



BNC RESEARCH

A RESEARCH REPORT BY BOOKNET CANADA

BNC RESEARCH

01.2020

Canada Reads Congratulations, nominees!

What happens now?
What if you win?



**BOOKNET
CANADA**

PREPARED BY BNC STAFF

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Introduction

It's debating time! To the Canada Reads nominees and their publishers: Congratulations to you and cheers to the Canadians who love to read. Along with a national broadcast comes added endorsement and publicity for your nominated titles, raising questions around planning. How will your nomination affect orders? Will you need to reprint? What should you do if your title wins?

BNC Research's literary award studies help Canadian publishers avoid surprises during awards season. By looking at sales data from previous years, we can help you to better predict potential sales and order spikes, giving you the data you need to ensure you have enough copies in the warehouse and on booksellers' shelves.

CBC's Canada Reads literary contest is highly publicized and widely followed. Its debate-style format and interactive components make it popular with the public. To get a sense of what to expect during the upcoming Canada Reads season, and to help publishers with stock and demand planning, we've created a trend analysis of last year's shortlist and winner as well as a comparison in sales and stock position of all the winners between 2014 and 2019.

Our research shows that interesting sales patterns follow the debates and the extensive media coverage that goes along with them.

This study includes:

- Week-over-week comparison of volume sold for all nominees
- Stock position by week: How many units were on hand during the Canada Reads season?
- On-order position by week: When do orders rise and fall, and by how much?
- Market trends by week, and percentage of market share for the nominated titles

The first section of this study compares the 2019 Canada Reads nominees by volume sold and includes a look at overall market sales during this time. The comparison by volume sold helps us understand how the award affects consumer behaviour, and how it relates to the rise and fall of the market as a whole.

Next, we look at the 2019 nominated titles individually, showing volume sold, units on hand (OH), and units on order (OO). This shows us the retail demand and how retailers are predicting sales, especially during the holiday season.

Finally, the year-over-year comparison looks at the winners from 2014 to 2019, showing the impact of the competition over time and noting similarities and special cases. The volume-sold comparison shows how the competition is reaching readers, on-hand numbers show how retailers are predicting sales, and on-order information shows the retail demand.

Note:

- All dates used in the graphs represent week-ending dates.
- BNC calculates percent change based on average units sold three weeks prior to shortlist and winner announcements compared to units sold in the week following each announcement. These calculations are dependent on a given title's availability in the market.

Caveats

Based on publisher feedback, we estimate that BNC SalesData represents 85% of physical book industry sales. Certain retail categories are not completely covered by our retail panel, and this should be noted in any interpretation of these results, as the effect of certain awards may not be fully captured in our data. These retail categories include:

- **Independent bookstores:** BNC SalesData includes most major independent bookstores, and many smaller ones but not all, any of which could be actively promoting an award winner. It also does not capture some specialty independent bookstores where a genre- or subject-specific award may have more impact. However, we are able to detect even the slightest variation in sales in our independent panel, so we are confident that sales changes in the independent market are well represented.
- **K-12 and higher-education sales:** Our panel does not include direct institutional sales to schools or college/university textbook sales.

New booksellers have begun contributing to BNC SalesData since our first literary awards study, conducted in October 2006. Some changes seen in year-over-year sales figures may be due to the increased number of stores reporting sales, rather than a true increase in overall sales.

At this time, ebook sales are not represented in BNC's data. Therefore, all numbers in this report refer to print books only.

