



BNC RESEARCH

A RESEARCH REPORT BY BOOKNET CANADA

BNC RESEARCH

09.2020

Writers' Trust Fiction Prize Congratulations, nominees!

What happens now?
What if you win?



**BOOKNET
CANADA**

PREPARED BY BNC STAFF

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Introduction

Congratulations, one of your books has been nominated for a literary award! We know you must have many questions: Will this national recognition translate into increased orders and sales? 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 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 Writers' Trust Fiction Prize. To get a sense of what to expect during the award season, and to help nominees 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 from 2016 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 shortlisted titles by volume sold and includes a look at overall sales in the 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 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 Writers' Trust Fiction 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 2016 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 trade book 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.

Writers' Trust Fiction Prize 2019

Organized by The Writers' Trust of Canada

Nominations announced: Sept. 24, 2019

Winner announced: Nov. 5, 2019

Winner: *Days by Moonlight*

Volume of Sales – Shortlisted Titles

		Shortlist announced	Winner announced	Christmas				
								
		<i>Season of Fury and Wonder</i>	<i>The Innocents</i>	<i>Shut up You're Pretty</i>	<i>Dual Citizens</i>	<i>Days by Moonlight</i>		
		Overall Unit Sales	2019-2020 Market Fiction					
September	1	10	1,337	7	13	24	1,391	281,082
	8	29	782	13	64	86	974	245,172
	15	22	658	14	103	52	849	299,601
	22	11	578	11	39	67	706	254,492
	29	9	811	26	34	46	926	269,706
October	6	17	1,466	19	221	34	1,757	246,206
	13	14	689	14	160	33	910	230,592
	20	18	635	36	138	31	858	224,278
	27	30	596	21	138	19	804	241,040
	3	41	476	25	117	21	680	256,122
November	10	95	438	19	174	65	791	253,275
	17	51	379	28	155	40	653	239,108
	24	71	753	35	399	49	1,307	259,706
	1	57	696	16	302	42	1,113	328,843
	8	58	921	20	258	97	1,354	348,618
December	15	79	1,454	26	264	110	1,933	399,367
	22	82	1,751	29	294	151	2,307	509,775
	29	38	923	17	168	107	1,253	346,871
	5	12	470	13	50	38	583	226,504
	12	34	273	12	35	38	392	215,045

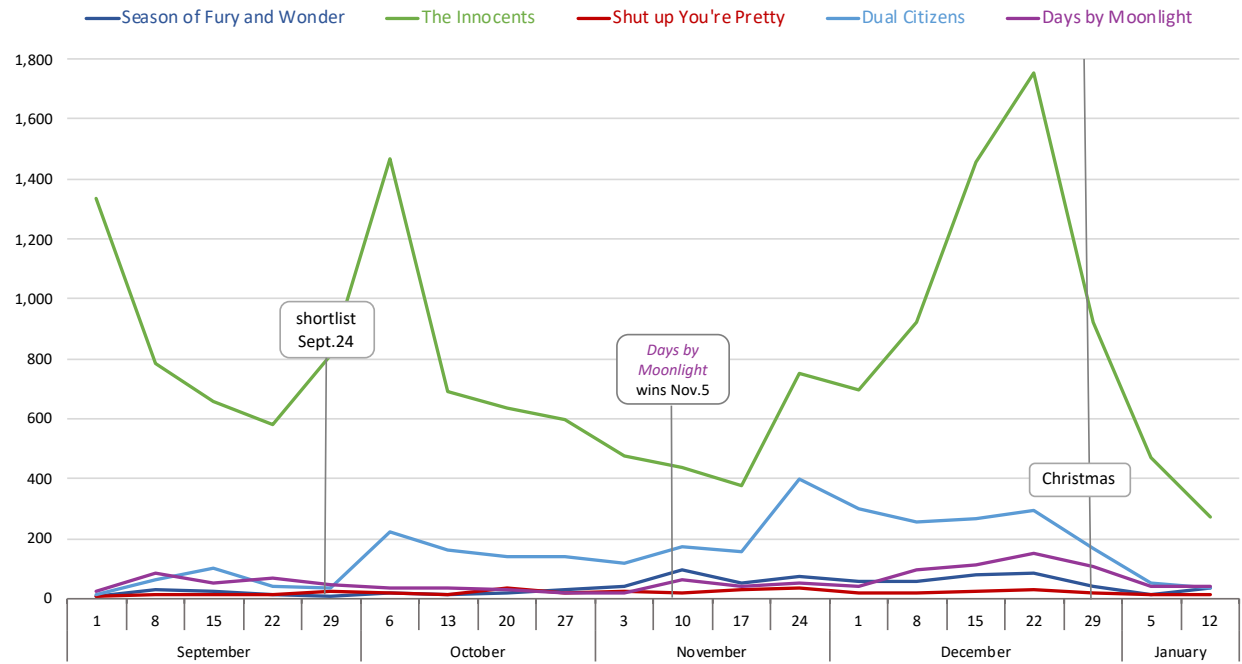
Shortlist announcement (Sept. 24, 2019):

