

MIAMI HERALD

SUNDAY DECEMBER 26, 2021 | PAGE 3D

**PUBLISHERS WEEKLY BESTSELLERS**

Publishers Weekly bestsellers for week ending Dec. 11

- HARDCOVER FICTION**
1. "The Judge's List" by John Grisham (Doubleday)
  2. "The Stranger in the Lifeboat" by Mitch Albom (Haper)
  3. "The Wish" by Nicholas Sparks (Grand Central Publishing)
  4. "Go Tell the Bees That I Am Gone" by Dana Gabalón (Delacorte)
  5. "Wish You Were Here" by Jack Piccolini (Ballantine)
  6. "Van Nostrand" by James Patterson (Little, Brown)
  7. "The Lincoln Highway" by Amor Towles (Viking)
  8. "D&D: Strickhaven Curriculum of Chase" (vicariously of the Coast)
  9. "Cloud Cuckoo Land" by Anthony Doerr (Scout24)
  10. "Mercy" by David Baldacci

11. "Autopsy" by Patricia Cornwell (William Morrow)
  12. "Bibi Summers" by Stephen King (Scrivener)
  13. "The Dark Hours" by Michael Connelly (Little, Brown)
  14. "Mying Angels" by Danielle Steel (Delacorte)
  15. "The Last Thing He Told Me" by Laura Dove (Simon & Schuster)
- HARDCOVER NONFICTION**
1. "Call Us What We Carry" by Amanda Gorman (Viking)
  2. "Bites of the Heart" by Brené Brown (Random House)
  3. "The Real Anthony Fauci" by Robert F. Kennedy Jr. (Skyhorse)
  4. "For Such a Time as This" by Katelyn McEnany (Post Hill)
  5. "All American Christmas" by Camryn Collier (Brookside)
  6. "The Pioneer Woman Cooks: Super Easy!" by Ree Drummond (William Morrow)
  7. "Jesus Lighten" by Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)

8. "There and Back" by Jimmy Chin (Ten Speed)
  9. "Guinness World Records 2022" (Guinness World Records)
  10. "The 1619 Project" by Nikole Hannah-Jones (One World)
  11. "The Storyteller" by Dave Gribble (Dey Street)
  12. "Wife" by Will Smith (Penguin Press)
  13. "The President and the Freedom Fighter" by Brian Kilmeade (Sentinel)
  14. "The Lyrics" by Paul McCartney (Liveright)
  15. "American Marxism" by Mark R. Levin (Threshold)
- MASS MARKET PAPERBACKS**
1. "Neighbors" by Danielle Steel (Dell)
  2. "Lost" by Patterson/Born (Grand Central Publishing)
  3. "Taxkane" by Johnstone/Johnstone (Pinnacle)
  4. "Slaughter of the Mountain Man" by Johnstone/Johnstone (Pinnacle)
  5. "Think as Thieves" by Sandra Brown (Grand Central Publishing)

6. "The Rescue" by Nicholas Sparks (Grand Central Publishing)
  7. "Winter Weddings" by Debbie Macomber (Mira)
  8. "All That Glitters" by Danielle Steel (Dell)
  9. "Someone Perfect" by Mary Balogh (Berkley)
  10. "Blizzard Showdown" by Shirlee McCoy (Love Inspired Suspense)
  11. "Snowfall in Cold Creek" by RaeAnne Thayne (Harlequin)
  12. "Christmas K-9 Prelethers" by WorthyBlack (Love Inspired Suspense)
  13. "The Middle Christmas Wish" by Leigh Bale (Love Inspired)
  14. "Left to Die" by Lisa Jackson (Scribner)
  15. "Little Lies" by Nora Roberts (Scribner)
- TRADE PAPERBACKS**
1. "Chainawd Man, Vol. 8" by Tatsuki Fujimoto (Viz)
  2. "Jujutsu Kaisen, Vol. 13" by Gege Akutami (Viz)
  3. "Twenty" by Colleen Hoover (Grand Central Publishing)

