



Literary Award Report:

Canada Reads 2020



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Introduction

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. The Canada Reads national broadcast adds endorsement and publicity for your nominated titles.

To get a sense of what to expect during the upcoming Canada Reads season, and to help publishers with stock and demand planning, BNC Research's literary award reports show a trend analysis of last year's shortlist and winner as well as a comparison in sales and stock position of all winning titles between 2016 and 2020. 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.

This report includes:

- Bibliographic data for shortlisted titles
- Week-over-week comparison of volume sold, volume on hand, and volume on order for each shortlisted title within the graphed time period
- Market trends by week and percentage of market share for shortlisted titles
- Year-over-year comparison of volume sold for winners from 2016 to 2020

Important notes for how to read the graphs and percent change figures:

- All dates used in the graphs represent week-ending dates.
- The graphed time period is from week ending Jan. 5, 2020 to Aug. 16, 2020.
- Where multiple editions are noted (ie. paperback and hardcover editions), sales are combined within tables and graphs.
- BNC calculates percent change based on average units sold three weeks prior to shortlist and winner announcements compared to units sold in the week or week after of each announcement, depending on which day of the week the announcement is made. 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 English-language 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's data. Therefore, all numbers in this report refer to print books only.

Canada Reads

2020 winner

- *We Have Always Been Here: A Queer Muslim Memoir* by Samra Habib, Penguin Canada, TP, 9780735235007, \$24.95

2020 shortlisted titles

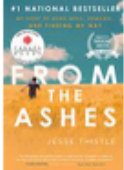
- *Son of a Trickster* by Eden Robinson, Knopf Random Vintage Canada, TP, 9780345810793, \$21.00
- *Small Game Hunting at the Local Coward Gun Club* by Megan Gail Coles, House of Anansi, TP, 9781487001711, \$22.95
- *From the Ashes: My Story of Being Métis, Homeless, and Finding My Way* by Jesse Thistle, Simon & Schuster, TP, 9781982101213, \$24.99
- *Radicalized: Four Tales of Our Present Moment* by Cory Doctorow, Tor/Forge,
 - HT, 9781250228581, \$34.99
 - TP, 9781250777911, \$21.99