Comparing an average of the three weeks prior to the announcement to the week following, we find the percent change for the shortlisted titles ranged from a decrease of -50% to an increase of 222% (a percent change average of 64%).

Winner announcement (Nov. 5, 2019):

The winning title, *Days by Moonlight*, experienced a percent change increase of 69% in the week following the winner announcement, and sold over 1,000 units from September 2019 to mid-January 2020. *The Innocents* sold the highest number of books within the September 2019 to mid-January 2020 time frame (over 16,000 units). The nominated titles experienced a range of percent changes from -33% (*The Innocents*) to 72% (*Season of Fury and Wonder*).

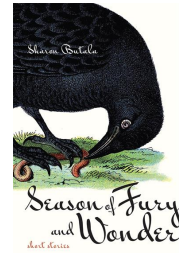
Shortlisted Titles



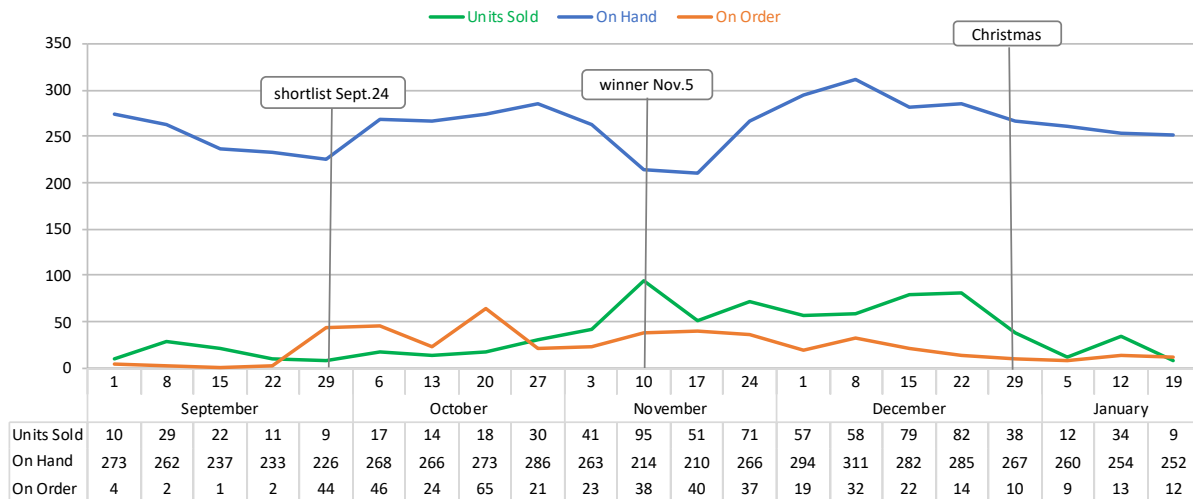
Nominee

Sharon Butala's *Season of Fury and Wonder* Short Stories

Coteau Books
Trade Paperback
9781550509748
\$24.95



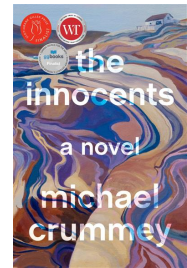
Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



