

(FICTION)
THE ELLE'S
LETTRES 2016
READERS' PRIZE

15 ELLE readers choose their favorite among three promising recent books—this month, mom-as-protagonist novels

1 **THE EXPATRIATES**
JANICE Y. K. LEE
(VIKING)



Separate lives become critically entwined in this multilayered portrait of three American women living in Hong Kong. Margaret, a brokenhearted mother; Mercy, a floundering twentysomething; and Hilary, a privileged, childless housewife, each cope with private loss in a foreign country—and the result, as in Lee's previous hit, *The Piano Teacher*, is an emotionally gripping page-turner. "Be prepared to cry," wrote one reader, "and drop all your plans; you'll want to spend all day and night with this novel."

2 **THE BURNED BRIDGES OF WARD, NEBRASKA**
EILEEN CURTRIGHT
(LITTLE A)



In this dark comedy, newly single and

(FICTION)

A SMALL GOOD THING

Elizabeth Strout's exquisite new book

By Kate Christensen

Amy and Isabelle, Elizabeth Strout's exquisite new book, was about a 16-year-old girl whose fraught intensity provided the laser-focused, beautiful (Random House), Strout reimagines mother and daughter in a time around, the daughter, gash, Illinois, for New York seen her mother, she's become two daughters.

When the novel opens, Lucille, a woman who has been in the hospital for years, comes to find that her mother, in a way that comes all the way from the Midwest, is thrilled to see her, happily calls Lucy "Wizzle-dee," he comes from the town where I grew up, a way I didn't remember, as if he were a word and observations had been made for years, and her voice was