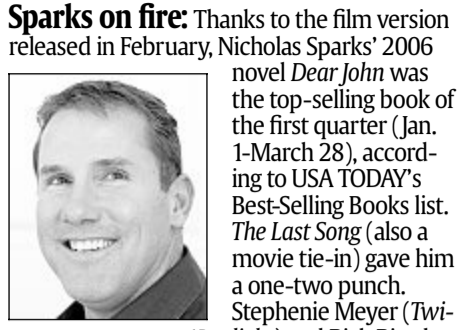


Book Buzz

What's new on the list and in publishing



Sparks: Had No. 1 and No. 2 books.

Sparks on fire: Thanks to the film version released in February, Nicholas Sparks' 2006 novel *Dear John* was the top-selling book of the first quarter (Jan. 1-March 28), according to USA TODAY's Best-Selling Books list. *The Last Song* (also a movie tie-in) gave him a one-two punch. Stephenie Meyer (*Twilight*) and Rick Riordan (*Percy Jackson*) also had a hot quarter at the bookstore.

Top 20 sellers for the first quarter:

1. *Dear John* by Nicholas Sparks
2. *The Last Song* by Nicholas Sparks
3. *Percy Jackson & the Olympians, Book 1: The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan
4. *The Lovely Bones* by Alice Sebold
5. *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett
6. *Eclipse* by Stephenie Meyer
7. *Percy Jackson & the Olympians, Book 2: The Sea of Monsters* by Rick Riordan
8. *Breaking Dawn* by Stephenie Meyer
9. *A Reliable Wife* by Robert Goolrick
10. *Percy Jackson & the Olympians, Book 3: The Titan's Curse* by Rick Riordan
11. *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* by Stieg Larsson
12. *Percy Jackson & the Olympians, Book 4: The Battle of the Labyrinth* by Rick Riordan
13. *New Moon* by Stephenie Meyer
14. *Game Change* by John Heilemann and Mark Halperin
15. *Percy Jackson & the Olympians, Book 5: The Last Olympian* by Rick Riordan
16. *Shutter Island* by Dennis Lehane
17. *Twilight* by Stephenie Meyer
18. *The Blind Side: Evolution of the Game* by Michael Lewis
19. *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days* by Jeff Kinney
20. *The Lost Symbol* by Dan Brown

Hannity's 'Victory': It has been a good week for Sean Hannity. The conservative radio host spent Wednesday in Minneapolis with Sarah Palin, and today his new book, *Conservative Victory: Defeating Obama's Radical Agenda*, enters the list at No. 3. "I swore I would never write another book. . . . It doesn't come easy to me, but this one almost wrote itself," says Hannity, whose *Let Freedom Ring and Deliver Us From Evil* also made USA TODAY's top 10.

"The way books come to me is kind of weird. The title, the chapters, everything all comes in about 15 minutes." He's not surprised his book, along with recent titles by fellow conservatives Karl Rove, Newt Gingrich and Glenn Beck, have been best sellers. "I've never seen such passion and concern about America heading in the wrong direction."

By Anthony DeBarros, Carol Memmott and Craig Wilson

'So Much for That' makes affliction terminally funny

So Much for That
By Lionel Shriver
Harper, 433 pp., \$25.99

Just when you're sick to death of hearing/talking/thinking about health care reform, along comes a delicious novel about . . . why we need health care reform.

So Much for That, Lionel Shriver's improbably feel-good black comedy, is the rare book that can

Review
By Jocelyn McClurg

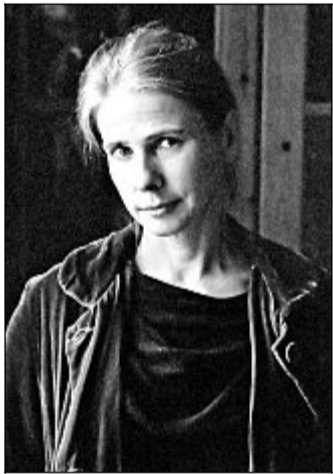
make suicide, near-bankruptcy and terminal cancer so engaging you can't wait to turn the page.

It's no secret that Shriver (*We Need to Talk About Kevin*, *The Post-Birthday World*) is brainy. But who knew she could be so witheringly funny? She turns irony into an art form here — but also reveals herself to be a real sofie at heart.