CBC Canada Reads 2019

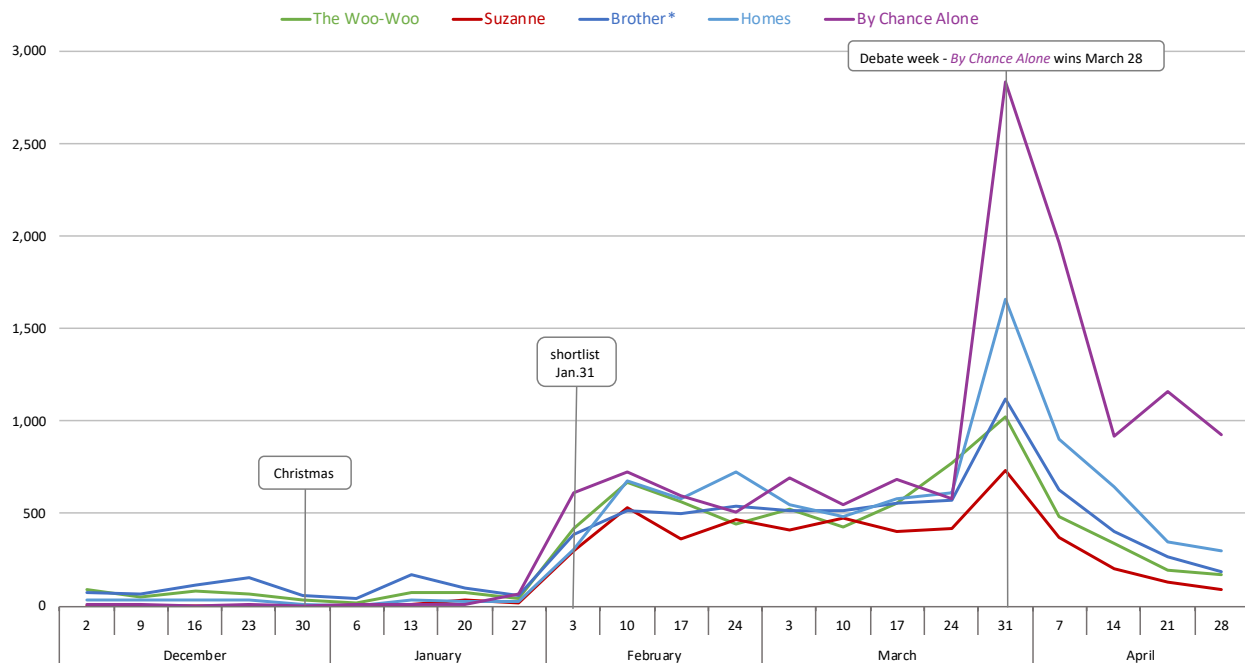
Organized by the CBC
Nominations announced: Jan. 31, 2019
Debate week: March 25-28, 2019
Winner: *By Chance Alone*

Volume Sold

		Christmas	Shortlist announced	Winner announced						
										
		<i>The Woo-Woo</i>	<i>Suzanne</i>	<i>Brother*</i>	<i>Homes</i>	<i>By Chance Alone</i>	Overall Unit Sales	2018-2019 Markets		
								Fiction	Non-Fiction	Week
December	2	86	2	71	31	6	88	365,774	601,007	1
	9	49	2	69	32	10	51	381,840	658,831	2
	16	82	2	115	31	2	84	433,106	800,409	3
	23	65	4	152	31	6	69	559,123	1,055,311	4
	30	32	2	54	9	1	34	301,688	526,793	5
January	6	16	0	42	4	6	16	221,377	364,570	6
	13	73	7	169	34	11	80	218,608	359,218	7
	20	70	30	100	24	5	100	202,503	329,161	8
	27	41	17	55	25	69	58	204,151	307,866	9
February	3	422	300	390	305	609	722	220,891	301,873	10
	10	670	535	517	677	724	1,205	219,352	300,490	11
	17	563	361	499	581	599	924	214,487	304,590	12
	24	441	467	539	722	511	908	219,848	311,801	13
March	3	521	414	517	548	696	935	224,998	306,752	14
	10	427	474	518	481	549	901	234,761	320,233	15
	17	559	407	559	577	685	966	226,197	326,991	16
	24	774	416	574	615	580	1,190	216,311	315,412	17
April	31	1,020	733	1,117	1,655	2,836	1,753	238,852	342,358	18
	7	487	375	625	905	1,964	862	230,474	312,616	19
	14	338	199	405	642	922	537	211,287	304,948	20
	21	197	131	263	347	1,160	328	214,511	290,781	21
	28	167	91	186	300	928	258	219,485	290,302	22

*Sales for the paperback and hardcover editions are combined.

Volume Sold



*Sales for the paperback and hardcover editions are combined.

