



BNC RESEARCH

A RESEARCH REPORT BY BOOKNET CANADA

BNC RESEARCH

01.2020

The RBC Taylor Prize Congratulations, nominees!

What happens now?
What if you win?



**BOOKNET
CANADA**

PREPARED BY BNC STAFF

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Introduction

Being nominated for a literary award is an exciting time for a publisher, because with national recognition comes increased orders and sales. So, what's the best way to stay on top of the game? Can you predict when your books are going to start flying off the shelves? Will you need to reprint? What happens if you win?

BNC Research's literary award studies help Canadian publishers avoid surprises during awards season. By looking at sales data from previous years, we can 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.

This study examines sales and order trends for titles shortlisted for the 2019 RBC Taylor Prize for Literary Non-Fiction. To get a sense of what to expect during the award season, and to help nominees with stock and demand planning, we have 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 from 2014 to 2019.

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 award season?
- On-order position by week: When do orders rise and fall, and by how much?

The first section of this study compares the 2019 RBC Taylor Prize shortlisted titles by volume sold and includes a look at overall sales in the Non-Fiction market 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 Non-Fiction market as a whole.

Next, we look at the 2019 shortlisted titles individually, showing volume sold, units on hand (OH), and units on order (OO) throughout the RBC Taylor Prize timeline. 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 award winners from 2014 to 2019, showing the impact of the award over time and noting similarities and special cases. The volume-sold comparison shows how the award 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.

