



Alice, I think (trilogy) by Susan Juby

Set in Smithers BC, the series follows the angst-ridden life of teenager Alice McLeod, who must endure constant and mortifying embarrassment from her hippie parents. In book two of the series, Miss Smithers, Alice enters the town beauty pageant as "Miss Rod and Gun Club". In the hilarious conclusion to the series, (*Alice McLeod, Realist at last*), Alice MacLeod has "officially graduated from the ranks of the weirdly marginal into the realm of the practically normal". I loved these books for their wit and depiction of small town BC eccentricities.

Rachel Brown, Parkgate

Sympathy by Dede Crane

A recently retired ballet dancer loses husband and child in an auto accident and has to undergo a controversial new treatment for post traumatic stress disorder. Sounds heavy, but this gritty novel is often funny and ultimately a testament to the resilience of the human spirit.

Elizabeth Austin, Parkgate

Monkey Beach by Eden Robinson

Growing up in a remote Haisla village, Lisamarie is visited by ghosts and shapeshifters, and tormented by a sense of impending doom. She undertakes a journey which is as much a personal quest as a search for her brother, missing at sea. Central to the story are the spirituality of her remarkable family and their connection to the living wilderness. Poignant and sometimes funny, this is a haunting story.

Elaine Dickson, Parkgate

I heard the owl call my name by Margaret Craven

Another BC classic. A young priest, unaware that he is dying, is sent to a remote BC First Nations parish. Father Mark's gentle efforts to reach an understanding with the Kwakiutl community complement his own inner struggle to come to terms with his situation.

Home by Annie Scoones

One of those books which is hard to classify but easy to enjoy – a combination of affectionate memoir, farm almanac and country cookbook. Scoones rescued the original buildings of a heritage farm in North Saanich, lovingly restored them, and filled them and her life with rare livestock, heirloom plants, and an eclectic assortment of local characters and interesting visitors. Told with gentle humour and engaging modesty, this is the perfect book for a ferry trip to the Island.

Wendy Metcalf Roy, Parkgate

Menace by L.R. Wright

Set on the Sunshine Coast, this is the award winning author's final novel prior to her death, and considered among her best. A young social worker rejects a suitor and begins to suspect that she may have a stalker; meanwhile a local senior is nearly run down by a motorist. Sergeant Edwina believes something very violent may soon occur in the town of Gibsons.

April Fool by William Deverell

Lawyer Arthur Beauchamp has retired to enjoy retirement as a hobby farmer on Garibaldi Island, but he reluctantly heads back into court to defend a former client accused of rape and murder. Meanwhile, Beauchamp's environmentalist wife has taken residence in a tree on Vancouver Island to protest the destruction of an eagle habitat. Court room thriller, classic whodunit, humorous and fast paced - Deverell is at the top of his game with this one!

Alicia Jinkerson

Girls Around the House by M.A.C. Farrant

Quirky, humorous and slightly whimsical - not in the funny chick lit vein of Sophie Kinsella. Narrator Marion deals with life in the small town of Sidney, on Vancouver Island: the growing pains of her three teenage children, her husband, and her charismatic mother in law. Also recommended: her non-fiction piece, "My Turquoise Years". It gives you such a rich look at what her life was like growing up on the Island, and provides honest, sometimes heartbreakingly funny insights into family life.

Michelle Zadak

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