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**CROOK'S CORNER BOOK PRIZE SHORTLIST ANNOUNCED**  
*\$5,000 Prize to be Awarded for Best Debut Novel Set in the South*

**CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA, SEPTEMBER 18, 2023**—Today, the Crook's Corner Book Prize Foundation announces the three finalists for best debut novel set in the American South. "Writing a novel is hard enough. Getting attention for your first novel is even harder. Our goal is to shine a light on promising new novelists writing about the American South to alert readers to the exciting talent out there," says Anna Hayes, Foundation President. The winner of the \$5000 prize will be announced in January 2024.

The Shortlist is:

- "[The Old Place](#)" by Bobby Finger (G.P. Putnam's Sons, Penguin Random House): Mary Alice and Ellie were forever linked the day they both lost their sons, one right after the other. Years later, the two are working their way back to a comfortable friendship. When a relative arrives who could expose a decade-old secret of Mary Alice's, the whole of their friendship is put at risk.
- "[Hestia Strikes a Match](#)" by Christine Grillo, (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Macmillan Publishers): Christine Grillo's "Hestia Strikes a Match" is an irreverent, incisive, laugh-out-loud interrogation of modern love of all kinds, in all its messy beauty. Equal parts wise and hilarious, it fills the heart, fortifies the spirit, and will surely help to fend off despair.
- "[Indigo Field](#)" by Marjorie Hudson (Regal House Publishing): In prose that's been called "dazzling" and "mesmerizing," in the animated voices of trees and birds and people, in deeply layered Southern-voiced storytelling, Marjorie Hudson lays out the boundaries of a field that contains the soul of the South, and leads us to a day of reckoning.

Although eligible books must be predominantly set in the South, authors may live anywhere, and all genres of fiction, except for Young Adult, are eligible.

Judging for this year's Prize will be [Wiley Cash](#). Cash is an award-winning and *New York Times* best-selling author of four novels and the founder of [This is Working](#). He has published widely on issues ranging from the environment to history to foodways to music. He serves as the Alumni Author-in-Residence at UNC-Asheville and lives in North Carolina.

About the Crook's Corner Book Prize

Inspired by the literary prizes awarded by famous Parisian cafés such as the Deux Magots and the Café de Flore, the Crook's Corner Book Prize honors the iconic Crook's Corner, which for 40

years was a culinary, literary, and artistic beacon in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Sadly, Crook's Corner closed in 2021. However, the Crook's Corner Book Prize will continue its annual award, a fitting homage to the unforgettable restaurant. For more information on the Prize and submission guidelines, please visit [www.CrooksCornerBookPrize.com](http://www.CrooksCornerBookPrize.com) or follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).

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