



BNC RESEARCH

A RESEARCH REPORT BY BOOKNET CANADA

BNC RESEARCH

09.2020

The Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction 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 Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction. 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 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 Hilary Weston Writers' Trust 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 publishers the retail demand.

Notes:

- 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 in Canada. 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.

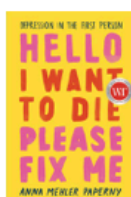
New booksellers have begun contributing to BNC SalesData since our first literary awards study, conducted in October 2006. Some changes seen in year-over-year sales figures may be due to the increased number of stores reporting sales, rather than a true increase in overall sales.

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

The Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction 2019

Organized by The Writers' Trust of Canada
Nominations announced: Sept. 17, 2019
Winners announced: Nov. 5, 2019
Winner: *Older Sister. Not Necessarily Related.*

Volume of Sales – Shortlisted Titles

		Shortlist announced	Winner announced	Christmas				
								
		<i>A Mind Spread Out on the Ground</i>	<i>Hello I Want to Die Please Fix Me</i>	<i>All Our Relations</i>	<i>The Art of Leaving</i>	<i>Older Sister. Not Necessarily Related.</i>	Overall Unit Sales	2019-2020 Market Non-Fiction
September	1	107	196	75	3	0	381	306,080
	8	80	230	84	5	0	399	313,583
	15	97	200	134	6	35	472	356,081
	22	110	200	89	9	199	607	380,952
October	29	150	182	88	8	46	474	399,749
	6	130	221	59	6	30	446	368,629
	13	98	144	36	9	44	331	373,359
	20	76	128	35	6	17	262	393,476
November	27	105	159	50	23	27	364	328,417
	3	108	282	55	67	47	559	345,667
	10	117	198	111	10	59	495	376,895
	17	75	510	31	6	26	648	400,014
December	24	69	167	52	3	24	315	459,847
	1	93	252	34	1	35	415	596,523
	8	145	189	80	1	28	443	698,956
	15	178	157	51	3	62	451	810,622
January	22	297	261	97	4	34	693	1,001,568
	29	164	226	72	2	23	487	609,873
	5	95	157	33	1	9	295	371,660
	12	107	123	128	2	6	366	340,607
	19	80	123	62	1	14	280	314,033

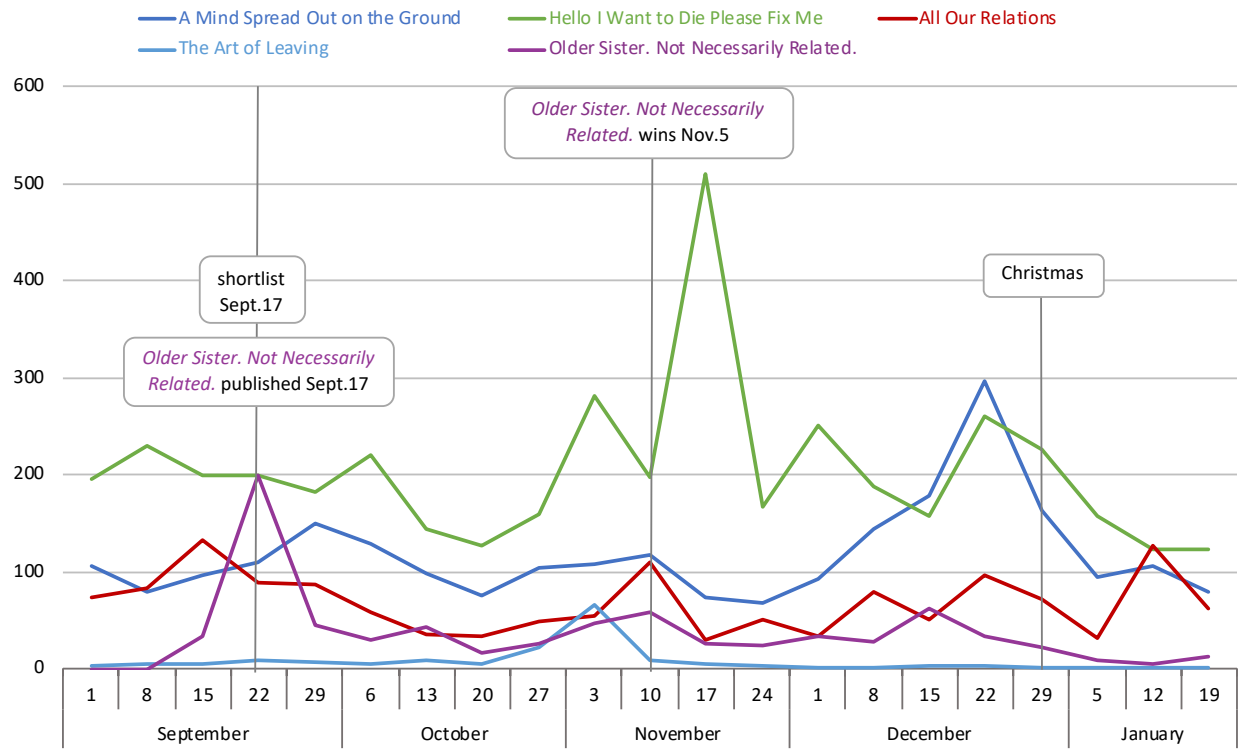
Shortlist announcement (Sept. 17, 2019):

