2010 Fiction All Stars

Titles Which Received Three or More Starred Reviews From Major Review Sources

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The Ask
by Lipsyte, Sam
FICTION LIP
After he loses his job as a development officer at a university, family man Milo Burke is given a chance to regain his position, but only if he can reel in a potential donor, one who has requested his involvement and turns out to be his sinister college classmate.

The Blindness of the Heart
by Franck, Julia
FICTION FRA
A multi-generational family story set in the Germany of the early twentieth century that reveals the devastating effect of war on the human heart.

Bound
by Nelson, Antonya
FICTION NEL
Left as guardian to her late friend's teenage daughter who is now missing, Catherine Desplaines must cope with finding the teenager and with her husband's philandering, amidst news reports of the return of Witchita's BTK serial killer.

The Changeling
by Oe, Kenzaburo
FICTION OE
After he rekindles a lost friendship with his brother-in-law, Goro Hanawa, and receives a series of tapes recording Goro's reflections, Kogito Choko hears his friend commit suicide on one of the recordings, prompting him to travel to Berlin.

The Cookbook Collector
by Goodman, Allegra
FICTION GOO
While executive Emily questions her choices about her career and a long-distance relationship with a successful man, her environmental activist sister, Jessamine, struggles with her own doubts about her beliefs and love affair.

Freedom
by Franzen, Jonathan
FICTION FRA
The idyllic lives of civic-minded environmentalists Patty and Walter Berglund come into question when their son moves in with aggressive Republican neighbors, green lawyer Walter takes a job with Big Coal and go-getter Patty becomes increasingly unstable and enraged.

Ilustrado
by Syjuco, Miguel
FICTION SYJ
When an esteemed author is murdered, protégé Miguel seeks both answers and the whereabouts of a missing manuscript written to expose corruption among the Philippines' wealthy ruling families, an effort for which Miguel examines his mentor's life and writings.

The Infinities
by Banville, John
FICTION BAN
Attending the deathbed of a renowned mathematician, his second wife and adult children reflect on their personal demons, including the son's pretty wife, who has caught the attention of the mischievous god Zeus.

Man in the Woods
by Spencer, Scott
FICTION SPE
Paul Phillips, a carpenter living in upstate New York with Kate Ellis and her daughter, Ruby, commits a crime whose only witness was a mixed-breed dog, and fears getting away with the crime as much as he fears the discovery of his terrible secret.

The Marriage Artist
by Winer, Andrew
FICTION WIN
Searching for the meaning behind his wife's suicide with her (suspected) lover, art critic Daniel Lichtmann discovers a link to pre-World War II Vienna, forgotten artist Josef Pick, and a remarkable woman.

Model Home
by Puchner, Eric
FICTION PUC
After tragedy strikes, Warren Ziller and his disintegrating family are forced to move to one of the houses in his abandoned real estate development in the desert.

Parrot and Olivier in America
by Carey, Peter
FICTION CAR
A tale loosely inspired by the life of Alexis de Tocqueville is set in the early nineteenth century and follows an unlikely friendship between a survivor of the French Revolution and an itinerant English engraver's son.

Room
by Donoghue, Emma
FICTION DON
A five-year-old narrates a story about his life growing up in a single room where his mother aims to protect him from the man who has held her prisoner for seven years since she was a teenager.

Secrets of Eden
by Bohjalian, Christopher

FICTION BOH

Haunted by the final words of a newly baptized congregation member who was subsequently murdered by her husband, the Reverend Stephen Drew abandons his pulpit to spend time with an author who writes best-selling books about angels.

Skippy Dies

by Murray, Paul

FICTION MUR

After 14-year-old Skippy ends up dead on the floor of a local donut shop, a number of suspects emerge at Skippy's school in Dublin, in a hilarious portrait of the pain, joy, and occasional beauty of adolescence.

Snakewoman of Little Egypt

by Hellenga, Robert

FICTION HEL

A middle-aged anthropology professor contemplating his future becomes romantically involved with a woman released from jail after shooting her husband, the pastor of a snake-handling church.

Sunset Park

by Auster, Paul

FICTION AUS

A group of troubled individuals is brought together by an enigmatic man in the wake of the 2008 economic collapse, including a fugitive who photographs the abandoned objects of evicted families, a celebrated actress preparing for a Broadway return, and a publisher struggling to save his marriage.

The Surrendered

by Lee, Chang-Rae

FICTION LEE

Thirty years after vying for the attentions of a beautiful but damaged missionary wife at an orphanage, Korean orphan June Han and former GI Hector Brennan are reunited by a plot that forces them to come to terms with mysterious secrets from their past.

