**TOP 5 OF THE TOP 5: Fresh Voices in Classic Genres**

**Romance, Science Fiction & Fantasy, Short Stories,**

**Horror, Readers’ Advisory in the News**

With Polli Kenn, Lucy Lockley, Andie Paloutzian, Angela Strathman,

Kaite Stover and Rebecca Vnuk

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*Handout available at bit.ly/PLA2020Top5*

**Top 5: Romance**

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**Top 5 Must-Know Romance Authors**

* Nora Roberts
* Georgette Heyer
* Jennifer Crusie
* Kathleen Woodiwiss
* Brenda Jackson

**Top 5 Must-Read Titles**

* *Lord of Scoundrels* by Loretta Chase
* *The Duke and I* by Julia Quinn
* *Bet Me* by Jennifer Crusie
* *A Prince on Paper* by Alyssa Cole
* *The Kiss Quotient* by Helen Hoang

**Top 5 Trends**

* Diversity
* *A Cowboy to Remember* by Rebekah Weatherspoon
* *Red, White, & Royal Blue* by Casey McQuiston
* *Once Ghosted, Twice Shy* by Alyssa Cole
* *The Kiss Quotient* by Helen Hoang
* *Hate to Want You* by Alisha Rai
* Jane Isn’t Dead: Contemporary Jane Austen Retellings
* *Unmarriageable* by Soniah Kamal
* *Pride, Prejudice, and Other Flavors* by Sonali Dev
* *Ayesha at Last* by Uzma Jalaluddin
* *Seeking Mansfield* by Kate Watson
* *Polite Society* by Mahesh Rao
* Covers in Contempo-Casual
* *Boyfriend Material* by Alexis Hall
* *Take a Hint, Dani Brown* by Talia Hibbert
* *Bringing Down the Duke* by Evie Dunmore
* *Party of Two* by Jasmine Guillory
* *The Worst Best Man* by Mia Sosa
* Multi-Author Series
* *Black Hollow Series*
  + *Reviving Love* by Cassidy K. O’Connor
  + *Silver Linings* by Sheri Lyn
  + *Finding Her Fire* by Gracen Miller
  + *One Man’s Curse* by Jennifer Wedmore
  + *It’s the Little Things* by Robbie Cox
* Indie Author Romance Conventions
* [Romance GenreCon](https://www.mymcpl.org/events/romance)
* [Romance Slam Jam](http://rsjconvention.com/)
* [Coastal Magic](https://coastalmagicconvention.com/)
* [ApollyCon](https://apollyconevent.com/)
* [Show Me Your Books](https://www.showmeyourbookskc.com/)
* [Historical Romance Retreat](https://www.historicalromanceretreat.com/)

**Top 5 Up-and-Coming Authors**

* Alyssa Cole
* Helen Hoang
* Evie Dunmore
* Casey McQuiston
* Rebekah Weatherspoon

**5 of Polli’s Personal Favorites**

* *The Wallflower Wager* by Tessa Dare
* *Sweet Filthy Boy* by Christina Lauren
* *Get A Life, Chloe Brown* by Talia Hibbert
* *It Happened One Autumn* by Lisa Kleypas
* *What I Did for A Duke* by Julie Anne Long

**Top 5: Science Fiction and Fantasy**

Lucy Lockley, Lead Collection Development Librarian, St. Charles City-County Library, St. Louis, MO [llockley@stchlibrary.org](mailto:llockley@stchlibrary.org)

**Top 5 Must Know Science Fiction/Fantasy Authors**

* Lois McMaster Bujold
* William Gibson
* N.K. Jemison
* John Scalzi
* V.E. Schwab

**Top 5 Must Read Titles**

* *Peace Talks* by Jim Butcher
* *Relentless Moon* by Mary Robinette Kowal
* *Burning God* by R.F. Kuang
* *Fires of Vengeance* by Evan Winter
* *The Jasmine Throne* by Tasha Suri

**Top 5 Trends**

* Diversity
  + *Down Days* by Ilze Hugo
* Less Dystopia, More Hope
  + *A Beginning at the End* by Mike Chen
* #MeToo & #OwnVoices
  + *Queen of the Unwanted* by Jenna Glass
* Shorter Stories & More Standalones
  + *Race the Sands* by Sarah Beth Durst
* Space Opera, Urban Fantasy, & Witches
  + *The Last Human* by Zack Jordan
  + *A Witch in Time* by Constance Sayers
* A Continuing Trend: Audio books
  + *Hollow Kingdom* by Kira Jane Buxton, read by Robert Petkoff
  + *The Ten Thousand Doors of January* by Alix E. Harrow, read by January LaVoy
  + *Emergency Skin* by N.K. Jemison, read by Jason Isaacs
  + *Black Leopard, Red Wolf* by Marlong James, read by Dion Graham
  + *The Lesson* by Caldwell Taylor, read by Janina Edwards & Ron Butler

