



The Miracle on Monhegan Island

By Elizabeth Kelly

After four years away, Spark Monahan returns home to Maine with a stolen dog as a peace offering for his son, Hally. His reentry into the dysfunctional Monahan family is rocky, and things get even more complicated when 12-year-old Hally claims to have had a vision of the Virgin Mary.

Read-alikes compiled by Sioux City Public Library Staff

Domestic fiction set in Maine:

[Good-bye and Amen by Beth Richardson Gutcheon](#) (*Fic Gut*)

The complicated marriage of gifted Danish pianist Laurus Moss to American child of privilege Sydney Brant was a mystery to many who knew them, including their three children—Eleanor, Monica, and Jimmy. Upon their parent's death, they are forced to return to the family summer cottage on the coast of Maine to divide up the estate.

[Abide with Me by Elizabeth Strout](#) (*Fic Str*)

In the late 1950s, in the small town of West Annett, Maine, Reverend Tyler Caskey struggles to hold together his own life, his family, and his town, while dealing with his personal anger, grief, and loss of faith.

[The Summer Guest by Justin Cronin](#) (*Fic Cro*) Nearing the end of his life, financier Harry Wainwright makes one last trip to the rustic fishing camp in Maine that has been his refuge for the last 30 years, leaving a profound legacy for a haunted young man, a Vietnam draft evader, and a spirited young woman who holds a key to the past.

If you are interested in adolescents dealing with mental illness, try:

[Running with Scissors by Augusten Burroughs](#) (*921 Burro, A Bur*) At the age of 12, Augusten Burroughs was left in the care of his mother's psychiatrist. Growing up amidst the doctor's unhinged family, nomadic patients, and his mother's erratic visits, the young boy is left to fend for himself. He emerges from the chaos with an identity independent from the insanity he left behind but with scars difficult to heal.

[Ordinary People by Judith Guest](#) (*Fic Gue*)

After his older brother's death, Conrad is beset with depression and guilt. Following a suicide attempt, his parents commit him to a mental hospital to recover; however, their different methods of dealing with their grief pulls the family apart.

[Challenger Deep by Neal Shusterman](#) (*Teen Shu*) Caden Bosch is paranoid, obsessive compulsive, and afraid; he also lives part of his life in another world on a pirate ship. As he begins to lose control to this alternate reality, his parents make the difficult decision to commit him to a psychiatric hospital. There, he encounters the difficulty of evaluation, diagnosis, treatment, and life in general as a teen with schizophrenia.

Dysfunctional (but witty) Family Sagas:

[The Nest by Cynthia D'Apris Sweeney](#) (*New Fic Swe*)

A charismatic but troubled Leo Plumb blows most of the \$2 million inheritance his father left for him and his three siblings. Leo makes a vague promise to repay his financially irresponsible and struggling siblings who are all depending on their share of 'the nest'.

[The Family Fang by Kevin Wilson](#) (*Fic Wil*)

Caleb and Camille Fang are performance artists that instigate and record public chaos. What they call art, their children — Annie and Buster — referred to as mischief growing up. Now in their late twenties, Annie and Buster have returned home to find that their parents have disappeared in what they assume to be another artistic stunt.

[Eligible by Curtis Sittenfeld](#) (*New Fic Sit*)

A modernization of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* set in contemporary Cincinnati, where the Bennet family has fallen on hard times thanks to medical bills, reckless spending and underemployment of the Bennet daughters. A Bachelor-like reality show brings a fun parallel to the re-telling of this classic.

[A Day Late and a Dollar Short by Terry McMillan](#) (*Fic McM*) Viola Price survives a major asthma attack, and then decides she has had enough of her husband of 38 years. Her adult children have grown apart, each struggling with their own personal challenges—jealousy, infidelity, abuse, alcohol and drugs. When they reunite after a family tragedy, they get to know the best and the worst about each other all over again.

If you like stories told by animal narrators, try:

[The Art of Racing in the Rain by Garth Stein](#) (*Fic Ste*) Enzo knows he is different from other dogs: a philosopher with a nearly human soul (and an obsession with opposable thumbs), he has educated himself by watching television and by listening closely to the words of his master, Denny Swift, an up-and-coming race car driver. On the night before his death, Enzo takes stock of his life, recalling all that he and his family have been through, hoping, in his next life, to return as a human.

[Horse Heaven by Jane Smiley](#) (*Fic Smi*)

Set in the world of thoroughbred racing, this story is told through the eyes of the horses themselves, and follows a group of trainers, jockeys, and "track brats" on a two-year journey through the racing cycle.



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