

The top 10 bestselling Canadian books of 2020

[CBC Books](#) · Posted: Dec 28, 2020 6:00 AM ET | Last Updated: January 1

[CBC Books](#) is counting down the top 10 bestselling Canadian titles of 2020, using data from close to 300 independent Canadian bookstores, courtesy of [Bookmanager](#).

You can listen to the countdown special hosted by [Ali Hassan](#) below or keep scrolling to see which books made the cut!

Ali Hassan hosts a countdown of the top 10 bestselling Canadian titles of 2020, using data from nearly 300 independent Canadian bookstores, courtesy of Bookmanager. 54:00

10. [How to Pronounce Knife](#) by [Souvankham Thammavongsa](#)



Souvankham Thammavongsa is a 2020 finalist for the Scotiabank Giller Prize. (Scotiabank Giller Prize, McClelland & Stewart)

[How to Pronounce Knife](#) is a collection of idiosyncratic and diverse stories. Capturing the daily lives of immigrants, Souvankham Thammavongsa captures their hopes, disappointments, trauma and acts of defiance. From a young man painting nails in a salon, to a housewife learning English from soap-operas, [How to Pronounce Knife](#) navigates tragedy and humour.

[How to Pronounce Knife](#) won the [2020 Scotiabank Giller Prize](#)

- [Souvankham Thammavongsa's stories explore the diversity of the immigrant experience](#)

Thammavongsa is a writer and poet. Her stories have won an O. Henry Award and appeared in *Harper's*, *Granta*, *The Paris Review* and *NOON*. She has published four books of poetry, including 2019's *Cluster*. [CBC Books named her a writer to watch in 2020.](#)

[9. Small Game Hunting at the Local Coward Gun Club by Megan Gail Coles](#)



Megan Gail Coles is the author of *Small Game Hunting at the Local Coward Gun Club*. (CBC)

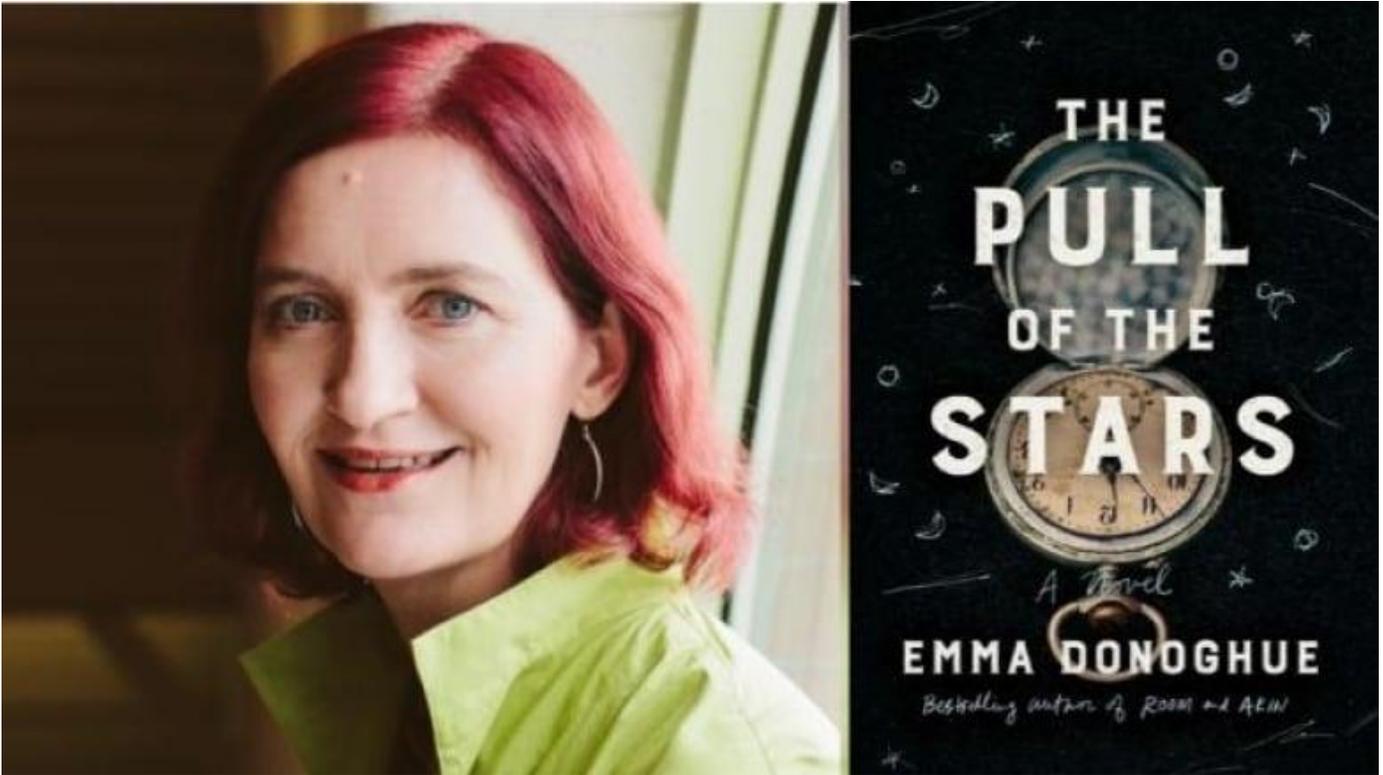
[Small Game Hunting at the Local Coward Gun Club](#) revolves around a cast of flawed characters all connected to a St. John's restaurant, The Hazel. Over the course of a snowy February day, they are implicated in each other's hopes, dreams and pains as they try to survive harsh economic times in the province.