The future winner, *Older Sister. Not Necessarily Related.* experienced the largest percent change increase after the shortlist announcement: 294%. Perhaps this was in part because the title was published the same day as the shortlist announcement (Sept. 17, 2019). The average percent change across shortlisted titles when we look at the week following the shortlist announcement in comparison to three weeks before the shortlist announcement is 80%. *All Our Relations* and *Hello I Want to Die Please Fix Me* experienced sales decreases of 10% and 13%, respectively, while the other two titles experienced a unit sales increase of 58% (*A Mind Spread Out on the Ground*) and 71% (*The Art of Leaving*).

Winner announcement (Nov. 5, 2019):

Hello I Want to Die Please Fix Me is the only title on the shortlist that experienced a sales increase following the winner announcement (169%). The other titles experienced a range of sales decreases.

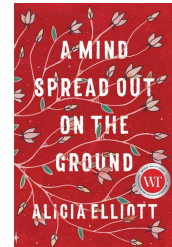
Shortlisted Titles



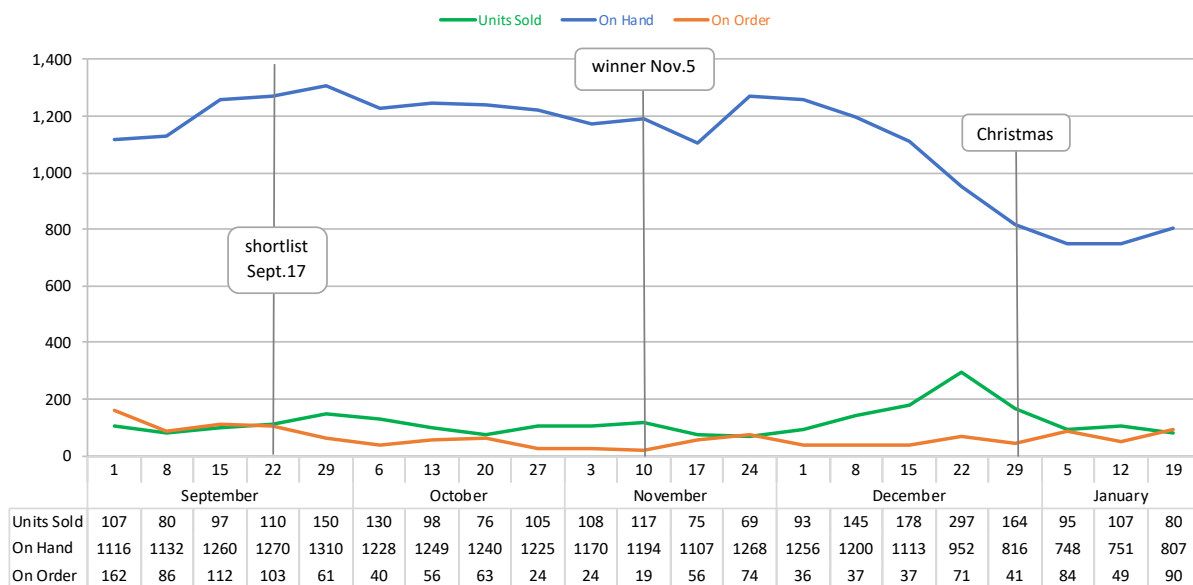
Nominee

Alicia Elliott's *A Mind Spread Out on the Ground*

Doubleday Canada
Hardcover Trade
9780385692380
\$25.00



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order

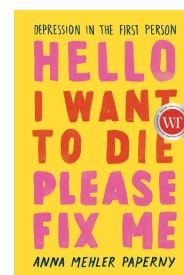


Nominee

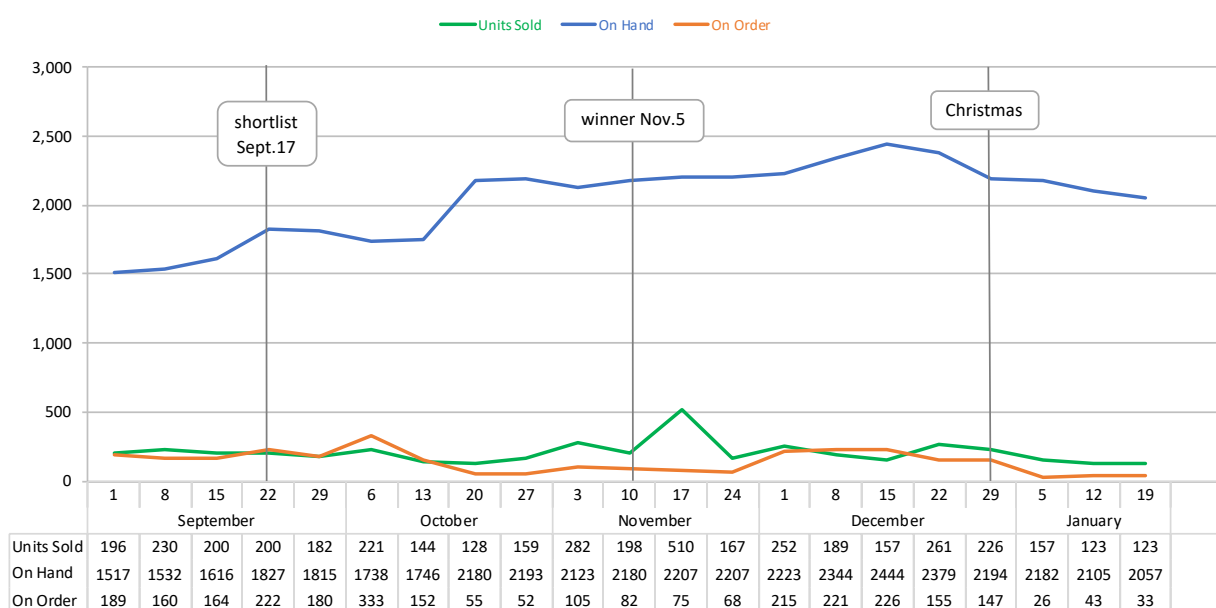
Anna Mehler Paperny's *Hello I Want to Die Please Fix Me*

Depression in the First Person

Random House of Canada
Trade Paperback
9780735272828
\$26.95



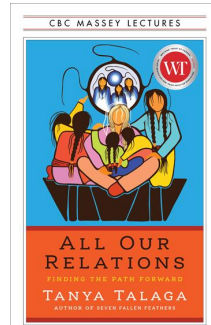
Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