The RBC Taylor Prize 2019

Organized by the Charles Taylor Foundation

Nominations announced: Jan. 9, 2019

Winner announced: March 4, 2019

Winner: *Lands of Lost Borders*

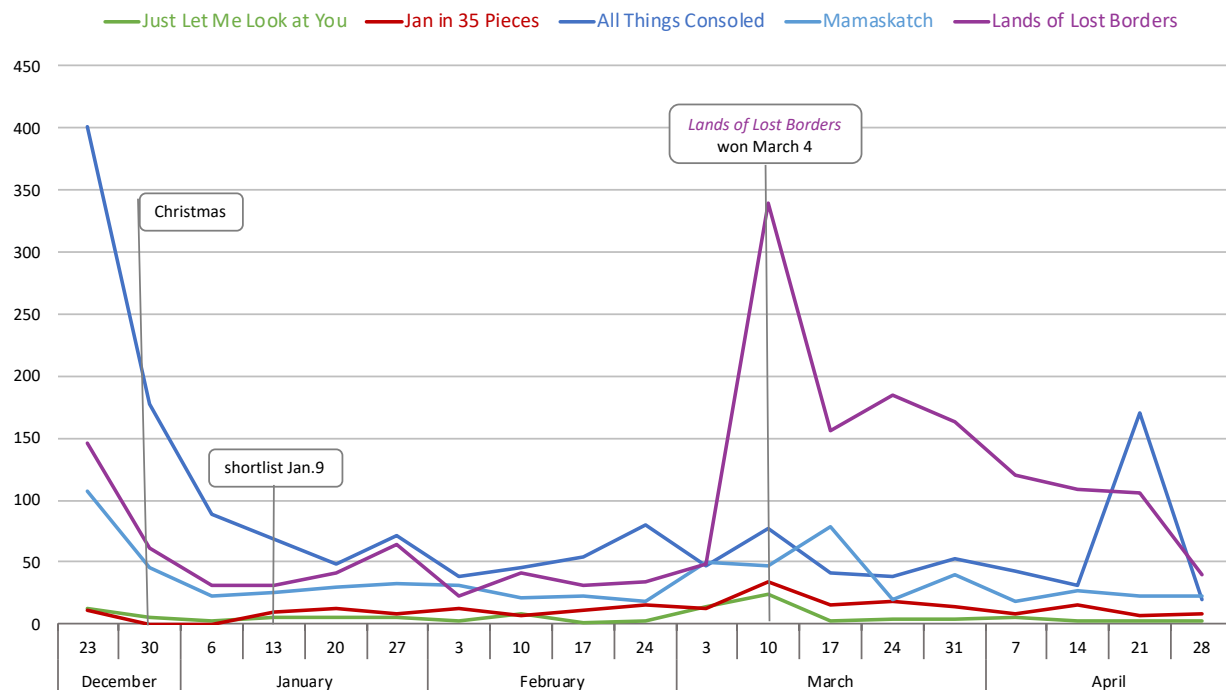
Volume Sold

		Christmas	Shortlist announced	Winner announced					2018-2019		
						Overall	Market	Week			
		<i>Just Let Me Look at You</i>	<i>Jan in 35 Pieces</i>	<i>All Things Consoléd</i>	<i>Mamaskatch</i>	<i>Lands of Lost Borders</i>	Unit Sales	Fiction			
December	23	12	11	401	107	146	677	559,123	1		
	30	5	0	178	45	61	289	301,688	2		
January	6	3	0	88	23	31	145	221,377	3		
	13	6	10	69	25	32	142	218,608	4		
	20	5	13	49	30	42	139	202,503	5		
	27	6	9	72	33	64	184	204,151	6		
February	3	3	12	39	32	23	109	220,891	7		
	10	8	7	46	21	42	124	219,352	8		
	17	1	11	54	22	31	119	214,487	9		
	24	3	15	80	18	34	150	219,848	10		
March	3	14	13	47	50	49	173	224,998	11		
	10	24	34	77	47	340	522	234,761	12		
	17	2	16	41	79	156	294	226,197	13		
	24	4	18	38	20	184	264	216,311	14		
April	31	4	14	53	40	163	274	238,852	15		
	7	6	8	43	19	120	196	230,474	16		
	14	3	15	32	27	109	186	211,287	17		
	21	3	7	171	23	106	310	214,511	18		
	28	3	8	20	23	40	94	219,485	19		



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Volume Sold



Shortlist announcement (Jan. 9, 2019):

It is difficult to get a true measure of percent change after the shortlist announcement as it takes place just after Christmas when book sales are often at their height. As we compare sales prior to and after the shortlist announcement, we find that only *Jan in 35 Pieces* experienced a sales increase following the shortlist announcement. It was a notable sales increase of 255%.

Two of the shortlisted titles were nominated for and won an award earlier in the fall of 2018: *All Things Consoled* (Writers' Trust Hilary Weston Prize for Non-Fiction) and *Mamaskatch* (Governor General's Award for Non-Fiction).

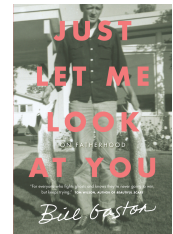
Winner announcement (March 4, 2019):

Three out of five titles experienced a sales increase following the winner announcement, ranging from 23% for *Jan in 35 Pieces* to 311% for the winning title *Lands of Lost Borders*. The average percent change was 18%. *All Things Consoled* and *Just Let Me Look at You* experienced sales decreases of -32% and -67%, respectively. *Lands of Lost Borders* and *All Things Consoled* sold the most units during the graphed time period.

