

## Don't Miss These "Best of 2016" Book Lists

The wave of best-of-2016 lists on the internet has subsided, leaving recommendations for book lovers of all reading interests to wade through and enjoy. You've probably seen a number of this year's must-read lists in the usual places (Recommended Reads for 2016 by Library Staff, anyone?); **here's a list of lists from sources you may not have considered.** Read more

Posted by Ryan S. on January 9, 2017

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Ryan S.'s blog

## Britt-Marie Was Here

view in catalog

Confession: I'm not much of an audio book junkie. In fact, I seldom listen to one unless it is the only copy of a book available, but Joan Walker's funny and poignant rendition of this Scandinavian novel entranced me.

I couldn't wait to get back to the poor, out of the way Swedish town of Borg--football crazy and poor--where most of the inhabitants were racing to sell their homes and leave after the 2008 financial crises. How did a middle-aged wife who had not worked outside the home or travelled anywhere end up in Borg?

Well, first her husband of four decades began an affair with a much younger woman. So Britt-Marie decided to leave him. When she went to the employment agency, there were no jobs, so she returned the next day and cooked for the young lady who worked there a lovely salmon dinner. Britt was nothing if not persistent. Read more

Posted by Dory L. on December 19, 2016

Britt-Marie Was Here

Fiction

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## The Six: the Lives of the Mitford Sisters



view in catalog

Having grown up in a family of six sisters (and two brothers), I understand the influences, cooperation and competition that six sisters often have for each other. The similar interests, wildly divergent ones, pet names shared, and shifting alliances.

The Mitford sisters: Nancy, Pamela, Diana, Unity, Jessica, and Deborah were born between 1904 and 1920, so their youth encompassed the roaring and irreverent 1920s as well as the anxious, and violent pre-war period before WW II. The last of the Mitford sisters, Deborah, died only two years ago.

They had an idyllic childhood on a country estate, and were left mainly to themselves, a nanny and a

tutor. They were almost totally home-schooled. They read deeply books from their parent's library and were fascinated by the world of ideas. All except Pamela, who loved farming and developed close connections with animals and the land. Just before dying she sighed and said she wished only for one more hunt. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on December 14, 2016

[The Six: The Lives of the Mitford Sisters](#)

[Family Relationships](#)

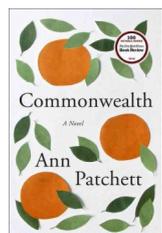
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## Commonwealth



[view in catalog](#)

Fifty per cent of all North American children experience the divorce of their parents. Talented author Ann Patchett explores her own family's divorce in this novel, altered, of course, as all fiction is.

A chance meeting at a 1960s christening causes two families to divide and then merge in new ways. The novel jumps around in the lives of the Cousinses and Keatings. Fix Keating is a Los Angeles cop, and Bert Cousins, an attorney who moves to Virginia. When Cousins falls hard for Keating's wife, Beverly, at the christening, two families are forever tied though they end up living across the continent from each other.

The novel proceeds from the perfectly realized christening where many of the guests are cops and the families of cops, and many of the partiers get drunk including some of the children, to one lakeside vacation where the blended children of the two families seek their own adventures while their parent and step-parent laze away in bed until mid-afternoon. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on December 6, 2016

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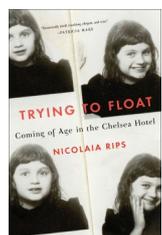
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## Trying to Float: Coming of Age in the Chelsea Hotel



[view in catalog](#)

Can't say when the last time I read a book written by a seventeen-year old, but this memoir by a high

school student was touching and well-written despite Nicolaia Rips' youth. Growing up in New York's famed Chelsea Hotel gives one a head start, at least when it comes to knowing interesting characters. The Chelsea's fame reached its ascendancy in the 60s and 70s with noteworthy residents: Leonard Cohen, Robert Mapplethorpe, and Patsy Smith, who wrote her own memoir about it, *Just Kids*. First Nicolaia describes how she came into being. Her mom was a globe-trotting artist, and her dad had zero interest in raising a child, but somehow the artist got pregnant, and the couple began a new way of life. Though not immediately.

While pregnant, her Mom traveled through Europe and along the Silk Road in Asia. Her dad, a non-practicing lawyer and writer, stayed in New York and added a psychiatrist's office to his daily rounds of coffee shops. He also denied that he was the father, accusing a gay friend for parenting the child. However, once Nicolaia was born, he came around and warmly embraced being a dad, but still the family remained footloose, decamping for several years in Italy, and then roaming North Africa and India, before returning to NYC and the Chelsea Hotel. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on October 24, 2016

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[Memoir](#)

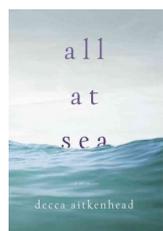
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## All at Sea



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This beautiful memoir had me weeping several times. The opening chapter describes in vivid detail the death of the author's partner by drowning on a winter vacation to Jamaica. He died in the usual tranquil bay outside their cottage after he entered the wild surf to rescue their small son, Jake.

Decca, a *Guardian* journalist and author, noticed both her partner Tony and son flailing in the water. She ran to the beach, dove in and swam out to them, whereupon her partner passed their son to her and she swam back pulling her son by the chin. She assumed all was well, and that the morning would just provide an embarrassing story that they would later share about this vacation.

But when she turned to look over the bay, she noticed that Tony was much further out than he had been, and he was fighting both the waves and the current. She almost swam out to him, but a friend stopped her and pointed to three men who were already assisting Tony.

Decca felt reassured, but Tony kept flailing. The men pulled him in, and on the beach, white foam poured from his mouth. A local doctor bent over him, and felt his pulse, but Tony had died. It seemed unbelievable to Decca because most of the time he had not been underwater. This made her recall a conversation that they had shared at a party about how you could drown in a teaspoon full of water. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on September 7, 2016

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