So Much for That opens with 48-year-old New Yorker Shep Knacker finally ready to make good on his promise to pack up and move to a remote island. He's purchased three non-refundable tickets to Pemba in East Africa — if his teenage son and wife, Glynis, want to join him.

But Glynis has a surprise of her own. She's just been diagnosed with a rare form of cancer called peritoneal mesothelioma, and she needs Shep's health insurance. So much for that.

Shep's longtime threats to quit his job and move to paradise (he calls his fantasy the "Afterlife," a place that, unfortunately, the very ill Glynis may well be headed) are something of a joke around the office. Shep still works at the Brooklyn handyman business he once owned and then sold to an employee (who's now his nasty boss) for a million dollars, mostly, it seems, so he can hang out with his best friend, the amusing blowhard Jackson Burdina.



By Eva Vermandel

Shriver: Illness, a thwarted retirement and health-care woes.

Jackson, who has a hyper-articulate teenage daughter who suffers from an awful disease called familial dysautonomia, knows the agony — and dollar drain — that awaits Shep, thanks to the World Wellness Group, "the health insurance company from hell."

Meanwhile, good-guy Shep, who perhaps is paying an unfair price for nearly flitting off to Pemba, is slavishly devoting himself to the prickly Glynis, a metalwork artist whose grand output totals a handful of (artfully turned) kitchen im-

plements. But Shriver's sharply observed characterization captures Glynis' appeal to her husband: He loved "her dry sense of humor, her slyness, the beguiling barbarity of her character."

As Glynis' illness progresses — and her oncologists encourage her to fight improbable odds, no matter what it costs, physically or financially — her fury grows. "On top of everything else I'm supposed to have cancer well," she protests.

So Much for That follows a trajectory that might surprise you. It's provocative, entertaining — and so very timely.

USA TODAY's Best-Selling Books

To see USA TODAY's complete list of 150 best-selling books, go to top150.usatoday.com

The top 10

	Rank this week	Rank last week	(F) Fiction	(NF) Non-fiction	(P) Paperback	(H) Hardcover	(E) E-book	Publisher and price in italics		
1	1	1	The Last Song	Nicholas Sparks	The story of a teenage girl distraught over her parents' divorce; movie (F) (P) <i>Grand Central Publishing, \$7.99</i>	6	6	The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo	Stieg Larsson	Journalist is hired to investigate the disappearance of an heir to a wealthy family (F) (P) <i>Vintage, \$14.95</i>
2	2	2	The Wimpy Kid Movie Diary	Jeff Kinney	Companion to the film adaptation; includes photographs, script pages and original art (F) (H) <i>Amulet Books, \$14.95</i>	7	9	Just Take My Heart: A Novel	Mary Higgins Clark	A prosecutor assisting in a murder trial finds herself in danger (F) (P) <i>Pocket, \$7.99</i>
3	—	—	Conservative Victory	Sean Hannity	Subtitle: "Defeating Obama's Radical Agenda" (NF) (P) <i>Harper Paperbacks, \$14.99</i>	8	5	Eclipse	Stephenie Meyer	Young adult: Third in Twilight vampire saga (F) (P) <i>Little, Brown for Young Readers, \$12.99</i>
4	3	—	The Girl Who Played With Fire	Stieg Larsson	A sex-trafficking ring involves prominent Swedes; sequel to "The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo" (F) (P) <i>Vintage, \$15.95</i>	9	8	Diary of a Wimpy Kid	Jeff Kinney	Diary from a middle-schooler, Greg Heffley (F) (H) <i>Amulet, \$12.95</i>
5	7	—	Dear John	Nicholas Sparks	Love, duty in the aftermath of 9/11; movie (F) (P) <i>Grand Central Publishing, \$7.99</i>	10	—	Hero at Large	Janet Evanovich	Reprint of the author's first book, a collection of short stories (F) (P) <i>Harper, \$7.99</i>

