

THE INDEPENDENT HANDSELLERS LIST

Local interest, obscure gems and tried and true favourites make up this assortment of titles that Canadian independent booksellers recommend with confidence.

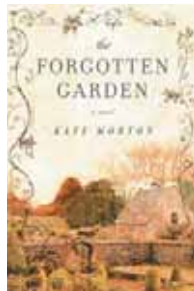
The Book Mark, Toronto, ON

The Help by Kathryn Stockett (Putnam/Penguin)

This is our favourite book this year. Everyone on staff has loved it and customers have thanked us for recommending it. Set during the turbulent early sixties in Mississippi, *The Help* vividly imparts the experience of being a black maid working for a white family. The characters, particularly those of Minny and Aibileen, are so clearly drawn that they have become impossible to forget.

The Forgotten Garden by Kate Morton (Atria/Simon & Schuster Canada)

Last year, Kate Morton's *The House at Riverton* was published. In the vein of *Gosford Park* and *Upstairs Downstairs*, we immediately fell in love with it. Her new book, *The Forgotten Garden*, is equally as enjoyable. Spanning over 100 years, this novel tells of Nell's search for her roots. After Nell's death, her granddaughter Cassandra continues the quest which takes her to Cornwall and an intriguing lost garden.



- Sue Houghting

Audreys Books, Edmonton, AB

Dirty Wow Wow and Other Love Stories by Cheryl and Jeffrey Katz (Ten Speed Press)

A charming photography book of well-loved stuffed animals. Each toy is accompanied by its owner's reminiscences. Will make you want to dig up oddly-named (and often forgotten) characters from your childhood.



What Have You Changed Your Mind About? Today's Leading Minds Rethink Everything edited by John Brockman (Harper Perennial)

In this newest title in the Edge.org series, editor John Brockman asks leading thinkers a provocative question and collects the most interesting answers. From Richard Dawkins to Nassim

Nicholas Taleb, some of today's finest minds describe the reversals they have made in their intellectual lives. A stimulating read.

Monkey Portraits by Jill Greenberg (Little, Brown and Company/H.B. Fenn)

Beautiful colour portraits of monkeys and apes. Subjects are surprisingly expressive: scary, cute, bizarre, familiar. My niece loves this one.



- Trevor Shikaze

Manticore Books, Orillia, ON

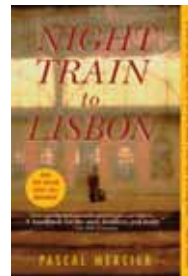
The Best Laid Plans by Terry Fallis (Emblem Editions)

Winner of the Stephen Leacock Award for Humour, 2008, this political satire has to be the funniest book for many years. Fallis self-published the book, but after it won the award, Douglas Gibson at M&S picked it up for the fall list. The inner workings of Ottawa in all its ridiculous glory are in the spotlight.



Night Train to Lisbon by Pascal Mercier (Grove Press/Publishers Group Canada)

A Homeric journey of a predictable professor of classical languages in Switzerland who commits a rash and random act: he goes to Portugal to discover the significance of the life of a philosopher-physician Prado who was killed in the Falangist regime 1936-39. Mundane and petty issues are juxtaposed with philosophical and life-or-death credo. This book is huge in Europe but given thumbs down by the NYT Book Review.



The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao by Janot Diaz (Riverhead/Penguin Canada)

A tragic novel of a young gay Dominican

searching for love, which he finally finds with an older female prostitute. But his family is under a Fuku, a curse that destroys its members. An award-winner that is great for clubs.

Netherland by Joseph O'Neill (Vintage/RHC)
The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo by Steig Larsson (Viking Canada)

A toss-up final book pick is between *Netherland*, which is the best novel ever about the death of the American Dream, and *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*, a superb tale of a disgraced journalist and a Gothic, unemotional, genius of a hacker sleuthing the 30-year-old disappearance of a young daughter of an industrialist. Both are excellent and easy to hand sell.

- Don Ross and Karen Naylor



P'lovers Environmental Store, Halifax, NS

Into the Forest by Jean Hegland (Dial Press/Random House)

P'lovers Environmental Store has a book club and we mostly read non-fiction books, but we have found a couple of great fiction titles relating to environmental issues. Our current favourite (and personally one of my 20 all-time favourite books) is a novel called *Into the Forest* by Jean Hegland—a gripping novel about the lives of two sisters who live outside a large city when electricity fails and society unravels. The story is gripping but the writing is stellar. Every sentence is sensual and the events reveal the true natures of the characters. It's soooo good, and we are able to sell it because we all love it to pieces.



- Liz Crocker

Thanks to all of our bookseller contributors who responded so thoughtfully and eloquently. If you've got a handselling hit on your hands, or staff recommendations to offer, please forward your picks to esinkins@babook.org