Shortlist announcement (Jan. 31, 2019):

By Chance Alone sold the highest number of copies during the shortlist period (i.e., the week following the shortlist announcement until the winner announcement), followed by *Homes*. All shortlisted titles experienced a large sales increase following the shortlist announcement, ranging from 379% (*Brother*) to 2,872% (*Suzanne*) – even higher than during Christmas. The average sales increase for the five shortlisted titles following the shortlist announcement was 1,809%.

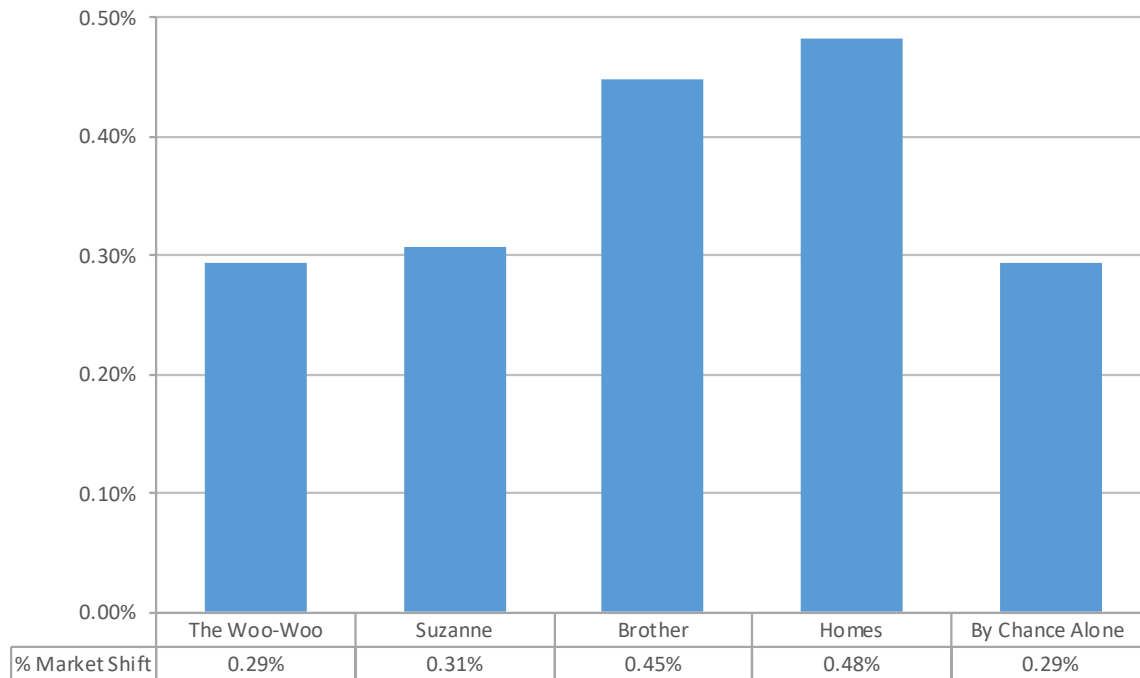
Sales remained high following the shortlist announcement and peaked during the debate week.

Winner announcement (March 28, 2019):

All shortlisted titles had sales peaks during the debate week. For the week following the winner announcement, three of the five titles experienced a sales increase, ranging from 14% (*Brother*) to 225% (*By Chance Alone*, the winner). *Homes* experienced a 62% sales increase following the winner announcement. Two of the five shortlisted titles experienced a sales decrease: -13% for *The Woo-Woo* and -17% for *Suzanne*. The average sales increase for the five shortlisted titles following the winner announcement was 54%.

2019 Nominees

Market Share Shift



Each shortlisted title's market share percentage (i.e., the portion of either the Fiction or Non-Fiction market, depending on the title's subject, that is allocated to sales of that title) during debate week was compared with a baseline market share from 12 weeks earlier to calculate the shift each title experienced during debate week. *The Woo-Woo* was voted off on day one and its percentage is a share of the Non-Fiction market, *Suzanne* was voted off on day two and its percentage is a share of the Fiction market, and so on leading up to the final day, leaving *By Chance Alone* the 2019 winner.