The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet

by Mitchell, David

FICTION MIT

Dispatched to the influential Japanese port of Dejima in 1799, ambitious clerk Jacob de Zoet resolves to earn enough money to deserve his wealthy fiancé, an effort that is challenged by his relationship with the midwife daughter of a samurai.

The Unnamed

by Ferris, Joshua

FICTION FER

Their wealthy lifestyle marred only by a two-time occurrence of a short-lived illness, Tim and Jane Farnsworth are devastated when the illness returns in ways that frighteningly alter Tim's behavior and test Jane's endurance.

A Visit From the Goon Squad

by Egan, Jennifer

FICTION EGA

Working side-by-side for a record label, former punk rocker Bennie Salazar and the passionate Sasha hide illicit secrets from one another while interacting with a motley assortment of equally troubled people from 1970s San Francisco to the post-war future.

The Widower's Tale
by Glass, Julia
FICTION GLA
Enjoying an active but lonely rural life, 70-year-old Percy haplessly allows a progressive preschool to move into his barn and transform his quiet home into a lively, youthful community that compels him to reexamine the choices he made in the decades after his wife's death.

World and Town
by Gish, Jen
FICTION JEN
Two years after burying her husband and best friend, 68-year-old Hattie Kong moves to a small New England town where she is joined by a Cambodian family and reunited with an ex-lover before tackling challenges in the form of fundamentalist Christians and struggling family farms.

Other Notable Fiction of 2010

36 Arguments for the Existence of God: A Work of Fiction
by Goldstein, Rebecca
FICTION GOL
Psychology professor Cass Seltzer finds his relationship challenged by a former girlfriend's invitation to join her biochemistry experiment in immortality, an effort that is complicated by his ongoing quest to understand religion.

Agaat: A Novel
by Van Niekerk, Marlene
FICTION VAN
Focuses on the relationship between Milla, an aging white female farmer in South Africa, and Agaat, her black maidservant, in a story set near the end of apartheid.

Anthill
by Wilson, Edward O.
FICTION WIL
Presents the adventures of Raff, a modern-day Huck Finn in Alabama, whose love of ants transforms his life and those around him as he fights condo developers intent on destroying an endangered tract of land.

Anthropology of an American Girl
by Thayer, H. T.
FICTION HAM
The riveting and cinematic story of a young artist's awakening and her enduring love for a professional boxer. Set in East Hampton, New York, in the 1970s through the moneyed, high-pressured Manhattan of the 1980s.

Ape House
by Gruen, Sara

FICTION GRU
A group of apes are kidnapped from a language laboratory and subsequently cast on a reality television show that calls into question scientific assumptions about common DNA that is shared by apes and people.

In the Company of Angels
by Kennedy, Thomas E.
FICTION KEN
After he is tortured for months in a Chilean prison, Bernardo Greene is visited by two angels who promise that he will survive to experience beauty and love once again, a promise that has better chances of coming true after Bernardo comes to Copenhagen for treatment.

Day for Night
by Reiken, Frederick
FICTION REI
In a novel that spans time and space, a middle-aged woman on vacation in Florida is linked to an elusive Sixties-era fugitive, as well as dozens of other characters whose lives seem mysteriously intertwined.

Day Out of Days: Stories
by Shepard, Sam
FICTION SHE
In a series of tales set mainly in the West, a man is trapped inside a restaurant where an endless loop of Shania Twain songs is playing, an actor recounts his teenage debaucheries with an old friend, and a squabbling family remains oblivious to their Yucatan vacation.

The Dead Republic
by Doyle, Roddy
FICTION DOY
A conclusion to the trilogy that began with A Star Called Henry finds Irish rebel Henry Smart unsuccessfully collaborating with a legendary director before taking work as a caretaker at a Dublin boys' school where he meets a woman who may be his long-lost wife.

Elegies for the Brokenhearted
by Hodgen, Christie
FICTION HOD
Mary Murphy searches for identity and purpose as she tells the story of her erratic childhood, her runaway sister, and the histories of people with whom she's crossed paths.

A Fierce Radiance
by Belfer, Lauren
FICTION BEL
Sent to report on the doctors working with the new drug penicillin at the outset of World War II, Claire Shipley falls in love with physician James Stanton, but the suspicious death of James' sister leads Claire to wonder if her estranged father, the head of a pharmaceutical company, is involved.

Good to a Fault
by Endicott, Marina
FICTION END

After Clara Purdy gets into a car crash, the bruises of the mother in the other car turn out to be late-stage cancer, prompting Clara to take in the mother's three children and their grandmother while the mother fights to beat her disease.

I Curse the River of Time
by Petterson, Per
FICTION PET
Anticipating a divorce against a backdrop of the fall of communism, Arvid Jansen is further dismayed by his mother's diagnosis with cancer, a situation that prompts his emotionally charged quest for understanding and balance.