[Small Game Hunting at the Local Coward Gun Club](#) was [shortlisted for the 2019 Scotiabank Giller Prize](#) and it was defended on [Canada Reads](#) 2020 by Alayna Fender.

- [Megan Gail Coles's debut novel is a tough-love letter to Newfoundland](#)

Megan Gail Coles is a playwright from St. John's. She previously published the short story collection [Eating Habits of the Chronically Lonesome](#). [CBC Books named her a writer to watch in 2020.](#)

8. [The Pull of the Stars](#) by [Emma Donoghue](#)



The Pull of the Stars is a novel by Emma Donoghue. (Punch Photographic, HarperCollins Canada)

[The Pull of the Stars](#), set in a war and disease-ravaged Ireland during the 1918 Spanish flu outbreak, tells the story of three women — a nurse, a doctor and a volunteer helper — working on the front lines of the pandemic in an understaffed maternity ward of a hospital, where expectant mothers infected with the virus are quarantined. The timely tale explores how these women change each other's lives in unexpected ways, while witnessing loss and delivering new life.

[The Pull of the Stars](#) was on [the 2020 Scotiabank Giller Prize longlist](#).

- [Emma Donoghue shares her favourite books](#)

[Emma Donoghue](#) is an Irish Canadian writer. Her books include the novels [Landing](#), [Room](#), [Frog Music](#), [The Wonder](#) and the children's book [The Lottery's Plus One](#).

7. [The Marrow Thieves](#) by Cherie Dimaline



Cherie Dimaline is the author of the YA novel *The Marrow Thieves*. (CBC)

In the dystopian world of [Cherie Dimaline's](#) award-winning *[The Marrow Thieves](#)*, climate change has ravaged the Earth and a continent-wide hunt and slaughter of Indigenous people is underway. Wanted for their bone marrow, which contains the lost ability to dream, a group of Indigenous people seek refuge in the old lands.