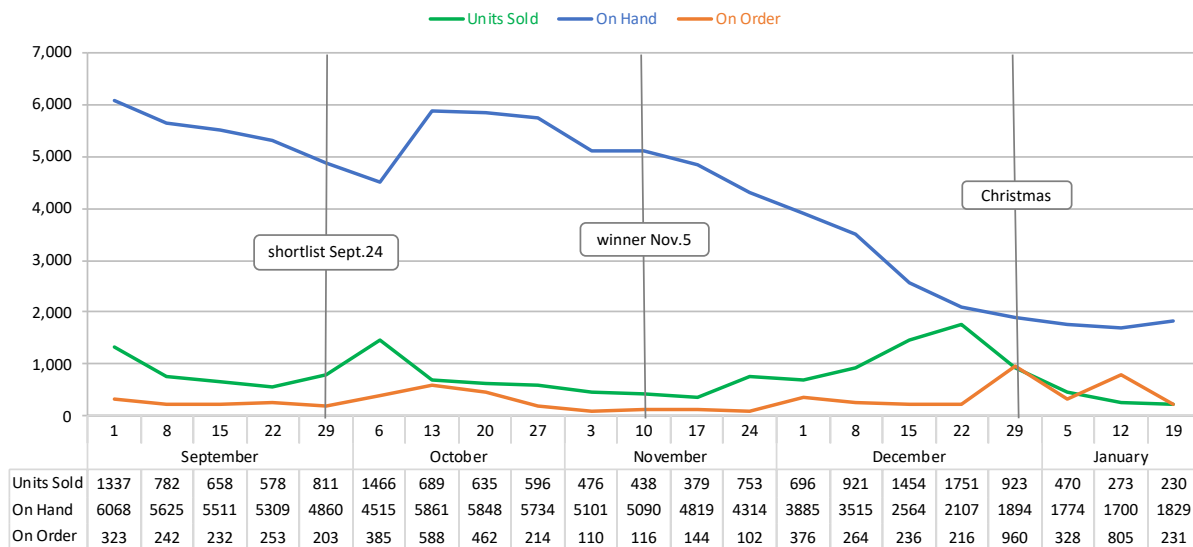
Nominee

Michael Crummey's *The Innocents*

Doubleday Canada
Hardcover Trade
9780385685412
\$32.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order

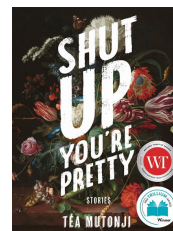


The Innocents was also nominated for the Scotiabank Giller Prize on Sept. 30, 2019 and the Governor General's Award for Fiction on Oct. 2, 2019.

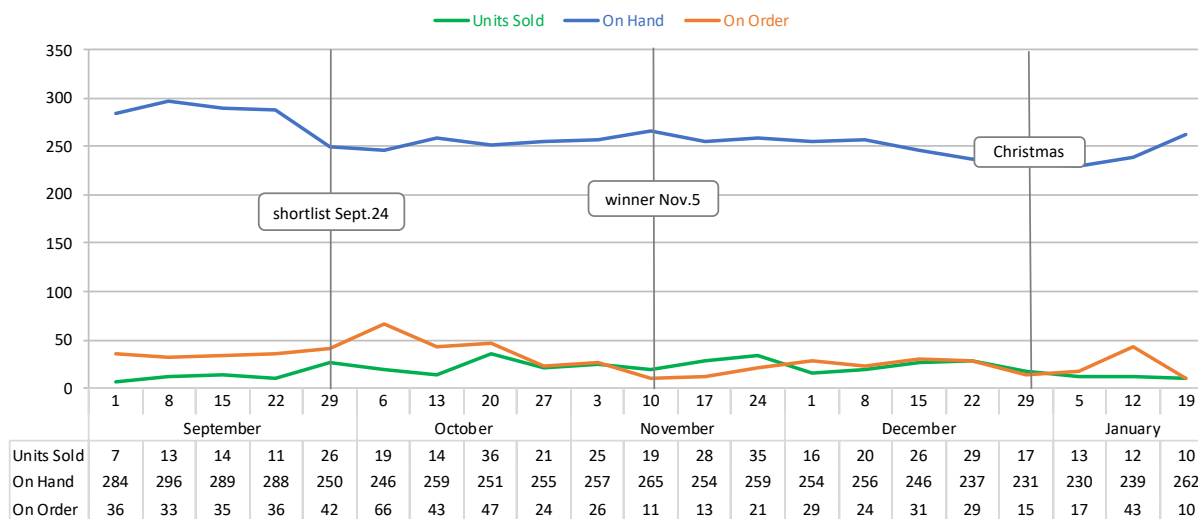
Nominee

Téa Muttonji's *Shut Up You're Pretty*

Arsenal Pulp Press
Trade Paperback
9781551527550
\$17.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order

