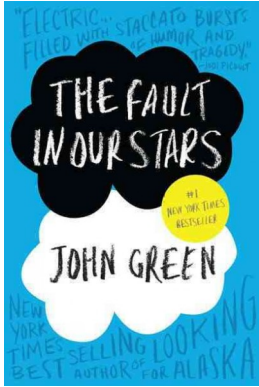


For the Love of Reading

The Fault in Our Stars



[view in catalog](#)

ISBN:

9780525478812

This young adult novel by the popular John Green fell into my arms at the YMCA. An exercise buddy suggested that I read it; she was turned on to it by her teenage son. The novel opens at a cancer support group in a church. Because it's set in Indianapolis some of the landmarks will be familiar. A 16 year-old girl suffering from stage IV thyroid cancer is returning at the insistence of her Mom. "Go out and meet somebody" her mom suggested and without any hope that she will, Hazel does.

Asked to speak about what she's thinking, Hazel describes how everyone on earth is going to die. It is the only end we can expect and that we have. Her speech is more philosophical and much more eloquent but totally lacking in hope. Afterwards, handsome Augustus who's on the mend from osteosarcoma - 80% chance of survival--tells her he likes what she said. Not only that but she looks like Natalie Portman. Augustus and Hazel have a mutual friend, Isaac, who is about to lose an eye from another form of cancer.

Hazel can't leave the house without her oxygen tank. Her prognosis is poor; it's not a matter of if but when. Her parents are extremely kind and protective. She overheard her mom say once that when Hazel dies, she will no longer be a mom.

If *The Fault in Our Stars* sounds depressing, amazingly it isn't. Green has created a sardonic, wise beyond her years, poetry-loving heroine with an edgy sense of humor. She finds a soul-mate in Augustus who has already lost one girlfriend to death. Hazel holds back. She doesn't want to die and be another "exploding torpedo" in his life. [Read more »](#)

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Classics as Graphic Novels

Interested in



revisiting an old favorite classic in a new way? Consider the graphic novel version of

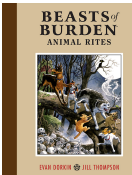
your old familiar favorite novel. I recently read *The Hound of the Baskervilles* reimagined as a graphic novel by Ian Edginton and was pleasantly surprised. This is the famous story of Sir Charles Baskerville who has suddenly died and Henry Baskerville, his nephew and the heir to his estate. Henry is being warned of danger that might befall him as he takes ownership of the manor on the moor. Sherlock Holmes and Watson travel with Henry to the moor to investigate the threat, made complicated by an escaped murderer, jealousy, mysterious family dynamics, and a possible hell hound. The characters were visually well represented including Watson, Dr. Mortimer and Mrs. Stapleton. Their mystery, though well known, has enough twists and turns to keep any reader going. The visual look and use of color does well to represent the haunting and atmospheric feeling of the moor and the danger lurking everywhere. For fans of dense novels, there is still quite a bit of dialogue which is slowed down further (for a modern reader!) by the original style. I really loved the look of this graphic novel edition which often reminded me of an animated movie. **[Read more »](#)**

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Posted by Sarah B. on Mar 20, 2013 [Sarah B.'s blog](#) [Add new comment](#)



[Beasts of Burden](#)



Making yourself read outside your comfort zone can end up with some total misses

and some excellent surprises. In all likelihood I would have missed *Beasts of Burden: Animal Rites*, a graphic novel about a talking pack of animals that solve supernatural mysteries in their seemingly sweet suburban neighborhood of Burden Hill. That description wouldn't peak my interest, but also doesn't do the graphic novel justice either.