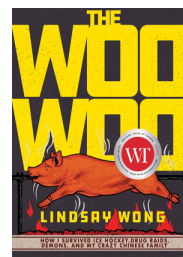
Is there a connection between sales and the order a title was voted off? Possibly. This year, the last two titles voted off (prior to the winner left standing) experienced the largest market share shifts, and the first title voted off saw the same positive market share shift as the winning title.

Nominee

Lindsay Wong's *The Woo-Woo*

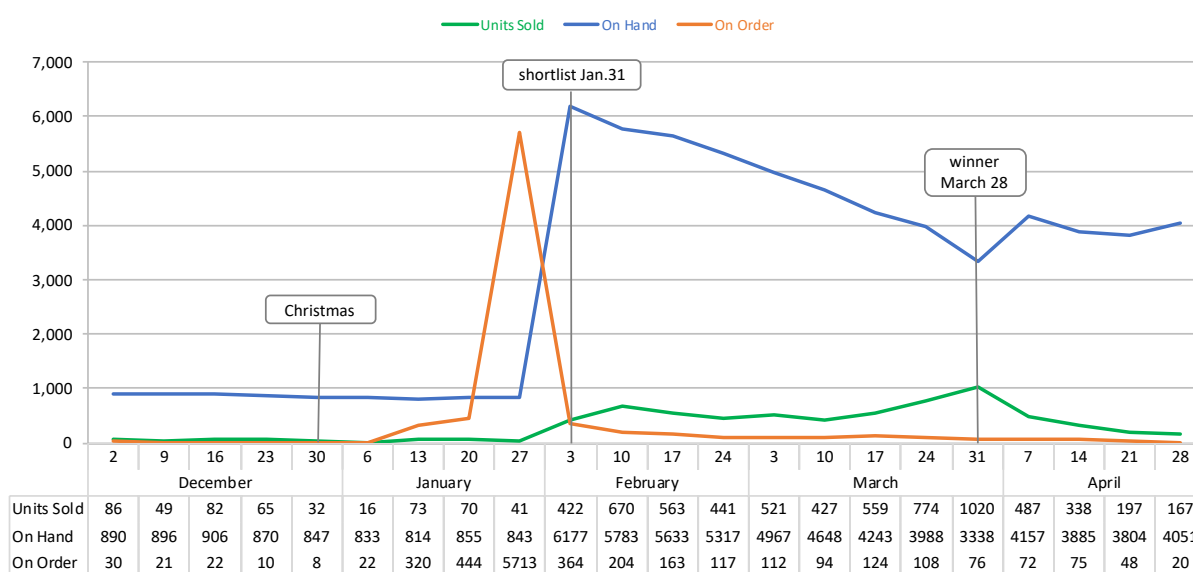
*How I Survived Ice Hockey, Drug Raids, Demons,
And My Crazy Chinese Family*

Arsenal Pulp Press
Trade Paperback
9781551527369
\$19.95



Defended by Joe Zee

Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



The Woo-Woo was also nominated for the Writers' Trust Hilary Weston Prize for Non-Fiction on Sept. 19, 2018.