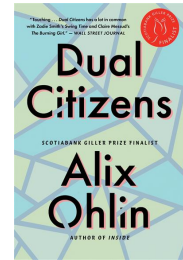


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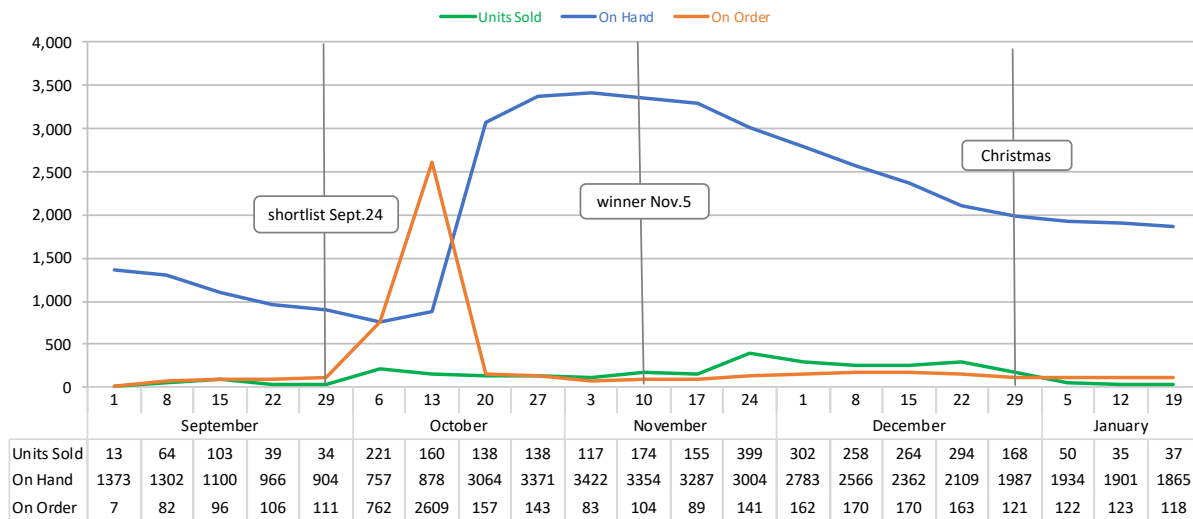
Nominee

Alix Ohlin's *Dual Citizens*

House of Anansi Press
Trade Paperback
9781487004866
\$22.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



Dual Citizens was also nominated for the Scotiabank Giller Prize on Sept. 30, 2019.

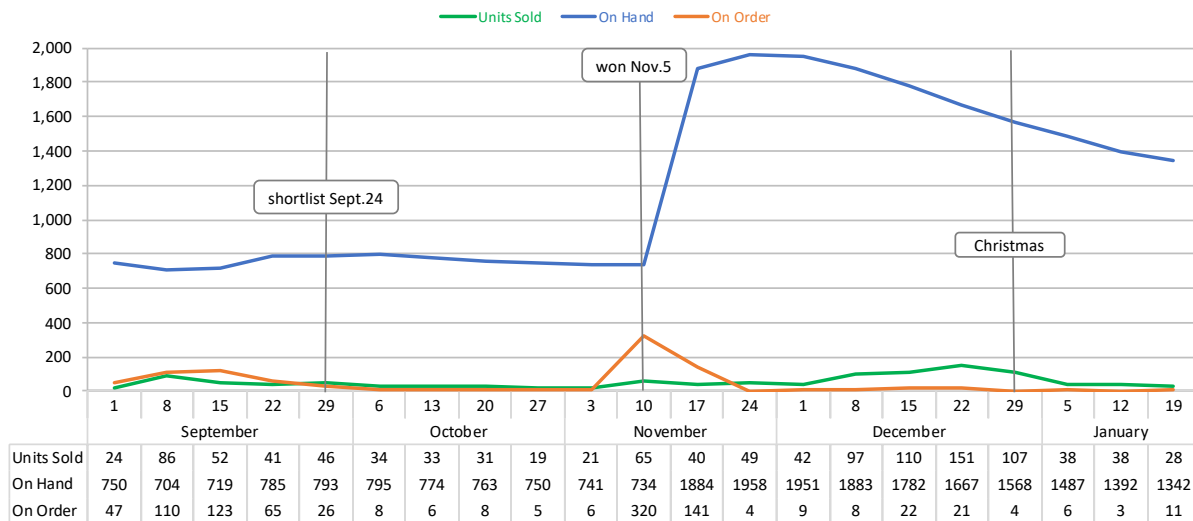
Winner

André Alexis's *Days by Moonlight*

Coach House Books
Trade Paperback
9781552453797
\$19.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



