



PULITZER BESTS & WORSTS

2022	Best example of how to create a seriously funny novel based on a premise that sounds deadly boring: a Zionist Medieval history professor's vetting process	The Netanyahus	Joshua Cohen
2021	Best look at Native Americans	The Night Watchman	Louise Erdrich
2020	Most outstanding exposé	The Nickel Boys	Coleson Whitehead
2019	Best look at humans via nature	The Overstory	Richard Powers
2018	Most fun read	Less	Andrew Sean Greer
2017	Most ingenious examination of slavery	The Underground Railroad	Coleson Whitehead
2016	Best really dark humor	The Sympathizer	Thanh Nguyen
2015	Most compelling WWII story	All the Light We Cannot See	Anthony Doerr
2014	Most disturbing young people	The Goldfinch	Donna Tartt
2013	Most bad stuff happening to one person	The Orphan Master's Son	Adam Johnson
2011	Best look at how people age	A Visit from the Goon Squad	Jennifer Egan
2010	Most interesting look-back	Tinkers	Paul Harding
2009	Most memorable older hero	Olive Kitteridge	Elizabeth Strout
2008	Saddest	The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao	Junot Diaz
2007	Best and most challenging parenting	The Road	Cormac McCarthy
2006	Best invented classic novel backstory	March	Geraldine Brooks
2005	Most moving act of love for a child	Gilead	Marilynne Robinson
2004	Most surprising take on slavery	The Known World	Edward P. Jones
2003	Best self discovery story	Middlesex	Jeffrey Eugenides
2002	Best look at a community	Empire Falls	Richard Russo



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2001	Most epic partnerships	The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay	Michael Chabon
2000	Best/only focus on Indian Americans	Interpreter of Maladies	Jhumpa Lahiri
1999	Best riff on a classic	The Hours	Michael Cunningham
1998	Biggest family blow up	American Pastoral	Philip Roth
1997	Worst business decision	Martin Dressler: The Tale of an American Dreamer	Steven Millhauser
1996	Best look at 1980s and single parenting	Independence Day	Richard Ford
1995	Best deep dive into a woman's lifestyle	The Stone Diaries	Carol Shields
1994	Best kept family secret	The Shipping News	E. Annie Proulx
1993	Best examination of post-war immigrants	A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain	Robert Olen Butler
1992	Most Shakespearean	A Thousand Acres	Jane Smiley
1991	Worst betrayal	Rabbit At Rest	John Updike
1990	Worst treatment of women	The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love	Oscar Hijuelos
1989	Best snapshot of a marriage	Breathing Lessons	Anne Tyler
1988	Most heartbreaking and poetic	Beloved	Toni Morrison
1987	Most blatant manipulation	A Summons to Memphis	Peter Taylor
1986	Best western	Lonesome Dove	Larry McMurtry
1985	Best love story	Foreign Affairs	Alison Lurie
1984	Most unlikely central character	Ironweed	William Kennedy
1983	Best spoken book	The Color Purple	Alice Walker
1982	Best portrayal of despicable bigotry	Rabbit Is Rich	John Updike
1981	Funniest	A Confederacy of Dunces	John Kennedy Toole



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1980	Loongest; best non-fiction sold as fiction	The Executioner's Song	Norman Mailer
1979	Most excessive collection of short stories	The Stories of John Cheever	John Cheever
1978	Best look at Black experience via short stories	Elbow Room	James Alan McPherson
1976	Nerdiest	Humboldt's Gift	Saul Bellow
1975	Most realistic portrayal of Civil War event	The Killer Angels	Michael Shaara
1973	Worst cat-fight	The Optimist's Daughter	Eudora Welty
1972	Best examination of isolation	Angle of Repose	Wallace Stegner
1970	Best story based on personal tragedy	Collected Stories	Jean Stafford
1969	Best/only Native American Lens	House Made of Dawn	N. Scott Momaday
1968	Most controversial novel	The Confessions of Nat Turner	William Styron
1967	Most outrageous Jewish discrimination	The Fixer	Bernard Malamud
1966	Most idiosyncratic short story settings	The Collected Stories of Katherine Anne Porter	Katherine Anne Porter
1965	Most vengeance	The Keepers of the House	Shirley Ann Grau
1963	Best Southern lit	The Reivers	William Faulkner
1962	Biggest Catholic trainwreck	The Edge of Sadness	Edwin O'Connor
1961	Biggest legal letdown	To Kill A Mockingbird	Harper Lee
1960	Best/only political thriller	Advise and Consent	Allen Drury
1959	Best coming of age story	The Travels of Jaimie McPheeters	Robert Lewis Taylor
1958	Most real look at loss	A Death In The Family	James Agee
1956	Most disgusting living conditions	Andersonville	MacKinlay Kantor
1955	Most challenging read	A Fable	William Faulkner



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1953	Easiest, quickest read	The Old Man and the Sea	Ernest Hemingway
1952	Great book & great movie	The Caine Mutiny	Herman Wouk
1951	Only look at community formation	The Town	Conrad Richter
1950	Most cringe inducing	The Way West	A. B. Guthrie
1949	Best reveal of systemic racism	Guard of Honor	James Gould Cozzens
1948	Best Broadway inspiration	Tales of the South Pacific	James A. Michener