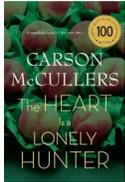


## 2021 Strong Female Character Books

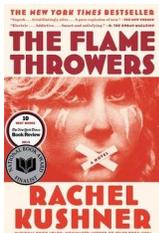
### The Heart is a Lonely Hunter, 2004 by Carson McCullers



With the publication of her first novel, *THE HEART IS A LONELY HUNTER*, Carson McCullers, all of twenty-three, became a literary sensation. With its profound sense of moral isolation and its compassionate glimpses into its characters' inner lives, the novel is considered McCullers' finest work, an enduring masterpiece first published by Houghton Mifflin in 1940. At its center is the deaf-mute John Singer, who becomes the confidant for various types of misfits in a Georgia mill town during the 1930s. Each one yearns for escape from small town life. When Singer's mute companion goes insane, Singer moves into the Kelly house, where Mick Kelly, the book's heroine (and loosely based on McCullers), finds solace in her music. Wonderfully attuned to the spiritual isolation that underlies the human condition, and with a deft sense for racial tensions in the South, McCullers spins a haunting, unforgettable story that gives voice to the rejected, the forgotten, and the mistreated -- and, through Mick Kelly, gives voice to the quiet, intensely personal search for beauty.

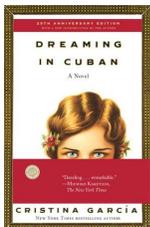
Richard Wright praised Carson McCullers for her ability "to rise above the pressures of her environment and embrace white and black humanity in one sweep of apprehension and tenderness." She writes "with a sweep and certainty that are overwhelming," said the *NEW YORK TIMES*. McCullers became an overnight literary sensation, but her novel has endured, just as timely and powerful today as when it was first published. *THE HEART IS A LONELY HUNTER* is Carson McCullers at her most compassionate, endearing best.

### The Flamethrowers, 2013, by Rachel Kushner



Reno, so-called because of the place of her birth, comes to New York intent on turning her fascination with motorcycles and speed into art. Her arrival coincides with an explosion of activity—artists colonize a deserted and industrial SoHo, stage actions in the East Village, blur the line between life and art. Reno is submitted to a sentimental education of sorts—by dreamers, poseurs, and raconteurs in New York and by radicals in Italy, where she goes with her lover to meet his estranged and formidable family. Ardent, vulnerable, and bold, Reno is a fiercely memorable observer, superbly realized by Rachel Kushner.

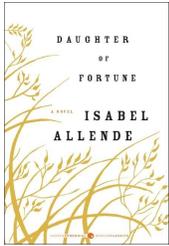
### Dreaming in Cuban, 1993 by Cristina Garcia



Cristina Garcia's acclaimed book is the haunting, bittersweet story of a family experiencing a country's revolution and the revelations that follow. The lives of Celia del Pino and her husband, daughters, and grandchildren mirror the magical realism of Cuba itself, a landscape of beauty and poverty, idealism and corruption. *Dreaming in Cuban* is "a work that possesses both the intimacy of a Chekov story and the hallucinatory magic of a novel by

Gabriel García Márquez” (*The New York Times*). In celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the novel's original publication, this edition features a new introduction by the author.

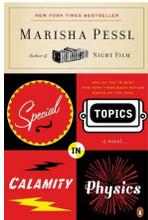
### **Daughter of Fortune, 2008 (432 pages) by Isabel Allende**



Orphaned at birth, Eliza Sommers is raised in the British colony of Valparaíso, Chile, by the well-intentioned Victorian spinster Miss Rose and her more rigid brother Jeremy. Just as she meets and falls in love with the wildly inappropriate Joaquín Andieta, a lowly clerk who works for Jeremy, gold is discovered in the hills of northern California. By 1849, Chileans of every stripe has fallen prey to feverish dreams of wealth. Joaquín takes off for San Francisco to seek his fortune, and Eliza, pregnant with his child, decides to follow him.

As Eliza embarks on her perilous journey north in the hold of a ship and arrives in the rough-and-tumble world of San Francisco, she must navigate a society dominated by greedy men. But Eliza soon catches on with the help of her natural spirit and a good friend, the Chinese doctor Tao Chi'en. What began as a search for love ends up as the conquest of personal freedom. A marvel of storytelling, *Daughter of Fortune* confirms once again Isabel Allende's extraordinary gift for fiction and her place as one of the world's leading writers.