Comparison of Winners 2016–2019

2019

André Alexis's *Days by Moonlight*

Coach House Books

Trade Paperback | 9781552453797 | \$19.95

2018

Kathy Page's *Dear Evelyn*

Biblioasis

Trade Paperback | 9781771962094 | \$19.95

2017

David Chariandy's *Brother*

McClelland & Stewart

Hardcover Trade | 9780771022906 | \$25.00

2016

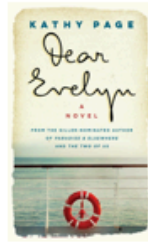
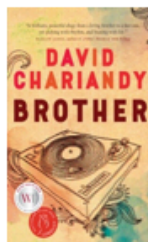
Yasuko Thanh's *Mysterious Fragrance of the Yellow Mountains*

Penguin Canada

Trade Paperback | 9780670068784 | \$24.95

Volume of Sales – Winner Comparison

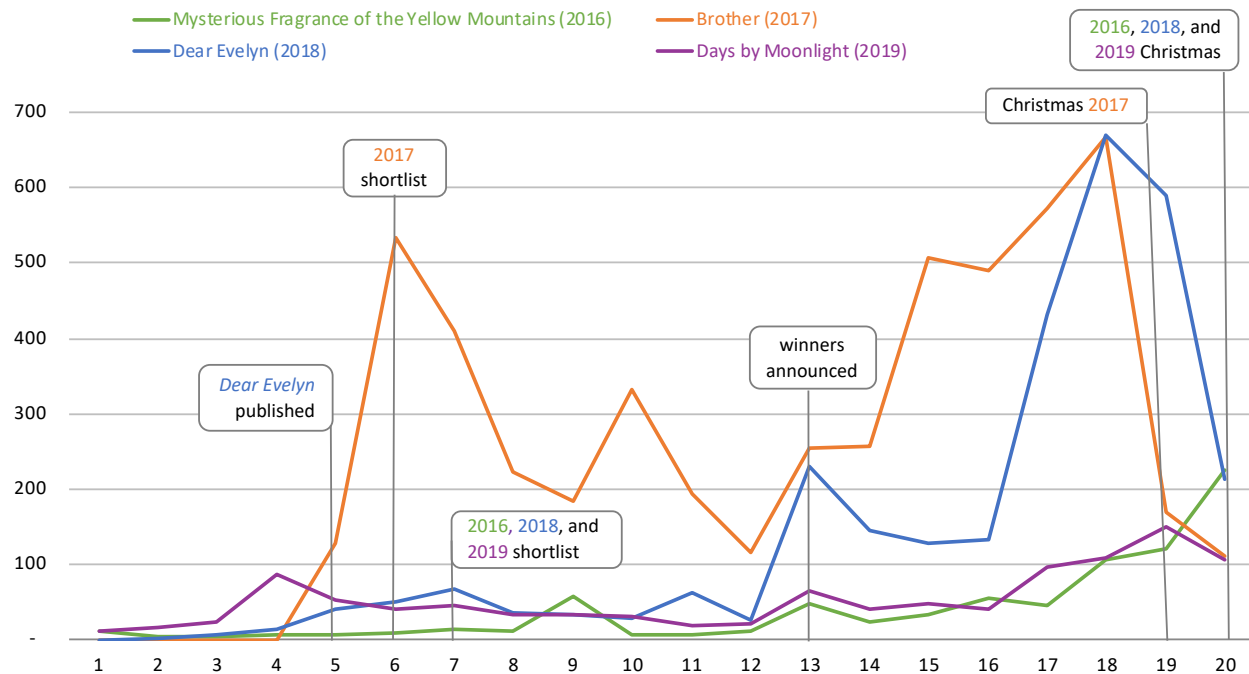
Shortlist announced
Winner announced
Christmas



Week	<i>Mysterious Fragrance of the Yellow Mountains</i> (2016)	<i>Brother</i> (2017)	<i>Dear Evelyn</i> (2018)	<i>Days by Moonlight</i> (2019)
1	11	0	0	13
2	5	0	1	16
3	4	0	7	24
4	8	0	15	86
5	6	128	40	52
6	10	533	50	41
7	15	411	67	46
8	11	222	36	34
9	59	184	34	33
10	8	332	28	31
11	7	193	62	19
12	13	116	27	21
13	49	255	230	65
14	24	258	145	40
15	33	507	128	49
16	55	489	134	42
17	47	572	431	97
18	107	667	671	110
19	122	170	589	151
20	226	112	214	107



Winners – 2016–2019



Brother experienced the largest sales increase of 863% the week of the shortlist announcement. *Days by Moonlight* experienced a sales decrease of -43% following the shortlist announcement. *Dear Evelyn* experienced the second highest sales peak after the winner announcement. All winning titles experienced a sales increase the week of the winner announcement. Most titles peaked in the week before or of Christmas.

