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Best-Selling Recent Fiction 1999

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Best-Selling Recent Fiction 1999

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Approval vendors categorize. That's our role, and all that happens downstream flows from this first step, a bibliographer's categorization of books by subject, format, and readership level.

Some decisions are straightforward; some are not. Categorizing works of fiction into our readership level categories of "Popular" and "General—Academic" is one of the most difficult decisions we make each day. It's an act of instant literary criticism that we perform in a matter of minutes, separating novels that seem to show literary ambition from those which aim to fit squarely into a genre.

That's not to say "wheat from chaff," since these days academic libraries show some interest in genre novels, reflecting the attention that mysteries, science fiction, and other popular works now receive from scholars in their research and teaching.

Here are two lists of novels, our best-selling titles over the past six months in YBP's "General—Academic" and "Popular" categories, each arranged in descending order by number of copies sold. The form still outshells the latter—with Ralph Ellison's Juneteenth, with 114 copies sold to date, outselling our top popular novel, Thomas Harris's Hannibal, by a margin of a bit more than two to one. Likewise, in moving down the list of hemingway, Ernest, true at first light, ed. by Patrick Hemingway. Scribner 1999 $25.50 Cth 0684849216
Sieg, Lee. Love in a Dead Language. Univ of Chicago 1999 $25.00 Cth 0226756971
Cather, Willa. Death Comes for the Archbishop, ed. by John J. Murphy. Univ of Nebraska 1999 $60.00 Cth 0803214294

"General—Academic" Level Fiction
Collins, Wilkie. Iolaire; or, Tahiti as It Was: A Romance. ed. by Ira B. Nadel. Princeton Univ 1999 $24.95 Cth 069103446x
Guterson, David. East of the Mountains. Harcourt Brace 1999 $25.00 Cth 0151002290
Hemingway, Ernest. True at First Light, ed. by Patrick Hemingway. Scribner 1999 $25.50 Cth 0684849216
Sieg, Lee. Love in a Dead Language. Univ of Chicago 1999 $25.00 Cth 0226756971
Cather, Willa. Death Comes for the Archbishop, ed. by John J. Murphy. Univ of Nebraska 1999 $60.00 Cth 0803214294

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Innovations
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Giovanni Battista Braccelli: Bizzarrie di Varie Figure (Various bizarre figures), Lewis Carroll: The Adventures of Alice in Wonderland; Through the Looking Glass, Alexander Jackson Davis: Rural Residences, Etc; consisting of Designs, Original and Selected, for Cottages, Farmhouses, Villas, and Village Churches, Domenico Fontana: Della Trasportatione dell 'Obelisco Vaticano (The transportation of the Vatican obelisk), Homai Beatae Mariæ ad usum Romanum (The hours of the Blessed Virgin Mary according to the Roman use), Gerardus Mercator: Atlas sive Cosmographicae Meditationes de Fabrica Mundi et Fabricati, Figura (Atlas, or cosmographical mediations on the frame of the world and its form), Andrea Palladio: I Quattro Libri Dell'Architettura (Four books on architecture), Agostino Ramelli: Le Diverse et Artifitose Machine (Various and ingenious machines), Pierre Joseph Redoute: Les Roses, Louis Renard: Poissons, Écrevisses et Crables, de Diverse Couleurs et Figures Extraordinaires. (Fishes, crayfishes, and crabs of diverse coloration and extraordinary form...), Francis Sandford: The History of the Coronation of ... James II, Walt Whitman: Leaves of Grass.

Prices for each title range from US$20 to $75, comparable to a hard-cover book or a trade paperback and considerably less than printed facsimile editions. This now makes it affordable for the retail consumer or a researcher to own a facsimile of rare first editions of landmark publications of Western civilization. (Last year, a copy of Galileo Galilei's Sidereus Nuncius with a folio missing sold at auction for $250,000.)

Libraries and institutions can set up standing orders for $1,000 per volume which averages $55 for two copies of each title. The standing order program, called the Octavo Digital Rare Book Room, entitles a subscriber to two copies of each title one for reference use and one for lending, an unlimited site license program, a 40% discount (off list price) on replacement costs for lost or stolen CDs or additions to the two copies per title, and special patron pricing available through a group discount plan. Subscribers also receive a wall-size poster to announce and advertise this new addition to the collection as well as an optional, free clear Lucite display case which holds forty-eight Octavo editions and sports a custom-printed display sign with the library's or institution's name on it. For personal attention, librarians can contact Mr. Brett Butler, Library Sales Manager, at 650-470-8159 or brett@jnt.4.net.