**Top 5 Up and Coming Titles**

* *The Unspoken Name* by A.K. Larkwood
* *The Companions* by Katie M. Flynn
* *Beoulf: A New Translation* by Maria Dahvana Headley
* *A Declaration on the Rights of Magicians* by H.G. Parry
* *A Pale Light in the Black* by K.B. Wagers

**5 of Lucy’s Personal Favorites**

* *Piranesi* by Susanna Clarke
* *Noumenon Ultra* by Marina J. Lostetter
* *Looking Glass: The Chronicles of Alice* by Christina Henry
* *Mexican Gothic* by Silvia Moreno-Garcia
* *A Deadly Education* by Naomi Novik

**Top 5: Short Stories**

Andie Paloutzian, Library Services Consultant, Brodart, Williamsport, PA [andiepaloutzian@gmail.com](mailto:andiepaloutzian@gmail.com)

**Top 5 Authors Iconic Authors**

* Flannery O’Connor
* Tobias Wolff
* Lorrie Moore
* George Saunders
* Alice Munroe

**Top 5 Benchmark Titles**

* *Tenth of Decemer* by George Saunders
* *Anthology* by Lucy Caldwell
* *Self Help* by Lorrie Moore
* *A Good Man is Hard to Find*  by Flannery O’Connor
* *A Manual for Cleaning Women* by Lucia Berlin

**Top 5 Trends in Short Stories**

* Self-reflection & Self-obsession
* *Grand Union* by Zadie Smith
* All Out Absurdity: Sometimes Horrifying, Often Hilarious
* *Orange World* by Karen Russell
* *Exhalation*  by Ted Chiang
* Transporting Tales
* *Everything Inside* by Edwidge Danticat
* *Fly Already* by Etgar Keret
* Authentic Voices, Contemporary Perspectives
* *Home Remedies* by Xuan Juliana Wang
* *Sabrina & Corina* by Kalie Fajardo-Anstine
* Perils of Polite Society: Scathing Social Satire
  + *Mouthful of Birds* by Samantha Schweblin
  + *Instructions for a Funeral* by David Means

**Top 5 Upcoming and Coming Titles**

* *Hitting a Straight Lick with a Crooked Stick* by Zora Neale Hurston
* *You Will Never Be Forgotten* by Mary South
* *The Hidden Girl and Other Stories* by Ken Liu
* *How to Pronounce Knife* by Souvankham Thammavongsa
* *F\*ckface* by Leah Hampton

**5 of Andie’s Personal Favorites**

* *Ayiti* by Roxane Gay
* *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri
* *Vampires in the Lemon Grove* by Karen Russell
* *Redeployment* by Phil Klay
* *Her Body and Other Parties* by Carmen Maria Machado

**Top 5: Horror**

Angela Strathman, Readers’ Advisory Librarian, Mid-Continent Public Library, Independence, MO [astrathman@mymcpl.org](mailto:astrathman@mymcpl.org)

**Top 5 Benchmark Authors**

* Shirley Jackson
* Stephen King
* Dean Koontz
* Clive Barker
* Robert McCammon

**Top 5 Must-Read Titles**

* *A Head Full of Ghosts* by Paul Tremblay
* *Horrorstor* by Grady Hendrix
* *The Troop* by Nick Cutter
* *NOS4A2* by Joe Hill
* *Into the Drowning Deep* by Mira Grant

**Top 5 Trends in Horror**

* Siri, Save Me! (technology and social media)
* *The Dark Net* by Benjamin Percy
* *Ghoster* by Jason Arnopp
* *Hex* by Thomas Olde Heuvelt
* *Burn the Dark: Malus Domestica* by S.A. Hunt
* *The Mansion* by Ezekiel Boone
* Diverse Voices (less trend than welcome development/more mainstream
  + *Frankenstein in Baghdad*by Ahmed Saadawi
  + *Mapping the Interior*by Stephen Graham Jones
  + *Certain Dark Things*by Silvia Moreno-Garcia
  + *The Devil in Silver*by Victor Lavalle
  + *The Graveyard Apartment*by Mariko Koike
* Novellas
  + *The Murders of Molly Southbourne*by Tade Thompson
  + *The Beauty*by Aliya Whiteley
  + *The Monster of Elendhaven*by Jennifer Giesbrecht
  + *The Ballad of Black Tom*by Victor Lavalle
  + *Come Closer*by Sara Gran
  + *In the House in the Dark in the Woods*by Laird Hunt
* Historical Horror
  + *The Hunger*and *The Deep*by Alma Katsu
  + *The Curse of Jacob Tracy*by Holly Messinger
  + *The Prisoner of Hell Gate*by Dana Wolff
  + *Lovecraft Country*by Matt Ruff
  + *Maplecroft*by Cherie Priest
  + *The Passenger*by F. R. Tallis
* Creepy Schools
  + *The Lost Causes of Bleak Creek* by Rhett McLaughlin
  + *Inspection*by Josh Malerman
  + *The Bus on Thursday*by Shirley Barrett
  + *Hekla’s Children* by James Brogden
  + *Riddance*by Shelley Jackson