Nominee

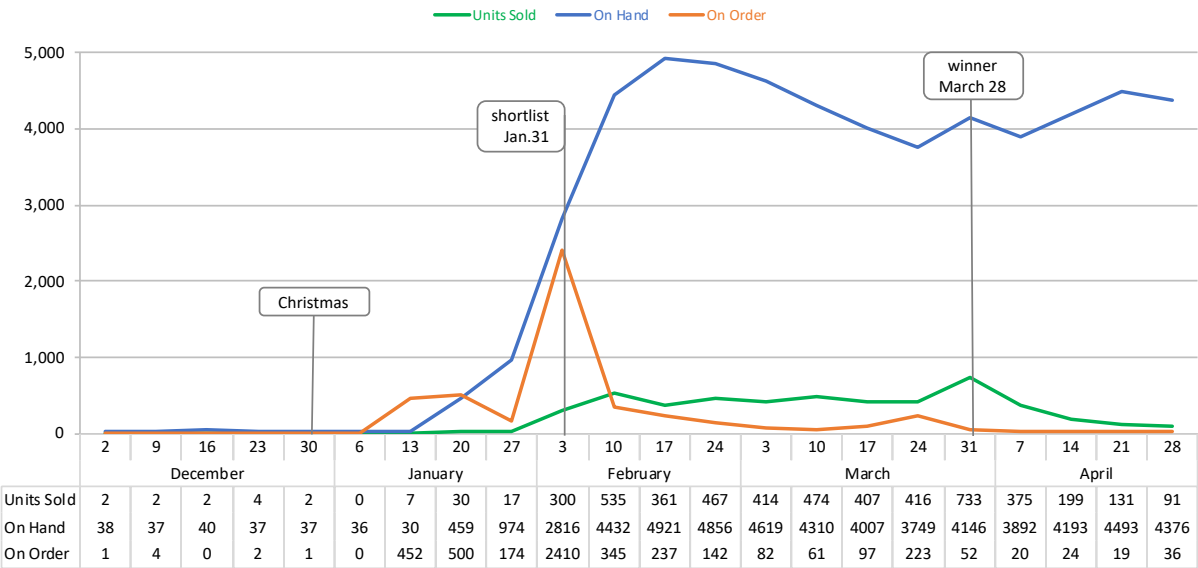
Anaïs Barbeau-Lavalette’s Suzanne

Defended by Yanic Truesdale

Coach House Books
Trade Paperback
9781552453476
\$20.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



Nominee

David Chariandy's *Brother*

Defended by Lisa Ray

McClelland & Stewart

Trade Paperback

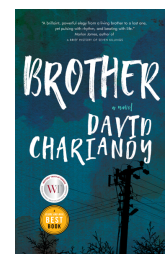
9780771023330

\$19.95

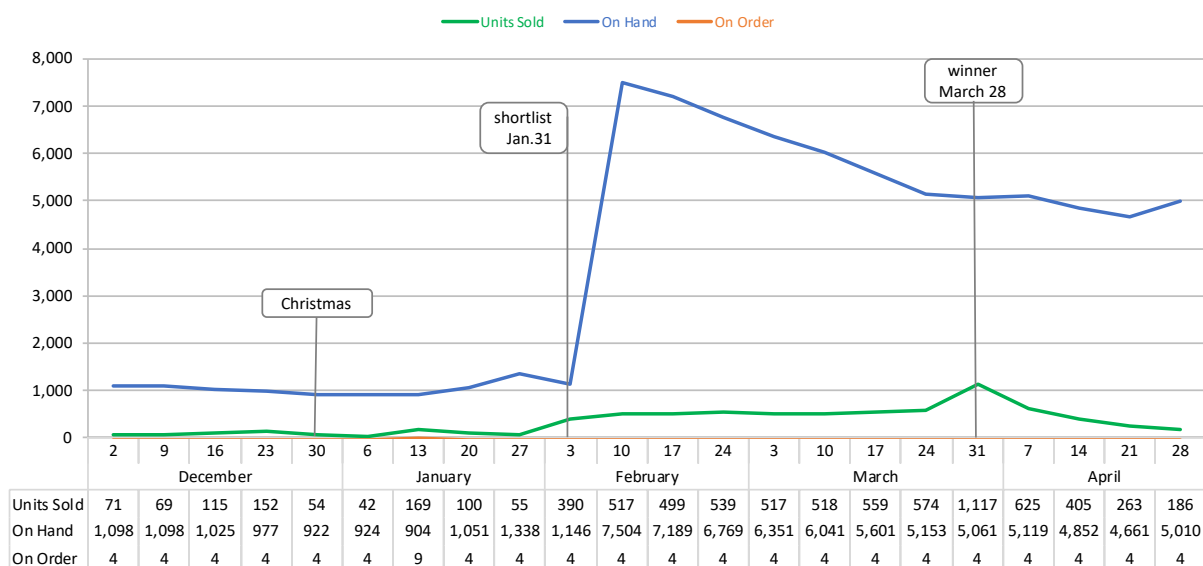
Hardcover Trade

9780771022906

\$25.00



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



**Sales for the paperback and hardcover editions are combined.*

Brother also won the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize on Nov. 14, 2017.