4. "Where the Crawdads Sing" by Delia Owens (P. Putnam's Sons)
5. "The Blue Zones Challenge" by Dan Buettner (HarperCollins)
6. "The Love Hypothesis" by Ali Hazelwood (Berkley)
7. "Kaju No. 8, Vol. 1" by Naoya Matsumoto (Viz)
8. "People We Meet on Vacation" by Emily Henry (Berkley)
9. "Jujutsu Kaisen" by Gege Akutami (Viz)
10. "The Old Farmer's Almanac 2022" (Old Farmer's Almanac)
11. "The House of Gucci" (movie tie-in) by Sara Gay Forden (Custom House)
12. "The Silent Patient" by Alex Michaelides (Corgi)
13. "One Piece, Vol. 98" by Eiichiro Oda (Viz)
14. "The Ultimate Bathroom Reader" by Bill O'Hall (LA)
15. "Three Women Disappear" by Patterson/Serafin (Grand Central Publishing)

—ASSOCIATED PRESS

**BOOK REVIEW**

**A woman shares her secrets in 'White on White'**

BY CORN OLDWELLER  
Star Tribune

In her 2019 debut, "Walking on the Ceiling," Aysegül Savas deftly probed the barriers inherent to human relationships, particularly how they are revealed when we try to inhabit another person's story.

The novel, meted out in bite-sized chapters, centers on the connections that Nunu, a young woman studying literature in Paris, has with an older male author and with her mother. The platonic friendship with the author delves into issues of appropriation, artistic inspiration and public versus private personas.

The mother-daughter relationship is more fraught and, for Nunu, more difficult to convey, a difficulty starkly revealed in a late chapter that reads, in its entirety: "I'm trying to say that I've tried to tell a story about her many times. But none have resembled my mother."

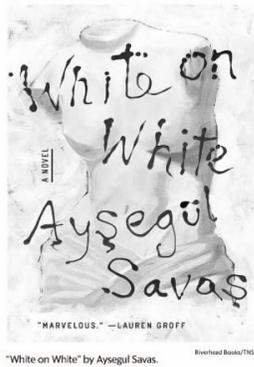
Agnes comes to town to work in her art studio on the flat's upper floor. The narrator finds Agnes' presence magnetic as the two discuss art, both Agnes' paintings and the sculptures the narrator is researching. Agnes extends her stay and begins to share more personal stories, both quotidian and intimate, covering everything from how often she thought about a painting that hung in her childhood home to the first time she has sex — with an art school instructor, an experience she saw dispassionately as "a task, a destination she'd set her mind on."

At first, the narrator wonders at Agnes' ever-lengthening separation from her husband, but soon she grows more concerned with finding her own separation from the woman. For her part, Agnes is keenly aware of her need for companionship from their first outing, when she says, "I seem to be starved for conversation. I'm going on and on."

The narrator's research into the historic ties between touch and narrative is almost unwittingly fueled by Agnes' compulsion to bare herself metaphorically. While we see the "physical aspect" of nakedness the same as it has been for centuries, our current "perception of being unclothed might hold entirely different meanings, like a thin film obscuring the subject from view."

The many correlations between that "thin film" and the "pleasingly thin" Agnes, so desperate to have someone slip inside her skin and understand her, make Savas' typically spare gem shimmer with richly complex insights on communication, family, love and friendship.

**White on White**  
By Aysegül Savas; Riverhead Books, 192 pages, \$26.



"White on White" by Aysegül Savas. Riverhead Books/TNS



Phyllis Harris, author and illustrator of 'The Gift Shop Bear,' sits outside her home in Raymore, Missouri. Harris has spent years illustrating books but this is the first one she wrote.

**CHILDREN'S BOOKS**

**Girl finds old teddy bear in attic — and inspires new book**

DAN KELLY  
Kansas City Star

KANSAS CITY, MO. — Four-year-old Eliana Hernandez was looking around her grandmother's attic in Raymore, Missouri, when she found a well-worn teddy bear stored in her mother's old toy box. The poor little guy had been up there alone, with no friends, for years and years — ever since her mother was a little girl herself.