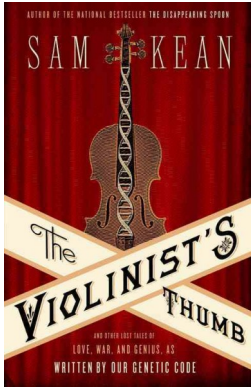
The storytelling is episodic, in that there are chapters that are a complete story into itself which makes for a fast read. There is a pack of animal friends, all dogs and one orphan cat who start uncovering supernatural cases in their neighborhood. They eventually become apprentices in the Wise Dog Society to further their training in fighting these evil forces. The supernatural stories cover a wide range from an evil coven of cats, a rain of mutant frogs, werewolves, magical earthen golems, ghosts, and more. **[Read more »](#)**

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Posted by Sarah B. on Mar 15, 2013 [Sarah B.'s blog](#) [Add new comment](#)



[The Violinist's Thumb](#)



[view in catalog](#)

ISBN:

9780316182317

OK, I selected this book based solely on its title, but boy did I luck out. What an incredibly gifted writer Sam Kean is. In *The Violinist's Thumb: and Other Lost Tales of Love, War, and Genius as Written by Our Genetic Code*, he translates dense scientific concepts into lucid, beautiful prose.

He also knows how to tell stories. The first chapter contrasts the biographies of two of DNA's discoverers, Mendel and the less well-known, Johannes Friedrich Miescher, who because he studied fish slime had to work in very cold conditions so that his material would not deteriorate before he could examine it. And who knew that Mendel joined a monastery so he could secure a university education? His passion for raising peas taught us so much about human inheritance.

This book tackles and at least partially answers many of life's great questions including: Why did it take eons for life to become complex? What is our most ancient DNA? Why do humans have no more DNA than so many smaller, less complex creatures? Why did we almost become extinct? Why did we break away from monkeys? Is the impulse for art conveyed by our DNA? Why are identical twins not identical? **Read more »**

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Posted by Dory L. on Mar 13, 2013 [Dory L.'s blog](#) [Add new comment](#)



The Count 2012



Every year [VIDA Women in Literary Arts](#) conducts a survey to count female author representation in major literary periodicals. This survey isn't about quality or good reviews, but just about the representation, number of reviews or general press coverage that women authors are getting. The results can be viewed through a wide variety of lenses, but the graphs are admittedly a little shocking.

It would be interesting to know how the publishing numbers break down, but a quick peek at the [New York Times Best Sellers hardcover list](#) of the top 16 titles shows an exact 50/50 female to male representation. Which to me (using completely unscientific methods) shows that books written by women are just as popular or being read in the same numbers as books written by men. **Read more »**

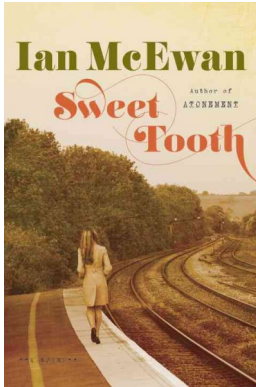
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Posted by Sarah B. on Mar 5, 2013 [Sarah B.'s blog](#) [Add new comment](#)





Of Spies and Literature



[view in catalog](#)

ISBN:

9780385536820

Do you like spy novels? Ones that mix in politics and love? If so McEwan's *Sweet Tooth* is for you.

It's set in the rollicking early 70s in England - a time of drugs, rock and roll, miniskirts, and--on a more serious note--women's entry into careers en masse. It tells the story of Selena, a bright vicar's daughter who loves to read and read fast. Her mother, in the only moment of life-dissatisfaction she's ever expressed to her daughter, advises Selena to go to Cambridge and study math so she can have a challenging career. Selena, being the good older daughter, follows her mom's advice and gives up studying literature for something better career-wise.

But Selena's real education begins the summer after college. An older tutor she meets through a boyfriend soon becomes her lover. In the process he teaches her about food, wine, politics, international relations, and how to read the newspapers for hidden facts and government policies. He's grooming her for a role in M15, the spy service. But then Tony leaves her abruptly after an argument so Selena goes to London and does find a job with M15. **Read more »**

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Posted by Dory L. on Mar 4, 2013 [Dory L.'s blog](#) [Add new comment](#)