The rest

11	—	—	Deadly Deals	Fern Michaels	The sisterhood sets its sights on a corrupt lawyer; 16th in series (F) (P) <i>Zebra, \$7.99</i>	12	17	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days	Jeff Kinney	Greg's summer plans include video games and no responsibility (F) (H) <i>Amulet Books, \$13.95</i>
13	11	—	Percy Jackson 1: The Lightning Thief	Rick Riordan	Children: Percy goes to Camp Half-Blood, a summer camp for demigods, where he learns that the father he never knew is Poseidon (F) (P) <i>Disney-Hyperion, \$7.99</i>	14	14	Percy Jackson 2: The Sea of Monsters	R. Riordan	Children: Camp Half-Blood's borders are poisoned, threatening the only haven for demigods (F) (P) <i>Disney-Hyperion, \$7.99</i>
15	—	—	Silver Borne	Patricia Briggs	Mercy Thompson's possession of a mysterious book puts her life in danger (F) (H) <i>Ace, \$24.95</i>	16	4	Caught	Harlan Coben	Thriller featuring a TV reporter who exposes sexual predators but begins to wonder if she has caught an innocent man (F) (H) <i>Dutton, \$27.95</i>
17	20	—	Percy Jackson 3: The Titan's Curse	R. Riordan	Young adult: Third book in the fantasy series (NF) (P) <i>Disney-Hyperion, \$7.99</i>	18	22	Percy Jackson 5: The Last Olympian	R. Riordan	Youth: Percy Jackson attempts to stop the Lord of Time (F) (H) <i>Disney-Hyperion, \$17.99</i>
19	21	—	Percy Jackson 4: The Battle of the Labyrinth	R. Riordan	Children: Fourth in series starring Percy Jackson, who sets out on a quest through a labyrinth (F) (P) <i>Disney-Hyperion, \$7.99</i>	20	24	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules	J. Kinney	Greg Heffley's older brother knows secret; sequel (F) (H) <i>Amulet, \$12.95</i>
21	10	—	Chelsea Chelsea Bang Bang	Chelsea Handler	Handler tackles "childhood, adulthood and daughterhood" in her latest collection of essays (NF) (H) <i>Grand Central Publishing, \$25.99</i>	22	28	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Last Straw	J. Kinney	Greg tries to toughen up to avoid military school; third in series (F) (H) <i>Amulet, \$12.95</i>
23	—	—	Home in Carolina	Sherryl Woods	Former childhood friends find love with each other (F) (P) <i>Mira, \$7.99</i>	24	18	Breaking Dawn	Stephenie Meyer	Young adult: Fourth installment in Twilight vampire series (F) (H) <i>Little, Brown for Young Readers, \$22.99</i>
25	—	—	Hungry Girl 1-2-3	Lisa Lillien	Subtitle: "The Easiest, Most Delicious, Guilt-Free Recipes on the Planet" (NF) (P) <i>St. Martin's Griffin, \$19.99</i>	26	—	Kindred in Death	J.D. Robb	Lt. Eve Dallas investigates the murder of a colleague's daughter (F) (P) <i>Berkley, \$7.99</i>
27	12	—	The Big Short: Inside the Doomsday Machine	Michael Lewis	The author explores the downturn of the real estate derivative market that preceded the 2008 market collapse (NF) (H) <i>WW Norton & Co., \$27.95</i>	28	15	The Help	Kathryn Stockett	A young white woman tells the story of black maids in 1960s Mississippi (F) (H) <i>Putnam Adult, \$24.95</i>
29	19	—	New Moon	Stephenie Meyer	Young adult: Second in Twilight vampire love saga; movie (F) (P) <i>Little, Brown for Young Readers, \$10.99</i>	30	—	Deception: An Alex Delaware Novel	Jonathan Kellerman	Homicide detective Milo Sturgis and psychologist Alex Delaware investigate the murder of a teacher at a prestigious prep school (F) (H) <i>Ballantine, \$28</i>
31	13	—	Fang: A Maximum Ride Novel	James Patterson	Max faces the possible loss of her soul mate Fang (F) (H) <i>Little, Brown for Young Readers, \$17.99</i>	32	16	Twilight	Stephenie Meyer	Young adult: Isabella falls for a vampire; movie (F) (P) <i>Little, Brown for Young Readers, \$8.99</i>
33	25	—	Gone Tomorrow: A Reacher Novel	Lee Child	Ex-military policeman Jack Reacher is pulled into a military conspiracy (F) (P) <i>Dell, \$9.99</i>	34	32	The Blind Side	Michael Lewis	Tells how a man moves from poverty to the NFL; movie (NF) (P) <i>WW Norton & Co., \$13.95</i>
35	27	—	Little Bee: A Novel	Chris Cleave	Nigerian orphan becomes involved with well-off British couple (F) (P) <i>Simon & Schuster, \$14</i>	36	26	Look Again	Lisa Scottoline	Reporter investigates the case of a missing child who looks just like her adopted son (F) (P) <i>St. Martin's Griffin, \$13.99</i>
37	31	—	House Rules	Jodi Picoult	An 18-year-old with a high-functioning form of autism is accused of murder (F) (H) <i>Atria, \$28</i>	38	29	Twilight: The Graphic Novel	S. Meyer; Y.C. Kim	Graphic novelization of Stephenie Meyer's novel, "Twilight" (F) (H) <i>Yen Press, \$19.99</i>
39	30	—	Shutter Island	Dennis Lehane	U.S. Marshals investigate a disappearance from a mental hospital; movie (F) (P) <i>HarperCollins, \$7.99</i>	40	—	The Perfect Poison	Amanda Quick	Arcane Society members team up to find a murderer who uses botanical poison (F) (P) <i>Jove, \$7.99</i>
41	33	—	A Reliable Wife	Robert Goolrick	A mail-order bride is not what she is advertised to be (F) (P) <i>Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, \$14.95</i>	42	41	The Shack	William P. Young	Man reconnects with God after death of child (F) (P) <i>Windblown Media, \$14.99</i>
43	—	—	Night Tales: Night Shield and Night Moves	Nora Roberts	Contains the stories "Night Shield" and "Night Moves" (F) (P) <i>Silhouette, \$7.99</i>	44	—	Bad Moon Rising: A Dark-Hunter Novel	Sherrilyn Kenyon	Fang must defy his two brothers on the Were-Hunter ruling council; 12th in series (F) (P) <i>St. Martin's Paperbacks, \$7.99</i>
45	68	—	Fancy Nancy's Elegant Easter	Jane O'Connor, illustrated by Robin Preiss Glasser	Children: Fancy Nancy decorates for an Easter party (F) (P) <i>HarperFestival, \$6.99</i>	46	—	Giada at Home	Giada De Laurentiis	Subtitle: "Family Recipes from Italy and California" (NF) (H) <i>Clarkson Potter, \$35</i>
47	43	—	The Pacific	Hugh Ambrose	A companion to the HBO miniseries that follows four U.S. Marines and a U.S. Navy carrier pilot during World War II (NF) (H) <i>NAL, \$26.95</i>	48	—	Desires of a Perfect Lady	Victoria Alexander	Historical romance: An earl and a lady have romantic designs on each other (F) (P) <i>Avon, \$7.99</i>
49	42	—	The Lovely Bones	Alice Sebold	Murdered girl peers down from heaven to narrate this story; movie (F) (P) <i>Back Bay Books, \$13.95</i>	50	40	Now Eat This!	Rocco DiSpirito	Subtitle: "150 of America's Favorite Comfort Foods, All Under 350 Calories" (NF) (P) <i>Ballantine, \$22</i>