2020 announcement dates

- Shortlist: January 22, 2020
- Winner: July 23, 2020

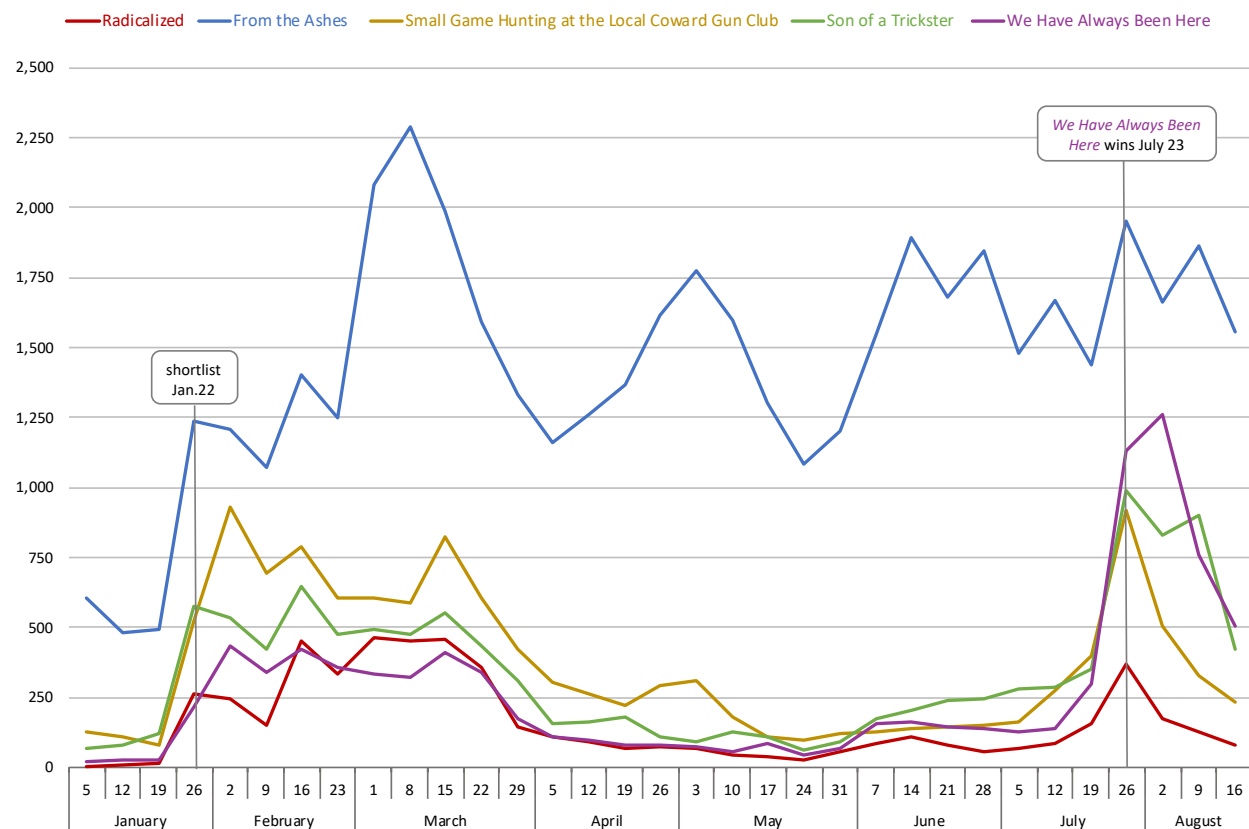
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Shortlisted titles — Volume of sales

												Shortlist announced	Winner announced		
    												2020 Markets			
Small Game Hunting at the Local Language															
		Radicalized	From the Ashes	Coward Gun Club	Son of a Trickster	We Have Always Been Here	Overall Unit Sales	Non-Fiction	Fiction	Week					
January	5	4	603	124	66	20	817	372,815	226,576	1					
	12	10	480	110	77	26	703	341,984	215,123	2					
	19	14	490	82	119	28	733	315,703	201,545	3					
	26	263	1,237	524	575	215	2,814	333,097	231,635	4					
February	2	245	1,207	931	533	435	3,351	322,512	229,630	5					
	9	150	1,072	696	421	337	2,676	300,805	204,570	6					
	16	450	1,401	787	646	423	3,707	330,199	230,698	7					
	23	331	1,249	603	477	356	3,016	290,604	207,526	8					
March	1	461	2,082	606	491	336	3,976	291,374	218,485	9					
	8	452	2,290	586	478	319	4,125	299,153	224,148	10					
	15	459	1,986	822	552	413	4,232	288,730	217,108	11					
	22	359	1,591	608	431	337	3,326	228,098	183,302	12					
April	29	144	1,334	423	311	176	2,388	183,755	135,494	13					
	5	109	1,159	305	156	106	1,835	146,261	124,896	14					
	12	92	1,261	264	164	99	1,880	169,179	133,957	15					
	19	69	1,368	220	177	82	1,916	170,345	155,812	16					
May	26	75	1,617	290	109	81	2,172	205,888	176,740	17					
	3	67	1,777	310	91	72	2,317	242,306	205,008	18					
	10	41	1,597	182	128	55	2,003	235,894	227,729	19					
	17	40	1,302	110	106	86	1,644	195,791	192,232	20					
June	24	29	1,081	98	61	41	1,310	180,574	163,169	21					
	31	57	1,204	122	94	66	1,543	226,456	227,543	22					
	7	88	1,551	128	175	157	2,099	263,008	245,116	23					
	14	106	1,894	136	202	161	2,499	266,551	247,039	24					
July	21	77	1,680	142	238	144	2,281	297,494	264,478	25					
	28	57	1,844	148	245	136	2,430	300,970	263,843	26					
	5	67	1,478	164	281	128	2,118	283,618	259,927	27					
	12	88	1,666	277	284	139	2,454	309,484	289,874	28					
August	19	157	1,440	401	353	296	2,647	302,522	267,019	29					
	26	366	1,950	916	990	1,132	5,354	333,930	285,056	30					
	2	173	1,661	507	828	1,260	4,429	298,483	283,904	31					
	9	124	1,861	327	903	758	3,973	301,120	282,212	32					
	16	78	1,556	233	424	506	2,797	306,787	267,412	33					