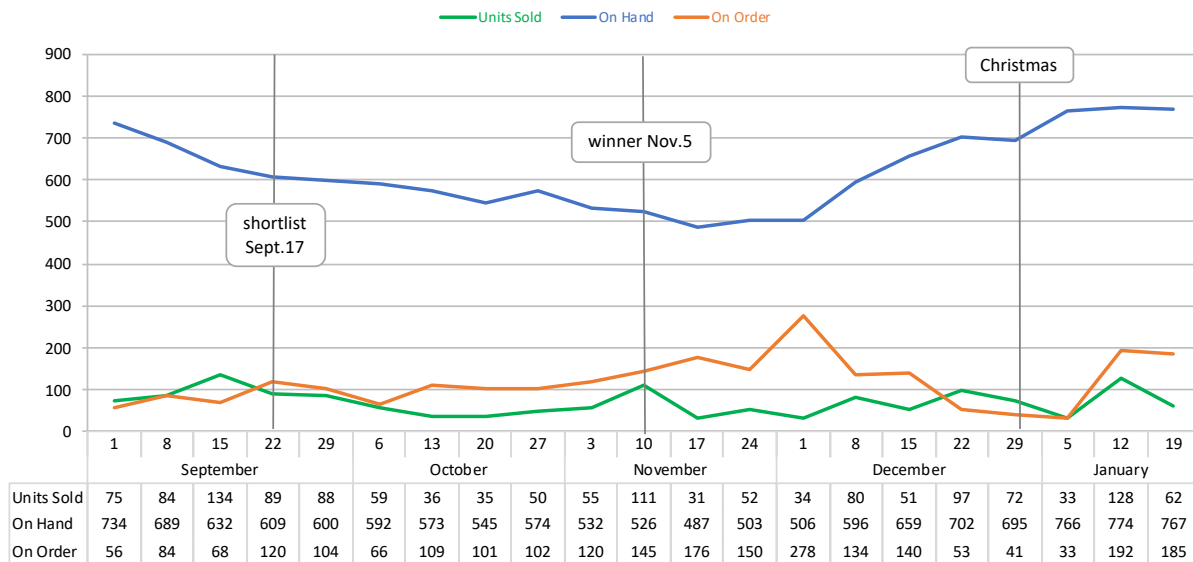
Nominee

Tanya Talaga's *All Our Relations* *Finding the Path Forward*

Random House of Canada
Trade Paperback
9781487005733
\$19.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