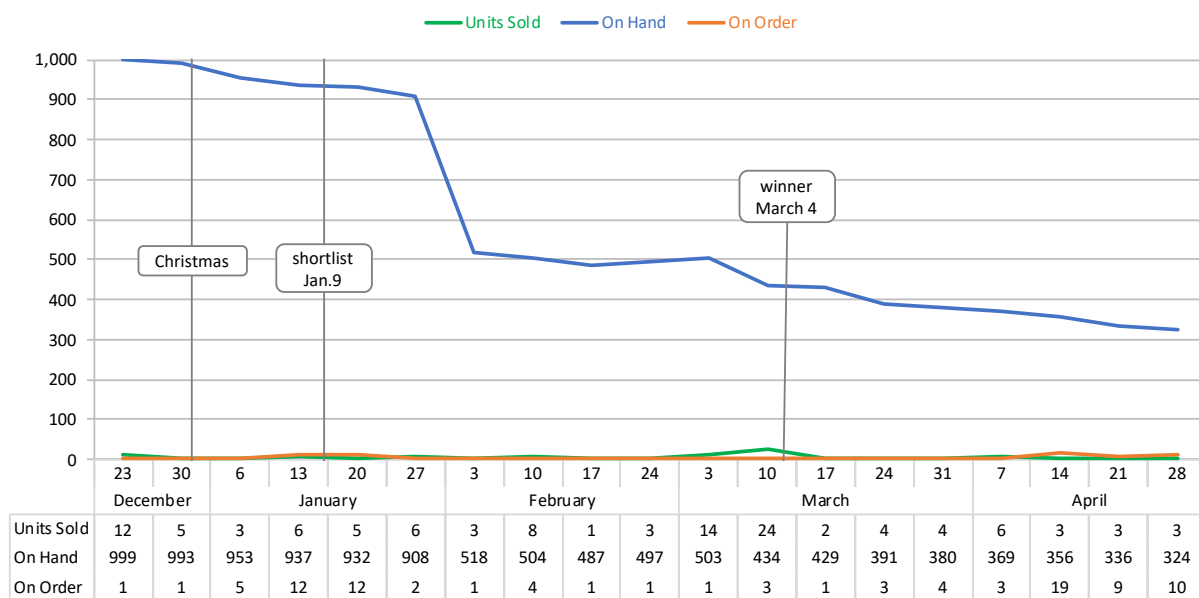
Nominee

Bill Gaston's *Just Let Me Look at You* On Fatherhood

Penguin Canada
Trade Paperback
9780735234062
\$24.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order

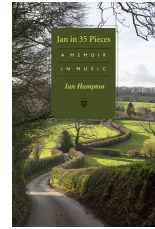


Nominee

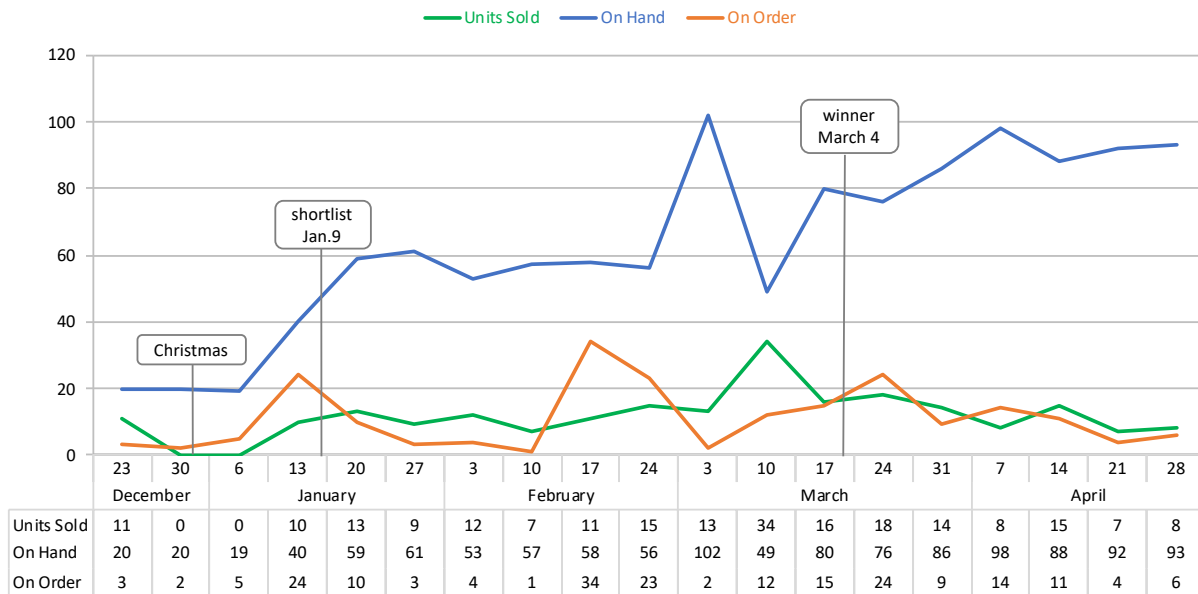
Ian Hampton's *Jan in 35 Pieces*

A Memoir in Music

Porcupine's Quill
Trade Paperback
9780889844131
\$24.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