The book list appears every Thursday. Reporting outlets include Amazon.com, Amazon Kindle, B. Dalton Bookseller, Barnes & Noble.com, Barnes & Noble Inc., Barnes & Noble e-books, Books-A-Million.com, Books-A-Million, Bookland and Books & Co., Borders Books & Music, Brentano's, Davis-Kidd Booksellers (Nashville, Memphis, Tenn.), Hudson Booksellers, Joseph-Beth Booksellers (Lexington, Ky.; Cincinnati, Charlotte, Cleveland, Pittsburgh), Powell's Books (Portland, Ore.), Powell.com, R.J. Julia Booksellers (Madison, Conn.), Schuler Books & Music (Grand Rapids, Okemos, Eastwood, Alpine, Mich.), Sony Reader Store, Target, Tattered Cover Book Store (Denver), Waldenbooks. For each title, the format and publisher listed are for the best-selling version of that title this week.

New Voices

Sarah Pekkanen



By Hilary Schwab

The book

The Opposite of Me by Sarah Pekkanen (Washington Square Press, 377 pp., \$15, paperback original)



What it's about:

Lindsey Rose, 29, struggles to get out from beneath the shadow of her gorgeous, seemingly perfect fraternal twin sister, Alex. **Why it's notable:** Jennifer Weiner, author of the best sellers *Good in Bed* and *In Her Shoes*, calls this debut novel "fresh and funny and satisfying . . . made me laugh out loud."