Imperfect Birds
by Lamott, Anne
FICTION LAM
Anticipating a successful final year of high school in a new community, star student and athlete Rosie gives way to behaviors that reveal to her increasingly horrified parents that she has been abusing drugs and telling costly lies.

The Imperfectionists
by Rachman, Tom
FICTION RAC
Preoccupied by personal challenges while running a struggling newspaper in Rome, an obituary writer confronts mortality, an eccentric publisher obsesses over his dog, and other staff members uncover the paper's founding by an impulsive millionaire.

Island Beneath the Sea
by Allende, Isabel
FICTION ALL
In a novel where the setting moves from the sugar plantations of Saint-Domingue to the lavish parlors of New Orleans at the turn of the 19th century, an African slave and concubine is determined to claim her own destiny against impossible odds.

The Lonely Polygamist
by Udall, Brady
FICTION UDA
Golden Richards, a polygamist with four wives and twenty-eight children, has a midlife crisis affair that threatens to destroy his family's future.

The Lotus Eaters
by Soli, Tatjana
FICTION SOL
Helen Adams, an American combat photographer during the Vietnam War, captures the wrenching chaos of battle on film and finds herself torn between the love of two men, one an American war correspondent and the other his Vietnamese underling.

By Nightfall
by Cunningham, Michael
FICTION CUN
Peter and Rebecca Harris have settled into a comfortable mid-life--with their careers as an art dealer

and editor, respectively, blossoming and their daughter in college--until Rebecca's brother with a history of drug problems shows up and makes Peter question his life.

Noah's Compass
by Tyler, Anne
FICTION TYL
Preparing to retire early from an unfulfilling teaching job, Liam Pennywell struggles to recall missing memories of the night before he awoke in the hospital with a head injury, an effort that leads to unexpected discoveries.

Point Omega
by DeLillo, Don
FICTION DEL
Jim Finley, a young filmmaker, attempts to convince Richard Elster, a former secret war advisor, to tell his story on film, an endeavor complicated by the arrival of Richard's daughter from New York and a devastating event that throws everything into question.

The Postmistress
by Blake, Sarah
FICTION BLA
The stories of a small Cape Cod postmistress and an American radio reporter stationed in London collide on the eve of the United States's entrance into World War II, a meeting that is shaped by a broken promise to deliver a letter.

The Pregnant Widow: Inside History
by Amis, Martin
FICTION AMI
In a mountainside castle in Italy, during the long, hot summer of 1970, Keith Nearing struggles to twist feminism and women's ascendency toward his own ends, leading him to actions that have repercussions that catch up to him in the twenty-first century.

Ransom
by Malouf, David
FICTION MAL
A reimagining of the story of Priam's effort to claim the slain body of his son finds the grief-stricken Achilles striking out against Hector after the death of Patroclus during the siege of Troy, an act that results in a powerful confrontation.

Rat
by Eberstadt, Fernanda
FICTION EBE
Growing up in a Mediterranean farmhouse with her free-spirited mother and other single-parent families, Celia flees with a boy who has been targeted by her mother's latest boyfriend and searches for the father she has never met.

The Scent of Rain and Lightning
by Pickard, Nancy
MYSTERY PIC
Convinced of his father's innocence in the killing of Jody Linder's father, Collin Crosby returns to

Kansas with his ex-con father and provokes Jody to face the stunning mystery behind her tragic past.

Shadow Tag
by Erdrich, Louise
FICTION ERD
After she discovers that her husband has been reading her diary, Irene America turns it into a manipulative farce, while secretly keeping a second diary that includes her true thoughts about her shaky marriage, its affect on her children, and her struggles with alcohol.

Summertime
by Coetzee, J. M.
FICTION COE
Researching a late South African writer, a young English biographer interviews five people whose accounts describe a reserved and bookish young man who had trouble making connections.

Super Sad True Love Story
by Shteyngart, Gary
FICTION SHT
In a novel set in the near future, when a beautiful, yet cruel, woman that Lenny Abramov met in Italy says she his coming to stay with him in New York, even the tanks and soldiers stationed in the city and the ongoing war with Venezuela can't get him down.

Turbulence
by Foden, Giles
FICTION FOD
Directed to forecast the weather to assist the planned Allied D-Day invasion, a reclusive pacifist who has devised a sophisticated new system and a young prodigy confront an unstable weather system that proves more threatening than realized.

Work Song
by Doig, Ivan
FICTION DOI
In 1919, itinerant schoolteacher Morrie Morgan journeys to Butte in the hopes of making his fortune in copper mining but finds instead a rich assortment of local characters before an encounter with a former student leads to a violent union uprising.