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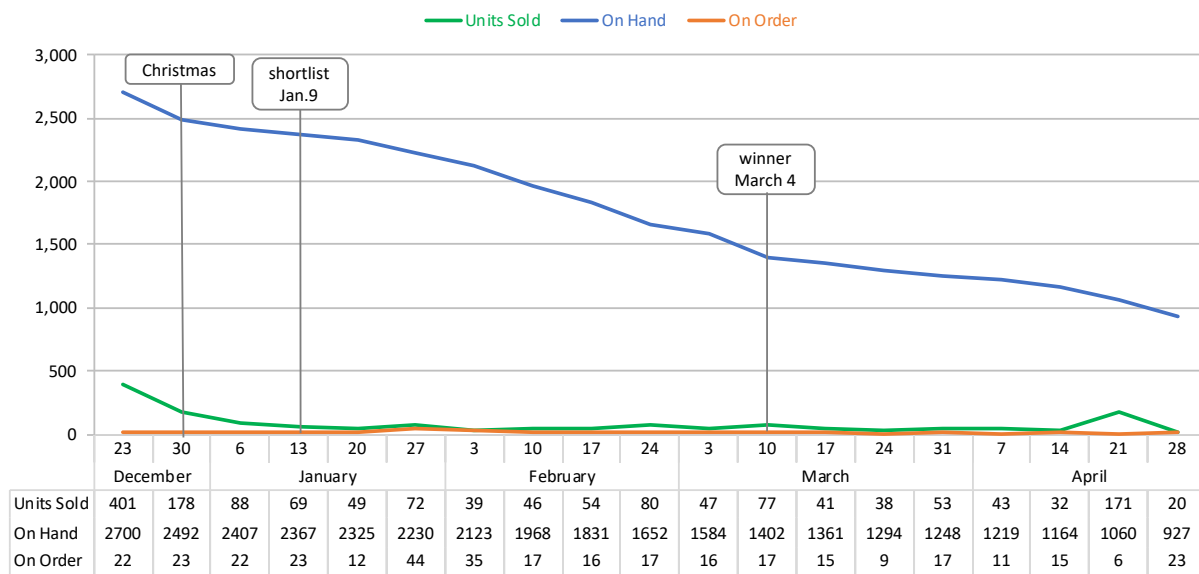
Nominee

Elizabeth Hay's *All Things Consoled*

McClelland & Stewart
Hardcover Trade
9780771039737
\$32.00



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



All Things Consoled was nominated for the 2018 Writers' Trust Hilary Weston Prize for Non-Fiction on Sep. 19, 2018 (not graphed) and won on Nov. 7, 2018 (also not graphed).

Nominee

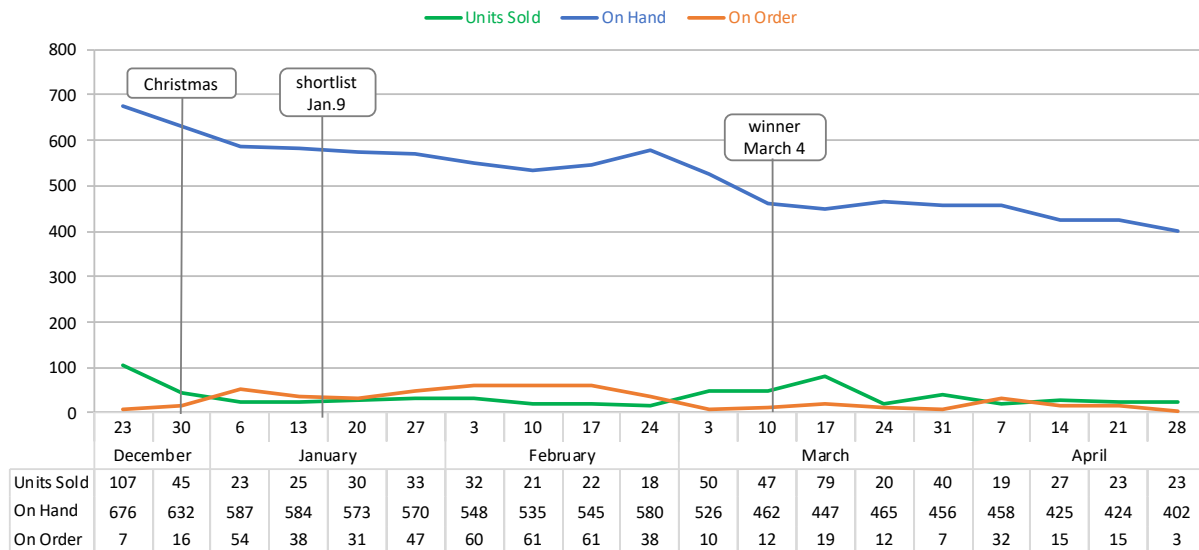
Darrel J. McLeod's *Mamaskatch*

A Cree Coming of Age

Douglas and McIntyre
Hardcover Trade
9781771622004
\$29.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



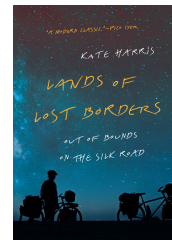
Mamaskatch was nominated for the 2018 Governor General's Award for Non-Fiction on Oct. 3, 2018 (not graphed) and won on Oct. 30 (also not graphed).