The author

Quick bio: Pekkanen, 42, a former journalist, lives in Chevy Chase, Md., with her husband, Glenn Reynolds, an attorney, and their three sons, Jackson, 10, Will, 8, and Dylan, 16 months.

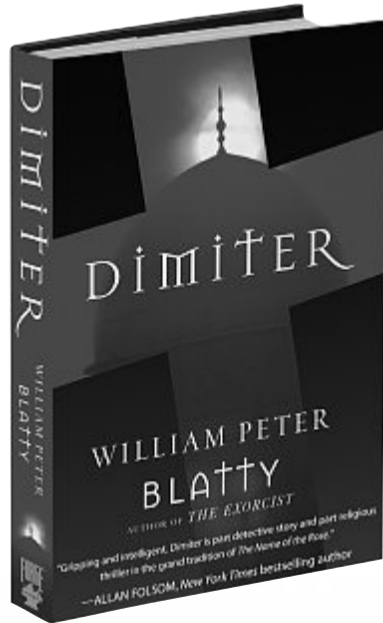
On her fascination with the bond between sisters: "I have two terrific brothers, but when I was younger, I always wanted a sister. I always pictured her as being complementary to me. We'd like the same things, we'd be best friends. But as I got older, I wondered, 'What if it wasn't what I expected it to be? What if I did have a sister and we were very different and we fought a lot?'"

What's next: "My agent is going over the final draft of my next novel. It's a stand-alone set in D.C. about a woman who wakes up one morning and finds that her husband has turned into a totally different person."

By Carol Memmott

A new novel of supernatural suspense from the author of *THE EXORCIST*

"An intelligent, tightly wound, suspenseful novel. One can only hope Blatty will publish another sometime soon." —USA Today



William Peter Blatty has thrilled generations of readers with his iconic mega-bestseller *The Exorcist*. Now Blatty gives us *Dimiter*, a riveting story of violence, murder, and suspense laced with themes of faith and love, sin and forgiveness, vengeance and compassion.

★ "A beautifully written, haunting tale of vengeance, spiritual searching, loss, and love." —Publishers Weekly, starred review



Photo: JT Blatty

WILLIAM PETER BLATTY won the Academy Award for his screenplay *The Exorcist*, based on his mega-bestselling novel. He has also won three Golden Globe awards, numerous other film and literary honors, and is the author of many novels and screenplays.

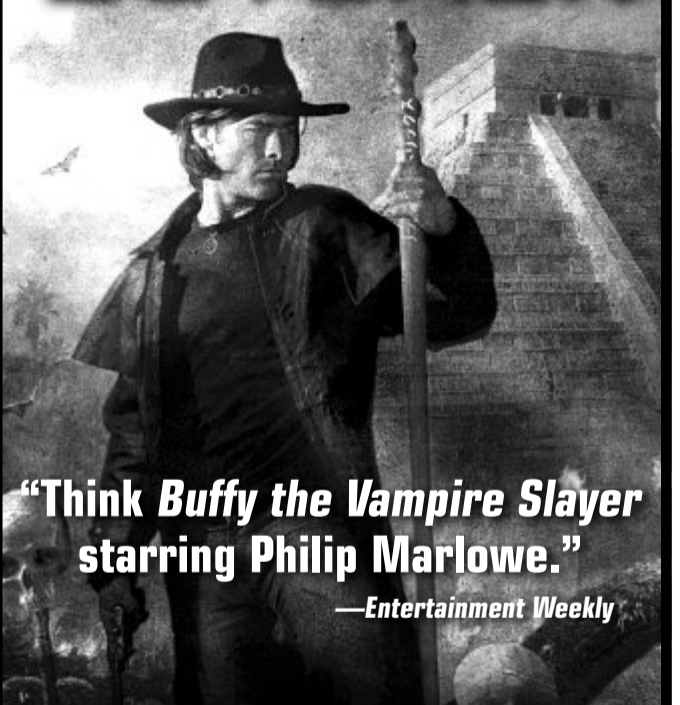
Also available from Macmillan Audio—read by the author!



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