### **Special Topics in Calamity Physics, 2007, by Marisha Pessl**



Marisha Pessl's dazzling debut sparked raves from critics and heralded the arrival of a vibrant new voice in American fiction. At the center of *Special Topics in Calamity Physics* is clever, deadpan Blue van Meer, who has a head full of literary, philosophical, scientific, and cinematic knowledge. But she could use some friends. Upon entering the elite St. Gallway School, she finds some—a clique of eccentrics known as the Bluebloods. One drowning and one hanging later, Blue finds herself puzzling out a byzantine murder mystery. Nabokov meets Donna Tartt (then invites the rest of the Western Canon to the party) in this novel—with visual aids drawn by the author—that has won over readers of all ages.

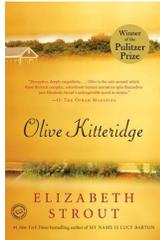
### **Three Strong Women, 2013, by Marie NDiaye**



From Marie NDiaye, the first black woman to win the Prix Goncourt, a harrowing and beautiful novel of the travails of West African immigrants in France. The story of three women who say no: Norah, a French-born lawyer who finds herself in Senegal, summoned by her estranged father to save another victim of his paternity; Fanta, who leaves a contented life as a teacher in Dakar to follow her boyfriend back to France, where his depression and dislocation poison everything; and Khady, a penniless widow put out by her husband's family with nothing but the name of a distant cousin in France. As these three lives intertwine, each woman manages an astonishing feat of

self-preservation against those who have made themselves the fastest-growing and most-reviled people in Europe. In Marie NDiaye's stunning narration we see the progress by which ordinary women discover unimagined reserves of strength.

### Olive Kitteridge, 2008, by Elizabeth Strout



**Book of the Year & Pulitzer Prize Winners** - At times stern, at other times patient, at times perceptive, at other times in sad denial, Olive Kitteridge, a retired schoolteacher, deplores the changes in her little town of Crosby, Maine, and in the world at large, but she doesn't always recognize the changes in those around her: a lounge musician haunted by a past romance; a former student who has lost the will to live; Olive's own adult child, who feels tyrannized by her irrational sensitivities; and her husband, Henry, who finds his loyalty to his marriage both a blessing and a curse. As the townspeople grapple with their problems, mild and dire, Olive is brought to a deeper understanding of herself and her life—sometimes painfully, but always with ruthless honesty. *Olive Kitteridge* offers profound insights into the human condition—its conflicts, its tragedies and joys, and the endurance it requires. **The inspiration for the Emmy Award–winning HBO miniseries starring Frances McDormand, Richard Jenkins, and Bill Murray**

### Caucasia, 1999, by Danzy Senna



Birdie and Cole are the daughters of a black father and a white mother, intellectuals and activists in the Civil Rights Movement in 1970s Boston. The sisters are so close that they speak their own language, yet Birdie, with her light skin and straight hair, is often mistaken for white, while Cole is dark enough to fit in with the other kids at school. Despite their differences, Cole is Birdie's confidant, her protector, the mirror by which she understands herself. Then their parents' marriage collapses. One night Birdie watches her father and his new girlfriend drive away with Cole. Soon Birdie and her mother are on the road as well, drifting across the country in search of a new home. But for Birdie, home will always be Cole. Haunted by the loss of her sister, she sets out a desperate search for the family that left her behind. The extraordinary national bestseller that launched Danzy Senna's literary career, *Caucasia* is a modern classic, at once a powerful coming of age story and a groundbreaking work on identity and race in America.

### Hind, The Light of the World Trilogy, 2013, by Nicola Griffith



In seventh-century Britain, small kingdoms are merging, frequently and violently. A new religion is coming ashore; the old gods are struggling, their priests worrying. Hild is the king's youngest niece, and she has a glimmering mind and a natural, noble authority. She will become a fascinating woman and one of the pivotal figures of the Middle Ages: Saint Hilda of Whitby.

But now she has only the powerful curiosity of a bright child, a will of adamant, and a way of seeing the world—of studying nature, of matching cause with effect, of observing her surroundings closely and predicting what will happen next—that can seem uncanny, even supernatural, to those around her.

Her uncle, Edwin of Northumbria, plots to become overking of the Angles, ruthlessly using every tool at his disposal: blood, bribery, belief. Hild establishes a place for herself at his side as the king's seer. And she is indispensable—unless she should ever lead the king astray. The stakes are life and death: for Hild, for her family, for her loved ones, and for the increasing numbers who seek the protection of the strange girl who can read the world and see the future.