Nominee

Abu Bakr al Rabeeah's *Homes*

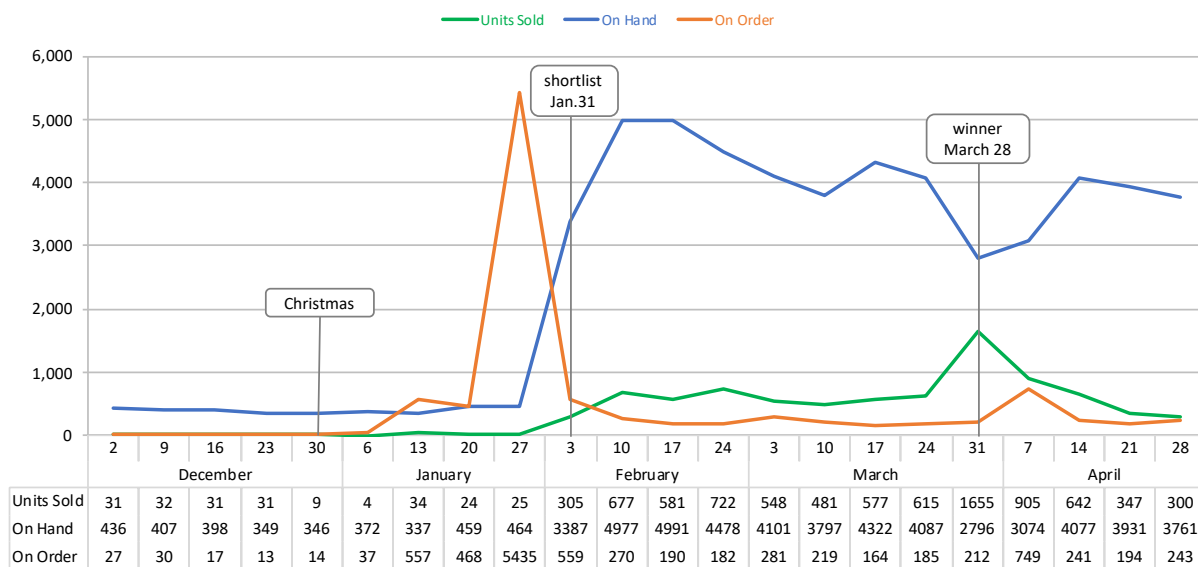
A Refugee Story

Defended by Chuck Comeau

Freehand Books
Trade Paperback
9781988298283
\$19.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



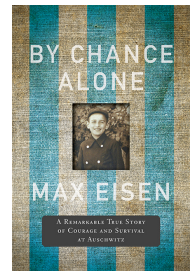
Homes was also nominated for the Governor General's Award for English-language Non-Fiction on Oct. 3, 2018.

Winner

Max Eisen's *By Chance Alone*

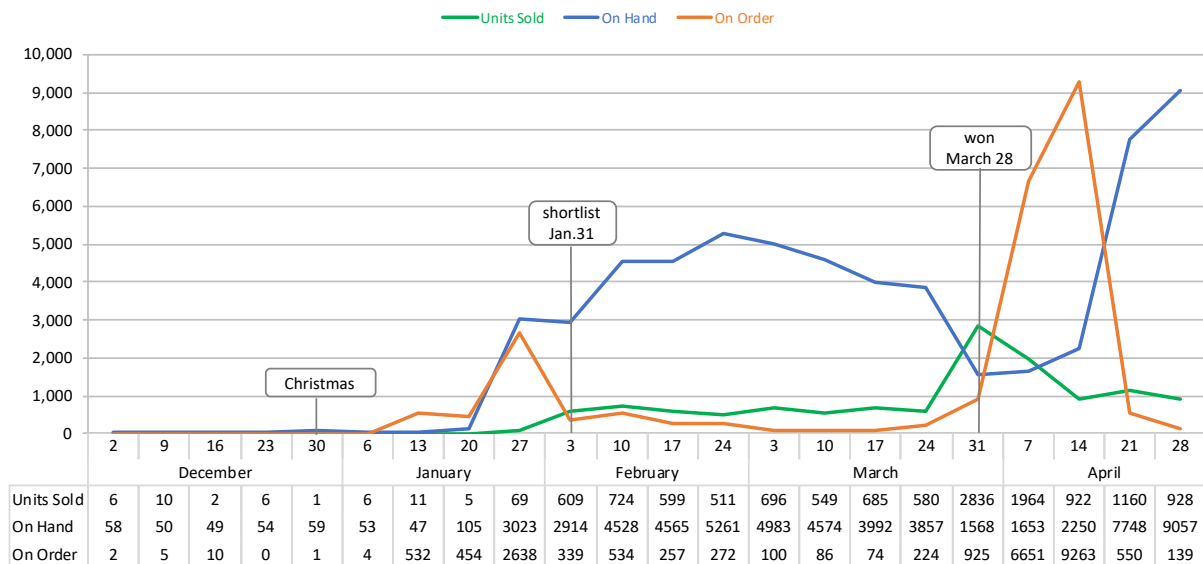
A Remarkable True Story of Courage and Survival at Auschwitz