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Shortlisted titles



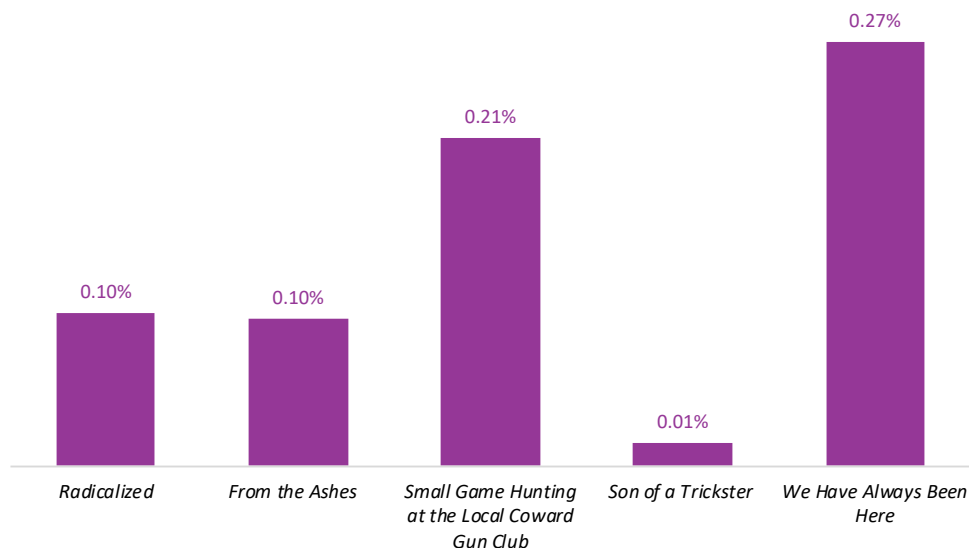
The shortlist was announced Jan. 22, 2020. All shortlisted titles experienced a large percent change increase in sales when comparing the week of the shortlist announcement with their average sales in the three weeks prior. The increases ranged from a 2,718% increase for *Radicalized* to a 136% increase for *From the Ashes*. The average percent change across all shortlisted titles was 916%.

The winner was announced July 23, 2020, which was postponed from March because of COVID-19. It is worth noting that physical book sales saw a significant decrease in the spring and early-summer because of retail closures related to COVID-19. This period lasted roughly from the week ending March 15, 2020 to the week ending May 24, 2020. Keeping in mind that the graphed time period spanned 33 weeks, *From the Ashes* sold the highest number of copies during the shortlist period — the week of the shortlist announcement until the week of winner announcement.

All shortlisted titles experienced a high percent change in sales when comparing the week of the winner announcement with the average sales in the three weeks prior — though this

increase in sales was lower than the percent change after the shortlist announcement. Percent changes ranged from 503% (the 2020 winner *We Have Always Been Here*) to 28% (*From the Ashes*). The average percent change was 247%.