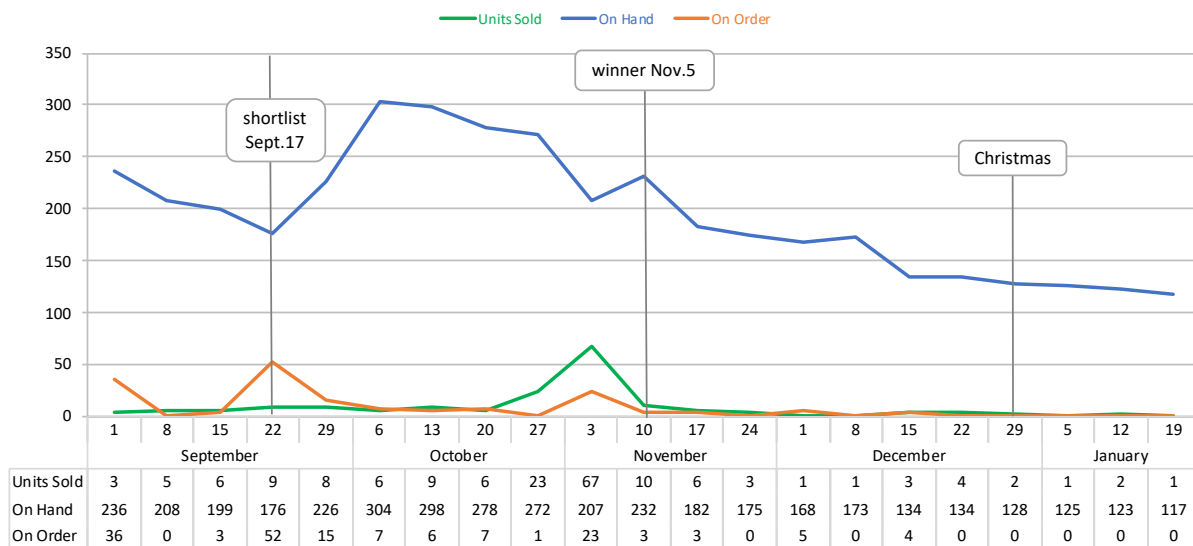
Nominee

Ayelet Tsabari's *The Art of Leaving* *A Memoir*

HarperCollins Canada
Hardcover Trade
9781443447867
\$32.99



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



Winner

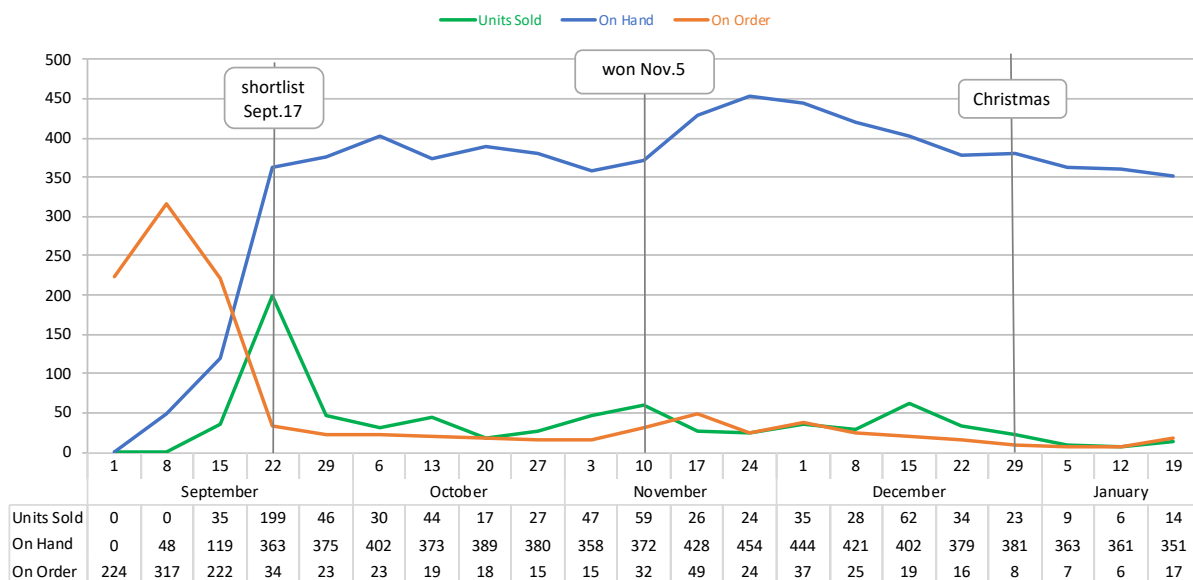
Jenny Heijun Wills's *All Older Sister. Not Necessarily Related.*

A Memoir

McClelland & Stewart
Hardcover Trade
9780771070891
\$29.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



