire with Hilter 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	Vermont 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.
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.



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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.
1984	"Ironweed" by William Kennedy Albany Depression-era baseball star becomes homeless alcoholic, talks to dead	240 pages, 8 listening hours of sadness	Dead infant son tells living father to atone and end his guilty, suicidal lifestyle.
1983	"The Color Purple" by Alice Walker Black Georgia woman endures abuse, poverty; finds love, sisterhood, career	Comand performance 8-hour narration by Alice Walker or 304 addictive pages	Shug Avery gives Celie a mirror and explains sex.



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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
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

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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.
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.



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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.
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.