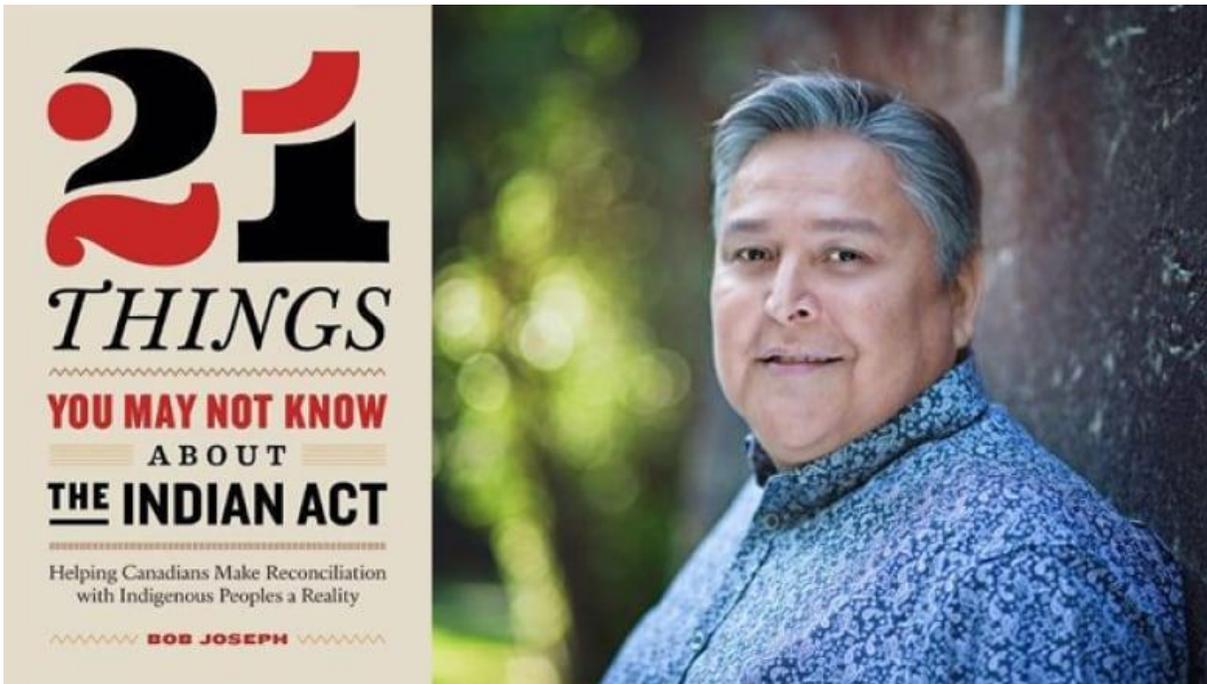
In 2017, *[The Marrow Thieves](#)* won the [Governor General's Literary Award for Young people's literature — text](#) and the [Kirkus Prize for young readers' literature](#). It is [currently being adapted for television](#).

[The Marrow Thieves](#) was defended by [Jully Black](#) on [Canada Reads](#) 2018.

- [The message YA novelist Cherie Dimaline has for young Indigenous readers](#)

Cherie Dimaline is a Métis author and editor whose award-winning fiction has been published and anthologized internationally. Her first book, *[Red Rooms](#)*, was published in 2007. Her follow-up to *[The Marrow Thieves](#)*, a novel for adults called *[Empire of Wild](#)*, was released in 2019.

6. [21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act by Bob Joseph](#)



21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act by Bob Joseph is a guide to understanding the Indian Act, created in 1876, and its ongoing impact on Indigenous people in Canada. (ictinc.ca)

Based on a viral article, [21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act](#) is the essential guide to understanding the 1876 Indian Act and its repercussions on generations of Indigenous Peoples. It also explores how the legal document's legacy has shaped the lives of Indigenous people from 1876 until now.

- [Bob Joseph says Indian Act is overdue for change](#)

Bob Joseph is a member of the Gwawaenuk Nation and is an initiated member of the Hamatsa Society. He is the founder of Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. and is the author of several books about Indigenous history and relations, including *Indigenous Relations* and *Working Effectively with Indigenous Peoples*.

5. [Son of a Trickster](#) by [Eden Robinson](#)



Eden Robinson is the author of *Son of a Trickster*. (CBC)