Shortlisted titles — Market share shift

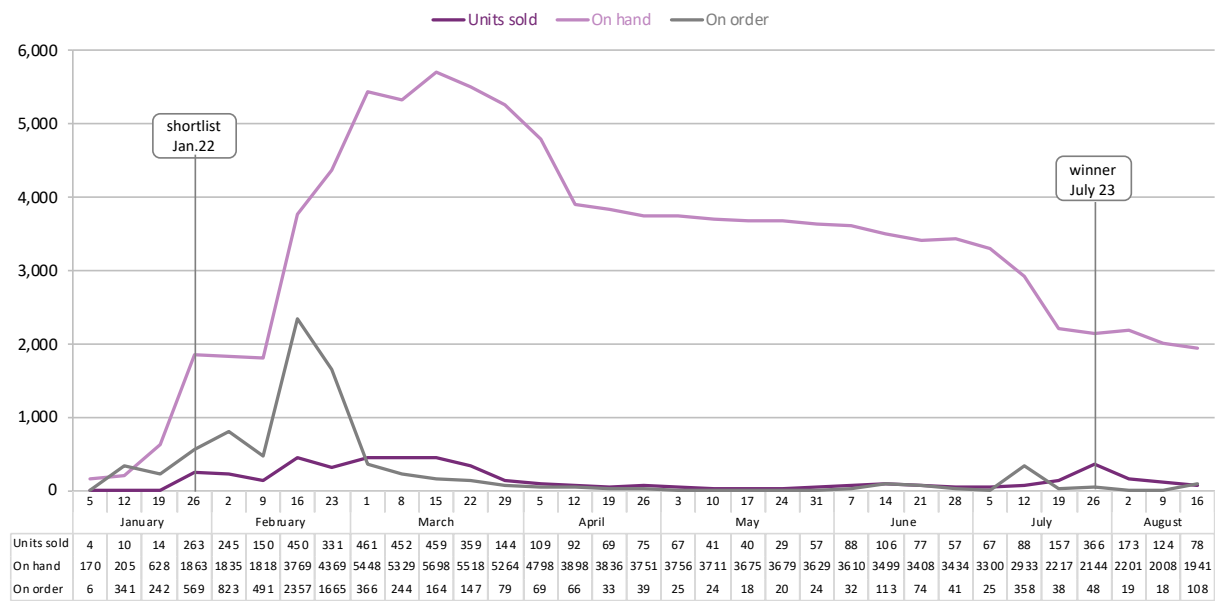


Each shortlisted title's market share percentage (i.e., the portion of either the Fiction or Non-Fiction market, depending on the title's subject, that is allocated to sales of that title) during debate week was compared with a baseline market share from 26 weeks earlier to calculate the shift each title experienced during debate week.

Radicalized was voted off on day one, *From the Ashes* was voted off on day two, and so on leading up to the final day, with *We Have Always Been Here* the 2020 winner. Market share percentages for *Small Game Hunting* and *We Have Always Been Here* are compared with the Non-Fiction market; the other titles are compared with the Fiction market.