Winner

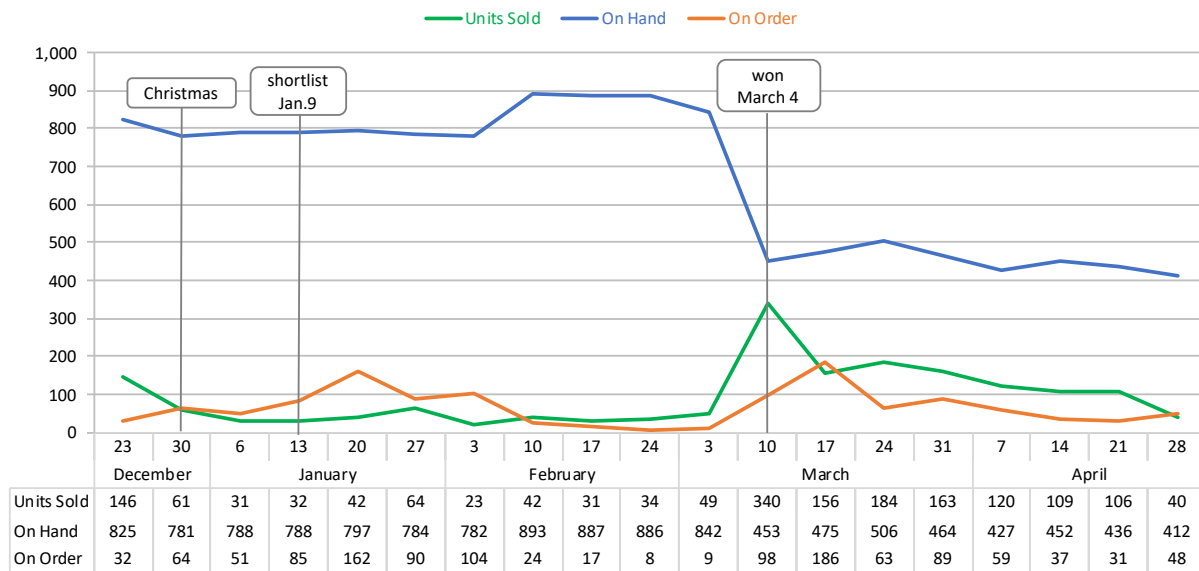
Kate Harris's *Lands of Lost Borders*

Out of Bounds on the Silk Road

Knopf Canada
Hardcover Trade
9780345816771
\$29.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



Year-Over-Year Comparison 2014–2019

2019

Kate Harris's *Lands of Lost Borders*

Knopf Canada

Hardcover Trade | 9780345816771 | \$29.95

2017

Ross King's *Mad Enchantment*

Doubleday Canada

Hardcover Trade | 9780385684620 | \$39.95

2015

Plum Johnson's *They Left Us Everything*

Penguin Group (Canada)