HarperCollins
Publishers
Trade Paperback
9781443448543
\$18.99



Defended by Ziya Tong

Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



By Chance Alone was also nominated for the RBC Taylor Prize on Jan. 11, 2017.

Winner Comparison 2014-2019

2019

Max Eisen's *By Chance Alone*
HarperCollins Publishers
Trade Paperback | 9781443448543 |
\$18.99

2018

Mark Sakamoto's *Forgiveness*
HarperCollins Publishers
Trade Paperback | 9781443417983 |
\$19.99
Hardcover Trade | 9781443417976 |
\$29.99

2017

André Alexis's *Fifteen Dogs*
Coach House Books
Trade Paperback | 9781552453056 |
\$19.95

2016

Lawrence Hill's *The Illegal*
HarperCollins Publishers
Trade Paperback | 9781554683840 |
\$24.99
Hardcover Trade | 9781554683833 |
\$34.99

2015*

Kim Thúy's *Ru*
Random House of Canada
Trade Paperback | 9780307359711 |
\$18.95
Trade Paperback | 9780345816146 |
\$17.95

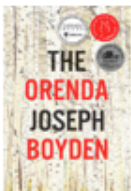
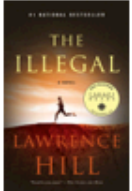
2014*

Joseph Boyden's *The Orenda*
Penguin Group Canada
Trade Paperback | 9780143174165 |
\$22.00
Hardcover Trade | 9780670064182 |
\$32.00