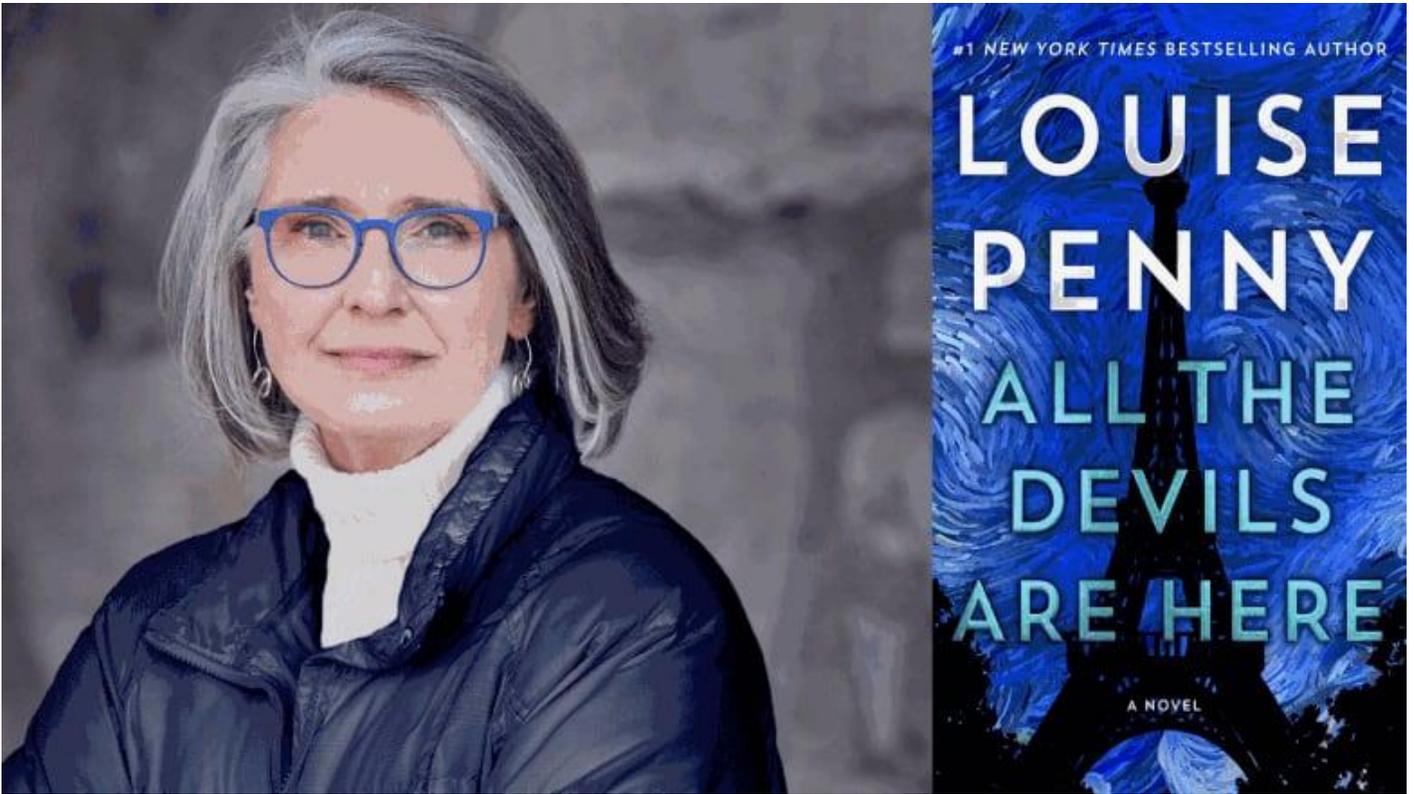
[*Son of a Trickster*](#) is a novel about Jared, a compassionate 16-year-old, maker of famous weed cookies, the caretaker of his elderly neighbours, the son of an unreliable father and unhinged, though loving in her way, mother. As Jared ably cares for those around him, in between getting black-out drunk, he shrugs off the magical and strange happenings that follow him around.

[*Son of a Trickster*](#) was on the [shortlist for the 2017 Scotiabank Giller Prize](#). It was adapted into a television series for CBC, [which can now be watched on CBC Gem](#). [*Son of a Trickster*](#) was defended by Kaniehtiio Horn on [Canada Reads](#) 2020.

- [Why it took Eden Robinson eight years to write *Son of a Trickster*](#)

Eden Robinson is an award-winning author from Kitimaat, B.C. She is also the author of the novels [*Monkey Beach*](#) and [*Trickster Drift*](#). [*Son of a Trickster*](#) and [*Trickster Drift*](#) are the first two books of a planned Trickster trilogy. The final book in the series, *Return of the Trickster*, will be published in 2021.