**Top 5 Up and Coming Titles**

* *The Southern Book Club’s Guide to Slaying Vampires*by Grady Hendrix
* *Malorie: A Bird Box Novel*by Josh Malerman
* *Wonderland*by Zoje Stage
* *Devolution: A Firsthand Account of the Rainier Sasquatch Massacre*by Max Brooks
* *The Only Good Indians* by Stephen Graham Jones

**5 of Angie’s Personal Favorites**

* *The Changeling*by Victor Lavalle
* *Kill Creek*by Scott Thomas
* *The White Road*by Sarah Lotz
* *The Boy who Drew Monsters*by Keith Donohue
* *The Lesser Dead*by Christopher Buehlman

**RA in the News: 5 Stories Impacting Readers’ Advisory**

Kaite Stover, Director of Readers’ Services, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, MO [kaitestover@kclibrary.org](mailto:kaitestover@kclibrary.org)

**Authors Speak Out: RWA Under Fire**

“[Racism Dispute Roils Romance Writers Group](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/30/books/courtney-milan-romance-writers-america.html)”

“[If the Romance Writers of America an Implode Over Racism No Group is Safe](https://www.salon.com/2020/01/26/if-the-romance-writers-of-america-can-implode-over-racism-no-group-is-safe_partner/)”

“[The Implosion of the RWA](https://www.claireryanauthor.com/blog/2019/12/27/the-implosion-of-the-rwa?fbclid=IwAR2GFTwz34Vjd0AZD_jB1bf89Iq0zzo8j4PVWx-GAtSWZ5sxoCjYwhgWedc)”

**Stories and Storytellers: American Dirt and My Dark Vanessa**

“[Why Everyone is Tallking About *American Dirt*](https://slate.com/culture/2020/01/american-dirt-book-controversy-explained.html)”

“[The Real Problem with *American Dirt*](https://www.texasmonthly.com/the-culture/american-dirt-book-controversy/)”

“[Will the *American Dirt* Fiasco Change American Publishing](https://slate.com/culture/2020/01/american-dirt-controversy-will-publishers-change.html)”

“[17 Great Books on the Border to Read Instead of *American Dirt*](https://www.texasobserver.org/17-great-books-on-the-border-to-read-instead-of-american-dirt/?fbclid=IwAR0dSJQN4VpyFuft5Lvb8lwsX7lnFP3wU-E9im2QKVwMndvqieYNHF8ABL0)”

“[What’s Going on with *My Dark Vanessa* and *Excavation*?](https://www.vulture.com/2020/02/my-dark-vanessa-and-excavation-book-controversy-explained.html)”

“[Why Everyone’s Angry About *My Dark Vanessa* Now](https://slate.com/culture/2020/01/my-dark-vanessa-book-controversy-explained-american-dirt.html)”

“[On *My Dark Vanessa* and the Way Stories of Trauma Get Told](https://lithub.com/on-my-dark-vanessa-and-the-way-stories-of-trauma-get-told/)”

**Classic Covers (not a rock band): Barnes & Noble & “literary blackface”**

**“**[Barnes and Noble, Criticized for Book Covers, Pulls Plug on Diverse Editions Project](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/05/books/barnes-and-noble-fifth-avenue.html)**”**

“[5 Diverse Retellings of Classic Novels You Need to Read](https://www.pastemagazine.com/articles/2020/02/diverse-retellings-of-classic-books-you-need-to-re.html)”

**E is for Embargo: Ebooks and Macmillan**

“[Update on Macmillan Ebook Embargo](https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/update-macmillan-ebook-embargo/)”

“[As Boycotts Mount, Macmillan CEO Defends Library Ebook Embargo](https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/libraries/article/81666-as-boycotts-mount-macmillan-ceo-defends-library-e-book-embargo.html)”

[The Panorama Project](https://www.panoramaproject.org/panorama-picks)

**Best Isn’t Always Selling: The New York Times Bestseller List**

“[The New York *Times* Pulls the YA Book That Allegedly Gamed the Best-Seller List Over ‘Inconsistencies’](https://www.vulture.com/2017/08/handbook-for-mortals-bestseller-list-controversy.html)”

“[The Convoluted World of Best-Seller Lists, Explained](https://www.vox.com/culture/2017/9/13/16257084/bestseller-lists-explained)”

“[Donald Trump, Jr’s New York *Times* Bestseller ‘Triggered’ Sparks Literary List Controversy](https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/donald-trump-jr-s-new-york-times-bestseller-triggered-sparks-ncna1091856)”

“[R.N.C. Spent Nearly $100,000 on Copies of Donald Trump Jr.’s Book](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/21/books/donald-trump-jr-triggered-sales.html)”

**Words are Forever: Authors We Lost**

Toni Morrison

Ernest J. Gaines

Paule Marshall

Binyavanga Wainaina

Judith Krantz

Mary Higgins Clark

Ron McLarty

Mary Oliver

Patricia Nell Warren

Rosamunde Pilcher

Vonda McIntyre