Nominee title: *Radicalized* by Cory Doctorow

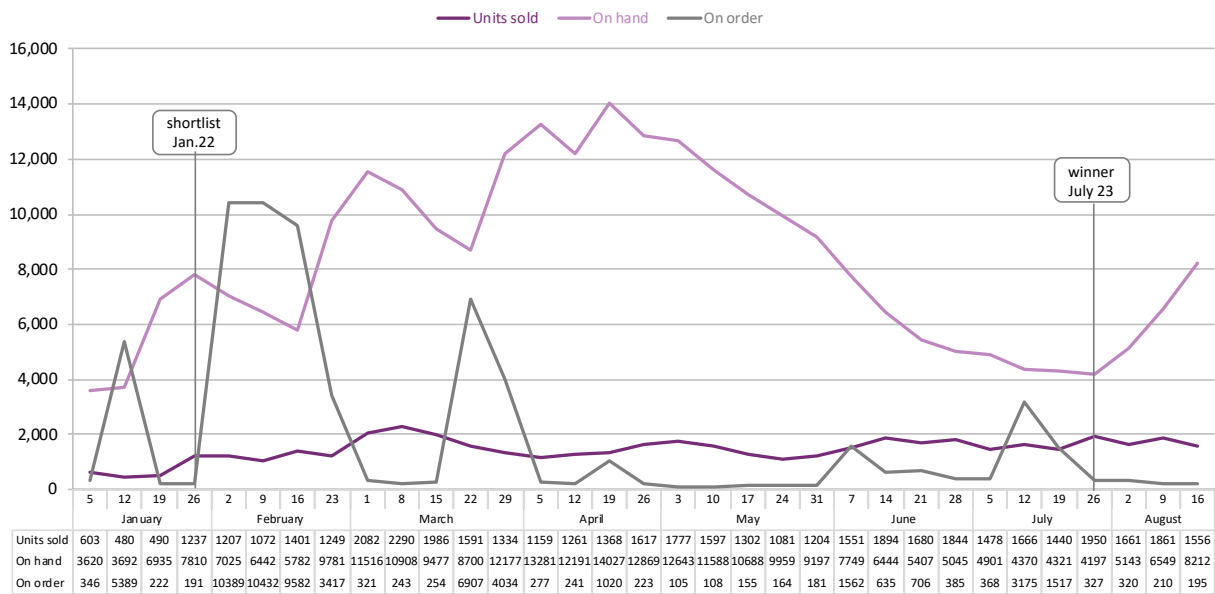
Units sold, on hand, and on order



Radicalized was defended by Akil Augustine and voted off on day one. Sales for paperback and hardcover editions are combined in the above graph.

Nominee title: *From the Ashes* by Jesse Thistle

Units sold, on hand, and on order

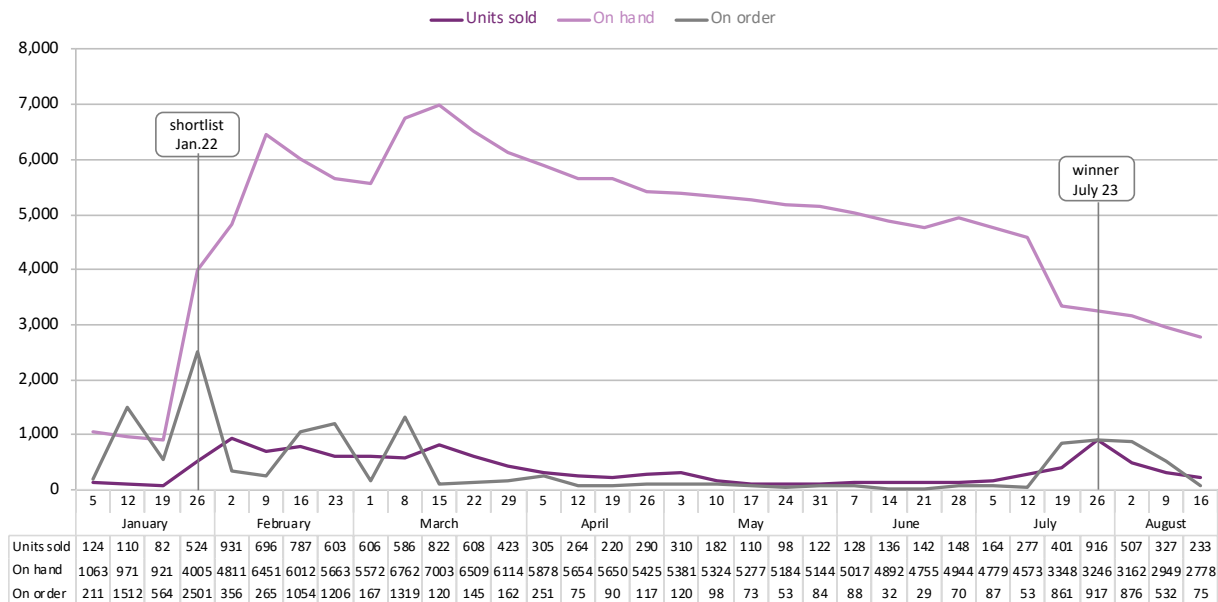


From the Ashes was defended by George Canyon and voted off on day two.