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Octavo is creating digital preservation solution as well as a publishing program. By using the highest resolution digital camera available and taking the time to properly photograph books, manuscripts, and other material, Octavo's data files can conceivably last for centuries and be migrated to new digital media as they are developed. 

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Leffland, Ella. Breath and Shadows. William Morrow 1999 $23.50 Cloth 0688142710


Alberts, Laurie. Lost Daughters. Univ Pr/ New England 1999 $22.95 Cloth 0874518989

Owens, Louis. Dark River: A Novel. Univ of Oklahoma 1999 $23.95 Cloth 0806131152


Dixon, Stephen. 36: Pieces of a Novel. Henry Holt 1999 $20.00 Cloth 0805059237

Harris, E. Lynn. Abide with Me: A Novel. Doubleday 1999 $24.95 Cloth 038548657x

Auster, Paul. In the Country of Last Things. Henry Holt 1999 $22.00 Cloth 0805054073


Buckley, Christopher. Little Green Men. Random House 1999 $24.45 Cloth 0679452931

“Popular” Level Fiction

Harris, Thomas. Hannibal. Delacorte 1999 $27.95 Cloth 038529929x


Perry, Anne. Bedford Square. Ballantine 1999 $24.45 Cloth 0345432983


Belfer, Lauren. The City of Light. Dial 1999 $24.95 Cloth 038533401x

Barkhordar Nahai, Gina. Moonlight on the Avenue of Faith. HARCOURT BRACE 1999 $24.00 Cloth 0151003882


Wolitzer, Meg. Surrender, Dorothy: A Novel. Scribner 1999 $21.50 Cloth 0688484449

Cornwell, Patricia Daniels. Black Notice. G.P. Putnam’s 1999 $25.95 Cloth 0399145087


Durant, Isadore, 1945–. Death Among the Fossils. Univ of New Mexico 1999 $21.95 Cloth 0826319505

Draper, Robert. Hadrian’s Walls. Alfred A. Knopf 1999 $22.50 Cloth 0375403698


Airth, Rennie. River of Darkness. Viking 1999 $24.95 Cloth 0670885959

Hickam, Homer H. Back to the Moon: A Novel. Delacorte 1999 $23.95 Cloth 0385334222

Clark, Mary Higgins. We’ll Meet Again. Simon & Schuster 1999 $24.50 Cloth 0684835975


Evanovich, Janet. High Five. St. Martin’s/ TRADE 1999 $23.95 Cloth 0312203039

Chace, Rebecca. Capture the Flag: A Novel. Simon & Schuster 1999 $22.50 Cloth 0684857588

Mason, Richard. Drowning People. Warner 1999 $23.50 Cloth 0446525243

Aubert, Rosemary. Feast of Stephen: An Ellis Portal Mystery. Bridge Books 1999 $22.95 Cloth 0882593278

Hambly, Barbara. Graveyard Dust. Bantam 1999 $23.95 Cloth 0553102591

Massey, Sujata. Flower Master. HarperCollins 1999 $24.00 Cloth 0060192283

Oregon Trails — Support Your Local Bookseller
by Tom Leonhardt (Director of the Library, Oregon Institute of Technology) <leonhart@oit.edu>

It was late June 1973 when I began work at Stanford as the Gifts and Exchange Librarian, part of the Acquisitions Department. Stanford was already automating (BALLOTS) its order and receiving processes and its main book vendor, among many, was Richard Abel and Company. As it turned out, having an automated ordering system was a godsend when most of the book orders had to be re-directed a couple of years later. Around that same time, I needed a special service from any book jobber who would help me out.

Once upon a time, universities, including those in the United States, published much of their own research and made those publications available to their libraries for international exchange in the interests of scholarly communication and dissemination of information. By the time I got involved in the international exchange of scholarly information, it was already declining but propped up by cold war politics, Communism, and the Soviet Union. In exchange for what we received, we sent exchange lists of duplicates and unwanted gifts. Stanford had few free publications and only a few sources that offered us heavily discounted prices—the Stanford Press, the Hoover Institution Press, and Annual Reviews (Stanford professors started that publishing house). All of this together was not enough to satisfy the Soviet libraries. They wanted new U.S. imprints and lots of them. I did not have the staff and time to acquire and ship large numbers of books to the Soviet Union so I approached Stanford’s major book suppliers (Richard Abel was already in the history books by then) but none of them would place our orders; drop ship the books to the Soviet Union (various libraries throughout the USSR), and bill the Stanford University Libraries’ Gift & Exchange Division.

Don Coombs of Coombs and Fred Gullette of Academic Book Center were two of the many vendor reps who called

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