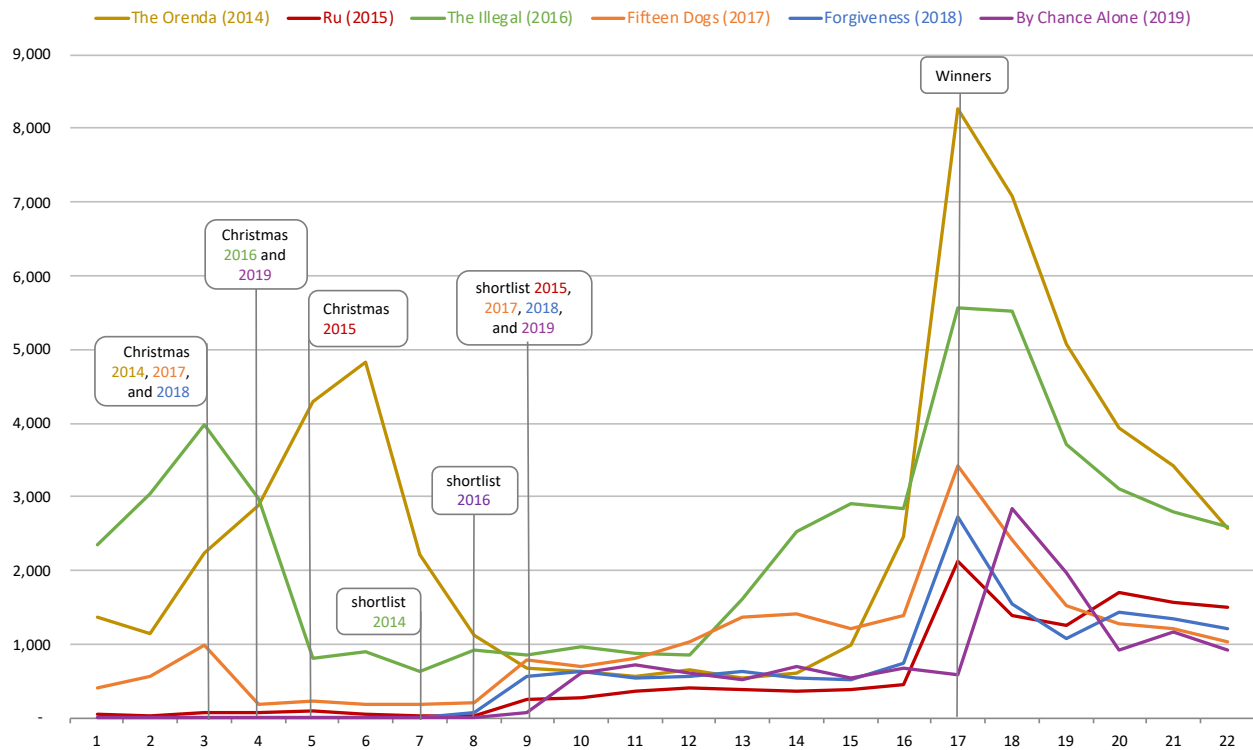
**Years where the program allowed the public to submit nominees and vote in polls prior to the debate.*

While we compare winners from 2014 to 2019, it should be noted that prior to 2016 the shortlist was announced before the holiday season. With the influence of holiday spending removed, we can clearly see the impact of Canada Reads on sales during the general post-holiday decline.

Volume Sold – Winner Comparison

	 Christmas	 Shortlist announced	 Winner announced			
						
	<i>The Orenda</i> (2014)	<i>Ru</i> (2015)	<i>The Illegal</i> (2016)	<i>Fifteen Dogs</i> (2017)	<i>Forgiveness</i> (2018)	<i>By Chance Alone</i> (2019)
1	1,358	43	2,355	402	5	6
2	1,138	29	3,050	558	0	10
3	2,239	65	3,971	992	0	2
4	2,878	75	2,987	175	0	6
5	4,293	97	810	220	4	1
6	4,831	45	901	189	4	6
7	2,208	37	626	190	3	11
8	1,116	31	924	202	70	5
9	680	256	850	781	576	69
10	632	284	968	705	637	609
11	556	356	872	800	547	724
12	644	420	861	1,028	567	599
13	539	377	1,621	1,373	622	511
14	617	355	2,520	1,407	534	696
15	987	382	2,912	1,215	521	549
16	2,465	464	2,850	1,391	740	685
17	8,278	2,135	5,562	3,416	2,740	580
18	7,078	1,395	5,516	2,422	1,538	2,836
19	5,077	1,251	3,716	1,534	1,074	1,964
20	3,941	1,695	3,105	1,282	1,440	922
21	3,418	1,561	2,789	1,213	1,352	1,160
22	2,584	1,499	2,606	1,036	1,214	928

Volume Sold – Winner Comparison



Despite the post-holiday decline across the overall market, each winning title peaked in the debate week, even higher than their Christmas sales, before returning to a higher baseline than experienced before the competition.

Conclusion

Being shortlisted for Canada Reads has a significant impact on book sales.

In 2019, the winning title sold the highest number of copies during the 22-week time period, and all shortlisted titles experienced large sales increases following the shortlist announcement and peaked during the debate week. The three titles left after day two each experienced a sales peak corresponding to the day they were voted off – *By Chance Alone* has the highest peak, followed by *Homes and Brother*. The opposite trend was seen for *The Woo-Woo* and *Suzanne*.

Sales for the winning titles from 2014 to 2019 increased the week after each shortlist announcement, in the midst of the overall post-holiday decline in book buying in the case of 2016 to 2019, and peaked during their respective debate weeks.