Trade Paperback | 9780143189053 | \$22.00

2018

Tanya Talaga's *Seven Fallen Feathers*

House of Anansi Press

Trade Paperback | 9781487002268 | \$22.95

2016

Rosemary Sullivan's *Stalin's Daughter*

HarperCollins Canada

Hardcover Trade | 9781443414425 | \$34.99

2014

Thomas King's *The Inconvenient Indian*

Doubleday Canada

Hardcover Trade | 9780385664219 | \$34.95

Trade Paperback | 9780385664226 | \$21.00

Winner Comparison – Volume Sold

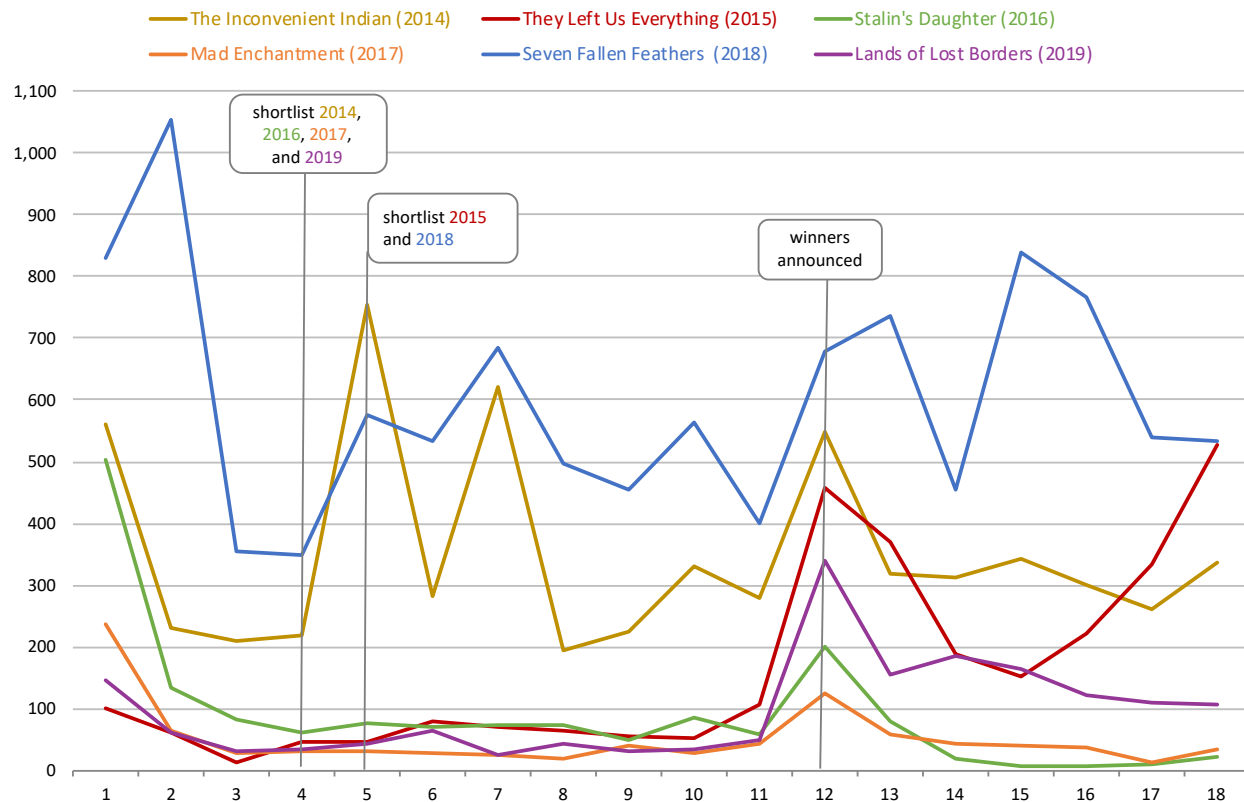
Shortlist announced Winner announced



	<i>The Inconvenient Indian</i> (2014)	<i>They Left Us Everything</i> (2015)	<i>Stalin's Daughter</i> (2016)	<i>Mad Enchantment</i> (2017)	<i>Seven Fallen Feathers</i> (2018)	<i>Lands of Lost Borders</i> (2019)
1	562	99	503	237	829	146
2	229	61	134	64	1,055	61
3	210	11	83	28	355	31
4	218	47	62	31	348	32
5	756	45	77	31	576	42
6	283	79	69	26	534	64
7	620	70	74	25	684	23
8	193	65	74	17	497	42
9	223	54	49	39	456	31
10	331	51	85	26	565	34
11	279	107	58	42	401	49
12	547	458	201	124	679	340
13	318	371	78	59	736	156
14	311	187	17	42	455	184
15	341	153	5	39	840	163
16	300	221	7	36	766	120
17	260	332	8	11	538	109
18	335	528	20	33	534	106



Winner Comparison – Volume Sold



Conclusion

Our analysis leads us to conclude that the RBC Taylor Prize for Literary Non-Fiction continues to have a positive impact on Canadian book sales:

- All of the winners experienced a sales increase after the winner announcement, ranging from 15% (*The Inconvenient Indian*) to 425% (*They Left Us Everything*). The 2019 winner experienced the second highest sales increase of 311%. *Seven Fallen Feathers* sold the most during the graphed time frame, followed by *The Inconvenient Indian*.
- Most of the 2019 shortlisted titles experienced a sales increase following the winner announcement and the winning title sold the most units during the graphed time period.
- The highest-selling winning titles benefited from being nominated for and winning other awards:
 - The 2014 winner, Thomas King's *The Inconvenient Indian*, also won the 2014 British Columbia's National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction and was nominated for the 2013 Trillium Award and the 2014 Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction.
 - The 2018 winner, Tanya Talaga's *Seven Fallen Feathers*, was nominated for the 2017 Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction, the 2017 Speaker's Book Award, and 2018's British Columbia's National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction. *Seven Fallen*

Feathers won the First Nation Communities Read Indigenous Literature Award, and 2017's Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for Political Writing.

- The 2019 winner, Kate Harris's *Lands of Lost Borders*, also won BC Book Prize's Hubert Evans Non-Fiction Prize 2019, and was nominated for the Kobo Emerging Writer Prize 2019.