

2009 Fiction All Stars

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

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[Brooklyn](#)

by Toibin, Colm

FICTION TOI

Leaving her home in post-World War II Ireland to work as a bookkeeper in Brooklyn, Eilis Lacey discovers a new romance in America with a charming blond Italian man before devastating news threatens her happiness.

[Brothers](#)

by Yu, Hua

Set against the backdrop of a modern-day China caught in the midst of a growing capitalism, Baldy Li, a teenage ne'er-do-well, and Song Gang, his bookish stepbrother, vow to preserve their close relationship despite their personal differences, a vow that is tested by their mutual love for Lin Hong, the most beautiful girl in their village.

[The Coral Thief](#)

by Stott, Rebecca

FICTION STO

In 1815 France, a young medical student discovers that the beauty who shared his coach has stolen the rare coral specimens he carried and soon he encounters a ring of philosopher thieves determined to sabotage pre-Darwinian theories of evolution.

[Drood](#)

by Simmons, Dan

A tale inspired by the mysterious final years of Charles Dickens finds the fifty-three-year-old literary master irrevocably changed when a train journey with his mistress ends in violence.

[Generosity: An Enhancement](#)

by Powers, Richard

FICTION POW

Intrigued by an Algerian woman whose blissful demeanor contrasts with the horrific environment of her home country, Chicago teacher Russell Stone brings her to the attention of others who become equally entranced.

[Inherent Vice](#)

by Pynchon, Thomas

FICTION PYN

Reluctantly investigating a kidnapping threat against his ex-girlfriend's billionaire beau, Doc Sportello tackles a bizarre tangle of nefarious characters and his own marijuana habit before stumbling on a mysterious entity that may actually be a tax shelter for a dental group.

[The Last Child](#)

by Hart, John

FICTION HAR

A year after his family is shattered by the disappearance of his twin sister, thirteen-year-old Johnny Merrimon risks everything in a final, desperate search through the dark side of his hometown with the aid of a giant-sized man.

[Love and Summer](#)

by Trevor, William

FICTION TRE

In spare, soulful prose, acclaimed Irish writer Trevor tells a haunting love story about the choices of the heart and the hardships--and comforts--of a bygone world

[My Father's Tears and Other Stories](#)

by Updike, John

FICTION UPD

A collection of short fiction includes tales set in the author's native Pennsylvania, the New England suburbs, and foreign countries, all depicting different facets of the American experience from the Depression through the aftermath of 9/11.

[Once on a Moonless Night](#)

by Dai, Sijie

FICTION DAI

Presents the story of the search for an ancient silk scroll inscribed with a lost Buddhist sutra, and one woman's search for her lost love.

[Spade & Archer: The Prequel to Dashiell Hammett's The Maltese Falcon](#)

by Gores, Joe

MYSTERY

A gritty, pitch-perfect noir novel, Spade & Archer is the authorized prequel to Dashiell Hammett's classic, The Maltese Falcon. In 1921, P.I. Sam Spade tangles with a villain who's planned what he thinks is the perfect crime. And he'll fall in love--though it won't turn out for the best.

[Sunnyside](#)

by Gold, Glen David

In 1916, the lives of three men - a son of the last star of the Wild West, a soldier in a campaign against the Bolsheviks, and Charlie Chaplin - are changed when the silent film star is spotted simultaneously around the world.

[The Tourist](#)

by Steinhauer, Olen

FICTION

Milo Weaver has retired from his days as an undercover agent for the CIA, but new details arise from his old cases that bring him back to his investigations.

[Weight of Heaven](#)

by Umrigar, Thrity N.

FICTION UMR

Having lost their beloved only child to a sudden illness, Frank and Ellie Benton hope to rebuild their lives by accepting an unexpected job offer in India but find their new home compromised by Frank's misguided efforts to heal his grief through a friendship with a bright young boy.

[The Year of the Flood](#)

by Atwood, Margaret

FICTION ATW

When a natural disaster predicted by God's Gardeners leader Adam One obliterates most human life, two survivors trapped inside respective establishments that metaphorically represent paradise and hell wonder if any of their loved ones have survived.

Other Notable Fiction of 2009

[The Family Man](#)

by Lipman, Elinor

FICTION LIP

Reunited with his long-lost stepdaughter by an ex-wife's hysterical plea for help, gay lawyer Henry Archer allows the young woman to move into his basement, where she reluctantly poses as the girlfriend of a down-on-his-luck former sitcom star.

[A Gate at the Stairs](#)

by Moore, Lorrie

FICTION MOO

In the Midwest just after the September 11 attacks, twenty-year-old Tassie Keltjin comes of age amid such challenges as racism, the War on Terror, and cruelty in the name of love, as she leaves her family's farm to attend college and takes a part-time job as a nanny.

[Half Broke Horses: A True-Life Novel](#)

by Walls, Jeannette

FICTION WAL

Presents a novel based on the life of the author's grandmother, Lily Casey Smith, who learned to break horses in childhood, journeyed five hundred miles as a teen to become a teacher, and ran a vast ranch in Arizona with her husband while raising two children.

[Homer & Langley: A Novel](#)

by Doctorow, E.L.

FICTION DOC

A tale inspired by a true story finds the blind Homer Collyer closeted within a once-grand Fifth Avenue mansion with his damaged brother and remembering a life marked by colorful characters, political events, and technological achievements.

[Juliet, Naked](#)

by Hornby, Nick

FICTION HOR

Ending her relationship with a man who turns out to be in love with a reclusive singer, Annie initiates an e-mail friendship with the musician that reveals their mutual loneliness, his concerns about his young son, and his plans to release an acoustic version of his most successful album.

[The Little Giant of Aberdeen County](#)

by Baker, Tiffany

FICTION BAK

In this family saga, unearthed secrets lead to the kind of betrayal that eventually breaks the Morgan family apart forever. However, one woman's reckoning with her own demons allows for both an uprooting of Aberdeen County, and the possibility of love in unexpected places.

[A Mad Desire to Dance](#)

by Wiesel, Elie

FICTION WIE

A European orphan transplanted to New York, Doriel is shaped by the pain, desperation, and loss of the deaths of his parents following World War II and the horrors of the Holocaust, and seeks solace in an intense study of Judaism, psychoanalysis, and a search for the secrets of his mother's life and his own birth.

[Nothing But a Smile](#)

by Amick, Steve

FICTION AMI

It's 1944 and Wink Dutton has returned to Chicago after an unwanted discharge from the military, taking a room at the back of the camera shop run by Sal Chesterton, the wife of one of his service buddies, but when Wink learns that she is making ends meet as a pinup model for the soldier's favorite girlie magazine, it's the beginning of an unspoken and powerful romance.

[The Piano Teacher](#)

by Lee, Janice Y. K.

FICTION LEE

Hired by the wealthy Chen family as a piano instructor, Claire Pendleton is seduced by the social life of Hong Kong's expatriate community and begins an affair with Will Truesdale, an enigmatic Englishman with a devastating past.

[Sing Them Home](#)

by Kallos, Stephanie

FICTION KAL

When their mother vanishes in the midst of a tornado in 1978, her three children are forced to deal with the sudden loss in their own ways, but when their father dies decades later and they are reunited, the three must delve into their history in order to come to terms with the tragedy that has always haunted them.

[South of Broad](#)

by Conroy, Pat

FICTION CON

After his brother's suicide, young Leopold Bloom King struggles along with the rest of his family in Charleston, South Carolina, until he begins to gather an intimate circle of friends, whose ties endure for two decades until a final, unexpected test of friendship.