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Nominee title: *Small Game Hunting at the Local Coward Gun Club* by Megan Gail Coles

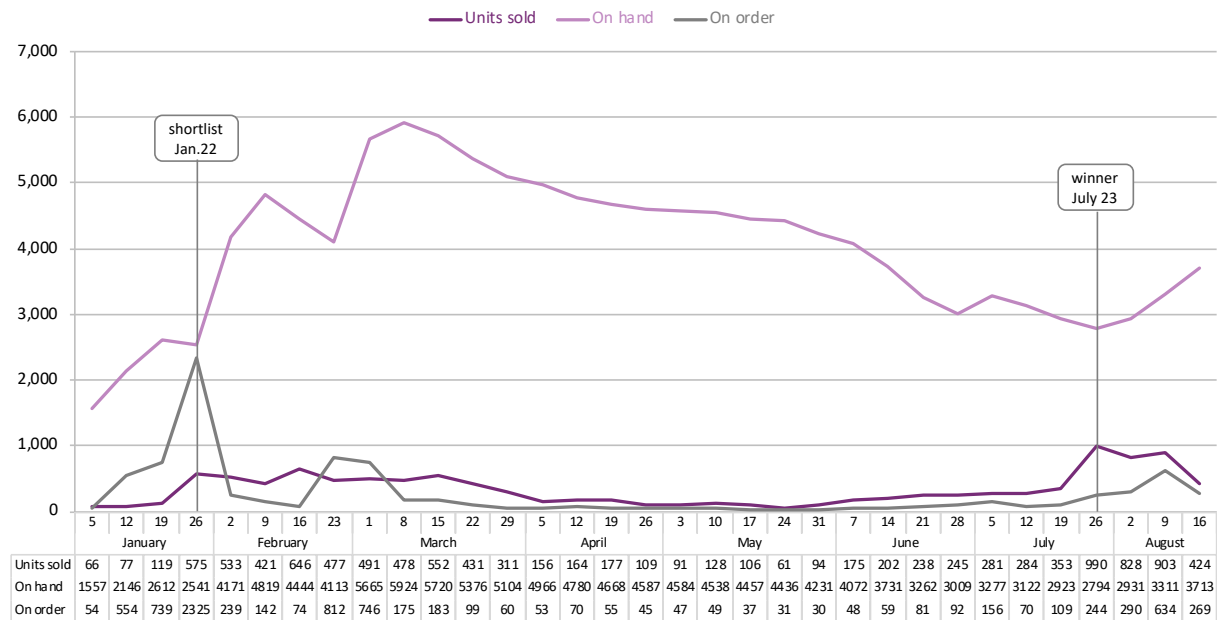
Units sold, on hand, and on order



Small Game Hunting at the Local Coward Gun Club was defended by Alayna Fender and voted off on day three. It was also nominated for the 2020 Scotiabank Giller Prize in September 2019.