Comparison of Winners 2016–2019

2019

Jenny Heijun Wills's *Older Sister. Not Necessarily Related.*

McClelland & Stewart

Hardcover Trade | 9780771070891 | \$29.95

2018

Elizabeth Hay's *All Things Consolated*

McClelland & Stewart

Hardcover Trade | 9780771039737 | \$32.00

2017

James Maskalyk's *Life on the Ground Floor*

Doubleday Canada

Hardcover Trade | 9780385665971 | \$29.95

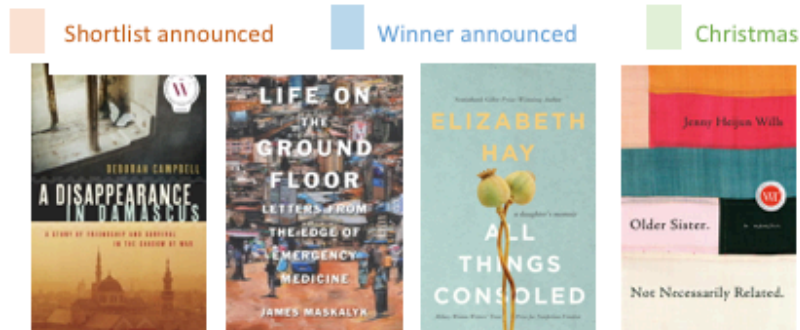
2016

Deborah Campbell's *A Disappearance in Damascus*

Knopf Canada

Hardcover Trade | 9780345809292 | \$32.00

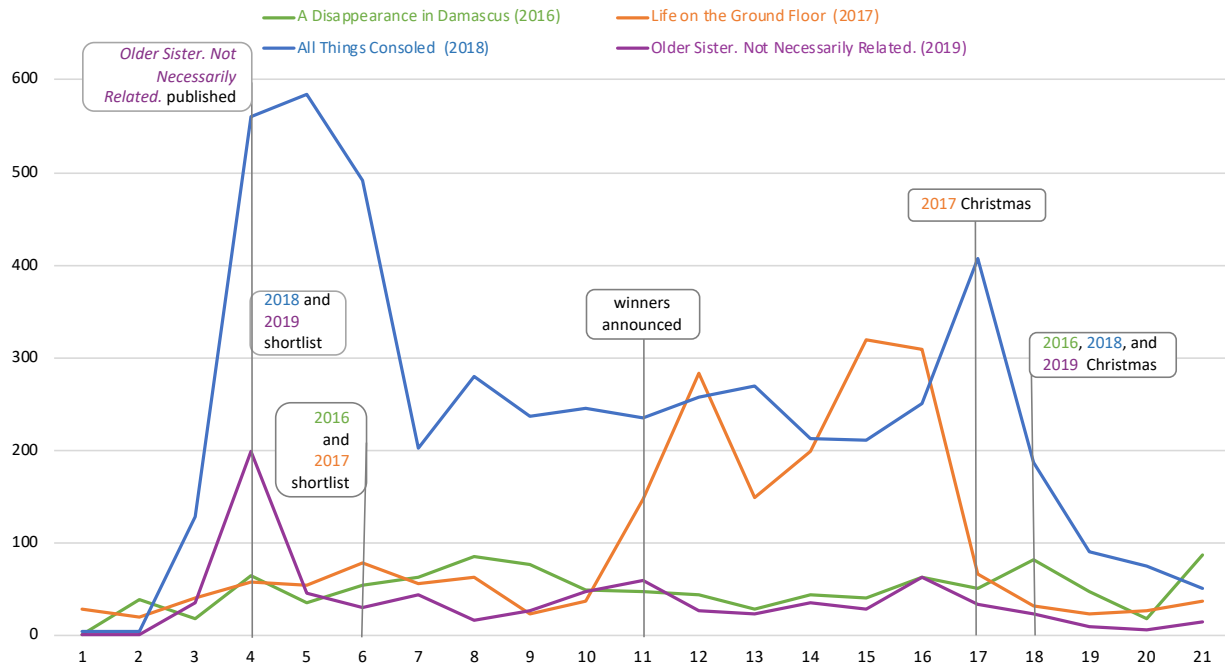
Volume of Sales – Winner Comparison



Week	<i>A Disappearance in Damascus (2016)</i>	<i>Life on the Ground Floor (2017)</i>	<i>All Things Consolated (2018)</i>	<i>Older Sister. Not Necessarily Related. (2019)</i>
1	0	29	4	0
2	39	20	4	0
3	18	41	129	35
4	64	58	560	199
5	36	54	584	46
6	55	79	491	30
7	63	56	203	44
8	86	63	279	17
9	76	23	236	27
10	49	37	246	47
11	47	148	235	59
12	43	283	257	26
13	29	149	270	24
14	44	198	212	35
15	40	320	211	28
16	62	309	251	62
17	51	67	407	34
18	82	31	187	23
19	47	24	90	9
20	18	27	74	6
21	87	37	50	14
22	15	28	72	14



Winners – 2016–2019



The average volume sold for the winners in this four-year span is 2,241 units with a median of 1,566. Among the winning titles between 2016 and 2019, *Life on the Ground Floor*, the 2017 winner, experienced the largest percent change increase in units sold following the winner announcement, at 590%. Over the 22-week time period, the 2018 winner *All Things Consolated* sold the highest number of units (5,052) and the 2019 winner *Older Sister. Not Necessarily Related.* sold the fewest (779).