4. [All the Devils are Here](#) by [Louise Penny](#)



All the Devils Are Here is a novel by Louise Penny (Minotaur Books, Jean-Francois Berube)

All the Devils Are Here is the latest Inspector Armand Gamache novel from bestselling mystery writer [Louise Penny](#). Gamache is in Paris, enjoying a family trip, when his elderly godfather is attacked on the street — and Gamache is convinced it's not a random attack. It turns out that his godfather knows many secrets and Gamache must figure out the web of deceit and lies before it's too late.

- [Why Louise Penny had to step outside her comfort zone to write the latest Armand Gamache mystery](#)

Thirteen years ago, Penny was a CBC broadcaster and journalist. Now, she's an award-winning author who has sold more than four million books and has won armloads of prizes, thanks to her Inspector Armand Gamache mysteries. Her mysteries include [Still Life](#), [Bury Your Dead](#), [A Trick of the Light](#) and [Glass Houses](#). In 2013, [Penny](#) was named to the Order of Canada.

3. [The Glass Hotel](#) by [Emily St. John Mandel](#)



The Glass Hotel is a novel by Emily St. John Mandel. (HarperCollins, Sarah Shatz)

[The Glass Hotel](#) weaves several narratives together as it tells a story of financial corruption, greed and a massive Ponzi scheme. Vincent is a bartender in a prestigious hotel on Vancouver Island. When the owner — Jonathan Alkaitis — passes Vincent his card, it becomes the beginning of their story together. Meanwhile, a hooded figure scrawls a cryptic note on a wall in the hotel, and a shipping executive for a company called Neptune-Avramidis — Leon Prevant — sees the note and is shaken. Thirteen years later, Vincent disappears from a Neptune-Avramidis ship. Inspired by the Bernie Madoff financial fraud scandal, the novel is a character study of people who profit and the lives that are compromised as a result.

[The Glass Hotel](#) was [a finalist for the 2020 Scotiabank Giller Prize](#). It was also named one of [Time's 'must-read' books of 2020](#) and [former U.S. president Barack Obama named it one of his favourite books of 2020](#).

- [Emily St. John Mandel has no idea where she's going... and she's okay with that](#)

St. John Mandel is a New York-based Canadian writer. Her fourth novel, [Station Eleven](#), was a finalist for a National Book Award and the PEN/Faulkner Award and won the 2015 Toronto Book Award.

2. [From the Ashes](#) by Jesse Thistle



Jesse Thistle is the author of *From the Ashes*. (CBC)