Eliana rescued the orphaned teddy bear and named him Heart Bear, and they've lived happily ever after. But that wasn't "The End."

In fact, it was a beginning.

That grandmother, Phyllis Harris, happens to be a prominent illustrator of children's books, and she knows a good story-line when she sees one.

Eliana and Heart Bear inspired the characters of Annie and just plain Bear in the new Christmas-themed "The Gift Shop Bear," which Harris wrote and illustrated. The book (published by Hachette Book Group/WorthyKids)

is now available online and in bookstores.

It is the first children's book Harris has written after illustrating more than 30, including "Maverick and Me" by Katherine Schwarzenegger in 2017 and "On Christmas Day" by legendary children's author Margaret Wise Brown in 2019.

Continuing the Christmas theme was hardly a strategic move for Harris, however.

"I didn't intend that," she said. "When I first started writing this book, it was not a Christmas book. It morphed into a Christmas book, and I don't remember exactly how that happened."

Adria Goetz of Martin Literary Management is glad it morphed. She had been looking for a new Christmas-themed children's book to push but couldn't find the right one — until Harris pitched hers.

"I received a million bazillion Christmas submissions over the years," Goetz said. "I really wanted something that I felt would add a unique story to the Christmas picture book canon. But this is

the first Christmas book I've ever sold because I've been very, very picky. So I think it's really special.

"I thought it was a really sweet story, and her illustration style is just so perfect for a Christmas story."

**TAKING NEW CHANCES**

Describing herself as "mostly self-taught," Harris has developed her illustration style and career over the past 40-plus years, all in the Kansas City area. After attending Ruskin High School and Longview Community College, she worked for two decades as a graphic designer, then freelancing for Hallmark Cards and others.

"It was a stay-at-home mom, and I freelanced, so I took my daughter along to my freelance gigs," she said of daughter Emily.

"I waited until my daughter was in grade school before I really started playing with the book side. It took a few years to get into it. I tell you, persistence has paid

off for me."

Persistence — and patience. Harris spent 20 years as a graphic designer before taking the leap into book illustrating, then worked another 20 years before finally taking a stab at writing.

Illustrating "On Christmas Day" was a coup for Harris. Brown, author of the bestselling "Goodnight Moon" and "The Runaway Bunny," died in 1952 at the age of 42 but left behind dozens of manuscripts, many of which have been published in the years since.

Before that, Harris ventured into the fast-growing domain of celebrities-turned-children's authors. Schwarzenegger, who is the oldest child of Arnold Schwarzenegger and Maria Shriver and is married to "Guardians of the Galaxy" actor Chris Pratt, has written three self-help books in addition to "Maverick and Me," about adopting a dog.

Schwarzenegger helped raise Harris' profile as an illustrator during promotional events, including on network morning shows.

"She was at least one of those celebrities that did mention the illustrator, which was really nice," Harris said.

**FOCUSING MORE ON WRITING**

Harris can now speak from experience when she says the time spent writing a children's book doesn't begin to compare to the time illustrating one.

"To illustrate a book, it can take months and months and months, three to six months on this book," she said. "On the writer's side, it's moments, when you're able to sit down and type and something comes out. And so literally it's hours compared to months."

But she added, "I don't want to discredit the writing side because that is so difficult for me."

Harris supplements her book income by selling her art. Working out of the attic above the three-car garage in her Raymore home, she launched an online shop at PhyllisHarrisDesigns.com in 2012. People around the world have purchased her art prints, which are sold online at Amazon, Home Depot, Walmart, Bed, Bath and Beyond — and beyond.

But that business will take a backseat to her new passion of writing and illustrating.

"Now that I'm working on my books, I really want to focus full time on that area," Harris said.

Her second book as author/illustrator already is in the hands of Goetz, who expects big things for "The Gift Shop Bear," which came out Oct. 26, for Harris.

"This book has really raised her profile as a creator," the agent said. "I think it's kind of put her on the map."

Harris hopes her own story will hit home, too.

"I want to inspire people that you're never too old to go after your dream," she said. "I'll be 60 next March, and I feel like I'm just getting started. I'm really excited about it."