Nominee title: *Son of a Trickster* by Eden Robinson

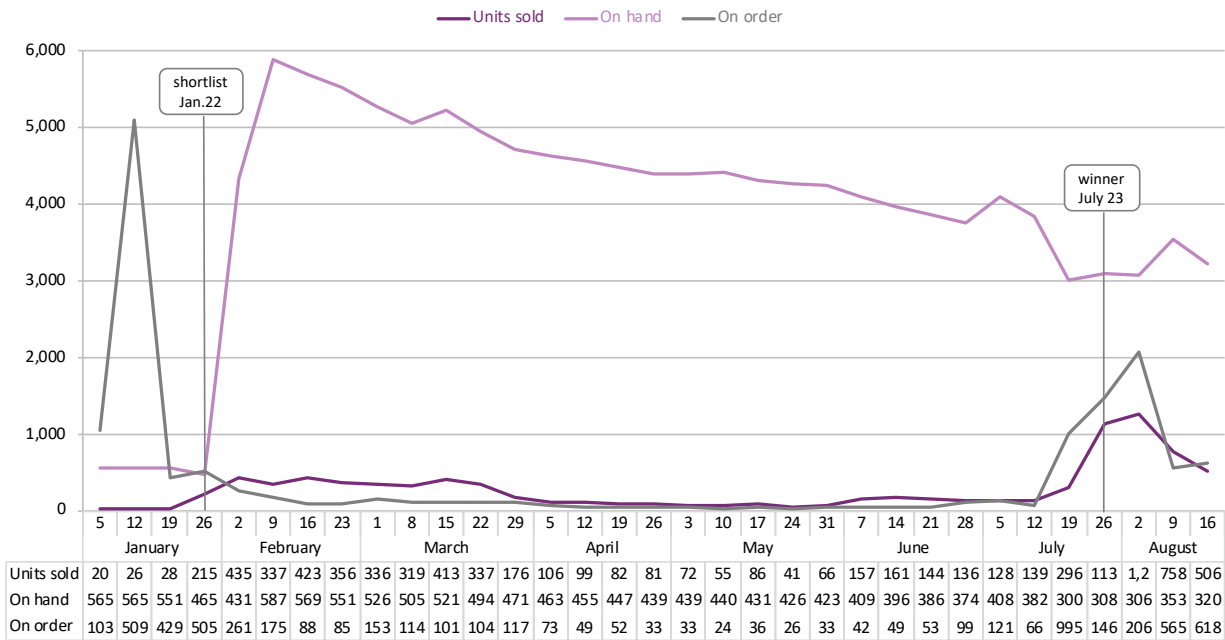
Units sold, on hand, and on order



Son of a Trickster was defended by Kaniehtiio Horn and was the runner-up title.

Winning title: *We Have Always Been Here* by Samra Habib

Units sold, on hand, and on order



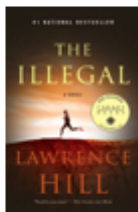
We Have Always Been Here was defended by Amanda Brugel and won.

Winner comparison 2016–2020

- **2020:** *We Have Always Been Here: A Queer Muslim Memoir* by Samra Habib, Penguin Canada, TP, 9780735235007, \$24.95
- **2019:** *By Chance Alone* by Max Eisen, HarperCollins Publishers, TP, 9781443448543, \$21.00
- **2018:** *Forgiveness* by Mark Sakamoto, HarperCollins Publishers,
 - TP, 9781443417983, \$19.99
 - HT, 9781443417976, \$29.99
- **2017:** *Fifteen Dogs* by André Alexis, Coach House Books, TP, 9781552453056, \$19.95
- **2016:** *The Illegal* by Lawrence Hill, HarperCollins Publishers,
 - TP, 9781554683840, \$24.99
 - HT, 9781554683833, \$34.99

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Volume of sales — Winner comparison — 2016–2019