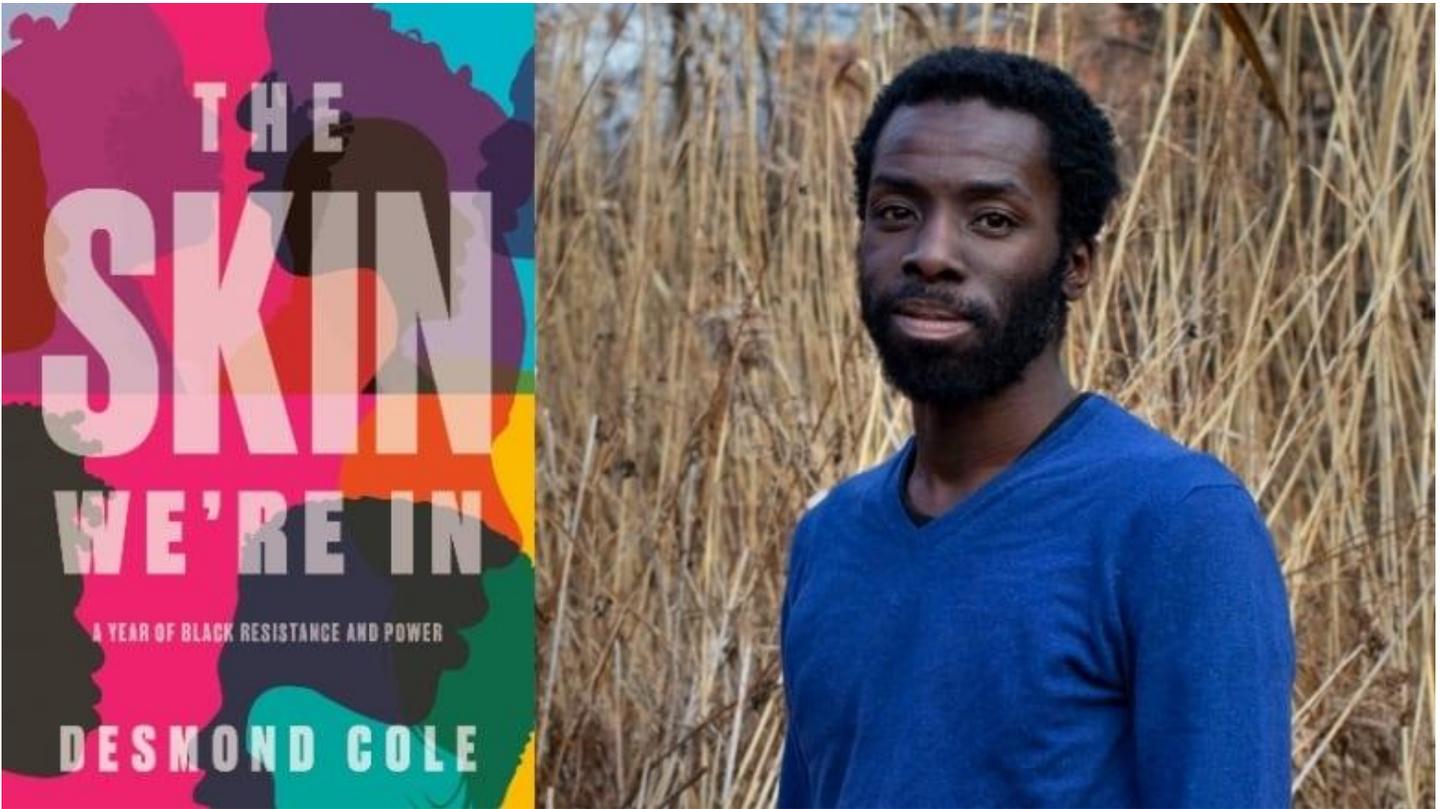
Jesse Thistle is a Métis-Cree academic specializing in Indigenous homelessness, addiction and inter-generational trauma. For Thistle, these issues are more than just subjects on the page. After a difficult childhood, Thistle spent much of his early adulthood struggling with addiction while living on the streets of Toronto. His memoir, *From the Ashes*, details how his issues with abandonment and addiction led to homelessness, incarceration and his eventual redemption through higher education.

From the Ashes was defended on *Canada Reads* 2020 by George Canyon.

- [How Jesse Thistle survived addiction, homelessness and incarceration — and became a bestselling author](#)

Thistle is an assistant professor at York University and was a recipient of the Governor General's Academic Medal in 2016. *From the Ashes* is his first book. [CBC Books named him a writer to watch in 2020.](#)

1. [*The Skin We're In* by Desmond Cole](#)



The Skin We're In is a nonfiction book by Desmond Cole. (Doubleday Canada, Chris Young/Canadian Press)

In [*The Skin We're In*](#), journalist and activist Desmond Cole looks at what it's like to live in Canada as a Black person. [*The Skin We're In*](#) looks at one year, 2017, and chronicles Coles's personal journalism, activism and experiences alongside stories that made the headlines across the country, including refugees crossing the Canada-U.S. border in the middle of winter and the death of Somali Canadian Abdirahman Abdi at the hands of the Ottawa police.

[*The Skin We're In* won the 2020 Toronto Book Award.](#)

- [**How Desmond Cole wrote a bestselling book about being Black in Canada**](#)

Cole is a journalist, radio host and activist based in Toronto. His writing has appeared in the Toronto Star, Toronto Life, Now Magazine and the Walrus. [*The Skin We're In*](#) is his first book. [CBC Books named him a writer to watch in 2020.](#)

