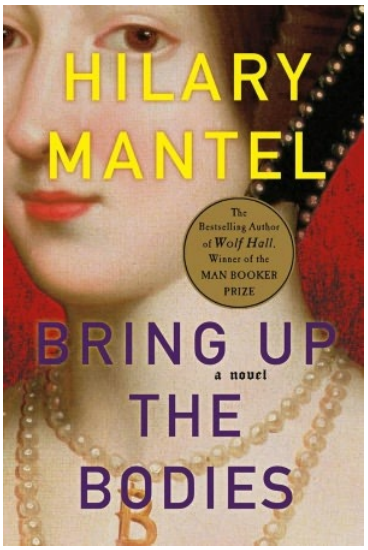
Best Books of 2012



I love making lists, reading lists and cross referencing lists. I especially love December when many journals publish their year-end best-of lists. The New York Times has a top ten list [1], as does Publisher's Weekly [2] and Amazon's Editors chose 20 books [3] that they considered the best for 2012. The only book to make it to all three lists? *Bringing up the Bodies* [4] by Hilary Mantel. This is the follow up novel to Wolf Hall, about Thomas Cromwell and Henry the VII. Both books won the Man Booker Prize and a third book is in the works.

Other than Mantel's struck-it-gold novel, there isn't a whole lot of other crossover. Publisher's Weekly and the New York Times both list *Building Stories* by Chris Ware. This graphic novel is really an unusual collection of printed material, collected in a large box, which shares the stories of the residents of one building. Tackling a wide range of themes, the New York Times calls it "simultaneously playful and profound".

Two nonfiction books show up on both the New York Times and Amazon lists. *Behind the Beautiful Forevers* [5] by Katherine Boo and *Passage of Power* [6] by Robert A. Caro. Boo's first book won the National Book Award and follows the residents of Annawadi, a Mumbai slum as they live, dream, die, work, scheme and hope. This is narrative nonfiction at its finest. Caro's book four of the Years of Lyndon Johnston covers the period of 1958 to 1964, pivotal years politically. Clocking in at over 600 pages, this isn't for someone who cowers from something more detailed. On the bright side, Amazon raves that it "reads at times like a novel, and a thriller, and a Greek tragedy".

With only four books making multiple lists, there is a lot of variety - something for everyone!

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Posted by Sarah B. on Dec 10, 2012

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[2] http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/best-books/2012/top-10#list
[3] http://www.amazon.com/gp/feature.html/ref=s9_al_bw_feat?ie=UTF8&docId=1000698051&plgroup=1&am
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