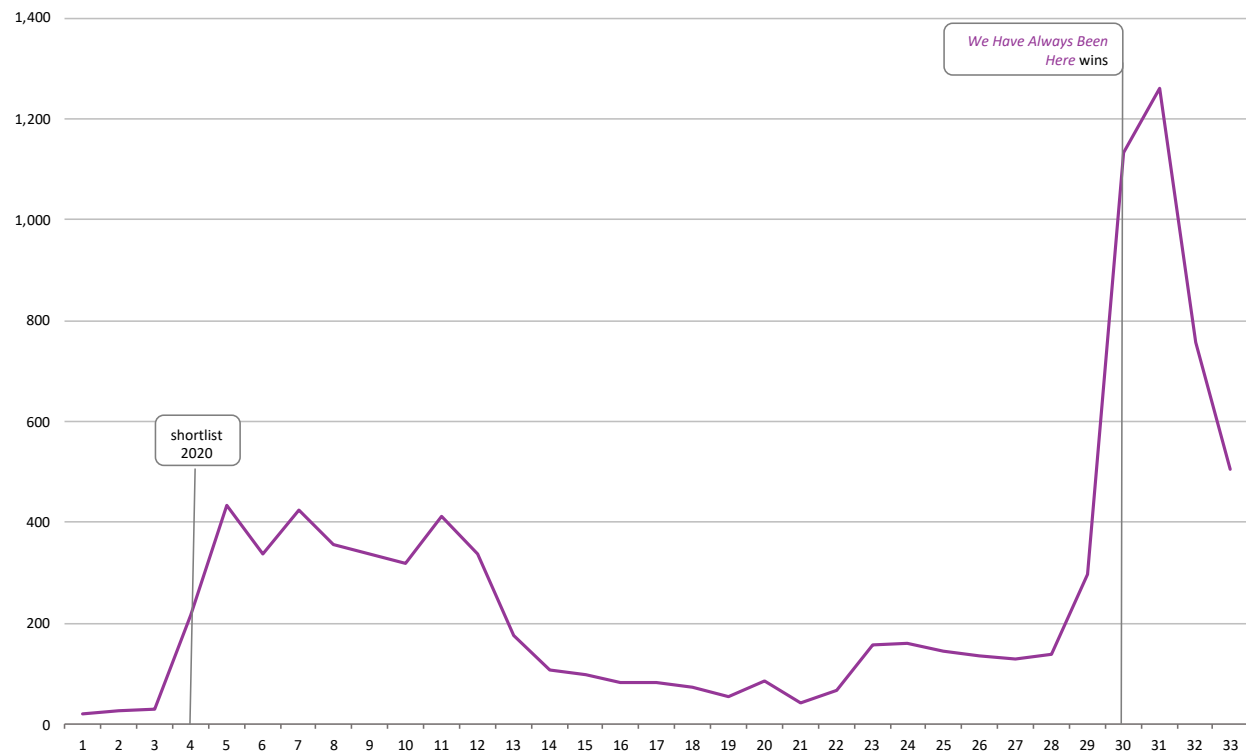
	Christmas	Shortlist announced	Winner announced	
				
	<i>The Illegal</i> (2016)	<i>Fifteen Dogs</i> (2017)	<i>Forgiveness</i> (2018)	<i>By Chance Alone</i> (2019)
1	2,355	402	5	6
2	3,050	558	0	10
3	3,971	992	0	2
4	2,987	175	0	6
5	810	220	4	1
6	901	189	4	6
7	626	190	3	11
8	924	202	70	5
9	850	781	576	69
10	968	705	637	609
11	872	800	547	724
12	861	1,028	567	599
13	1,621	1,373	622	511
14	2,520	1,407	534	696
15	2,912	1,215	521	549
16	2,850	1,391	740	685
17	5,562	3,416	2,740	580
18	5,516	2,422	1,538	2,836
19	3,716	1,534	1,074	1,964
20	3,105	1,282	1,440	922
21	2,789	1,213	1,352	1,160
22	2,606	1,036	1,214	928

In 2019, the winning title, *By Chance Alone*, sold the highest number of copies during the 22-week time period, and all shortlisted titles experienced large sales increases following the shortlist announcement which peaked during the debate week. Sales for the winning titles from 2016 to 2019 increased the week after each shortlist announcement — even in the midst of the overall post-holiday decline in book buying — and peaked during their respective debate weeks.

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Because of COVID-19, the Canada Reads 2020 debate was postponed to week 30. As the 2020 time period of 33 weeks cannot be directly compared with the 22-week time period for prior years, we have separated out the 2020 winner.

2020 winner



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Volume of sales — 2020 winner

Shortlist announced Winner announced



<i>We Have Always Been Here</i>	
Week	<i>Been Here (2020)</i>
1	20
2	26
3	28
4	215
5	435
6	337
7	423
8	356
9	336
10	319
11	413
12	337
13	176
14	106
15	99
16	82
17	81
18	72
19	55
20	86
21	41
22	66
23	157
24	161
25	144
26	136
27	128
28	139
29	296
30	1,132
31	1,260
32	758
33	506

In 2020, COVID-19 retail closures during the analyzed period were from week 11 to 21 (the week-ending March 15, 2020 to the week-ending May 24, 2020).