

Staff Picks



Recent International Fiction

See the world through these books by authors from various countries.

Compiled by: Ryan S.

Spain



In the Night of Time

Antonio Muñoz Molina Fiction (New Arrivals) Munozmo

October 1936. Spanish architect Ignacio Abel arrives at Penn Station, the final stop on his journey from war-torn Madrid, where he has left behind his wife and children, abandoning them to uncertainty. Crossing the fragile borders of Europe, he reflects on months of fratricidal conflict in his embattled country, his own transformation from a bricklayer's son to a respected bourgeois husband and professional, and the all-consuming love affair with an American woman that forever alters his life. (hnhco.com)



Infatuations

Javier Marias Fiction Marias

Breakfasting daily at a Madrid cafe? where she observes fellow patrons, Mari?a Dolz offers condolences to a widow whose husband has been shockingly murdered, an act that leads to a new relationship and disturbing insights into the crime.

Belgium



Life Form

Amelie Nothomb Fiction Nothomb

One morning, Nothomb receives a letter from one of her readers, an American soldier called Melvin Mapple, who is fighting in Iraq. Horrified by the endless violence around him, he takes comfort in over-eating. Over-eating until his fat starts to suffocate him and he can barely fit into his XXXXL clothes. Disgusted with himself, but unable to control his eating, he takes his mind off his ever-growing bulk by naming it Scheherazade and pretending that he is not alone at night with his flesh.

Italy



My brilliant friend ; Book one : Childhood, adolescence

Elena Ferrante Fiction Ferrante

Series: Neapolitan novels

In a poor, midcentury Italian neighborhood, two girls, Elena and Lila, exhibit remarkable intelligence early in school, at a time when money is scarce and education a privilege, especially for girls. Only Elena is allowed to continue in school, and she devotes herself to her studies, while Lila redirects her own talent toward her family?s business. The girls use each other, sometimes as crutches, sometimes as inspiration, but as they approach adolescence, their friendship is challenged by their changing bodies and attitudes toward the world.



The Story of a New Name

Elena Ferrante

Series: Neapolitan novels

The second book, following *My Brilliant Friend*, featuring the two friends Lila and Elena. The two protagonists are now in their twenties. Marriage appears to have imprisoned Lila. Meanwhile, Elena continues her journey of self-discovery. The two young women share a complex and evolving bond that brings them close at times, and drives them apart at others. Each vacillates between hurtful disregard and profound love for the other.

Japan



Revenge : eleven dark tales

Yoko Ogawa Fiction Ogawa

What appears to be a collection of sympathetically worded, yet familiar, short stories then veers into the unexpected. With dark calm and disquieting imagery, the author leads readers on a journey of the macabre in a progression of tales that resound long after the last page is turned. And although the stories may be perceived as gruesome, the author paints each tale exquisitely.



The Guest Cat

Takashi Hiraide Fiction (New Arrivals) Hiraide

The simplest of relationships often elicit the most complex emotions, as two freelance editors discover in an eloquent tale. One day, a small cat appears in the couple's garden, and the man discovers that the young child of a neighboring family has adopted the tiny creature and named it Chibi. Though the cat doesn't belong to them, the couple develops a proprietary feeling for the cat as their lives become more centered around its visits. They begin to take joy in small pleasures as the cat, always on its own terms, slips between their neighbors' home and theirs and even explore options to remain in Chibi's life when they're told they must find a new place to live. (Kirkus)

China



Sandalwood Death

Mo Yan Fiction Mo

Series: Chinese Literature Today

Sun Meiniang interacts with the three men in her life during the Boxer Rebellion, including Sun Bing, her father and a leader of the rebellion, who is destined to come to a cruel end.

Israel



Textile

Orly Castel-Bloom Fiction Castelb

A curious and beautiful study of lives loosely linked by family and heritage. Proprietor of a successful pajama factory catering to the ultra-Orthodox Jews in Tel Baruch North, Israel, Mandy Gruber ought to feel empowered. Unfortunately, she is hamstrung by deathbed promises made to her mother. Against the backdrop of war and unrest, the strivings of a woman for independence gain international depth. (Kirkus)

Germany



The Beggar King

Oliver Potzsch Potzsch

Series: The Hangman's Daughter

The third book in the internationally bestselling Hangman's Daughter series takes readers to the imperial city of Regensburg, where the hangman has been accused of murder.

Netherlands



The Dinner

Herman Koch Fiction Koch

A high-class meal provides an unlikely window into privilege, violence and madness. Koch's slow revelation of the central crisis is expertly paced, and he's opened up a serious question of what parents owe their children, and how much of their character is passed on to them. (Kirkus)

Colombia



The Sound of Things Falling

Juan Gabriel Vásquez Fiction Vasquez

An odd coincidence leads Antonio Yammara, a law professor and narrator of this novel from Latin American author Vásquez deep into the mystery of personality, both his own and especially that of Ricardo Laverde, a casual acquaintance of Yammara before he was gunned down on the streets of Bogotá.

Chile



Ways of Going

Alejandro Zambra Fiction Zambra

How does the experience of dictatorship impact the children, and what is the relationship between writers and their material, asks a noted Chilean novelist. Listed among Granta's Best of Young Spanish-Language Novelists, Zambra divides his third novel into two strands: a story of the Pinochet years narrated from a child's perspective; and a meditation by the author of that story on how novelists draw ideas from their own experiences. (Kirkus)
